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Emotional Experiences of Non-Indigenous Educators Teaching Indigenous Curricula: Reconciliation Through Narrative Inquiry

by

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A THESIS

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Abstract

Non-Indigenous educators are required to teach Indigenous curricula according to Alberta Education (2018b) *Teaching Quality Standards* (TQS). This requirement hopes to contribute to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) (TRCC) calls to action regarding education in Canada. My research focuses on the calls to action which ask educators to teach Indigenous curricula with "intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect" (TRCC, 2015). By asking the research question, *what are the emotional experiences of non-Indigenous educators in Alberta who are teaching Indigenous curriculum,* my purpose was to examine the emotional experiences as we work individually and collectively towards reconciliation in education.

In this emotional journey that you are joining me on, the reader will encounter writing surrounding the Papal apology, situating myself in the research, situating the research in governing literature, approach to research and design, findings and discussion of the data. This thesis includes my design of Research in a Medicine Wheel which provides a conceptual and theoretical framework. In addition, the reader will encounter a Findings in a Medicine Wheel Word Cloud, and sweetgrass braid drawings which I created to show how my research is woven with research partners and the seven sacred teachings.

Through a Narrative Inquiry approach, the findings present the stories of my three research partners and myself. In conducting an emotive analysis of these stories as data gathering, I created categories which represent themes found in each of the research partner's stories. Susie presents the role of empathy in teaching Indigenous curricula; Elsi presents a story of growth, authenticity, and humility; and Quinn presents the perspective of moving past shock: a journey towards understanding. Each of the research partner's stories are followed by my

reaction and reflection which created the opportunity for me to become the fourth researcher in this research.

This emotional journey includes a research process which became one of creating new relationships, the renewal of existing friendships, and changing relationships,. The research and writing which follows are centered on concepts found in the ever-changing processes of reconciliation.

Keywords: reconciliation; non-Indigenous educators; Indigenous curricula; narrative inquiry

Preface

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, T.M. Miles. The dialogue sessions reported in Chapters 4-6 were covered by Ethics Certificate number REB21-0320, issued by the *University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board* for the project "Emotional Experiences of Non-Indigenous Educators Teaching Indigenous Curricula: Reconciliation Through Narrative Inquiry" on December 20, 2021.

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Being true to my commitment to reconciliation I must acknowledge all who contributed unpleasant experiences throughout this research process. Without those life lessons I would not be the person I am today. Overcoming barriers made me a stronger person and helped me to commit to my research with more dedication after making my way through the dark and sometimes horrible experiences.

Last, but most definitely not least, I must express heartfelt thanks one more time to the three wonderful souls who joined me intimately in this process…my Research Partners, who I call friends: **Susie, Elsi,** and **Quinn.** Without you, your stories, and emotional experiences, this research could go nowhere. I am thankful for the trust you placed in me to present you in my research with honour and respect. I have done my best to present you all as true as I can while maintaining the integrity that you all deserve. Again, I thank you for being friends and confidants.

Thank you all for your **love, support,** and **walking alongside me** in my education journey.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to my late parents, **Eric** and **Rosalie,** and my late brother **Brent**. My mother and brother never saw me on this education journey, but I know they both would have been just like my dad when I heard from others how he would sit on coffee-row and talk about his daughter who had returned to school.

I would like to also dedicate this work to my late mother-in-law and father-in-law; **Elizabeth** and **Mervyn** Miles. Thank you for raising your son in a way that you could both be proud of. I never had the chance to meet my late mother-in-law before she passed, but I did have the chance to know Craig's father for many years. He was always supportive of me in my education journey. He saw me graduate from my first two degrees. He would be proud to watch me cross stage for this degree.

I hope that I have made you all proud.

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Preamble

The following document focuses on **emotion(s)**. To highlight the **emotions** expressed throughout the reader will find words that are **expressing emotion** or **enacts an emotional response** bolded. I have chosen to stylistically amplify them to draw attention to these **expressions of emotion** within this research and document. This shows how **emotion** was expressed through the research process as well as the writing process. In addition to individual words which are in themselves **expressed emotions**, the reader will discover that there are also two and three-word phrases highlighted throughout. The reason I have chosen to incorporate phrases is that they **conjure emotions** and have particular significance within the stories and narratives held in this research. These are phrases which will be closely related to single word **emotions**. Another reason I chose to highlight them is they are supporting phrases which provide context, or validity to the single **emotion** words. I have also bolded the word **reconciliation** throughout, as I believe that it is a word that is **emotional** because it changes **hearts** and minds of those who participate in the act of **reconciliation**, regardless of how it is enacted.

I have chosen to bold the words and phrases that are **emotions** so that the reader of this dissertation will see that **emotional involvement** goes beyond the stories that were told by research partners who joined me on this journey. **Emotions** are found throughout research such as this, from the beginning of the process, through data gathering, into the writing process, and lastly, **emotions** will be **felt** by the readers as they also join in this journey.

Prologue

Situating Myself in Reconciliation

Welcome to my research. I am a Cree, I am First Nations, I am a woman, I am an academic, I am all of these and much more. You will encounter a deeper introduction of who I am and why I have come to do this research when you reach the body of this thesis. For the purposes of this small introduction the main factors of my identity are that I am a First Nations researcher. I chose to create a foundation of **reconciliation** in which to build my research and writing on.

The following section of writing is a reflection piece that is placed here at the beginning, because it serves a purpose for the reader to encounter this reflective piece before the body of what makes up my thesis. I have not placed this piece here to give it a position of authority or privilege. I want the reader to be exposed to another layer of how I view **reconciliation**. This reflective writing serves to present my beliefs about **reconciliation** and its relationship to the Papal apology. **Hopefully**, it will provide the reader with another viewpoint of the Papal apology that they may not been exposed to or considered before.

Papal Apology

The following section was produced long after I had established my research topic, problem, and process. The data collection process was already complete, and I had started the data processing and writing stages of this thesis. I had already made a commitment that my research would represent **reconciliation** in as many ways as possible. I have maintained a flexible approach throughout the process of preparing my dissertation which is why I could reflect on the Papal visit to Canada and incorporate it into my writing. What follows illustrates

the premise of my research and some of the basis of my beliefs, which have guided me in this process.

Reflection I

> *In France, a play entitled, Controversy at Valladolid…in it a group of Roman Catholic clerics and intellectuals, fifty years after 'the fact of Columbus,' are arguing in the context of a major international forum, whether the 'Indians of the Americas' are or are not human (for you see in those days, the Pope considered that we had no souls, that we were equivalent, in effect, to wild, savage animals…* (Highway, 2004, p. 180)

In 2008 Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued an **apology** to residential school survivors on behalf of the Canadian government. Like the 2008 event, which was considered by many to be a stepping-stone on the **emotional journey** of **reconciliation**, the trip to Canada made by Pope Francis of the Roman Catholic Church is, what can only be considered a historic moment. Because my research focuses on **reconciliation** as the foundation upon which it is built, I would be remiss if I did not include a reflection on my **emotional responses** to the **apology** issued by Pope Francis on July 25, 2022. It is a moment, that for some, will be a great event in the process of **reconciliation**.

Like many other Indigenous individuals across Canada, I watched the Pope's **apology** on my computer. Before I delve into my personal reflection, I would like to state that I found myself to be **annoyed** by my research in that moment as I watched the process the Indigenous Chiefs, residential school survivors, and church representatives participated in. As a member of a family, and reserve which counts many residential school survivors/victims among their members I was **bothered** by the fact that I could not simply listen and watch the **apology** and all that it

encompassed. I felt I had to analyze the actions and the words, and then relate all of it to my research, and ultimately, write about it, as I am here, so that it could become a part of my dissertation. In any other time and place during my life I would have been an observer and not an analyzer.

This is just another instance in which I have recognized that research is personal, and it affects every aspect of your being. Completing this doctoral degree and being amid the writing process forced me to observe this event through an academic lens. I am left with questions of reflection that I will be considering, but possibly never have answers for, such as:

1. *Does an academic perspective add more to the meaning and effect of Pope Francis coming to Canada to **apologize** for the Catholic church?*
2. *Did this academic perspective detract from the personal aspects of what the **apology** should mean to me, my family, and my reserve?*
3. *Will my thoughts on what was witnessed today in Canada change after I have completed my research and degree?*

These are reflective questions which will follow me long after I have completed writing my dissertation.

What follows are areas that I reflected on both during and after watching Pope Francis issued his formal **apology** to Indigenous Residential School survivors:

Was it Enough?

The benefits of having social media, and a quick glance at general comments show there is a great divide on whether this **apology** was enough. For some it was a step in the **healing** process. For others there will never be any words or actions that are enough to allow for **healing** and **reconciliation** to occur. There is no right or wrong way to **feel** about the Papal Apology.

Both reactions have validity as they speak to where the individual experiencing these **feelings** is in their personal **reconciliation** process. The **apology** that was issued should be **controversial**, accepted, or rejected personally by any residential school survivor in their own way. This is one event that will allow individuals to process in their own journey of **healing** and **reconciliation**.

One thing that Pope Francis spoke about in his **apology** was how being in Canada and issuing his **apology** would reawaken past **traumas**. It would cause memories and past **hurts** to become present again. He also stated that this was a necessary part of the process. To not continue to be **indifferent** to the **traumas** caused by residential schools he must be allowed to speak about it. This is part of the **reconciliation** process which I can relate to my research. I must be able to write about it to acknowledge it and contribute to **reconciliation.**

Space and Place

The place in which this event occurred was representative of the process of **reconciliation** in many ways. The thing that **struck me** the most was watching the Pope being walked by others into the Maskwacis round gathering place, being surrounded by current and past Chiefs, residential school survivors, and Indigenous community members. It must have been a foreign place for the Pope to find himself in, and a foreign place for those who are Indigenous to experience having him there. The visual representation of traditions and culture on display was a massive contrast with the Pope dressed all in white surrounded by the colourful regalia of the dancers and the dark-skinned weathered faces of the Indigenous Elders.

Will it be enough for other Indigenous communities to have one **apology** in one place? Will others demand more? Pope Francis said during his talk that he had many invitations to go to many communities. It would be physically impossible for him to do this. Is it enough that he made the trip to Canada, and he issued his **apology** on Canadian soil? From what I have

observed, reflected on, and analyzed this may be another **divisive** point for discussion among Indigenous People in the future when this event is discussed.

Words Paired with Actions

The words that Pope Francis used were all the right words, well-placed. Yes, he read from a prepared speech. Yes, he did his **apology** in another language, and it was translated into English. Are these things which can be overlooked? Again, I say yes. He used phrases in his speech to describe the things that residential schools did to Indigenous People. He used words such as "**spiritually denigrated**" [emphasis added] (The Canadian Press, Jul 25, 2022). He did not have to use such direct phraseology, but he did. He called the schools a "**disastrous error**" [emphasis added] and related them to "**deplorable evil**" [emphasis added] (The Canadian Press, Jul 25, 2022). He expressed **humility**, paired with **shame**. Pope Francis acknowledged the **horrors** of residential school, the **trauma** they caused, and the fact that his visit would **reignite emotions** among survivors. He did so while asking **forgiveness** and expressing **deep sorrow** (The Canadian Press, Jul 25, 2022). Many will condemn his words as being hollow and without meaning. One look at social media comments to see how quickly his words were dismissed by some, but not all. Whether or not one personally agrees with how Pope Francis expressed his **apology**, it should not be so casually written off if one, or many, are not in agreement. For many, these words were needed for the process of **reconciliation** to move forward in a **positive** way. Pope Francis expressed his words of **apology** as a place to start, creating a new beginning. He also acknowledged that this **apology** is necessary for future generations, and that it will provide **hope** for generations to come. Pope Francis aptly described this **apology** as a "**universal reconciliation**" [emphasis added] (The Canadian Press, Jul 25, 2022).

As the saying goes, actions speak louder than words. In this case I am in full agreement. It must be acknowledged that Pope Francis actions could have followed the same as other Popes before him. He could have stayed home. He could have refused to come to Canada when he was invited by the Indigenous People. His health is not the best, and he is elderly. Without him acting, and making the trip to Canada, these events would not have occurred.

There were many acts that showed Pope Francis how **vibrant** and **alive** Indigenous cultures and traditions are in Canada; from the dancers and the drummers to the words of the songs and the traditions in how the event was governed by Indigenous cultures. There were other acts that could be seen throughout the broadcast which were representative of Indigenous cultures such as the woman sitting and beading while she listened to the Pope speak. I believe that every person who attended the event did so to contribute to the act of **reconciliation**, in whatever way they were able to.

The Headdress Presentation

At the conclusion of his **apology** Pope Francis was presented with a headdress. It is a **great honour** to be gifted a headdress by an Indigenous Elder. It is a greater distinction when you consider that Pope Francis was presented with a headdress by Dr. Wilton Littlechild. As I wrote about in the previous section, actions speak volumes. Do I think that the headdress was presented as an **honouring** gift? Yes, but not fully. I believe that the presenting of the headdress is more **meaningful** in the act of **reconciliation**. The presentation itself contributes to the act of **reconciliation.** As I watched the process I waited to see if the gift would be accepted as it was presented. I admit, I was **shocked** in witnessing Pope Francis allowing the headdress to be placed upon his head, but also on top of his zucchetto. If Pope Francis was not **sincere** in his actions of meeting Indigenous residential school survivors and asking **forgiveness,** I think that

this was the one thing which showed his **true intentions**. Pope Francis wears his papal robes in a similar manner to the Indigenous Peoples' regalia. He could have easily said a feather headdress is simply not allowed, but he did not.

This act along with others during the process will be divided in how it is viewed and accepted or not. There is an argument to be made that sacred symbols such as a headdress should not be gifted to someone who is the true representation of those that caused the **harm** in residential schools. But the presentation of the headdress was done by a **well-respected** Elder in the community, who was formerly a commissioner in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, as well as former Grand Chief of Treaty Six Nations. This is worth acknowledging. It leads to questioning whether there are Elders who are further along in the process of **reconciliation** than others. I often think this may be true when I listen to how my own Auntie talks about her residential school experience.

I have concluded for myself that the **apology** from Pope Francis was a **good** thing. It was needed by many for **reconciliation** and **healing** to move forward. He needed to come to Canada to show by his actions that he is **sincere** in his **apology**. It would not have held the same meaning or had the same effect had he just issued an **apology** via the internet. He stated that the purpose of his trip was a **penitential pilgrimage** meant to contribute to **healing** and **reconciliation**. He talked about how he was gifted two pairs of moccasins by the Indigenous People who met with him in Rome months before his visit to Canada. He made the promise to return those moccasins to Canada when he came, in memory of the children lost at residential schools. He fulfilled that promise.

Returning the moccasins came to symbolize the **walking together** that must occur for **reconciliation** to be manifest. He acted on **good faith** that the Indigenous People in Canada

would accept him and acknowledge his actions. He **honoured** the Elders who are the residential school survivors and **memorialized** the children who were lost to residential schools. He did so as an act of **reconciliation**.

Research/Reconciliation/Relationship

My research was created on a foundation of **reconciliation**. The act of contributing to **reconciliation** changed meaning for me, and my research as the process moved forward. It gained **deeper meaning** after I conducted the data gathering with my research partners. What began as '**reconciliation** as an **action**' developed into '**reconciliation** as **relationship building**' and then further became defined as '**reconciliation** as **relationship changing**'. What was witnessed by the world in Maskwacis, AB was a historic event which contributed to **changing relationships** for **reconciliation**.

The question can and should be asked "*How does the Pope coming to Canada contribute to **reconciliation***"? Does the Papal visit change relationships? Again, I answer, yes. Some will be changed for the **good.** Some will be changed in a **negative** way. There are those who are either not wanting, not willing, or not able to walk the path of **reconciliation** currently. These few will stagnate on social media, spewing **vitriol** regarding the visit to Canada by Pope Francis, and **condemning** Indigenous individuals who do not agree with their stance. Every Indigenous and non-Indigenous person has a different relationship with **reconciliation**. Every individual defines **reconciliation** in a different way. This is the way that it should be. Walking the path of **reconciliation** is personal and is something that is completed at various stages, within different timeframes, for everyone. If the trip from the Vatican City in Rome to Alberta, Canada by the head of the Catholic church, and all that he represents cannot be accepted as a step towards **reconciliation**, then what will it take? The Truth and **Reconciliation** Calls to Action (TRCC,

2015) required that the Pope of the Catholic church deliver an **apology** for their role in residential schools. Pope Francis fulfilled the requirements of call to action #58 (TRCC, 2015) by making this trip and issuing the **apology** on Treaty Six territory. Recognizing that this is a step for the **good** in the **reconciliation journey** does not mean that all is **forgiven,** and all pasts are erased.

Reflection II

As it happened to work out the week in which Pope Francis landed in Canada and began his week travelling through the country, I had a meeting set with my supervisor, Dr. Mairi McDermott. We had scheduled in to discuss my discussion chapter related to the findings of my data gathering. I sent her a change of topic request and the previously written piece of what I am calling my 'immediate response and reflection' on the Pope's visit and **apology**. As it turned out it was only the first **apology** he would make during his time in Canada. Pope Francis would continue his trip and make another **apology** later in the week during his time in Quebec and Nunavut. I watched the remainder of the trip and the events surrounding his travels with a more **distanced** observance.

I continued to watch the social media **reactions** to the **apologies** and events. As I began the observance of the initial **apology** I continued to evaluate and relate what was occurring to my research and the impacts that it was having on me personally as I reflected from day to day. There were a few things that directly related to me and my research which influenced this second part of this writing for my dissertation.

The first thing that occurred was hearing the reaction of my husband after he read the first section of this writing. As usually happens with him, he will read anything I have written late in the day, and long after I have finished working on it. My husband is not only my life partner, but

he has also taken on his own role as a research partner in the way that he has read and provided feedback to me at every stage of this degree. On this occasion he stood in our kitchen reading, late at night after he arrived home from work. He finished reading what is presented in the previous section of this writing. This time he expressed an immediate reaction. He described his reaction as being **visceral**. This was something he had never expressed before. He told me that he has previously had similar reactions to reading my writing. His comments were **touching** and made me realize that he is as influenced by my work as much as anyone. He shows his support for me and my work in many ways and I am always **appreciative** when he expresses a **deep meaningful** reaction. It gives me **hope** that my work may touch others similarly. This reaction and description also influenced my decision on keeping the initial reflection as it was written and not change it into an academically written piece, other than adding in a reference to the transcript of the Pope's **apology**.

The second thing that occurred was the meeting that I had with my supervisor and discussing my initial reaction/writing. Dr. McDermott's first thoughts on what I had written was that it could be the introduction to my dissertation, as a prologue to the work. As I thought about how my reaction and reflection would fit into my writing, I decided that if I were to be truly an **honest** reaction it should be left as **true** to the initial writing as it could be. What is presented above has very little editing done to it for this reason. Staying **true** to my research means that I need to accept that my **emotional** reaction and how I write it into my work is not a **negative**. I too often think that everything must be presented academically written, which can mean that **emotions** and reflections are removed, regulated, and controlled.

The third event that occurred which affected this second writing piece was the social media sentiments being expressed by Indigenous People across Canada. I have reflected on some of those comments.

Sit This One Out

If you are not Indigenous you must sit this one out. The one reoccurring theme that I observed in reading social media comments during the week was that anyone who is not Indigenous was not allowed to express an opinion or make a comment about the Pope's **apology** and travels across Canada. It was made clear by some that unless you were Indigenous and directly affected by residential schools you could not/should not be commenting. **Reconciliation is participatory**. It requires action by all. The **burden** of making space for reconciliation to occur is not for Indigenous People alone.

Gatekeeping

*How is **reconciliation** going to happen if all of Canada isn't allowed to participate*? I understand the **sentiments** expressed regarding not wanting non-Indigenous peoples who were unaffected by residential schools to throw their two-cents in. I do not understand the **desire** to demand every non-Indigenous person to sit down and stay quiet about the events which occurred with Pope Francis **apologizing** and his visit to Canada. This was a week that was witnessed around the world as **monumental**. As it should have been. I must admit that I was **baffled** by the opinions expressed that non-Indigenous people were not included as being participants in the week. **Reconciliation** must be inclusive for it to be **meaningful,** and **effective**. While the **apology** may not have been directed at non-Indigenous individuals that should not be interpreted as it has no **meaning** or **value** for them. Removing this aspect of the **apology** also means that the non-Indigenous students who attended residential school (see Berrera, 2018 for Ron Gosbee's

story) are removed from having the **apology** directed at them for their own path of **healing** and **reconciliation**.

Community

Who is the community? Many of the comments that I witnessed on social media contained the sentiment that "we" as a group of Indigenous People all hold the same beliefs about the Pope's visit and **apologies**. It was rare that I encountered an expressed opinion by other Indigenous People that agreed with my own sentiments. I like to think of myself in the silent minority; that being amongst the few who do not feel the need to be one of those individuals to speak out on social media, or express opinions because it leads to **disagreements** and **arguments**, which do nothing to contribute to **reconciliation**. I find it **disappointing** to read **negative** opinions and statements. I find it **extremely disrespectful** when I read statements against individuals such as Dr. Littlechild by those who disagreed with his actions of presenting the headdress to Pope Francis. Furthermore, I find it **disappointing** that vocal groups who *do not* and *will not* accept the **apology** by Pope Francis, think that they have the right to speak for others and denounce his words and actions as though these **critics** represent all Indigenous People. I know that there are those in the Indigenous community who will not agree with my reflections on this, and I **humbly** accept that as fact. I do not expect everyone to agree with me and/or think like me. I also do not propose that I speak for anyone else but myself in this instance.

The last statement I would wish to express regarding those who present their opinion as being the voice of all is regarding the residential school survivors and Elders who *did* accept the words and actions of Pope Francis as being **genuine**. These individuals will take **solace** and have their own **healing process** move forward because Pope Francis made this visit. This is what **reconciliation** is. It is **healing** and moving forward. Anyone, and especially those who are not

themselves residential school survivors, who do not accept this **apology** and speak out against it are diminishing the affect that it can have for others. During my meeting with Dr. McDermott, we discussed those who do not want **reconciliation** to occur, and actively prevent it from happening. By preventing and denouncing the **apology** this week these individuals are preventing residential school survivors, and Elders, from continuing their own path of **healing** and **reconciliation**.

Non-Indigenous Community

How were those in the non-Indigenous community affected? Another demographic within the population that this week's events affected were the non-Indigenous community that actively work towards a **meaningful reconciliation** process. Without this group of people **reconciliation** goes nowhere. This is important to acknowledge. Their work is **worthy** of being recognized and **respected**.

There is a certain group of individuals that are directly related to my research that are not Indigenous, who are contributing to the process of **reconciliation** by supporting me in this research and writing. This work is bigger than just relating to non-Indigenous people. At this point in time, we all must strive to contribute to **reconciliation**. It is also not okay to actively interfere with **reconciliation** happening. Not only is my supervisor not Indigenous but my committee is not inclusive of an Indigenous person. This was not by design, or for a lack of trying to include an Indigenous person on my committee. I believe that they are all **committed to reconciliation** in their own way, and they are all at different stages in their own journey. They have supported me. They have given their time to be in meetings with me to discuss my research. They have contributed to this writing by being a part of my work. They have consciously made the choice to join me on my **walk of reconciliation** and I **appreciate** them for it.

Research as Reconciliation

*What does **reconciliation** really mean to me and my research?* Answering this question for myself means that I must examine my motives, intentions, and ultimately what I want my research to say about me personally when it is complete. As we discussed in our meeting there are different stages for everyone that is on the journey of **reconciliation.** The one type of person that Dr. McDermott mentioned in our discussion are those who are actively blocking or preventing **reconciliation** from occurring. I have been made aware of the type of person that I want to be, and the category I wish to fall under, in this week of following the Canadian tour of Pope Francis by the social media comments. I must be aware daily until my research and writing is complete and even after, that I am presenting myself as the person who wants **reconciliation** to be manifest in words and actions. I also want to be **respectful** of those who surround me and where they are on their own journey of **reconciliation**. I must be aware that my words and actions will affect others and where they are in their journey of **reconciliation**.

I am aware that every person who reads this dissertation is on their own journey of **reconciliation**. They will all be at different stages in the path they are walking. For this reason, I am inviting the reader of this work to join me on my path, walk with me, and others; **respect** that we are on the same path, we just may be at different stages in our journey. My approach and orientation weaves through everything in my work. We all want the same outcome; to see the road to **reconciliation** continue and move forward. I **hope** that what I have written here and what follows contributes to others' **path of reconciliation**, and changes relationships in the process. I invite the readers of this dissertation to approach my research from wherever you are on your journey.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Reconciliation Through Narrative Inquiry

Allow me to take this space to orient my research as *Reconciliation Through Narrative Inquiry.* I have gone beyond what might be viewed as a normative narrative inquiry study. Even though I have anchored my research as narrative inquiry it is important to note that there is not a singular path which defines what narrative inquiry can be. I was particularly drawn to the writings of Kim (2016) and the influence of his work. I also have presented concepts of narrative inquiry which include the works of researchers such as Clandinin et al. (2006) and Clandinin and Connelly (2000). I have incorporated an Indigenist research approach with academics such as Archibald (2008), Battiste (2000), Kovach (2009) and Wilson (2008). I have created a thesis which has a synergy of narrative inquiry approaches, like Martin (2014) did in her research and thesis. I have provided stories and reflective pieces in this writing. I have also created visual representations of my research. These visuals include Indigenous representations woven into my research through a Medicine Wheel and sweetgrass braids.

Conversely, I would like to point out that not everything is **reconciliation.** There are certain acts and attitudes which will always go against anything that **reconciliation** attempts to repair and **heal**. I am asking for a space, within my research, that allows us to come together in our differences. These differences may be found in opinion, attitude, approach, education, and exposure to Indigenous topics and concepts. I am attempting to create a space that can be shared even with those differences present. Furthermore, I am asking that we enter a space we can share where existing differences are present, without judgement. I have strived to create this non-judgemental atmosphere, and as you will see in the story told by Quinn in his sharing with me

that he felt that I approached him and where he is at in **reconciliation** without making him feel as though I was being judgemental about his **reconciliation** journey.

I am presenting an approach that is multi-faceted. I am also presenting an approach to **reconciliation** that asks everyone who engages with this work to do so on their own terms. I am presenting a definition of **reconciliation** that asks everyone reflect on what **reconciliation** means to them, and where they are in their own journey. I believe that no one person can define what **reconciliation** means to anyone else. For this reason, I have not created a definition of **reconciliation** in my research.

I have created a platform with my research which promotes multiple layers of **reconciliation**. I recognize that there are organizations such as the TRCC (2015) who have attempted to create a definition of **reconciliation**. They should have a definition, but this does not mean that the definition they created is the only one or even the definitive one. It means that their definition was a framework for the work they were doing and specifically applies to the TRCC (2015). Their work is reaching many people around the world. So, while I have been asked to present an identifiable definition of **reconciliation** the closest that I can present to the reader is that **reconciliation** is personal. It should be personal. No one can tell you where you are in your own journey. Others can guide you in the path that you are walking. Others can provide support in the path you are walking. But no one can define what **reconciliation** means for another because they do not know the individual path another is on. My definition of **reconciliation** as it relates to this research and writing is that we can all come together, and be together, so that we can all move forward on whatever path of **reconciliation** we are on as individuals. The common denominator of **reconciliation** is all that is needed to accomplish this act.

For many this will be the first time being exposed to my ideas, my research, and my writing. If this is true for you then welcome to my research process and what has been a long but **fruitful** journey in the **reconciliation** process. It is my **hope** that by the end of your reading of my research that every one of you will have something to take away that will be of **positive** benefit.

The topic and title of my research is: *Emotional Experiences of Non-Indigenous Educators Teaching Indigenous Curricula: Reconciliation Through Narrative Inquiry.* My research answers the question: *What are the **emotional** experiences of non-Indigenous educators in Alberta who are teaching Indigenous curricula?* This is followed by the sub-question of: *How do non-Indigenous educators narrate the ways they experience the Alberta Education (2018b) Teaching Quality Standards which requires all educators to teach Indigenous curriculum "competently"?* These questions are what guided my research. I conducted this research with three non-Indigenous research partners, with myself as the fourth partner. This was another way in which my research represents **reconciliation** in action.

My research examines the **emotional** experiences of non-Indigenous educators who are teaching Indigenous curricula as a contribution to **reconciliation**. Non-Indigenous educators are required to teach Indigenous curricula according to the TQS (Alberta Education, 2018b). This requirement **hopes** to contribute to the TRCC (2105) calls to action regarding education in Canada. My research focuses on calls to action #62 and #63 which ask educators to teach Indigenous curricula with "intercultural understanding, **empathy**, [emphasis added] and mutual **respect**" [emphasis added] (TRCC, 2015).

It is important to note that even though there is a requirement for all educators to strive to meet this competency in teaching Indigenous curricula, there are many who do not. In one

instance I had a personal conversation with an educator who stated that they did not have to teach Indigenous topics because they were partnered with another teacher who fulfilled that requirement in the classroom for them. The TQS (Alberta Education, 2018b) and the LQS (Alberta Education, 2018a) are Ministerial orders, which means that there is a requirement by educators in Alberta to be adhered to.

In what follows I provide the broader context of my research, situating myself in relation to the topic as well as briefly describe how the research was designed/framed to help me reach towards **reconciliation**.

Indigenous Researcher

*I was born and raised on the concepts of **reconciliation**.*

Tanisi, hello, and welcome to my research. As a way of introduction allow me to situate myself and my research. I am a First Nations member of the Opaskwayak Cree Nation (OCN) in Treaty Five territory. As a sponsored student by OCN at the University of Calgary (UCalgary), I strive to represent my community and reserve to the best of my ability in everything that I do. I am a born and raised urban Indigenous Canadian. Although I have never lived on my reserve I have **deep, meaningful connections**, and relationships with my family on the reserve. This is largely due to and can be credited to my family who still live on OCN. My mother was born and raised on the reserve. She met my father who is Ukrainian while he was building highways through the area. She married my father and left the reserve before she was 20 years old. She, and they as a couple, did not have a choice in leaving. They married during the time when any treaty status woman automatically lost her status for marrying an individual who was not treaty. My mother was the only one among her family who experienced this, and it changed her life dramatically.

With the creation of Bill C-31 in 1985 my mother regained her status as a treaty Indian, which is also when I gained my treaty status (Assembly of First Nations, 2020). This does not make me any less Indigenous than someone who was born and raised on a reserve. I have never been treated as lesser than by my reserve or my OCN family. Although my mother lost her status as a treaty Indian, and band membership, she did not lose her connection to the reserve, or her family. As a result of this, the relationships I have within my reserve and family there, have affected and influenced my research in this doctoral program. This support of me and my research is apparent in the letter that I received during my education process (Appendix A). My relationships with immediate family history and treaty status are what help me ground my research towards **reconciliation**.

Embracing one's voice is inclusive of claiming one's identity. As a Cree Indigenous woman, who is also Ukrainian, my identity is not always weighed equally by myself as I continue to do research around Indigenous topics. I identify with both heritages equally outside of my research. Claiming my Indigenous identity has also meant that I must acknowledge my treaty status granted through repatriation of Indigenous women who had their status stripped from them, due to marriage. I also recognize and acknowledge that my First Nations heritage is what qualified me for treaty status, it has also facilitated my opportunities to achieve the level of education that I am at now. Sponsorship by my reserve is something that I **proudly** give credit to. As described in McLeod (2014) I am "Cree-ing loudly into my night,'…Cree-ing is the pronunciation of identity, an assertion that the speaker is connected to her people, to a way of life that is larger than herself" (p.32). In some ways I also **feel** that I am part of something that is larger than life, larger than my life. I am striving to live up to the expectations that others have of me. Graveline (1998) speaks about representation of self as follow:

> Through conceptual constructs like First Voice, we express our wish to invoke a society in which we each have opportunity to represent our own selves and our own cultures rather than falling into the appropriation of voice, experiences, art, and spirituality, which has become the unacknowledged but taken for granted basis of 'Western' culture. (p.120)

I am aware that my "First Voice" (Graveline, 1998) and how I use my voice is representative of an Indigenous woman conducting research within a Western academy of learning.

I find that it is important for me to clarify at this point that even though I am half Cree and half Ukrainian I do not identify as Métis. I was recently introduced as Métis/Cree by another person, who had not asked me prior to them introducing me if I did in fact identify myself in this way. I understand why there are some who are choosing to introduce themselves in this manner if they have a mixed heritage. I am not one of those people. I only identify as two heritages. I am of mixed heritage, but I am not Métis. I do this out of **respect** for the Métis People of Canada. I am a member of a numbered treaty reserve. I do not believe that if I applied to have membership in the Métis Nation of Alberta I would qualify. Much like treaty status there are certain qualifications that are required to be met to obtain Métis membership. This does not mean that I **disapprove** of those who choose to identify themselves with a Nation/Métis identity. The approach taken by me in that I expect all who come to be a part of my research will be walking at different places in the path of **reconciliation**, I view identity in the same way. If you are identifying yourself as a Nation/Métis, it is a personal choice you have made for what is best for you. I have made the choice to not include Métis in my identity. Having said this I cannot guarantee that my view on this will remain static. I am flexible and open-minded enough to recognize that I must meet others where they are and walk my own path and **stand strong** for myself and what I believe to be my **truth**.

When various Indigenous individuals come together, they bring with them their own teachings, culture, and traditions. As more Indigenous groups are represented within social settings it becomes necessary for Indigenous individuals to make it known who they are, what their background is, and what their teachings are. This can simply be accomplished by an individual stating what First Nations tribe they belong to, and if they are Métis status or Inuit. Identity politics is not something that I pay much attention to. When I say that I am Indigenous I follow it with the fact that I am treaty status. I believe that most people who have treaty status would not consider identity politics to be an issue because of the simple fact that we carry a card which identifies us by a reserve membership and assigned government number. We are very aware of how we are identified.

The silencing of other cultures is an occurrence that continues within the greater umbrella of Indigenous groups. Silencing of people from Indigenous to Indigenous also happens when a single culture is in the majority and their traditional teachings dominate and override those of other Indigenous people. Enforcing teaching and tradition of one Indigenous group over other Indigenous teaching silences the teachings and traditions of the group that is being dominated. Oppression does not always happen in a dominant/minority situation. It can be something as simple as telling someone who is Métis that they must follow Cree teaching, with no regard, or choice offered to the individual to opt out. These are situations which I strive very hard to always avoid.

I will conclude this section of my introduction with an overview of my background and experiences which bought me to be doing this research. At the point of writing this I am a wife and mother to four, stepmother to two, mother-in-law to two, and grandmother (Kookum) to three, with another grandchild on the way. I am an auntie, niece, cousin, and friend to many. My

life experiences have provided me with strength and fortitude to keep moving forward no matter the circumstances I find myself.

I grew up as the fifth child of six. I have experienced situations which included physical violence and growing up with the effects of alcoholism in the home. We were never homeless, and never without food. We were not wealthy and lived comfortably in the middle. By the time I was 15, I was no longer living with either of my parents. I was at the end of my eleventh year of school when I made the choice to not return and complete grade twelve. At the time I contributed to the statistics of Indigenous student drop-out rates. By the time I was 16, I was living in a different province, and city from that of my immediate family. At the age of 17, I was living alone in a small city. By the age of 18, I was married to my first spouse, whom I had known since the age of 13. I had my first child at age 19 and by the time I was 24 I had four children. I grew up young.

I stayed in a marriage that was not healthy for many years. My youngest was ten when I finally had the **courage** to live my life as a single mother. My first year as a single mother had me experiencing a women's shelter for the first time. In this first year of being single, I hit the limit of visits one is allowed to have at the food bank. Visits are limited to once per month. After you have reached the sixth month you must have a referral from an agency. In that first year I visited the food bank eight times, to keep my children fed and have a house to live in.

During this year I had the experience of attending the Thanksgiving dinner that was held every year by Indigenous actor, singer, and philanthropist Tom Jackson. I will never forget the experience of attending that dinner. My children and I were driven to a restaurant and served a full turkey dinner. Tom Jackson and his wife were present and visited every table. This act of **generosity** is one that has stayed with me. My children all received a new scarf and mittens at

the end of the night. It was in this year that we were a sponsored family for Christmas as well. My children were asked to provide wish lists of items that they all would like to have for Christmas. All four of them included a new pillow and blankets for their beds. I was already putting plans in place to return to school. I requested a new sweater that I could wear for school. It was during this time that the little things in life were luxuries. We received all that we had requested plus more. The gift cards for grocery stores carried me through well into the new year. I do not know who provided all that they did for my family. I never had the chance to express my **thankfulness** to any one specifically. I am now at the place in my life that I can begin to give back to others and pay forward those gifts that were sent my way when I needed them most.

It was during this time that I had experiences which made it necessary for me to fight for my life. My identity as a First Nations woman became a weapon for my life to be turned upside down. At one point I was going through three different court systems. I was testifying for physical **abuse** charges; I was testifying on behalf of myself to fight assault charges; and I was in court fighting child protective services. After a hospital visit the assault charges against me were withdrawn. Protections for me were continued to be put in place for five years. Child services were finally convinced that I was a **good mother** who was caring for her children. Reaching the point of getting past the effects that this all had on me, and my children was not easy, as anyone knows who may have had similar circumstances to overcome.

I do not relate my experiences for anyone to take **pity** on me or **feel sorry** for me. I would rather view my life experiences as those things that made me into what I am today. Life experiences that taught me to be **strong**, and hold my ground, and fight for what I believe in. It was during the time in my life when I was struggling to provide food for my children that I was forced to take account of my life, and where I was headed. It was at this point that I made the

decision to return to school and change my life. I returned to school in the fall of 2006. I met my current husband in the winter of 2007. The **love** and support he provided me were what carried me through in my commitment to follow through to this point in my education.

These experiences provided me with an identity that has served me well, as I have continued into what many call mid-life. I believe that I have just begun. My post-secondary education began after I had lived an already full life of raising my children. I have many more years of experiences to look forward to in this education journey.

Identity in Research

The expressed goal of my research is to contribute directly to **reconciliation** - as a personal, educational, and relational act. My research engages non-Indigenous educators who are teaching Indigenous topics via curricula because I believe that those who are teaching Indigenous curricula are **hoping** that their actions are also contributing to **reconciliation**. For this reason, I refer to participants as *research partners, partners in research, dialogue partners,* and *partners in dialogue* (I expand on the intentionality with this phrasing later in the thesis). This method of purposefully bringing together perspectives from non-Indigenous educators and myself, a First Nations researcher, acted as one layer of **reconciliation**. In other words, engaging my position as a First Nations researcher with varied relations to treaty status and OCN community presents possibilities for this research to be situated as Indigenous research, even though, as you will learn, I do not specifically take up an Indigenous methodology.

My research methodology is Narrative Inquiry (Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Duff & Bell, 2002; Estefan et al., 2016; Kim, 2016). I recognize that this is a Western way of conducting research. I have chosen narrative inquiry because I am **respecting** two aspects of my research that cannot be ignored. Those are: 1) I am enrolled in and conducting my research

within a Western institution, which means that at some level I have committed to a belief in the possibilities of learning about and conducting Western research; and 2) I conducted my research with non-Indigenous educators. The involvement of non-Indigenous research partners is key to my research topic, problem, purpose, and questions. I address why I have made this decision to focus on non-Indigenous educators' **emotional** experiences teaching Indigenous curricula in my Research Approach and Design chapter. That said, I must be considerate of their relationship to, and sense of belonging in my research. Some of my research partners engaged with a research project focusing on Indigenous content and relations for the first time. I wanted their level of comfort and willingness to participate to be influenced by the usage of a Western methodology whereas, they may have potentially felt intimidated or marginalized by an Indigenous research methodology. My purpose was to hear their stories and the **emotional** aspects involved in attempting to weave Indigenous curricula into their teaching. I wished to avoid insisting that they share their stories through methodologies that may be less familiar to them. In other words, my intention was to meet my research partners where they are, which is immersed in Western ways of knowing, being, and relating (Battiste, 2013), even as they may be learning more Indigenous sensibilities on their teaching Indigenous curricula journeys.

Two distinct ways of knowing exist when you are an Indigenous researcher within a Western academic system. Kanu and Glor (2006) discuss the power of stories in bringing together two unique ways of knowing:

> One cannot remain detached from the environment in which one examines oneself without entering into collaborative dialogue with others. This collaborative dialogue is predicated on what Noddings…has described as stories. Stories have the power to direct and change our lives…becomes powerful once one comes to an understanding that our

> stories need to be understood. The way that our stories begin to be understood is through conversation with others. (p.109)

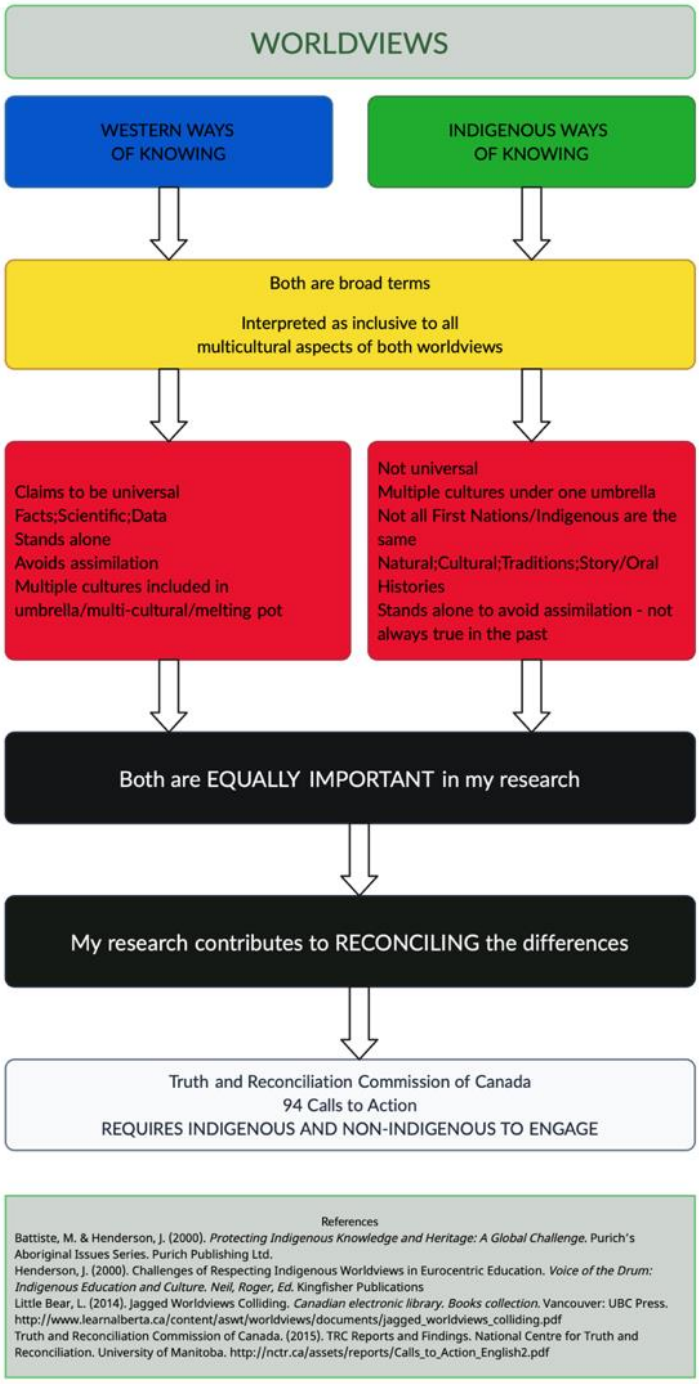
Stories are one way that different thought processes may come together in a mutual understanding. This is significant in that areas that **healing** may occur, with the use of storytelling. “Educational praxis ties into the idea of a transformational intellectual in that there is a movement towards not only writing autobiographical, reflexive narratives but also sharing such narratives with others” (Kanu & Glor, 2006, p.112). Differing worldviews came together through storytelling and personal reflection, within my research, which bought forth a **reconciliation** and mutual **respect**.

Even though I am utilizing a conventional Western methodological approach, I do want to be clear that I am grounding my research as Indigenous research; that is not to say that I am using an Indigenous research methodology, but instead I am engaging partners who teach Indigenous topics and I, myself am an Indigenous researcher. I qualify my research as Indigenous research on three levels - the “who”, the “what” and the “why” of the research: 1) I drew on my lived experiences as an Indigenous woman, which helps me to frame my interest in the research and how I engage in sense making; 2) The topic of the research being focused on Indigenous curricula; and 3) The express purpose of uplifting **reconciliatory** possibilities, in other words, the goal of relational accountability (S. Wilson, 2008). I do believe there is a distinct difference between research engaging Indigenous topics and that research being conducted under more rigid guidelines constituting Indigenous research methodologies. Ultimately you cannot remove the Indigeneity of the topic or the researcher’s identity regardless of the methodology.

To define and separate the concepts of two different worldviews engaged in this research, I created a diagram which can be seen in Figure 1. The diagram that I produced helped me to understand and articulate what I think of when I examine two worldviews. The colours in this diagram have been used to be in harmony with the colours of the Medicine Wheel diagrams which the reader will encounter throughout the remainder of this dissertation.

Figure 1

Worldviews



I present, in the context of my research, Western ways of knowing as a parallel worldview to Indigenous ways of knowing. Indigenous ways of knowing can then also be connected to Indigenous ways of doing, and Indigenous ways of being (S. Wilson, 2008). Indigenous knowledge encompasses all three of these. I created this diagram as a visual aid to ensure that I could explain how I differentiated the two worldviews. The diagram contains both worldviews, separates them, but acknowledges that both are needed in my specific research. These terms are interpreted in a cultural context for the purposes of my research. My research represents Western worldviews that are meant to benefit non-Indigenous people, and it also represents Indigenous worldviews that are meant to benefit Indigenous People.

Ethical connections in relationships are important when conducting any type of research because relationships have meaning and create changes in people just by their existence. “Two sides always enter into relationship such that both come away changed…only together do they reveal a meaning, only by altering one another do they become what they are – something much more than what they were before” (Weber, 2017, p. 32). This process of completing a narrative inquiry has produced a variety of relationship responsibilities for myself. It is my **hope** that these relationships continue and flourish after I have completed my degree. According to Justice (2018):

> To be a **good relative** [emphasis added], then, in whatever ways that might be realized, is to counter these exploitative forces and the stories that legitimize them, while at the same time affirming – or reaffirming – better, more generative, more generous ways to uphold our obligations and our commitments to our diverse and varied kin. (p.84)

So, narrative inquiry and the myriad of relationships involved always must be considered to ensure that my conduct and interactions with others involved are not marred. The intent must always to be a **positive force** in those lives you touch along the way.

My Indigeneity dictated how I conducted myself within the context of my research and interaction with others. It also informed how I make sense of the narrative data from the dialogue sessions with each research partner. I agree with S. Wilson (2008) when he stated that approaching your study with **proper motives**, a **good heart** and mind, and the intention to do only good as a result of your research (p. 60) opens the possibility of the research being named Indigenous, which is more expansive than what is becoming more rules-bound articulations of Indigenous research methodologies. S. Wilson (2008) also correctly points out that the reality of Indigenous research lies within the lived experiences of Indigenous researchers who ground their research in the lives of real people and not ideas (p. 60). While there are politics, ethics, and relational accountability (S. Wilson, 2008) to be considered, I wanted to engage a more expansive world of possibility for the kinds of research conducted by Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers as we work towards **reconciliation** (Archibald, 2008; Datta, 2017). I believe I have done this with my research.

An example of an alternative positionality in relation to researcher identity and research methodology has been conducted by Kerr and Ferguson (2020), two non-Indigenous researchers. In this study, self-identified Euro-descendant researchers focused on teacher candidates in an education program at the University of Winnipeg. Like my approach, their research participants were all from "White, Euro-descendent settler ethnicities" (Kerr & Ferguson, 2020, p. 2). Their work explicitly **hoped** to offer ways to "transcend dualisms" between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, what I consider efforts towards **reconciliation** (p. 1). They based their study

on the principles of Donald's (2009b, 2011) ethical relationality, and Archibald's (2008) Indigenous Storyworks (see, for example, Kerr & Ferguson's description on p. 2). Studies such as this show an example of how non-Indigenous researchers have successfully explored this topic. Another work that shows how the work towards **reconciliation** can manifest itself is in the study conducted by McDermott et al. (2021) which bought together both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers. McDermott et al. (2021) shows an example of how researchers worked together and in "parallel paths" (p. 27) towards engaging Indigenous teaching and research with their participants who were also both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. Kerr and Ferguson (2020) and McDermott et al. (2021) recognized, as I do, that the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people must be strong to do this type of **reconciliatory** work. The focus on relationships within narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) is another reason I designed my research in the fashion that I did.

I am already engaged in a combined Indigenous and Western worldview by being Indigenous, enrolled in a Western university, completing a Westernized degree program, conducting a research topic that combines both First Nations and non-Indigenous viewpoints. Additionally, I am completing the process of a written dissertation which includes Westernized components such as a literature review (S. Wilson, 2008). My research will be concluded by successfully defending my final written dissertation. None of this will be accomplished without my Indigeneity playing a critical role throughout the process. Readers might be wondering why I have spent these last few pages rationalizing my decision to name my research as Indigenous while taking up Narrative Inquiry. I believe this to be important as an introduction to my research because it speaks to the overall sensibility of **reconciliation**, and expanding the roles and methods assigned to different people through common sense and repeated taxonomies. I

believe we must change and expand the stories of identity and belonging, so that we can face each other beyond the limiting categories that keep us separated, as we move towards **reconciliation** - this includes purposeful research methodology approach and design decisions that embody fidelity.

Reconciliation: Changing Relationship

My research is based on **reconciliation** as a concept. I must examine what the word **reconciliation** means, to me. I cannot provide a definition that applies to each individual reader of my dissertation and research. I can only apply to my writing what my understanding is of what the definition of **reconciliation** is to myself.

The word **reconciliation** comes from the word reconcile. In order to reconcile there must be two sides, there must be two different opinions, or differing point of views. Within my research the context of **reconciliation** is meant to represent the side of Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people. How one reads my dissertation will depend on what side of these two differences in defined cultures they represent.

In my thinking about defining the word and the concept of **reconciliation** I reflect on what it means to walk in both worlds. This concept of walking in both worlds was expressed eloquently by Little Bear (2000). As I pondered what it means in the context of my research and how to define the **reconciling** of differences, of two worlds I realized that because of my heritage and the fact that I constantly do walk in both worlds of being both Indigenous and non-Indigenous may help me to better see the middle ground that I stand on.

To **reconcile** differences, they must exist. In order for there to be a **reconciliation** process that does not mean that the differences of one side or the other are erased or negated in anyway. In other words, in the context of my research, to **reconcile** Indigenous people and non-

Indigenous People does not mean that the differences between the two groups are erased or taken away in any way. In doing my analysis of **reconciliation** and what it means to me and my research I understand that to **reconcile** differences and contribute to **reconciliation** requires a better understanding of what both sides represent. A person who is not Indigenous can never have a full understanding of what it is to be Indigenous, and vice versa. To recognize and accept the differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people is what I would like my research to continue to do even after it is written. But even more so, I **hope** that my research will continue to contribute to the **reconciliation** process and change relationships.

As an Indigenous person who also has some non-Indigenous heritage (remember, my father was Ukrainian), I had to reconcile the part of me that I was putting forth and representing as myself in this research project. By putting forward and identifying myself as an Indigenous researcher and partner, I did not want the reader to forget my Ukrainian/father's roots. Putting myself forward as Indigenous does not cancel or remove any parts of my non-Indigenous culture and heritage. In my desire to offer a bridge in my presentation of both sides of my culture and heritage and how I was raised I have never used the terms "settler" or "colonizer" when referring to any non-Indigenous person or groups of people. Going forward I will stay true to what I view as being terms that should be used when referring to non-Indigenous people. Because of the way I was raised I have always viewed using these terms as being **negative** and contributing to **divisiveness** between two cultures. This is my personal testimony and does not necessarily reflect the viewpoint of others involved in my research, or those who are reading this dissertation.

The Desire to Reconcile

There are many interpretations of the word **reconciliation**. For example, to the Truth and **Reconciliation** Commission, "**reconciliation** is about establishing and maintaining a mutually **respectful** relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country" (TRCC, 2015, p. 3). I have had to ask myself, as a First Nations individual how I relate to it in the context of my research. There was a balancing act of ensuring both sides were heard equally in my research which followed me through the research process. This is also a contributing factor in how I view the concept of **reconciliation**. I have stated vocally and in writing that I believe that **reconciliation** is an action word, that requires reciprocity from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Without a contribution from both sides of the equation, **reconciliation** can never be fully realized. I spoke to this idea in the writing above in the Papal **apology**. This carries through to the remainder of my research. The intention in conducting my research is to manifest **reconciliation** in action. I have conducted my research through the living, active interpretation of **reconciliation**. It is my **hope** that **reconciliation** can be seen in all aspects of my research.

Relationship is an important aspect to allowing Indigenous voices **feel** that they are safe to express themselves. According to Sameshima and Leggo (2013) "the cultural value and integrity of education must be to assist human physical, intellectual, and **emotional** unfolding. We need to pay more attention to the latter. We need to educate on the spelling of **love**. We need to learn how to be together" (p.90). There can only be reciprocity if we create an environment that **nurtures** this type of relationship.

The concept of **reconciliation** applies to reciprocity and relationships, as both are needed for **reconciliation** to occur. There may be less discussion of recommendations as more years

pass since the TRCC (2015) report was released and included 96 calls to action (TRCC, 2015) that should influence education and curriculum among other things. The TRCC (2015) specifically addresses education and the educator's relationship with Indigenous students in call to action #63. This call to action requires that educators "[build] student capacity for intercultural understanding, **empathy**, and mutual **respect**" (TRCC, 2015). This acknowledgement of teaching about the lasting effects of residential schools can be found in many writings. Cook (2016) is one example of this:

> Regan, the Research Director of the Canadian Truth and **Reconciliation** Commission sees…the creation of the TRCC as uncovering an uncomfortable 'historical amnesia' of the IRS [Indian Residential Schools] by a non-native audience, and that this amnesia reveals the 'continuing complicity in denying, erasing, and forgetting this part of our own history…she thus exposes the pressing need to decolonize the way non-Natives *hear* the voices of IRS survivors in such a way that can affectively **disturb** the fiction of Canada as a peacekeeping country that **respects** human rights. (p.71)

The teaching of Indigenous history must include the **good** with the **bad**. To eliminate any part of this history would be similar to silencing individual voice because you **do not like** what is being said, or it makes you **uncomfortable**. "Resistance to making Aboriginal content and perspectives in schools 'real' is similarly positioned when there is pressure being applied to avoid teaching '**difficult** knowledge' so that the image of Canada as fair and just country can be preserved" (St. Denis, 2011, p.315). Teaching and education of Indigenous topics must create and **nurture** a reciprocal relationship with Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators. In order for non-Indigenous educators to have a **good** understanding and create **empathy** with what they are learning and in turn teaching to students, there must be mutual **respect**.

Indigenous students need to be **nurtured,** and not treated as lesser than anyone. They do not need to be saved. They are not at a deficit because of their culture. Educators owe it to their students to view them as whole, capable of expressing themselves competently. They need to be **nurtured** and allowed to grow as equals to non-Indigenous students. Cultural differences do not affect their capability of learning as individuals. As noted by Sameshima and Leggo (2013):

> *Pedagogically teachers cannot view students as wounded, filled with holes of deficiency. I think many of us imagine the teacher as* ***healer****, saving the lost. Raising the students to whatever is deemed 'par', pouring curriculum into the holes. We have to conceive of the students as already whole, full of experience, buoyant, splashing around in* ***joy****, in* ***love-filled*** *water.* ***Lovingly*** *bombarded by every 'bodies' trace on the words in the water and* ***feel*** *the belonging through responsibility and polite obligation to those near us*. [emphasis added by author] (p. 95)

Indigenous students recognize that they do not need to be saved. They also know that the history of residential schools, and the elimination of aspects of language and culture was an intention to save them - from themselves. Indigenous People are not projects to be worked on or fixed. Educators must assume that Indigenous students are capable of learning, and are functioning academically, at the same level as others.

Ethical Considerations When Writing with Indigenous Topics

I draw upon the writings of Younging (2018) and S. Wilson (2008) to introduce key ethical considerations around writing about Indigenous topics. Younging (2018) *Elements of Indigenous Style: A Guide for Writing by and About Indigenous Peoples*, is a small but impactful handbook style of writing guide. Younging (2018) has written this guide inclusive of Indigenous and non-Indigenous authors who are aware of the complications that may arise from writing

about Indigenous topics. As a First Nations researcher I am trying to be cognizant of all the ethical and cultural concerns that can be included in Indigenous writing and research. I am not immune to the perils of misrepresentation of Indigenous topics and cultural aspects that it represents. Some of the perils that Younging (2018) includes in his writing are knowing where Indigenous information comes from, following proper Indigenous protocols, observing **respect** for Elders, and recognizing the importance of relationship. One of the ways in which I did this throughout this research process was being in constant communication with OCN and my academic advisor there. Younging (2018) also includes a brief history of Indigenous People in literature, cultural appropriate practices, and Indigenous cultural realities. While I considered the suggestions and history presented by Younging (2018) to guide my writing, you may sense that there are also connections that can be made with regards to teaching Indigenous curricula.

The second text included in this section is *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* (S. Wilson, 2008). S. Wilson (2008) focuses his writing on Indigenous research design which also validates my research being Indigenous in content, but not in methodology. Similar to how Younging's (2018) call for a considered approach to writing around Indigenous topics guided my writing, S. Wilson's (2008) inclusion of a reorientation to elements of research, research design paradigms, and relationality, shaped my research process (inclusive of the writing). The ability to include this writing within my research process contains a personal aspect. Shawn Wilson and I are members of the same reserve in northern Manitoba, the Opaskwayak Cree Nation. Gregory Younging was also a member of OCN before he passed. Shawn and Gregory serve as examples to the community and give **hope** to researchers like me that I can and will be successful in my education journey. Like them, I am giving acknowledgements to my reserve and the Opaskwayak Education Authority for the support that

they have provided to me. This support has included sponsorship as a student. More importantly it has allowed me to pursue this level of education. I have access to information, resources, and feedback; I also have an accountability relationship with my reserve that ensures I represent them as a group in the best way possible. My research is just one reflection of this and will contribute to existing Indigenous research.

Both authors (S. Wilson, 2001, 2008; Younging, 2018) included in this section have provided Indigenous and non-Indigenous writers a place to meet and learn in a reciprocal fashion that contributes to the act of **reconciliation**. This meeting place, this invitation, as presented in Younging (2018) and S. Wilson (2008), echoes the broader goals of my proposed research towards **reconciliation**. As I move through the research I will be purposefully contributing to this type of writing, particularly from the perspective of a First Nations author.

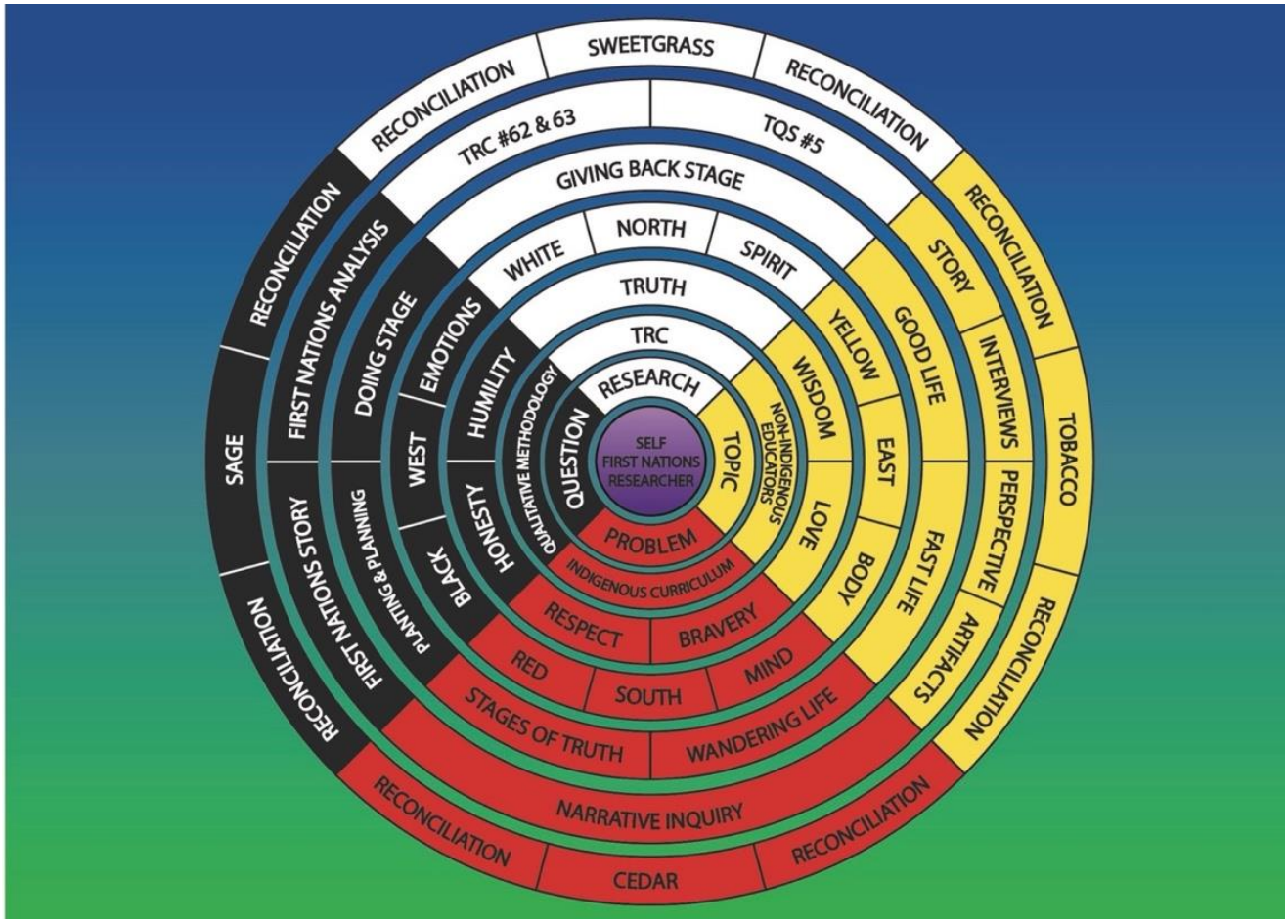
Regardless of whether the literature is written by an Indigenous or non-Indigenous author the goal of both is to bring together two worlds so that they may walk together in harmony. These authors all have an inclusive intent and **spirit** in their writing - to benefit everyone who reads and uses their works.

Chapter 2: Research in a Medicine Wheel: A Guiding Framework

In the process of conceptualizing my research I created a Research in a Medicine Wheel which is seen in Figure 2. This visual incorporates all aspects of my research. One might read this chapter, then, as an ontological conceptual/theoretical framework - the Medicine Wheel becoming a container that could hold the complexities as we move towards ***reconciliation***. In addition to grounding my Research in a Medicine Wheel (Figure 2) this visual is an all-encompassing inclusion of mine and my partners experiences in this research process, which can be seen in the Research in a Medicine Wheel: Final Diagram (Figure 23). This Medicine Wheel incorporates the teachings of my Cree heritage and teachings from Elders on my reserve. Other Indigenous groups may not have the same teachings as Cree people do. There may also be differences in teachings between Cree groups. This is one way in which it is evident that Indigenous People are not monolith and should not be treated as such. In addition, I have incorporated information from the Best Start Resource Centre (2010) on teachings such as the Seven Stages of Life and the Life Cycle because they view Indigenous knowledge through a strengths-based approach.

Figure 2

Research in a Medicine Wheel



The creation and use of this Medicine Wheel (Figure 2) are another way to help identify this narrative inquiry as being conducted by a First Nations researcher, which is distinctive to me and my identity and experiences as a Cree person. The influence of my Indigenous worldview will **hopefully** be visible to others through this representation. I have incorporated the **emotional** experiences of research partners, my personal experiences, how they are similar, and how they may differ. The choices I made as to what to include and omit from the Medicine Wheel (Figure 2) varied throughout my research journey. The ideas represented in this diagram help capture

how I have approached my research and what I incorporated into my process to help keep me grounded. The diagram was a living and dynamic part of the research process. Upon the conclusion of my research and dissertation writing this Medicine Wheel (Figure 2) has gone through a series of changes. The final results of those changes are shown in the final chapter with the figure Research in a Medicine Wheel: Final Design (Figure 23). The progression shown of the design of the Medicine Wheel (Figures 2-9; Figures 18-23) is another way in which I illustrated the evolution and **emotional effects** that this process has had on myself and my partners.

I have chosen the framework of my research to be incorporated into a Medicine Wheel because it is a symbol of **healing** in many Indigenous cultures, including my own. For me, it represents the fundamentals of what is needed for **reconciliation** to be manifested. The various Indigenous components and cultural references that are included, such as the colours and what they represent, seven sacred teachings, and seven directions, are easily understood regardless of whether you are Indigenous or not. I have used the word "circle" to refer to the individual levels of the Medicine Wheel because they represent the never-ending circle of life. If the space were removed between each circle, the whole would take the traditional form of a Medicine Wheel. The following section includes the diagram and a detailed explanation of what each circle and section represent in my research with accompanying visual representation (Figures 2-9). Each circle is individually explained, including why I have positioned each component within each section and quadrant.

This Medicine Wheel journey for this project begins in the centre of the circle. The foundation of this diagram is my research, and therefore I have placed myself in the centre circle; this is why I open the research by positioning myself and my relations. This circle is coloured

purple to coincide with the first of the seven colours of the Medicine Wheel. My identity as a First Nations researcher is also included within this centre, which contributes to the purpose of my research and the lens through which I am viewing all aspects of it. My identity, who I am, including all my experiences as a First Nations woman, is how I situate myself within the research, rather than identifying myself in a particular place or location. I do this, in part, because of my complex family relations with OCN and historically who gets to decide who is "Indian enough". I have faced this question many times as an off-reserve member who has always been considered urban Indigenous and considered by some to be not fully Indigenous. I recognize the importance of place in Indigenous ways of knowing, being, doing, and relating (Kovach, 2009). I did not remain static in my location while conducting my research dialogues with partners online, they also were not required to be in Calgary which expands the "places" of importance in the research. As a note of reference, completion of the research process and locations of me and the research partners included numbered treaty territories five, six, seven, and eight. Regardless of the place(s) where my research partners teach Indigenous curricula within Alberta, my research is oriented towards inclusivity, with a strengths-based approach. My definition of inclusivity as it relates to my research indicates the involvement of both Indigenous researcher and non-Indigenous educators working together as a means of creating an inclusive and **welcoming** environment in the act of **reconciliation**.

Moving from situating myself at the center, I now provide an overview of the design of the Medicine Wheel itself as my conceptual and theoretical framework. I have written more about the presentation of conceptual and theoretical framework in the Literature Review chapter of this dissertation, where I have presented other authors such as Mashford-Pringle (2017), Wenger-Nabigon (2010), and Lavallee (2007) who have successfully used Medicine Wheel

concepts within their own research. The ways in which these authors (Mashford-Pringle 2017; Wenger-Nabigon 2010; and Lavallee 2007) all used the Medicine Wheel in their projects is different than my use, which shows how diverse Indigenous symbols are and how their usage can be changed; they are not always static. This can be seen in how the colours of the Medicine Wheel can differ, as one example. The Medicine Wheel is a symbol of **healing** within many Indigenous teachings, including those of my home reserve, OCN. The quadrants contain a variety of representations within them. The four directions are included in the circle. The up, down, and centre make up the remainder of the seven aspects of the directions of a Medicine Wheel.

The seven directions are each represented by one of the seven colours of the Medicine Wheel. The centre, as discussed earlier, is coloured purple and represents me as the researcher. Throughout the duration of conducting the research and writing for this degree, I attended three online Cree speaking classes, conducted through OCN, with Elders and teachers, Robert Ross and Edith Spence, and Shirley Cook. I was privileged to attend all of these classes as they were offered only to student members of OCN. As a part of the first class, we discussed the Medicine Wheel, seven sacred teachings, four sacred medicines, and seven directions. In relation to the seven directions the teacher taught us that *all* lies in each direction. As I have been taught, individuals always place themselves in the centre of the seven directions and are in constant contact with *all* that is. Staying true to this teaching I have placed myself at the centre of the Medicine Wheel (Figure 2).

The four quadrants are comprised of the most commonly used colours of the Medicine Wheel: yellow, red, black, and white. Some Cree teachings will use blue instead of black, however, I have chosen to use the more commonly recognised colours of the quadrants of

Medicine Wheel. In the Cree speaking class that I attended the colours of the Medicine Wheel were taught as yellow, red, black, and white, to represent the directions and all people on earth. The up and down directions in my Medicine Wheel diagram are represented by the colours of blue and green, to represent sky above, and earth below. I have included them as a gradient colour that blends in the middle of my background. I designed this in a way that it would be a representation of the blending of the two colours instead of a separation. The colours also are a blending of the background to fill in the spaces that are between the circles of the layers of the Medicine Wheel. This provides the viewer with a more blended representation instead of a distinct separation of colours. This blending is meant to contribute to how the concepts I am presenting within the wheel also have connections and are woven together instead of separate entities.

First and Second Circles

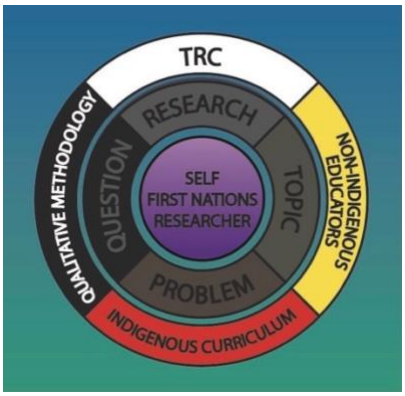
The first and second circles (Figure 3; Figure 4) each represent four aspects that I address within my research. These aspects surround me directly and are positioned within the quadrants they are to coincide with other aspects of my research. Beginning in the east quadrant, according to Cree teaching, the ‘topic’ (Figure 3) is positioned in this quadrant along with the ‘non-Indigenous educators’ in the second circle (Figure 4). The non-Indigenous educators were the first aspect that I considered at the conception of my research. They are the basis of my topic and where my research begins. It is important to note that my research partners did not see the Medicine Wheel design before, during, or after my interactions with them in the dialogue sessions, but I would not have been able to move forward or complete the Research in a Medicine Wheel (Figure 2) concepts without the participation of non-Indigenous educators.

Figure 3:

Four Aspects of Research Broadly Conceptualized

Figure 4:

Four Aspects of Research Specific to this Research



The second quadrant to the south moving clockwise, represents my 'problem' of my research in the first circle (Figure 3) and 'Indigenous curriculum' in the second circle (Figure 4). The research problem of my narrative inquiry is to present the **emotional** experiences of non-Indigenous educators. This representation is done through their personal stories. The second circle (Figure 4) in this quadrant represents Indigenous curriculum. The **emotional** experiences

that are presented by the non-Indigenous educators are related to how they engage Indigenous curriculum.

The third quadrant to the west represents the ‘question’ of my research in the first circle (Figure 3), and ‘qualitative methodology’ in the second circle (Figure 4). The research question asked of non-Indigenous educators was presented to them as a broad topic that allowed them to express, through story, their **emotional** experiences. By conducting a qualitative methodology, the expressions of the non-Indigenous partners were not coded into ratings or numbers. In vivo coding (Miles et al., 2020) was used to show how they express their **emotions,** their point of view, and their stories.

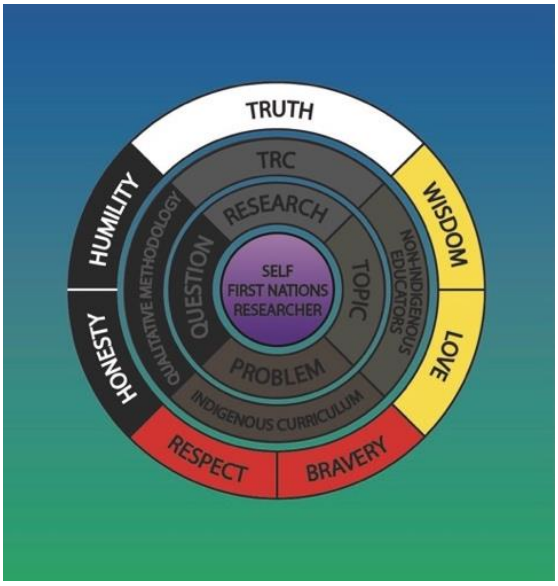
The fourth quadrant situated in the north represents my ‘research’ in the first circle (Figure 3) and the TRCC (2015), in the second circle (Figure 4). My research is based on the concept of **reconciliation** and therefore is directly connected to the TRCC (2015) report and its recommendations.

Third Circle

Moving from the centre outward, the third circle (Figure 5) represents the seven sacred teachings. Unlike the teaching of the seven directions, the seven sacred teachings begin in the north quadrant, with the concept of truth. This teaching aligns with other components of the circles in that the direction around the circle moves clockwise.

Figure 5

The Seven Sacred Teachings



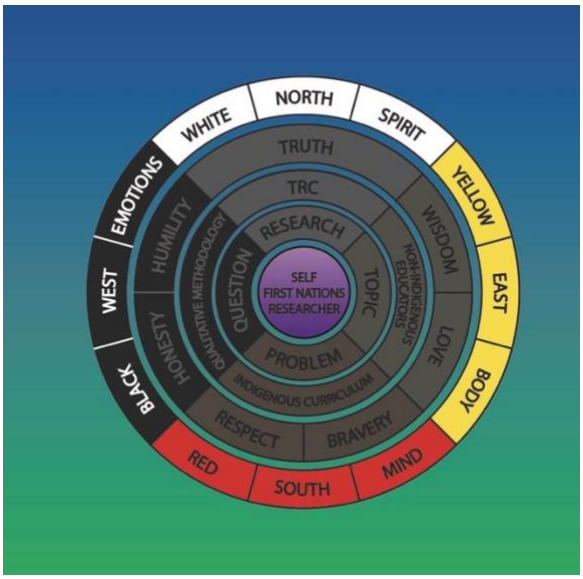
This circle reinforces my research being based on the TRCC (2015) and concepts surrounding **reconciliation**, which are in circle two (Figure 4). Moving to the next quadrant, in the east, the sacred teachings of wisdom and **love** fall into this yellow section. Both of these are reminders of how I approached my research and the non-Indigenous partners that I engaged with throughout the process. Travelling south on the third circle brings us to the sacred teachings of **bravery** and **respect**. This quadrant also correlates with Indigenous curriculum that non-Indigenous educators may access as resources. The concept of **respect** is at the forefront when interacting with Indigenous People I have encountered and Indigenous curriculum. I did not know in advance the various types of Indigenous curriculum that would be presented in the stories that the research partners shared. The final two sacred teachings are located in the west. It follows the methodology section in that it reminded me to be both honest and have **humility** in my interaction with non-Indigenous educators that I encountered during my research process.

Fourth Circle

The next circle and its contents were placed in this position because it is the middle circle (Figure 6) when counting both from the outside in and to the centre out, in this version of the Medicine Wheel. It is no longer the middle circle in the final version (Figure 23) which is found in the conclusion chapter of this thesis.

Figure 6:

Four Directions, Colours, and Aspects of Being



This circle represents the four quadrants (east, south, west, north) of the Medicine Wheel and their corresponding colours (yellow, red, black, white). The colours, quadrants, and the direction around the wheel is similarly taught by a variety of Indigenous groups. However, this is not always the case, and other Indigenous teachings may not necessarily align with the presentation and interpretation I have presented with my Medicine Wheel creation. This is especially true in the way that I have incorporated aspects of my research within the diagram.

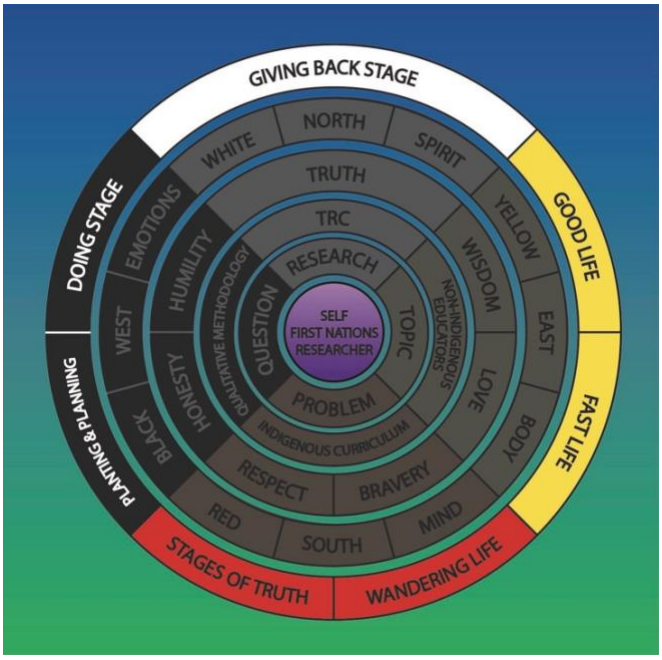
The Medicine Wheel begins in the east which is yellow. Moving clockwise around the circle the south is red. The west quadrant is black, and the final quadrant to the north is white. Within these quadrants, aligned with the colours of different people, I placed the four parts of one's being: *body, mind, **emotion**, and spirit,* to speak to the relations between individual and community/culture. My research encompasses all four aspects of being: *physical* participation as researcher and research partner; the *mind* and contribution to knowledge by myself as First Nations researcher, and research partners as non-Indigenous educators; ***emotionally*** my commitment and **caring** about my research and how I interact with non-Indigenous research partners which was valuable in completing a successful research project, as well as the **emotional** focus on the experiences of non-Indigenous educators teaching Indigenous curriculum; the *spirit* is represented by conducting my research in the **spirit of reconciliation**. This circle in the Medicine Wheel is the balance of all my research and how all other aspects interact and connect with each other.

Fifth Circle

The fifth circle (Figure 7) contains the seven phases of life. Life begins with birth and proceeds through the stages of aging and gaining wisdom and knowledge. The initial phase is located in the east quadrant once again. The first two stages are early life stages. The beginning stages of my research are represented in this quadrant. The birth of what I wanted to research was formulated in this stage. This included deciding who, and what my research would encompass. The sacred teachings of wisdom and **love** guided my thought process, ensuring that my research would be a strengths-based approach that would **hopefully** result in a **positive** influence.

Figure 7

The Seven Phases of Life



The next quadrant to the south, as both reader and researcher travel around the circle, contains the next life phases. The wandering life and stages of truth represent the processes I had to go through to bring a maturity to my research in establishing it. Moving into the west quadrant of the Medicine Wheel brings the next two phases of my research process. The planting and planning stages are combined with the doing stage. This is the final stage of conducting my research and moving into the writing of my dissertation. Only by moving forward into these phases was I able to accomplish a successful research project that offers insights into the **emotional** experiences of non-Indigenous educators teaching Indigenous curriculum.

The final phase and the only one located in the north quadrant of the Medicine Wheel is the giving back phase. In life this is the Elder's phase because they have gained wisdom enough to be an Elder. My research will reach this stage when I am finished this degree program and

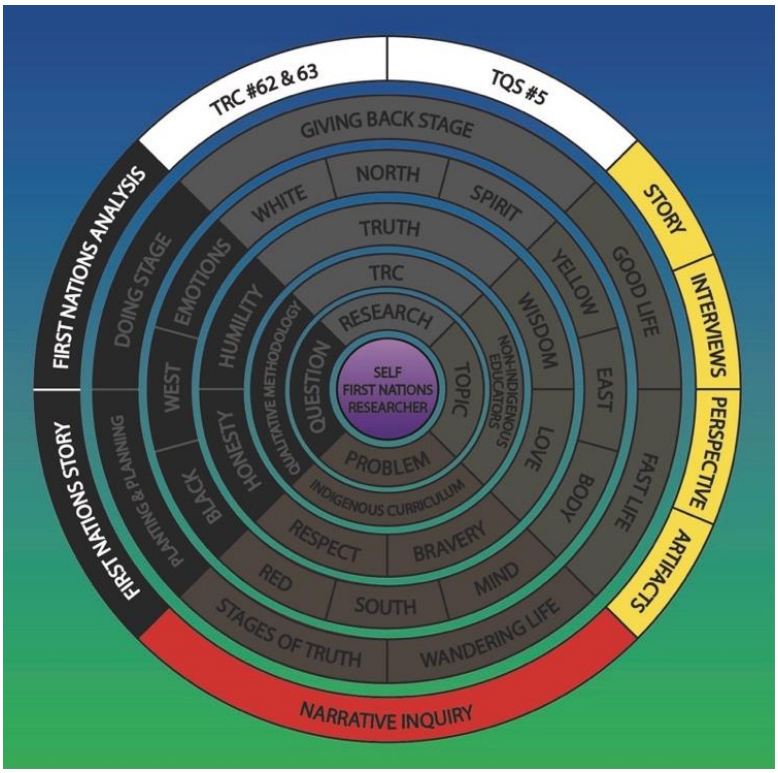
have written and defended my dissertation. My research will be my giving back in commitment to **reconciliation** as action. It will be a testament to the support I have been given throughout my education journey. It will be a giving back to my husband, family, friends, professors, supervisor, and OCN community. I have **hope** that it will be a contribution to **reconciliation** to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

Sixth Circle

The final circle that pertains directly to my research is the sixth (Figure 8). This circle contains all the aspects that I needed to employ and include for my research to be conducted successfully.

Figure 8

Methods, Data Collection, and Analysis of my Research



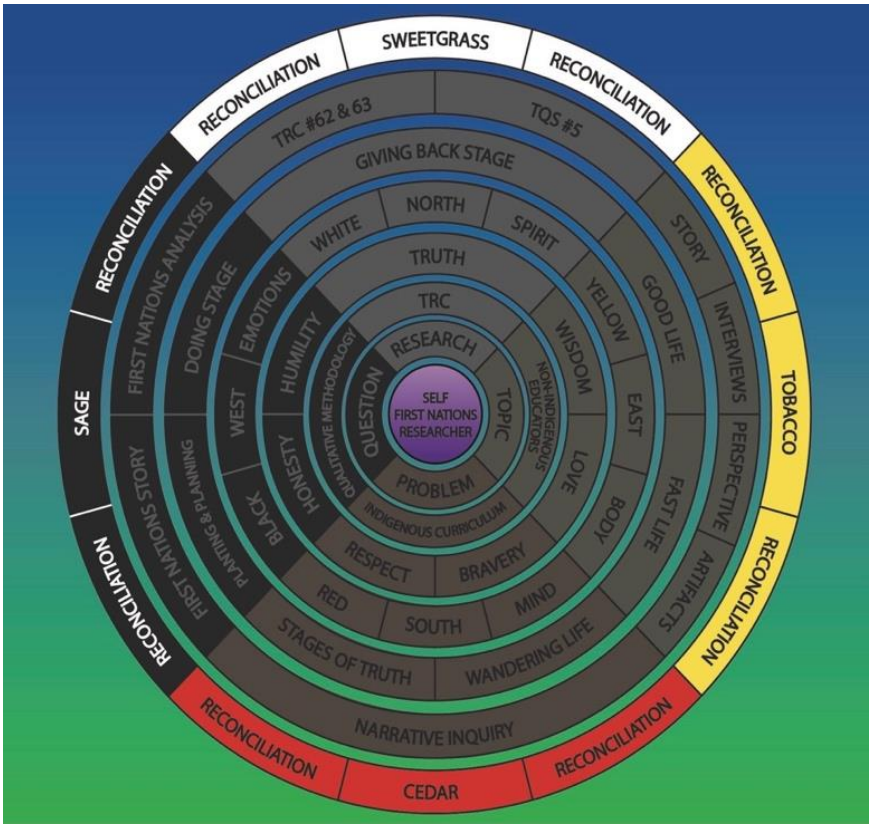
Beginning again in the east quadrant I have placed non-Indigenous educators' contribution to my research: story, dialogue sessions, **emotional experiences**, and artifacts. In the final results of conducting the data gathering process there were no artifacts presented for my research. This did not change the outcome of the data gathering and analysis stages. The second quadrant to the south is the narrative inquiry aspect of my research. This is my chosen method of conducting my research with the non-Indigenous research partners. The west quadrant is directly opposite the non-Indigenous contribution in the east quadrant. This section of the circle represents my personal contribution to my research in the form of my First Nations reflection, story, and analysis. The final quadrant of this circle to the north contains the two main influences of my research; the TRCC (2015) calls to action #62 and #63 refer to education; and the TQS (Alberta Education, 2018b) Competency 5 places professional practice standards for Alberta educators to include Indigenous aspects in their teaching curriculum.

Final Circle in Early Research Stages

The final circle (Figure 9) that encompasses the Medicine Wheel, at the time of framing my research, is representative of **healing** and cleansing.

Figure 9:

Healing, Cleansing, and Reconciliation



The east quadrant is where the first earth element of a smudge is located. Tobacco is placed in the centre of this section of the circle. The south quadrant contains the second earth element of a smudge, with cedar placed here. The west quadrant contains the third earth element, sage. The north quadrant contains the fourth earth element, sweetgrass. These four elements are also the four sacred grasses. The other three components of the smudge are: the shell, which represents water; the flame representing fire; and smoke representing air. Incorporating the four sacred grasses into my Medicine Wheel provides a cleansing aspect to my research process. I placed **reconciliation** on either side of the sacred grasses to provide balance to the entire outer

circle. This shows the importance that the concept of **reconciliation** holds in all my actions and interactions throughout my research process.

As the Medicine Wheel that I created helps to visualize and ground **reconciliation** in action through this research, it is my **hope** that by sharing the stories of non-Indigenous educators' **emotional** experiences teaching Indigenous curriculum will invite others into the work of **reconciliation**.

Now that I have addressed who I am and provided the reader with some context of what my research foundations are, I will move into the literature that applies to the areas of research regarding **reconciliation**, narrative inquiry, Indigenous curricula, Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations, to name a few.

Chapter 3: Situating the Research in the Governing Literature

When I began writing this dissertation, I **struggled** with adhering to what is considered the 'norm' in academic writing, which requires and/or demands that a dissertation have a literature review chapter. As stated by S. Wilson (2008) "the academic audience that requires a literature review is in itself the context for and which it is written" (p. 43). As I have previously stated I am working within a Western context but applying an Indigenous orientation because I am a First Nations academic. Although I am incorporating an Indigenous perspective on my research I remain as a First Nations researcher conducting a narrative inquiry. **Reconciling** the two different approaches to academic writing allowed me to present what is expected within a dissertation in the form of a literature review chapter. S. Wilson's (2008) words guided my approach to the following review of the literature: "Doing a literature review can be seen as the culturally relevant way to communicate with dominant system academics…by doing the review in a style that is not critical, but builds upon the work of others, it can also form the context for relational accountability" (p. 44). As such, my emphasis is less on seeking differences and demarcations between scholars' approaches to the topics of interest in my research and more on bringing voices together.

As indicated, the topic of my research is studying the **emotional** experiences of non-Indigenous educators teaching Indigenous curricula to create **reconciliation** in action. I conducted my research through a narrative inquiry methodology which includes the stories of non-Indigenous research partners plus my own First Nations story. In other words, it examined non-Indigenous educators' **emotional** experiences regarding teaching Indigenous curricula storied with my lived experience and **emotional** reflections as a First Nations person. This research is important as it is topical and timely with the TRCC (2015) report stating the

important role of education in working towards **reconciliation**: "History plays an important role in **reconciliation**; to build for the future, Canadians must look to, and learn from, the past" (p. 8).

Changes to the professional practice standards in the TQS (Alberta Education, 2018b) and *Leadership Quality Standard* (Alberta Education, 2018a) (LQS) followed the release of the TRCC (2015) final report and have contributed to an increase in studies within the realm of Indigenous education. The final report of the TRCC (2015) states:

> Schools must teach history in ways that foster mutual **respect, empathy**, and engagement. All Canadian children and youth deserve to know Canada's honest history, including what happened in the residential schools, and to **appreciate** the rich history and knowledge of Indigenous nations who continue to make such a strong contribution to Canada, including our very name and collective identity as a country. For Canadians from all walks of life, **reconciliation** offers a new way of living together. (p. 21)

The changes made to the professional practice standards affects teachers within Alberta and guides them in knowing and teaching of Indigenous curricula. Specifically, the TQS (Alberta Education, 2018b) and LQS (Alberta Education, 2018a) are Ministerial orders which request Alberta educators to be "applying foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit for the benefit of all students" (Alberta Education, 2018b, p. 6), with similar emphasis focusing on the leaders' role in the LQS (Alberta Education, 2018a). This literature review explores a selection of publications that help to situate the topic of non-Indigenous educators' experiences while interacting with Indigenous curricula.

Prior to the TRCC (2015) final report and recommendations there was already a shift occurring in how Indigenous curricula was viewed in education. While not naming it

specifically as "**reconciliation**" the concepts that authors presented prior to 2015 share the same, or similar, ideas which I will be drawing on throughout this literature review (Battiste, 2000, 2005; L. Cardinal, 2001; Dion, 2007; Ermine, 2007; Kovach, 2017; Ottmann [with Pritchard], 2010; St. Denis, 2007, 2011). Authors such as Battiste (2013) emphasised in her writing the importance of the inclusion of Indigenous voice in education systems (p. 66). This inclusion spoke to the concept of **reconciliation** before the term became more widely used in academia. When reviewing the literature, one can note the release of the TRCC (2015) final report has prompted a specificity of naming education as a part of **reconciliation**.

I gathered literature based on two key topics of research: Indigenous curricula and non-Indigenous educators, keeping in mind that each book and/or article could fall into more than one category. For instance, much of my literature falls into both Indigenous and non-Indigenous categories. In Canada, we are unique in that we have the TRCC (2015) final report, which reviews the effects of students who attended the residential school system. This TRCC (2015) report also contains recommendations within which directly influence many of the scholars who are referenced for this research. I have included literature in this review written by Canadian (Battiste, 2000, 2005, 2013; L. Cardinal, 2001; Kovach, 2010; Ottmann [with Pritchard], 2010; St. Denis, 2007, 2011; S. Wilson, 2001, 2008), United States (Brayboy, 2000; Cajete, 1993; Delpit, 1995; Guskey, 2009), Australian and New Zealand (May & Aikman, 2003; Smith, 2012) authors. I also included literature references specific to Alberta and its professional practices standards (Alberta Education [2018b] and Alberta Education [2018a]) which guides Alberta educators. I also include the TRCC (2015) as it is unique in that this report and the recommendations contained within are and were created for Canada as one nation.

Within this category of narrative inquiry is the individual lived experience of non-Indigenous educators who teach Indigenous curricula. The key actors who I am relying upon include Duff and Bell, 2002; Brayboy, 2000; Cain et al., 2013; Caxaj, 2015; Chung, 2018; Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Clandinin et al., 2007; Datta, 2018; Estefan et al., 2016; Huber et al., 2013; Hooley, 2010; Iseke, 2013; Kerr and Ferguson, 2020; Kanu and Glor, 2006; Kovach, 2010; Lessard et al., 2020; Lindsay and Schwind, 2016; Martin, 2018; Varaki, 2007; S. Wilson, 2001, 2008 and Yuan and Lee, 2016. This section is meant to examine how narrative interacts with the experiences, and Indigenous story and will help to illustrate the conceptual basis of my research.

I had a conversation with an educator who teaches in Alberta. This person related their classroom experience as follows: This educator had students questioning why they have to study the same text this year as they did last year, and past years. The students wanted to know why the text/material doesn't, and hasn't, changed. This particular educator teaches the same students from grade seven to nine in a junior high school. The explanation given to the students by this educator for using the same material from year to year was that Indigenous authors do not have access to publication services in the same way as non-Indigenous authors do. They related to their students that by not having access to publication services this creates a lack of literature for teachers to access which then limits their ability to change the material they use to teach Indigenous curriculum from year to year. As I reflected on the preceding story, the following questions emerged for me:

A) *Why does a non-Indigenous educator hold the belief that there are limited resources for educators to access for classroom teaching? Is this point of view widely thought to be true by non-Indigenous educators?*

B) *Would educators change their curriculum from year to year based on the ability to access a variety of resources?*

C) *What barriers would an educator face if they are changing their Indigenous curriculum from year to year? If any? Would it introduce barriers that did not previously exist?*

To set apart my reflexive thinking along the way from my academic writing I have chosen to include italics as a narrative method to express my own thoughts, questions, and reflections. This will enhance my writing throughout and highlight for the reader how conversations and interactions with others help to further examine perspectives and concerns regarding my research, similar to the way I have chosen to bold emotion words and phrases. Additionally, the reflexive questions provide insight into the process of coming into this research in relation to the governing literature presented here.

This literature review purposefully examines some of the publications that non-Indigenous educators have access to that can be implemented in their classroom teaching. It also examines the literature as it pertains to non-Indigenous educators and Indigenous curricula. I do this by taking up the following discussions: Narrative as Research; **Reconciliation** in Action; Non-Indigenous and Indigenous Relations; Indigenous Knowledges; Walking in Two Worlds; and Government documents. The following situating of the literature will take the reader through this series of main topics.

You will notice, as you read this chapter, that I will intentionally include a broad list of authors who have contributed to the different topics of my research. The American Psychological Association (2020) (APA) is the guidebook that I used for this writing. The APA (2020) guides writers “to cite one or two of the most representative sources for each key point”. This statement applies to most essay style writing. The guide then goes on to state that literature reviews

"typically include a more exhaustive list of references, given that the purpose of the paper is to acquaint readers with everything that has been written on the topic" (p. 254). To some these broad lists may feel long or lack differentiation; they can include both Indigenous and non-Indigenous authors grouped together as I have used them. Again, as mentioned above, this is a purposeful approach that differs itself from the conventional scholarly criteria for literature reviews that require us to seek differences among the most minute of details—seeking differences rather than connection. While I am in no way attempting to erase what can be important differences, I am offering another way to engage literature reviews guided by S. Wilson's (2008) call for relational accountability—relational being the operative word for me and this work reaching for **reconciliation** [emphasis added] (p. 44). The presentation of authors in this way - combined and coming together - further emphasises the importance of my research being centered on **reconciliation** in action. Whether Indigenous or not, the authors I have chosen to engage for this literature review have influenced me, how I approached this research, and influenced my dissertation writing. Where I sense connection and generative coming together, I invite you to read potential for **reconciliation**.

After establishing the main themes of my literature review, I then created sub-categories within some of the main themes within the literature, providing the reader with a map that flows from one idea to the next.

Firstly, this examination of the literature will look at ***Reconciliation*** *in Action*. The sub-topics that will be examined in this category are *Conceptualizing Indigenous Curricula Through Relations* and *Relationship.*

Secondly, I engage with the categories of *Story in Narrative*. This section will also include the topic of *Narrative as Research.* This section will differ from the methodology section of Narrative Inquiry as it will not be focused on the methodology, but rather what the literature says about how narrative inquiry relates to story.

Thirdly this chapter will examine *Indigenous Knowledges.* The sub-categories in this section of literature review will include *Indigenous Knowledges as Orientation to Research, Indigenous Knowledges in Education,* and *Indigenous Story in Research.* I am reminding the reader that as they go through this section to keep in mind that I am an Indigenous researcher conducting a narrative inquiry methodology, and that this section is not meant to be read as an inference of me conducting an Indigenous research methodology.

The fourth section in this chapter will examine the writings around the topic of *To Walk in Two Worlds.* The sub-categories in this section include *Allies* and *Giving Voice.*

Lastly, I will address the ***Apprehensions*** *and Tensions of Non-Indigenous Educators.* This will include sub-sections regarding *Diplomacy Debate and Opposition* and *Experiences and* ***Emotions*** *Through Story*. This last sub-section includes a *Comment About Intergenerational Trauma.* This aligns with my research being a narrative inquiry which examines the **emotional** experiences of my research partners.

The final section in this literature review will address *Indigenous Curricula Material for Educators.* This section includes a brief examination of Government documents, policy guides, manuals, and professional practice standards that all educators in Alberta have access to in their attempts to teach Indigenous curricula.

Reconciliation in Action

This research is grounded in the concept of **reconciliation** in action. There are numerous authors that qualify to be noted in this section. My choice of inclusion in this category is not meant to infer that other authors are not contributing to **reconciliation**; I have simply included their contributions in other sections and other ways. The concept of **reconciliation** and how I define it has been already discussed in my introductory section of this research. This section provides me with an opportunity to expand the ways in which **reconciliation** manifests itself in others' writings (see, for example, Chung, 2016; Ermine, 2007; Fitzmaurice, 2010a, 2010b; Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018; Gair et al., 2005; Justice, 2018; Lee, 2012; Little Bear, 2014; McDermott et al., 2021).

Authors such as Justice (2018) remind us that Indigenous and non-Indigenous people have a requirement to be **good** relatives to each other through the concepts of kinship and story (p. 74). Chung (2016) demonstrates how a non-Indigenous educator is influenced by Indigenous Elders teachings by being exposed and participating in Indigenous ceremony and traditions. Meanwhile Ermine (2007) reminds us that **reconciliation** includes "an ethical space" that "entertains the notion of engagement" (p. 202). The idea of being in **good** relations is the foundation of my research and is one of the main reasons for me inviting non-Indigenous educators to be research partners in my research with me as a First Nations woman. According to Ermine (2007) "the 'ethical space' is formed when two societies, with disparate worldviews, are poised to engage each other" (p. 193). The engagement that is seen in this research with Indigenous researcher and non-Indigenous educators is one way that we met, and created an ethical space, which contributes to **reconciliation** as a result.

The normalization of Indigenous content is seen throughout writings addressed to non-Indigenous educators (Agbo, 2003; Antone, 2000; Battiste, 2000, 2005, 2013; Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Blakesley, 2012; Brayboy, 2000; Cajete, 1993; Chung, 2016; Deer, 2013; Donald, 2009b, 2011; Dion, 2007, 2016; Fontaine et al., 2015; Gaudry, 2016; Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018; Henze & Vanett, 1993; Innes, 2009; Kovach, 2017; Okineegish, 2015; Schmidt, 2019; Scott & Gani, 2018; St Denis, 2007, 2011; S. Wilson, 2001). For some non-Indigenous educators their first encounters with Indigenous curricula may make them **uncomfortable** because they are required to recognize their own 'whiteness', or complicity with whiteness (Fitzmaurice, 2010a). It is important to recognize that identifying groups with labels helps with additional perspectives between non-Indigenous and Indigenous People and how they differ. This is not meant to be **derogatory** or **pejorative** to any of the individual members of either group. As stated by Fitzmaurice (2010a) "I became a white person in 1990 as part of my first encounter with the chief and council of Cold Lake First Nation, who collectively referred to me as 'Hey, *munias*' (translation from Cree 'Hey, whiteman')" (p. 355). This recognition should not promote a **fear** to misrepresent Indigenous curricula as it relates to self-understanding. Non-Indigenous educators who have **apprehension** that their presentation of Aboriginal perspectives might inadvertently **offend** students or parents need support and encouragement that they can present Indigenous curricula **respectfully**. As an example, scholars such as McDermott (2014) "call for an ethics of affect" by listening differently through embodied pedagogy (p. 211). Harrison and Clarke (2020) comment about decolonising knowledge and embedding knowledge in the curriculum as ways of developing the Indigenous cultural capabilities (p. 184). Other authors such as St. Denis and Schick (2003) examined this difficulty two decades ago, which shows that this has been an issue that has been ongoing, but also a topic of interest which scholars have written about as an issue

to be solved. Non-Indigenous educators who have a desire to teach Indigenous curriculum also want to ensure that they are doing so in a **good** way, and that is also why I am presenting my research as being a contribution to a **positive experience** of non-Indigenous educators of furthering their understanding of Indigenous curriculum.

Authors such as Justice (2018) try to see a balanced approach in multicultural aspects of presenting Indigenous curricula and relate it to kinship, which, like **empathy**, is a multidimensional concept (p. 75). A cultural revitalization which incorporates **positivity** is required for non-Indigenous educators *to tell a better story* (Lee, 2010, p. 1, see also Dion, 2007; Donald, 2009b, 2011; Scott & Gani, 2018; St Denis, 2007). "How we walk with others" (Chung, 2016, p. 400) and "behaving as good relatives" (Justice, 2018, p. 73) are key concepts which contribute to the act of **reconciliation**. Other ways that the concept of **reconciliation** is presented in the literature is through "Indigenous inclusion" (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018, p. 218), "actioning change" (Gair et al., 2005, p. 182), "engaging in parallel paths" (McDermott et al., 2021, p. 27) and "moving to relational balance as a method of **reconciliation**" [emphasis added] (Fitzmaurice, 2010b, p. 57). The concept of "parallel paths" (McDermott at al., 2021) is something that I relate to how our relationship exists in this world of research and scholarly engagement. Her path is parallel to mine as a non-Indigenous supervisor; we are working towards the same goal, but our approach is dictated by how we live in separate worlds; hers being supervisor and mine being student. Non-Indigenous educators who have a **desire** to teach Indigenous curricula also want to ensure that they are doing so in a **good** way, and that is also why I am presenting my research as being a contribution to a **positive experience** of non-Indigenous educators of furthering their understanding of Indigenous curricula. I also

ensured research partners believe this to be true as well. I accomplished this by defining inclusion criteria through the recruitment process. The **emotions** and experiences shared by research partners was not always **positive**, but their experience in contributing to and being a part of my research was a **positive experience** for each one. The aim of my research was meant to unite and bring together - **reconciliation** as relationship building and changing.

Conceptualizing Indigenous Curricula Through Relations

There are two main factors that are required for my research. The first is the participation of non-Indigenous educators. The second is the desire to participate in **reconciliation** as an action. My three research partners demonstrated their desire to be a **positive** contributor to **reconciliation** by agreeing to be a part of this research project. This is the foundation of what my research has been built upon.

There are many key actors participating in the conceptualization of Indigenous curricula and its teaching by non-Indigenous educators. The key actors that I have chosen to include in this literature review include: Agbo (2003); Antone (2000); Blakesley (2012); Deer (2013); Dion (2007, 2016); Ermine (2007); Fitzmaurice (2010a, 2010b); Gair et al. (2005); Gaudry (2016); Gaudry and Lorenz (2018); Henderson (2000); Henze and Vanett (1993); Justice (2018); Kovach (2017); Little Bear (2014); McDermott et al. (2021); Oskineegish (2015); Schmidt (2019); Scott and Gani (2018) and St. Denis (2007, 2011). There are also authors who are considered with high regard as Indigenous scholars such as King (2003) who are self-identified as Indigenous. King (2013) is of Cherokee descent but is not officially recognized by the Nation. This does not diminish his credibility as an Indigenous author, speaker, and scholar. Other authors include Métis author, Gaudry (2016) and Native American authors Brayboy (2000) and Cajete (1993). There are numerous authors that have set themselves apart as noteworthy exemplars and voices

of expertise. The sheer volume of authors would not allow for inclusion in their entirety, as that would be for a different study. For the purposes of my research, I focus on the central conversations from the core group of scholars that guided my approach in particularly notable ways. For example, authors such as Kovach (2017) and Okineegish (2015) have provided non-Indigenous educators forms of advice towards adapting their approaches to writing regarding Indigenous People. Kovach (2017) did this in the form of a written letter, which as a genre allowed for story and relationality to be centered, two key concepts grounding my research.

Non-Indigenous authors who publish works regarding Indigenous curriculum topics are also considered to be multicultural or intercultural scholars and actors informing the field of Indigenous curriculum. I have ensured that these non-Indigenous actors are also included in this literature review and cited within my research (Agbo, 2003; Blakesley, 2012; Chung, 2016; Deer, 2013; Delpit, 1995; Guskey, 2009; Kanu, 2002; Kanu and Glor, 2006; Henze and Vanett, 1993). Of note, these non-Indigenous actors are often presenting the study, delivery, and integration of Aboriginal perspectives within an outcomes-based curriculum (Deer, 2013), which differs itself in some ways from an Indigenous curriculum grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing that are process oriented rather than product oriented.

Narrative as research examines the relationships that occur through narrative or story (Cain et al., 2013; Clandinin et al., 2007; Kanu & Glor, 2006; Varaki, 2007) "Within narrative inquiry, experiences viewed narratively and necessitates considerations of relational knowing and being, attention to the artistry of and within experience, and sensitivity to the overlapping stories that bring people together in research relationships"

(Cain et al., 2013, p. 574). According to Varaki (2007) “one of the fundamental assumptions of the narrative inquiry is that human beings and stories are intertwined” (p. 1), which is also how I envision **reconciliation** in action within my research process. Similarly, Varaki (2007) relates “narrative knowing occurs through reflection on personal experience through storytelling” (p. 106). Narrative as research in literature directly relates to story and relationships.

Relationship

Another factor identified by many scholars within the literature that may affect non-Indigenous educators’ engagement with Indigenous curricula is whether or not relations are established with Indigenous groups (Agbo, 2003; Antone, 2000; Battiste, 2000, 2005, 2013; Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Blakesley, 2012; Brayboy, 2000; Cajete, 1993; Chung, 2016; Deer, 2013; Dion, 2007, 2016; Gaudry, 2016; Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018; Guskey, 2009; Henze & Vanett, 1993; Innes, 2009; Joseph, 2018; Joseph & Joseph, 2019; Kovach, 2017; Okineegish, 2015; Schmidt, 2019; Scott & Gani, 2018; St Denis, 2007, 2011; S. Wilson, 2001). A lack of communication and established relationship may **negatively** impact non-Indigenous access to understanding Indigenous curricula to their fullest. This concept of relationship was discussed by Agbo (2003) as he observed that Indigenous community members felt that non-Indigenous educators are unwilling to learn about their way of life, non-Indigenous educators on the other hand, indicated that they are willing to learn all that can be provided by Indigenous community members who are prepared to teach them (p. 48). The “perfect stranger” as a concept was illustrated by Dion (2007) in that non-Indigenous educators’ lack of familiarity with Indigenous content may allow teachers to claim the position of being a “perfect stranger” to Aboriginal people (p. 470). This allows them to be non-Indigenous and not having a full understanding of Indigenous curricula which may remove their ethical responsibility. This divide was articulated

by Agbo (2003) in relating how there was a lack of communication between a school which was non-Indigenous, and community which was Indigenous. The physical manifestation of the divide was a fence around the school which separated First Nations parents from their children. This separation was viewed as a throwback to how the residential school system created physical and spatial barriers between schools and community. This reference to residential schools was reinforced by statements such as teachers' having expectations of children "not to behave as First Nations, but as 'civilized' persons" (p. 43). These perceived associations to the past can uphold barriers to both non-Indigenous and Indigenous educators, scholars and communities working together.

Non-Indigenous educators who have established a relationship with Indigenous members often refer to themselves as allies. They consider themselves to be working with, and taught by, an established community of Elders, knowledge keepers, or cultural teachers. As Fitzmaurice (2010a) indicates, "To begin with, it seems reasonable to presume that in a broad sense, the term 'ally' suggests a relationship across difference. In its basic form, to be an ally is to align oneself and to work co-operatively, and collaboratively with a group other than one's own" (p. 352). Someone who becomes an ally does so with the intention of creating **positive** results for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. This is why Gaudry (2016) indicated that the implementation of Indigenous curriculum must be paved with **good** intentions. This is **reconciliation** as relationship changing.

Indigenous Knowledges

Indigenous knowledge is an all-encompassing category that can be seen throughout my entire literature review in various ways. Indigenous curriculum is typically written by Indigenous authors, writers, scholars, and researchers to provide culturally relevant points of view (Armstrong, 2013; Battiste, 2000, 2005, 2013; Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Brayboy, 2000; Cajete, 1993; L. Cardinal, 2001; Dion, 2007, 2011, 2016; Gaudry, 2016; Innes, 2009; Justice, 2018; King, 2003; Kovach, 2010, 2017; Little Bear, 2014; Matilpi, 2012; Smith, 2012; St. Denis, 2007, 2011; S. Wilson, 2001, 2008). According to well-known authors such as Battiste (2005) Indigenous knowledge has always existed and is varied, place-based, and relational with a focus on process more than product which is more commonly emphasized in Eurocentric knowledge. This section will examine some perspectives and concerns that have been documented previously by non-Indigenous educators teaching Indigenous curricula, regardless of whether the authorship of the literature is Indigenous or non-Indigenous. In order to do this, it will address questions such as the exposure non-Indigenous educators have had to Indigenous curricula, what their relationship is to Indigenous pedagogy, comprehension and understanding of Indigenous curricula and their **comfort** in teaching it. Indigenous identity is varied and culturally situated by factors such as where they are located.

The difference among Indigenous People is identifiable with literature which discusses them as a population. The phraseology used by scholars and authors is as varied as their cultures. Indigenous curricula contexts use as a sampling the following identifier phrases for Indigenous curricula and Indigenous education contexts: the “Indigenous gaze” (Ermine, 2007, p. 199); “Indigenous worldviews” (Henderson, 2000, p. 73); “Indigenize” as a verb (Gair et al., 2005, p. 180); “Indigenist paradigm” (S. Wilson, 2001, p. 52); “Indigenous knowledge” and “Aboriginal

paradigm" (Little Bear, 2009, p. 7); "Indigenous traditional models of teaching and pedagogy for decolonizing" (Madden, 2015, p. 2); authenticity and belonging; real Indian; understanding one's identity; racial formation; racialization (St Denis, 2007, p. 1069). The teaching of these topics in the classroom are what contributes to making a curriculum Indigenous. Examples of this can be seen in having a non-Indigenous educator who is teaching home-economics and sewing class can incorporate the creation of ribbon skirts with Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. This will be seen later in this writing with my research partner, Susie and how she does this in her classroom. This is one way that educators can bring Indigenous knowledges into the classroom without creating situations that bring forth political or controversial social issues. For Indigenous students this can act as reinforcement and emphasise the importance of Indigenous knowledges being valid.

Brayboy (2000) provides a definition of *real Indian* as their skin colour, hair colour/texture, belief in greater good, and walking the walk (p. 417). Brayboy (2000) also distinguishes how identities as Indigenous, and researcher, affect ways in which he presents himself. He states that it can be extremely complicated because both identities of researcher and Indigenous must be simultaneously foregrounded. In addition to this terminology being varied there are many authors who write about Indigenous identity and how it applies to concepts within Indigenous curricula. As I have stated previously my identity is that I am a First Nations member of OCN, Treaty 5 territory. My identity and relationship with those on my reserve influences my research in the same way that other Indigenous researchers are affected and influenced by their identity and relationship with their own culture.

Indigenous knowledge is situated in the research is presented as the Indigenous perspective (L. Cardinal, 2001; Cajete, 2017). Authors such as Cajete (2017) recognize the importance of the telling of story from an Indigenous point of view. According to Cajete (2017) "story is one of the most basic ways that the human brain structures and relates human experience. Everything that humans do in experience revolves around some kind of story" (p. 115). Cajete (2017) connects this experience to culture and education. L. Cardinal (2001) connects Indigenous knowledge to identity and speaks about how identity provides validity to Indigenous knowledge. This early understanding represented what I wanted to do in my research process, as I discussed how I approached the research as Indigenous while taking up a Western methodology in the introduction to my thesis.

Indigenous Knowledges in Education

Indigenous knowledge in education consists of naturalizing and implementing the Indigenous perspective in educational systems (Battiste, 2005; L. Cardinal, 2001; Little Bear, 2009; Madden, 2015; Louis & Scott, 2016). Authors such as L. Cardinal (2001) write about inclusion of all aspects of Indigenous People which goes beyond just their voice. He promotes the inclusion of Indigenous cultures, traditions, and their worldview (p. 180) which can be particularly difficult for those who have less knowledge of and experience with these non-Euro-Western ways of being. Little Bear (2009) presents the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge in education as an "unbundling of the education system" (p. 15) which will allow Indigenous knowledge systems to be incorporated. Battiste (2005) suggests "bringing about a blended educational context that **respects** and builds on both Indigenous and Eurocentric knowledge systems" (para. 2). Authors such as Louis and Scott (2016) conducted research together as an "Aboriginal man, PhD candidate, and educator" and "a white Anglo-Canadian teacher" (p. 2).

Louis and Scott (2016) together wanted to promote culturally authentic forms of curriculum (p. 7) while calling for a new ethical relationality (p. 12). In working together, they created a result that is one enactment of **reconciliation** as relationship changing. This was the type of working relationship I strived to have with my research partners.

Situating Indigenous Story in Research

Indigenous storytellers differ in the way that some of the stories are told and used. Culture and identity play a significant role in how and why Indigenous story is told as a means of contributing to research (Brayboy, 2000; Caxaj, 2015; Hooley, 2010; Iseke, 2013; Kovach, 2010; S. Wilson, 2001, 2008; Younging, 2018): "It involves a dialogic participation that holds a deep purpose of sharing story as a means to assist others. It is relational at its core" (Kovach, 2010, p. 40). According to Iseke (2013) "storytelling is the central focus of Indigenous epistemologies and research approaches" (p. 559) while Brayboy (2000) emphasises the importance of positioning yourself as an Indigenous researcher. Brayboy (2000) states "I am constantly aware of the ways that I am being positioned by those with whom I interact as a researcher as well as those I interact with as an Indian, and the differences between the two" (p. 416). Other authors such as S. Wilson (2001, 2008) and Younging (2018) provide texts that guide how to present and **respectfully** approach Indigenous People, cultures, traditions through research, which I make connections to the pedagogical ways educators might take up Indigenous curricula. Through this process of **reconciliation** my own story as a First Nations woman was incorporated as reaction and reflection of the stories of the non-Indigenous educators in my research. In this way my story, as reflection, contributed to the process of Indigenous story research.

This section examines the combining of Indigenous story and narrative inquiry as a means of bringing together Indigenous storytelling and the western view of narrative (Chung, 2018; Datta, 2018; Kerr & Ferguson, 2020; Lessard et al., 2020; Martin, 2018). As stated by Kerr and Ferguson (2020) "within ethical relationality there is no requirement of sameness or expectation of agreement, rather there is a requirement to recognise and be responsible in all our relations" (p. 3). The article written by Lessard et al. (2020) is a great example of how Indigenous and non-Indigenous People can work together. "It is important to recognise that the questioning of who we are in each situation, in each relationship, and in each place is part of the ways narrative inquiry is lived" (p. 31). According to Chung (2018) "Narrative inquiry is not a study of the other. Thinking with the stories that I lived in the narrative inquiry changed me as these stories called me to live differently" (p. 97). This is the type of **positive relationality** and change that I strived to have with the non-Indigenous research partners in this process.

My story as First Nations researcher is an important aspect to my research, and results in that it helps to provide the perspective of an Indigenous person on this type of research. The inclusion of my reaction and reflection to the stories told by my research partners is meant to work in **harmony** and be complimentary to the non-Indigenous educators who joined in this process alongside me. Much like Archibald (2008) describes, I see myself as "a beginning storyteller who is gaining understandings about the significant role that stories can play in teaching, learning, and **healing**" (p. 85).

There are several key actors found in the literature regarding Indigenous story and storytelling. The authors that I chose to include for Indigenous authors in this literature review are inclusive of those that apply to my specific research and narrative inquiry (Archibald, 2008; Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Caxaj, 2015; Iseke, 2013; King, 2003; Kovach, 2009, 2010; Lessard

et al., 2021; Smith, 2012; S. Wilson, 2001, 2008; and Younging, 2018). There are many themes that can be found within the writings that can be carried forward into pedagogical considerations including: Indigenous story (Archibald, 2008; Kovach, 2009, 2010), Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing in research (Smith, 2012; S. Wilson, 2008), **respect** of Indigenous culture (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Lessard et al., 2021), Indigenous experience (Iseke, 2013), oral tradition (King, 2003), relationship (Caxaj, 2015), and understanding (Chung, 2018). Authors such as Kovach (2010) include specifics of how conversation works in Indigenous contexts:

> The conversational method is of significance to Indigenous methodologies because it is a method of gathering knowledge based on oral storytelling tradition congruent with an Indigenous paradigm. It involves dialogic participation that holds a deep purpose of *sharing story as a means to assist others*. It is relational at its core. (p. 40, emphasis added)

The idea in italics brings us quite close to the role of educators, to assist others, and when it comes to Indigenous curricula, the educator can both engage story to assist themselves in their growing relation with Indigenous ideas, as well as assisting learners in their paths towards **reconciliation**. Other authors who are not Indigenous write about Indigenous research from a non-Indigenous perspective such as Kerr and Ferguson (2020) who engaged with Archibald's (2008) Indigenous storywork concept to conduct their study. This type of writing supports the reason for me doing my research in promoting better relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous People as an act of **reconciliation** in both research *and* in teaching.

Another such author is Datta (2018) who is a non-Indigenous academic writing about Indigenous research methodology. Datta (2018) has found that "storytelling as an emerging

research method is timely, accurate, appropriate, and culturally relevant for many Indigenous communities" (p. 35). One might, then, imagine that engaging story in the classroom can be(come) a culturally relevant pedagogy—if done well with right intentions, background, and relations. Other writings are a combination of Indigenous and non-Indigenous authors teaming up to create joint contributions that promote **good** relations by writing about their interactions with Indigenous Elders (Lessard et al., 2021). Additionally, they wrote about their experiences of learning and receiving teaching through storytelling from Indigenous elders over a period of time spent with them which resulted in continuing to "learn how to live out, and up to, ideas of mutuality and reciprocity…in relationship with a sense of **kindness** that allows us to work at **reconciliation**" (p. 35). This reinforces that narrative inquiry as a potential pedagogical model for teaching Indigenous curricula is not something that can be accomplished quickly as it relies on relationships being established and nurtured over time. While the importance of Indigenous writing has become mainstream, the 'how to' present Indigenous topics properly needs to catch up, so it reflects the importance being placed upon it. This is one of the ways I **hope** my research will contribute to the broader field of Indigenous education and **reconciliation**.

To Walk in Two Worlds

Henze and Vanett (1993) present a metaphor of "walking in two worlds" and the distinct differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people/groups in educational systems. This "walking in two worlds" (Henderson, 2000; Henze & Vanett, 1993, Little Bear, 2014) is seen in the research partners and in my involvement with them throughout the process. We, the research partners and I, maintained a balance of both worlds as we engaged in research that shows how "two distinct, readily identifiable worlds exist" (Henze & Vanett, 1993, p. 119). This concept of two worlds existing side by side is one of the foundations that is required for **reconciliation** to

occur. I am not approaching this concept as interchangeable with the concepts around two-eyed seeing. I view this concept as me, being Indigenous navigating two distinct worldviews. The concept of two-eyed seeing is viewed by me as an approach that benefits non-Indigenous people more, because it intertwines two world views (Bardwell & Woller-Skar, 2023) . Educators who are creating change are presented with challenges in doing so (Henderson, 2000). These challenges can be seen in creating a balance of all voices being heard equally while bringing together Eurocentric and Indigenous worldviews (Henderson, 2000, p. 61). Rather than assimilation the goal should be acculturation wherein it is a two-way process that enables both cultures to be changed. Within this theme of non-Indigenous educators' relationship to Indigenous curriculum is the individual lived experience and knowledge within non-Indigenous groups. Differences in educators' identities may contribute to issues of communication between teachers and parents in that the language and cultural backgrounds of teachers differ from that of the community (Agbo, 2003, Gaudry, 2016; Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018).

Henze and Vanett (1993) discuss the space in between Indigenous and non-Indigenous actors in education and how the space must be united. In his writing Little Bear (2014) discusses how two worlds collide and have shared or collected world views which influence both Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups, people, and cultures. This concept can be seen in the diagram I created to distinguish between worldviews (Figure 1). Whether it is expressed as walking in two worlds, or expressed as the spirit of walking together, the bringing together of two worlds, mine as Indigenous researcher, and research partners who are non-Indigenous, is another way that **reconciliation** in action was manifested through my research.

Allies

The concept of allies can come from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous writings (Schmidt, 2019). Indigenous authors such as Pete (2016) have gone so far as to create checklists as a way to regulate or monitor progress and implementation of Indigenous concepts in order to be an Indigenous ally as non-Indigenous educators. This includes concepts which cover Indigenous content, Indigenous knowledge, protocol norms, dominant narratives/creating space for Indigenous, social justice, collaboration and recognizing Indigenous scholars. Pete (2016) indicated that the implementation of Indigenous curricula must be paved with **good** intentions. This includes concepts which cover Indigenous content, Indigenous knowledge, protocol norms, dominant narratives, creating space for Indigenous topics, social justice, collaboration and recognizing Indigenous scholars.

Schmidt (2019) set forth in her writing ways in which non-Indigenous people can be "**respectful** and/or ethical" in teaching about Indigenous culture and histories (p. 61). In the same way that I regard **reconciliation** as relationship changing, Schmidt (2019) considers "decolonizing to be a verb" (p. 69). I could have included numerous authors as examples in this section, but I chose to only show how these two authors embrace and promote the concept of allyship, which directly relates to **reconciliation** as relationship changing, because it resonated with me, and my research and they are illustrative of others' articulations. These two examples also show how **reconciliation** must be **positively** approached by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous People in order for change to occur, or for **reconciliation** to become manifest as a strengths-based action.

Giving Voice

Indigenous academics are developing new analyses and methodologies to decolonize themselves. There are many ways in which Indigenous academics vary and are inclusive of collaborations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous actors (Agbo, 2003; Battiste, 2000; Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Blakesley, 2012; Brayboy, 2000; Chung, 2016; Deer, 2013; Donald, 2009b, 2011; Dion, 2007, 2016; Gaudry, 2016; Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018; Henze & Vanett, 1993; Innes, 2009; Kovach, 2017; Okineegish, 2015; Schmidt, 2019; Scott & Gani, 2018; St Denis, 2007, 2011; S. Wilson, 2001). The concept of inclusion and giving voice to others is something that relates to my research on multiple levels: firstly, because I believe that non-Indigenous educators are working through ways to include the voices of Indigenous People in their teaching; and secondly, I want to promote non-Indigenous educators as having an important story to tell others about their experiences in teaching Indigenous curricula (Antone, 2000; Dion, 2016; Gaudry, 2016; St. Denis, 2007, 2011). Authors such as Antone (2000) promote the inclusion and giving voice to Indigenous People in school systems.

Having done research for a period which has been centered around First Nations, Métis, Inuit outcomes I have examined many specific issues, challenges, and triumphs within the broad topic of Indigenous People. Research within this broad topic requires Indigenous voices to be heard, listened to, but more importantly analyzed and examined in greater detail. Indigenous scholars cannot continue to be silent actors in education. Education requires teaching, and teaching requires one to have a voice. The concept of giving voice is acknowledged by research design authors as a thing of importance. For example, Creswell (2014) outlines how a qualitative approach to a literature review

"provides an overall orientating lens for the study of questions of gender, class, and race (or other marginalized groups)" (p.64). Marginalized groups usually **appreciate** having their voice, and perspectives acknowledged as an important contribution to the conversation.

Indigenous People may self-impose silencing or monitoring of their voice. For many reasons an individual may choose to hide their reactions of **emotions.** Matilpi (2012) discussed self-imposed silencing. She stated that there are few opportunities for Indigenous students to be authentic and good reasons to stay silent, one of which is for safety (p.213). The safety that they are seeking is a matter of self-preservation. Sometimes it is much easier to keep silent than to speak up to defend oneself and suffer **negative** consequences of not being silent.

The topic of allowing space for Indigenous student's voice applies to myself as an Indigenous student in a doctoral degree program. Other levels of my education journey have provided me with personal experiences, **positive** and **negative**, which have helped nurture my perspective on this subject. At this point of my education, I can now use my personal voice as an example of how Indigenous voice can be heard, and used, in research. My goal in my research is to promote the process of **reconciliation**. The concept of **reconciliation** is important in research, and education, as a means of learning in the present from historical events. McCarthy et al. (2003) noted:

> Thinking in postcolonial terms about the topic of difference and multiplicity in education means thinking rationally and contextually. It means bringing back into educational discourse the **tensions** and contradictions that we tend to suppress as we process experience and history into curricular knowledge. It means abandoning the auratic status of concepts such as 'culture' and 'identity' and recognizing the vital porosity that exists between and among human groups of the modern world. (p.463)

One of the purposes of me doing research in this area is to increase Indigenous voice in education. As an Indigenous person who is not currently working in the field of education, I **feel** I have an advantage in that it allows me flexibility in how I present concepts. I may be **less guarded** in my presentation because I do not have constraints of a political position within a school, or administration. Regardless of position, **tensions** exist when discussing Indigenous voice within the realm of education.

Indigenization of programs is one of the ways that change is seen in curricula. The literature suggests there may be barriers, such as cultural differences and misunderstandings of language usage, to non-Indigenous students being taught Indigenous curriculum even though there is not a requirement that students be Indigenous to learn Indigenous curriculum (Armstrong, 2013; Battiste, 2000; Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Blakesley, 2012; Brayboy, 2000; Chung, 2016; Deer, 2013; Donald, 2009b, 2011; Dion, 2007, 2016; Gaudry, 2016; Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018; Henze & Vanett, 1993; Innes, 2009; Kovach, 2017; Okineegish, 2015; Schmidt, 2019; Scott & Gani, 2018; St Denis, 2007, 2011; S. Wilson, 2001). In addition to barriers created for non-Indigenous students there are also barriers created for Indigenous students. St. Denis (2011) acknowledges that 'multiculturalism' helps to erase, diminish, trivialize, and deflect from acknowledging Indigenous sovereignty through 'racialization'. Creating Indigenous curricula may cause a silencing of Indigenous student voices. Also, if done improperly educating a large number of non-Indigenous students can come at the expense of the Indigenous students (Gaudry, 2016). Indigenization is discussed by Gaudry (2016) as an example of how educators must also be aware that poor implementation could work against the goal. For example, there are conversations around the need for qualified

individuals to teach historical narratives and break down stereotypes. It is not a requirement for Indigenous People to bear the burden of change so that non-Indigenous educators can access Indigenous knowledge systems. Instead, action-informed change is required (Antone, 2000; Gaudry, 2016). Others, such as Dion (2016) views voice as a way to mediate the space between Indigenous and non-Indigenous experiences/people/groups and contribute to **reconciliation**. Another way that St. Denis (2007) views voice as a contributing factor to **reconciliation** is in cultural revitalization, which includes languages (p. 1077). My research aims to provide a **positive** venue for non-Indigenous research partners to share their stories as a means of **reconciliation**. Bringing my own story into the fold with theirs this will ensure that multiple voices are heard and recognized in my research process.

Apprehensions and Tensions of Non-Indigenous Educators

I found that searches for non-Indigenous authors who publish works regarding Indigenous curricula topics were also considered to be *multicultura*l or *intercultural* scholars and actors informing the field of Indigenous curricula. I have ensured that these non-Indigenous actors are also included in this literature review for the insights they provide into my topic (see, for example, Agbo, 2003; Blakesley, 2012; Deer, 2013; Dion, 2007; Oskineegish, 2015; Scott & Gani, 2018).

One of the themes identified in the literature was non-Indigenous educators' relationships to Indigenous pedagogy. This relationship was often discussed through concepts of transformation and creating change such as integrating Indigenous perspectives (Agbo, 2003; Antone, 2000; Battiste, 2000, 2005, 2013; Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Blakesley, 2012; Brayboy, 2000; Cajete, 1993; Chung, 2016; Deer, 2013; Dion, 2007, 2016; Fontaine et al., 2015; Gaudry, 2016; Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018; Henze & Vanett, 1993; Innes, 2009; Kovach, 2017;

Okineegish, 2015; Schmidt, 2019; Scott & Gani, 2018; St Denis, 2007, 2011; S. Wilson, 2001, 2008). Indigenization of programs is one of the ways that change is seen in curriculum. This is discussed by Gaudry (2016) as an example of how educators must be aware that poor implementation could work against the goal. For example, there are conversations around the need for qualified individuals to teach historical narratives and break down stereotypes. Yet, there is not a specified requirement of who is qualified within literature. Furthermore, it is not a requirement for Indigenous People to bear the burden of change so that non-Indigenous educators can access Indigenous knowledge systems. Instead, action informed change is required. This should not be interpreted as a requirement to assimilate Indigenous knowledges into the current system (Agbo, 2003; Antone, 2000; Battiste, 2000, 2005, 2013; Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Blakesley, 2012; Brayboy, 2000; Cajete, 1993; Chung, 2016; Deer, 2013; Dion, 2007, 2016; Gaudry, 2016; Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018; Guskey, 2009; Henze & Vanett, 1993; Innes, 2009; Joseph, 2018; Joseph & Joseph, 2019; Kovach, 2017; Okineegish, 2015; Schmidt, 2019; Scott & Gani, 2018; St Denis, 2007, 2011; S. Wilson, 2001).There are writings that point to some of the ways in which non-Indigenous educators approach the topics in Indigenous curricula with caution due to **apprehensions** and **fears** they may have (Scott & Gani, 2018; Deer, 2013). Some of the **apprehension** and **discomfort** was found due to perceived lack of knowledge and lack of support (Deer, 2013, p. 183). As I have stated previously **apprehension** may be one of the experiences that comes through the stories told by my research partners, with the possibility of uncovering some of the reasons non-Indigenous educators feel **apprehensive**. Of note, non-Indigenous actors are often presenting the study, delivery, and integration of Aboriginal perspectives within an

outcomes-based curriculum (Deer, 2013), which differs itself in some ways from an Indigenous curricula grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing that are process oriented rather than product oriented.

Teachers should always strive to eliminate **tension** with students, being aware that eliminating **tensions** may create new ones. “Efforts to challenge oppression are not free of contradictions. Anti-oppressive approaches to teaching and researching operate in ways that challenge some forms of oppression while complying with others…the complicity is not always intentional or visible” (Kumashiro, 2002, p.68). It is **hoped** that my research, along with other Indigenous academics will help to eliminate **tensions** and promote **positive** learning environments for Indigenous students. “For Aboriginal students to have a sense of belonging in school, teachers must do more than simply introduce Aboriginal content into the curriculum; they must also adopt Aboriginal methods and values so that students may come to know their own identity and potential from within the understanding of their culture” (Ledoux, 2006, p.276). Indigenous students who can see themselves reflected in curriculum will have higher success with what they are being taught because they will have better understanding.

A challenge that non-Indigenous educators may have to overcome is that the dominant Eurocentric discourse is what they are taught, and the lens through which they view Indigenous curricula. This may affect how they relate to the material, the level of understanding they may have regarding Indigenous curricula, and cultural differences which may create barriers. Teacher understanding is overdetermined by the dominant discourse presented in curriculum (Dion, 2007). In other words, the curricula is usually created to present the dominant voice at the forefront, when curricula should present a spectrum of voices and perspectives.

Deer (2013) discusses **apprehensions** that pre-service teachers may have in teaching Indigenous curricula. He points out that while some "such knowledge can be accessible, whilst in other cases it can be rather inaccessible" (Deer, 2013, p. 188). These issues of accessibility, **apprehension**, and influence were present in the stories that the research partners in my research related through their stories. This demonstrates how the non-Indigenous educators who were partners in my research were also influenced by the Indigenous teachings they have accessed. This will be seen by the reader in the findings, analysis, and discussion chapters of this writing.

Systemic barriers may be present for non-Indigenous educators when presented with traditional/historical knowledge versus contemporary Indigenous knowledge. They require a degree of comfort that they can convey material to students in a way that contributes to the students' learning and understanding of Indigenous curriculum (Blakesley, 2012; Chung, 2016; Deer, 2013; Henze & Vanett, 1993; Okineegish, 2015; Schmidt, 2019; Smith, 2012). **Discomfort** in teaching Indigenous curriculum (Dion, 2007) can create barriers to non-Indigenous educators' attempts and willingness to pursue Competency 5 in the TQS (Alberta Education, 2018b). While Dion (2007) wrote prior to the TRCC (2015) and subsequent TQS (Alberta Education, 2018b), she presents the concept of the *file of **uncertainties*** as a reflection from non-Indigenous educators and their own ***uncertainties*** and **fear** of misrepresentation of Indigenous curricula content. Non-Indigenous educators need to understand how to teach difference without a **fear** of **offending** while caution to do no **harm** is encouraged. This **fear**, then, is one **emotional** aspect of non-Indigenous educators that may be expressed in my research. This creates the question of whether non-Indigenous educators know how to teach/engage differences

without hierarchies, given that most have been educated in Eurocentric systems that rely on hierarchies and discreet categories. Educators additionally discharge their responsibility to teach Indigenous perspectives based on a belief that because they are not of Indigenous ancestry, they do not possess the necessary background to carry out this mandate (Scott & Gani, 2018). Using a racial or cultural disqualification argument is a problematic option for non-Indigenous educators and may create possibilities for them to inadvertently teach Indigenous curricula incorrectly or only superficially (Battiste, 2005; Dion, 2007; Scott & Gani, 2018).

Canada, and many of its provinces have created changes in education curricula to incorporate Indigenous knowledge into student learning experiences. The Alberta Government introduced updated TQS (Alberta Education, 2018b) which includes teaching First Nations, Métis, Inuit (FNMI) foundational knowledges. Competency 5 of the TQS states that educators must be competent in the study of FNMI topics so that they may pass on this knowledge to students (Alberta Education, 2018b, p.6). The changes that have taken place within Alberta curriculum standards are an example of how Indigenous outcomes are becoming more topical in curriculum development. Changes will allow for curricula to be viewed as cultural objects regarding Indigenous topics as they become embedded, at all levels and spanning all subjects. Battiste (2013) relates to the importance of why these changes in education must occur when she stated:

> We must believe that teachers and students can confront and defeat the forces that prevent students living more fully and more freely. Every school is either a site of reproduction or a site of change. In other words, education can be **liberating**, or it can domesticate and maintain domination. (p.175)

Creating change in curriculum standards by the Alberta Government is demonstrating a commitment to schools being institutions that allow for growth in Indigenous knowledge. The Alberta Government has made changes to school curricula to ensure that they are a **positive** force for change.

In addition to changes occurring provincially there is continued movement which has stemmed from the Canadian federal government creating the Truth and **Reconciliation** Commission in 2008 to gather testimonies from residential school survivors. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission final report resulted in 96 calls to action (TRCC, 2015). These calls to action included specific requirements for education to incorporate Indigenous knowledge in Canadian curricula. The TRCC (2105) call to action #63 states that educators must "build capacity for intercultural understanding, **empathy**, and mutual **respect**". If educators across Canada focused only on teaching **empathy** to students there would be a change in attitude, action, and understanding of Indigenous knowledge and its importance to understanding for all Canadians.

Battiste (2013) understood prior to the release of the 96 calls to action that there was a necessary change in attitude and regard to Indigenous knowledge. Without having the full report released, Battiste (2013) wrote about the process as it occurred:

> Core themes reverberated in those hearings among former students of the Indian Residential Schools of their striped Indigenous identities; sexual, mental, **emotional**, and physical **abuse**; poor nutrition and some death from starvation and **abuse**; enforced child labour; and the lack of a public-school education that was intended to prepare them for anything but church attendance and domestic labour. (p.56)

Changes in curriculum requirements coupled with the TRCC (2015) calls to action means that non-Indigenous educators are and will continue to be seeking information from Indigenous educators, knowledge keepers, elders, and cultural teachers. “Aboriginal learning [has] many unique characteristics:

- Learning is holistic;
- Learning is a life-long process;
- Learning is experiential in nature;
- Learning is rooted in Aboriginal languages and cultures;
- Learning is spiritually oriented.
- Learning is a communal activity, involving family, community, and elders; and
- Learning is an integration of Aboriginal and Eurocentric knowledge” (Battiste, 2013, p.181).

This list is in no way complete regarding Indigenous knowledge and what can be learned. Battiste (2013) has incorporated the importance of combining the Indigenous knowledge with Eurocentric education systems. This working together, and the combination of both, is the foundation that the TRCC (2015) final report emphasized. There must be an equal effort of working together to have true **reconciliation** within Canadian school systems, and society.

Indigenous People are usually very **generous** with their knowledge. They have a desire to have others learn from them and to teach others. The TRCC (2015) calls to action require action from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous for **reconciliation** to come to fruition. If there are non-Indigenous individuals who want to learn there must be Indigenous People willing to teach them.

Non-Indigenous educators should strive to remove **tensions** between Indigenous and Eurocentric ways of knowing and create an atmosphere which **nurtures** teaching, kinship, and belonging (Justice, 2018). It was my **hope** that my research would create this atmosphere of **nurturing** and understanding for the non-Indigenous educators who participated with me in this process. Indigenous People are not a one size fits all model and Indigenous communities all have unique and varied histories (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2016, p. 218). Many educators in Alberta believe that Indigenous perspectives cannot be engaged because no perspectives can be identified (Scott & Gani, 2018) due to the diverse nature of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit People and communities. The assertion that there is a similar perspective among Indigenous people minimizes the diversity that exists among Indigenous people, and risks contributing to problems of overgeneralization about Indigenous People and cultures (Scott & Gani, 2018).

Diplomacy Debate and Opposition

The voice in opposition to non-Indigenous educators teaching Indigenous curriculum is not a focus of what my research intends to bring forth. Having stated this I do not wish to discount or minimize any voice or perspective that non-Indigenous educators should not teach Indigenous curriculum. The voice of opposition to my position in this research that non-Indigenous educators can and should teach Indigenous curriculum is necessary to understand the complexities of my research more fully. It will be given **respect** because it does partially shape the discourse. The study of opposition would be a whole other study, and though it is important, it is not true to what the goal of my research is. I have similar thoughts to Scott & Gani (2018) regarding the opposition that may be present with some non-Indigenous educators in Alberta. Scott and Gani (2018) refer to Donald (2009a) regarding this opposition where he stated that

opposition may be influenced by having "to learn *from* Aboriginal perspectives rather than as a government-imposed requirement to learn *about* Aboriginal peoples" (p.29). Would there be less resistance to integrating Indigenous curriculum into classroom teaching if it were not a mandated expectancy? This also could be the topic of an entire research project in itself, but it is not currently my goal to address this question.

Past influences such as residential schools have contributed to a history of **distrust** and contribute to **hesitancy** to adopt strategies. This concept is something that the majority of authors and scholars, whether they are Indigenous or not, seem to agree on (Agbo, 2003; Antone, 2000; Battiste, 2000, 2005, 2013; Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Blakesley, 2012; Brayboy, 2000; Chung, 2016; Deer, 2013; Dion, 2007, 2016; Fontaine et al., 2015; Gaudry, 2016; Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018; Henderson, 2000; Joseph, 2018; Joseph & Joseph, 2019; Justice, 2018; Kanu, 2002; King, 2003; Kovach, 2010, 2017; Ledoux, 2006; Little Bear, 2014; Matilpi, 2012; May & Aikman, 2003; Okineegish, 2015; Ottmann (with Pritchard), 2010; Scott & Gani, 2018; Schmidt, 2019; Smith, 2012; St. Denis, 2007; Toulouse, 2016; TRCC, 2015; Tuck & Yang, 2014; S. Wilson, 2008, 2011). As Scott and Gani (2018) have stated, their "findings have led to important questions around why so many educators have such difficulties engaging with Aboriginal perspectives to the point that they simply ignore these mandates" (p.168). This ignoring of mandates is simply a way that educators may use to protest against the requirement that they teach Indigenous curriculum in the classroom. Similar to St. Denis (2011), Scott and Gani (2018) have provided discourse regarding how Aboriginal perspectives should not be privileged over those of other cultural groups. It is unfortunate that teaching Indigenous curriculum in schools could be considered a contested issue when it should be equal to teaching historical concepts as it is ingrained in Canadian past. Historical context is important when teaching Indigenous content.

Authors such as Dion (2007) acknowledge the ethical considerations that must accompany this historic context when she stated, “ethical learning that is ‘learning that impels us into a confrontation and reckoning not only with stories of the past but also with ‘ourselves’ as we ‘are’ (historically, existentially, ethically) in the present” (p.337).

Experiences and Emotions Through Story

The foundation of my research is the experiences of non-Indigenous educators who will relate those experiences as **emotions** through story. The concept of **emotion** in story is seen in various authors’ writings (Duff & Bell, 2002; Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Estefan et al., 2016; Huber et al., 2013; Lindsay & Schwind, 2016 and Yuan & Lee, 2016). According to Yuan and Lee (2016) “While **emotions** can inform and define teachers’ professional and personal identities, identity can in turn guide and shape teachers’ **emotional** decisions and reactions” (p. 821). Non-Indigenous people are diversified which will affect how they relate to Indigenous People and curricula. Lindsay and Schwind (2016) commented that “as the stories are lived and told in a given place and in relationship, we co-construct the emerging knowledge, which is at once particular and localized, and yet transferable to other persons and contexts by means of reflective self-inquiry of the audience” (p. 15). Differences in educators’ identities may contribute to issues of communication between teachers and parents in that the language and cultural backgrounds of teachers differ from that of the Indigenous People. These differences became some of the stories that are told by my research partners, which illustrates the possibilities of using narrative inquiry in this research, because it allowed me to dwell in the complexities of storied lives (Lindsay & Schwind, 2016), rather than flattening them out to some grand narrative.

Comment About Intergenerational Trauma

I thought that it was important to include a comment in this section that specifically pertains to **trauma** and **intergenerational trauma** because the stories told by research partners deal with sensitive topics which include references to various types of **traumas**. I am addressing this topic early on in my writing so that the reader is aware in advance of reading the stories that they will encounter sensitive topics. This should be expected in this type of research as it deals with heightened **emotional** experiences.

As a researcher, I did not limit or attempt to control what **emotional** experiences my research partners brought into the dialogue sessions. As a result, topics of residential schools, abuse, and ongoing legacies of **harm** are addressed within the context of **emotional** experiences in this research and writing. As a reader of this work there is a responsibility that comes with that to acknowledge these **emotional** reactions as coming from **traumatic** experiences, which must be allowed to be spoken, and written into this research, and not be silenced.

Indigenous Curricula Material for Educators

Now that we have considered the complexities and considerations for non-Indigenous educators teaching Indigenous curriculum, I will end the literature review with a snapshot of some of the resources that educators can make use of. In considering my research one important query came to mind: *What material regarding Indigenous curricula do non-Indigenous educators have access to?* Even if non-Indigenous educators have access to Indigenous material, they may not know how to engage it **meaningfully**, as the previous sections illustrated with my connections between research methodologies and teaching pedagogies. In the stories that were told by my research partners, there are references to accessing materials in relating to growing their knowledge on Indigenous topics. This can be seen in all three research partners' stories. In

addition to peer reviewed publications, then, I have also included government publications and policy actors, especially because these can be more easily accessible to the general public outside of the academy.

Governments and organizations have created publications that may be considered guides and manuals for non-Indigenous and Indigenous educators to access. This is important literature as it applies to my research and provides clarity as to what types of material non-Indigenous educators may have access to. In other words, the purpose of this subsection in my literature review is to begin to identify existing Indigenous curricula that illustrates the landscape within which teachers are navigating as they work towards TQS (Alberta Education, 2018b) Competency 5. The TQS (Alberta Education, 2018b) and LQS (Alberta Education, 2018a) are two Ministerial orders which contain specific professional practice standards to guide teachers, in Alberta, with Indigenous curricula, as I introduced in chapter 1. In both of the Ministerial Order documents, requirement Competency 5 asks that as an Alberta educator, one "develops and applies foundational knowledge…historical, social, economic, political implications…about First Nations, Métis and Inuit". It requires educators apply this knowledge "competently" (Alberta Education, 2018b, p. 6), while "supporting student achievement" and "provide opportunities" to "develop knowledge" (Alberta Education, 2018b, p. 6). Educational leaders are asked to "enable all school and staff to gain knowledge and understanding through aligning resources and building capacity and also pursuing opportunities and engaging in practices" (Alberta Education, 2018a, p. 6). Both mandates set out what is required of educators and education leaders but neither states, directs, or guides them on how they are to achieve these stated goals, or what is defined as 'being' competent.

Publication and policy makers have created contributing documents which supports all educators, including non-Indigenous educators in accessing Indigenous curricula. Some publication references which follow are complete manuals that instruct educators in a step-by-step fashion on presenting Indigenous curricula in the classroom. Others have been created as ways for non-Indigenous educators to access Indigenous knowledge systems. Below I provide an overview of what some of these different government and policy documents offer as resources to educators regarding Indigenous curricula.

- *100 Ways of Indigenizing and Decolonizing Academic Programs* (Pete, 2016). This document contains a checklist of 100 ways to Indigenize and decolonize in education. It explains cultural helping roles, inclusion, protocol norms, work of **reconciliation**, barricades, and is culturally reflective because it is written by an Indigenous scholar and was not completed through consultation.
- *A Study of Aboriginal Teachers Professional Knowledge and Experience in Canadian Schools* (St. Denis, 2010). This document contains a study which examines philosophies of teaching, integrating Aboriginal content and perspectives into the curricula, racism and allies in education. It is a perspective of Aboriginal teachers that non-Aboriginal educators could learn from. It focuses on a **positive** perspective and acknowledging the lives of Aboriginal people, culture, and history.
- *Books to Build on: Indigenous Literatures for Learning* (University of Calgary, Werklund School of Education, 2023). This is an interactive website which is meant as a resource for educators to weave Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing into their teaching and learning. This resource is accessible to anyone who wants to expand their knowledge base regarding Indigenous topics with an easy to navigate search system.

This resource contains more than 150 teaching and learning ideas. Lesson plan ideas are included for K-12 and post-secondary education. This website is ever expanding with calls for new lesson plan contributions that relate to existing website material, or new materials not already included in the resource lists.

- *First Nations, Métis and Inuit School-community Learning Environment Project: Promising Practices* (Alberta Government, 2007). This document addresses barriers to accessing Indigenous knowledge systems and ways of overcoming them with school, students, and community engagement. Educator curricula and resources are provided within a framework which includes implementation and participation.
- *Our Way is a Valid Way: Professional Educator Resource* (Alberta Education, 2013). Several websites and resources are provided within this document. Topics of study include land, traditional ways of knowing, oral tradition, residential schools, and anti-racist/oppressive education. This publication sets out goals, responsibilities, understanding, meaning, and assessment criteria for educators. It includes classroom strategies and ideas for implementation. This document is not written specifically to non-Indigenous educators but to anyone who wishes to increase their knowledge and a desire to enhance their understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing.
- *Professional Learning Pebbles: Activities to Build Teachers' Foundational Knowledge* (The Alberta Teachers Association, 2017). This document demonstrates knowledge building exercises for educators. Each activity can be related to the TQS (Alberta Education, 2018b) requirements and what participation in each exercise supports as a competency. There are clear explanations of how to conduct each exercise which contain awareness, acknowledgement, atonement, and action supports.

- *Promising Practices within Diverse Educational Systems* (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, 2009). This document contains Indigenous knowledge as curricula. It includes provincial input from Alberta, Saskatchewan, NWT, and Nunavut educators.
- *Walking Together: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Perspectives in Curriculum* (Learn Alberta, 2010). This website was created for Alberta teachers as a resource to access in addition to the Indigenous curricula they are using in the classroom. Similar to the Medicine Wheel the teaching lessons begin in the east and proceed clockwise around the circle. Each section contains relevant resources to Indigenous teachings which include oral traditions, Elders, symbolism, connection to land, Indigenous pedagogy, culture and language, well-being, traditional environmental knowledge, kinship, Aboriginal and treaty rights and healing historical trauma.

Something I would like to highlight is that the list of resources discussed above each underwent thorough consultation with Indigenous Elders, knowledge keepers, and cultural advisors in the creation of their material. The access to learning and education resources which have been created in partnership with Indigenous People are, indeed, available to non-Indigenous educators. This availability is apparent by the above list, which is not complete or comprehensively inclusive of all resources. When reflecting on the availability of resources, I am evermore curious about what the possibilities and limitations for non-Indigenous educators in feeling confident to take up Indigenous curricula. My reflections lead me to ask the following:

A) *Are these resources enough? Or not enough? If these resources were created in partnership with Indigenous Elders, knowledge keepers, and cultural advisors is the content viewed as a reliable resource? Why or why not?*

B) *Why does there appear to be **hesitancy** by non-Indigenous educators to access material (online?) that is not directly from Indigenous education leaders? Is there something missing from within this material that non-Indigenous educators perhaps feel that they can only get from Indigenous education leaders directly and with personal communication?*

C) *In other words, what is creating conditions for non-Indigenous educators to continue to feel resources do not exist to support teaching Indigenous curricula?*

This section of my review has examined some of the government created resources that non-Indigenous educators have available to them and some of my curiosities emerging from my lived experiences and the selected literature reviewed.

Alberta education, policy and government documents (such as those discussed above) qualify as supports and systems of supports that all non-Indigenous educators have access to for information (Alberta Education, 2007, 2013, 2018; Alberta Learning, 2015; The Alberta Teachers' Association, 2017). This does not reflect individual support from government officials, nor does it represent any oppositions that may have been against implementation of policy and procedure at the government level.

Concluding Thoughts

The previous section addressed some of the resources that non-Indigenous educators have access to regarding Indigenous curricula. Government documents and policy guides have been written with the intention of being inclusive (Alberta Education, 2013; Alberta Education, First Nations, Métis and Inuit Services Branch, 2007). Knowing that there is a selection of material that can be easily accessed by non-Indigenous

educators led to me ponder the following questions regarding Indigenous pedagogy and how non-Indigenous educators' relationship with material manifests itself:

A) *How have non-Indigenous educators been introduced to Indigenous culture and curricula?*
B) *Does the accumulation of/access to Indigenous curricula content affect the subject area confidence of non-Indigenous educators?*
C) *Have non-Indigenous educators been taught Indigenous curricula as engaging and immersive? This would include learning about protocols, cultural practices, and traditions.*

The answers to some of these questions did come out in the stories that were told by the research partners. The reflective questions that I have included in my research are all related to my main question of discovering what the **emotional** experiences are of non-Indigenous educators and shape my curiosities when delving into the governing literature. The Indigenous material they have access to, how they approach the material and their personal commitment to teach Indigenous knowledge **respectfully** will have an impact on their teaching of it.

It is my position as a First Nations person and researcher, that Canadian education has a role to play in the act and promotion of **reconciliation**. This position is not one that I have in isolation, as it has been studied and written about by numerous others (Agbo, 2003; Antone, 2000; Battiste, 2000, 2005, 2013; Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Blakesley, 2012; Brayboy, 2000; Chung, 2016; Deer, 2013; Dion, 2007. 2016; Fontaine et al., 2015; Gaudry, 2016; Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018; Joseph, 2018; Joseph & Joseph, 2019; Justice, 2018; Kanu, 2002; King, 2003; Kovach, 2010, 2017; Ledoux, 2006; Little Bear, 2014; Matilpi, 2012; May & Aikman, 2003; Okineegish, 2015; Ottmann, (with Pritchard), 2010; Scott & Gani, 2018; Schmidt, 2019; Smith,

2012; St. Denis, 2007; Toulouse, 2016; Tuck & Yang, 2014; S. Wilson, 2008, 2011). Furthermore, I contend that First Nations, Métis, and Inuit People of Canada have a role to play in supporting non-Indigenous educators in the Indigenization of curricula. This sentiment was expressed in the TRCC (2015) final report that "together, Canadians must do more than just *talk* about **reconciliation;** [emphasis added] we must learn how to *practise* **reconciliation** [emphasis added] in our everyday lives" (p. 21). How individuals do this, and what motivates them to do so is also dependent on the support they receive from educators, politicians, Indigenous People, and parents in the process. It is for this reason that my own research comes from a strengths-based approach that believes that non-Indigenous educators can and should teach Indigenous curricula. I will address how my approach to the research was strengths-based in more detail, in particular through the visual representations, in the next chapter where I discuss my research approach and design.

Chapter 4: Research Approach and Design

I wish to remind the reader at this point that I have conducted a narrative inquiry which incorporates more than just the concepts of narrative inquiry. As you recall from the Introduction chapter, I have anchored my research as narrative inquiry in the concepts presented by Kim (2016). Other narrative inquiry researchers such as Clandinin et al. (2006), Clandinin and Connelly (2000) were important to this work as well. I have incorporated an Indigenist research approach with academics such as Archibald (2008), Battiste (2000), Kovach (2009) and Wilson (2008). I have provided stories and reflective pieces in this writing. I have also created visual representations of my research, some of which the reader has already encountered. The presentation of my research is also influenced by the stories shared by my research partners, and the reflective pieces shared by me. The following section which outlines the research design will provide a detailed context of this multi-faceted approach to this narrative inquiry.

The previous chapter of my research conducted an initial review of the literature as it applies to my research of the *Emotional Experiences of Non-Indigenous Educators Teaching Indigenous Curricula: Reconciliation Through Narrative Inquiry*. The following section will be specific to the methodology of my research. The following research design is presented in chronological fashion to show the processes that I went through in conceptual stages through execution of my research.

The methodology that shaped my research was narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin et al., 2007; Clandinin et al., 2018) within the broader field of qualitative research (Creswell, 2007; 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Creswell (2007, 2014) and Denzin and Lincoln (2018) write about narrative inquiry broadly as a form of methodology, while Clandinin (2006) and Kim (2016) provide details about how narrative inquiry functions as

a research method. This section will begin with a brief literature review as it applies to narrative inquiry, as a Western methodology, combined with Indigenous references to shape the particular sensibilities of the research approach. One excellent example of how these two worlds work together in narrative inquiry can be seen in the writing of Lessard et al. (2021) where the non-Indigenous authors related how they were affected by the experience of sharing time (p. 30), conversations (p. 32), and a reciprocity of relationships (p. 34) with Indigenous Elders. The research method I incorporated represents an interactive weaving together of story as it presents the non-Indigenous story of research partners with my story as First Nations researcher. This weaving together of stories reinforces my chosen method of narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2006) because it is a research process which allows for the inclusion of both Indigenous (Archibald, 2008) and non-Indigenous voices within its guidelines. In the words of Kovach (2009) "The current world of qualitative research is an inclusive place…the use of a self-reflective narrative research process, in conjunction with a philosophy that **honours** [emphasis added] multiple truths, is congruent with a research approach that seeks *nisitohtamowin* (a Cree word for understanding)" (p. 27). To finish this introduction to the chapter, I share how and why I came to narrative inquiry as a methodology for my research. Then, this chapter will articulate my particular approach to narrative inquiry methodology, limitations and delimitations, ethical considerations of conducting my research, data gathering, data analysis, and findings.

Coming to Narrative Inquiry

I have gone through a process of growth, discovery, reflection, and **emotional** experiences that has led me to conducting a narrative inquiry. As Varaki (2007) notes, "narrative inquiry is the process of gathering information through storytelling. Connelly and Clandinin (1990, p.6) noted that: 'humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and collectively

lead storied lives. Thus, the study of narrative is the study of the ways humans experience the world" (para. 5). In the beginning stages of this degree program there was no predetermined path as to what my methodology in conducting my research would or should be. In the very early stages of discussion with my supervisor the method that seemed to best fit with my choice of research topic was autoethnography. In examining autoethnography I briefly touched on narrative as a method within autoethnography, which introduced me to considerations of narrative in research methodologies.

The progression of my research and development of my topic and research question led to a closer examination of whether the correct choice for my research methodology would indeed be autoethnography. This examination of autoethnography and its application led me to realize it involved, to a large degree, the removal of non-Indigenous educators' stories, at least in the ways I was interested in capturing. The decision to not do an autoethnography left me questioning which research method would then be a better fit for my research goals towards **reconciliation** in action? Subsequent discussion with my supervisor led to the possibility of case study as method. In order to make a well-informed decision I had to review the process required for case study and some of the relevant literature. Through this, I discovered that case study would fit my research if I were willing to forgo centering the storytelling aspect of how I wanted to present the non-Indigenous educators' stories as they were presented to me. I did not want to conduct an interview with a predetermined list of questions that would limit or create barriers in what was included in the dialogue partners' stories as it did not feel right to me with regards to the aspects of my emerging research that mattered most.

It did not take long for me to realize that narrative inquiry would be the appropriate decision as my research method of choice. Kim (2016) situates narrative inquiry as follows:

> Using narrative as a phenomenon to understand multidimensional meanings of society, culture, human actions, and life, it attempts to access participants' life experiences and engage in a process of storytelling (Leavy, 2009). Polkinghorne (1988) believes that working with stories holds significant promise for qualitative researchers because stories are particularly suited as a linguistic form in which human experience can be expressed. Narrative inquiry utilizes interdisciplinary interpretive lenses with theoretically, philosophically diverse approaches and methods, all revolving around the narratives and stories of research participants. (p. 34)

Once this method was chosen as that which would best fulfill the type of research and results, I wanted to produce for my final research and dissertation writing it allowed me to delve into the world of possibilities in narrative inquiry. Ultimately, narrative inquiry and many of the functions within this method spoke to my research and how I wanted to present it. Through this process of identifying and committing to a methodology, consideration was always given to ensure the inclusion of my Indigenous story along with the non-Indigenous stories of the educators who joined me in this research process. It is important to note at this point that there are differences that follows in how I use the terms narrative, story, and dialogue. I have tried to refer to narrative as the method of inquiry, story as the partner's shared stories and reflections shared by me, and dialogue is used in reference to the dialogue sessions that were conducted between me and the research partners. There is a degree of **comfort** that resulted from settling on narrative inquiry and upon studying and acquiring more in-depth knowledge regarding narrative inquiry as a method I became much more **confident** in my choice as a researcher.

Situating Narrative Inquiry in the Research

There are numerous references that could conceivably be applied to this section of my writing. The key to choosing the appropriate references for my research requires a focus that includes both sides of the narrative inquiry that I am conducting, inviting narrative stories from non-Indigenous educators as well as my story as a First Nations researcher. The literature I chose to include, and omit, spoke directly to my research that would be inclusive in weaving both voices together, **honouring** the differences and relationship building necessary for reconciliation.

As I have already included a robust review of the literature on the central concepts and topics within my research, the literature that is included in this section consists of the literature that I have chosen to guide my research as a narrative inquiry.

There are several key actors found in the literature regarding narrative inquiry. The authors I have chosen for inclusion in my research have been chosen because they complement my previous literature review chapter and the writings by Indigenous authors included in this section. Key actors and publications I found regarding narrative inquiry that I have chosen for inclusion of my research include: Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin et al., 2007; Clandinin et al., 2018; Creswell, 2007, 2014; Denzin and Lincoln, 2018; Duff and Bell, 2002; Estefan et al., 2016; Kim, 2016; Martin, 2018; Varaki, 2007; Riley and Hawe, 2005. As stated by Varaki (2007) “Confusion often occurs in the discussion of narrative due to the fact that the term refers to both methodology and to the experience as a subject for studies” (para. 15). To avoid this confusion Varaki (2007) suggests using the term ‘narrative’ to describe method and ‘story’ to describe the phenomenon. I have committed to this differentiating of terms through my literature review and into my methodology section of writing.

Authors such as Clandinin and Connelly (2016) provide researchers with full chapters written about "What do narrative inquirers do?" (p. 48). Within this chapter Clandinin and Connelly (2016) discuss the "*three-dimensional narrative inquiry space* and the 'directions' this framework allows our inquiries to travel – *inward, outward, backward, forward, and situated within place*" (p. 49). This is similar to how I have positioned myself in my introductory section of this dissertation and incorporated the Medicine Wheel as a conceptual framework for my research.

It is important to be able to not only answer the question of what the purpose of a narrative inquiry is, but also answer the question of why researchers choose to do narrative inquiry. The detailed perspectives of why to conduct a narrative inquiry study is a major theme in the writing of Clandinin and Connelly (2016), Creswell (2007) and Kim (2016). According to the texts written by these authors those who choose narrative inquiry as a research method are as interested in *how* people story their experiences as they are in the stories themselves (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin et al., 2007; Clandinin et al., 2018). "Each study has its own rhythms and sequences, and each narrative inquirer needs to work them out for his or her own inquiry" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2016, p. 97). I looked forward to seeing the differences in both the content of and the ways in which stories were told by the non-Indigenous educators who became my research partners. The differences in their stories were indicative of their diverse perspectives and have implications for an important relational reminder that we all come to the path of reconciliation differently and have various learnings and unlearning to embrace along the way.

My reasons for the 'why' of narrative inquiry may be different than other researchers. Clandinin et al. (2018), for example, "highlighted the relational aspects of narrative inquiry…not

as describers of situations but as committed to a relational ontology, acknowledging we are in active relationships with participants. Narrative inquirers are studying our experiences in relation with the experiences of participants" (p. 17). This studying of experiences of researcher and participant is what drew my attention to narrative inquiry and why I feel it worked well with the aims of my research. Part of my justification includes the aspects of story and relationship that can be woven into my research being conducted with non-Indigenous research partners and my story as a First Nations researcher. The importance of narrative inquiry and providing it legitimacy as a qualitative study can be seen throughout any of the publications of the key actors in this research methodology: Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin et al., 2018; Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Clandinin et al., 2007; Estefan et al., 2016; Kim, 2016.

A number of authors have focused on writing narrative inquiry research design (Creswell, 2007, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Kim, 2016). These authors include how to conduct and write narrative inquiry as a method, by outlining the specifics of what is story, how theory is applied, data collection and analysis. Authors who write about research design include ways in which narrative inquiry is a methodology in qualitative research, with data collection methods such as biographical, autobiographical, oral history, and life history (Creswell, 2007, p. 55), data analysis including focusing on each account in its entirety rather than thematic parts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018, p. 552), and answering questions about validity and reliability addressed within a qualitative approach (Creswell, 2007, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Kim, 2016). I embrace Clandinin's (2006) notion that each narrative inquiry ought to be responsive to the particulars of the topic and relationships between research and participants. Later in this chapter, I will outline more specifically how my narrative inquiry was designed and unfolded.

Indigenous Sensibilities Within Narrative Inquiry

I have examined multiple studies with a variety of perspectives on narrative inquiry to provide validity and credibility to my own research and was particularly drawn to a small sample of Indigenous scholars who also used narrative inquiry as a method of research.

T. Cardinal (2014), identifying as Cree/Métis by heritage, conducted a narrative inquiry methodology as an Indigenous researcher. One difference between her research and my own is that she engaged with Indigenous participants.

Martin (2014) conducted a narrative inquiry from the Indigenous perspective of a Secwepemc researcher. She incorporated the metaphor of drumming into her research and writing. Like me, Martin (2014) also incorporated Indigenous knowledges into her research and writing. I qualify my research to be Indigenous because of the research topic which includes non-Indigenous educators' experiences teaching Indigenous curriculum topics, my identity as a First Nations person, and my overall goal towards **reconciliation**. As mentioned earlier in my writing I referred to how Martin (2014) had a synergy of methodologies in the way she conducted her narrative inquiry. This synergy can be seen in my narrative inquiry with the incorporation of Indigenous concepts.

Another inspiration for me conducting a narrative inquiry as an Indigenous researcher was Young (2003). She incorporated stories of those that joined her as a way of walking together. She included a section which wove the stories within her research together, similar to the way I have done in the conclusion chapter of this writing. She also incorporated a metaphorical beaver pelt in her writing. The weaving of stories that can be seen in Young's (2003) writing inspired me to believe that there are numerous ways that Narrative Inquiries can

present story. Regardless of our separate identities we have a commonality of being Indigenous and approaching our research from that perspective within the methodology of narrative inquiry.

The stories that are told in my research by non-Indigenous research partners manifested in them telling a slice of their life history and personal **emotional** experiences of engaging with Indigenous curricula. To gather the narratives, I conducted dialogue sessions which are outlined below which allowed partners to tell their story, in their own way.

The role that narrative inquiry has in my research is two-fold in that it will allow for non-Indigenous research partners to tell their stories and it will allow me to tell my story as a First Nations researcher. Denzin and Lincoln (2018) discuss how Sto:lo Nation author, Jo-ann Archibald [2008] showed how "educational structures and practices are changed when Indigenous stories and storytellers guide the way. By attending to the dynamic relationship between educational structures and actual classroom practices, Archibald's [2008] work exemplifies critical bifocality" (p. 555). Narrative inquiry allowed for my own story as a First Nations researcher to include aspects of Indigenous story, in the spirit of **reconciliation** being an action, that unites these stories of **emotional** experiences from Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives, woven together as a complete unit. This weaving occurred in the data analysis of the partners' stories that expressed their **emotional** experiences being incorporated with my own **emotional** and learning experience as I have progressed through the research process. I expect that my learning and growth as a First Nations person will continue to be affected as it already has been in this doctoral program.

Approach to Research

This section will examine how I conducted this research and will include examining what dialogue sessions are in this research process, conducting virtual dialogues, sampling methods

including how I accessed research partners, the recruitment processes, research partners' profiles, and data collection. Broadly, over the course of three months, I had a series of three dialogue sessions with three non-Indigenous educators. Each dialogue session built upon the first with a focus on the emotions that were expressed in response to the guiding question of, what are the **emotional** experiences of non-Indigenous educators teaching Indigenous curricula? In practice what this meant was, there was one prompt provided in which the dialogue partners responded and then deepened and expanded upon in subsequent sessions, with the third session also focusing on their experience of the dialogue sessions. After each dialogue session, as the researcher, I narrated my **emotional** responses to the narratives shared by the participants. Below I go into more specific details about how the research unfolded. After I describe who the participants are and how I recruited them.

Sampling Methods

Scope

The scope of my research did not allow for a large sampling size. With narrative inquiry, it is recommended that researchers keep the sample size small (Clandinin, personal communication, February 10, 2021; Duff & Bell, 2002, p. 210). Furthermore, with time restrictions placed on me by the doctoral program it was not possible for a large number of research partners to be recruited and allow for deep dives into the narratives shared by each person nor the relational emphasis I placed on getting to know the research partners. My goal was to recruit four research partners. In the end I recruited three research partners, and I became the fourth research partner. The decision for me to be the fourth research partner was the result of barriers to recruiting others, combined with the realization that I am as much of a research partner as I am the one conducting this research. Conversations which were reflective of this

concept convinced me that it was not out of the realm of possibility. Upon reflection of how and where I would fit into the Research in a Medicine Wheel (Figure 2), it became apparent that I did fit into the definitions of what the fourth partner would represent in the north quadrant.

Sampling

I started out purposefully seeking educators known to me who identify as non-Indigenous and were teaching Indigenous curricula. Even though some of research partners were acquaintances they were not in close relationships with me. An existing relationship with two of the three research partners, through purposive sampling, contributed to the relational aspect of my research. Research partners were recruited via email. My familiarity with particular non-Indigenous educators teaching Indigenous curricula helped me in approaching the initial invitees but was not an influence whether they agreed to join my research process. Research partners were required to have or be incorporating Competency 5 of the TQS (Alberta Education, 2018b, p. 6). My goal was to have at least one educator who has been teaching a number of years and has had to make changes to their practice due to the implementation of the TQS (Alberta Education, 2018b) requirements. I was hoping to contrast this with one teacher who has just recently started teaching and may have had Indigenous curriculum classes in their pre-service education. I did accomplish this goal in my recruitment, as Susie is a long-time teacher of 23 years and Elsi has recently graduated with her BEd and started teaching the year that we conducted our dialogue sessions.

I chose to solely focus on the non-Indigenous educators as I believe there may be similarities between the **emotional** experiences of non-Indigenous and Indigenous teachers, but Indigenous educators experiences come from a different place. These differences may be based on culture, teachings, and expectations of knowledge (McDermott et al., 2021). These

differences in Indigenous educators' **emotional** experiences are no less important than non-Indigenous educators' experiences. By accessing only non-Indigenous educators I am attempting to portray the connection and act of **reconciliation** that can occur between Indigenous researcher and non-Indigenous educators.

I focused my recruitment efforts on non-Indigenous educators in secondary contexts (grade 7-12). Teaching at this level requires educators to go into greater detail on topics of Indigenous knowledge and curriculum than in the elementary years. As Estafan et al. (2016) note, "**Tensions** also exist in relation to standards that are constructed for curriculum, content and teaching and learning practices…standards dictate what a professional practitioner must know and be able to do, and they dictate what and how they should be able to do this" (p. 26), which get increasingly more complex as you move into the junior and high school grades. For these reasons, I restricted my sampling to non-Indigenous educators who are implementing Competency 5 of the TQS (Alberta Education, 2018b, p. 6).

Accessing Research Partners

As I noted, I attempted to recruit educators who I know or that I was at least acquainted with. By doing this purposeful recruitment I have only those on-board who are committed, to my understanding, to the work of reconciliation. "Random sampling is a gold standard of quantitative research, but it is used minimally in qualitative research…our sampling tends to be more *strategic* and *purposive* because we are focusing on a case's unique contexts" (Miles et al., 2020, p. 28). Yet, my attempts to recruit partners through purposive sampling were not satisfactory, only receiving two teachers who agreed to participate. I then employed a snowball sampling method, through referral, to recruit one teacher who was new to the field, as I did not personally know any teachers at this career stage. In snowball sampling "the researcher asks

participants to identify others to become members of the sample…by using this process, however, you give up knowing exactly what individuals will be in your sample" (Creswell et al., 2019, p. 143). This required that I accept recommendations from family, friends and personal professional connections.

My intended purposeful sampling recruited partners who are **positive**, committed, and willingly contributing to **reconciliation**. Even though my research partners are committed to **reconciliation** they may not always have had **positive** experiences. This came through in their stories in that they were able to talk about both **good** and **bad** experiences. I created a written invitation to participate which was sent as a formal request to research partners (Appendix C) to share their **emotional** experiences with others through my research. After I provide an introduction to the research partners, I will outline how the three dialogue sessions with each participant unfolded in a more general sense.

Participants as Partners in Research

When I was beginning to write this thesis, I spent some time away from my home and focused on nothing but this research, alone, and undistracted. During this time away I reflected and thought about how I wanted my final written work to look, and how this would influence how it was read by others. During this time of reflection, I recalled attending a presentation by a professor where she presented her thesis, and the processes she went through to completion. It was during her talk that she commented on how many times the word "participant" is used when writing about those who join you in the research process. Because of this comment, I contemplated many titles that could be given to the people who are so willing to give of their time to contribute to a research project such as mine. At one point I contemplated calling Susie, Elsi, and Quinn "contributors to research", and/or "contributors to dialogue". This term did not

have the **feeling**, for me, that is needed when doing work that is **life-changing**, and very close to your **heart**.

Searching for references seemed to be a **futile** effort on my part in trying to find other researchers who have called "participants" in research "partners". I understood that many of the results I would encounter would be using the term partner in the traditional aspect of research partners being collaborators, creators of research design, work together through the analysis, and results of the research project. I did however find some projects that were completed which referred to participants as partners (Krusz et al., 2020; K. J. Wilson et al., 2020). These projects presented Indigenous People working with non-Indigenous people in research, and they are recent in relation to when I am writing this. It is possible that there is beginning to be a change in how Indigenous and non-Indigenous collaborations in research are being presented in literature.

These research studies (Krusz et al., 2020; K. J. Wilson et al., 2020), were conducted in areas of research outside of education. K. J. Wilson et al. (2020) study involved Inuit self-determination, and Krusz et al. (2020) examined decolonizing health research. The study conducted by Krusz et al. (2020) was the result of research that was conducted by non-Indigenous researchers who worked with Indigenous girls, regarding health, which they then provided reflection on. There is a similarity to my research in that Krusz et al. (2020) discussed how non-Indigenous researchers were approaching the research from where they were in their personal paths of decolonizing research (p. 207). I have asked the reader of this thesis to approach it in a way that reflects where they are on their personal path of **reconciliation** (see Papal Apology and Introduction sections for examples). Regardless of the topic of these studies, Krusz et al. (2020) and K. J. Wilson et al. (2020) show how different areas of research may be

changing how they address the Indigenous People that they are working with, and walking with, by calling them partners instead of participants.

When the word partner was flagged in early drafts of my thesis, I could recognize the potential confusion with participatory research—which this project was not. Yet, as I reflected on my decision to use the term "partners", my response was that I could not possibly have the results that I have without the contributions made by Susie, Elsi, and Quinn, which made them **feel** like partners to me, and not just participants. I am sure there are many who can relate to these sentiments but have not considered the title that others may hold in the written part of the research process as being something that could be changed.

I understand that using the phraseology of calling those who worked with me on this "research partners" has the potential to mis-signal a participatory project, yet the naming is purposeful and important in the work I am doing. This is why I am explaining my decision in such detail here to offset the potential misreading of my use of the term "research partners".

As stated by K. J. Wilson et al. (2020) "Indigenous Peoples want to conduct their own research, in their own way, in their own words, under their terms, and for their own purposes" (p. 131). This statement by K. J. Wilson et al. (2020) is connected to many that I have included in this writing such as S. Wilson (2008), Kovach (2009), and Gaudry (2015). According to K. J. Wilson et al. (2020) usually "it is ultimately the western researcher who decides what Indigenous knowledge is relevant" (p. 132). I feel that I am pushing back on this sentiment by the very nature of me deciding to go against the grain in how I have labelled Susie, Elsi, and Quinn as "research partners". The study referred to by K. J. Wilson et al. (2020) was non-Indigenous researchers training and mentoring the Inuit youth, who then conducted the research to address

the community's needs (p. 129). They saw the value in referring to the Indigenous youth as "partners" and not "participants".

In this writing, I have given the titles "research partners", "dialogue partners", and "partners in story" to Susie, Elsi, and Quinn. I **feel** that without the stories shared by my research partners this work would not be what it has come to be. They shared **intimate** parts of themselves, through their stories. I came into this research with the intention to emphasise the importance of how the relationship between me and the research partners would be examples for others, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to see how relationship matters in research interactions. Just as importantly, the willingness to share their narratives cultivated a space for relationship change; relationships between me and the research partners, relationships between the research partners and their efforts to teach Indigenous curriculum, and overall relationships to and as **reconciliation**. They also committed to meeting with me on three separate occasions to ensure that I would present them as accurately as possible in this writing. I **feel** that their contributions made them partners in my research. Another factor that influenced this decision for me was that I transitioned from researcher to research partner by becoming the fourth partner in this process. I also became representative for the fourth quadrant in the Medicine Wheel (Figure 19). I **hope** that in changing how I refer to the non-Indigenous educators who joined me in this research process to a title that is outside of the norm, that it may **inspire** other Indigenous, and non-Indigenous researchers to make similar changes in the future in how they acknowledge the partners they work with in research as another movement towards **reconciliation**.

Recruitment and Profile of Research Partners

The phase of contacting potential research partners began at the beginning of a new year. This was a fitting time to begin the recruitment process in my research. A new year, a new beginning, and the start of another phase of my research.

I already had settled on Susie and Quinn being the first potential partners to recruit for this research. Beyond those two persons I had a list of possibilities for potential research partners. I sent out a couple of emails to establish possible contacts with other school districts. Two of these emails were sent to inquire about possibly recruiting teachers within city school districts. The process, length of time, and information requests/requirements caused me to reconsider any potential research partners being recruited from any school district located within a major city, because the barriers that were created would prevent a fulsome exchange of stories. I did not want to risk having partners in dialogue with me that would feel like they were limited in what they could share.

Susie

My initial list for potential research partners always had Susie amongst the top choices. After a brief conversation with Dr. McDermott, I sent out an email with an explanation of what my research was using a template that I created and modified according to who I was speaking to (Appendix B), and an Invitation to Participate (Appendix C). This email request was responded to by Susie within three hours. Susie was **happy** to join me in my research. She asked if she needed to get permission to participate. After I emailed her back, I had indicated that she might have to have permission from her principal. She emailed me back within two hours of my second email to her. She had contacted her principal to inquire about procedures and had already been granted permission to participate in my research. This email exchange occurred late in the week.

By the following Monday Susie had the consent form and had filled it out and sent it back. At this point in my recruitment process, I was thinking that there is no way that it could be this easy. There are so very many researchers who are always telling the **horrible** stories of how difficult it is to recruit people into your research.

It was in these first few days that Susie inquired with me on whether I was looking to contact any other educators for my research, as she had referrals for me. I did follow up with one of these potential people. As it turned out they were located within a city school district and the process that was required by this district was a lengthy and complicated process which required a significant amount of information from me with applications and submissions needed. This school district also had set out time frames for research participants to be accepted into research and times that they could participate. The restrictions that this would place upon my research made me decide to not pursue this avenue as a possible research partner contact.

Susie was very quick to respond to my request. So, it should not have been a surprise that she was also eager to schedule our first dialogue session. Our first dialogue session was scheduled in the following week. From initial contact to first dialogue session the timeline was only twenty days.

Susie is a friend; someone I have known for several years. We met through our educational journeys. When I was in the process of designing my research proposal and what my research partners would ‘look’ like I always had Susie in my mind. I knew the type of person that I wanted to join me in my research process and Susie was always the reference in my head that I would go to. Susie had many years of experience and stories which I knew by her personality that she would be open, and willing to share with me. I knew that if she agreed to

join me and I could find others like her, in demeanor, attitude, tenacity and dedication to their teaching careers that my research process would be smooth.

Susie is a long-time educator in a community outside of Calgary, Alberta. She has been teaching for twenty plus years. She is a wife and mother. She teaches high school level classes. Her area of expertise is in social studies, fashion, and cosmetology. She has had the privilege of teaching numerous Indigenous students throughout her career. Her role as a fashion teacher has allowed her to share in the making of ribbon skirts for many of her Indigenous students, which she speaks of fondly.

Elsi

On the same day that I sent the initial emails to Susie and Quinn, I sent an additional email to my friend who was the referral for Elsi. The time that it took from this email contact to the first email that I sent directly to Elsi was eleven days. There were many emails exchanged to facilitate this contact for Elsi to be recruited as a partner in my research.

After contact was established, I sent an initial email to Elsi to introduce myself and my research topic. This email also included the Invitation to Participate (Appendix C). She responded and said that she was interested in participating. It was during this process that I began to take note that not only was my research reinforcing existing relationships, but it was also creating new relationships. I could see how my research was changing relationships as well. A new teacher agreeing to become a partner in my research was something I was **hoping** for, but I could not have anticipated, because when I began the recruitment process, I did not know any new teachers. I thought that I would be recruiting educators who were established in their careers and would have many stories to tell about their experiences in teaching for years. I came to realise that a new teacher would have different types of stories to tell, but they were just as

important as the teachers who had years of memories to share. Elsi bought a new perspective to my research which I might have missed had she not agreed to join in this research.

The initial introduction meeting with Elsi we began with a **comfortable** camaraderie. Upon seeing each other there was an instant connection made with the colours in our hair. We both had a brighter colour than normally worn by most people. This initial meeting was for both of us to get a **feel** for each other and decide whether her joining this research project would work, for both of us. We established an immediate **comfort** with each other. She did ask me in this initial meeting if there was a certain kind of story that I was looking for her to provide for this research. I assured her at this time that she was free to talk about whatever she felt **comfortable** with and only what she wanted to share with me. I had to be careful during this conversation that I did not direct her in any way about what she would share in our dialogue sessions. I reviewed the process we would be sharing together as dialogue partners. I reaffirmed that she would be provided anonymity throughout the process. Elsi and I both agreed at the end of our introduction meeting that she would be a good fit for my research and that we were **happy** to go forward with booking the first dialogue session.

Elsi is younger than the other research partners. She is single, with no children. She had just graduated from her BEd and moved to begin her first position in her teaching career. She moved to an Indigenous community in the northern part of Alberta. She left behind her family and friends in the city of Calgary to create a different life, and a new adventure, for herself.

Quinn

On the same day that I sent the initial email to Susie, I also sent one to Quinn. Quinn was another contact that I had **hoped** would agree to become a partner in my research because I knew

that he would provide an interesting array of stories and experiences which would be different from the others, mainly because of his position in the school he was in and his personal history.

Like Susie, Quinn also responded to my contact email almost immediately. Although Quinn was the second email contact and was also the second one to join me in my research process, he became what is shown as the third research partner within my Research in a Medicine Wheel (Figure 19) and Medicine Wheel Word Cloud (Figure 12). The reason that he presented as the third partner is that his first dialogue session occurred after the first dialogue session with Elsi.

Quinn was **happy** to be a part of my research. He also required that my flexibility for him to participate be greater than the other two partners. One of the reasons this flexibility was needed was that he has a young child, which always takes precedence. I was very up front with how forgiving my schedule could be in cancelling and rescheduling dialogue sessions as needed. In the process of scheduling dialogue sessions Quinn became sick with Covid-19. The precautions of having online Zoom sessions became an important part of my research being designed in the way that it was to account for this possibility. Quinn was required to get approval from his school district in order to participate. This created a gap between the initial contact to first dialogue session of just over one month. The delay caused by him being sick pushed his second and third dialogue sessions to be completed in the final phases of my data collection.

Quinn was a former acquaintance of mine, like Susie, we met through my education journey. Quinn and I were in an education program together for a couple of years, where we became partners in presentations and class collaborations. Quinn is the type of person that I would run into and would feel the need to catch up with to find out how he was doing, regardless of how long it had been since our last encounter. Quinn was always vocal about his experiences

with Indigenous students and the Indigenous community he shared with them through the school he worked in. I knew that with his previous willingness to be open about his experiences and sharing his life-experiences that he would be open and candid with me if he agreed to be a research partner. It was for this reason that I had him on my list of possible candidates to be research partner with me at this stage of my education journey.

Quinn is a former teacher who had moved into the role of Principal about three years prior to my research. He was married and had recently become a new father. Although he works in an Indigenous community, he does not live within the community itself. He has been a part of the community for a number of years and has an established relationship with those he works with in the community, other educators, and students; both Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

Fourth Research Partner

I had many people offer to send referrals to me for my research partners. I had initially though I would have three partners. Then I realized that I could easily have four partners as that would also align with the quadrants in the Research in a Medicine Wheel: Final Diagram (Figure 23).

I had offers as referral through local school divisions within the city of Calgary. I had one offer to recruit from within a school division located within the city of Edmonton. I sent out numerous emails to inquire about the process in each of the school divisions which were possibilities for referrals. All responses indicated that the recruitment process would be lengthy with requests to provide information which included my research proposal for full review. Avoiding s lengthy process which may not have had the desired outcome proved to be serendipitous because I did not force the research to occur, it was allowed to develop naturally. I became **comfortable** in the process that the path for my research to occur would be revealed to

me, instead of me forcing something that may have been a **detriment** to me and the research. Some of the school divisions required that potential research participants not be contacted until after my application was complete and approved. The amount of time that would add to the process of finding a fourth partner was not **encouraging**.

It was during a discussion with my husband about the **frustration** around finding a fourth partner that we discussed the possibility of me being the fourth partner in my research. It was becoming commonplace for me to discuss a concept within my research process such as this and have a meeting with Dr. McDermott within days. This was no exception. I met with her shortly after this discussion and she suggested during that meeting that I should consider being the fourth partner in my research. Many of our meetings and discussions were used by me as a confirmation that I was going in the right direction with my process. Dr. McDermott helped me to think about how I would approach this concept within my research process. I had already looked at the Medicine Wheel (Figure 9) and could see how I would fit into the north quadrant.

Data Collection

The primary method of data collection was a series of three, one-on-one dialogue sessions with each research partner, which allowed them to share their emotional experiences teaching Indigenous curricula. These dialogue sessions might otherwise be considered interviews: I have chosen to name them Dialogue Sessions to align with the concept of story being more informal and conversational than a question-and-answer type of interview.

A secondary data set was initially considered as a possibility which would have included artifacts that the partners were invited (but not required) to bring with them to the dialogue sessions. Unfortunately, none of the participants elected to share any artifacts, which constitutes a limitation of the study, and causes me to ask why they did not decide to share any artifacts.

Perhaps they felt more compelled to tell their narratives, whatever it was, I do believe a future study could place more emphasis on collecting artifacts. These artifacts were considered as possible venues to help illustrate the ways in which the non-Indigenous educators take up Indigenous curricula in their teaching practices. There were no artifacts presented to me by any of the research partners during any of the dialogue sessions, yet I leave the desire for them as articulated in the design, so the reader can have a better sense of what was intended and what actually took place.

Dialogue Sessions

This section will address the framework that my dialogue sessions followed. Most literature refers to 'interviews' being conducted with participants of a research project. The literature that I direct the reader to in references will use this term, but for the purposes of my research I refrained from calling my process interviews. I used the terms *discussion, dialogue sessions,* and *conversations*. As stated in the earlier section of this chapter, the term "participant" in my research process and writing is not used, and I have used the terms "research partner" and "dialogue partner" in its place.

Kim (2016) provides a summary of the types of interviews that researchers may access. This includes "structured interviews", which include close-ended questions, have no flexibility, short answers, and are like an oral questionnaire. The second type is a "semi-structured" interview (Kim, 2016). This includes general questions that are guided, it is good for specific answers, and follows the lines of a traditional survey interview. The third type is an "unstructured" interview. This is an open-ended interview. It consists of a grand-tour question which presents the general topic. The interviewee is not guided or limited (p. 253). I followed the open-ended style of interview format laid out by Kim (2016) as it best aligned with my research

as narrative inquiry. The dialogue sessions lent more to my research in that research partners did not feel as though they had to answer a set of questions or follow a certain script.

In alignment with narrative inquiry, I anticipated that these dialogue sessions would be reflective, provide a personal narrative of educators, and include a variety of **emotional** experiences which included **positive** experiences as well as the **frustrations** and concerns they face in teaching Indigenous curricula. As I noted, the format of these dialogue sessions was meant to be informal. I did not incorporate a list or guiding questions for research partners. It was my intention for the partners to **feel** that they may freely go in whichever direction their story led them. My role as the researcher was that I would redirect the narrative if the partner had gone too far away from the focus of the research topic, but this was not necessary. As much as possible, I limited my interaction with the narrative so that I did not interrupt the flow or distract from the direction that the story was taking. For example, as I discuss later, after the rewatching the first dialogue session, I decided to turn off my microphone so that my audible reactions would not be heard by the participant. I felt that if I attempted to guide the direction of the story, I may remove some of the intended content, particularly given my role as an Indigenous researcher seeking stories from non-Indigenous educators. According to Kim (2016) "an emphasis should be placed in the quality rather than the quantity of the interviews…Kvale suggests a minimum of three rounds of open or in-depth life story interviews…the adequacy of the sample is not determined solely by the number of informants, but by the appropriateness of the data" (p. 251). I followed this recommendation as it worked well with my research and what I **hoped** to achieve in my interactions with research partners. I intended to collect stories of quality, as referred to above by Kim (2016) that would enrich my research results. My chosen partners were asked to meet with me directly for three dialogue sessions as outlined below.

Dialogue Session I: Narration Phase

The first dialogue session consisted of an online meeting in which the partner was invited to share their story and **emotional** experiences on being a non-Indigenous educator who is teaching Indigenous curricula. As Yuan and Lee (2016) wrote, "By constructing and telling their own narratives, people can give explanations to their actions, make sense of their relationship with others, reflect on the past and plan for the future, express and manage their **emotions**, and therefore, construct and reconstruct their identities" (p.823), hence why I followed an unstructured, open-ended style of dialogue session. This type of discussion has "no set agenda other than to listen to whatever your interviewee wants to tell you" (Kim, 2016, p. 254). Research partners knew that I would be asking for them to talk of their **emotional** experiences prior to engaging in our first dialogue session. This knowledge helped them to be more **comfortable** in reflecting some of the experiences they have had. This first session was defined by partners' reflections and story of their **emotional** experiences. It was video (due to the technology, Zoom), and audio recorded for the purpose of transcription and analysis. The anticipated time commitment was expected to be approximately 1 hour, but I did allow for up to two hours of time for this session. The one-hour time limit proved to be adequate for all of the partners.

I anticipated that there would be a variety of **emotions** expressed in this first dialogue session, and so I planned to avoid interrupting the partner's storying if they were talking about sensitive **emotional** recollections. I can attest to how **emotional**ly charged this experience has been for me as a First Nations person proposing to research this topic. I expected the non-Indigenous research partners' experiences to be similar in scope in their lived experiences as educators in Alberta schools. The first session was transcribed, and the transcription was sent to

the partners before the second session occurred. This provided time for review and reflection before we met again. I asked the research partners to take notes or mark-up the transcription so that they might have more details that they might want to discuss in the second session. I speak more about this in the more detailed description of each dialogue session as it unfolded.

Dialogue Session II: Conversation Phase

My role as researcher shifted in this second phase of the dialogue sessions. In this session my role as the researcher became more participatory as I became a part of the conversation alongside the research partners. This was done through discussion regarding what they said in their first dialogue session, where partners could clarify what they may have meant by things they shared in the first dialogue session. Through this discussion, the research partners and I ultimately co-authored the meaning of the **emotional** experiences presented in the narratives. Yuan and Lee (2016) stated that "Narrative inquiry is an effective means of 'getting at what teachers know, what they do with what they know and the sociocultural contexts within which they teach" (p. 820), and so we worked together to review and reflect on what was said in the first session to ensure there was no misrepresentation or misinterpretation of their **emotional** experiences. This second session was also recorded, and transcription was provided to the research partners before the third session occurred.

Dialogue Session III: Reflection and Debrief Phase

The main purpose of this session was a reflecting and debriefing session. In the third dialogue session we reviewed the second transcript together as an enactment of **reconciliation**. This co-review allowed for the research partners to clarify further insights into the previous conversation session(s) which lent to a further avoidance of a misrepresentation or misunderstanding of what the original stories were from dialogue session one. I anticipated that

there would be a variety of **emotions** expressed by the research partners through the storytelling process: “While **emotions** can inform and define teachers’ professional and personal identities, identity can in turn guide and shape teachers’ **emotional** decisions and reactions…**emotions** emerge from various aspects of teachers’ professional lives, such as their classroom teaching” (Yuan & Lee, 2016, p. 821). I wanted to ensure that each partner was allowed the opportunity to reflect with me on the experience of participating in my research; the time together to build relationship was important in helping to understand the implications of the **emotional** experiences expressed in the narratives. I also wanted research partners to **feel** that they had benefited from the experience. Furthermore, they may find a renewed commitment to Indigenous curricula approaches. This final session was recorded and transcribed but not used in dialogue with research partners; transcriptions were used only for review and clarification of thoughts that the partners expressed, with the exception of Susie where I did use a portion of her third transcription for clarity of topic as the reader will find in a later chapter. The other reason this dialogue session was not used as part of my data analysis is that it was also meant to be a debrief for partners, a way to close the circle and give back to the partners. I used this discussion to ensure that there were no lingering effects of the process of expressing the **emotional** commitment that is made by non-Indigenous educators in teaching Indigenous curricula. While the **emotions** experienced after participating in this research were as varied as what was told in their stories I would be going beyond the scope of my research if I included the after-effects of **emotions**. This could be a possible topic of research for a different research project which allows for a longer and more detailed analysis of what this type of experience holds for research partners. It is my responsibility as a researcher to ensure that I have caused no **harm** to research partners, and this is one way that I completed my due diligence in this. In the findings chapter,

you will get a more specific picture of how the process worked through my telling of the chronological unfolding of the dialogue sessions. This will flesh in the ways I made particular decisions as the relationships and conversations were taking place.

Virtual Dialogue

When I began this doctoral program there were no serious safety or health concerns. At the time that I am writing this dissertation we have moved past the variety of lockdowns and restrictions which were in place for Covid-19. The process of completing the dialogue sessions occurred near the end of these restrictions and dictated that I would continue with my dialogue sessions online. As discussed by Clandinin et al. (2007) "Connelly and Clandinin (2006) identified three commonplaces of narrative inquiry – temporality, sociality, and place – which specify dimensions of an inquiry space" (p.23). Creating research around the research design of narrative inquiry has changed my way of thinking about the approaches that can be taken in conducting research. "Story is one of the most basic ways that the human brain structures and relates human experience. Everything that humans do, and experience revolves around some kind of story" (Cajete, 2017, p.115). Conducting a personal reflection that includes the aspect of storytelling has changed my way of thinking and is reflected in my research. Stories and personal reflection of one will never be the same as the next person. With Indigenous researchers, similarities may exist due to cultural teachings. It must be recognized that space and place can make those teachings differ as well. Huber et al. (2016) commented on this changing process:

> *Subjects* in human research are no longer treated as fixed in place, that is, as static, atemporal, and decontextualized. When drawing on the methodology of narrative inquiry, which explores stories, narratives of experience, as the phenomenon of interest, narrative inquirers 'embrace a rational understanding of the roles and interactions of the researcher

> and the researched'…understanding stories as *data,* moving toward the particular from the universal, and an acknowledgement of the blurred, tentative, and multiple ways of knowing…in this shift towards understanding experience, experience is understood as 'the stories people live'. People live stories and in the telling of them, modify them, and create new ones. (p.217)

Conducting a narrative method as personal storytelling and reflection does not necessitate that the researcher has direct interactions with others.

Zoom is the current online platform that is used by many, including UCalgary, to conduct online interactions. It allows for video and audio recording. As in a face-to-face interview, online session included recordings via Zoom. Proper handling of Zoom and audio files ensure that confidentiality is maintained. All video and audio recordings were downloaded on a password protected computer with an encrypted hard drive.

There are **positive** aspects of conducting Zoom sessions online for data collection. With the ongoing usage of online applications such as Zoom for conducting meetings the proposal of conducting interviews in an online format was something that educators were accustomed to when I approach my potential research partners with the concept. My expectation was that partners would be **comfortable** with the online setting and interactions as it had become the only way of creating personal connections for many over the pandemic.

Online sessions were my proposed primary form of data collection to ensure that partners did not feel they were at risk of Covid-19 exposure at any time that they were participating in my research. This contributed to their **emotional wellbeing**. Furthermore, this approach allowed me to be in dialogue with folks from a much wider area in Alberta as there was no need to travel for

an in-person interview. I focused on conducting online discussion with partners to maintain consistency throughout my research project.

Data Processing and Emotive Analysis

The way in which I used the data that I collected helped to define my research. My research did not engage in data reduction: "Thematic analysis…involves the open coding of data i.e., the building of a set of themes to describe the phenomenon of interest by putting 'like with like'…the researcher looks for patterns in the data, labels them and groups them accordingly" (Riley & Hawe, 2005, p. 229). This approach to coding was not incorporated in my data analysis process as "thematic analysis…de-contextualizes the data" (Riley & Hawe, 2005, p. 229). Instead, I focused on in vivo coding (Miles & Saldaña, 2020) because of my interest not only in what **emotions** showed up in the narratives, but also how they showed up; in other words, it was important for me to stay true to how the research partners talked about **emotions** in their own words. I believe that I was able to maintain the integrity of the **emotions** included in the stories that were told by emphasizing *how* the research partners narrated their experiences, which is a core feature of Narrative Inquiry (Clandinin, 2006) and Indigenous Storywork (Archibald, 2008). The goal of my research was to present the **emotional** experiences as they were told in the purest form possible.

My form of data analysis incorporated a type of sense-making that did not require me to dramatically change, reduce, or analyze the stories that my partners provided, instead, by sitting with the words of the research partners, returning to them to co-author some sense-making and then visually representing the core of each of their narratives (see the braids I created in the conclusion chapter) I was able to maintain the different but linked narratives of **emotional** experiences from each of the participants. I incorporated a style of **emotive** sense-making for my

data analysis; however, I returned to the stories to the fullness of their telling in my writing. "According to Connelly and Clandinin (2000), teacher identity can be interpreted in terms of 'stories to live by' (p.4) which are fraught with various **emotions**, both **positive** and **negative**" (Yuang & Lee, 2016, p. 823). My focus was on the emotive components of the stories; how the stories were told and what **emotions** were included and expressed through the stories. As "Narrative analysis begins from the standpoint of storyteller" (Riley & Hawe, 2005, p. 229), I did not wish to analyze the stories by dissecting them or re-creating them in any way. This concept was reinforced by Riley and Hawe (2005) in the following passage:

> Narrative inquiry attempts to understand how people think through events and what they value. We learn this through a close examination of how people talk about events and whose perspectives they draw on to make sense of such events. This may reveal itself in how and when particular events or activities are introduced, how **tensions** are portrayed, and in how judgments are carried out…a narrative approach looks closely at the sentences constructed by the storyteller and the information and meaning they portray…thinking about the context of the storytelling is another important feature of narrative inquiry…data emerges from within the relation between the teller, the listener and the context of the telling of the story. (pp. 229-230)

I also avoided the process of "smoothing" stories. Smoothing is explained by Kim (2016) as follows:

> Narrative smoothing is a necessary method that many narrative researchers…use to make our participant's story coherent, engaging, and interesting to the reader. It is like brushing off the rough edges of disconnected raw data. However, it can also be problematic because it involves certain omissions, such as the selective reporting of some data (while

> ignoring other data), or the lack of context due to the researcher's assumption that what is clear to him or her will also be clear to the reader. (p. 291)

I intended to draw meaning from the **emotions** expressed in the stories that were told by asking research partners to explore the meaning of what they have said in the first dialogue session. This required that my second session with each partner clearly defined what they meant by the words they use, and the context of the stories they told be presented correctly, hence the importance of the second two dialogue sessions. I did *not* incorporate methods of data analysis, that would require me to alter the story as told by my research partners. I felt that this would not do them, or my research justice. I wished for the partners' stories to live in the context and with the **emotional** complexities in which they were told as much as possible.

I anticipated that the range of emotions expressed would range from **frustration** and **anger** to **joy** and **pleasure**. Other anticipated **emotions** were **happiness**, **sadness**, **hope**, **excitement** (success), **fear**, **terror** (misrepresentation/appropriation) and **apprehension** of being a non-Indigenous educator teaching Indigenous curricula. One such study, conducted by Yuan and Lee (2016) focused on teachers' **emotions** categorized their results in groups as follows: "**excitement** and **anxiety**" [emphasis added] (p. 827); "**shock** and **guilt**" [emphasis added] (p. 828); "**joy** and **pride**" [emphasis added] (p. 829); "**anger** and **frustration**" [emphasis added] (p. 831); "**disillusionment** and **determination**" [emphasis added] (p. 832). Building my analysis through identifying **emotions** enabled me to maintain the structure and integrity of the stories themselves and create **emotions** categories similar to Yuan and Lee (2016) as they speak to the non-Indigenous partners' narratives in this research.

Placing Trust in Narrative Inquiry

Conducting multiple sessions with each research partner lends to the credibility of narrative inquiry, to ensure that the partners' **emotional** story is represented consistently within my research. "Central to the achievement of trust and rapport is the researcher's **genuine caring**, [emphasis added] interest, and respect for the participant's human dignity and integrity" (Kim, 2016, p. 253). It is important that my research process maintains the true nature of the research partners' stories to provide them with the **respect** and representation that they would expect of me as a researcher.

Narrative inquiry as a methodology within qualitative research has proven to be effective for other researchers (Martin, 2018; Varaki, 2007). As stated by Varaki (2007) "Inquirers should select and justify the chosen criteria" (sec. 4) for their research. For my research topic, the theoretical aspects of narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2006) are needed, which includes an examination of trustworthiness. Narrative inquiry requires flexibility in how it is presented in research, as stated by Clandinin (2007) "in narrative inquiry it is important to always try to understand people, places, and events as in process, as always in transition" (p. 23).

This flexibility and transition is present in my research. Research partners worked alongside me as I approached my data analysis in ensuring that their stories are **respectfully** presented in my research results. The concept of transition and change does not remove credibility from the stories that were told in narrative inquiry. It provides credibility that lived experiences are constantly changing and in motion. As stated by Clandinin et al. (2007) "specified another dimension of the sociality commonplace as the relationship between participant and inquirer…inquirers are always in an inquiry relationship with participant' lives.

We cannot subtract ourselves from relationship" (p. 23). The relationship I have as researcher with my research partners, remained intact from the beginning to end of the research process.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) stated that "like other qualitative methods narrative relies on criteria other than validity, reliability, and generalizability. It is important not to squeeze the language of narrative criteria into a language created for other forms of research". They continued on this thought process by introducing possible criteria as being "apparency and verisimilitude", which puts emphasis on recognizability in the field, "transferability" which takes the emphasis off generalizability, "avoiding the illusion of causality" which removes a cause-and-effect relationship. The **good** qualities of narrative inquiry were stated to include "explanatory, invitational qualities, **authenticity**, [emphasis added] adequacy and plausibility" (p. 184-185).

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) wrote a descriptive of what narrative is and related it to food. This is an area that I enjoy and can relate to. They stated the following:

> We found ourselves searching for a metaphor to help convey our meaning. We likened narrative form to a *soup.* Imagine for a moment a rich steamy soup, filled with various chunks and pieces of vegetables, rice, and noodles. Imagine another soup of slightly different ingredients, different amounts, different sized chunks, spiced in other ways. As we begin to play with the metaphor of soup, we realize that like the soups there could be different ingredients in our narrative pots…Sometimes, the container in which the soup is put is clearly laid out. For example, the shape of the container may seem clear. Perhaps we are writing a dissertation in a department or university where a form is specified…the container establishes the form for us, and we work within that form to write our narrative inquiry text (p. 155)

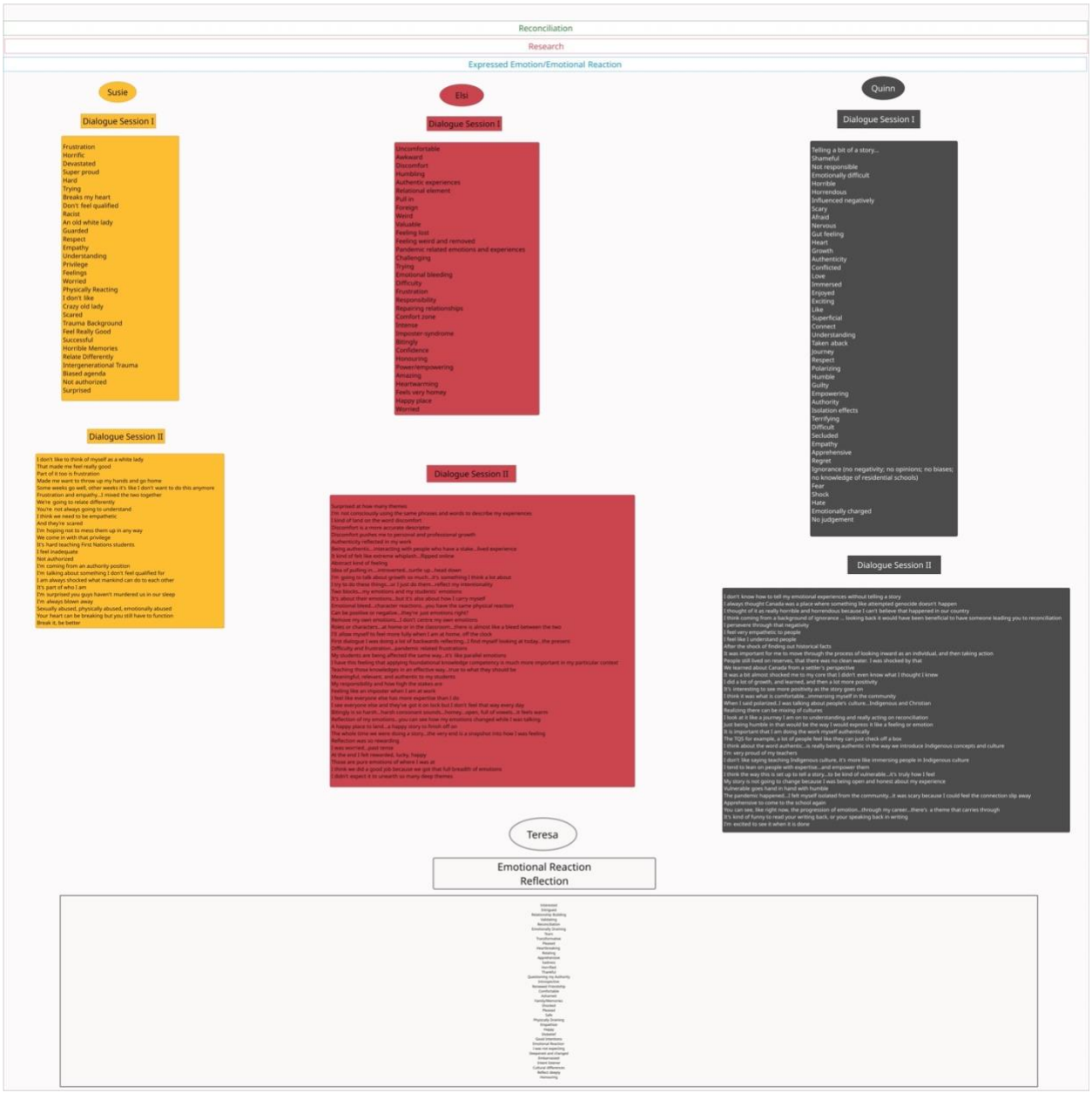
This analogy of soup and narrative perfectly sums up how I have approached this research. It also serves as the perfect metaphor for the different ingredients that were provided to my pot of soup by me and my research partners. This analogy provides the component of trust that is needed when doing a narrative study. It is required that one must recognise, that like soup, narratives are not going to all be the same, even though they all may be classified as soups. The differences that are required to be present for my soup to still be soup but not the same soup as another researcher is why I chose to do a narrative inquiry for my research. The next section discusses how I have visually presented my soup/narrative inquiry.

Visually Presenting Expressed Emotions as an Interpretive Analysis

In continuing with the visuals that I had already created I produced a figure which identifies the emotions expressed by the research partners in their dialogue sessions (Figure 10). This diagram includes a list of single words from first dialogues sessions and a list of phrases from the second dialogue session which directly correlate to the first dialogues sessions words list. The colours that are used are the same ones assigned to each research partner as they are placed within the Research in a Medicine Wheel (Figure 2). This was done to create a consistency in how the research partners are presented within the different diagrams that I created for this research. This diagram was the initial stage of how the Research in a Medicine Wheel (Figure 2) came to be. Like everything in this research, the development of ideas and visual concepts were created by working through the stages and processes of the research requirements.

Figure 10

Research Data Themes



My initial reaction to the **emotive** analysis after they were presented visually was that the list of words that I created from the first dialogue session with Susie was much shorter than the lists of the other partners. The stories that Susie told were longer and more detailed than those of

the other partners in how she related her **emotional** experiences. The list is created from her first dialogue session. The words and phrases are her own words and expressions, unchanged. I created groups of words and phrases that were same or similar, even though they may not have been expressed consecutively. The list of words and phrases created to represent Susie may appear to be short but the impact they had in our first dialogue session still lingers with me to this day.

In keeping with the way in which I have created visuals for reference, such as the Research in a Medicine Wheel (Figure 2), as a conceptual framework, I created a Findings in a Medicine Wheel Word Cloud (Figure 12) as a part of my emotive analysis. I created a word cloud as a way to visually map the **emotions** expressed in the dialogue sessions, being sure to keep the particular words of each research partner together, as represented by the same colour relating to their quadrant in the Medicine Wheel. I am inserting the initial phases of how I created this Findings in a Medicine Wheel Word Cloud (Figure 12) so that the reader might get a glimpse into the stages of creation that became crucial to my sense-making and analysis of the narratives shared with me.

As it happened often in my research process, I was having a meeting with my supervisor, Dr. McDermott when she asked if I had considered a word cloud for the findings as I described my approach to highlighting the **emotional** experiences in the transcripts from the first dialogue session. Many of our conversations validated the processes which I was considering in how to present this research. The Findings in a Medicine Wheel Word Cloud (Figure 12), which follows in its completed form represents the findings as individual words that were pulled from the dialogue sessions. These words were chosen to represent each research partner in the best way possible.

I began this process by creating a basic Medicine Wheel diagram which contains four quadrants within a circle. I followed the same design specifications as the Medicine Wheel that I created to represent my research. In the same way that I assigned each of my contributors to a quadrant within the Research in a Medicine Wheel (Figure 9) I placed each contributor within the same quadrants of the Findings in a Medicine Wheel Word Cloud (Figure 12).

The process which is outlined above had me creating a list of words from each contributors' stories from each of their first dialogue sessions. I took the individual words and phrases that I identified and randomly placed these words within the quadrant that was assigned to each contributor. I used *only* the words and small phrases that were identified from dialogue session one. I used the words from my own created list of words which reflected my **emotions** and reflection in the process of my research.

The next step in this process was that I created text boxes around each of the word and phrase that was chosen for each quadrant. I colour coordinated the textboxes to match the quadrant assigned to each contributor. The east quadrant which is yellow has highlighted words in yellow text boxes, to match Susie's words; the south, red quadrant has text boxes that match Elsi's words; and the west, black quadrant, contains text boxes to match Quinn's words. The north and white quadrant of the Medicine Wheel represent me, and my words list, as the fourth contributor to my research.

Medicine Wheel Word Cloud Creation Phase

After I had placed the words and phrases within each quadrant and had highlighted them according to each contributor, I manually moved each word into categories outside of the Findings in a Medicine Wheel Word Cloud (Figure 11). In doing this I landed upon eight separate categories of words. Each of the partners was represented within each category. These

categories were determined by the type of **mood** being expressed. **Negative** words were separated from **positive** words, and then **negative** words that were expressly more **negative** were separated further. For example, words such as '***horrific***' and '***horrendous***' were not in the same category as 'difficulty' and '*hard*'.

Figure 11

Medicine Wheel Word Cloud Creation Phase

After creating the main categories I had to decide which became the most important to represent the main word within the word cloud that would also best represent my research. I evaluated each group and decided that the words that related to each other that were most representative of '***thankful***' where the words that would become the main word in each quadrant. I chose to use the word ***thankful*** as the main, and most important word to represent me

in my quadrant because it best represented the **emotional** impact that the three research partners had on me personally, and my research process.

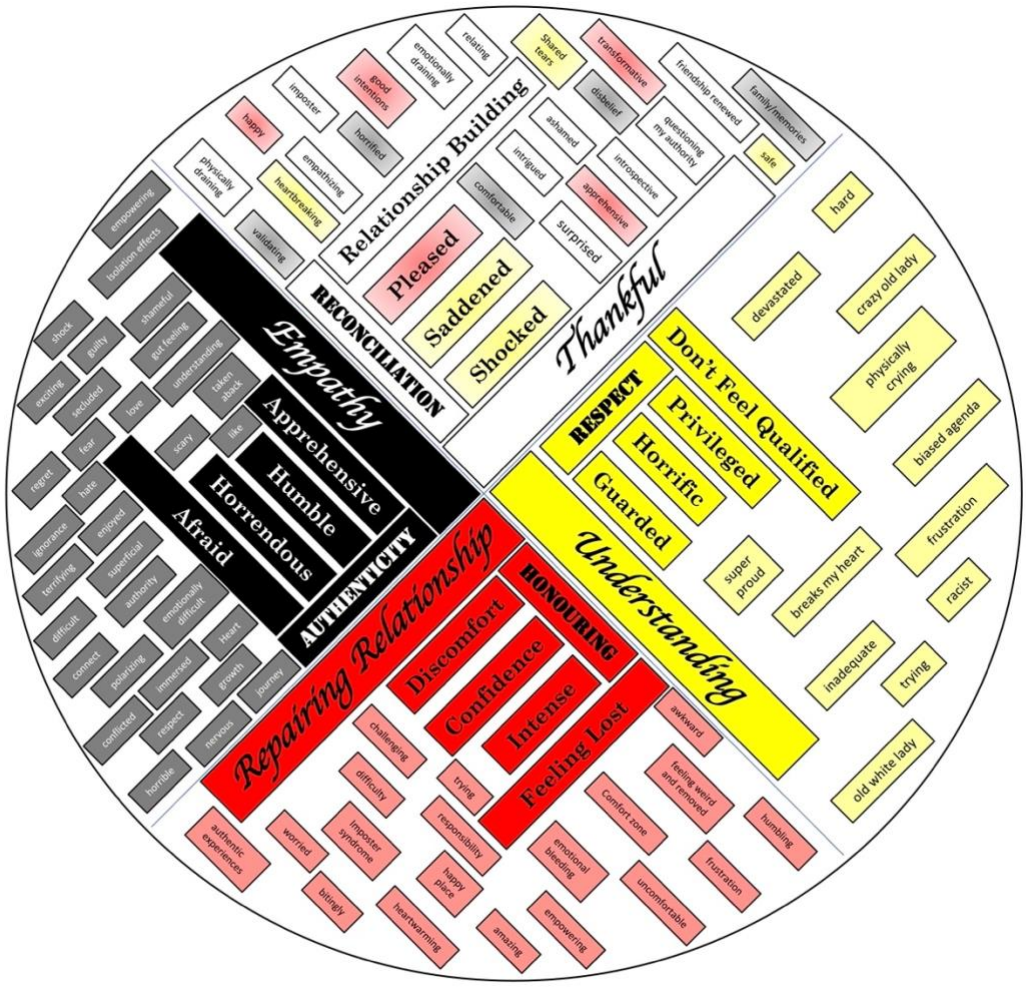
After I had decided which words would represent each research partners as the main word to be highlighted in the word cloud, I chose one word for each to be a second level word. I then did another evaluation choosing one more word from each partner's list of words, and this became the third level of words. All the remaining highlighted words from the transcript were used to create what I categorized as the fourth level of words. This helped me in sorting through the throughlines from each of the partner's narratives; Susie's Story: The Role of **Empathy** in Teaching Indigenous Curricula; Elsi's Story: A Story of Growth, Authenticity and **Humility**; and Quinn's Story: Moving Past **Shock**: A Journey Towards Understanding (as shared in the Findings chapter).

Findings in a Medicine Wheel Word Cloud

These different levels of words were placed back inside the quadrants of the Medicine Wheel and were highlighted by four different types of fonts to show the difference in levels and can be seen in the final version which is Figure 12. The main word for each quadrant was placed into a larger box. I then used a larger, bold font to highlight it as the level one category. The second level word can be seen that it was placed in the opposite direction and opposite side of each quadrant, and in a different bold font to represent it as second level. Third level words are placed adjacent to both first and second level words and are placed parallel to the level one word in each quadrant. The remaining words which are level four words were placed to create unity in the remaining space.

Figure 12

Findings in a Medicine Wheel Word Cloud



One difference that can be seen in the word cloud is how I chose to highlight the words in the north and what is the white quadrant of the Medicine Wheel. I sent a draft version of this diagram to a friend to get feedback from her from a visual-art point of view. Her main criticism of the diagram was that there was no colour in the north quadrant. In two different conversations she asked me if I could place or create a colour for the north quadrant. I explained to her that this quadrant was the words that were representing me, and that the quadrant is white, and it is not

supposed to have colour. Her request for colour made me examine how I was presenting the words within my quadrant. Upon reflection, I realized that all the words within what I was calling my quadrant were not my words alone. A handful of the words in this section of the word cloud were in fact my emotions, but others were **emotional** reactions that I experienced because of the stories of the contributors to my research. I proceeded to choose certain words to highlight with the colours of the other contributors' quadrants, based on this realization. So, within the north and what is to be considered normally only white, I have five words that are highlighted yellow, five words that are highlighted red, and five words that are highlighted with a dark grey. After I placed this little bit of colouring within my quadrant, I sent another version of the diagram to my artist friend, and she responded that adding that colour now made the diagram visually **pleasing** and also allows for the relational aspects of the research to be amplified.

In creating the Findings in a Medicine Wheel Word Cloud (Figure 12), I believe that I have created a visual representation of the findings within my research that accurately depicts the **emotion** expressed by the individual research partners. I believe that I have created a balance of reflection and reaction by myself as a researcher and partner within my research. The Research in a Medicine Wheel (Figure 2) being used as an anchor throughout my thesis is another way for me to visually present the concepts of **reconciliation** which are meant to be **healing** and relationship building in my research. The two diagrams work together and stand as a representation of the concept of walking together for a greater **good**.

The visual representation of the words that the reader will discover as they work their way through the following chapters will provide further clarity and context to what the **emotions** that were expressed by all four research partners.

Ethical Considerations

One aspect of my research that I needed to be continually aware of the distinct relationship status that I, as a First Nations researcher would have with the non-Indigenous research partners that I chose to work with. “Narrative research as a site of moral responsibility can begin with a development of ethical relationships with our participants. The essence of narrative inquiry lies in this ethical relationship between the researcher and the participant, for narrative inquiry is relational” (Kim, 2016, p. 169). My relationship with my partners required that they are relating to me the knowledge and ways in which they teach Indigenous curriculum topics, without a sense of judgement in relation to my identity as a First Nations researcher. As I stated previously, I would not be critiquing or providing feedback to research partners, instead my focus was on listening to their narratives. According to Younging (2018) “collaboration is crucial in achieving authentic content, and in demonstrating **respect** for the complexity and individual nature of Indigenous Peoples” (p. 31). This collaboration is normally written about when non-Indigenous People are accessing Indigenous knowledge systems. I listened to my partners’ stories to hear about their **emotional** experiences. I was not there to correct or contribute to the knowledge they already had about Indigenous curricula. This was one way in which I could potentially create a power dynamic which I endeavoured to avoid throughout the entire process. I did everything possible to avoid the appearance of there being a social power construct. I was occasionally required to ask for further clarification in areas of phraseology and language usage to ensure that I was interpreting what was said by the dialogue partner in the way intended. This was the extent of my inquiring for clarity. Duff and Bell (2002) write about ethical considerations:

> Any research method, of course, has its limitations, and narrative is not suitable for all inquiries. The time commitment required makes it unsuitable for work with a large number of participants. It also requires close collaboration with participants and a recognition that the constructed narrative and subsequent analysis illuminates the researcher as much as the participant. Ethical issues are some of the most serious ones to be addressed. Exchanging stories is often understood within a larger story of **friendship**, so researchers may find disengagement difficult at the end of the research project. More seriously, when researchers take peoples' stories and place them into a larger narrative, they are imposing meaning on participants' lived experience. (p. 210)

The meaning imposed on my partners' lives must be a **generative** one. The spirit of my research is that all the partners were **thankful** to have an **emotional** contribution to my research and **feel** better for having done so – **reconciliation** through Narrative Inquiry.

Shortly after beginning this Doctor of Education program, I attended an Indigenous function. As always, these functions offer Indigenous community members the chance to catch up and chat. During this function I had a short chat with someone from within the Indigenous community I had not seen in a substantial amount of time. This person asked me what I was doing, and I proceeded to relate to them the education journey that I was on. When I told them that the topic of my research was studying non-Indigenous educators who are teaching Indigenous curriculum their reaction and response was that I must have received permission from the community to be able to conduct that type of research. This statement has been with me since the day that I had that conversation through all the stages up to now in my research journey. I have asked myself the following questions as I proceeded from that conversation to where I am now in my research:

A) *Who is the community that this individual thought I should have asked permission to conduct my research, given the specifics of the research?*

B) *Is my own community 'enough' to get permission from? Is the implication of the question that I should have local Indigenous community permission? Does the blanket assumption that all Indigenous research must seek permission from a particular community limiting the possibilities of Indigenous research?*

C) *Within the context of my research, considering non-Indigenous educators' engagement with Indigenous curriculum that is not necessarily specifically located within any particular Indigenous community, who does one go to in order to be granted this community permission?*

D) *In other words, if non-Indigenous educators are taking up Indigenous curriculum that may be situated in different communities and they may be located on various Blackfoot, Cree, and Métis lands here in Alberta, from whom does a research need to seek permission? (This question, in particular, draws parallels with some of the potential* ***apprehensions*** *and* ***hesitations*** *that non-Indigenous educators who want to do this work may be asking with regards to seeking permission to teach Indigenous curricula).*

These questions concern the broader community and are important to bear in mind as the world of Indigenous research continually grows, however, for the purposes of my research, I am keeping them present to guide in the situational-ethical considerations. Is the broader community concerned with the concept of granting permission for the kind of research I am pursuing? Do I have a requirement to seek permission when my research is regarding curricula materials and non-Indigenous educators' pedagogies? Would these same questions and permission

requirements be asked of a non-Indigenous educator who was researching non-Indigenous educators? These questions may refer to my previous chapter on literature review and who owns knowledge.

My research is not specific to one Indigenous community. It is meant to contribute to Indigenous knowledge. I was not required to access Elders or Knowledge Keepers to conduct my research. The government documents I have referenced earlier in the literature review section have completed the work of Indigenous consultation. My research will not be interrogating the contents of Indigenous curricula that non-Indigenous educators are accessing in their teaching. This would go far beyond what the goals of my research are, although they may be important to take up in future studies.

I have had numerous conversations with family that are also fellow members of OCN. My family, academic consultants, or reserve members in general have not asked me if I have been granted permission, nor have they implied that I might need to get permission from someone to conduct my research and further my education. They trust that I am conducting myself as a proper representative of our nation because of our existing relationship (See Appendix A).

When I examine the question of permission as it pertains to my research method, narrative inquiry, I have asked myself two questions:

A) *Do I need permission from someone/anyone to tell my personal narrative/story?*
B) *Do my research partners as non-Indigenous educators need permission from someone/anyone to tell their personal narrative/story as it pertains to teaching Indigenous curriculum?*

I have continued to set apart my reflexive writing with italics as I did in my previous literature review chapter. Presenting these reflexive questions here will also provide context to the reader as to how my research and writing is guided by personal conversations and interactions with others regarding my research.

Limitations and Delimitations

As with other research studies there are issues of limitations and delimitations that must be considered and accounted for to provide a sense of the shape of possibilities and reach within the work. The following section discusses some of the identifiable limits that I imagined I might encounter in my research process.

Limitations

I categorized having to do all my data collection dialogues online as a limitation because it is one factor in my research process which I had little control over. I was at a point in the designing of this research where restrictions were a factor which was controlled by the provincial government. Distancing and gathering restrictions were an ongoing concern, which had also changed in degrees over the past few years. These restrictions were a consideration that contributed to and effected the **emotional** wellbeing of research partners. Research work, and the processes it involves, required adjustments to be made, and schedules created around these limitations. The process of data gathering was affected by restrictions which caused me to decide to do all my dialogue sessions online, regardless of restrictions and location of partners.

I did my best to ensure that the quality of stories that I gathered for my research were not compromised by conducting conversations online. “To imagine a relationship with our storytellers (or storygivers) requires our moral, ethical, **emotional**, and intellectual commitment to them in the research design process” (Kim, 2016, p. 164). I had control over the **positivity** of

the experience that the research partners took away from the process they engaged in with me. Further limitations that showed up during the process included: the difficulties in securing a fourth research partner as planned, although, as I discussed it turned out to work well for the sense-making and implications of the work in relation to the Research in a Medicine Wheel: Final Diagram (Figure 23).

I did not secure any artifacts from the research partners, and now wonder what that might suggest about the **emotional** experiences of the non-Indigenous educators. There was not an emphasis of importance placed on attempting to gather artifacts from my research partners. This was a contributing factor in the resulting fact that none were presented to me. I cannot imagine that the stories that were told to me would be lacking anything by not having any type of artifacts to accompany them.

Delimitations

One of the set limits I chose for my research was to only access non-Indigenous educators who are engaging Indigenous curriculum. Indigenous educators and the influence they have on non-Indigenous teachers were not accessed as a contributing factor. Indigenous educators have their own unique **emotional** experiences which are separate from what I intended my research to be. I also chose to use an open-ended style of narrative inquiry dialogue sessions (Kim, 2016). Because the stories and **emotional** reflections were guided to the extent of only asking that research partners speak on the broad topic of my research which asks them to share their **emotional** experiences, the results were necessarily unknown to myself as a researcher. This was a conscious choice I made in producing my research design. “Often, in the end, the narrative combines views from the participants’ life with those of the researchers’ life in a collaborative narrative” (Creswell, 2014, p. 14). My story as First Nations researcher provides

reflection on the process before I began my research, the personal and **emotional** aspects that occurred during the process, and a personal reflection during the end process of data analysis and writing.

Conclusion

I **hope** that my approach to study this topic of non-Indigenous educators teaching Indigenous curriculum will be a **positive** contribution to existing research. This research has further potential as my data collection leaves many **emotional** stories untold and yet, as I will address later, it can also serve as a model for the ways in which we support non-Indigenous educators in committing to the work of teaching Indigenous curricula - that of spending time with one another to work through the **emotional** experiences of the work. My research is necessarily limited in scope. It leaves the possibility for future opportunities to access more stories, over a longer period, with a wider variety of research partners (including Indigenous educators). The depth of a study with wider parameters would develop deeper relationships with researcher and research partner. The possibilities of accessing different school systems could include a comparative analysis on the differences of **emotional** experiences with educators in a variety of school systems. Regardless of the size or timeline of this type of research, the desired results should be that non-Indigenous research partners have further enriched their lives by being a contributing factor to the act of reconciliation with Indigenous People.

Chapter 5: Findings

Due to the importance of maintaining the integrity of the narratives from each research partner, as well as what turned out to be the significance of the overall design of the research, in this chapter I share several kinds of details to help the reader sense the findings of the research. First, I detail the dialogue sessions in the chronological order that they occurred. This allows me to demonstrate and lean further into the specificities of how the research took shape; in particular, I return to the ways I worked with the transcripts from session to session and how that work allowed the research partners and I to co-author the context and sense of the **emotional** experiences in the second dialogue sessions. Then I go more into the details about what I ultimately found, through the co-authoring second dialogue sessions as well as the word cloud creation-as-**emotive**-analysis (Figure 11), to be the **emotional** experiences narrated from each research partner.

Dialogue Sessions: Chronological Order

Susie: Dialogue I

My first dialogue session was scheduled within the same month as initial contact made by email. Being the first research partner meant that Susie was placed within the first quadrant of the Medicine Wheel (Figure 19). I had the highest **comfort** level with Susie that I could possibly have with any of my research partners. This **comfort** level was a **positive** for me in my first dialogue session and provided me with a **good first experience** to continue the remainder of the dialogue sessions. I found myself **audibly reacting** to some of the experiences that Susie was sharing with me in this first session. As a result of this I decided that in the next two first dialogue sessions with other research partners I would turn off my mic so that if I did have an audible reaction that it would not be heard by the research partners. This would remove the

possibility of me causing them to pause or question what they had said in dialogue. My reactions to Susie's story in her first dialogue session did not cause her to pause or interrupt her story telling but I wanted to remove the possibility of causing interruption with other partners in their storytelling. I was thankful that I had this realization in the first dialogue session with Susie, and not further along in the process where I may have had the potential to interrupt the flow of the stories being shared with me.

Susie: Dialogue II

Susie was **wonderful** in scheduling her dialogue sessions within the time period that I had proposed to her in the initial phases of data gathering. Her second dialogue session occurred two weeks after the first session. In the time between the sessions, I transcribed, highlighted, and commented on the first dialogue session. This transcription was sent to Susie one week after the first dialogue session occurred.

Susie's second dialogue session was as much of an **emotional roller coaster** ride for me as I experienced in the first session. This session was different in that I did not have to hold back any of my reactions and was able to comment. The note that I made to myself before beginning this second dialogue session was that "*I was bringing in with me a **plethora of emotions** running through my head".* This resulted in a great conversation which provided further context and detail to what Susie had already shared with me in the first session.

Elsi: Dialogue I

The first dialogue session with Elsi was our second online meeting. Our first dialogue session was postponed by one day due to internet issues. Elsi is located in the north part of the province and internet connections tend to be unstable and we were still in the middle of winter at the time of scheduling the dialogue session to occur. Even though Elsi was the third person that I

connected with to be a research partner she was the second person that I conducted a first dialogue session with. For this reason, she was placed into the second quadrant of the research in a Medicine Wheel (Figure 19).

The first dialogue session with Elsi occurred with her being in Calgary, back at her parents' house for a visit. She was situated in her old bedroom. She commented on how **nice** it was to be home again. It was obvious that there was a high **comfort** level with her and how she related her stories to me that day.

Susie: Dialogue III

The final phase in the dialogue sessions was to wrap up and debrief. The final session with Susie was longer in duration than the other research partners. She was also the partner who had shared the most **intimate** and **emotional** experiences in the first two dialogue sessions which could have lingering effects. Our discussion on this day became a reminder to us that we have a **good friendship**. I was **happy** that Susie had agreed to join me in this research journey. I have a life-long relationship with her that will be forever **enriched** by her participation in this research.

Quinn: Dialogue I

Quinn is my third research partner and is in the third quadrant of the Medicine Wheel (Figure 19). Quinn was very open and willing to share with me his **emotional** experiences in this first dialogue session. He began by stating that he would be telling a story. He proceeded to do so. Very eloquently and succinctly. He was very open about his thoughts and how his experiences affected him. I anticipated that Quinn would be forthcoming in sharing his experiences as this is the type of personality that he has. He contributed a great deal of generative enlightenment regarding reconciliation and how it is viewed by non-Indigenous educators.

Elsi: Dialogue II

The second dialogue session with Elsi occurred with her being back at her teaching position in the north. I was displaced from my home for this session. I was at my sister's home for a period of time. This caused a brief discussion about time and place, and space and how it changes the interactions with others online. Even though the dialogue sessions were occurring in an online venue the place in which you are and how your **comfort** level changes affects how you interact with others (Cain, 2013; Clandinin, 2007). Elsi and I both noted that there were distinct differences in how we **felt** during the dialogue sessions based on our various locations.

Quinn: Dialogue II

Quinn's location being far north caused disruptions in internet connections. This created a necessity for the second dialogue session to occur without the use of video camera. The dialogue session was conducted and recorded with audio only. This changed the dynamic of the interview. There were no visual clues as to **emotional** reaction in face or body language. The context of what we discussed was not changed as we were reviewing and discussing the transcript that was sent from the first dialogue session. There was another layer of separation that was added though. It is one thing to be conducting a dialogue session which is online and not in person. It adds another missing element when there is no visual contact. I was not recording or observing facial expressions, so this did not affect my data gathering **negatively**.

Elsi: Dialogue III

By the time we reached the third dialogue session Elsi and I had established a **comfort** level that was akin to **old friends meeting**. We are both **comfortable** with the fact that we established a new relationship and began a friendship which will never go away. We were both **thankful** to have been in this research process together. We both acknowledged that we could

call on each other as friends at any time in the future. This was an unexpected friendship that I could not have anticipated at the outcome of this educational journey that I am on.

Quinn: Dialogue III

My final dialogue session with Quinn was very short, straightforward and to the point. Quinn is another example of someone who will always be welcomed in my life. He can contact me anytime and has since we concluded this part of my research process. We have a friendship which will endure.

This section provides a brief overview of the dialogue sessions, and the order in which they were conducted. Now that I have explored the processes involved with the unfolding of data gathering this next section will move into the narratives that each of the research partners told, as interpreted through the **emotive** analysis and word cloud (Figure 12) described in the previous chapter.

This section will discuss the findings in further detail and be more descriptive in nature. As I have previously discussed the words used by dialogue partners, including myself, that are presented to the reader in this section are bolded to highlight **emotions**, and **emotional expressions**. I have used the words, phrases, and stories related to me in dialogue as they were stated in the session by each partner in research. I have maintained the integrity of the stories presented by including repeated words, sentence breaks and pauses with either a comma or ellipses. I am presenting each partner's stories as separate and apart from each other, even though there may be similar **sentiments** expressed in dialogue.

As a dialogue partner in the data gathering process, I am presenting my data collection material, reactions, and reflections, at the end of each of the research partner's dialogue sessions. I am presenting the material in this way so that there is a direct and immediate correlation to

what was discussed and how I reacted as researcher, and partner in dialogue. The titles of each of the research partner's dialogue sessions transcriptions presents the major themes that can be seen in each person's section of writing.

Susie's Story: The Role of Empathy in Teaching Indigenous Curricula

I am beginning the writing of Susie's dialogue sessions in a different way than the other two research partners because of the sensitive nature of the stories that she told.

Trauma and Indigenous Intergenerational Trauma

Trauma and the effects of it are not limited to Indigenous People. Susie presents an example of how her own **traumas** affect her and how she has had to deal with intergenerational **trauma** in her own life. She relates a story about how an Indigenous student in her class is confronted with the effects of **intergenerational trauma** in class regarding missing and murdered Indigenous women.

As you will read in the following section, the event that occurred in Susie's classroom that day were not limited to only having an **emotional** effect on the student involved. Susie was affected **emotional**ly and brought forward those **emotions** into the dialogue session she had scheduled with me later on the same day. This is one way in which it is evident that **intergenerational trauma** affects more than just the Indigenous People who are directly connected to it. This is not meant to diminish the effects that **intergenerational trauma** has had on Indigenous People. Their **trauma** is real and has been well documented. S. Wilson et al. (2019) addresses the topic of **trauma** in the following passage "We can't expect people to engage in real dialogue about these **sensitive issues** without **intense feelings**; it's not reasonable to expect Indigenous people to go straight to **forgiveness** without **grieving** and **raging** about what was taken from them" (p. 87). This statement is aptly applied to this section of writing as

the reader will see in how Susie expresses her thoughts and emotions about **trauma**, and how the past of each person affects them in the present.

I will now proceed to the dialogue sessions and how the stories told by each of the research partners contributed to this research in ways that I could not have anticipated. It is my **hope** that the reader will forever be changed by reading and experiencing the **emotions** and experiences related to each of you by the research partners, and myself as both researcher, and partner.

Susie: Dialogue Session I

> *Susie: Sometimes they just **laugh**, and **giggle**, and think, oh you **white lady**, you don't know anything… And **I'm a white, old lady** who doesn't **understand**. And sometimes they've got explained it to me and sometimes they do and sometimes they won't. … **you crazy old lady**, and what do you know?*
>
> *Sometimes we'll get called a **racist**… And we're not looking to their **feelings**… I'm here to do the best job I can. . I am a **white person** teaching your culture. **I am trying** to get this right. I'm trying to do you justice … And I'm **trying** to **respect** it…*
>
> *But no one ever sat us... No one sits down and explains to white people, and I'm just gonna call myself a white person, because I don't think you can get whiter than I can. really **frustrating***
>
> *And you know, I've **tried very hard** to make sure my facts are straight. And that I give as much information as possible.*
>
> *I had one recently whose mom said that, um, she was **worried that I was making her kid want to commit suicide** who was First Nations. And that her daughter was **scared of me.***
>
> *It **breaks my heart** because I don't think I am. I'm not perfect.*

*So, I've tried, like I've **tried really hard** so when I hear that it **breaks my heart** because I'm not perfect. I really, I know, I'm not perfect. But **I try really hard** to treat every kid equal.*

Teresa: Reflection/Reaction

I did not expect that my first dialogue session would so quickly create an almost **visceral** reaction to the stories that Susie was telling me. I found myself **physically reacting** to the pointed comments that Susie was directly being called a "racist". **I was in total shock**. My jaw **physically fell open** as I reacted to what Susie was saying. I recall the thought going through my head was that I would have to try to control my reactions so that they were not so openly expressive, for **fear** of throwing off the flow of talking and what Susie was saying in her storytelling. In the transcripts I audibly recorded myself reacting with "**Oh, wow**". This led to me changing the process in my first dialogue sessions with Elsi and Quinn, as described earlier in the chapter.

Trying not to **outwardly react** to the stories that were being told created another **dilemma** for me as researcher who was also research partner. How is it possible to control your **emotional** reaction when that is a part of what your research is intended to become…a reaction and reflection from a personal perspective. At the time of hearing Susie speak for the first time and having natural reactions come through I did not consider what would be the effect of trying to control my **emotional** reactions in further dialogue sessions. I did not know at the time that the most reactive **emotions** I would have would be with Susie.

I found it interesting that after Susie talked about being called "a white lady", and a "**crazy old lady**" that she identified herself as being "a white person" and that you could not get

"any whiter". This is one of the reasons that I highlighted this as a point to discuss in our second session as dialogue partners.

My second reaction of complete and utter **shock** occurred not long after the first, when Susie related the story of the mother who said that Susie was making her daughter want to commit suicide. It was at this point that I recognized that **not only was I reacting emotionally, but also physically**, and that I may not be able to control my reactions. I also recognised at this point that I could not have possibly prepared myself in any way for the stories that I would hear, and how those stories would influence me.

I felt myself reacting to how Susie related her **emotions** as **heartbreaking** as a **sadness** for what she was **feeling**, and how it so obviously affected her. I found it **heartbreaking** myself that Susie experienced some of the things she related to me, as a teacher, teaching Indigenous topics and students. As an example, I could not imagine what kind of **emotions** and reactions Susie went through in dealing with a parent telling her she was making her daughter want to commit suicide. I imagine that her **emotional effects** were greater than what she expressed in relating the story here. I feel it needs to be pointed out regarding the relating of this story that there is no possibility that **deep emotions** and experiences such as this can't be explained in enough detail to see and hear the full extent of how experiences affect us **emotional**ly when dealing with situations such as this.

Susie: Dialogue Session II

The stories that were initially shared by Susie in her first dialogue session were greatly expanded upon in her second session with me in conversation. I wonder if this was because of it being more interactive and conversational in format.

Regarding **racism** and race, and being called an **old white lady**

> *Susie: I **don't like** to think of myself as a white lady. No, I don't. You know, I just want to be Canadian.*

The thread of being called or labelled a white lady by others is one that can be seen throughout the dialogue sessions with Susie. This was one element that was present with her and not with any of the other research partners.

Murdered and Missing Women

One of the stories that Susie related to me in this second session was in explaining and expanding on her use of the words **understanding** in the context of cultural experiences. She related a story about doing an assignment in class that week which had the students create tattoos. She related the story as follows:

> Susie: *We have the kids do tattoos this week about their nation. And they had to include personal stuff about their identity. And then they had to clip something about our nation, one girl… her tag… she was murdered and missing… the symbol for the murdered and missing Indigenous women. And she says, I have this much of a chance of being murdered. As a grade 11 student, never once did that ever cross my mind that I have an x percent, like certain percentage of being murdered. Right? Like that is **horrific.** What goes through this… and I'm sure these are conversations she's had at home with her parents, because they are **scared** for her. Or maybe they know somebody who's had…they've had an aunt or an, a sister. Or, you know, the lady three doors down's daughter has gone missing. And **they're scared**.*

This reflection and relating of this story began with Susie trying to relate to **understanding** culture made the conversation turn toward a discussion of ***empathy*** and ***understanding***. In the conversation which followed I explained to Susie that I was placing **empathy** and

understanding within context of this story. I also pointed out that she expressed that it was ***horrific*** that this student experienced this.

Recognized Privilege

Susie talked about *privilege* in her first dialogue session. When I asked her to expand on that thought she stated the following as explanation:

> *Susie: We come in with that privilege. And we've never called it privilege until recently. We've never acknowledged we had a privilege. But no one has sat me down and said… as a white person, these are the things that are automatically guaranteed to you, that aren't to other people in the world.*

The way in which Susie regarded her own self-recognised privilege was expressed eloquently and ensured that I was presenting this as her personal experience. One of her final statements on this topic came in the relating of a story about an Indigenous youth that her family had living with them. It was as follows:

> *Susie: Yeah. So, um, when we talk about M. [name removed], and when M. was coming to live with us, there were conversations about where he's from, and what that looks like. And, you know, there was a lot of when he moved in, contacting the social worker, and confirming, can't, like M. wanted his hair cut, making sure I had permission. I did read the manual. And so, and yes, it was okay. So, we did that. And just and then going through his clothes and documenting, I'd read somewhere in the pamphlet that I had to document all his clothes, he moved in with, except I couldn't find it again after that. So, we fixed a lot of his wardrobe, he had a lot of girl clothes still. And so, it's like, well, what kind of clothes do you want to wear, then, you know, helping him make that transition and switching that over? You know, just weird things like that. So, but nobody sits us*

> *down and says, "This is how you do it." And when you're white, we come from a very big privilege.*

The one thing that many wish for when it comes to relating to, learning about, or living in-relation to Indigenous People is that there be an instruction book on how to do it.

Survivors of Abuse

It was obvious from the interaction that Susie had with M. that there was more than just a difference in cultures to navigate. She, and her family helped an Indigenous youth transition their gender identity. This story and how this Indigenous youth affected her transitioned into a statement about how Susie relates to Indigenous People because of her personal background.

> *Susie: But that comes from my background as a **sexual abuse** survivor. And the research I've done. So, if you translate that into what First Nation students go to, they're taught from their parents and grandparents, from their parents… expect experiences. So, expect to see this, or when this person says this, or does this, this is what that means. And things like that.*

Personal experience plays a part in how one person can or cannot relate to others. Susie expressed how her life experiences help her to relate to **intergenerational traumas** that are experienced by Indigenous People. For this reason, I have chosen to bring in a part of the third dialogue session that occurred with Susie as she expanded on this sentiment.

> *Susie: (Dialogue Session III) Yeah, I've never hidden it, like, since I've come to terms with it. I don't advertise it… but at the same time, I don't hide it. Okay… it's, **it's part of who I am**… when I was… and still going through it. Like, I'm still like you are never over it… coming from **a trauma background**, right, you come, come from a **trauma***

> ***background****… I think a lot of times when you come from a* ***trauma background****, you* ***assume nobody understands*** *what you are going through. They can't relate…*
>
> *So, look at it from everybody comes from a* ***trauma background****. Yeah. You just don't know what another person's* ***trauma*** *is. That's true. That's the best thing I ever heard somebody say was…****treat everybody like their heart is breaking****, because it probably is… because I think at some point,* ***your heart can be breaking but you still have to function****.*

This conversation was in direct relation to my asking Susie if it was okay for me to be highlighting the section of our second dialogue when she brought up her personal history. She was granting me permission to use this in my dissertation writing. I am placing this here so that the reader knows that I did have permission to use what I consider to be **intimately**, personal information.

One of the most impactful stories that Susie related to me occurred because of an experience she had in her class the same day that we were meeting:

> *Susie: So, for instance, today, a girl left my room, a councillor came into my office, came to see me, and said do you know why she is in my office? And I'm like, no. She asked to call her mom. I said sure. She said, uhm, I can't get a hold of my mom, can I keep my phone in case my mom phones me? I said, sure. She asked to go to the bathroom. I said, sure. And she's in the principal's office, or not the principal, the councillor's office because one of the assignments. I asked them to Google themselves… it's Internet. And, you know, like checking to see what you can find about yourself on the internet was part of an assignment to see globalization and how that* ***impacts you****, and stuff like that. Well, her grandmother who was murdered, came up and bought up* ***horrible memories****. Well, that's not something that when you make this assignment you ever consider. So, it's like,*

> ***I'm really sorry****. She's like, no, no, not something we expect to have to cover, or be prepared for in class.*

As a follow up statement, Susie further expressed her **emotional** reaction to this occurrence as we discussed **empathy** and **understanding** and **frustration**. I have included the following section as an example of how we truly became partners in dialogue:

> *Teresa: I think that this is showing the effect of it because I was trying to pinpoint what is the* ***emotion*** *that you put in when you kept saying,* ***I try*** *this… and* ***I can only try my best… and I try.*** *And I think that's the word that I'm, I'm attaching to that is your* ***empathy*** *coming through…because I know that you can't have* ***sympathy****, especially for somebody like, like that with, a, you know… having their murdered family member come up in it because you can't relate to that.*
>
> *Susie: but you can* ***empathize*** *with them and say, 'Oh, my God. Yeah, that's what this assignment did to this student. I can't imagine the* ***shock*** *that must have happened…she was going to go to her next class…and then if she still has issues, they are going to send her to … for some support, and some counselling…but and part of it is* ***frustration****…. This week I've had a couple of incidences that were, just made me* ***want to throw up my hands, quit, and go home…*** *So, I don't know, like some weeks,* ***some weeks go really well****. And other weeks. It's like,* ***I don't want to do this anymore****.*

Positive Interactions

Susie related **positive** emotions which were a result of her leaving school on this day to come and meet with me for our second dialogue session. She related part of the discussion she had with some of the students as she prepared to leave: *And then one says, some people are really surprised when I say you're my* ***favorite*** *teacher. And I'm like… Oh, I didn't know it was*

*her **favorite** teacher. So that **made me feel really good**. Yeah, but **I just want them to be successful**.*

Susie is like other teachers who do what they do because they want success for their students. Susie expressed her **emotional** experiences as very matter-of-fact reactions. She also acknowledges that she has **up and down days**, but she has over two decades of teaching experience which has not led to *quitting* or *giving up* and going home yet. For that she is to be commended.

Cultural Differences

Another area that was expanded upon as partners in dialogue was regarding the topic of cultural differences:

> *Susie: I'm and I think in their minds, I'm old and probably out of touch. As far as my race goes, I am white. I like I can't say I'm mixed race. I can't say I'm partially this or partially that. I'm white. And I am a lady. So, the term is correct. I am white. I am old in their eyes. And I am a lady. But I don't know. I think sometimes like when you put them all together and… and I don't really think about it when I say it, but when you read it, it's like, gosh, I am.*
>
> *I'm sure they walk into every classroom at [name removed] High School and look, no First Nations teachers. We're not we don't have the same background. We don't have the same culture. We have different traditions; we're going to relate differently. You're not going to always **understand.***

Cultural differences are some ways in which non-Indigenous educators must navigate unknown territory if they encounter different traditions or cultural teachings from what they already know

or have been exposed to. Susie related an example to me in our second session in dealing with a specific student and how it impacted her:

> *Susie: So, she lost marks and other response, like other portions of it, but that just really* ***impacted me*** *that this is so forefront and, you know, it'd be nice to sit down and have a conversation with her. But I find a lot of First Nation kids, because we don't have the same background are* ***guarded.*** *And she has that right. You know, I'm just her teacher… And I think we need to be* ***empathetic*** *and let them because they have a right to those boundaries. And I think you've got to give credit to these parents, because their parents were not in residential school. Most of them weren't, there might be a few of the ones who hit the tail end of it. But their grandparents were, you know, a lot of them were and maybe some of them got missed, but then maybe they were in the 60 Scoop, or whatever reason. And so, I think it's we're three generations in if you go from residential schools, you know, trying to, you know,* ***intergenerational trauma****,* ***intergenerational trauma****, but this is the generation where the parents of their parents are saying, we're going to stop this. I don't know how I'm going to stop this. I don't know how, what this is going to look like. And some are successful, some are very successful, and some aren't. But, you know, you got to look at the resources that they have, in what they're bringing, and we don't know what their parents' lifestyles were like.*

Not Qualified

In another part of our dialogue session Susie continued about cultural differences and teaching Indigenous students:

> *Susie: And* ***it's hard*** *teaching First Nation students… And so, when you teach a First Nation students from a white perspective, because that's what it is, if I'm trying to help*

them, and I don't know, I'm sure they're going we know this. It's been taught to us, I do have one boy, which is very interesting, who's half First Nations half Italian. And he says to me, said to me, I don't identify as First Nations. I said, Okay. Which, you know, what last name do you want to work with? He worked with an Italian one. You know because there's nobody in his family that talks about it. And I don't know why. That's his life. And he has that choice, too. So, I think it's hard to stand in front of a room and tell nine kids that are in that room who are First Nations about residential schooling, because I'm sure they can tell me stories that would curl my hair and ***break my heart****. Right, I'm sure they can talk about the 60's scoop. With first-person stories. And I* ***feel very inadequate****. And very, not,* ***not authorized****. I don't know how else to word it. There's a better word for that. And I can't think of it. You know, I'm coming from an authority position as their teacher. And I'm talking about something that I* ***don't feel qualified*** *for.*

The expressed **feeling** about not being qualified, or authorized to teach Indigenous topics, or Indigenous youth is one that has been studied and explored numerous times. Susie expressed her **feelings** and how it affects her to experience these **emotions** in her teaching.

Forgiveness

The final story that I will present to the reader is another story that I could not have prepared myself for, as a partner in this research and dialogue with Susie. Her words and expressed **feelings** are presented as unchanged; I am reiterating this as a point of emphasis because the way Susie expressed these sentiments could not be done better by me.

*The story that follows does contain strong language and **sensitive topics** within, but I have decided that it should be included as I did not want my data analysis to be filtered or omitting stories because they may not present a **positive** point of view.

*Susie: I just am always **shocked by what mankind can do to each other**. You know, like, I think about when you say something stupid… And like, I've said this to some of my First Nations students, and like, I'm **surprised** you guys haven't murdered us in our sleep. Like that First Nations didn't uprise and just... I'm not putting up with your crap no more...you took my land. You're taken my children, you've murdered... Like, seriously, I don't know how we got to a place in society where white people are still alive and on this continent. And I think that goes to show that First Nations people are a lot more **gracious** than, than we are, than white people are, and a lot more **forgiving**. And I don't know if that's the correct term **forgiving** is the right word. Because I look back at what I've gone through in my life and the, the **abuse I've suffered**, and it was hard to **forgive**. And that's, I think, like, a little drop, like, that's just one tear drop compared to what a whole society has been put through. They have an ocean, and I have a drop. And I don't know how you guys do it. **Sorry**. Okay. I think the crap that we as people have put other people through, **breaks my heart**. Because I would never deliberately try to **hurt** another person. I'm not saying it hasn't happened…*

*I just think **I'm always blown away**. And I'm not saying that every First Nation person should be put on a pedestal and is perfect and an angel. But I understand where they come from with their crap. I understand the baggage somewhat. Sometimes I want to tell them to get over it. But I'm coming from that, because I grew up with a mother, who went into foster care who was **sexually abused, physically abused, emotionally abused**, had me at 17 had my sister at 19. We lived in poverty. And she pulled up and, and she was **abused**. She says she hit me once where she left a mark. And never did it again. Like I come from a strong, strong woman who just... and she hasn't gotten over it, like there's*

stuff in her past.... It's still right. But she moved on. And sometimes I want to say to kids, I get it. Now do better. Now move on. Don't let this define you. I get your parents went through crap; I get your grandparents went through crap. I get it. But someone's got to break it. And just... just do it. And I guess the ***frustration*** *comes from... someone strong enough to do it… I've seen her right like she's college, university educated, she has two degrees. She's retired now. She just bought her first house when she was 60...60 years old and she bought her first house. You know, she was in her 30s When she finally learned to drive a car and got her own car. Like, and keep in mind we came from like, my mom grew up in foster care where she was separated from her siblings. And you know, and my dad, like she divorced him. He went to jail for rape. He didn't do it. And my mom admits that one and I've read the I've read the newspaper articles. His lawyer committed suicide of the week before he was supposed to go to trial. And my mom said, well, why did you? Why did you say you were* ***guilty****… he's like I had nothing better to do. Like my grandpa, my dad had grade eight education and couldn't read… I figured he had learning disabilities. Now I can look back and see that. But like when I say I came from white trash, I came from white trash. And so, when I bring in my background with other kids, and it doesn't matter what color you are, when I see the crap in their life. I said, Okay. I think no,* ***break it. Be better.*** *I get you have* ***anxiety.*** *I get you've got crap.* ***Get help. And break it.***

The relating of this section of story was a very **emotional** experience for Susie. I appreciated that she could share what she did with me as a partner in dialogue. I was very thankful that I asked Susie to be a part of my research because I knew that she would be impactful.

Teresa: Reaction/Reflection

When Susie told the story regarding the girl in class with the grandmother who was murdered, I was more prepared to not show my **emotional** reaction so openly. Her principal told Susie at the conclusion of this occurrence that this is not something they can prepare for. This was the type of story that **I was not expecting** or thinking that I would have to prepare for within my research data gathering. Upon further reflection, and after the end of the dialogue sessions with Susie were completed, I realized that I should have been more prepared for this type of story to be told. I wondered, after the fact, if the length of time that someone teaches will affect the possibility of this type of interaction occurring?

Mixed Emotions

Hearing and experiencing the relating of Susie's personal history of **trauma** and **abuse** created a reaction of **mixed emotions** for me. I felt **saddened**, while at the same time I felt myself trying to be **empathetic.** This was one instance in our shared time together as partners in dialogue that I was careful to not **change, discount, or diminish** Susie's experiences. I was very **thankful** at this point in time, again, that I had made the decision to present the stories of my research partners as they were told in their own words. I would not be **comfortable** with attempting to relate such a personal experience as someone else's **trauma**. I knew Susie prior to her becoming a research partner with me, but I was not aware of these details about her life and upbringings. This is one way in which I could see that our **relationship** was **deepened and changed** by this research process.

One of the reactions that I did not think about is how I would relate my own personal experiences to that of Susie when she discussed the students, she deals with who are **guarded,** with **boundaries** in place. I have found myself in similar situations where I have been interacting

with Indigenous youth and have felt that they are **guarded** in the interactions. I found that this issue might be something that cannot be overcome even with similar or same cultural backgrounds being in play. Just because I am Indigenous it does not guarantee me to have an open and free-flowing conversation with another Indigenous person. I could relate on a personal level when Susie was talking about this aspect of relationship.

Living in Two Cultures

There was one specific moment in time when Susie was telling me her story where I felt **embarrassed** to be an Indigenous person because of the treatment a non-Indigenous person was experiencing due to the words/actions of an Indigenous person. This moment occurred as Susie related her experience with being call a **racist.** I **felt** this reaction because I could not imagine being in a situation where I would tell another person to their face that I thought of them as presenting a **racist persona**. I also **reflected** on what I imagine my response would be if one of my children arrived home from school one day and told me that they had called their teacher a racist.

It might be the way I was brought up, or the environment of living within two communities/cultures. I have experienced what it is for an Indigenous community to fully accept non-Indigenous people as being considered members of the family and community. This has had an influenced in the choice of topic, specifically **reconciliation**, for this research. This influence is in direct correlation to how I was raised in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures.

A Neutral Party in Reconciliation

I want to express at this point that I had also reflected upon the story that Susie related about the mother who said that she was causing her daughter to want to commit suicide. I **felt**

that I could not properly articulate my reaction and **emotions** upon hearing this. As much as I would like to include these reflections on this story, I found that I could not.

In reflecting on this, I concluded that I prefer to be what I would consider a neutral party in **reconciliation**. For this reason, as I mentioned in the introduction, I have made a conscious effort to avoid using phraseology which labels non-Indigenous as being colonizers or settlers. I **feel**, and have always **felt**, that this type of labelling continues to cause divisiveness. I especially have avoided these types of phrases and wording because I personally view these words and phrases as not conducive to **reconciliation**. How can I say that I am in favour, and fully support **reconciliation** if I am divisive in the way in which I present it? Again, as I stated in my opening section on the Papal **apology**, I understand fully that there are those who will not agree with these sentiments. There are those who may find that they are **offended** by what I have stated here. They may insist that I recognize these words and use them. I will not. I am not intending that these statements to cause further division among those who read my dissertation in its entirety. I am wanting the reader to be made aware that this is where I am in my journey of **reconciliation**, and it may not align with your path, or where you are walking currently in your life-journey.

I found myself being an **intent listener** in these dialogue sessions. In the second dialogue it was more important for me to be observant of when to interact with what was being said, and when to just be an active listener. I found that as I went **deeper** in conversation, in our time as partners in dialogue, it became easier to identify the times when I needed to simply let Susie expand on her thoughts and go into more detail about her stories.

Shared Emotions with Susie

The final section of stories that I have presented with Susie and how she related her point of view on how **mankind treats each other** was like the pinnacle of our time together. I should not have been **surprised** that we would share a **physical reaction** together, but in some ways I was. I was already trying to keep my **emotional** reactions limited so that they were not physically visible to her. At the point when she began talking about how mankind treats each other there was a **defined shift** in the **mood** and **tone** of our interaction. The **emotional** interaction became **more intimate,** and I could **feel** at the time that it would be a **shared emotional moment**.

Susie made me think about how I entered into my research process, as she was the first of my partners in dialogue. Her discussion about cultural differences and how they impact her teaching was very reflective of me and this research process. My approach and interaction with non-Indigenous educators was always in my research design. Susie bought this interaction to manifestation and made me **reflect deeply** about how I would proceed with other partners in dialogue as my research continued. I had to recognise cultural differences, while **honouring** similarities because I could relate to them not being Indigenous to a certain extent. I recognized that I would truly never understand the perspective of the partners in dialogue and research because even though I am Indigenous I also walk with non-Indigenous people. This concept is what I try to express in the sections of my dissertation as walking in two worlds. What I want to express came to fully be realized in my thought process because of my interaction with Susie. For that I will be **forever thankful** to her.

Elsi's Story: A Story of Growth, Authenticity, and Humility

Elsi was unknown to me prior to her agreeing to become a research partner in this research. This distinction is important to note because our relationship was truly started and grew through our interactions as part of the research. In this way Elsi is truly representative of how **reconciliation** is relationship building because it was her commitment to **reconciliation** that led to her committing to become a part of my research without ever meeting me in person.

Introduction Zoom Session

Prior to participating in my research, I met with Elsi in an online zoom session which was not recorded. I contacted Elsi via email and recruited her to join my research partners through our mutual contact. Our entire relationship and interaction was done via internet video chats. As I have mentioned previously, I believe it is important to note this for my dissertation writing because it influenced our interaction with each other. We became fast friends through this research process, and I will forever be **grateful** that Elsi joined me in this education journey.

*For research purposes I have changed Elsi's and Quinn's location descriptions to be "*Indigenous community*" throughout the following sections. This provides another layer of anonymity to them.

Elsi: Dialogue Session I

I wanted to begin this section with a brief introduction of Elsi and how she situates herself at the beginning of our Dialogue Sessions

> *Elsi: like one of the main things this year for me has been this like **shift** from being in an explicitly like student role to being in an educator role. And specifically with regard to the applying Indigenous knowledge, TQS, thing that has been a big shift for me because I think I spent, like those two years in my BEd program, really being on the receiving end*

of like knowledge and lessons and working with, uhm, you know, Indigenous knowledge keepers and educators to now being the one who's like in the delivery role. And as a white person, that's been ***pretty uncomfortable****. For me, I think, especially with my context being on an [Indigenous community] and working with a predominantly Indigenous student population. I think that's another thing for me that has been kind of like* ***a big context shift*** *and lent itself to this....like* ***awkwardness or discomfort****, I guess.*

Elsi created shifts in her storytelling which were easily seen when the words were transcribed and examined.

Feeling Good

The following is one such shift in which she expressed how good she felt her experiences were.

Elsi: but I also think that it has been, like, ***really good for me****,*

And that's also been a really ***good*** *sort of environment for me.*

The progression of an experience being really **good** to **humbling** is a natural shift in the progression of her dialogue.

Elsi: So, it's been a ***really humbling experience*** *as well, uhm, in that shift. Uhm, another thing that I kind of wanted to chat about with you was just within the context of like, how everything's happening, how my career is starting… being during the pandemic has been really interesting on the* ***emotional aspect*** *as well.*

Pandemic Effects

Pandemic related experiences and changes affected Elsi and the beginning of her teaching career. She expressed how the pandemic-related moments affected her and her well-being.

Elsi: like I did a professional development day at the Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park, and I did a site-based sort of field school course… and we worked really closely with a

Blackfoot elder. And those were the two courses that really stuck out to me as being I think the most helpful in terms of learning those foundational knowledges in, in an ***authentic*** *way. That, that have kind of like stuck with me. And like in thinking about it and reflecting on it, I think that the key differences with those were that they were like, out in a specific place. And everything that we were doing was really tied to the people we were working with and the place that we were in, which is something that I really* ***felt I lost*** *in, in my second year of my BEd, because everything switched online… And like****,*** *it all* ***felt very, like weird and removed from, from everything*** *really, because I was up in this room, like I was in this office all day, talking on the computer. And like a lot of it was like black squares. So that like the* ***relational element*** *was really lost.*

so much knowledge in the community that the kids are usually able to benefit from, and that our teaching staff is also able to benefit from, but we just can't this year, which has been ***frustrating****. Because I think right now it's all too easy to like* ***pull in*** *and just rely on my own stuff and my own resources, when really especially as like a first-year teacher, someone new to the field, new to the career, I should be trying to* ***build those connections****. You know, just like to benefit everyone to benefit my practice to benefit my students to make sure that that the* ***growth*** *is something that's happening early on. Yeah, so that's been* ***challenging****, even* ***frustrating.***

Centering Emotions

I think it would be easy for many to relate to the **feelings** that Elsi expressed in this previous section. She continued to follow the lines of **emotions**, reflection, and centering her **emotions**.

*Elsi: I've been **trying** very hard to like, **not center my own emotions all of the time**. So, like this practice of going and thinking about, like, how I have personally **felt about all of these experiences** was almost like **foreign** or **weird**. It's not something that I've really been practicing, which I found interesting, like, just in terms of **a reflection element**, just with the specific conversation I was. I guess a little **surprised** that that was not something that I been doing, like how **difficult** it was for me to kind of think about, like, how have I been **feeling**? Or how have I been **reacting** to all of this? Because I think I've kind of.... like, and I think a lot of people maybe do this, I think it might be a tendency of teachers and educators but like, I really tried to like just to think about my students all the time. And **I'm thinking about their emotions**, and **I'm centering their emotions**. And especially with this conversation again, because I try, I try to always be as **aware** as I can that I'm working. Like my students are all Indigenous, they have Indigenous lived experiences, and I don't. Uhm, so, I try to keep that kind of at the forefront of my mind and I try not to centre too much of like my **emotional responses** because I don't necessarily think that that's, uhm, like the **time and place** for it. But it has been interesting in this, in this kind of context to go back to that. And I kind of like I don't know if that's the correct approach because I do think it's been **valuable** to think about my own **my own emotional experiences** as well. Because obviously, that's going to like, **bleed into my work** and **bleed into** the way that I'm fulfilling the competencies as well. Yeah, so really interesting, I guess for me, like just that like self, **self-reflection piece**.*

This was the first instance in which Elsi referred to **bleeding into** her work. This concept was expressed in further detail in the second the dialogue session.

Recognizing Responsibility

It was evident that Elsi had done a lot of thinking and reflecting about her personal situation prior to entering into this dialogue session with me. At this point there was a shift in the discussion as Elsi described a shift in her experiences…

> *Elsi: So, even like the shift in **place**, the shift in **energy**, like this has been like a very interesting time for this reflection to take place. So, I really **appreciate** it.*
>
> *Elsi: And like, yeah, just the contextual elements of why that's a thing have been **frustrating.** But I also just **feel bad** about it. Like, because I feel there's a certain level of, of **responsibility** that, that I've been **feeling** to my kids. And I think I don't, I don't **feel** like I fulfill it all of the time to them, which was actually this was another thing that I noted down was just that, for me, because of the community that I'm in, and the context of my school, and my classes and my students. Uhm. This particular part of the TQS, of applying foundational knowledges, uhm, the stakes **feel a lot higher** to me, like it **feels a lot more important** that I do a **good job** of that comp... competency in particular, because of who my students are, and what **their experiences** are, and also like what their **family's experiences** have been within the institution of education… And so, I, I don't know, I like... I **feel like** doing, doing, like I said, **doing a good job** of fulfilling this competency and, and show... like, showing my students and my families that that's a priority for me is kind of a way to start **repairing those relationships** or **building them back up.** And it does **feel like** if I'm, if I'm not able to, to do a **good job** of that or to fill... fulfill that competency in like, an **authentic and meaningful and relevant way** for my students that that's like, one of the biggest gaps that I could have, I guess.*

It was great to see how Elsi made connections to the TQS (Alberta Education, 2018b) as a new teacher. Her opinion and comments were not biased or reflective of what it was like to be a teacher in the system prior to the TQS (Alberta Education, 2018b) being put in place regarding Indigenous education.

> *Elsi: Like I said, in like **meaningful and relevant ways**, rather than just like, I don't know, like slapping something **superficial** on to, like a worksheet or something that I made, that would work for any, any student or any community or any family, you know, it's, it's become a lot more…**relevant** to my students and, and grounded in, in what those types of, of disciplines actually look would look like for them in a **meaningful** way... And I think that's, like, far and away more **beneficial** to my, to my practice, than staying within my **comfort zone**… now that I'm thinking about it, it's kind of like **a weird place** to end off on maybe a little, a little bit of a **downer,** I'll try and spin it so that it's more, more of an more of an **upper** but I think like where I'm at right now in terms of my, my own **feelings** about where I am which is it maybe it's not a **bad** thing, but I have been **feeling** like if I if I had to pick like an **overall emotion** for my whole my year so far, my half year I guess so far. It's just like this very **intense.** Like there's like an **awkwardness** that I **feel** almost every day at work with like an **imposter syndrome-y type of feeling**. And I think it does go back again because of this like **disparity** between my lived experience and my students.*

Elsi became aware of how she was presenting her story to me in this part of the dialogue session.

Ending on a Downer

Elsi was worried about ending the stories on a "**downer**", which was a testament to the type of person she is, and how she wants to present herself and her teaching commitment. It was

obvious that she did not want this story-telling session to end on a **negative** note. She recognizes the vast differences between herself and her students. She also **respects** the fact that there are differences. You can see this in the way she talks about her students. She has **care** and **concern** for them.

> *Elsi: But like, it's like,* ***bitingly****.... Oh my gosh, I can't find the word that I want. I* ***hate it*** *when this happens. It's like very clear to me, that like, when I talk about these things, for my students, they might mean very different things, right. And they might have very different, uhm, not only just like,* ***emotional responses*** *to these things, but even, even the way that like, they might have heard about these things, or the language that's been used about these historical moments could be different. And I'm aware of that, but I* ***feel*** *like I'm, it's impossible for me to be aware of like how those things would look different for them, or like, necessarily* ***what they're feeling****. And so just* ***navigating*** *that has been, has been, I guess,* ***awkward*** *for me… I guess,* ***humbling*** *for me to just like, practice being aware of it, and do my best to try and make sure that I'm* ***honoring****, you know, how my students might have learned about these things differently, or how they might* ***feel*** *about them differently than me… if* ***I feel like an imposter****, like maybe I should, uhm, try, and try and lend some more some more* ***authority*** *and some more* ***agency****, to the people who might hold more expertise than me. So, trying to do a lot of like group discussions, and really bring my* ***students' voices up higher****… give them* ***the power to choose****… that's very* ***empowering.***

Elsi made a shift in her relating her experiences from being what she called a **downer** into a more **positive** and **uplifting** tone as she continued this session as a partner in dialogue.

Positive Uplifting Tone

Her word usage changed as she made that shift and in the end of this section, she was using words such as **empowering**. This dialogue session showed a real ebb and flow as it progressed through our time together. In the end Elsi did end her dialogue session on an **uplifting** note.

> *Elsi: but the last thing and actually, this is a **lovely, a lovely one to stop on**. Is I just wanted to tell a story about one of one of my staff members who has made the biggest impact on me, I think, and it's, I have an EA in my room who is a community member. She's, she's a parent in the school too. I teach two of her kids. And the student that she works with in my room is her nephew. So, first of all, like she's just really brought a very **grounded** and like **family** based like network of relationships into my, into my classrooms that I teach, which has been It was new for me... like, I've never really the schools that I did like my practicum in, and the schools that I went to when I was in K to 12 were all, like, I never really saw that. They weren't, like I didn't, I didn't necessarily see a lot of like family connections or family involvement. And seeing that, so like, **rooted** into, like, my students' everyday lives at the school has been, uhm, really eye opening for me. And it's been, honestly, like, **amazing** to see the way that she works with this one student in my classroom. And like, the **depth of relationship** that she has with him, and the amount of like, **engagement** and, like **love,** and **love of learning** that she is able to, like pull out of him and, and, and bring into his life at school has been, like really just **heartwarming** for me. And **I love** I **love** watching her work with him. And she's been such a teacher for me, I think in my in my class because I've been able to see the way that she works. And not only just with that student, but the difference in my classroom when she's in the room and*

*when she's not, is very **palpable**. Like you can, you can tell that she has, uhm, like, just developed these relationships with all the students that that **feels very... very homey**, I guess is like the word that's coming to mind for me. And I've **loved** being able to collaborate with her because I **feel** like what we do as a team, like what we like I'm able to bring sort of like the training that I have in, in like our disciplines, and in like planning and assessment and uhm, and instruction and things like that. But what she brings, that's so valuable for, for, our classroom is all of this more I guess like this, the soft skills. But like I **feel** I **feel like** this is some like a word that I've used a lot. And it's a point that always gets like... **hammered on, harped on**, is just the importance of relationships in education. Like it's in the TQS it's something that we like, never stopped talking about because it's so true. Like we work with people at the forefront. And that, like that's what she has a very like she has a great **strength** in that. And so being able to meld those together, in our teamwork has been I think, I guess one of my like **favorite** things that I've that I've learned this year so far... Yeah. And that does feel like a like **a happy place to land.** That's a **happy story** to finish off on.*

Elsi expressed **deep-felt emotions** when she related the stories about her educational assistant and students. She used words that reflected the **love**, family connections, and the importance of relationship. You could feel how she **felt content** to close her storytelling with a **heartwarming** story that would leave her, me, and the reader with those **happy feelings** lingering. Even though Elsi was finished with her storytelling she did continue to express **emotions** throughout the remainder of our dialogue session.

*Elsi: It feels so like **fortuitous** that it's happened in this moment. Like almost like it was I don't know it was just like meant to be. **I'm so happy**. I was kind of **worried** about I was*

*like I don't know, like I just started like I don't know how much I have to say really. Yeah, it's been **very good** on my side to like, I'm very, **I'm happy** that somehow, we've crossed paths.*

Teresa: Reaction/Reflection

I related to the way in which Elsi was talking about her personal experiences and how she had done much thinking about it prior to the dialogue session. I had been preparing myself with my own personal reflection in advance of meeting with Elsi. Part of this reflection and preparation was due to my initial dialogue sessions with Susie. I **felt** that after my experience with Susie occurred, I would be better prepared for Elsi to relate **shocking or surprising** stories. The **tone** and types of stories that were presented by Elsi were filled with **warmth** and **sincerity** which became an **emotion** that transferred through to me in her storytelling. Elsi had an ebb and flow of **negative** and **positive** relating throughout but there were not any **extreme** reactions that were experienced by myself as we became partners in dialogue. I also wanted Elsi to **feel** that I entered into this partnership in research with her with only **good intentions**. I knew that it must have been **difficult** for her to enter into a research project with someone who was unknown, other than by recommendation through a third party. I am **honoured** that Elsi placed her trust in me to not misrepresent her or her stories.

Heartwarming and Happiness

The final story that Elsi told so that she would end on a **positive note** was very **heartwarming.** It was evident through this story that she had a **deep commitment** to her students and their success. She is a very good storyteller, and it was easy for me to **feel** her **emotions** coming through as she related the experiences she had in her class with the student and EA. I **love**d the way in which she transitioned from **negative** to **positive**. I **felt** that she was also

ending in a **positive** way to benefit me as the researcher and our first interaction with each other. I **felt** like she was meant to be a part of my research in this moment. Elsi became a symbol of how research, in the context of **reconciliation** is relationship-building. Our time from first meeting to becoming **comfortable** with each other was not a very long period of time. And the one thing we had **bonded** over was the concept of **reconciliation**.

Much like the way in which Elsi expressed how **happy** she was that we had crossed paths and she had become one of my partners in research I too **felt** the same as we closed off our first dialogue session. I was **very pleased** that this was the outcome of meeting and Elsi becoming a part of this research process.

Elsi: Dialogues Session II

My second session with Elsi as dialogue partners was like reconnecting with a long-time friend. The **comradery** and friendship that was started in the first session carried through to the second session. We were both **genuinely glad** to see each other to have a continued dialogue about what occurred in our previous meeting.

Elsi's Reflection

Elsi went into greater detail about what she meant from the first dialogue session when she was specifically using these words. The way that she expanded and provided more definition to sections of what was highlighted was a clear connection and again there was a clear balance to her **emotional** experiences as she reflected back on what she had said in the first session. Elsi began the dialogue with simple but expressive dialogue points.

> *Elsi: My like, just like, initial overall reaction was that I was kind of, I guess, **surprised** at how many, uhm, **themes** you were able to pull out of what I said, because it was so like, unplanned once I got talking, you know, like, it wasn't like I, I had some notes and like*

*some kind of ideas about where I wanted to go and what I wanted to talk about, but I wasn't really **anticipating** that it would be so **cohesive,** or that things would kind of **fit together** the way that they did… I'm not like consciously using the same phrases and words to describe my **experiences,** but like they do crop up that way.*

Discomfort/Uncomfortable Places

Elsi expressed her **surprise** at the themes that were highlighted in our first dialogue session. On the topic of **discomfort** and being **uncomfortable**

*Elsi: I kind of land on the word **discomfort** as being something that's more of a specific **reflection**, like contrasting, being **uncomfortable** versus like being in a place of **discomfort**. I think **discomfort** is probably a more accurate descriptor of how I **feel**. I know it's such a small thing. And I don't even know if like, grammatically or if within English that makes sense that like, they would be different. But for me, like, I don't view the like, **discomfort** that I **feel** as necessarily being **negative** or **bad**, it's just kind of like my situation and my context… I guess you can kind of see the through line from this first part where I'm talking about **being uncomfortable** or in a **place of discomfort**… what I'm what I'm trying to get at here is that **being in this place of discomfort** is something that pushes me to personal and professional growth… or what things make me **uncomfortable.** Because it's something that I'm like, really experiencing.*

Elsi expanded on her expressions of **uncomfortableness** and **discomfort** as not necessarily being a **bad** thing. The connection she made to personal growth was apparent that she view these places of being **uncomfortable** as points of growth for herself.

Without having this second session as dialogue partners, in more of a conversational manner I would not have interpreted what she said correctly. I realized once again during this

discussion how **thankful** I was that I had designed my research process in the way that I did. This explanation and defining reinforced how important multiple dialogues are when attempting to keep the **true intent** of what was said by the research partners.

Feelings of Authenticity

The next section of discussion had Elsi expanding her meaning and intent when she talked about **authenticity**.

> *Elsi: when I'm like thinking about the word **authenticity**, and within this context of how I've used it… , those projects, to me felt more often are **authentic,** because I was working with, with people who were like really involved in the kinds of content, both the content pieces that we were working on, but also the actual, like, projects that we were doing. And I guess that's the other part of **authenticity** that I also am seeing reflected in my work here at school as a teacher now is, rather than doing like, lessons, I guess, that are more abstracted or theoretical… Like, for example, next week, I'm collaborating with our Cree language instructor in our high school social studies class, to do a unit on moccasin making. And for me that **feels authentic**, because we're like, instead of just having them, like, read their textbooks about identity and culture and stuff like that, like I'm going to have them doing something that is real and hands on and like, they'll actually touch you know, so it **feels more authentic** to me, I guess… So, I guess, like to sum that up, if you want a more succinct quote, I guess there's like two parts to it. It's like the people and the relationships that are involved coming from, like that being **authentic**, like interacting with people who actually have a stake, is part of their lived experience. And then also what you're doing, like, are you actually doing something that is, like, rooted in the place that we're at and our actual lives that we live every day.*

Pandemic Revisited

The next area that we covered as dialogue partners was regarding the pandemic related experiences. Elsi was very descriptive in relating her **feeling** about the shift that occurred when the pandemic caused lockdowns and isolation.

> *Elsi: I'm kind of, I guess, juxtaposing like, what my what my education **felt** like before the pandemic versus after it started, right. So, all of these more like **authentic** experiences that I had the **wonderful** opportunity to do happened kind of before the pandemic began. And so, there was a very... it kind of felt like, **extreme whiplash** to get like, flipped online, and then have like, finish out the rest of my degree. In this very, like, I use the word **removed.** And I think that's maybe why it **felt so removed** is because it started in one way that was very, like **grounded**. And it **felt real to me**. And then it kind of ended in a way that was much more, much more of that **abstracted kind of feeling**.... where it all happened in this like, digital space, and I wasn't seeing a lot of people.*

Elsi expressed **intense emotions** using extreme words in this section of her storytelling. The words she chose were very descriptive. This word usage included phrases such as **feeling removed**, **extreme whiplash**, and juxtaposing. These phrases were indicative of her artistic expression.

Pulling in Emotionally

The progression of this dialogue followed along with highlighted sections of dialogue one. Elsi expanded the ideas she presented around the phrase "**pulling in**".

> *Elsi: And I think especially for me with this idea of **pulling in**, I'm quite. I'm quite **introverted**. And so, it kind of adds another layer to that were like, the easiest thing for me to do would be to just like....**turtle up** kind of, and like, put my head down, and work*

> *on my own thing. And then what I go on to say is like, really, as somebody who's new, new to the profession and new career I'm still like very much very solidly in kind of the, the foundational phase of building up, building up my resources and building up my expertise. And so I should be, I should be* ***resisting that urge****, I guess to* ***pull in****, right and instead, yeah, instead, I guess just like,* ***push out****, and* ***reach out****, and find, find new people and new resources to kind of fold into my practice.*

The ideas presented here are a continuation of the way in which Elsi was creating a picture of how she **felt** and her **emotional** experiences around being introverted. Phrases such as **pulling in**, **turtle up**, and put my head down are descriptive metaphors to how she experiences being introverted. Elsi followed through this dialogue session with turning what I might have presented in a **negative** or different context than what she defined it further as actually being what she meant.

> Elsi: *These particular comments about difficulty and* ***frustration****, definitely tie into what I was talking about earlier. With, like pandemic related* ***frustrations****,* ***emotions*** *over....the context here is a little different, because now I'm talking about like.... how the pandemic is treating me today, as a like, now that I'm in a teaching position, but it's, it's like, similar* ***emotions*** *are still at the forefront where like, when the pandemic started, and I was in school, I was kind of cut off from a lot of opportunities, like to work with people face to face, and now my students are being affected in the same way. So, it's kind of like a, like* ***parallel emotions*** *there.*

Discussion of Growth

The next area of discussion was around the concept of growth. Elsi related how her use of the word trying was connected to her growth experiences.

*Elsi: I'm going to talk about **growth** so much. It's something that I think about a lot right now… Actually, that was one thing that I was. That was one of those themes that I was like, **surprised** to see, uhm, so much, where I... I guess I didn't really think about how much I use that, that verb instead of like doing. But it's kind of **interesting** to think about the comparison between like, I tried to do these things, or I just do them. And I was **reflecting** on that and thinking about, like, why I might use trying instead, like why that's my default, and, I don't know, like, I think it's probably...maybe a bit of like, trying to just reflect there, I've used it again, but trying to just like, reflect my intentionality. Because I know, I always know what I am attempting to do or like what my intent is with, with my actions or, or the decisions that I make, or how I like, relate my thought process to, you know, what I end up doing, I always know, like, where I'm at and what I'm thinking and what I want, like the outcome that I want. But I don't always know whether or not I achieve it, or the extent to which I achieve it.*

Emotional Bleeding

The next section that Elsi expanded upon was the most **anticipated** part of the dialogue by me. I had a **mixed emotions anticipation** about how Elsi would expand on the concept of **bleeding into** her work. I have included a section of my part of the dialogue regarding this concept of **bleeding into** work to give the reader an idea of what my immediate reaction was.

*Elsi: I can maybe add a little bit of context into like, now that I'm thinking about that phrase of **bleeding**... I'm a pretty big, like, tabletop role playing game fan. This is going to sound so random, but like... related. There's this thing, where, like, what can happen, like in and out of the game, is where, whatever character you're playing, you have like, a character and then yourself, but there is **emotional bleed** that can happen between you as*

a player and you as a character. And so, like, depending on how your character reacts to something, you could have like very physical reactions, as a person as well, which can either be like ***positive*** *or* ***negative****…And I guess it's kind of I didn't think about this before, but like, it's kind of interesting to see how maybe that idea translates here as well, especially because I've just come out of talking how, like something that I do is like, remove my own* ***emotion****, sometimes where I don't* ***centre my own emotions****. It's almost like setting up a couple of different like, roles or characters of Elsi where there's like, teacher Elsi and Elsi, Elsi… like human Elsi, who's not a teacher, like when I'm at home or whatever. And so, I guess with in that, in that sense, there's almost like a* ***bleed between the two****…where like, I have my* ***emotions*** *where maybe I'll allow myself to* ***feel*** *a little more* ***fully*** *when I'm…not in the classroom. But like that is inevitably like, it's impossible that that won't affect me when I'm teaching…or when I'm working, is kind of where I was trying to go with that. Yeah, so I don't know if that context is helpful or interesting. But that's kind of like a neat metaphor.*

Teresa: I am so glad that I highlighted that to ask you about that, because what a phrase ***emotional bleed****. Like, that's* ***awesome.*** *That is* ***awesome.*** *And I do understand what you mean. I mean, I, I don't play the tabletop games, but I'm a video gamer. You know, I grew up in the 80s. We still play video games. My husband, I still play a lot of video games… So yes, thank you for sharing that with me. I* ***love*** *that phrase.* ***Emotional bleed****, and I do get it. Oh my gosh, that's* ***incredible****. I don't think I've ever heard that put that way.*

It was very apparent by the comments I made that I was having a physical reaction to how Elsi presented this concept in the process of the dialogue sessions. And the wrapping up she did by

making this concept into a metaphor that directly related to the research process we were in together made it even better than I had anticipated.

Relationship Building

Elsi summed up the changes she was going through and how they were affecting her **emotional**ly. She presented what would become a common thread within my research and dissertation writing: the concept of relationship building.

> *Elsi: So, I think, I don't know, just like a reflection to add to this is, I think, for me, what I'm trying to do here is pair this like process of reflection, with how much change has been happening in my life this year. Like physically, and also in terms of **energy**, just with like, where I am, like whether I'm at home with my family, or in a new place, with new colleagues, my students, you know, new connections and new relationships.*

Teaching Standards and Competency

The next area of discussion was about the TQS (Alberta education, 2018b) standards and competencies relating to Indigenous education.

> *Elsi: I have this **feeling** that, the applying foundational knowledge competence is that much more important to my particular context. And I guess I can clarify what I mean, I because I realize I say because of the community that I'm in, and the context of my school, that's kind of vague. But like specifically being part of a school, that's in an [Indigenous community] where I have [Indigenous] students, uhm, those, yeah, those students have, I **feel**, like an experience and a history that makes it much more **important** to me to do a **good job** of representing those knowledges and...teaching them in a...in an, in an effective way, in a way that is, like **true** to what they should be. And I would add that when I, when I say like doing a **good** job, or making sure that those knowledges are*

*taught in like a **true** way. To me, it's, to do that, it has to be **meaningful,** relevant and **authentic** to my students.*

Feelings of Inadequacy

Elsi then related her thoughts and **emotional** reaction to how she sometimes **feels** like an imposter. This **feeling of inadequacy** is expressed by many non-Indigenous educators who are teaching Indigenous curricula.

*Elsi: Yeah, I kind of **feel** like I just like knew that I wanted to talk about it. But I didn't know exactly where I wanted to put it in the conversation. So, I guess, maybe that's why the shift is so stark. Because actually, now like rereading it, I'm seeing how extreme the, how extreme it is, even just in like the words that I'm using, like the verbiage that I choose. And when I when I started, I'm talking about like my responsibilities and how the stakes are high. And like, I see this as being a really important element of my job, and I want to do a **fabulous** job with it. I think maybe there is a through line, actually, to this next topic of like, feeling **awkward** and like an **imposter** when I'm at work. Because I'm like, just in a place where I'm not sure if I am fulfilling that responsibility to my kids. And like, I know that I think it's so important. So, I probably **stress myself out** trying to make sure that I'm doing a **good** job of it. And I do like **feel** like everyone has more expertise than I do. And they kind of like, have it way more under control than I do. So, when I'm in that environment, like that's probably where it comes from a little bit of **feeling like an imposter**. Like I see everyone else, and they've got it on lock, but I don't **feel** that way every day. And then also I **feel** like it's important that I work myself up to that.*

A Happy Note

In closing Elsi expanded on her thought process around closing off on a **happy note** in the first session. In doing so she expressed **deep feelings** and **emotional** reactions she had in reading what she said back later.

> *Elsi: I remember thinking this way, when I said, and that does feel like **a happy place** to land, that's **a happy story** to finish off on.... I kind of in my head, I was like, Cool. And that's the end of like me doing storytelling… Because the whole time we were on the call we were we were doing a story, right. So now like, looking back at that, I think it's... that was one of the things that was really interesting to me was to see.... how I don't know. Like, I think those... the very end here is such a snapshot into how I was **feeling in that moment**. Like having concluded or concluded like it because that's what I thought… Yeah, I'm so your storytelling is done. And then I **felt** just this like sense of Yeah, like **being lucky** to have had the opportunity to talk about these things and do this reflection that I thought was so **rewarding**. And interesting, beneficial. Yeah. And I just like, I **felt happy.** And even part. Like, I know, I said, **worried**… But even when I said like, I was **worried.** Yeah, that was kind of like a past tense thing, right? Like, I wasn't **feeling** that way. In the moment. I was **feeling worried** before we started talking that like the things that I had to say to you wouldn't be useful at all. But then at the end, I just felt like, yeah, like **rewarded**. Lucky, **happy.** Yeah, I was **very happy** that the things that I had to share with you were useful, and that I ended up actually finding some things to talk about. Yeah. So that's when it was at the end… it's not like I **wasn't happy to be finished**. I think it's just because I tricked myself into thinking that I was finished, but then I was like, oh, like I've, like, I've done it. And now I'm just like, **chilling** and I just get to like, you know,*

> *take a load off and yeah, and just like be like, I think those are just like sort of the* ***pure emotions*** *of where I was, in that moment… I* ***feel*** *like, it reads almost like I was* ***embarrassed*** *to have my last thing that I say be like,* ***something sad,*** *or, or, like, rooted in* ***frustration****. I think it was important to me that I… that I kind of wrap things up in, at the very least, like an* ***optimistic way****. Right. And I think the reason for that is because, uhm...like, I wanted what, what I had to capture to be a reflection of how I* ***feel*** *most of the time, or how I feel like holistically. And, and despite, you know, like, I think it's valuable that I talked about, like* ***frustrations*** *and* ***feeling uncomfortable*** *and* ***not always feeling the best*** *about my practice and like sometimes having* ***bad days*** *or having* ***negative emotions.*** *I think it's important that I talked about all that. I'm* ***glad*** *I did. But I also think that like, it was important to cap it off with....with the* ***feeling of optimism****… So, I'm really, I'm really* ***happy*** *that that was something that came out of what I had to say. Because I think, like, if what we're trying to do is, is talk about my experience in a, in like, a full and realistic way, I....think* ***we did a good job*** *because we got that* ***full breadth of emotions,*** *which is really cool.*

Elsi truly captured what I was hoping for in this research process and dialogue sessions. At the same time, she became a partner in dialogue in ways which I could never have imagined. The way she expressed her final reflection on this research process sums up my research in one moment. I am **thankful** for Elsi and how she was so easily moved to openly comment about her **emotions** and experiences.

Elsi had a most interesting reflection on how she viewed herself in the research. I am presenting this reflective moment as the closure to her dialogue session experience: "*So interesting to read my own words back, it's almost like you can see the light bulb moments where*

*I like stumble into an idea that seems very **true** to my experience, or something that I'm like, yeah, like, that's it like that is how that's the word that I would use to describe how I'm **feeling**…"*

Teresa: Reaction/Reflection

The first part of our second dialogue session consisted of a sensation as though we had known each other well and were meeting again. We were **happy** to be there. We were both **pleased** with how the results of the first dialogue session looked like highlighted data pieces. Elsi viewed them as themes, while I was viewing them as in vivo coding. Regardless of the differences in how we were looking at them, we had a **joint satisfaction** with what had become the final results of the first dialogue in transcript form. I was **anticipating** how much more would come out of the second dialogue. I was **anticipating** that the defining moments would be of great interest to me.

Tangible Authenticity

In her defining moments of speaking about **authenticity** and what she meant in using that in single use and in phrases, it became clear that Elsi has definitive ideas about how she defines words for herself. For example, the express notion that **authentic** was something that is tangible; it could be touched as in the example she presented of the moccasins making class that was upcoming. I have not included transcript from our third dialogue session, but it is worth noting that the moccasins that Elsi spoke about during this dialogue session were complete and she showed them to me on video. They were **beautiful,** and something she will cherish forever.

Shared Experience

I spent a lot of time reflecting on how the pandemic affected someone like Elsi, and her transition from school to teaching. In this instance I think that there would be a lot of people who

can simply state that they related to others because it was such a **shared experience**. Staying home, not able to go anywhere for such a long time, even if you wanted to because you simply could not. This is one example of how many could both **sympathize** and **empathize** with others because experiences were very similar. I found that I was reacting to Elsi expressing her isolation effects as a very **similar feeling** to what I had in my education process. I never had the urge to **turtle up, pull in**, or become more isolated than what was placed upon general populations, but I could see how those would be natural effects for some people, especially if you are already introverted in that way and would be more **comfortable**.

I found the flow of the conversation interesting when it moved from one topic to another with Elsi. There was a **natural transition** to the next topic and so on, with both of us. We were truly partners and dialogue and were both **comfortable** going with the flow of the conversation. I enjoyed the section of discussion where Elsi discussed the concept of **growth**. It was something that she spent a lot of time reflecting on. I could relate to that reflection as I was in a constant **feeling of going through growth periods** throughout this degree program. Some of the growth was tangible, and some was a slow process that might not be evident even to me until long after I am done this degree.

Elsi became a reflection of what I was **hoping** to present in my research. But in the end, she became more than that. I could not imagine in the beginning phases of my research that I would be interacting with a complete stranger. I will forever be **thankful** to Elsi for changing my research so that it became more than just a **reconciliation** process. She made it become a **relationship building** process. She will, forever be remembered when I think about how much impact she had on me personally and my research concepts.

Bleeding Into Work – a Pleasant Surprise

My **favourite** part of dialogue session two was in the explanation of what Elsi meant by ***bleeding into her work***. The **anticipation** of how she would expand on this concept and the explanation of **emotions** that accompanied it was something I was **hoping** would be as **exciting** as it actually ended up being. I had never heard of the phrase or concept. When Elsi explained what it meant and how she was relating to it in the context of the dialogue session I can honestly say I was **blown away**. Yes, I recognise how unprofessional and unacademic it is to use such a phrase within the writing of my dissertation. I absolutely **love** the way in which she explained this concept. I was **thrilled** that she bought it in to our dialogue sessions. Even after the fact as I reflected on it, I was so, so **pleased** with Elsi joining me as a dialogue partner as she demonstrated in powerful ways the idea that we can all learn with one another in the process of reaching for **reconciliation**—this is why it is so important for Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations to be cultivated as part of **reconciliation**.

Reflecting on TQS

The final part of the presentation of Elsi's dialogue session regarding the TQS (Alberta Education, 2018b) and fulfilling the requirements of the Competency 5, takes me back to where I began with this research topic, and how I started by focusing on the TQS (Alberta Education, 2018b) standards being put in place to include Indigenous education competencies. Elsi did come full circle in covering all of the concepts that I wished to have represented in my research and dissertation writing. I especially **enjoyed** how Elsi said in the concluding part of dialogue session two that "*we*" did a **good** job.

Quinn's Story: Moving Past Shock: A Journey Towards Understanding

Quinn started our first dialogue session in the best way as he stated, "*So, I'm just going to kind of yeah, maybe tell a little bit of a story…* and that is what he proceeded to do.

Quinn: Dialogue Session I

Quinn reflected on how his up bringing affected what he never knew about history and past occurrences within the same country he lived. His story is not unique in this way.

No Knowledge/No Biases

There are many Canadians who can attest to the fact that they lived here their whole lives and were never exposed to the truths about residential schools, which has implications, especially for non-Indigenous educators taking up Indigenous curricula.

> *Quinn: one of the things I **feel** really I've always felt **kind of shameful** of, even though I know it's not my fault is the fact that I actually didn't hear the word residential school until I moved to Alberta and worked on a reservation. That's the first time I had heard the word residential school. And of course, being the person that I am, I wanted to dive really **deep** into that and really understand that history. But it was, it was, like, it was a **difficult road**, for sure, it was an **emotional difficult** road. And I still kind of get **emotional** about it actually just because it's, um, it's...what word, just.... I just think it's **horrible** that I was in the same country as, as some **horrendous events** that had happened and was never told of it.*

As he went on to say he also did not have any **biases**.

> *Quinn: I didn't even have any **biases** towards Indigenous people or Indigenous communities because I just didn't have any knowledge or experience of anything, of the, of the history that happened to them, or some of the **negativity** or the **negative biases** that*

*people have about them. So, I wouldn't say I went into it **negatively** or **positively**. I was kind of **neutral**.*

The progression of Quinn's story and how he went from being **neutral** to **negative**ly influenced is more common than not.

Negative Influences

The growth process is evident that Quinn went through as he talks about his experiences and how they affected him.

*Quinn: He gave me a very **negative view** of the place right before I even went there So I was kind of instantly being **influenced**, I would say, **negatively**. And that's **scary** like a little bit more **afraid** than I was before **nervous** maybe is a better word than **afraid** than I was before I had got there. But there was always still that **negativity**. And you would just hear a lot of **negativities** about families and about students and that sort of thing.*

Changing Heart and Mind

And now we can see the moving towards a changed heart and mind. The changes that Quinn experienced as he grew in the community which he became a part of is not unique, but it is also not the most common experience among non-Indigenous individuals.

*Quinn: It was just my **gut feeling**, you know, that, that the people that I worked with, and the children I worked with were **good people**, it was just, they've been through a lot. I would say that my **heart** was in that community… but I **grew** a lot as an educator in that year and a half... I, not only just in my **understanding** of Indigenous education and, and people and you know, the legacy of residential schools and all of that, but I also **grew** just in like my teaching practice. Obviously, as a new teacher, I was able to **grow** there… Like an **authentic** picture… And that was really **exciting** because I truly **loved** working*

*with Indigenous people. When I worked in (an Indigenous community), I **love the people** I really did. And I **love** the culture and I **love** being part of the community really **immerse myself**.... so, I **enjoyed** that part of it*

Open to Growth

One must be open to the idea that **negative** influences may not have been entirely correct. Individual growth can only occur if a person is open to growth.

*Quinn: I didn't do though, at this point, a lot of reflection. So, at the beginning, I kind of talked about like some of my **feelings** around, you know, growing up and those sorts of things. And it wasn't until I became a principal, I think or was becoming a principal. So probably around the time that I did my masters, that I really started to dig a little deeper into, like my biases of Indigenous people, and not just like understanding that, but, but acting on them and understanding the importance of that action. So, I guess in my third year… I really started to **genuinely** connect with community members and have conversations.*

As stated by Quinn, connection matters. Quinn went on to make one of the most impactful single sentences in his storytelling.

Quinn: and I've come to realize that it's important to just understand each individual family or person's experience.

Personal Experience

Quinn recognized through his personal experience within an Indigenous community that everyone lives a different story.

*Quinn: I feel like I'm definitely still on the **journey of understanding**, I think I have a **good** understanding of the history in terms of the actual history of, of residential schools*

and the legacy that it's left behind. However, I don't know if I'll ever understand it completely. Because every time I hear a new experience from someone, it's different. that's the ***hardest*** *part, right, is to act on,* ***act on reconciliation*** *and the calls to action.*

Truth and Reconciliation

Quinn spoke about how the TRCC (2015) calls to action have impacted him personally. This is one example of how **reconciliation** is not just something that is experienced by Indigenous people.

Quinn: …tried to make as big of a difference as possible by really just leaning on other people. One thing that I've found is you have to be ***extremely humble****. As a white educator in an Indigenous community and a white leader in Indigenous community, sometimes I feel* ***guilty*** *a little bit that there's not an Indigenous leader, leading the school. And, and I almost wish there was, and I and I think to myself, if I could give up my position for that* ***opportunity*** *to make more* ***authentic*** *connections, and more, and more* ***authentic*** *leadership, when it comes to Indigenous education, I probably would. It's a big thing for me, I* ***feel*** *very it's a very* ***emotional experience****, I guess, to be that leader. But I know I can make a difference. It just takes a lot of leaning on other people and, and I do a lot of work in in* ***empowering.***

Empowering Others

Quinn's experiences differ slightly from Susie and Elsi because he is currently in a leadership position at his school. His reflections still come from that of a non-Indigenous educator. The way he has positioned some of his comments are reflective of his position. For example, the fact that he can **empower** others through the decisions he makes.

> *Quinn: I **felt very isolated** from the community more so than I did in my first three years in my first year as a principal, because of the pandemic. I can **feel** the connection between the school and the community, and the school and the Elders and... slipping a little and kind of **going backwards**. And it's, it's **terrifying for me**, because it's kind of my responsibility to keep that going. Right. So, it's, it's **hard** to Yeah, it's, it's, it's a **scary experience**, I think, and, and we've been doing a lot recently with like Zoom and that sort of thing, but it's just, just doesn't **feel** as **authentic** as having the person in the room. And I think and I think for the Elders and the Knowledge Keepers that we have, I don't think it **feels** as **authentic** for them either, which I don't want to happen.*

Pandemic Experiences

Pandemic related experiences and **emotions** associated with it was bought up here and with Elsi previously. I could see that being in more remote settings would have had different effects on anyone who was already remote compared to those such as myself who went through pandemic related **isolation** while being located in a large center.

> *Quinn: I think it's **hard**, like I think it's **hard** to talk about, I just **feel** it's almost like a therapy session, I **feel** very, like **guilt,** and **shame** are the two words that I think of. And I'm a very **emotional person**, I get **emotionally invested** in things, I have a ton of **empathy.***

The comment about a therapy session was something that I had already been considering as I entered these dialogue sessions. How would these reflecting times affect me and my research partners. Contemplating something is different than speaking about it to another person.

> *Quinn: I have a very **emotional experience** as a, as a, as a leader is my thing. So, I think I think I **feel** a lot of responsibility, which is **difficult** at times. because I'm **scared** that I'm*

*not going to do our community and our children justice... **scary things**. I'm, yeah, I'm **apprehensive** at times I want it to come off as **authentic.***

Empathy and Respect

The words that Quinn used to identify specific **emotions** was apparent in how few words were used, but how many **emotions** were expressed in the previous section.

*Quinn: not to say that it's **easy** for Indigenous leaders to do that because I think it's probably **more emotional** and maybe **more difficult** because they're actually leading their own community. I believe I'm doing the work to rectify that and to understand it moving forward. But yeah, there's some **shame** in that, and then and some **regret***

Quinn showed how **empathetic** he could be in his reflection on the difficulties that Indigenous leaders must deal with. He brings forth his **empathy** in this reflection.

*Quinn: my **ignorance,** and then just some **fear** moving forward. And perhaps the **fear** holds me back a little… some of the things that I've seen happen in the last few years have **shocked** me when they first started discovering children from the residential schools in the unmarked graves, that was a very **emotional experience** for me. But then, I, but then, I was like, Well, why am I **emotional** about it? I mean, you know, it's not my people, you know, but, but I it was, it was a **very emotional experience** for me, because I was so **emotionally charged** in those moments, but then it kind of like settles back down again, I'd **love** to find a place where I'm a constant **advocate,** I think, not just in certain moments, but all the time. I think that's what makes me **emotional** about it. Because I don't think I'm doing the **best** that I can. Yeah. Ah, yeah, that is an **emotional experience**.*

Teresa: Reaction/Reflection

I found that I reacted with **sadness** in hearing Quinn relate his story about not knowing anything about Indigenous People. He had no expressed **emotions**. No **negativity**, no **positivity**, but no **interest** either. He did not know that he should have until he was exposed to Indigenous People. At the point of exposure, it was both **sad** and **unfortunate** that he was presented with a **negative point of view**.

Stereotypes

The way in which Quinn related his indifference brought to mind how **stereotypes** are perpetuated within society in general because if someone does not know, then they simply do not know, anything. Being told **stereotypes** and **negatives** as your first exposure is a circumstance. For others their first exposure to Indigenous People may be totally opposite and they may only see **positives**. For these people they are **fortunate** that they do not have the **barrier** of **negativity** to overcome.

I found it to be another **heartwarming moment** in this research process when Quinn talked about how he discovered the **good** that existed with Indigenous people. He **immersed** himself into the community and culture. He showed his **willingness** to not accept the worldview that was initially presented to him, and he was open to form his own opinion, through lived experiences.

No Judgement

Quinn said to me in this dialogue session, "***And, I don't feel any judgment from you, which is nice***." This is one of those **defining moments** in this research process where I realized I was presenting myself properly, and that what I wanted to accomplish with this research was affecting the relationship I had with my partners in research. My main goal in my interactions

and dialogue session was that the partners who joined me would all **be better** after and **feel better** for having done so.

I was touched by the fact that Quinn acknowledged how **difficult** it must be for Indigenous leaders to ensure they are doing right in how they lead their community. Recognizing how difficult it is for Indigenous leaders is one example of how Quinn has truly **immersed** himself in his community. One must be at an **intimate** level with community to relate to it.

Quinn: Dialogue Session II

The effects of Covid were still being **felt** everywhere at the time I was conducting these dialogue sessions. As it was at the time my second dialogue sessions was postponed because he had become ill with Covid. This affected the timeframe for completing the dialogue sessions with Quinn.

Another thing to note was that with Quinn's location he was affected by his Internet and how his camera kept freezing up. He turned his camera off for this second dialogue session. This made the second session completely different than all others because there were no visual clues, or facial emotions being expressed as we talked.

Telling a Story Continued

Quinn's second dialogue session with me was similar to the other research partners in that he expanded and provided clarity and definition to what he had said in the first session.

> *Quinn: I didn't have anything that jumped out at me at all, really? Or **concern** me or anything like that. I was like, I don't really know how to, like, tell my **emotional experiences**, I think without telling a story, you know, just kind of what I've been through or what I've done.*

It was evident in the first dialogue session that Quinn felt **comfortable** in telling his experiences through story. It showed how he could seamlessly move from one topic of discussion to the next, because he was simply just telling a story.

> *Quinn: And I just, I always thought of maybe, Canada, as being like a very... free and you know, a place where… where something like.... **attempted genocide** doesn't happen. So, uhm, yeah, I was just kind of taking...I thought of it as really **horrible** and **horrendous** because it was like, wow, I can't believe that that actually happened in our country. I kind of thought about that a little bit. When I see it highlighted. I think I went into I did go into it **neutral,** because I didn't know a lot of the major **biases** that other people had, or I didn't hear a lot about growing up. But about Indigenous communities and people I should say, but I did. Like I did have a little bit of a **negative** talk, I guess, where people **talk negatively**, sometimes about Indigenous people, but it was always people that were like, far away from us. We were in Newfoundland and, and Indigenous people were like, far away kind of thing. So, I didn't have really set opinions maybe... I think coming from like, like I said, the background of ignorance that I did. I...looking back, I think it would have been **beneficial** to have someone who was leading, you know...**reconciliation** or at least **positivity** in the community that I that I went to in the beginning. But I kind of got the opposite experience.*

Experiencing Shock

Quinn has vivid memories of the **shock** he experienced when he found out histories not previously known to him about Indigenous People and residential schools. He is similar to others when he reflects back about how he wishes he had a more **positive influence** when exposed to this part of Canada's history. There are many Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who have

hopes that when those who are not educated in the history that it comes from someone who can present this history with accuracy and not from a **negative** worldview. Quinn went on to discuss how he overcame the **negativity**:

> *Quinn: And I think I **persevered** through that **negativity,** because I think that's the type of person that I am. And I **feel** very **empathetic** for people. And I **feel** like I understand people. And not like generalized people, but I think other people probably don't. And if they were to **experience** more of a **positive**, **welcoming**... or experience in the beginning, it might change the way that they interact with the community and the students… I think just like after the **shock** of discovering kind of like the historical facts of what happened, and then getting to know the people in the community, and **understanding** that, you know, the **negativity** that I'm hearing wasn't necessarily true all the time. I think that allowed me to **grow**… having an **awareness** of the events and those sorts of things. And so yeah, it was important to me to kind of once I became aware of what happened then move through the process of, of **looking inward**, and **growing** as, as an individual and then taking action.*

Quinn found that his personal growth helped him overcome the biases and negativity he was exposed to regarding Indigenous People in Canada. Quinn went on to discuss how **shocked** he continued to be in this next section of transcript. The repeated use of the word '**shocked**' is why I found it important to present the dialogue partner's words as they expressed them. It provides the reader with a visual representation of how many times this one word was repeated:

> *Quinn: what I was talking about that it was almost like we were on an island and, and I know sometimes...I can, I found myself before thinking of reservations like that, like, because I was so **shocked,** I really was **shocked** at, at kind of the history and what had*

*happened and the fact that people still lived on reserve and like, there was no clean water and those sorts of things. I was **so shocked** by that. And I kept, I remember thinking in my head like, this is it's like, there's like a third world country in our backyard sometimes with, with the, you know, the lack of amenities and health care and, and like I said, clean drinking water. And just those things that I thought growing up were so...obvious like, to be.... that people had that in Canada, the way I thought of Canada… it was very **shocking**. I had when I grew up, I had this idea of Canada, because we, we learned about Canada from such a settlers' perspective, in my education. And I'm talking like, from, we talked about, I **feel** like, all I learned about was Columbus and stuff.*

Quinn paused in discussing the content of his first dialogue session to make an observation about the tone that was being pulled out to be presented in this research:

*Quinn: The **tone** of the of the, what you're pulling out like how it progresses… it is interesting to see more **positivity** as the story goes on.*

Understanding and Reconciliation

Quinn bought up topics of **understanding** and **reconciliation**. He connected those two topics to being humble in the process:

*Quinn: I look at it as like a journey **t**hat I'm on, to **understanding** and really, acting on **reconciliation** But I **feel** like I'm still on the **journey** of kind of finding out how to how to act on the calls to action, and really, like help move Indigenous education forward...or education for Indigenous students. I think **humble,** like **humble** is a **good** word for it. Or like just realizing that I don't know everything, and that I'm not finished with the journey. And just being **humble** in that would be the way I would express it. If I were to say, like a **feeling** or an **emotion**.*

To further define the **humbleness** expressed Quinn shifted into talking about **authenticity**. His expression of **authenticity** was just an extension of what he was previously talking about with understanding and **reconciliation**, and **humbleness**. He nicely wraps up this section with dialogue around immersing oneself in Indigenous culture. This is one way in which you will present yourself **authentically**:

> *Quinn: I do think that it's important to, that... I'm doing the work myself **authentically,** as well as, you know, representing Indigenous culture in the school **authentically**… the TQS is, for example, a lot of people think that they can just check off the box of, you know, understanding foundational knowledge, the TQS outcome… so I think people think that they can just check it off by I don't know, you know, bringing in feathers or doing a little bit of beading in the classroom or whatever, but, but not really **authentically,** weaving.... like the Indigenous ways of knowing and being into their classroom and into everything that they're doing. Yeah, so yeah, that's, that's the, that's definitely what I think about when I think about the word **authentic**, is really **being authentic** in the way that we, and the way that we, introduce Indigenous concepts and culture… but I think we we've done a **good job** of, of being **authentic** in the way that we're, like, teaching Indigenous culture. I almost....don't like saying teaching Indigenous culture. It's more like **immersing people in Indigenous culture** because we're in an Indigenous community.*

Vulnerability and Being Humble

Quinn returned to the way in which he found **comforts** in telling a story; his story, as a partner in dialogue. He presents his true self, his true **feelings**, and **honest** reflections, through his **vulnerability**:

Quinn: *I think also the way that the, it's set up like to tell a story and to be like kind of* ***vulnerable,*** *in telling a story it, it makes it easy for me to say, oh, yeah, that is what I mean, or it isn't because that's truly how I* ***feel*** *still, you know what I mean? Like, my story is not going to change because I was being open and* ***honest*** *about my experience. Quinn: I think as well* ***vulnerable****. kind of goes when I say that word, it kind of goes hand in hand with the* ***humble side****, you know, trying to be* ***vulnerable in learning*** *and, you know,* ***vulnerable*** *in the fact that I'm not* ***afraid*** *to tell my staff who look to me for leadership that sometimes I don't know, everything… And just the personal reflection, right, like, just being* ***vulnerable*** *enough to reflect on things and, and even admit to you, and to as many people as I can admit it to that, you know, I grew up not knowing a lot about Indigenous people, and, and kind of helps that's lead me to where I am now.*

Community Connections

Quinn presented a difficult time in how the effects of the pandemic created an isolation effect for himself, his school, and Indigenous community. He presents the loss of connection as **scary**. This would have been an intense **emotion** felt by all, especially when it came with an unknown aspect of what would occur in the middle of the pandemic:

Quinn: I can probably connect it back to the previous experience that I talked about is, you know, being ***connected to the community*** *and* ***feeling really immersed*** *is important for me and I kind of as the pandemic was happening, you could kind of* ***feel that slip away****…. So, I felt myself... myself* ***isolated*** *a bit from the community that I hadn't* ***felt*** *before that, as well as the school, as a whole, kind of* ***isolated*** *from the community, we had always been very integrated, and very much the hub, like I said, of kind of the events. So, when we couldn't host things, we couldn't have people in, couldn't have Elders in to*

*teach and those sorts of things. It was kind of **scary,** because I, I could **feel** that **connection slip away**. And it was, it was something that we worked really hard to build with the community… you can still **feel** that the community and the school isn't as **connected** as it was back in the beginning of my time there. And that's what I was **afraid** of when I say **scared** and afraid that's kind of what I was **afraid** of is that we were going to become this **disconnection** again, where people were, you know, **apprehensive** to coming to the school again, and you know, didn't want to be as **involved**, because it takes a lot, it took a lot of work in the beginning to kind of **build** that connection and that relationship.*

Presenting Accuracy in Storytelling

In the final highlighted section of dialogue that I brought into this analysis, Quinn confirmed that what I was highlighting, and how I am presenting what he had said was accurate, and that I was doing justice to him and his story:

*Quinn: what you pulled out, I it is, you can see... especially right now, like, you kind of brought up the **progression of emotion** through the... through my career, basically. I can definitely see that, like you.... There's a theme that kind of carries itself through… it's kind of **funny** to read your, your writing back, or your speaking back in writing, And I definitely think you've like, captured my thoughts accurately… I definitely. As we're as we're talking through it, I'm definitely thinking yeah, that's what that's still what I meant...I think, you know, being a non-Indigenous person, it can be **difficult** to talk about sometimes, you know, the experiences that I've had, and the learning that I've had to do and that sort of thing, and I think I just think some people, or maybe with other people, I*

*would **feel** a little bit like, pooh.... I'd be **afraid** to say that… **afraid**, you know, that I'd be **judged** by it.*

Teresa: Reaction/Reflection

The second dialogue session with Quinn became defining. He gave clarity to what he said. He expanded ideas and brought forth his own reflections about what he had said in the first dialogue session.

Settler's Perspective

In reviewing this session, I realized that Quinn had described his education being from a settlers' perspective. This is one example of how I allow others to use whatever terms or words they **feel** comfortable with in their relating of thoughts and ideas. He is not wrong in describing the general education system as being from a settlers' perspective. Realistically those who emigrated here at that time were in fact settlers. I do not find the use of the word settlers controversial at all when used as a descriptor, and not a **pejorative**. We can all recall Columbus in our education, but very few can recall being taught about residential schools. Thankfully that is changing in this country, and with research projects such as this it will help to move **reconciliation** forward.

Emotional Wellbeing

I enjoyed how Quinn made comparisons and connections to ideas in the way that he could understand for himself. He did this as he grew and learned about Indigenous People, their culture, and related that to the islands metaphor that he brought forth in this second session.

I was aware of how much Quinn's journey affected his **emotional** wellbeing as he moved through his story and how he reflected on what he said previous. I **hoped** that his **emotional**

experience in being a partner in dialogue with me would be a **positive experience**. He expressed this in many ways as we spoke.

As with the other two research partners in dialogue I was very **happy** and **thankful** that Quinn became a part of my research. I had him in mind as I was in the early stages of developing my research process and knew that he would be a **beneficial** addition to this study. In writing this I am aware that I have said I am **thankful** for all three of the research partners for helping create data for my research, but they all instinctively know that, even as they may read this, that they are much more than that to me. They are friends. And the relationships we have created from this joint experience will stay with us all for the remainder of our lives. Any future encounters we may have will always be affected by being partners in dialogue and research.

Teresa's Perspective in Dialogue Sessions

As I went through the process of the dialogue sessions, I was presenting myself to my research partners as researcher. I also present myself as a research partner. For this reason, I have decided to include some key sections of our dialogue sessions with each partner from the second sessions. This will reflect to the reader how we became dialogue partners in this research. It will also give further context to the reader to the type of conversation which occurred from my perspective. My interactions with my dialogue partners were also full of reaction, reflection, and **emotion.** So, in this section I am presenting some of my side of the second dialogue from the interactions with each individual. I am presenting these comments as they were spoken in individual dialogue sessions to maintain the **integrity** of my own comments being directly associated with that research partner and not others.

Susie: Dialogue Session II

We're really clarifying things because when I do my, when I do my data analysis... I want to make sure that I'm not misrepresenting anything that you've said.

*I'm taking note and trying to identify and pull out the **emotions** that I can identify. So, the word I'm writing down is **empathy.***

*I knew that you would be very open and upfront with me. So, which is what I **appreciate** about you.*

*I don't want to take apart anything that you said, I don't want to dismantle anything. I want everything that you said to be intact, right. So, I'm not like taking and breaking things down. the whole missing and murdered indigenous women, and the fact that somebody that's in grade 11 is, is able to say, this is my percentage of chances. Its teachers like you that are letting them say that kind of stuff. And they **feel** that they can say it **safely.** Right? So, you are doing a **good** job.*

*I get why I highlighted it now because it because it explains a lot about you. It also explains a lot about why you express yourself the way you do and why you do the things that you do. And I'm so I'm so **glad t**hat I'm doing my research in this way because a lot of times people will do an interview and then they'll say **thank you** for your information, right? Like this. I'm getting why you said a lot of things that you did and why you express them...the phrases that have come out and why you have what I am now identifying as the **empathy** and understanding that you have This is research… because people need to be able to express this kind of thing. And when my research gets out there and everything is all finalized and done, I **hope** that it's it makes a difference.*

*Don't be **sorry.** Don't ever be **sorry**. This is this is you being you. And I **appreciate** it so much. So, so, much. Yeah, yeah, you have no idea. The benefit that my research is going to get from you sharing with me and, and, just agreeing to do this is, is **incredible**. So don't be sorry. I'm very, very, very **thankful**. So, I'm **glad** that I know you.*

Elsi: Dialogue Session II

*I have come to realize that this second dialogue session is actually more important than the first one because of this, that you can actually see what you were saying. And you can analyze it instead of just, you know, just talking and saying, oh, well, you know, it's going to go into research. Now I know for sure it's going into the research the way it should and the way you meant to say it. So yeah, yeah, it's **good** for both of us*

*And then you went into the pandemic related emotions, which I imagine a lot of educators affected, both **positive**ly and **negative**ly. Just... and I think the way that you describe that I like the way you described it, **pandemic emotions**. I thought that that oh, well, everybody's having those, aren't they? But in different ways, right?*

*So, I specifically wanted to ask you, if you could comment on what **authentic** means to you....and again, I've highlighted a kind of a block, quote there.*

*That's an interesting way to describe it....whiplash. Yeah. Yeah. That's pretty **extreme**. But that's, that's **good**. I **like** the way you like the way your mind works. Very descriptive.*

How many times did I miss, and didn't highlight growth in your first dialogue session with me? So, because I just noticed that it's there. And that's exactly what you're bringing out?

So, the other thing that I am making sure that I do is that your story appears in my research in almost like a its own compartment, right? So, it's not going to be, it's not going to be like overlapped with somebody else's story. It's not going to be like, I'm not going to do coding like

saying, oh, well, you know, four of the [partners] all use the word try because even though you use the word try, or trying, you're using it in a different way than somebody else would totally right. So. So this is this, the purpose of this is to make sure that you are presented in what you... what you said, and what you meant by what you said. Yeah, sounds like Doctor Seuss.

I attended a presentation by Jean Clandinin, which is like she's one of the ones that formulated narrative inquiry as a research method. And during her presentation, she said, you cannot get deep enough into the ***true meaning*** *without doing three sessions with somebody. And that's why I formatted my research the way I have so. So, I can definitely credit her for all of that. And, and, I see why she said it. Now that I'm in it I see why she said three, and it has to be three.*

So, I think that and then you follow that up with I'm so ***happy****, right? And you were* ***worried****. I can see why. But like, I can see that. I understand that. I get that. So, but the fact that you felt like you were* ***happy*** *that you have done this at the end of it. I* ***felt good*** *knowing that, right? Because you don't know what...like you don't know what anybody's gonna say, right? Like, I had no idea what you were gonna share with me in our first dialogue session. Right? And the things that you said were like, they were* ***wonderful****, you know, even what you consider to be a* ***downer****. I thought it was it was it was* ***awesome****. Right? And just the range of motions and* ***emotions*** *that you, uhm, that you expressed, and you shared with me.... Did I say* ***thank you*** *yet?*

Quinn: Dialogue Session II

Of course, I highlighted at the beginning, because you, you said, maybe telling a little bit of a story, which is exactly what my research is. So that was that was just a highlight for myself to say, you actually, you understand the assignment… The fact that you actually opened with that, when you when you started to get started on it, like at that point, I remember thinking to myself, well, like you, I know that you didn't really realize or, you know, it's like, it came naturally for

you to just say that, you know, I'm just going to tell a story, but that is exactly what my research is based on

And so, your storytelling, which was like the way that you started it saying, I'm going to tell a story, and you definitely told the story, I was going, just going through it. And I thought, oh, this is kind of interesting how you did this in, in reflecting back, and how your teaching career started and how you progress to where you were. So, I ***love*** *the way you did that.*

I knew that you were going to be a ***good*** *[partner].... your contribution is going to be so* ***awesome****. It, well, it already is. Even when I was going through this first one, I thought, oh my gosh, the stuff that you bought out. I was like, oh, that is, that's* ***incredible****.*

So, when I'm like looking at my dissertation and the data that I'm doing, then I can say, you know, you actually kind of were, were a little bit more vague in the first one, but once you expanded on it, it's like, it's more clear as to what you were actually saying

And that moves into how you became ***excited****, you* ***loved*** *working with Indigenous people, you had* ***immersed yourself****, and you found it* ***exciting****. And it's like, it's like, you can see this progression as you were moving through your storytelling.*

Because and the fact that you said like, you ***love*** *working with Indigenous people, and you* ***love*** *the culture and* ***love*** *being part of the community, it's like, you can see those* ***emotions*** *coming out in what you were saying, whether you were consciously aware of what you were saying and how you were expressing them at the time.*

…in my dissertation writing, I'm.... the one thing that I'm striving for is that I keep everybody in my...or my [partners] all separate. Like, I don't want to overlap any of the like, because this is the data is what it is, right? But I don't want to overlap your story with somebody else's story. So,

*when I'm talking about how you **immerse** yourself in the community, I know that it's going to be different than the way somebody else would have expressed it.*

*like even when you said like, at the bottom of page eight, I **feel** like I'm definitely still on a journey of understanding. Like that is an **emotion** because that's the way you **feel**. But you weren't actually like specifically, saying, this is my **feeling**.*

...you bought in the aspect of the TQS.... And it's like, that's one thing that I've always I've always, like, contemplated...thought about... considered... like, how do teachers view that as a competency that they have to bring into their, into their teaching.

But with the type of research that I wanted to do, I wanted to make sure that I am I am accurate in what I'm saying and how I am representing you in my research. And, and I've found through this process that this discussion is the most important discussion in the process because you are confirming that either I'm looking at something correctly, or I've read it correctly after I've transcribed what you said, or I'm not. And so, the this is, you know, this is the most legitimate way for me to say I have I've done my due diligence.

*I think that one of the most important things you said to me personally, was the last statement that I highlighted in that you said that I don't **feel** any **judgment** from you. So, the fact that you said that to me, was very, like, like you said, it's, it's **nice**. Well, I, I **appreciate** the fact that you express that to me. And that you **felt** like you could say that to me… I just wanted to let you know that I really **appreciate** the fact that you said that to me. And you just kind of... you expressed it in the way that you did.*

*I want this experience to be a **positive** experience for you.*

In addition to my **expressions of thanks** I sent a personal thank-you card and gift to each of my research partners. This stays true to many Indigenous cultures practise of gifting. I was

thankful to each person and the gift they gave to me of their time, and words, and **emotions**. And to them I say "**Ekosi**" (Cree word for thank you/appreciation).

Key Moments in Findings

I am presenting a brief look at some of the key findings that were presented in the stories told by my research partners and me. This is another example of how there are connections between the stories that we all live and across the narratives that were told. I **hope** that the reader may see some aspects of their lived experience reflected in the stories told.

Susie and Quinn: On Reconciliation

Quinn and Susie highlighted how important it is to recognise that each person/family is on an individual journey. The experiences of others may not be the same, even though there are common threads and similarities. This directly relates to my opening when I was writing about the Papal **apology**. Every individual is on their own path of **reconciliation**. There are similarities, but different stages. Personal experience will determine how each individual experiences **reconciliation**.

Susie, Elsi, Quinn and Teresa: On the Topic of Authenticity

There was a real concern with all three research partners that they had with **feelings of inadequacy** and not being qualified to be teaching Indigenous curricula. This theme translated into comments about **authenticity**. My own reflection brought in the concept of a **tangible authenticity** when I commented on the moccasin making that Elsi did in her classroom between our dialogue sessions. This was seen by me as one way she was being **authentic** in her approach to Indigenous curricula in the classroom.

Elsi and Quinn: On the Pandemic

The stories of Quinn and Elsi related to the effects of the pandemic. They spoke about **isolation** and how the effects of the lockdown had affected both their teaching experiences. The pandemic affected connections to students and community resources. Community connection is important to how non-Indigenous educators' function within the terrain that they must navigate with Indigenous People. The effects of losing that community connection was highlighted by Quinn and how it related to his situating himself in the community.

Teresa: On Gratitude

The expressions of **gratitude** and how **thankful** I was to have these three unique experiences with my partners in research, will never be fully expressed in this writing. This is significant because it also suggests that there are **emotions** and **emotional** experiences that cannot be contained/captured in writing, they are lived and felt in the body. I believe that this could prove to be an important consideration in the future work of dialoguing through **emotional** experiences teaching Indigenous curricula.

Susie, Elsi and Quinn: On Negative Emotions

Negative expressions were not necessarily presented within dialogue as a **bad** thing. All three partners in dialogue presented **negative** experiences as a learning opportunity, or an area which allowed for **growth** to occur. **Negative**s were presented for a purpose, and not just for the sake of saying I have had **negative emotions** or experiences.

There was a common theme through all the discussions about concepts of **reconciliation**. The ways in which the research partners bought forth these ideas were similar in the context of relating it to their teaching experiences and how it relates to **reconciliation**. The relation to this research was a natural connection made by all three partners.

Susie, Elsi, Quinn and Teresa: On the Importance of Positive Interactions

There was a common theme mentioned by all four of us about how it was important to have **positive** interactions. This theme could be seen in the section where Susie discussed positive interactions, Elsi didn't want to end on a **downer** and changed her dialogue to be more **positive** and **uplifting**, and Quinn discussed the **positiveness** he desired to have with community interactions. My own desire to have **positive** interactions were seen in my discussion with all three research partners in my discussion of living in two cultures, being a neutral party, and experiencing **heartwarming happiness**.

My desire to end on a happy note can be seen again here as I will leave the reader with a positive note to end this short summary of key moments.

Braiding Each Story Through Reconciliation

In the development of this study, I had intended to create a braiding of the stories within my research. These braids are meant to be a metaphoric symbolism of my research and relationship within. Another research which had a similar type of braiding but was done with a weaving of stories with the beaver pelt can be seen in the work of Young (2003). I referred to the similarities that can be seen between my research and Young (2003) in the introduction section of this writing. The creation of these braids was a labour of **love**, intended to provide another layer of **authenticity** to my research. Often, I read Indigenous writing which states that they will braid stories, concepts, data findings or analysis. The braiding is then done through words. When I was in the initial stages of designing this research, I had in my mind what the braiding of the stories and my research would *look* like, so when it came to the dissertation stage, I created the braids that would accompany the writing.

For me to visually create the braid that I saw in my mind I knew that the only way I could **authentically** create this was to draw them by hand, as a result, that is what I did. (Figures 13,14,15). Each braid is hand-drawn, which can be seen in how each one is not exactly the same as the others. This individuality is a contributing factor to how each of the research partners contributed significantly different but equally important aspects to this research.

Figure 13

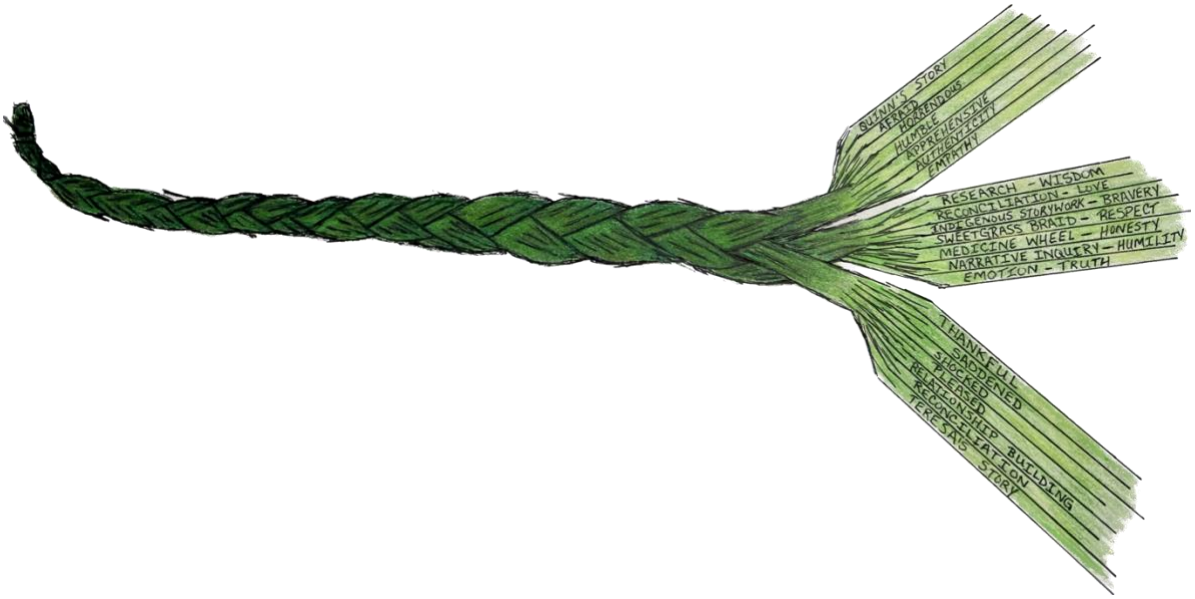
Susie's Braid

Figure 14

Elsi's Braid

Figure 15

Quinn's Braid



Sweetgrass braids are created from nature. There will never be two braids created equally for this reason. The size, shape, and colours will differ in them, always. This representation is what I wanted to show in the data collection from my research partners. Even though the **emotions** and words they used in dialogue were similar, or same, the way they represented those words has different meaning. The hand-drawing of these braids can be directly attributed to the partners in my research discussion about what needs to be done in order for there to be a representation of **authenticity**.

As you can see by the drawings one braid consists of stories told by Susie, reaction and reflection to her stories by me, and the act of coming together in this research as a contribution to **reconciliation**. The second braid represents the stories of Elsi, my story, and this research. And the final third braid represents the stories of Quinn, my story and this research. I had completed a practice design before I did the final three. I did not want to discard this drawing, so I created a fourth braid for my supervisor, Dr. McDermott that is my gift to her, as a token of my **appreciation**.

Figure 16

Mairi's Braid

Mairi has provided me with the support I needed through this process. I have experienced the gift of friendship from her throughout this process and we have built a strong relationship which will last our lifetimes.

What the Narrative Findings Tell Us: We Are All Connected

The traditional teaching of the braiding of sweetgrass does not vary greatly between Indigenous groups. Sweetgrass is a sacred grass. Each braid of sweetgrass is traditionally made with twenty-one strands of sacred grass. Each of the three sections is made up of seven individual strands.

The first seven strands of sweetgrass in the braid represent the seven generations before us: our ancestors. The research partners in this project with me represent the past generations in the sweetgrass braid. They have joined me to tell me their stories, their past experiences. They have willingly come into this process with me to share their stories. We have come together in parallel paths of walking together for a **greater good**, and in process of **reconciliation**.

In my visual representation of each of the research partners I have identified them in the strands as one strand representing them as person; the remaining six strands are identifiers of the stories they told. Singular words that were used in the Findings in a Medicine Wheel Word Cloud (Figure 12) are used in the six strands that represent their storytelling.

The next seven strands represent the seven teachings: **love**, **respect, honesty, courage, wisdom, truth, and humility**. These seven teachings are also seen in my Research in a Medicine Wheel: Final Diagram (Figure 23). The connection of the seven teachings and my research are presented in these seven strands of this part of the sweetgrass braid. This is a representation of how I want my research to be seen; as an example of **reconciliation**, contributing to **healing**, and a teaching tool. Connections to the Papal **apology** and **reconciliation** are also present in this visual braiding of the narrative findings.

The last of the seven strands represent the seven generations in front of us. This section of my research and stories braid represents me as both researcher and research partner. This dissertation writing and visual representations contained within, such as the Research in a Medicine Wheel: Final Diagram (Figure 23), Findings in a Medicine Wheel Word Cloud (Figure 12), and sweetgrass braiding drawings (Figures 13-16) is what future generations will have access to in online format/archives. It will stand as a testament to me and what I have produced long after I have completed this degree.

Chapter 6: Discussion

The previous chapters have dealt with the data of the **emotions** in this research project. This chapter will present a discussion regarding the **emotional** experiences of the research partners, and myself, as I journeyed with them through this research process.

As an Indigenous individual I began this research journey having in mind that I would work with non-Indigenous educators as an act of **reconciliation**. I accomplished this work by asking non-Indigenous educators to share their **emotional** experiences with me. As stated by Hargreaves (2000) "teaching is an **emotional** practice. Interacting with numerous children and adults each working day, teachers use their **emotions** all the time" (p. 824) [Bolding added]. Hargreaves' (2000) sentiment has been the overarching theme of this project. I now find myself presenting a discussion as to how the results of **emotional** experiences manifested in this research. I found the writing of this chapter difficult because **emotions** are personal and not easily defined. **Emotions** require that no barriers be placed on them in order for them to be freely expressed. How one person defines what **emotion** looks like is not the same as anyone else. There may be similarities in how **emotions** are perceived, but no two people will agree completely on how one singular **emotion** is defined, as I draw out in the different ways **emotions** such as **fear**, **love**, and **empathy** were expressed in the narratives shared with me. In addition to these challenges in presenting **emotions** McLaughlin (2003) commented that "debates about the place of **emotions** [emphasis added] in the generation of knowledge are often characterized by a language of polarity" (p. 66). This potential polarity is a primary issue that I have encountered in presenting a discussion about **emotions**; how I present the **emotions** expressed in the stories of my research partners may not be interpreted or viewed in the same way by the reader. Furthermore, my goal was to work towards **reconciliation**, rather than lean into polarity, so

McLaughlin's (2003) reminder urged me to tread carefully in the naming of **emotions** in the work. McLaughlin's (2003) writing presented a change in how **emotions** could be regarded in research for me. She cites that "more attention needs to be given to the importance of the role of **emotion** [emphasis added] in understanding and developing the capacities for reflection which facilitate personal, professional and ultimately systems change" (p. 66). This systems change has been a topic of discussion for a number of years in educational research settings, and it continues to be in this research, as it will be in future research.

As I faced the task of discussing **emotions** in this research without compromising the narratives, I looked to S. Wilson (2008) and his writing about how and why *Research is Ceremony*. I found the challenge I was facing in writing a discussion about **emotions** in the context of research were difficulties that could manifest in other areas of research as well. Some of the **difficulties** presented by S. Wilson (2008) that are relatable to my research are that "it just can't be thought of in a linear or one-step-leads-to-another way" (p.116), "western tradition teaches us to separate our head from **heart** [emphasis added] and **spirit** [emphasis added]" (p. 119), and research such as this sometimes needs " a lifetime of analysis" (p. 120). These statements represent a few of the considerations I **wrestled** with in attempting to present to the reader a discussion about the **emotions** that presented in the analysis and findings of my research. I want to present **emotions** that are not separated from our head, **heart**, and **spirit** (S. Wilson, 2008; Archibald, 2008). What follows are some of the relations I identified in the findings of this research that are presented as broad topics of discussion which includes concepts of connectedness, the **emotional** work of teaching Indigenous curricula, the **emotional** story of **reconciliation**, topics of **authenticity** and **empathy**, teaching from the **heart**, **emotional heartbreak**, and the ideas of learning and unlearning **difficult knowledge**. I will close this

introduction to the discussion with the following quote as I **feel** that McLaughlin (2003) sums up the *why* I did this research when she stated the following:

> The process of research is deeply entwined with **feeling** and with perceptual processes. To take seriously the role of **emotions** in research is to strengthen the research, for all aspects of the process are connected to **emotion**, particularly when it is collaborative. Furthermore, the role of **emotion** must be taken seriously and worked with in a constructive fashion. (p. 69)

I do believe my work on **emotional** experiences is important and can be meaningful to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups which include researchers, teachers at varying levels of education, administration personnel, and anyone interested in **reconciliation** through education.

Emotion Equals Connectedness

My dilemma in presenting **emotions** in the form of a discussion chapter had me contemplating how to maintain the integrity of the stories told by research partners while not changing the meaning and intent that they had in sharing their stories with me. S. Wilson (2008) presents a different way of viewing data in the following excerpt:

> So, the Indigenous paradigm of using relational accountability differs in the style of logic that will be utilized by the researcher in their analysis. Logic needs to become more intuitive as the researcher must look at an entire system of relationality as a whole. To break any piece of the topic away from the rest will destroy the relationship that the piece holds with the rest of the topic…So any analysis must examine all of the relationships or strings between particular events or knots of data as a whole before it will make any sense. (p. 120)

The relationality that is seen throughout my research continues in this discussion chapter as something that must be viewed as a part of a whole, not a separate section of the research. This concept of connectiveness can be seen in the writing of Kovach (2009) where she states, “data are more than things; they are living connections animated through the exchange of story,” and that “personal story can never be decontextualized from the teller” (p. 158). It is important to note that she does not distinguish the storyteller as being Indigenous or non-Indigenous. This thread of connectiveness can be seen in other areas of this writing and diagrams presenting various aspects of my research, such as the Findings in a Medicine Wheel Word Cloud (Figure 12) and the Research in a Medicine Wheel: Final Design (Figure 23).

Building strong relationships is another way in which connectedness can be viewed as a **positive** outcome of this research. One of the **challenges** I found myself facing throughout this research process was being treated as though I was just another non-Indigenous person attempting to “do” Indigenous research. On more than one occasion I found myself having to explain to another person that I was in fact Indigenous and was not attempting to do research “on” Indigenous People, customs, or traditions. It was during these interactions that I found myself responding **emotional**ly to how I was questioned about the intent of my research. It was also during these interactions that I was able to get a small glimpse into the questions and resistance that non-Indigenous educators face in their teaching Indigenous curricula. In reviewing my notes and reflections throughout this process I came across a reflection piece that I had written in the early stages of this program. I had an interaction with a woman and her elderly mother one day in a coffee shop. During our interaction the daughter asked me about my research topic. Upon hearing my topic, the woman said to me “Shouldn’t non-Indigenous be teaching their own kind?” (Personal communication, 2019). I recall trying to control my outward

reaction to hearing these words. Other than the obvious question of what would be the defining factors of what their own kind would be this type of statement is what contributes to the problems and politics circulating around this research. (Louie & Scott, 2016; McDermott, 2014; Scott & Gani, 2018; St Denis, 2010, 2011; Schick & St Denis, 2003). I tell this story here because it contributes to the discussion that my part in conducting this research has held for me throughout the entire process. This also contributed to me questioning the viability of this research and what qualifies me to do this research. I believe this type of statement causes non-Indigenous educators to question themselves and whether they should be teaching Indigenous curricula. I also remember thinking about this statement for a long time after and imagining what it would be like to hear those words as a non-Indigenous educator. I tried to imagine the reaction of the three partners that joined me in my research and how different their reactions would be to hearing this statement; one new teacher, one in a career that spans over two decades, and one who is now in an administration position. I realized that one of the difficulties I had to overcome in writing a discussion chapter was that every story, and every **emotion** contained within this research will be read, understood and transposed into the context of where the reader is currently situated in life. Denzin and Lincoln (2018) discussed Jo-ann Archibald [2008] and her approach to this type of research described her work as teaching "ways to help people think, **feel,** [emphasis added] and be through the **power** [emphasis added] of stories" (p. 554). They continue to talk about ways in which she "integrated elements of Western academic practices, such as audio-recording and transcribing interviews" (p. 554). Reading this helped me **feel better** about how I was approaching my own research. Similar to the non-Indigenous research partners I felt a need to find others' work that would reinforce that my research was a **good** thing and that I was producing a piece of writing that would **help** others.

As I did in the first section of this thesis regarding the Papal visit, I invite the reader of this section to make their own meaning of this work. I want to emphasize to the reader that I am presenting this work as someone who believes that **emotional** work does not fit into a box. I am writing about **emotions** that are not entirely mine, nor are they not mine. **Emotional** experiences and the stories were shared with me by research partners. They were given to me as personal gifts that I will always be **thankful** for. But I still had to reflect on this process and ask to what extent does the degree program requirements force Indigenous student work to fit into the university box. As stated by Battiste and Henderson (2000) "rather than attempting to understand Indigenous knowledge as a distinct knowledge system, researchers have tried to make Indigenous knowledge match the existing academic categories of Eurocentric knowledge" (p. 39). Statements such as this have reminded me keep myself aware throughout this process that **emotional** work cannot be confined to one definition, one singular experience, or only one point of view. Perspectives are different from mine as Indigenous to research partners as non-Indigenous. As stated by Archibald (2008) "the **power** [emphasis added] of a story is shown through stories about a story" (p. 85). I believe that this is what I am trying to accomplish in writing a discussion chapter; I am emphasizing the **power** of the stories shared with me by research partners, through story.

Teaching Indigenous Curricula Is Emotional Work

Teaching Indigenous curricula is **emotionally** charged work for non-Indigenous educators. This concept was observed by Hargreaves (1998) in his discussion about how "caring occupations like teaching call not only for **emotional sensitivity** [emphasis added]**,** but they also require active ***emotional labor*** [emphasis added]*"* (p. 840) and this **emotional labor** has particular contours in relation to my topic. The **emotional** aspect of teaching Indigenous topics

was seen in all three of the stories of the research partners. To ground my discussion here, I draw on authors such as Hargreaves (1998, 2000) and Taxer and Gross (2018) who acknowledge the **emotional** practice of teaching, as well as authors such as Harrison and Clarke (2020), Kanu (2005) and Mesquita et al. (2007) who bring in the cultural effects that may affect teachers' **emotional** experiences. Hargreaves (1998) talks about how "good teaching is charged with positive emotion. It is not just a matter of knowing one's subject, being efficient, having the correct competences, or learning all the right techniques" (p. 835). One of the foundations in the creation of this research was the implementation of the TQS (Alberta Education, 2018b) teaching competencies. Teachers in Alberta have an expected competency in Alberta to be capable of teaching Indigenous knowledges. Elsi and Quinn made specific reference to the requirement to competently teach Indigenous curricula in the stories that they shared.

One of the **emotional** experiences that non-Indigenous educators have in teaching Indigenous curricula is **fear** and **apprehension.** They **fear** cultural appropriation. They **fear** that they will get it wrong or are doing it wrong. They **fear** being told that all of their good intentions are not perceived as such (Scott & Gani, 2018). This expressed **emotion** of **fear** can be seen in all three of the research partners' stories. This **fear** is common in non-Indigenous educators who are teaching Indigenous curricula (Kovach, 2009; Craft & Regan, 2020). Archibald (2008) addressed this issue by stating that "without basic cultural sensitivity among teachers, appropriation and disrespectful use of stories are more likely to occur" (p. 150). In this section of writing Archibald (2008) provides an example of a non-Indigenous person being disrespectful in a storytelling process. This concern can be seen in the stories related by my research partners. One example of this is seen in how Quinn **worried** about his lack of knowledge about Indigenous topics and issues. He was aware that he had to educate himself in Indigenous ways of

knowing, doing and being if he was to be an effective teacher within an Indigenous community. I found that as I work through this section of writing I was finding more examples of how non-Indigenous People need to handle Indigenous knowledges, and stories (Archibald, 2008; Kovach, 2009) which only made this writing more difficult. I am in the position of being an Indigenous researcher who is interacting with non-Indigenous educators' stories. As part of this discussion chapter, I would suggest there is limited literature on how Indigenous researchers present non-Indigenous Peoples' stories. The way in which Indigenous stories are presented in literature suggests that it is owed a level of **reverence** and **respect** (Archibald, 2008; S. Wilson, 2008). I address the topic of directionality further in a later section on teaching from the **heart.**

The Emotional Story of Reconciliation

The final report of the TRCC (2015) includes a list of calls to action. My research was based on these calls to action being implemented by educators in Alberta. The TRCC (2015) calls to action that I wanted to specifically highlight in this chapter (and the research overall) are #62 and #63. These calls to action ask that age-appropriate Indigenous curriculum to be used in schools, plus necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers how to integrate Indigenous knowledge (TRCC, 2015). This Indigenous knowledge was presented by the research partners in this project when they related their experiences of teaching Indigenous curricula. Call to action number sixty-three asks that educators build "student capacity for intercultural understanding, **empathy,** [emphasis added] and mutual **respect** [emphasis added]" (TRCC, 2015). Readers may recall, **empathy** and **respect** are seen in the stories shared by research partners. This section will discuss their **empathy** experiences in greater detail. By sharing their **emotional** experiences with me in this research, my research partners have directly contributed these TRCC (2015) calls to action.

The **emotional** story of **reconciliation** is important for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous People. The **emotional** experiences that are a result of participating in the act of **reconciliation** are shared by both groups. The **emotions** experienced by me were a direct result of listening to the research partners stories. The **emotional** experiences of the research partners that they shared were a result of them engaging with and teaching Indigenous students and Indigenous curricula. Four Arrows (2008) talks about how we affect each other through stories as relationship when he discussed his own thesis writing and how we "work with those we studied in new ways, to understand our work as entering into relationship with others and writing in novel and interesting ways" (p. 79).

Authenticity and Empathy

Authenticity was touched on by all three of the research partners in relating their stories to me. Bialystok (2016) defines **authenticity** as "a description of identity. Something that is authentic, is aligned in its identity, it is self-identical; it is what it says it is" (p. 314). Identity is intrinsically connected to **authenticity**. Bialystok (2016) discusses how identity and **authenticity** influence teachers as follows: "An authentic teacher is an authentic person whose identity is expressed or confirmed in some necessary way through her teaching" (p. 317). She continues this thread by stating that "an authentic individual who feels that teaching is part of her identity may be more disposed to take her work seriously, take pride in her role, and enjoy being a teacher. This in turn may lead to more effective teaching, although the particular methods involved would vary" (p. 317).

Accompanying the expressed desire to be **authentic** there were expressions of **feelings of not being qualified** to teach Indigenous curricula (see Susie, Elsi, and Quinn's stories). This **feeling of not being qualified**, or lacking authority by non-Indigenous educators has a direct

correlation to **feelings of being authentic** in their teaching Indigenous topics. These sentiments were expressed in a study conducted by Kanu (2005) where it was found that "accompanying the teachers' lack of knowledge base was their lack of confidence, due to not having what they called the right to teach Aboriginal cultural knowledge" (p. 59; see also Yuan & Lee, 2016). Although we are many years beyond 2005, and education practices have changed in educating non-Indigenous teachers, the sentiment still remains that they are not qualified. One participant in the Kanu (2005) study stated, "I **feel like a fraud** [emphasis added]" (p. 59). In expressing similar **emotional** experiences in this research Quinn stated, "**I'm scared** that I'm not going to do our community and our children justice" (See: Quinn Dialogue Session I). Kanu (2005) found that "teachers who embark on the journey of integration often credit some sort of transformational experience for helping them acquire the interest and the desire to improve their teaching" (p. 54). The transformational experiences of my research partners were seen in the stories they told.

One of the **authentic emotions** expressed by me and research partners (see Elsi's story) was expressed as **thankfulness.** This concept is seen in others' research such as Four Arrows (2008) and is also called "**appreciative inquiry** [emphasis added]" (p. 204). The expressed **emotion** of **appreciation** falls under the category of **authenticity** for the purposes of this writing because I felt that one of the most **genuine** expressions of **emotions** that were had between all three of my research partners and me was the **thankfulness** that we all had. I purposely highlighted this as an expressed **emotion** with Elsi because the newness of the experience came forward more with her in how she was **thankful** for the opportunity for growth and learning because she participated in this research process as a new educator. I was **appreciative** of all three of the research partners in this project, but thought it was **brave** of Elsi to join me in this

process as a newly graduated teacher who was in her first year of teaching. I believe that the experience of being a part of this research will benefit Elsi as she furthers her career in education, and she shared a similar sentiment in our third dialogue session. It would be wonderful to check in with Elsi a few years from now to see how her practice is growing.

Empathy is presented alongside **authenticity** in numerous writings. Bialystok and Kukar (2018) stated that "many teachers believe that the virtues they impart to their students are as important as, if not more important than, the curriculum they deliver" (p. 23). This thought was seen throughout the stories of all of the research partners. Bialystok (2016) follows this sentiment when she stated:

> The second reason we may think an **authentic** teacher is a better teacher is that an **authentic** individual may be more likely to model or cultivate similar **virtues** in others. Specifically, a teacher who has wrestled with her own identity and strives to be '**true to herself**' may be in a stronger position to help students 'find' and accept their own identities. Although this may not translate into better classroom performance, it may be regarded as one of the broader goals of education. (p. 317)

Quinn and Elsi expressed their desire to be **authentic** on their teaching and relationships with Indigenous students. This expressed **desire** seemed to be very important to Quinn and Elsi because of their acknowledgement of not having prior knowledge of Indigenous topics (Quinn) and being very new to teaching and being in the early stages of teaching about Indigenous knowledges (Elsi). The desire to be **authentic** and **empathetic** will be one that is relatable to other non-Indigenous educators.

I found that I was **decidedly torn** in how I am presenting the concept of **authenticity**. Like the introduction to this section and asking that each reader approach this discussion in their

own way and understanding I find that presenting the notion of **authenticity** to be something that cannot be defined and put into a box. How individuals define **authenticity** is something that is personal, and important, for them to decide. **Authenticity** is not something that individualistic, it relational and experienced through interaction with others. Bialystok and Kukar (2018) discuss the issue with **authenticity** in education as "the colloquial understanding of being authentic is following your '**gut feeling**' [emphasis added] or acting on your most deeply held convictions and desires" (p. 26). Non-Indigenous educators must balance the **desire to be authentic** with the requirement to be **respectful** of what others deem to be **authentic** to them. This is one reason why I placed **authenticity** and **empathy** in the same section of writing here. As stated by Bialystok (2016) "it is often taken for granted that teachers who make students feel supported in their learning are de facto authentic teachers" (p. 319). I believe that this is the type of **authenticity** that my research partners and other non-Indigenous educators who are teaching Indigenous curricula strive for when they express a desire to be **authentic** in their teaching practices.

Non-Indigenous educators face another dilemma in having **empathy** for Indigenous students, because like **authenticity**, how **empathy** is portrayed, received, and understood is an individual understanding. This issue was expressed by Bialystok and Kukar (2018) when they observed that "while **empathy** [emphasis added] has long been promoted as an educational aim…it remains a contested term with no clear definition" (p. 29). This same sentiment can be seen in the writing of Zhou (2022) as he presented a critical review of **empathy** and its role in education. Zhou (2022) presented a critique of **empathy** in education, also acknowledged that "the fact that scientists have offered a myriad of inconsistent definitions of the term empathy is indicative of the complexity of the concept and raises suspicion that those writing in the field of

education may be using the same term to be referring to different things" (p. 1). I have presented **authenticity** and **empathy** as issues firstly in this discussion section because I wanted to address how each of these **emotions** is very personal and experienced by individuals differently. Even though Susie, Quinn, and Elsi expressed a **desire** to be **authentic** and **empathetic,** their personal situations, influences of teaching, traditions, and culture all played a role in their ability to do so. This does not negate their **good** intentions, but it can impact their effectiveness in practice, and thus we must reach towards awareness of the influence of these factors. Bialystok and Kukar (2018) point out that "we emphasize most easily with people we perceive to be like us" (p. 31). So, even though most people find it easier to have **empathy** for those they are similar to, it is not an impossibility to have **empathy** for others; it may require more **emotional** work to do so with those who are less like us. This discrepancy in individuality can be seen in how Susie, Quinn and Elsi acknowledged their desire to be **authentic** and **empathetic** to the Indigenous students, and community they deal with daily in their teaching careers. Their acknowledgements are based on personal experience and life situations that differ for each of them, much like how Zhou (2022) referred to different experiences will result in differing definitions. Other teachers who are reading and relating to this research may find that they need to acknowledge the differences of definitions in order to be more **authentic** and **empathetic** in their teaching careers. These differences are not limited to just teachers, as those who are in administrative positions, those who teach in higher education, and anyone who is examining the concepts of **reconciliation** will find this acknowledgement of differences meaningful in how they relate to the concepts of **authenticity** and **empathy** in education.

Regardless of the presentation of how individuality can create issues with the concepts of **authenticity** and **empathy** I need to acknowledge that it is a **good** thing that the research

partners, and educators in general, strive to be **authentic** and **empathetic** in their teaching careers. As stated by Bialystok and Kukar (2018) “both authenticity and empathy are inextricable from concepts of the self and its relations to others.” They continue by acknowledging that “in quotidian matters, and arguably most education scenarios, it may be possible to maintain a moral balance between the kind of essential individualism presumed by authenticity and the genuine openness to others presumably by empathy” (p. 31). **Authenticity** and **empathy** are **positive** virtues for educators to strive to have in their teaching. According to Zhou (2022) “it was found that student perceptions of how empathetic they found their teachers to be positively correlated with perceptions of their own learning success” (p. 1). Similarly, Bialystok and Kukar (2018) commented that “both empathy with its presumed prosocial consequences, and authenticity, with its close alignment with the Western notion of the individual, seem to offer educators a way of cultivating the kinds of students who will succeed as active participants in a pluralistic society” (p. 34). This achievement is what educators strive for in their teaching careers, as it is one way in which they measure their success.

Cultivating Relationships and Teaching from the Heart

The educators who were research partners in this process with me expressed their **desire** to approach Indigenous topics and students with **respect** by teaching from the **heart**. The sentiment of doing something ‘from the **heart**’ can be seen in my motivation for completing this research. Bhavsar (2020) commented that “for the successful participation of our inner selves in the academic endeavour, we have to know our inner selves” (p. 4). In addressing Indigenous youth, in her **love** letter to Indigenous youth Lindsay Dupre talks about people like me who do research as she states, “many of us choose to do this because of the **deep sense** [emphasis added]

of reciprocity and responsibility that we carry to give back to our communities through the pursuit of education" (S. Wilson et al, 2019, p. 97).

I have acknowledged my **indebtedness** to my own reserve through this education journey, as they are crucially responsible for me achieving the level of education that I have. For that reason, I have put my **heart** and **soul** into this work, so that they may be **proud** of what I have accomplished. I **hope** that I can one day return to them, as a community, a greater benefit than I have received. Indigenous People who have connections to their communities are always **gracious** in their acknowledgement of how they have contributed to their successes in academia. This example has been shown to me by those from my family (Tomson Highway) and from my community (Shawn Wilson). They have both been exemplars to me in how I should conduct myself as a representative of my community, OCN. This work comes from the **heart** like their work has come before mine.

Teaching, and **feeling**, from the **heart** is an important thought that can be seen in the writing of Archibald (2008) and S. Wilson (2008). Bhavsar (2020) states "we human beings routinely think with our **hearts** [emphasis added]" (p. 3). He continues with the thought that "we decide with our hearts, and then our minds rationalize these decisions" (p. 3). This line of thought is concluded with the concept that "Academics, though, are trained and socialized so thoroughly in cognition that we routinely fail to acknowledge emotion or spiritual aspects of our decisions" (p. 4).

Similar to S. Wilson's (2008) recognition that research can take a lifetime of learning, Bhavsar (2020) states that "paradigm shifts take a long time. But in honors we can make a beginning by considering how we may bring our **hearts' journey** [emphasis added] to our teaching and mentoring" (p. 8). I believe that presenting my research partners narratives and

experiences as their "*hearts' journey"* (Bhavsar, 2020) is one way that can **honour** them and their contribution to this research. Battiste and Henderson (2000) commented that "as Indigenous peoples reclaim the oral traditions stored in the minds and hearts of their people, these traditions must be respected by modern curricula and thought" (p. 15). As Indigenous cultures are becoming more mainstream every year the acknowledgement must be made that these knowledges come from the minds and **hearts**, and that they are to be treated with **respect** because of where this knowledge originates.

Emotional Heartbreak

In recognizing that teachers are putting their **heart and soul** into their engagement of Indigenous curricula, the opposite affect must also be acknowledged…that this **heart work** is also **heartbreaking**. The sentiment of having her **heart broken** was echoed frequently by Susie in her narrative. This can be related to Shirley (2017) when she stated:

> When truth-telling practices activate stories of struggle and resistance, educators need to be conscious of the risks involved in telling such stories. Teaching into the risk involves the process of raising awareness in students by unveiling history from the perspective of those affected by injustice and requires educators to carefully ponder how to…cultivate students' **emotional** responses and reactions. Consequently, teaching into the risk requires **cultivating the heart** and carefully navigating youth through the **emotional** process of critically engaging in sociocultural analyses of society. (p. 2)

Susie related how she felt that her work in teaching Indigenous students and Indigenous topics was sometimes **heartbreaking** for her. She related stories of dealing with Indigenous issues that would only be seen with Indigenous youth, such as Indigenous missing and murdered women and the student experience she had in the media assignment shared in the findings section. Susie

made an astute observation in relating the story of the Indigenous missing and murdered women and how it affected her student that day when she said, “treat everybody like their **heart is breaking**…because it probably is” (See Susie’s story). Shirley (2017) stated that “**cultivating the heart** [emphasis added] with Indigenous epistemologies is a core component within a space of learning where social issues and concerns are discussed” (p. 3). She continues by stating “colonialism has contributed to disrupting the lives, livelihood, and well-being of Indigenous peoples; it is Indigenous epistemologies that will contribute to the **healing** [emphasis added] of our community members” (p. 5). As can be seen in the story related by Susie, this is a reality that non-Indigenous educators must keep front of mind in their daily interactions with Indigenous students. Taxer and Gross (2018) discuss how “teachers often exert some level of control over their emotions via emotional regulation…which may be defined as the process by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions” (p. 180). In instances where **heartbreak**, or **traumas** are experienced it would be a natural reaction for teachers to regulate their **emotional** reaction.

My reaction and reflection included **emotional** reactions that were **heartbreaking** as I listened to the narratives of my research partners; especially Susie as her stories related to **traumas**. The **emotional heartbreak** experienced by non-Indigenous teachers was an unexpected **emotion** that was passed on to me as I listened to the stories told by Susie. I believe this **emotional** reaction was felt by me as an Indigenous researcher because the non-Indigenous partners were **authentic** in their stories that were shared from the **heart.**

Connections of Heart and Love

There is a common connection that is made between the **heart** and **love**. These connections can be seen in the stories of my research partners as their narratives often contained

a reference to teaching from the **heart** and **acting out of love**. At the end of her first dialogue session Elsi was concerned with ending her stories on a **good** note. She did this by shifting her storytelling into a topic of **love.** She related the story of watching her Indigenous teaching assistant interactions with Indigenous students as **heartwarming**, and how she **loved** seeing the interactions being so **positive**. Elsi also brought in emotion words such as *palpable*, *collaborative*, and ***feeling very homey*** when the educational assistant is present. All of these **emotions** relate to experiencing **heart** and **love** emotions. Stern and Burgess (2020) discuss similar experiences as Elsi's, in their study as "moving beyond 'Western' and 'non-Western' dichotomies of identity and engaging with Aboriginal studies teaching as an interface of cultural tension allowed them to focus on ways in which they could make valid contributions to Indigenous and non-Aboriginal students" (p. 307).

A few years ago, Tomson Highway conducted an interview in which he stated that he has had the successes in his life *because* he attended residential school (Ostroff, 2015). He did not receive a large amount of criticism for making this type of statement, where others have. I believe that he made this type of statement because he presented his personal testimony of how his success in life was a result of his education. I do not believe that by crediting his residential school education that it was in any way meant to discredit the **abuses** and **horrors** suffered by others in the residential school system. Like Dr. Littlechild who presented Pope Francis with a headdress, as I discuss in the *Papal Apology*, Highway (Ostroff, 2015) presented his perspective on residential school, based on his life experiences, and how it contributed to his success. Highway commented:

> All we hear is the **negative** stuff, nobody's interested in the **positive**, the **joy** in that school. Nine of the **happiest** years of my life I spent it at that school. I learned your

> language, for God's sake. Have you learned my language? No, so who's the privileged one and who is underprivileged? "You may have heard stories from 7,000 witnesses in the process that were **negative**, [emphasis added] " he adds. "But what you haven't heard are the 7,000 reports that were **positive** [emphasis added] stories. There are many very successful people today that went to those schools and have brilliant careers and are very functional people, very **happy** [emphasis added] people like myself. I have a **thriving** [emphasis added] international career, and it wouldn't have happened without that school. You have to remember that I came from so far north and there were no schools up there. (Ostroff, 2015)

I choose to believe that his approach comes from a perspective of **love**. Anyone who knows his work knows that he has written about the **abuses** that occurred in residential schools in plays such as *The Kiss of the Fur Queen* (Highway, 2021). Coming from a position of **love** allows Highway to talk about hard truths such as residential schools and present different perspectives from his personal experience (Ostroff, 2015). He has addressed the **abuses suffered** in residential schools in his writing, but he also has the individual autonomy to address how his education, even in a residential school, contributed to his successes in life. I am similar to Tomson Highway in that there are many who I encounter who think that it is a detriment to be First Nations, and to be a treaty member of a reserve. If it were not for my inclusion in treaty five territory, and membership to OCN I would not have the education that I do. I do not consider the education opportunities I have **enjoyed** because I am treaty status to be a **detriment**.

During the time that I was completing this degree I participated in two projects as a graduate assistant researcher. Both of these projects were conducted with a mid-sized Catholic School District. These projects were conducted to benefit Indigenous youth who attend Catholic

Schools. It was not lost on me that these projects directly involve the Catholic Church, which was one of the main churches that previously operated residential schools in Canada. Non-Indigenous educators must work through the legacy that has been felt by the existence of residential schools, and those who work in the Catholic school system are not immune to the effects of the long-lasting effects. These effects are also **felt** by Indigenous individuals such as myself. This is the **difficult work** that some Indigenous individuals choose to do. Both of these projects had multiple Indigenous individuals including an Indigenous community Elder. We could all recognise that the Indigenous youth within the Catholic schools are not different than any other Indigenous youth in any other school system. The teachers within the Catholic school system in Alberta have the same requirement to teach Indigenous curricula competently. I participated in these research projects so that I could contribute to the success of these Indigenous youth. I wanted to show through my actions both in these projects that it is okay for Indigenous individuals to work with institutions such as Catholic school districts and non-Indigenous research partners. I find that the risk I have taken in doing this research and working in the research projects have provided me with a personal growth that I would not have experienced otherwise.

Much like Tomson Highway, I approached this work from a perspective of **love**, and to be a **positive** contributor to the successful education of Indigenous youth. I have been careful to not present my research in a way that it could be interpreted as opposing sides. This is why I have repeatedly asked the reader to approach my writing and research from their own positionality. I have created an open invitation for all. This approach connects to my opening statement of how I was born in/through **reconciliation**. I have only been taught, and raised, to live a life of **reconciliation**. I have put myself at risk of being criticized greatly by conducting

this research and writing some of the perspectives that I have in this thesis. I have tried to present my perspectives as being neutral, as found in this writing in the section *Walking in Two Worlds*. I have done this by approaching this work with all intentions of doing a **good** work, out of **love**. I am **proud** to be a part of the Highway family and have people such as Tomson Highway to follow as example, with his personal philosophy being "life is an act of joy" (Ostroff, 2015). I recognize that how Highway claims success *because* of residential schools, and the way I am approaching the narratives shared with me with **dignity** can be challenging to the conventions of how we ought to take up this work, and that leads me to the next section which delves into questions of (un)learning and difficult knowledges.

Learning/Unlearning Difficult Knowledges

The difficulty of unlearning is a common thread seen throughout the stories of the three research partners, and through the themes in my thesis writing. McDermott (2014) stated, "I started to see the ways in which anti-racism calls for an *un*learning of dominant ways of knowing yourself and normatized social relations" (p. 212). Writing about these harder truths is a dilemma for me because I must present ideas and truths here that not all who read this will agree with, not that agreement is a requirement. I examine cultural differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups, which presents difficulties regardless of which different cultures are being presented. Mesquita et al. (2007) examined cultural differences in **emotions.** They observed that "cultural differences in **emotion** [emphasis added] regulation are to be expected, because the common and most valued relationships differ across cultural context" (p. 284).

Non-Indigenous Learning/Unlearning Difficult Knowledge

Non-Indigenous research partners participating in an Indigenous researcher's project is not a new concept. It is, however, more common for non-Indigenous researchers to conduct

research with non-Indigenous research partners. In examining how cultural differences may have affected the non-Indigenous partners in this research project I will include concepts of unlearning difficult knowledges. Mesquita et al. (2007) acknowledge that "cultural models may affect individuals' focus of attention on relatively different aspects of emotional situations" (p. 290). This speaks to how the **emotional** experiences of the non-Indigenous research partners differ from my own **emotional** experiences, as well as how the cultural model that the reader lives in will affect how they experience reading this thesis. Mesquita et al. (2007) discuss in their writing how cultural differences affect **emotional** regulation. This regulation of **emotions** and how it affected research partners in this project can be seen in Susie's story when she relates her reacting, or not reacting, to the experiences she encountered. Her story about the student encountering her relative as a missing and murdered Indigenous woman as a result of the class assignment is one way in which the differences can be seen in how the Indigenous student regulated her **emotions**, and ultimately how Susie dealt with her own reaction to how her class assignment impacted one of her students.

The concepts of unlearning are intricately connected to colonization and what is considered by many Indigenous People to be dominant cultures. Authors such as Fee (2021) in talking about **empathy** and **respect** presented the following:

> To put oneself into someone else's shoes would, in Indigenous systems…risk **violating** that person's autonomy. Indeed, 'putting oneself in the other's shoes' seems very much like a colonizing move at the level of **emotion** life, one that begins with the assumption that we can know the other at a deeply personal level without even meeting them face-to-face. This assumption could quickly shift into 'knowing what is best' for someone else. (p. 218)

Non-Indigenous educators must always be aware that there is a danger that may present themselves as being an actor who is presenting and representing the dominant culture that knows best for Indigenous others. Fee (2021) also wrote that "empathy, or any other emotion alone cannot be the remedy to complex transnational social inequalities and conflicts, because it is always already bound up with, and produced through, these very relations of power" (p. 217). Similarly in the study conducted by Stern and Burgess (2020) found that the non-Indigenous educators "were highly aware of their positionality" (p. 310). The connections to **empathy**, and power relations are contributing factors to the ideas that I am presenting in this discussion chapter.

Susie's stories include her acknowledging that she **feels** that she has a privilege. She has learned from her privileged perspective how to be inclusive of all aspects of Indigenous People, youth, culture, and curriculum.

Indigenous Learning/Unlearning Difficult Knowledge

As an Indigenous person I had my own set of preconceived notions, or knowledges that I had to unlearn through this research process. This included learning to let go and trust the process as the research took shape. It also meant that I had to lean on others to provide knowledge which would strengthen my research. I had to become acutely aware of any **biases** that I might bring into this research. One of the **frustrations** I found in creating this discussion chapter was the lack of publications and general acknowledgement that Indigenous researchers need to be aware of how they portray and present non-Indigenous points of view and in this case, **emotional** experiences. I found that this was one of the difficult knowledge areas that I had to face in presenting this discussion chapter. I wanted to present a section of reflection and discussion around the literature and results of this research in how Indigenous researchers

respect non-Indigenous experiences regarding Indigenous knowledge interactions and **emotional** experiences. I can only speak from my personal experiences at this point, as I did not find a specific example of Indigenous People needing to be **respectful**, appropriate, or **empathetic** to the presentation of non-Indigenous points of view.

The closest I can come to this type of reference is in the writing around **reconciliation**, but even this writing presents an expectation of Indigenous knowledges being **respected** and **revered**, but not the reverse as a requirement when presenting non-Indigenous knowledge or experiences. Indigenous scholars (Archibald, 2008; S. Wilson, 2008; Kovach, 2009; Craft & Regan, 2020) all write about ways in which **reconciliation** can be enacted between Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups. While I can understand that most Indigenous authors and scholars want to lessen the impact of the dominant culture on Indigenous People (see *Reframing* in Craft & Regan, 2020) it would benefit both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people to see a broad approach taken in how **emotional** experiences affect non-Indigenous educators. This may be one area where the concept of the dominant culture can be removed from the equation when conducting research; **emotions** themselves are not culturally specific, we all **feel emotions**. The ways in which individuals experience **emotions** can be influenced by their cultures though. In other words, everyone regardless of culture, or race, or identity experiences **emotions** such as **fear**, **pride, happiness, sadness**, etc. Harrison and Clark (2020) discussed this concept in relation to higher education as "the development of cultural capabilities within the university sector…identifies the objective of universities in developing and embedding an Indigenous cultural capability within their teaching and research programs…to bring about culturally appropriate exchanges between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people" (p. 187). So, in addition

to race and cultural affects, there are considerations of **emotional** experiences for people such as me who are conducting research in higher education settings.

In earlier chapters of this thesis, I have expressed my **desire** to be **respectful** in presenting the stories of the research partners. I realized when I reached this point of writing this discussion chapter that my **desire** to be **respectful**, and careful in my presentation of the non-Indigenous stories that this is counter-intuitive to what readers of this writing might be thinking and **feeling**. I approach this work in what could be **contentious** to some, as another way in which I can be the person who is attempting to not present a one-side-vs-the-other perspective. We, as a society, have become accustomed to being careful and **respectful** of Indigenous ways of thinking, knowing, and doing so much that it may be foreign for some to recognize that I **felt** the same towards my non-Indigenous research partners. While they may be of the dominant culture, we cannot forget they are individuals with their own **feelings** and **emotions**. I found myself relating these thoughts to those expressed by McDermott (2014) when she discussed the concepts of "attaching ourselves to particular narratives" (p. 219). She further contemplates how she then had feelings of **frustration** when she stated, "who am I to ask an-Other(ed) body who has experienced…**pain** [emphasis added] in educational spaces to wait for me to get **uncomfortable** [emphasis added] and witness what that discomfort can be productive of?" (p. 219). This question is similar to thoughts I have had about how I **feel** about this research, and how I am presenting it in this discussion. I had to question myself on why I **felt** that I had to question my own **discomfort** and recognize that **good** may come out of presenting my own **vulnerabilities**. This may be the purpose of me **feeling** the need to write this chapter in the way that I have presented it; an example for other Indigenous researchers to examine their own

intentions and regard they have for non-Indigenous people who may become participants in their research.

McDermott (2014) also stated that "we must guard against marginalized bodies being put on display, asked to carry the burden of proof about the **emotional** [emphasis added] toll of racism for white consumption….even – or especially, when a dominant body identifies as an ally" (p. 222, see also, Tuck, 2009, 2010). There are many studies that have shown the perspective of white teachers, such as Solomona et al. (2005) where the authors were careful to "ensure that whiteness is tabled as a viable subject for examination" (p. 148). The results in their study included "underlying emotional sentiment expressed in their [white teachers] writings" (p. 153), Susie also related her feeling and position of **power** as being sutured with white privilege in this study. The study conducted by Solomona et al. (2005) examined perspectives of white teachers and presented results in relations to privilege. The concepts of **power** and privilege are not new in this way. I do not imply that any and all research that studied non-Indigenous perspectives are incorrect in the way they present non-Indigenous educators.

Authors such as St. Denis and Schick (2003) write about how "the cultural other is typically understood to be Aboriginal peoples" (p. 56). The word *other* implies that in a cultural hierarchy Indigenous groups are lesser, in this context. It is my wish for the reader of my work to understand that in the ways that other research project that are inclusive of Indigenous People and topics command **respect**, I feel that I owe the same **respect** to the non-Indigenous research partners' stories and how I present them in my research. This requires that neither Indigenous nor non-Indigenous groups be presented as a cultural other; we must work from another frame of reference, one that does not promote hierarchy and othering to be made legible. As a matter of

discussion this statement alone is contentious for some and is one way in which I have created a **vulnerability** for myself in my research.

Landing in a Happy Place

It was important for Elsi to end her dialogue session on a **happy** note. She commented that it felt like a **happy** place to land, with a **happy** story to finish off on (See Elsi's Dialogue Session I). I found myself wanting to end my writing in most areas by presenting my research in a **positive** and **uplifting** way. Taxer and Gross (2018) state that "an essential aspect of emotional regulation is the activation of a goal to influence emotion…this goal can be to change the emotion so that one feels **positive** [emphasis added] rather than **negative emotions** [emphasis added]" (p. 180). I could see myself feeling the need to create that **happy** landing with this discussion chapter. I am resisting the urge to create a **happy** ending here. I believe that this chapter has presented difficult topics of discussion that readers should reflect on in their own way. I realize that my research is presenting difficult work that requires pause for thought. I will close this chapter in the way that I opened it. I **hope** that if there are areas of discussion presented here that have caused the reader to question, or reconsider, their own viewpoint in any areas presented that they will recognize this as being a **good** thing. As McDermott (2014) writes "affect and emotion are always already present in educational spaces, and not only when these made-to-be-difficult conversations are engaged" (p. 217). It is the ever-present affect and **emotions** which led me to produce this writing and to do this research.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

As I move into the conclusion chapter of this dissertation, I reflected on the Research in a Medicine Wheel: Final Diagram (Figure 23), I created and asked myself how the Medicine Wheel, as a conceptual framework, fits into place within a chapter that presents the importance and impacts that this research may have?

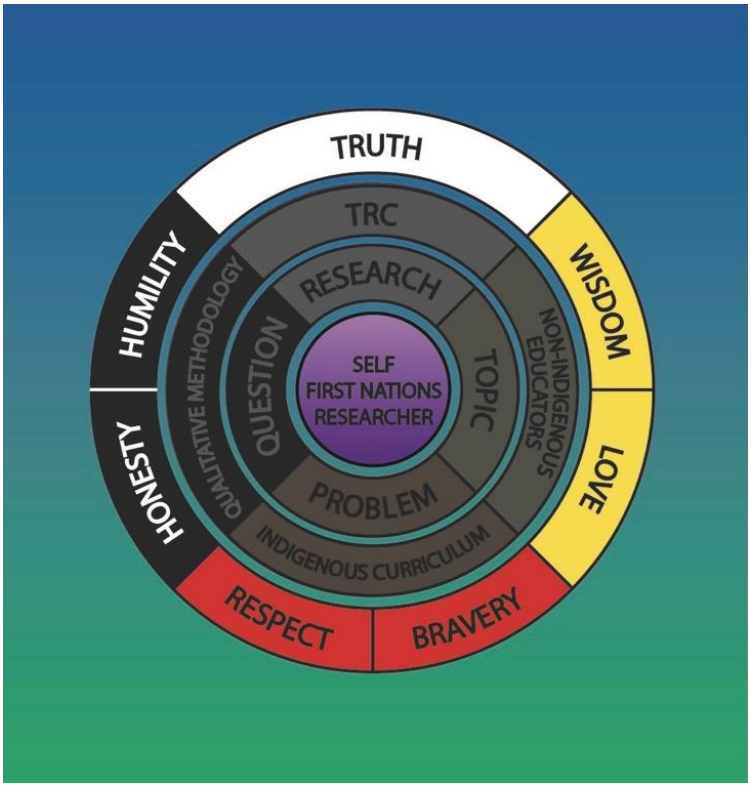
The process of completing this degree has found me doing a significant amount of reflective contemplation. Normally, I would be thinking about one thing, an area of concern, or chapter for consecutive days. The ideas and how I have presented them, the diagrams created for those ideas have usually had the most clarity for me when I am sleeping. This was no different for me as I thought about the writing of this chapter. Early one morning I realized that I needed to begin with my reflection and story process before I created a discussion around the research partners data and findings from their stories.

I decided that this conclusion chapter must begin with me and how my perspectives are important to what this research represents. I realized that my story and experiences throughout this process are the reason for the 'why' I did this research, and 'why' I am doing this writing. I realized that I must give meaning to my research and how it relates to me before I bring in the **emotional** experiences of Susie, Elsi and Quinn.

The next thought I had, in these early morning hours, was how one of the circles in the Research in a Medicine Wheel (Figure 2) started with the north quadrant, which is where I had placed myself. In that moment I could not recall which circle it was but was not surprised when I looked to find that it was the third circle, which contains the seven teachings. (Figure17) I brought a visual of the circle down into this chapter so that it is easier for the reader to recollect its contents.

Figure 17

Return to the Seven Sacred Teachings



As I stated earlier in the initial introduction of the circles within the Research in a Medicine Wheel (Figure 2) this circle is different from the others in that it begins in the north quadrant. It only makes sense then, that this closing chapter would begin with me, with the seven sacred teaching of truth. When I created the original circles within the Research in a Medicine Wheel (Figure 2) I had not yet recruited or finalized who would be represented by the quadrants. As fate would have it, the diagram of the Research in a Medicine Wheel (Figure 2), where each research partner was placed, and how it all came together in the way that I wrote this closing chapter fell in place as though I had intended it from the beginning. These are the ways in which I have followed my instincts and allowed things, ideas, and creative processes to come to me. I

feel better knowing that I am not forcing something to fit or changing the narrative to serve a purpose other than what was originally intended. I **feel** that with presenting this conclusion chapter to the reader, and beginning with me and my story/reflection, that this is how it was meant to be.

And so, I will begin this discussion with my story, followed by Susie's story, Elsi's story, and conclude with Quinn's story. Each story will be connected back to the third circle in the Research in a Medicine Wheel (Figure 5). The final section of this chapter will be an overview of the importance of my research, and why it matters beyond the four of us involved in the dialogue sessions.

Teresa's Story: The Manifestation of Reconciliation

As I stated above the discussions will be directly connected to the third circle in the Medicine Wheel (Figure 5). Beginning in the north, this quadrant contains the teaching of Truth. I held true to the intent and meaning of the stories bought forth by my research partners in their dialogue sessions. Their truth mattered to me and my research. As I stated earlier the representation of truth and how I fell into that space within the Medicine Wheel (Figure 5) provided me with a guiding principle in how I approached my non-Indigenous research partners throughout this process. This includes how I present them in this section of writing.

My story was a reflection from beginning to end of this research journey as can be seen in how I began this writing with the Papal **apology**. The Papal **apology** was a reactionary piece written by me because I had a story to tell about my perspective on the **apology**, how it related to me, and how I could see the connection between a current event and my research. The creation of the Research in a Medicine Wheel (Figure 2) came about as a reflective process regarding my research. This process began before I conducted any of the research data gathering process and

continued through until the end of data analysis and into the writing process. The Findings in a Word Cloud Medicine Wheel (Figure 12) was the result of me making sense with the data created from the dialogue sessions. I created my stories as reflections on the stories of other research partners. These were some of the ways in which I was able to create researcher reflections in other ways than just words. I believe that creating the diagrams and visual aids helps others to physically see not only what I was trying to bring forth in this research, but how I got there. It is a way for others to see that there are a variety of ways in which research, data, and results can be presented in a thesis.

My story flows through the entirety of this research. This is another reason why my story and reflections need to fall at the beginning of this discussion. My story is more than just reflection on, reaction to, and analysis of the stories of my research partners, it is also the creation of the research from the very beginning of my degree program to the end. My story includes my interactions with others such as my supervisor, the members of my committee, and the members of my examination committee. My story also represents all of the choices that I made and how I decided to conduct my research, the data collection, the data analysis, and what I am representing here as why my research is important.

Politics of Identity in Shaping our Stories

I would be remiss if I did not include my story and **emotional** reactions as First Nations researcher in my data analysis. As stated by Archibald (2008) “it is essential that First Nations have the power to direct the contextual representation of their stories and their cultural knowledge” (p. 146). My intention was that I would record my **emotional** experiences of conducting my research, and so I created three threads of story which are specific to my experiences.

The first thread is defined as the ‘before conducting research stage’. This includes the **emotional** ups and downs I experienced in this doctoral program, and in preparation to conduct my research. The requirements of this degree program are that there are a number of classes which must be completed prior to the research stage. It was during this first two years in the program that I experienced my most extreme **emotional** highs and lows.

In the early phase of this research process, I had an encounter with someone who was also Indigenous. I had inquired about their heritage. This was done out of, what I would now label as naivety, on my part. Until this point I had not encountered anyone who became **offended** by my asking them to clarify the specifics of their heritage. I have always been taught that you must situate yourself as to who you are within the Indigenous community. Doing this requires that you identify which community you belong to. If you are not a member of a reserve, are non-status, Métis, or are neither but have Indigenous heritage you should not be offended by being asked where you are from. Being a part of any Indigenous community or having Indigenous heritage should be something that provides context to others when you identify as being Indigenous that they can relate to you and who you are. When you are a member of a reserve it is a way for others in that community to place you in family relations. When I tell others that I am part of the Highway family there are connections that can be made to others. I am fortunate to have someone in my family like Tomson Highway who is published and has written about my great-grandparents when he talks about his heritage and family life. Until I reached the upper levels of my post-secondary education, I did not know that identity and how you identify yourself to others might be a controversial event. These interactions with others have been learning lessons for me and demonstrate that this work of teaching Indigenous curricula is both **emotional** and political for all people—although differently situated.

It was also early in this research process that I faced **criticism** regarding my choice of research topic. I am not sure that I will ever understand why those who do not agree with my doing this research **feel** the way they do, because I do not understand the opposition to it. I view my research as contributing to **reconciliation**, nothing more or less. I do not think that it is controversial. I have had reactions such as outright opposition; one person called my research "spicy"; and others have told me that my research is not valid. These comments all came to me before I had completed the class requirements, and prior to me doing the actual research. I was not prepared to encounter such **vocal opposition** to my research topic when I entered this program. I expected that there may be those who did not agree with my research, but I was unprepared for the opposition to be openly **hostile**. Again, when I think about this in relation to the **emotions** that swell in the research partners' stories, I am less surprised by the concern to avoid missteps.

The experiences that I had in completing the class requirements phase of this program provided me with additional barriers that I had to face and overcome. It was during this time that I worked with my supervisor, Dr. McDermott in creating my committee to support me through this research process that I encountered experiences which were often challenging. For others who may have faced similar circumstances it may have been enough to cause them to quit the program entirely. These experiences were just another hurdle on the path of completing this degree. These **negative experiences** were **demoralizing** at times. But they provided me with more life lessons which might be the exact thing that I will need further down the road which will enable me to relate to another person, to be able to say to them that they too can overcome, and together we can each work towards **reconciliation**. I set out in the beginning of this research process to create a strengths-based approach. Taking the **negatives** and creating a **positive** life

lesson as a result is one way in which I have come through this journey as a stronger person. I believe that the challenges I have faced regarding my research are because others have different views and approaches to **reconciliation**. Their way is not wrong, nor is mine, they are just not the same. I do not believe that others need to necessarily agree with everything I have presented in my approach to **reconciliation**. How I have approached my research helps define what **reconciliation** is; meeting others where they are and working together regardless of how different those paths are.

The second thread is my story as 'First Nations researcher reflections' which includes my reflections and **emotional** experiences that I experienced during the time that I spent with research partners. I anticipated that I would be affected by the stories that were told, and I was. Archibald (2008) writes that "stories have the power to make our **hearts** [emphasis added], minds, bodies, and spirits work together" (p. 12). This is the stage of my storytelling that was woven together with the stories of research partners. The Research in a Medicine Wheel (Figure 23), combined with the Sweetgrass braids (Figures 13-16) are true representations of how this research was affected by my research partners. I believe that my research accomplished what I intended it to do. I believe that I have conducted myself in an ethical manner throughout the process. I believe that I have created a result that truly does represent **reconciliation**. The desire of my research was to represent **reconciliation** from the outset. The way in which I designed my research demanded that only non-Indigenous educators would be research partners. By creating a research process in the way that I did I **felt** that a possible outcome would be a manifestation of **reconciliation**. Asking myself the "So what?" of my research and how does this help others I **hope** that other Indigenous researchers might look to this work as an example of how Indigenous People can work with non-Indigenous people and create a **positive** outcome for all. This is the

defining factor of my research that kept me going from beginning this program to reaching this stage in writing.

The third thread of my story is the 'after data gathering' stage of my research. I am following the examples of Indigenous writers such as Archibald (2008), Battiste (2000), King (2003) Kovach (2010) and S. Wilson (2008), who have successfully provided researchers such as me with examples of how Indigenous story can be translated into written word. The writing phase of this journey has been just as **emotional** for me as the first and second stages. This third stage has caused me to be self-reflective, and do a lot of **soul searching**, to monitor myself throughout the writing process; I have been aware of how I present myself and others in the written words here. The final stages of writing made me more in tune with my interactions with the data that I had gathered, and how I was producing the end result from it. I believe that I stayed **true to my word** and promise to my research partners that I would present their stories in the truest form. The following section discusses the interactions I had with the research partners in greater detail.

Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Relationships in Research

The reflection part of this discussion begins with my reflections of Susie story. The first thing to notice how about my reflection and reaction to Susie is that I began with expressing how my reactions were **visceral**, physical, **shocking**, and were what I described as natural reactions. One of the things that I found most notable about my reactions and reflection with Susie was an unexpected **shock** and **awe** around the stories that she related to me. The reason that this is so noteworthy is that normally when reading about Indigenous topics, for example, the reader expects the person who is Indigenous to be the one telling the stories that cause or create that reaction. In the case of these interactions, it was the non-Indigenous educator who was creating

an **emotional** response from an Indigenous person. As I noted earlier in my writing about my **emotional** response to Susie's stories this was something that I was not prepared for, nor did I have any indication when I began my dialogue sessions that this would occur.

One of the portions of the dialogue session that I felt was important to highlight as a reaction that I had as an Indigenous person related to this section of her storytelling where Susie conveyed her experiences with Indigenous students and being called a racist. This is the type of story that most people expect to hear from an Indigenous person. This is one of the things that I found myself reacting to because it was so unexpected, while at the same time I could see, hear, and feel the **emotions** that Susie expressed around the experience having an Indigenous student refer to her words or actions as being racist. We need to be aware that the narrative scripts that are repeated and then taken up as common sense/everyday are limiting for all of us—we need other stories to draw from as we walk towards **reconciliation**, and I **hope** that my research can serve in this role.

This initial reaction to Susie and her stories caused me to evaluate my physical reaction to listening to her and the other two research partners. While I had to be careful from this point forward not to react in the first dialogue sessions physically or verbally with the remaining two research partners, I also had to avoid the possibility of silencing myself. I spoke about giving voice in the literature review chapter of this writing and I was fully aware that by editing myself and my reactions that I had to also ensure that my voice would still be heard. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) stated,

> One of the researcher’s dilemmas in the composing of research texts is captured by the analogy of living on an edge, trying to maintain one’s balance, as one struggles to express one’s own voice in the midst of an inquiry designed to tell of the [partner’s] storied

> experiences and to represent their voices, all the while attempting to create a research text that will speak to and reflect upon the audience's voices (p. 147).

Part of me doing that contributed to the choice in presenting my story, reflection, and reaction first, at the beginning of this chapter, before I completed the written section relating to the three non-Indigenous research partners. This awareness is something that other Indigenous researchers must monitor while they conduct research, and especially if they are working with non-Indigenous people. Do not sacrifice your voice to put others before you. I **feel** that sometimes I do this to myself and it something that I have become more aware of through this research.

The initial interaction I had with Susie influenced my reaction with Elsi and Quinn as I entered into their first dialogue sessions. I became very aware of my physical reactions; I made the choice to turn my microphone off during Elsi and Quinn's first dialogue sessions. I believe that the decisions I made from interaction-to-interaction had a direct impact on my reaction and reflection. I felt that I had monitor my reactions, while at the same time not going so far that I silenced my voice within the research as a whole.

My first dialogue session with Elsie was a lot less **shocking** than the experience that I had with Susie. My reflections and how I wrote about those experiences is very evident in the tone and the words that I used from Susie's first dialogue session to Elsi's first dialogue session. the thing that I found most noteworthy in dealing with Elsi and listening to her stories was that I believe my approach to her was entirely different then both Susie and Quinn because she was a new acquaintance, and I did not have a history with her. I believe that many other researchers would **feel** the same way in how they approach somebody that they had recruited that they did not know prior to their research interaction. This **feeling** and treatment of someone that you do not know prior to recruiting them to participate in your research becomes both a **positive** and a

negative. It took me back to the writing of the ethics proposal and how one must balance out the knowing of someone and how that influences your interactions with recruiting an unknown research partner and how you relate to them. This is something that I was aware could occur when I was submitting my ethics application. Other researchers may find that having a research partner that is not known to them does not result in the **positive** experience that I had with Elsi. I had no way of knowing that our experience would be **positive** when I first contacted Elsi regarding her participation.

I found that my interaction with Elsi from beginning to end created a **feeling** in me that I wanted Elsi to have a **positive** experience in this research process. Upon further reflection of my interaction with Elsi, I wonder if this **hope** of creating a **positive** experience for her influenced how I interacted with her during the dialogue sessions. This has me pondering if other researchers set out to create a **positive** environment, with little **discomfort**, for their research partners. In the reflection statements that I wrote regarding Elsi's interactions with me, I stated, "I also wanted Elsi to **feel** that I entered into this partnership in research with her with only **good** intentions". I became aware that the majority of my interaction with Elsi, the stories that she told, and how she related them were primarily **positive** in comparison with the stories told by Susie and Quinn. I cannot come to a definitive conclusion that me not knowing Elsi prior to her participation would influence our interactions I felt it was worth noting at this point in the discussion. There may be other researchers who will read this and take it into consideration when they conduct their own narrative inquiries.

Moving on to my reflection and reaction to Quinn's first dialogue session I again found that my writing and interaction with him differed from that of Elsi's because of our existing relationship. Quinn's first dialogue session caused me to react with emotions of **sadness** and

disappointment because of his experiences of not being taught about the history of Indigenous People in Canada. I also noted when I looked back at how I wrote about Quinn's first dialogue session that I did not note anything being **surprising** in what he related to me in his storytelling. Quinn is very much representative of a lot of people in Canada who, at one point, may not have known anything about Indigenous People and their history, but after becoming aware of topics such as residential schools, 60's scoop, and other barriers that they faced he took it upon himself to further his education about issues related to Indigenous People. I believe that his experiences provided a common but needed perspective on what it is like for someone to become aware of Indigenous issues and make a conscious choice to not ignore the facts, but instead become educated and knowledgeable about Canada's history with Indigenous People. This is something that I am **thankful** to Quinn for bringing to this research. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) commented,

> When narrative inquirers return to [partners] with text, their question is not so much Have I got this right? Is this what you said? Is this what you do? Rather, it is something much more global and human. Is this you? Do you see yourself here? Is this the character you want to be when this is read by others? These are more questions of identity than they are questions of whether or not one has correctly reported what a [partner] has said or done (p. 142).

As I stated previously, I wanted to present my partners stories as accurately as possible. Other researchers may benefit from Quinn's example of someone who can participate in research even though they are still in the learning process about Indigenous topics. Quinn does not know all there is to know, he did not come to this research thinking that he did, but his contribution was

beneficial because he joined me in this research journey. It is my **hope** that he furthered his own knowledge about Indigenous research by being a part of this **reconciliation** process.

The most noteworthy thing about my reflections of Quinn's first dialogue session was the statement that he made about not **feeling** any **judgment** from me as an Indigenous person. This is worth highlighting again in this reflection chapter as it truly should be something that Indigenous people, Indigenous researchers, and Indigenous scholars should strive for when interacting with non-Indigenous people in the process of **reconciliation**. This comment from Quinn highlighted for me that my research and how I was conducting myself with my non-Indigenous research partners was achieving the goal that I had set forth in conducting this research. My intention was to set an example of how someone who was Indigenous could conduct research based on **reconciliation** and have that as a manifestation in the end results. I believe that Quinn's comment is a true representation of ways in which **reconciliation** can be presented through research. It should be prudent to other Indigenous researchers that non-Indigenous partners should **feel no judgment** in the process.

One thing that I think is noteworthy is the relationship that the specific circle in the Research in a Medicine Wheel (Figure 2) takes the stories that were told by the research partners and creates a strengths-based approach to how I am further presenting the data. I set out in the beginning to create a research result that was not focused on **negatives** or emphasising only the **bad** experiences of non-Indigenous educators. By highlighting the seven teachings and how each of the research partners stories are related to them in each quadrant the **negative** stories are represented as being **positive**s in the research outcomes, even though the content of the stories may not be directly relatable to being a strength-based **positive emotional** experience. I believe that in order to create a strengths-based research outcome the **negative** stories and concepts must

also be presented. The same can be said of why I included my thoughts and reflections on the Papal **apology.** Pope Francis also acknowledged the **darkness** that was created by the existence of residential schools. He also **hoped** to contribute to the process of **reconciliation** through his actions. We must acknowledge the **negative** experiences told in the stories of the research partners so that we can learn from them and turn them into a **positive** outcome, which contributes to this research being strengths-based. I **hope** that others can see this as an example of how **negative**s in research can create a **positive** outcome.

Susie's Story: The Role of Empathy in Teaching Indigenous Curricula Through Wisdom and Love

Moving into the east quadrant of the Research in a Medicine Wheel's (Figure 5) third circle is where the stories of Susie are located. This circle contains the teachings of Wisdom and **Love**. It is fitting that Susie would have these two teachings assigned to her and her stories.

It is very fitting that the two teachings of Wisdom and **Love** would fall into the quadrant with Susie and her stories. I believe that Susie related stories that other non-Indigenous educators will relate to. Her stories are an example of someone who has been teaching in Alberta for a long time which creates and manifest the teaching of wisdom. The **love** that she has for teaching, which in turn manifests in the **love** she has for her students, is present throughout her storytelling. The importance of this research for other non-Indigenous educators is that they may see examples of what others have done, such as Susie, and that it will give them **hope** that they are doing the right thing in their interactions and teaching of Indigenous topics.

One of the stories that Susie related to us in her storytelling/dialogue session was that of the student who was researching for the class project and came across the news articles regarding her family member who was amongst those missing and murdered Indigenous women. This was

one example of how non-Indigenous educators must be prepared to deal with difficult situations without any notice that they will arise within the classroom setting at any time of the day. The way in which Susie handled this situation was an example for others to follow. She was aware that there was something that occurred with the student, she knew enough to not react, and she also ensured that the student was **comfortable** enough to remove herself from the classroom and seek help from school supports. The story that Susie related to me that day was not one that I could have anticipated to come into my research process on the same day that it occurred with her student. This was also an example to me as a researcher that I had to be prepared for any situation to be presented to me by my research partners. The fact that this story was brought forth early in my engagement with my research partners provided me with a heightened awareness going forward from that point. This became a learning experience for both Susie as an educator and me as a researcher.

Early in my writing I addressed the fact that the reader would encounter heightened **emotional** responses which were experienced by my research partners and by myself. This writing is presented to the reader out of much later place then where they were when they read my initial comments regarding this response. As a reader you have made the decision to continue reading this thesis to this point. By doing this you have become a witness to the stories that were told and are now a part of this work. I say this at this point because I feel that it is important that the **emotionally** tough stories that were related to me in the dialogue sessions by Susie deserve recognition. Susie related an instance in which she had to deal with a difficult situation around missing and murdered Indigenous women, and a student in her classroom. This was followed by an equally **tough** story regarding her experiences as a survivor of **sexual abuse**. These two stories were important for me to include in this research as examples of someone who has dealt

with and overcome difficult and **unbearable** situations. I bring this to the attention of the readers because Susie related these difficult experiences as examples of situations which must be overcome. She used the story of her **abuse** and related it to how she relates to and communicates with Indigenous students. Susie is the type of educator who wants only the **best** for her students. She wants Indigenous students to know that they can overcome **negative** situations and remove barriers that they may **feel** are impossible to break through. As I have stated before I think that it is only fitting that Susie have the two teachings of wisdom and **love** in the category same quadrant as she is placed in the Research in a Medicine Wheel (Figure 5), because she has such a tremendous amount of **empathy** for Indigenous students and the challenges they face.

Susie related stories about dealing with Indigenous students and in doing so displayed examples of **reciprocity in reconciliation** through her teaching. She told of examples of interacting with students who are First Nations, but do not identify themselves as such. Susie showed examples of **love** and understanding through her storytelling about how she intentionally meets each student where they are at. This act of meeting students where they are is very similar to how I have presented my research, and that each person who comes into my research will react to it and interpret it from the place in which they are. This showed me as a researcher that it is my responsibility to present my research; and let each person come into it in their own way. Susie shared an example of this when she related the story of her student who was half First Nations and half Italian. She did not tell this student that he must, or was wrong, to not present his identity as First Nations. This was one way in which Susie showed her wisdom and **love** that she has for each of her students. She met this student where they are, not where she thought they should be. Susie showed me that I must take this approach with every person that encounters my

research and acknowledge that they will respond to it in their own way. It is not for me to decide that they have approached my research in a correct or incorrect fashion.

Elsi's Story: A Story of Growth, Authenticity, and Humility with Bravery and Respect

Moving clockwise in the Research in a Medicine Wheel's (Figure 5) third circle leads us to the south quadrant and Elsi's stories. The two teachings that coincide with this circle and her quadrant are **Bravery** and **Respect**, which is very fitting for Elsi. As a new teacher, Elsi showed how adventurous and **brave** she could be just by agreeing to be a part of this research project with me. Else is an example for other non-Indigenous educators to realise that it does not matter how far into their teaching career they are; they have a story to tell.

Prior to me writing this discussion chapter and the importance of the results of this research the title of Elsi's story was already titled as a story of growth, **authenticity**, and **humility**. Placing the stories and relating the discussion of these stories into the third circle of the Medicine Wheel provided the additional topics of **bravery** and **respect**. Combining all those words; **growth, authenticity, humility, bravery,** and **respect** you can see a similarity, and all can be related to Elsi in the way that she conducted herself as a new non-Indigenous educator.

Elsie, and the stories that she related to me in her dialogue sessions were stories of growth and learning and exploring new things. In reflecting upon Elsi's stories and how they fit in to the spirit of **reconciliation** I concluded that Elsi represented ways in which **reconciliation** is manifest and encouraged to grow. As a new educator every experience for Elsie is new, **exciting**, and educational. Elsi related stories of how she was moving into her new career in an Indigenous community and the **humbleness** that she displayed in doing so presented to me and to the reader an example to follow have of **bravery** with **respect**.

It is my **hope** that there will be a younger, new educator, like Elsi who is just starting their teaching career that might come across this writing and recognise Elsi as an example of someone who has made the choice to teach Indigenous students and topics to the best of their ability. Elsi provides an example for others that creating a **nourishing** space for **reconciliation** to grow can be done from the very beginning of their careers.

Elsi provided very moving **emotional** experiences with our dialogue sessions. The newness of her career does not negate the fact that every experience is **emotional**. The newness of her career, moving to a northern location, and relocating to an Indigenous community are **emotional** experiences for anyone, at any age. Elsi related her experiences regarding these changes, and her beginning teaching career in a way that provides truth and validity to those experiences. Throughout her relating her experiences there was a theme of **authenticity**. She had a **fear** of misrepresenting Indigenous culture, traditions, and teachings because she is a non-Indigenous educator. This **fear** of misrepresentation is something that will help Elsi and guide her to ensure that she is **authentic** in her teaching of Indigenous topics for many years. Elsi is a great example of how questioning yourself and your motives may prevent you from becoming arrogant in your knowledge of all things Indigenous. This is an important acknowledgement for non-Indigenous educators to keep with them; don't become an expert of what you think you know. There is always more to learn. I myself am reminded of this at the most opportune times, as an Indigenous individual.

The final highlight that I will bring to Elsi and the stories that she related to me in the dialogue sessions relate to the concept of **reconciliation** as relationship-building. The way in which Elsi entered my research as a complete stranger to me, and how she left my research as lifelong friends, was more than I could have expected to come from my experience in this

research process. My experience with Elsi as a research partner was what led the development of my research to become **reconciliation** as relationship-building. Without her participation my research would not have progressed beyond the concept of **reconciliation** in action. For this I will be forever **thankful** to Elsi. If the reader remembers nothing else from reading this thesis, it is my **hope** that their one take-away is the example of this relationship building process. When I ask myself the question of what this research means and represent to others, the answer will always come back to be the example set by Elsi coming into this research and trusting me to represent her and her stories in the best way possible. How does this help other non-Indigenous educators? The answer to that question is that **hopefully**, this example is a way for others to see that they can contribute to **reconciliation** as a non-Indigenous person, if they recognize the opportunity to do so when it comes their way.

Quinn's Story: Moving Past Shock: A Journey Towards Understanding with Honesty and Humility

Honesty and **humility** are the two teachings that align with the west quadrant of the Research in a Medicine Wheel (Figure 5) where Quinn and his stories reside as a research partner. Like the other research partners, it is appropriate that Quinn would fall in the same quadrant as honesty and **humility**. Quinn was openly **humble** about how he dealt with his lack of knowledge about Indigenous topics and their place in Canadian history. He expressed **emotional** reactions in a different way than the other two partners in this research. It is a story that is familiar for many others in their journey of discovery when they are confronted by the realities of such things as residential schools and the sixties scoop. Like others Quinn expressed emotions of **apprehension**, **guilt**, and **shame** in his acknowledgment of not knowing and his

process of education. He also expressed desires of being **authentic** and having **empathy** as he became aware of Indigenous topics and issues.

One area that I wanted to highlight in the dialogue session that was talked about by Quinn is his role as a male, and how he views **emotions** in relation to gender. Quinn addressed this in the following: “I've really done a lot of work to understand that, and to understand how that fits into...a leader’s role, but also like a masculine role, which is kind of a weird thing, but because it might not be as traditionally masculine as…some people might think.” I am bringing this quote into the discussion because it was one statement made by Quinn, but I found that it stayed with me long after the dialogue sessions were complete. I wondered if there would be a difference in how **emotions** were brought into the discussions prior to my first dialogue session with any of the research partners. I was not **surprised** that it was acknowledged by Quinn. This is something that could be of note to other researchers in that gender should not be a consideration when recruiting participants, unless there are reasons to create specific samplings which would focus specifically on one gender or another. The **emotions** expressed by Quinn in his dialogue sessions were presented in my findings equally to those of the other two research partners. There were many similarities in the **emotions** expressed between the two genders in my research. It does open the question to whether there would be a difference were this type of research, based on **emotions**, be the same in a larger scale, with more participants.

The final thing that I will comment on regarding the dialogue sessions with Quinn is that he did have a different way in which he approached the concept of **reconciliation**. He expressed his initial **shock** at learning about Indigenous histories. He also bought out many references to being **humble** in his approach as he became more educated about Indigenous People. He differed from Susie in that she had many years of experience with Indigenous People. He also differed

from Elsi because she is relatively new in her career and attended university past the point when Indigenous issues became more mainstream in education programs.

Thoughts on Perspectives Presented by Partners

All three research partners had a different point of view regarding **reconciliation** and how they contributed to it. The ways in which the research partners view, and the roles they play, in contributing to **reconciliation** are very different; based on where they are in their life situations and their journey of walking in partnership with Indigenous Peoples. The research partners became relevant examples of how I as an Indigenous researcher needed to approach each of the non-Indigenous partners where they were, and see **reconciliation** from their perspectives, without **judgement**.

The barriers placed in front of me, helped me to create a strong representation of the manifestation of **reconciliation** with non-Indigenous partners. The challenges I encountered in this journey of **reconciliation** was an individual thing for me in the same way it was for my research partners. I can only present to the reader of this writing where I am currently in my journey of **reconciliation**. This causes me to pause and acknowledge that my own path of **reconciliation** is not finished. I cannot say that I am at the end of this research journey, therefore I have arrived at **reconciliation**. Reaching the end of this research journey makes me realize how much there is to be done in the process of **reconciliation**, for non-Indigenous and Indigenous People.

Research in Medicine Wheel: Final Design

The first iterations of my Research in a Medicine Wheel (Figure 2) was created prior to my completing my candidacy exam. I knew in the development stages of the diagram that it

would be changed, expanded and finalized after I had completed the data gathering and analysis stages of research.

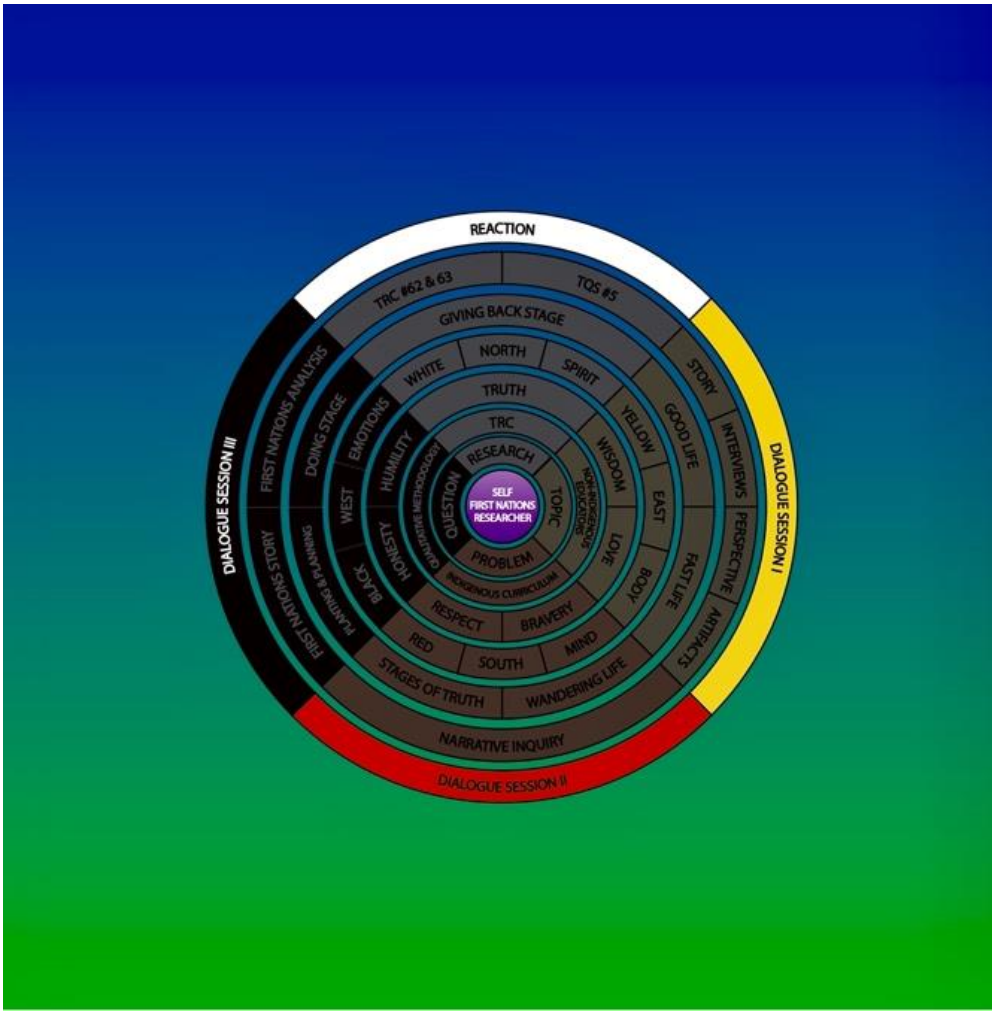
Seventh Circle

The basis of the Research in a Medicine Wheel (Figure 2) that I created in the early stages of my research process remained unchanged in the final diagram. I wished to maintain the basic premise of what I put into the Medicine Wheel and not change any of the content of the circles. The first six circles in the Medicine Wheel remain as they were originally created, with the exception of the center circle which has had the font colour change from black to white for better contrast. The additional four circles represent the final stages of my research. The first additional circle represents the dialogue sessions that I had with my research partners; it becomes circle eight when counting from the inside outwards.

Four additional circles were added to the first version of the Research in a Medicine Wheel (Figure 2). The total number of circles is now twelve. The first seven circles need no further explanation of what they represent as that was previously provided in the first iteration of the research in Medicine Wheel. I will walk through each additional circle that was added in the same way that I previously did so that there is context added to what each circle represents.

Figure 18

Dialogue Sessions and Reaction



Beginning in the east quadrant, again we see dialogue session one (Figure 18). Following the same teaching as outlined earlier we begin in the east. The first dialogue session with my partners set the stage for the final processes of this research. Following the same clockwise movement, the second quadrant to the south represents the second dialogue sessions. The west quadrant represents the final, and third dialogue session with my partners in research. The fourth quadrant, to the north, also contains the representation of my part of this research and is

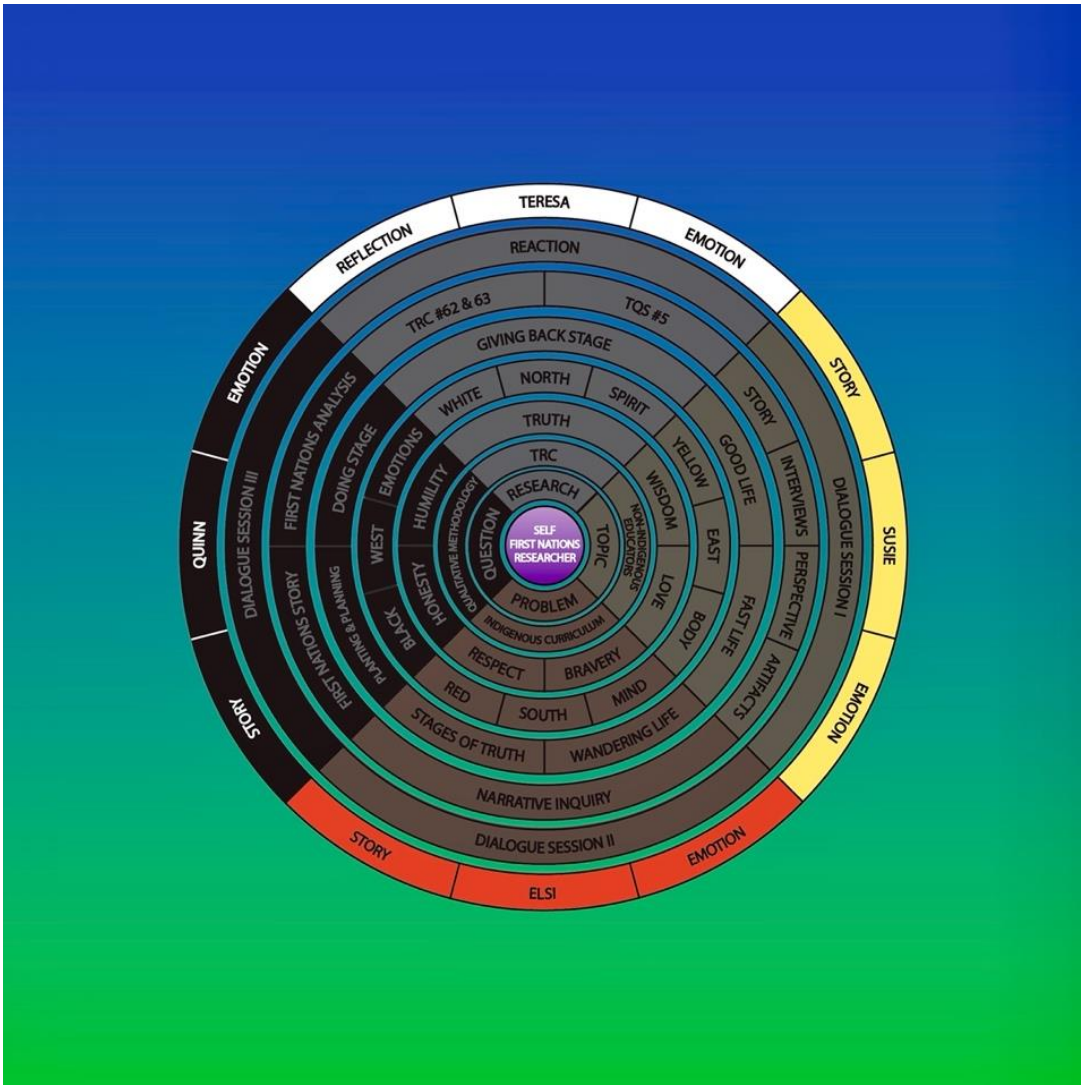
designated to represent the reactions that I had personally to the dialogue sessions with my partners.

Eighth Circle

Moving to the next circle, which is the ninth circle from the center, I have represented my research partners by name, their story, and their **emotions** (Figure 19).

Figure 19

Research Partners and Emotions



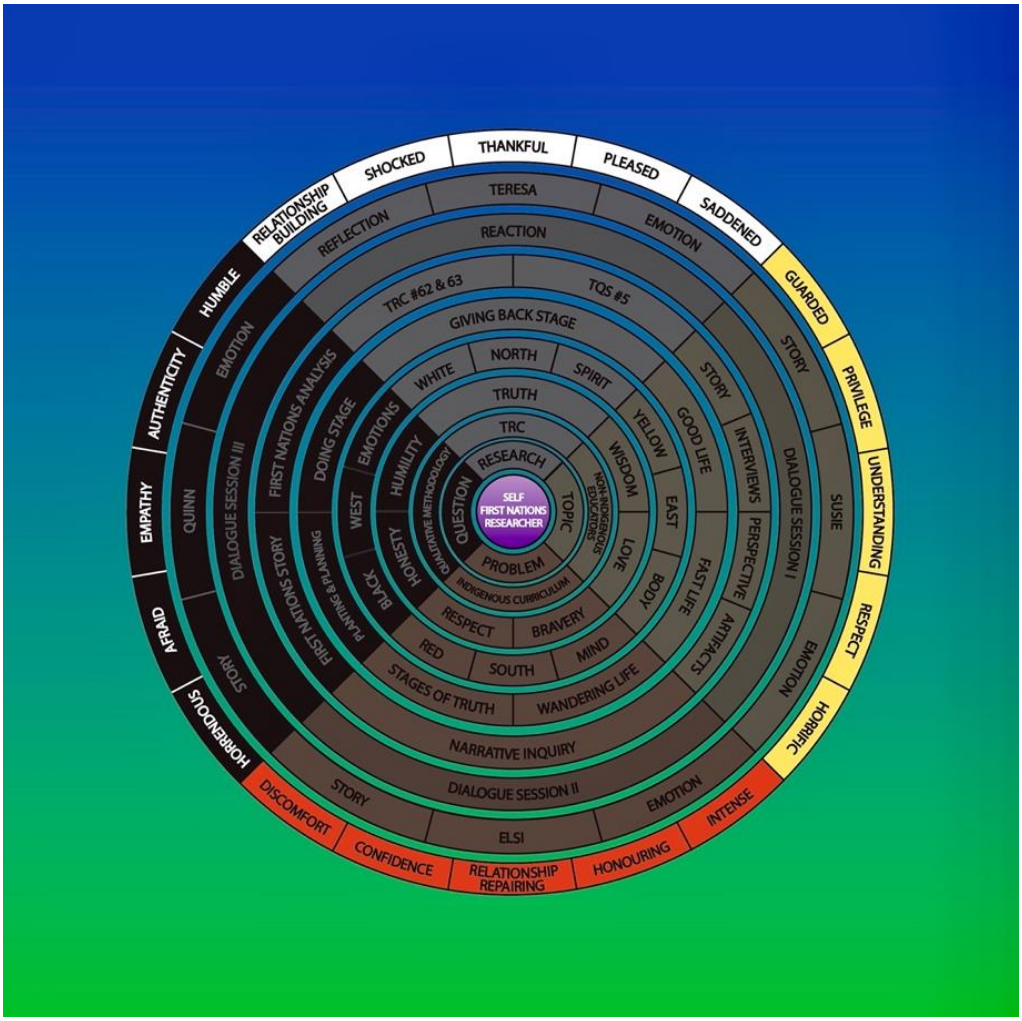
Beginning again in the east, I have named Susie, the south quadrant contains Elsi, and the west represents Quinn. The north names me, as research partner. My partners names are also presented with story on one side, and **emotion** on the other side of their names. The stories are all-encompassing of the stories they related to me in all three dialogue sessions as well as the entirety of the **emotions** they expressed, both in words, and physically. My section is labelled with **emotion** and reflection. I have named my quadrant with a different category than that of my research partners because I **feel** that my story was created through my reflection of the stories that were given to me in the storytelling and conversation process with my partners in dialogue.

Ninth Circle

The next circle can be directly related to the Word Cloud Medicine Wheel that I created to present the findings of my data (Figure 20).

Figure 20

Medicine Wheel Word Cloud Contents



Using the word that I identified from the first dialogue session and putting them into the word cloud allowed me to transfer those words directly in the Medicine Wheel Word Cloud Contents (Figure 20). Beginning in the east, the connection is clearer that this quadrant belongs to Susie, and the words listed in the circle next to her name are identified as belonging to her. The words of **guarded, privilege, understanding, respect**, and **horrific** are not changed or given new meaning by placing them within this tenth circle. I believe that by placing these words

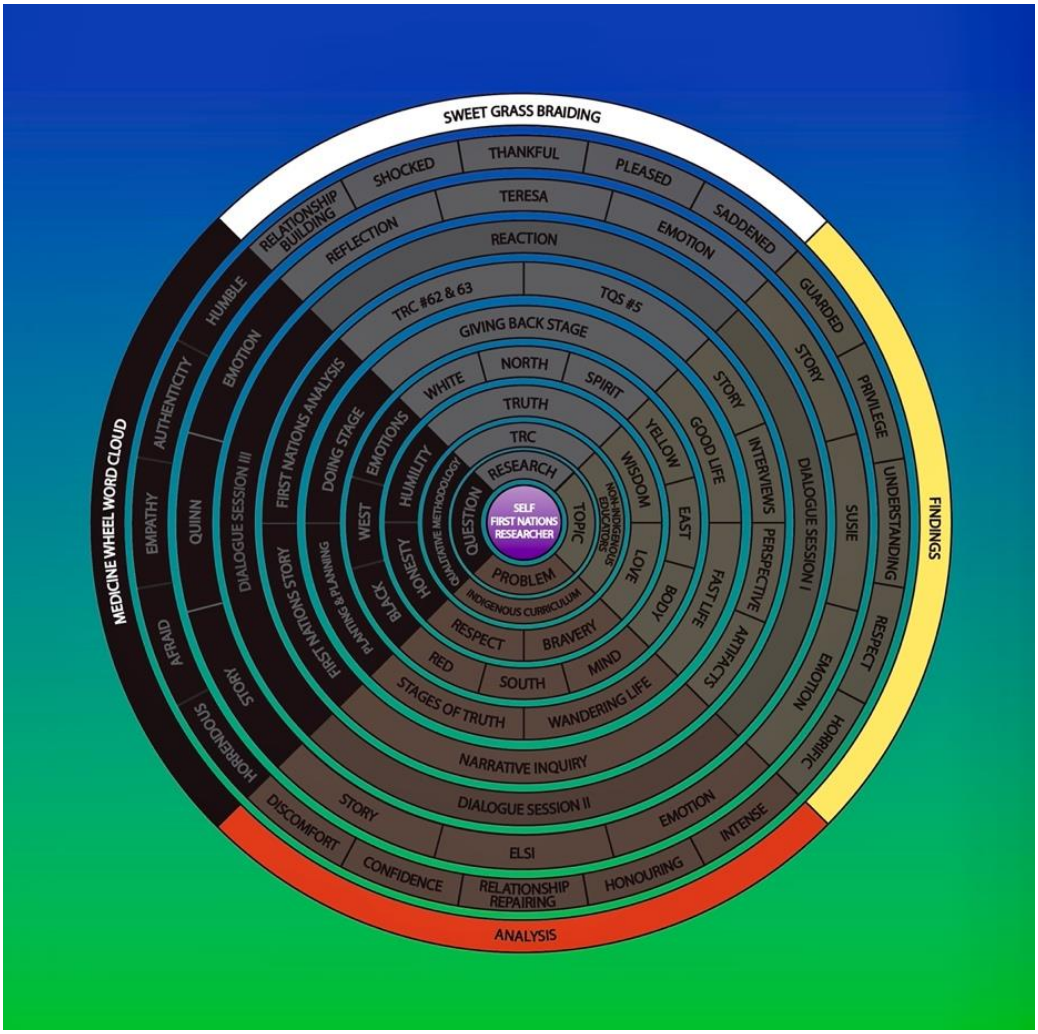
in the circle in the way that I have, provides a clearer idea of ownership when the reader see these words referenced in other areas of writing. Following around the circle to the south we can see that Elsi has the words **intense, honouring, relationship repairing, confidence**, and **discomfort** within her quadrant of circle ten. The east quadrant displays Quinn's word as being **horrendous, afraid, empathy, authenticity**, and **humble**. Moving to the north, my words are not representative of my story, but instead, again, they are my reflection from the stories of my dialogue partners. The words which present my reflection are **relationship building, shocked, thankful, pleased**, and **saddened**.

Tenth Circle

Moving to the final circle that was added in the finished version of my Medicine Wheel (Figure 21) is the process which occurred after the candidacy exam and once the data collection took place.

Figure 21

Research Analysis



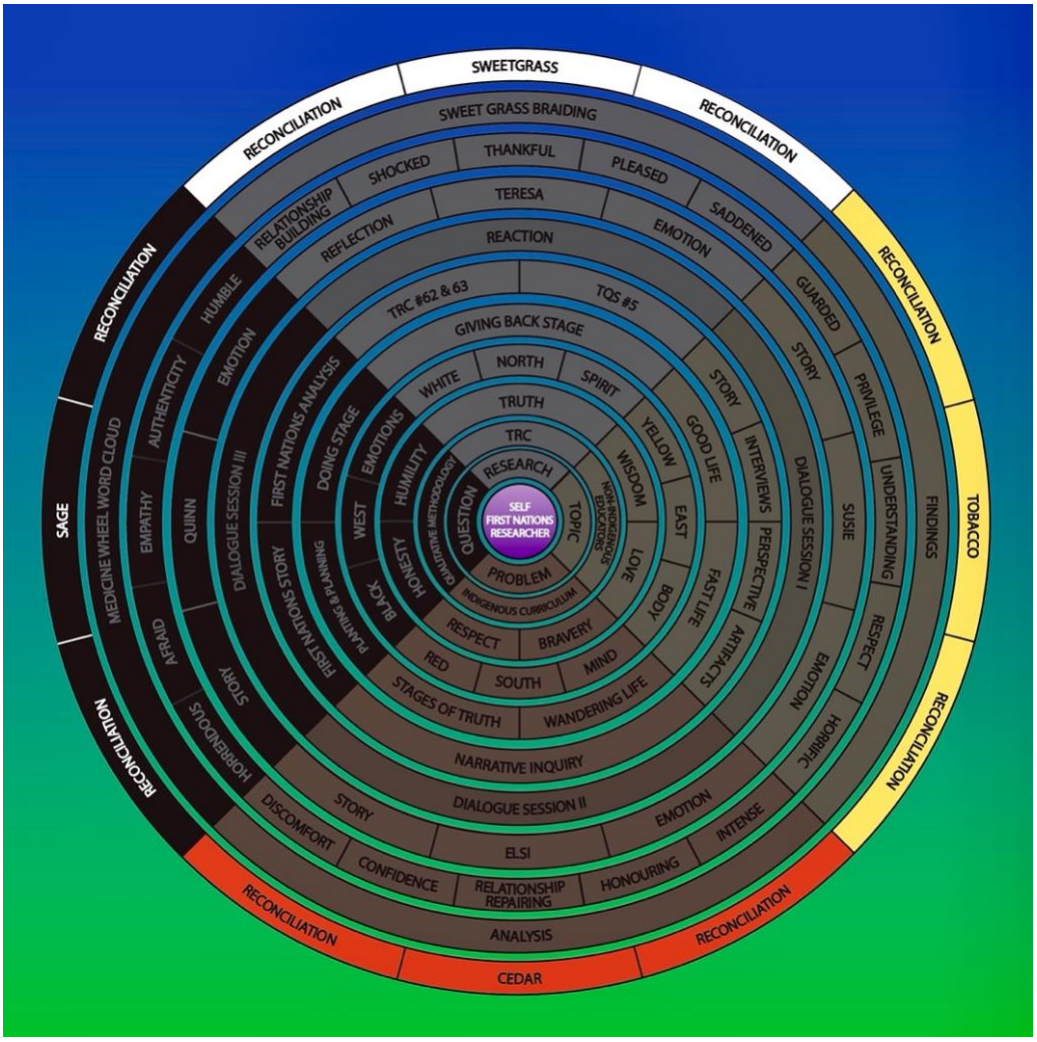
The data became findings, which is where the tenth circle begins in the east quadrant. The south quadrant represents the analysis stage of the research. Moving to the west quadrant we can see the Findings in a Medicine Wheel Word Cloud (Figure 12) which developed from the findings and analysis phases. The north quadrant represents the sweetgrass braiding which I drew and is displayed within the dissertation.

Eleventh Circle

The final circle of the diagram representing my research was originally in the first version of the Research in a Medicine Wheel (Figure 9). It is the foundation of my research and holds it all together in this Research in a Medicine Wheel (Figure 22). The concept of **reconciliation** combined with the four sacred grasses became circle twelve in this final version of Research in a Medicine Wheel (Figure 22).

Figure 22

Sacred Grasses and Reconciliation

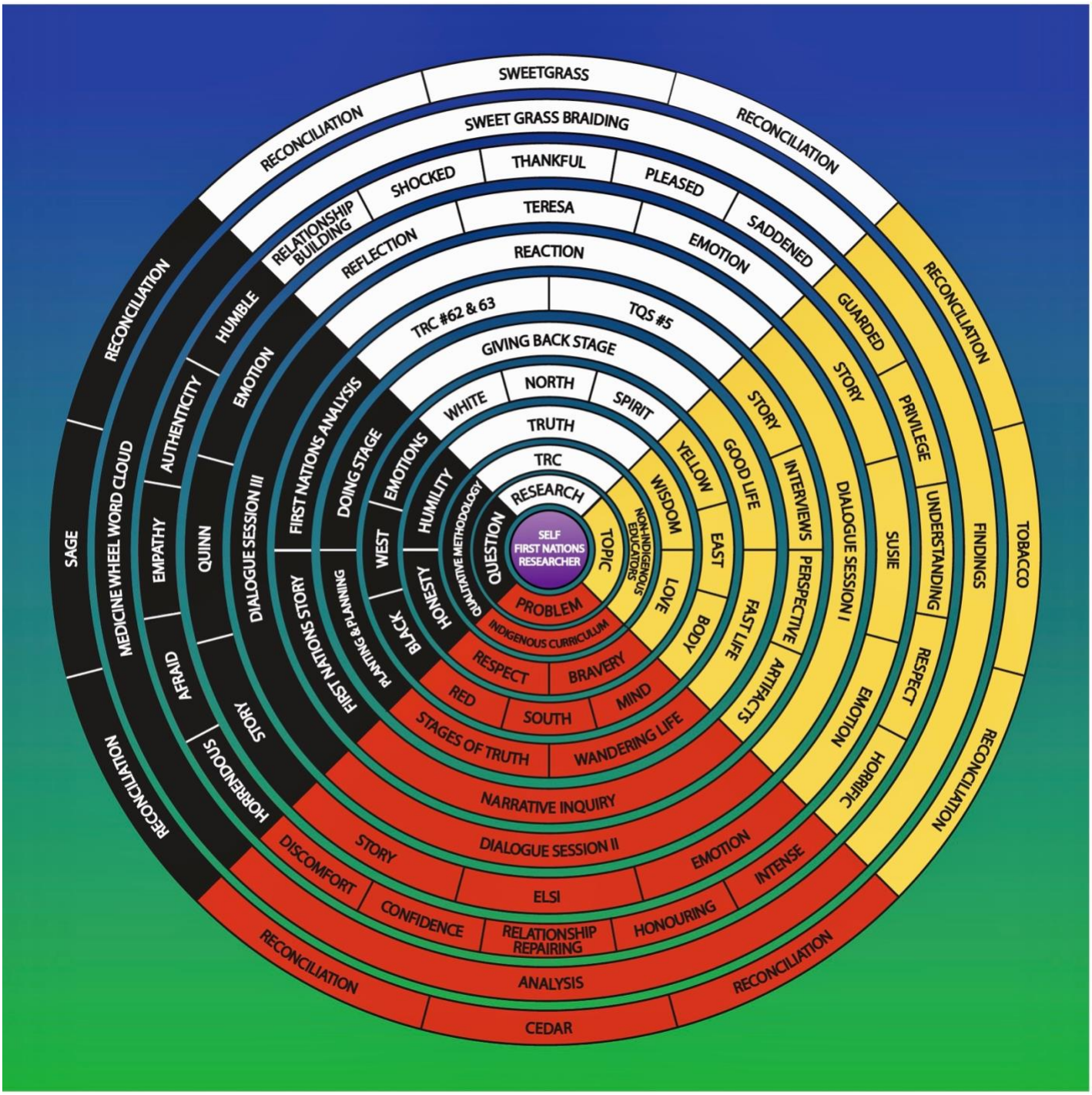


Research in a Medicine Wheel: Final Diagram

The final diagram is the completed Research in a Medicine Wheel concept. When I began this journey in education and the processes of earning this degree, I could never have guessed that I could create and present my research within something like a Medicine Wheel, in the way that I have.

Figure 23

Research in a Medicine Wheel: Final Diagram



I am **pleased** with the way that it came together, and I believe that is represents my research fully. I am **hopeful** that it serves as **inspiration** for other Indigenous researchers to create other ways to present their own research, other than written word only. The creation and development of the Medicine Wheel helped to bring together all of my research from beginning to end together in one visual that is unlike other research representations. It is my **hope** that this will serve as an example to other Indigenous researchers that it's okay to colour outside the lines, and that the *university box* can be broadened to fit your needs instead of trying to fit all that you are and what you are trying to accomplish into a limited space.

Coming Full Circle

As I mentioned earlier Shawn Wilson is from the same reserve as I am, and he has been an exemplar for me to follow. S. Wilson (2019) commented that Indigenist research can mean we all speak the same language…it is a philosophical approach to research that centres Indigenous ontology, epistemology, and axiology…it is Indigenous ways of knowing, ways of doing, and ways of being…it is who we are, how we know, and engage with knowledge…it is what we do as researchers…it is the way we act/conduct ourselves (p.7). These sentiments can be seen in my introduction of myself, and how everything I do represents me and my heritage; and in the case of my education and research, my reserve. Representation requires a particular behaviour. As stated by S. Wilson et al. (2019) "the term Indigenist is therefore not meant to be prescriptive or exclusive, but rather to point to common elements of research approaches" (p. 8). One of the comments by S. Wilson (2008) that I have been drawn to is that "researchers do not have to be Indigenous to use an Indigenous paradigm, just as researchers do not have to be 'white' to use a Western paradigm" (p. 193). He goes on further to say that Indigenous knowledge can't be advanced from a mainstream paradigm (p. 193). It is this thought process

which helped me to develop my research in the way that I did, as an Indigenous researcher conducting a Western research methodology.

I mention the concept of Indigenist research here because I have conducted a narrative inquiry, as an Indigenous person. I have often wondered throughout this process what my research would have looked like if I had conducted an Indigenous research methodology. But in pondering this thought I am always reminded that my research had to be as accessible as possible to the non-Indigenous partners that joined me. As stated by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) "each study has its own rhythms and sequences, and each narrative inquirer needs to work them out for her or his own inquiry" (p. 97). I was required to be considerate of two worlds in this research, which required me to **stay true to who I am** as an individual. For this reason, I could not exclude concepts that apply to Indigenous researchers.

As I write this closing section of this thesis, I asked myself, *why did I do this research?* and *who do I **hope** will benefit from it?* Then, there are the usual questions I am sure most researchers have in the concluding acts of thesis writing, *what if no one reads it?* or *what if a large quantity of people reads it?* For those who do read it, I **hope** that it is an **inspiration** to you, in whatever form that may be. For some it may be a new way of approaching **reconciliation**, for others it may be an example of how **reconciliation** can work as the foundation of a research project.

The visual diagramming of the Research in a Medicine Wheel: Final Diagram (Figure 23), the Research in a Medicine Wheel Word Cloud (Figure 12), and the four hand-drawn Sweetgrass Braids (Figures 13-16) that I created for this research are also meant to contribute to the **healing** aspects of **reconciliation**. And with that I will leave the reader with one final reflective question:

Who did I do this research for? The Indigenous student who is just graduating high school and wondering how far they can go in furthering their education. The Indigenous student who is looking at options in an undergraduate degree program. The Indigenous student who is contemplating applying for grad school. I did this research for the single mother who wonders if they can succeed if they return to school. I completed this degree for every mature student who wonders if it's too late to return to school. It is never too late because education is life-long learning.

I conducted this research, and completed this degree for the Indigenous researcher who wonders if they can conduct research with non-Indigenous people as their allies. The Indigenous researcher who wonders if they can conduct a successful research project under the umbrella of a Western research paradigm. The Indigenous researcher who asks themselves what **reconciliation** is to them and how do they commit to furthering **healing** relationships.

I also did this research for the non-Indigenous educators who look for examples of how they can contribute to **reconciliation**. For the non-Indigenous educators who need examples of how they can work with Indigenous researchers. For non-Indigenous educators to realize that they have a contribution to be made to Indigenous researchers as they work through ideas and processes that involve **reconciliation**. For non-Indigenous educators who take on the roles of supervisor, and committee members that they can work with Indigenous researchers in graduate programs to have successful Indigenous research. As stated by Clandinin and Connelly (2000)

> A sense of an audience peering over the writer's shoulder needs to pervade the writing and the written text. It is excusable to misjudge an audience and write text that is not read as **meaningful** by others. But it is inexcusable not to have a sense of audience and a sense of what it is about one's research text that might be **valuable** for them. (p. 149)

My **hope** is that my research becomes a **positive** contribution to the study of non-Indigenous educators who are teaching Indigenous curriculum. I believe my research has the potential to be a long-term study that could be conducted with large numbers of non-Indigenous educators contributing. The limitations that I had in a condensed timeframe, with a contained number of non-Indigenous educators that I could interact with on my own as one researcher would be removed as a barrier to large scale study, completed with a team of researchers. The stories that could be accessed and the **emotional** spectrum surely would be impressive to see.

Reconciliation should be viewed as a two-way action verb. It is not meant to be a one-way street that creates Indigenous spectators. For non-Indigenous individuals to learn to have **empathy** and a renewed view on the effects of residential schools there must be Indigenous people to educate them. As difficult a task as it may be, it must happen for there to be learning. "Learning is viewed as a life-long responsibility. Knowledge teaches people how to be responsible for their own lives, develops their sense of relationship to others, and helps them model competent and respectful behaviour" (Battiste, 2013, p.161). Only through understanding how the effects of residential schools continue, can there be **empathy** shown to survivors.

One day in the not-so-distant future the survivors who remain of the residential school system will be gone. At this point the **tragedy** of residential schools will no longer be taught as experiences we shared, and it will simply become history. It will remain a burden to be carried forward by the children and grandchildren of the survivors. They will be the generations that will teach in classrooms, in public forums, and presentations the experiences of those who attended residential schools. It will be important that future teachings in school settings, and to those who oversee curriculum content to keep the stories and testimonies of those who attended residential schools be taught as a lived experience. Accessing those whose family members attended

residential schools will be important to keeping these histories alive. There is a vast difference between a teacher telling a classroom of students the things that occurred in residential schools to having a family member relate personal stories about what they were told by previous generations. By keeping these topics in schools, they will continue to be an important part of Indigenous People being, and existing, in curriculum as a culturally historic teaching.

My research is an ongoing process. I came into this program thinking that I would be conducting research in the way that is thought to be the norm; I would create a list of questions and find people to answer my questions to gather data for analysis. As stated by Huber et al. (2016):

> Clandinin and Connelly…now argue they no longer see narrative inquiry as method but as methodology and, even more so, as a way of composing a life, of living…Such understandings shift attention away from narrative inquiry as only focusing on the retelling or representation of stories to understandings that 'relationship is key to what it is that narrative inquiries do'. (p.220)

My research will be an ongoing story which will not end. The concept of a conclusion within a personal story within research does not fit the narrative. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) recognized the ongoing process:

> When we see an event, we think of it not as a thing happening at that moment but as an expression of something happening over time. Any event, or thing, has a past, a present as it appears to us, and an implied future. (p.29)

This is how I view my research. In summary, I conclude this research, with the intent that it is not really ever complete as it is just a stepping-stone within a process. As stated by Clandinin et al. (2018):

> In narrative inquiries departures seem an appropriate metaphor for endings, endings that allow us to continue to live out the relational ethics that live at the **heart** of narrative inquiries…endings that allow us to take up the questions around what it means to live in relational ways. (p.173)

My research is something that will continue, even after I have completed this degree program. "It must be recognized that every being is in a state of ongoing transformation, constantly struggling to unfold itself" (Weber, 2017, p. 22). Finding the balance in my research, studies, and being aware of others who are in this relationship with me, helped to keep me grounded and aware of my space and place as it evolved and changed through this process.

Closing Comments from OCN

As is often the case with me and my writing I find myself going in a different direction than I originally expected. At this point, I had already drafted a closing comments section. I should have been settled on how my thesis would end. But everything is not always as it seems. When I think I have it settled I should know not to rest. This comes with always trying to be flexible in my life, and so it goes with my writing. I began this dissertation with an acknowledgement of my reserve, OCN. I wrote about the support they gave me throughout this education journey. As I write these closing comments, I find myself sitting at the Kikiwak Inn (*Kikiwak* in Swampy Cree means '*Your home away from home*'), on Opaskwayak Cree Nation, drinking a tea, all by myself.

As I come to the end of the fourth year of navigating this Doctor of Education degree, I realized that this is the fourth time I have made the trip to OCN since I began. I have travelled here for two trips to visit and for two family funerals. During the time I have spent in this program I have lost my Auntie Lynda, and the current trip was to celebrate the life of my uncle,

James Highway. While it is always a sad time to attend celebration of life, it is also a time of reflection and reinforcing the importance of the things that matter. This time was no different as I joined with my aunties, uncles, and cousins. It is fitting that I would be writing this as I bring to close a chapter in my life which has me and my siblings and cousins on the reserve coming to the realization that we are the next generation that will be considered the elders in the family. We will be watching the newer generations come, and **hope** for the best for them to have the best life possible.

My time spent in OCN included my usual visit with my academic advisor, Marlene Head. As we sat and had our usual tea together, I realized that as my time in the EdD program comes to an end, so will my education relationship with her. Even though our relationship will be changed we will remain lifelong friends. There are some things that will not change regardless of changes in context.

So, I found myself sitting alone, drinking tea, and reflecting on how my time with my degree is coming full circle. I find that it is only fitting that I would open this writing with a discussion about who I am, where I am from, and the support that I have from OCN. There is a different **feeling** in the air here. There is a **calm demeanor** among the people that you don't **feel** the same in the big city. I plan to conduct my thesis defence at OCN. As I sit on this land that my mother grew up on and that she called home I know that I have made the correct choice to return for my defence exam. I am always trying to pay attention to the little things that I know matter. This is one of those times where I know that I am in the right place and doing what I need to do to complete my degree in a good way. On the land that my mom called home. The place where my siblings and I have so many wonderful memories of growing up visiting the reserve. As I spoke at my uncle's funeral, I commented on how the memories are all **good** memories. Like my

family memories, the memories I have of this place are only **good**. Even in the **sad** times there is always **good**.

I was thinking about my writing as I sat and typed this out. I now realize that there is a reason that I wrote about space and place in earlier sections of this thesis. This is why I felt that it was important for me to write these closing comments before I returned to the city. When I return, I will be finishing my writing, and closing this chapter in my life. The education journey I am on will never end, as goes my connection to OCN. Even though the degree will be complete the years that I spent furthering my education will never leave me. My relationship with OCN is always changing but will also never end.

Like Elsi did in her dialogue sessions with me, I also feel that I needed to end this writing by "**landing in a happy place**". While the trip that I made was for a **sad** gathering, it also gave me the opportunity to ground myself again as a member of a family that resides in treaty five territory, on a reserve called Opaskwayak Cree Nation. It helped me to bring this writing to a close. This trip caused me to reflect on how I opened this thesis writing by acknowledging my reserve as the reason I am here in this place closing out the final writings. I had already decided that this last section would have a reference to coming full circle in some way. I had no idea that I would be making a trip to OCN which would bring that full circle concept to reality. I will always look to people such as Shawn Wilson, and Thomson Highway, all the Elders, and all my relations in my OCN family as examples of how to conduct myself as a representative of OCN. And so, this is my way of closing this writing by **landing in a happy place**. I will forever be **thankful** to OCN for the role that they played in allowing me to obtain the education that I have. **Ekosi.**

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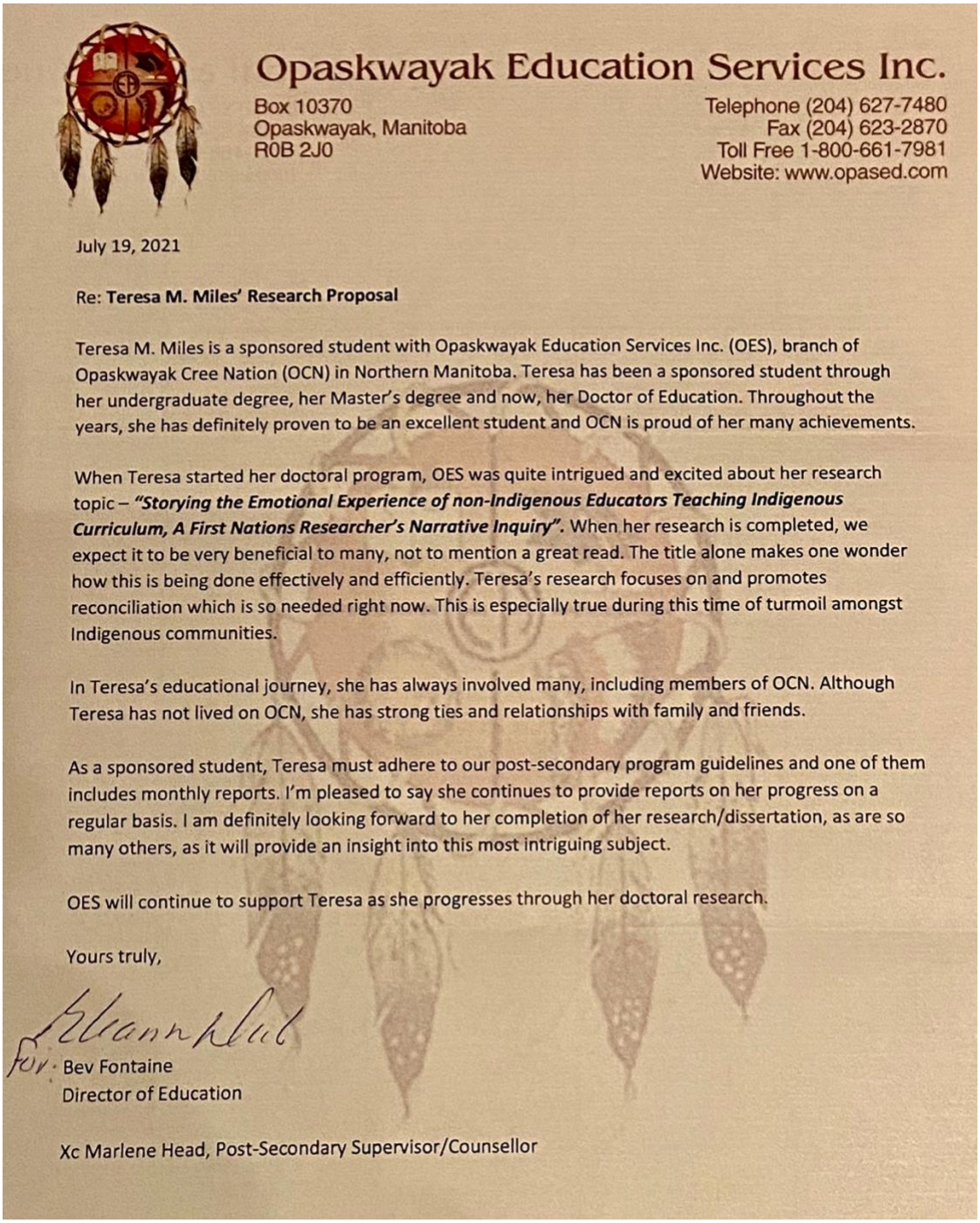
Appendix A



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July 19, 2021

Re: **Teresa M. Miles' Research Proposal**

Teresa M. Miles is a sponsored student with Opaskwayak Education Services Inc. (OES), branch of Opaskwayak Cree Nation (OCN) in Northern Manitoba. Teresa has been a sponsored student through her undergraduate degree, her Master's degree and now, her Doctor of Education. Throughout the years, she has definitely proven to be an excellent student and OCN is proud of her many achievements.

When Teresa started her doctoral program, OES was quite intrigued and excited about her research topic – ***"Storying the Emotional Experience of non-Indigenous Educators Teaching Indigenous Curriculum, A First Nations Researcher's Narrative Inquiry".*** When her research is completed, we expect it to be very beneficial to many, not to mention a great read. The title alone makes one wonder how this is being done effectively and efficiently. Teresa's research focuses on and promotes reconciliation which is so needed right now. This is especially true during this time of turmoil amongst Indigenous communities.

In Teresa's educational journey, she has always involved many, including members of OCN. Although Teresa has not lived on OCN, she has strong ties and relationships with family and friends.

As a sponsored student, Teresa must adhere to our post-secondary program guidelines and one of them includes monthly reports. I'm pleased to say she continues to provide reports on her progress on a regular basis. I am definitely looking forward to her completion of her research/dissertation, as are so many others, as it will provide an insight into this most intriguing subject.

OES will continue to support Teresa as she progresses through her doctoral research.

Yours truly,

For: Bev Fontaine
Director of Education

Xc Marlene Head, Post-Secondary Supervisor/Counsellor

Appendix B

Hello _____,

I hope that all is well with you these days. I trust that you are keeping healthy and staying safe. As a reminder we became acquaintances through _____. I realize it may have been longer than either of us realize in how much time has passed since we last spoke. The past two years have been hectic for many in a variety of ways.

The reason I am contacting you today is that I have reached the point in my Doctor of Education degree program that I am conducting my research. The topic and title of my research is *Emotional Experiences of Non-Indigenous Educators Teaching Indigenous Curriculum: Reconciliation Through Narrative Inquiry.* I am recruiting non-Indigenous educators within the province of Alberta.

I am currently contacting a select few people that I think will benefit from participating in my research. I would love to have your contribution be a part of my research data. I am sending out initial contact emails now in the hopes that I can establish who is interested and willing to commit to this research project. I am also being very cognizant that I must meet potential participants where they are and respect boundaries and needs. I do not want to place any undue pressure or demands on those who wish to participate in this process with me and am open to working with personal schedules to accommodate and make this process as easy as possible for participants.

I have included with this email a formal invitation to participate in my research process. This invitation contains further details about what the process entails and time commitments. If you choose to participate, a required consent form, for you to sign will follow. I have received

approval through the UCalgary ethics board to conduct my research and must follow specific protocols such as sending you this formal invitation to participate.

If you have any questions or would like to speak with me prior to making your decision, please reach out to me via email. I look forward to hearing back from you at your convenience.

Warm Regards,

Teresa Miles, MEd

Student, EdD. Curriculum in Context

University of Calgary

Werklund School of Education

Appendix C

An Invitation to Participate

Teresa Miles

Research Topic and Title:

Emotional Experiences of Non-Indigenous Educators Teaching Indigenous Curriculum: Reconciliation Through Narrative Inquiry

Tansi/Greetings,

I am a First Nations graduate student at the University of Calgary. I am a member of the Opaskwayak Cree Nation which is located in Treaty 5 territory. Currently, I am enrolled in the Doctor of Education: Curriculum in Context program at the University of Calgary. My dissertation will uncover the emotional experiences of non-Indigenous educators who are teaching Indigenous curriculum through narrative inquiry.

I am in the process of seeking non-Indigenous educators who are currently working on incorporating Competency 5 of the Alberta Education Teaching Quality Standard into their classroom curriculum who are willing to participate in my research through a process of dialogue. My research is being conducted as a qualitative research project that will be completed through gathering stories and listening to the reflections and emotional experiences of non-Indigenous educators in a combined discussion with me.

I am looking for educators located and teaching within the province of Alberta. The preferred grade range is junior high to high school (grades 7-12) across the disciplines/subjects.

Ultimately, I am seeking any non-Indigenous grade 7-12 teacher in Alberta who has taught or is teaching Indigenous curriculum. Teaching Indigenous topics at this level may contain a more in-depth and student driven participation level. There is a higher understanding of what Indigenous curriculum presents to students in this age range and how it affects their place in this world.

Participants will be invited to three dialogues:

- The focus of the first session will be to record your reflections and emotional experiences of teaching Indigenous curriculum. This would require a time commitment of between 1 and 1.5 hours for this first session.
- The second session will be a chance for the researcher (me) and you to engage in co-authoring and co-interpreting what was said/shared in the first session. The purpose of co-interpreting the transcripts together is to ensure that everything is presented as it was intended by you. We will identify expressed emotional experiences together to ensure accuracy in my research data analysis. The second session will also be audio recorded. This will allow me to incorporate any additions to the narrative that may provide further clarification as the true intent and meaning of what was originally presented by you in the first session. This second session may take longer to discuss and so the time commitment for this session would be between 1.5 and 2 hours.
- The third and final session will be a recorded dialogue around the interpretations of your narratives to ensure that the final result of what is being presented within my dissertation is an accurate representation of the narrative exchange that occurred between myself and the participant. This third session will be a confirmation that transcriptions are an accurately portrayal of our previous two dialogues and should not require as much time

commitment as the first two sessions. This time commitment would require between 30 minutes to an hour.

- There will also be a commitment of time from each participant to read through the transcripts that have been sent in Word format before the second and third scheduled meetings. During this reading of the transcripts, it would be helpful for the participant to make notes on their thoughts, specific points, and expressed emotions they may wish to discuss in the second or third sessions.

I look forward to your contribution to my research and developing a relationship that helps us to walk together in a good way.

Ekosi/Thank You

Teresa Miles, MEd

Student, EdD. Curriculum in Context

University of Calgary

Werklund School of Education