

Hospitality and Indigeneity in the K-12 School System

by

Maclane Cardinal

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of

The University of Manitoba

in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of

Master of Education

Department of Educational Administration, Foundations and Psychology

University of Manitoba

Treaty One Territory and the Homeland of the Métis Nation | Winnipeg

Abstract

Educational hospitality, according to Claudia W. Ruitenberg (2011), is the notion that otherness is accepted, anticipated, and embraced. In a hospitable space, students are able to change practices that do not meet their unique needs, with pedagogy and practice becoming reflective of the population they serve, rather than perpetuating traditional understandings of schooling. Within a school context, hospitality has far reaching implications, perhaps the most poignant being that of creating hospitable spaces for Indigenous students. This study will seek to understand the ways in which Indigenous students perceive a sense of hospitality in their school ecologies, as well as examine the ways in which a sense of true hospitality might be fostered in school settings for and by Indigenous students. Through examining physical spaces, curriculum, and social relations in schools, the notion of hospitality will be utilized to bring forth both critiques as well as recommendations for school systems and structures to become hospitable to Indigenous students.

Acknowledgments

I am so grateful to be surrounded by people who encourage and inspire me every day. I first want to thank my advisor and mentor through this process, Dr. Nathalie Piquemal. Her wisdom, expertise, patience, and positivity were not only appreciated, but extremely needed throughout this entire process. My committee, consisting of Dr. Frank Deer and Dr. Jan DeFehr have been incredible teachers throughout this process, and I feel fortunate to have been able to learn from their respected expertise. I also want to thank my partner, Adrian, for showing unending patience and support throughout this entire process. To my parents, thank you for sacrificing so much so that I could hone my passions and academic abilities to lead me to this point. I also want to thank Kushi (Grandma) Pahan Ste San Win for her guidance and blessing of this work. Her approval of this research means so much. Finally, I want to express my deep gratitude to the participants in this study. Thank you for your bravery in the form of story.

This work is dedicated to my late grandfather, Maurice Joseph Cardinal, a strong and resilient Métis man.

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	I
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	III
TABLE OF CONTENTS	IV
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
Objective and Context	1
Researcher's Positioning	4
Modern Context: Schooling and Colonialism	5
Historical Context: <i>How did we get here?</i>	11
Research Question	16
Sub Questions	17
Significance of Study	17
Methodology	18
Theoretical Framework	19
Hospitality: Theoretical Understandings of Belonging	19
Key Terms	25
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	26
Hospitality and Belonging	26
Indigenous Understandings of Hospitality.....	29
Physical Spaces	32
Curriculum	40
Multiculturalism and Curriculum	44
Social Relations	52
Teacher and Student	52
Peer Relations	56

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY59

Conceptual Framework60

 Indigenous Methodologies and Relationality62

 Indigenous Methodologies and the Use of Story64

 Utilizing a Dialogic Social Inquiry Approach to Understand a Phenomenon66

Research Methods70

 Creating and Maintaining a Hospitable Research Community70

 Data Collection Procedures71

 Recruitment71

 Informed Consent72

 Criterion Sampling74

 The Logistics of Interactions76

 Risks and Benefits77

 Criteria for Participants 79

 Ethics.....80

 Insider vs. Outsider Positioning81

Credibility and Reliability82

 Data Analysis83

CHAPTER 4: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS88

Individual Portraits88

 Participant 189

 Participant 2 91

 Participant 3 92

 Participant 4 94

 Participant 5 96

Summary of the Participants	97
Conceptualizing (in)Hospitality	97
Responsive Systems	99
Curriculum	100
Disregarded Indigenous Content	101
Settler Pedagogies	103
Instrumentalization of Identity	106
Deficit Narratives	107
Social Relations	109
Teacher Relationality	109
Overt Racism and Race-Based Incivility	112
Solidarity with Oppressed Students	115
Teacher Representation	116
Physical Spaces	117
A Space to Gather	117
Visual Representations of Indigeneity	119
Smudging	120
CHAPTER 5; DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE.....	122
Indigenous Experiences of Hospitality	122
Who is the Host and Who is the Guest?	123
Microspaces and Micropractices of Hospitality	129
Microspaces	130
Micropractices	131
A Circle Within a Square	132
Curriculum	133
Disregarded Indigenous Content	133

Settler Pedagogies	135
Instrumentalization of Identity	136
Deficit Narratives	138
Social Relations	140
Teacher Relationality	140
Racism and Classroom Race-Based Incivility	142
Solidarity with Oppressed Students	143
Teacher Representation	144
Physical Spaces	145
A Space to Gather	146
Visual Representations of Indigeneity	147
Smudging	148
Indigenizing Hospitality	150
Circular Thinking and Hospitality: Disrupting the Linear	150
Pedagogy and Emotion	152
Relationships and Spirituality	153
Spaces and the Physical	155
Curriculum and the Mental	155
Piecing it All Together	157
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION	158
Implications for Practice	159
Pedagogy	159
Pre-Service Education	159
In-Service Professional Development	160
Individual Teacher Learning	160
Relations	161

Addressing Racism and Incivility	161
Indigenous Teachers	162
Building Connection	163
Spaces	163
School Planning	163
Smudging	164
Individual Teachers	165
Curriculum	165
Ministry of Education	165
Teachers	166
Universities	167
Policies of Inclusion	168
Limitations and Areas for Future Research	169
Reflection	170
Summary	172
References	175
Discussion Prompts (Appendix A)	183
Research Guidelines (Appendix B)	190

Chapter 1: Introduction

Objective and Context

This study will aim to explore the social, systemic, and individual factors that either hinder or support the extent to which Indigenous students experience hospitality within the K-12 public-school system, while also revealing barriers to hospitality and belonging within school ecologies.

It would be near impossible to effectively approach reconciliation, without also acquiring a deep understanding of settler colonialism. Settler colonialism is a phenomenon that is relatively unique to Canada, and has been at the heart of past and ongoing traumas toward Indigenous people on these territories. It is apparent that there are deep roots of colonialism, racism, and dispossession on the land called Canada. Colonialism has roots that date back generations, yet whose ramifications can be felt still today. Further, Canadians are still in a process whereby whiteness is upheld, and Indigeneity is pushed further into the margins (Simpson, 2017). This has created systems, structures, and institutions that are inhospitable to Indigenous peoples, despite the fact that these systems, structures, and institutions are located on Indigenous land. This process of continued disenfranchisement has been referred to as *settler colonialism*, and refers to the unique and distinctive phenomena that have taken place, and continue to occur on Turtle Island.

In his book *Stolen City: Racial Capitalism and the Making of Winnipeg*, Owen Toews (2018) explains these unique phenomena, writing that:

For a start, settler colonialism explains a relationship in which stealing peoples' land tends to take precedence over stealing their labour, and struggles against settler colonialism continue to take aim primarily at the dispossession of land. Closely related to this dynamic

is the way that settler colonialism aims for the total destruction and replacement of people's collectivities – nations, laws, economies, identities, with new regimes on the same lands (p. 21).

When one looks at the laws, economies, and regimes that are taking place on Turtle Island, it is abundantly clear that settler colonialism not only has occurred, but is still manifesting itself today.

Within the context of education, settler colonialism is extremely apparent. The systems and structures of education that took place on these lands, pre-contact, were holistic, child-centered, and community involved models. These traditional ways of learning focused on one's inherent connection with the land, on nurturing innate gifts and talents, and learning how these gifts can support the wider community. These traditional ways of knowing were violently replaced with Eurocentric, capitalist-driven systems of education, that were in extreme opposition to the ways of knowing and being that had occurred on these lands for thousands of years. Toews (2018) goes on to put forward the notion that the dispossession of land is at the heart of settler colonialism, writing:

It is important to recognize, however, that land is at the center of settler colonialism not merely as a thing to be kept or taken away, but as a social relation, a way that relationships between people play out (p. 21).

In this account, one can reason that if land is at the center of settler colonialism, then land might also be at the center of negating its devastating effects. Toews (2018) goes on to note that:

Theft of land is achieved by enforcing certain social relationships – western ideas of territorial sovereignty, capitalist private property, and commodification, for instance – through which

people are excluded from accessing land in ways they deem necessary to the survival of their nations, communities, families, and the world itself (p. 21).

If theft of land, achieved by imposing certain social relationships, is essential to settler colonialism, then land, and the relationships that surround it, become key components within reconciliation efforts (Simpson, 2014). If places of learning are to become hospitable to Indigenous learners, schools, divisions, and governments must recognize land as a crucial, foundational aspect.

Understanding settler colonialism as an ongoing process, rather than a relic of the past can help educators uncover paths forward to ensuring spaces of learning can become hospitable to Indigenous learners. Toews writes that “understanding that settler colonialism is a specific expression of racial capitalism helps us to think dynamically about the shifting racial orders, blocs, agendas, feelings, and institutions that have remade settler colonialism on Turtle Island since the earliest invasions” (p. 22). Toews’ analysis calls on systems and institutions to look at land, and the unique set of relationships occurring on the land, as phenomena that are not only ongoing, but is changing and being *remade* as the settler and Indigenous relationship moves forward. Looking at this relationship through a decolonizing lens, it is empowering to see the multitude of possibilities available, especially within systems of education. If this relationship has historically been remade in ways that are of detriment to Indigenous peoples, then perhaps it can also be remade in ways that view Indigeneity, land, and Indigenous ways of knowing as central tenets in the rebuilding of settler and Indigenous relationships. This notion of being *remade* has clear implications, and endless possibilities in the field of education. If schools have been a means by which the state has made and *remade* Indigenous ways of knowing to be viewed as inferior, then schools and spaces of learning can also be remade to be spaces where

land is a central, fundamental key figure in the path towards hospitality for Indigenous students in spaces of education.

Researcher's Positioning

I enter into this study with a rather unique positioning, carrying with me many aspects of privilege, while simultaneously inhabiting components of marginalization as well. My cultural background as a Métis person has led me to pursue this work, recognizing that many parts of my cultural background have been denied as a result of the colonialism faced by my ancestors. Growing up, I witnessed the ways in which racism infiltrated my family dynamics, with my Settler relatives pushing racist narratives onto my Indigenous relatives. As a result of this, I have witnessed members of my family deny their Indigeneity, allowing colonialism to further the belief that being Indigenous placed one in direct contrast to the socio-cultural ideals of Canada. My family is now just beginning to reclaim the pride in being Indigenous, having survived the relentless attempts to eliminate our history and culture from the Canadian landscape. By understanding the ways in which colonialism is still manifesting itself today, I hope to begin to change the dominant narratives that remain intact within educational institutions.

I also carry with me an understanding of marginalization, belonging to the LGBTQ2S+ community. In this positioning, I understand how systems and structures produce attitudes that lead to a sense of otherness and inhospitality. While this is vastly different from experiences of racialization, I empathize with those who feel they do not belong across institutions in Canada.

I also bring with me immense privilege. Coming from a middle-class, White-appearing, English-speaking family has given me unearned advantages in Canadian society. These are advantages that the participants in this study do not receive, and this is unjust. Through the use of Donald's (2012) *ethical relationality* I will work to understand the ways in which my

positioning, and that of the participants in this study work in relation to each other, and how this influences beliefs and attitudes that may often go unnoticed or unchallenged.

My positioning as a teacher also influences the perspectives that are brought into this study. I have witnessed first-hand the ways in which Indigenous students are *othered*, silenced, and marginalized in schools. Each day, I observe colleagues who believe they are “Indigenizing” their curriculum, but are really inadvertently perpetuating further misinformation and harm. I also acknowledge that my positioning as a teacher places me in a very unequal power dynamic, specifically with children and youth. This serves as a constant reminder to approach this work sensitively and respectfully.

Utilizing a dialogic framework to guide this study, I understand how a conversation is fundamentally different from an interview. Rather than asking all of the questions, it is my goal to foster the necessary conditions for authentic dialogue to emerge. I will constantly work to honour the words and stories of others without superimposing my own thoughts or beliefs.

Modern Context: Schooling as Colonialism

Throughout the history of institutionalized education on these lands, the education of Indigenous People, imposed by settlers, has been marked by inhospitable policies and practices (Battiste, 2013). Settler colonialism not only has disenfranchised Indigenous People through the removal and degradation of sacred lands, but has permeated educational spaces as well. Policies of multiculturalism within schools and curriculum have further marginalized Indigenous people, positioning them as “one of many” cultures present within schools (St. Denis, 2011). This is a problematic positioning for a myriad of reasons. As Lowman and Barker (2015) write, “when Indigenous peoples are positioned simply as another ethnic or cultural group meriting the same rights as all other Canadians under the Charter and Multiculturalism Act, then Indigenous

peoples' only means for redress for colonial harms is through the elected governments, courts, and other institutions of the Settler society" (p. 75). In this way, it becomes clear to see how policies of multiculturalism, at a school level, further marginalize Indigenous people.

In addition to multicultural practices disenfranchising Indigenous people in educational settings, Canadian curriculum functions in much the same way. Through curriculum, whiteness is upheld, celebrated, and rewarded (Battiste, 2015). Social Studies curriculums do quite little to offer authentic Indigenous perspectives, often positioning the loss and degradation of Indigenous lands, territories, and bodies, as a positive component, fundamental to "building a nation" (Donald, 2012) When Indigenous perspectives are so vehemently overlooked through curriculum, paired with policies that do little to integrate authentic Indigeneity, it becomes apparent just how inhospitable school spaces have become for Indigenous youth.

There has been a push from many governments and school divisions to incorporate Indigenous content into Canadian curriculums (Clarke et al., 2019). In Manitoba, one of the documents available to educators is titled *Integrating Aboriginal Perspectives into Curricula* (2003), this document states that "to correct historical and social biases that have developed, greater integration of Aboriginal perspectives into existing and future curricula is necessary. Schools have the responsibility to ensure that Aboriginal perspectives are fairly and accurately conveyed to all students" (p. 1). Although this document is in much need of an update, this sentiment continues, and has grown immensely. Increasingly, teachers are being asked to provide opportunities for their students to learn about Indigenous knowledges and worldviews. What this actually looks like in practice varies greatly depending on individual teachers' beliefs, understandings, and positioning. Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) write of the recent pushes to Indigenize the academy, and reveal a dramatic lack of consensus amongst scholars and educators

for what this looks like in practice. One need only observe the daily life of a school to recognize that an authentic understanding of Indigenous perspectives within schools is exceptionally rare (Battiste, 2015). This is especially apparent amongst non-Indigenous, settler teachers, with most notions of Indigeneity being primarily tokenistic and folkloric. Clearly, there is far more work that is required in order for school spaces to become places that are both hospitable for Indigenous students, and educational/experiential for Settler students.

A recent document produced by the Manitoba Ministry of Education (2020) highlights that “we need more informed teachers with a better grounding in the knowledge and understanding of First Nations history and culture so they can inspire greater achievement in our students” (p. 4) This document has been published as a framework for teachers to use as a reference point for discussing Indigenous languages, history and culture in Manitoba classrooms. These objectives appear to be made with positive intent, however, there are still many barriers standing in the way for teachers wanting to Indigenize their spaces, and ultimately, for Indigenous students attempting to navigate an inhospitable education system. These types of top-down, ministry-prescribed documents make it further apparent that the goal of infusing Indigeneity into curricula is that of closing achievement gaps amongst Indigenous students (Battiste, 2015). This goal becomes problematic once one recognizes the system in which Indigenous students are being forced to navigate is a colonial relic, where curriculum and classroom pedagogy are antithetical with Indigenous worldviews.

The desired outcome of these policies and recommendations, one can assume, is to increase high school graduation rates amongst Indigenous students. In fact, this goal can be found both overtly and subtly in most government-created documents centered on incorporating Indigenous perspectives into curriculum (Manitoba Education, 2020). Upon reviewing high

school graduation statistics across Canada, it becomes quite apparent why more work is needed in the context of Indigenous education. According to Manitoba Education and Training (2018), the four-year “on time” graduation rate for Indigenous high school students in Manitoba was approximately 48.5 per cent. In her book *Decolonizing Education: Nourishing the Learning Spirit* Marie Battiste (2013) also shares daunting statistics. Approximately 31 percent of Indigenous students take and pass provincial examinations in Grade 12 English, and 5.5 percent take and pass Mathematics 12. Compare this statistic to the 87.9 percent high school graduation rate for non-Indigenous students, it is shockingly obvious that institutions of education have historically been, and are continuing to be, inhospitable places for Indigenous students.

These statistics reflect not only an unjust education system, but also highlight the ineffectiveness of teacher training in creating culturally responsive classrooms and schools. In her work *A New Immigrant Experience of Navigating Multiculturalism and Indigenous Content in Teacher Education*, Lilach Marom (2016) writes of the tension that exists in teacher education programs as it relates to Indigenous education. Marom writes “colleagues who taught the newly introduced ‘Aboriginal Education in Canada’ course said they often experienced strong resistance from teacher candidates” (p. 29). This phenomenon, though unsettling, is extremely prevalent across educational institutions. Marom goes on to write that “many Canadians are not informed or engaged with Indigenous knowledges, perspectives, and political struggles; the same is true of many teachers and teacher educators” (p. 29). Here, Marom is noting that the lack of pre-service education perpetuates misinformation and bias in the classroom, thus continuing the ongoing cycle of ignorance and harm. Marom projects how there are many factors that contribute to the pushback and willful ignorance of educators, both pre-service and in-service, in learning about Indigenous pedagogies and historical barriers. One of these factors is that of the “perfect

stranger” (Dion, 2007).

In the “perfect stranger” paradigm, teachers assume an innocent role, noting how little interaction they have with Indigenous people, thus eliminating themselves from the context, and making reconciliation impossible. Susan D. Dion (2007) writes of this problematic positioning, noting:

While teachers are being encouraged to include Aboriginal content across the curriculum, I argue that the majority of teachers, like the majority of Canadians, have a limited understanding of Aboriginal people, history, and culture; rather, their understanding is informed by dominant discourses (p. 330).

Dion writes how the majority of Canadians, teachers included, have limited interactions with authentic Indigeneity. Through colonialism, Indigenous peoples have been positioned as a monolithic culture that remains a relic of the past. When this is paired with policies of segregation, and racialized poverty, White settlers have essentially no authentic interactions with Indigeneity, thus perpetuating further harm. As the teaching profession remains predominantly White/Settler, this becomes further problematic, as the social reproduction components inherent within schools will continue to produce, and reproduce misinformation, bias, and harm. This sentiment is echoed in Emma Battell Lowman and Adam J. Barker’s (2015) work *Settler Identity and Colonialism in 21st Century Canada* where they write “the specific type of colonialism at work in Canada that structures relationships between Indigenous Peoples and others on these lands specifically seeks invisibility in order to achieve its end goals. As such, disavowal is a key part of the Settler identity and marks Settler people as benefitting from the dispossession and destruction of Indigenous Peoples while at the same time vehemently denying complicity in the

events and processes that make that happen” (p. 15). In this excerpt, it is clear once more to see that the “perfect stranger” positioning by White settlers is an intentional by-product of the settler-state. Dion (2007) notes this unethical positioning and suggests:

Until teachers have an opportunity to investigate and transform their understanding of Aboriginal people and the history of the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada, dominant discourses will continue to be reproduced maintaining the ‘imaginary Indian’ as ‘the Indian’ Canadians have in mind (p. 330).

The systems, structures, and policies present in the Canadian settler-state work together to further marginalize Indigenous peoples, and Indigenous sovereignty, while maintaining White space and power, specifically, within school contexts (Battiste, 2013).

Upon reviewing these critiques, it becomes further apparent that systems of schooling on these lands are inadequate at addressing the unique needs of Indigenous Peoples. These are needs that have been created through colonial policies and practices throughout Canada’s history and have manifested into a system that is unjust and inhospitable toward Indigenous students. This complex issue carries with it a long, and continuing history of colonialism, racism, and dispossession, and cannot be solved by incorporating folkloric projections of Indigeneity into classrooms. It has become clear that recent attempts to incorporate Indigenous perspectives into schools have been inaccurate and ineffective (Higgins, et al., 2015). Because of this, there is a clear call to address ways in which systems of schooling can effectively retain Indigenous learners, further the Calls to Action, and foster meaningful relations between Settler and Indigenous people on these lands. In examining physical spaces, curriculum/pedagogy, and social relations through a lens of educational hospitality (Ruitenber, 2011), this study will

highlight successful efforts at achieving educational hospitality perceived by Indigenous students, while also critiquing the flaws as identified by Indigenous youth themselves that school systems could address. Finally, systemic recommendations grounded in the words and stories of Indigenous youth will be put forward and situated within existing literature.

Historical Context: How did we get *here*?

The lands we now call Canada have been home to thriving, connected, and ethical communities for millennia. Indigenous people have created complex systems of government, spirituality, and leadership, that have been shaped by nature, and an inextricable connection to land. In his book *Loss of Indigenous Eden and the Fall of Spirituality*, Blair Stonechild (2020) recounts how Indigenous communities thrived on these lands for generations, long before the arrival of European settlers. Stonechild writes of elements present within Indigenous communities before the arrival of colonizers, noting “all things were in balance and harmony because people did not place themselves and their interests above that of the rest of Creation” (p. 29). When one places this notion in contrast to the selfish, capitalist-driven economy that has now dominated these lands, it appears almost utopian to imagine a different reality. Stonechild goes on to paint an idealistic picture, writing “Indigenous life was based upon spiritual convictions that recognized that the human sojourn on Earth presented them with opportunities to learn and benefit from the gifts of the Creator. Maintaining proper relationships with the other created beings was paramount. These worldviews produced healthy societies capable of long-term sustainability and uplifting cultures that promoted life” (p. 31). With this harmonious, balanced, and holistic image of a pre-settler “Canada,” it becomes almost unfathomable to comprehend how quickly the systems, structures, and processes on these lands became to change into a country whose values and worldviews are often placed in direct opposition to that of the

Indigenous utopia or “Eden” (Stonechild, 2020) that had thrived on these territories for thousands of years.

The relationship between settlers and Indigenous peoples has been one centred on Eurocentric, racist, and capitalist ideals (S. Denis, 2020). Through this relationship, Indigenous people have experienced the violent dispossession of their lands, languages, and bodies, all of which have been state-prescribed and state-endorsed. Policies that have employed segregation, discrimination, misogyny, and cultural genocide have been a common thread in this relationship. Blair Stonechild (2020) writes of this relationship at its initial contact, noting “contact between First Nations of Turtle Island and Europeans of the Old World was probably the most dramatic collision of two diametrically opposed ideologies to ever occur in world history” (p. 94). These two oppositional worldviews for a while were able to live in relative peace, however, it was only a matter of time until the settler paradigm became the dominant narrative on Turtle Island. Soon, Indigenous peoples were subject to assimilative policies and practices that have continued to disenfranchise and place them at the margins of Canadian society. Because of this, our systems, structures, and institutions have been marked and shaped by colonialist ideals, all while the dominant culture perpetuates racist narratives about Indigenous people (S. Denis, 2020). The colonial path that has led Canadians to this unique and unfortunate place in history is something that should be commonly understood amongst the dominant, settler population, yet frequently is either misinterpreted, or outright rejected. Marie Battiste (2013) writes of this, stating “it [Canadian Indigenous history] is a subject that every citizen of Canada should know, because every citizen in Canada is connected to it” (p. 23), further implicating institutions, governments, and individuals to change the dominant narrative that has permeated perceived social hierarchies on these lands.

As settlers became the dominant culture on Turtle Island, Indigenous people soon began to be viewed as obstacles, rather than partners; barriers rather than keepers of the land and water (Stonechild, 2020). The new settlers soon began to develop a sense of ownership and entitlement over Indigenous land, while simultaneously forcing their worldviews, institutions, and systems of governance onto these lands. Indigeneity was placed as a hindrance that needed to be overcome in order to create the nation of Canada. In his book *the Comeback*, John Ralston Saul (2015) highlights this development, writing:

Land was broken. Towns built. Railways were in permanent expansion, spurs off in every direction as villages grew into towns. All true. But at exactly the same time, in the same country, Indigenous peoples were dying or suffering or not reproducing because of the terrible conditions to which they had been reduced, and doing most of this in small communities, out of the sight and mind of the largely European Canadian population (p. 7).

This is a narrative that is widely, and *intentionally* omitted from Canadian institutions and curriculums, as it does not serve the widely accepted projection that Canada is a fair, just, and inclusive society, and has been from its inception.

As the newly formed Canadian settler-state continued to grow and flourish, so too did assimilative policies set on destroying any and all notions of Indigeneity. The Canadian government introduced the *Indian Act*, which as Stonechild (2020) writes, “was designed to weaken the protected status of Indians and divest them of their reserve lands. Under assimilation policy, Aboriginal Peoples were to become a mere memory. The prognosis for Indian survival was not good as the Indigenous population plummeted to its nadir in 1910 amid talk of its imminent demise” (p. 109). The *Indian Act* reinforced the notion of Social Darwinism that the newly arrived settlers held to be true. The main tenet of Social Darwinism purports that certain

cultures have evolved to become stronger and more dominant than “weaker” cultures (Rudman & Saud, 2020). The *Indian Act* reinforced these racist beliefs by making Indigeneity punishable under the law. An 1884 amendment to the *Indian Act* went so far as to make participation in ceremonies such as potlach, Sundance, or sweat, punishable with up to six months imprisonment (Stonechild, 2020). These measures were not only blatant violations of the treaties, but also reinforced the narrative and belief that the newly founded nation of Canada was made by and for White settlers, with its institutions, systems and structures being inherently anti-Indigenous by design. Ralston Saul (2013) writes of this system, highlighting “in a country that believed it was built on the rule of law, respectable mechanisms had to be put in place. Myriad laws, regulations, and administrative structures were created and amended in order to install a legal infrastructure of racism and punishment, both social and economic” (p. 12). These infrastructures of racism, punishment, and colonialism prevail today.

Perhaps the most devastating ramification of Canada’s belief in social Darwinism was that of the residential school system. Under the guise of education, the Canadian government, in partnership with various churches, set to eradicate Indigeneity completely, by going after a community’s most vulnerable and impressionable group – its children. Through this system, the Canadian government in partnership with the church, was able to take Indigenous children away from their families, and place them in a



Figure 1: Lacombe's Ladder. Marquette University, 2009

school whose sole purpose was to eradicate any notion of Indigeneity within a child (Stonechild, 2020). Within these schools, children were taught that Indigenous culture, spirituality, and practice was *heathen*, and would result in them going to “hell”. In many classrooms, Lacombe’s Ladder (figure 1) was hung, noting how the only way to “heaven” was to abandon Indigeneity, and conform to the White, Christian vision of Canada. Ralston Saul (2013) writes of this direct attack on Indigeneity, saying “behind the progressive mask of education, using the key mechanisms of civilizations – language, culture, and all things spiritual – they could mount a direct attack on Indigenous peoples. The sexual exploitation, the medical malpractice, the experimentation – all could be seen as expressions of the European racial desire to demean other races” (p. 12). This genocide occurred simultaneously with increasing attacks and dispossessions of Indigenous lands, territories, and bodies, while also perpetuating misinformation to the dominant culture, reinforcing images of Indigenous people as a hindrance to the development of Canada as a nation. This disenfranchisement, paired with a disillusioned majority populace set the stage for the context in which Canadians find themselves today. Ralston Saul outlines this paradox eloquently, writing “we are dealing with deeply rooted, European-style racism that is central to the late nineteenth-century narrative” (p. 13). This “European-style racism” (Ralston Saul, 2013) is one that must consciously and *intentionally* be dismantled across institutions today.

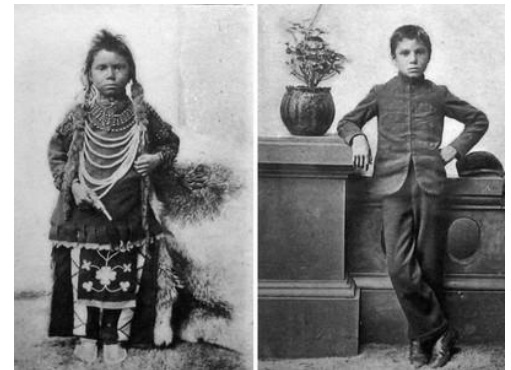


Figure 2: The Transformation of Thomas Moore (Keesig), Regina Indian Industrial School, 1892

Since opening the first residential schools in 1883, to the closing of the last residential school in 1997, approximately 150,000 Indigenous children were exposed to this uniquely European form of genocide (Stonechild, 2020). As these schools were operating, as well as since

their closure, the Canadian government (and its institutions) has stayed the course in furthering the Settler agenda. Marie Battiste (2013) summarizes this, writing “imagine the consequence of a powerful ideology that positions one group as superior and gives away First Nations peoples’ lands and resources and invites churches and other administrative agents to inhabit their homeland, while negating their very existence and finally removing them from the Canadian landscape to lands no one wants” (p. 23). The consequences of these immoral and inhumane actions are severe, and have only just begun to be revealed through inquiries such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015). The list of damages is exhaustive, the harms done are unimaginable; and yet, Indigenous culture and spirituality has remained intact, despite the unrestrained, relentless attacks from settlers. Although the Canadian settler-state attempted, and continues to attempt to break the sacred circle, they have not been, and will not be successful.

Through the relentless colonial *othering* perpetuated on these lands, Indigenous students have historically, and continue to experience inhospitable environments within schools (Battiste, 2015). Through culturally irrelevant, and historically inaccurate curriculum, unwelcoming physical spaces, and hostile relations occurring within schools, Indigenous students continuously get pushed to the margins of their school and classroom ecologies (Donald, 2012).

Understanding these phenomena, and actively working to change them are of key importance not only to reconciliation in Canada, but to society as a whole. This work will seek to bring awareness to the ways in which Indigenous students conceptualize feelings of (in)hospitality within their social ecologies, as well bring to light potential paths forward, using exclusively an Indigenous perspective. Through situating this work within Ruitenberg’s (2011a) lens of hospitality, educators, policy makers, scholars, as well as settler society as a whole can begin to

identify and alter the policies, practices, and ontologies inherent within white-settler imposed systems, actively challenging historical norms rooted in White supremacist ideals.

Research Question

What is the extent to which Indigenous youth experience a sense of educational hospitality within physical spaces, curriculum, and social relations?

Sub Questions:

- a) How do Indigenous High School students/recent graduates living in urban Winnipeg conceptualize hospitality?
- b) What is the extent to which Indigenous high school students/recent graduates experience(d) hospitality in physical spaces, curriculum, and in social relations? Specifically, what are the factors that either promote or hinder hospitality in educational spaces, as conceptualized and experienced by Indigenous youth themselves?
- c) What can we learn from the experiences of urban Indigenous youth in order to create, promote, and sustain hospitality within reconciliation efforts?

The experiences of Indigenous youth will be explored utilizing a lens of hospitality, uncovering the ways in which the current public-school system meets, or fails to meet the unique needs of Indigenous learners navigating educational spaces in urban Winnipeg. Physical spaces, curriculum, and social relations are central tenets within school settings, and thus, are appropriate infrastructures to both analyze, critique, and draw implications to. In this way, the central components inherent within schools can be understood as the means by which meaningful reconciliation is able to meaningfully occur within public schools across Manitoba.

Significance of Study

This study is imperative for a myriad of reasons. In light of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, teachers, administrators, and policy makers are continuously looking for ways to make educational spaces, pedagogy (curriculum and practice), and relations more welcoming and hospitable to Indigenous students. With most attempts to incorporate Indigeneity into schools being primarily tokenizing and folkloric, there has yet to be a study that examines authentic ways to create hospitable spaces, curricula, and relations for Indigenous students. It is clear that the current model of schooling for Indigenous students not only ineffective, but also unethical and colonial (Battiste, 2015). In order to further reconciliation, provide an accessible, culturally-relevant, and research-informed school experience, a study that examines Indigeneity in schools through the lens of hospitality is not only beneficial to the existing body of work in this area, but is urgently required. Marc Kuly's (2021) recent dissertation which focused on the experiences Indigenous students share about their school experience offers an important insight into the failings of the current system. I propose that one way forward is that of Indigenized educational hospitality to bring forth a sense of connection and belonging within school settings, for and by Indigenous students themselves.

Methodology

This study will be a *bricolage* of Western and Indigenous methodologies, informed by a dialogic social inquiry (DeFehr et al., 2021) approach. A bricolage utilizes methodologies and epistemologies from different (and sometimes competing) worldviews, and in so doing, generates something creative, new, and transformational (Rogers, 2012). Given the context of this study, utilizing a bricolage approach offers many opportunities for a deeper understanding of the deeply political phenomena being studied, with the benefit of being able to draw on multiple perspectives for informed, conscientious inquiry.

Utilizing qualitative research design (Creswell & Creswell, 2014), as well as Indigenous methodologies (Kovach, 2021) as foundational components, a dialogic inquiry approach cautions against arriving at research with a pre-set research agenda, made outside of the relationships where research takes place. Due to the political and historical contexts in which this study will occur, a dialogic approach is suitable as it recognizes the harms that can arise when participant's words and personal narratives are misconstrued, or interpreted in a way that is not coherent with the participant's intent. It is because of this that a dialogic approach does not presuppose how a study may develop, rather, it invites participants to be actively involved in how research is conducted, and how their words are interpreted and presented afterward, positioning the researcher as a respondent. Approaching a study in this way ensures that participants are able to see themselves in the study, and thus, in its implications.

Theoretical Framework

Hospitality: Theoretical Understandings of Belonging

The unique social positioning of teachers and their students is something that continues to be discussed in educational circles around the world. Teachers, who have successfully completed professional training which has socialized them to replicate educational norms, are often viewed as the authoritarian, fount of knowledge in every classroom. Learning occurs through the teacher's expertise, and ability to provide resources and opportunities for intellectual growth in their students. In this model, teachers play *host* to their students, who are temporary guests in the four walls of the classroom. This model of learning has its roots in Eurocentric and capitalist ideals, wherein the goal of school is to prepare students for a life where they will be answering to a boss, punching a time card, and remaining obedient to higher social orders (Battiste, 2013). In Claudia W Ruitenberg's (2011) work *Hospitality and Subjectification*, this relationship is

questioned, and positioned in a way that allows some of these unchallenged educational norms to be critiqued.

Ruitenbergh (2011) writes that “In my work I have proposed that our responsibility to children and youth is to receive them into the world *and* to accept that they will change the world into which they are received” (p. 134). This excerpt summarizes the central tenet of Ruitenbergh’s argument, that teachers can be viewed as host, and students as guest, and it is up to the host to provide a meaningful, safe, and hospitable environment for young minds to grow. Ruitenbergh (2011) goes on to note that

an ethic of hospitality is an ethical framework focused on receiving the other, in which hospitality is understood as ‘an unconditional gift given by a host who is aware of her or his indebtedness to the guest. Immediately, this marks a departure from other conceptions of hospitality based on reciprocity or exchange [that is to say, conditionality] in which the guest incurs a debt by accepting hospitality. (p. 134)

This is an important aspect of this concept, as it flips many traditional views of schooling. In this model, the host (the teacher) is indebted to their guest (their student). In this framework, the teacher must accept that their physical space, pedagogy, and philosophies may need to be changed, altered, or outright abandoned in servicing the debt to their guests.

This framework challenges many widely accepted educational norms, yet it also brings to attention a unique phenomenon, whereby multiple sets of needs may be competing for the same space. In this context, space could be an actual physical space, or a matter of resources, attention, or support. Ruitenbergh (2011b) addresses this question as well when she writes “the singularity of each person is violated as two sets of needs and demands, each incomparable with any other, must now be appraised and prioritized in relation to each other.” (p. 139) The practice of

weighing a student's unique academic, behavioural, and emotional needs against their peers is one that is common place in Canadian schools, and is reflective of the colonial, settler-state education system that educators and their pupils are forced to navigate daily. Resource teachers, classroom teachers, and administrators are very often put into a position where all student needs are not able to be met, and students with the most obvious, indiscrete needs are prioritized over students with subtler, but just as pressing learning needs. Ruitenberg's model of hospitality implores these systems to create a space where difference is anticipated, and where students have the ability to change and alter the system, both micro and macro, that they are in. In a Canadian context, this has wide reaching implications, perhaps the most poignant being that of reconciliation, and the decolonization of education.

If schools and the systems and structures of education are to be hospitable, Ruitenberg contends, they must be flexible and malleable to and by BIPOC students. Ruitenberg (2018) writes "It is clear that hospitality cannot be said to have taken place if white educators fail to see, interrogate, and change the ways in which the educational spaces into which they seek to receive racialized students are marked by whiteness" (p. 258). One only needs to read through curriculum documents to understand that Canadian education is marked by whiteness. Indeed, whiteness is rewarded, celebrated, and idealized throughout schools. Through policies of multiculturalism, aspects of school life can appear to be hospitable, yet, when this narrative is interrogated, it is clear that whiteness is still what is celebrated and rewarded in educational institutions on these lands. Dwayne Donald (2012) has named this occurrence "fort pedagogy". In this model, Donald uses the symbol of the fur trading fort as a metaphor for what occurs within Canadian schools. Within the fort, whiteness is celebrated, and seen as building a nation, being productive and profitable. Yet, on the outskirts of the fort, Indigeneity is viewed as

unrestrained, barbaric, and of the past. Using this model, Donald purports that curriculum and schooling functions in much the same way. Holding whiteness up as the “golden standard”, while making Indigenous contributions and ways of knowing viewed as a relic of the past, and/or as a less valuable contribution to the “creation” of Canada. Utilizing Ruitenberg’s lens of educational hospitality, it quickly becomes apparent how the infrastructure of schooling is one that is inhospitable to racialized students.

If hospitality for Indigenous students is said to have taken place across systems, structures, and institutions, then schools, curriculum, and pedagogy must be altered so that they are not only inclusive, but authentic and reflective of the population that they serve. Ruitenberg (2011) supports this notion when she writes “a hospitable curriculum, then, pays explicit attention to the voices that have been excluded from its development, and the effects of their absence” (p. 34). Using Ruitenberg’s argument alongside the model of fort pedagogy that Donald (2012) has put forward, it is apparent that there is much work to be done if spaces of education are to be truly hospitable to Indigenous students. Ruitenberg (2011) goes on to write that “hospitality, then, is a demand for openness to the arrival of something and someone we cannot foresee; a demand that is impossible to fulfill, but that confronts all of our decisions and actions” (p. 33). This projection of hospitality would require that teachers, schools, divisions, and governments anticipate Indigeneity, while also accepting that the arrival of Indigenous learners will change the systems and structures of education, and there should be ample room for this change if schools are to be hospitable.

In addition to systems and structures being morally and ethically obligated to become hospitable spaces for Indigenous learners, there is also an obligation for teachers to ensure that their classrooms, practices, and pedagogies are hospitable. Teachers, as the deliverers of

curriculum, are in a unique position in which they can decide whose voices get heard and celebrated, and whose get overlooked. Ruitenberg recognizes this unique positioning when she notes that “teachers can become quite ‘at home’ in the school, the curriculum, and their position. The ethic of hospitality reminds them that the spaces of education are not *their* spaces, spaces they own or should consider under their control, but rather spaces into which they have been received and whose purpose is to give place to students” (p. 34). Through this excerpt, Ruitenberg is recognizing that teachers carry with them immense responsibility, and are fortunate enough to hold with them professional certification that entitles them to make ethical decisions based on the need, or *anticipated* need of their students. Although teachers may not be able to change larger systems and structures that they are operating within, they do have the ability and capacity to ensure that their spaces, pedagogies, and philosophies are ones that not only accommodate the other, but anticipates them without even knowing who the other is, or what their unique set of needs may be. Even when teachers may not fully know how the other may change or alter the space, or the teacher’s professional practice, they are morally and ethically obligated to ensure that all students, and in this context Indigenous students, are accepted into spaces of learning.

It is rather problematic how a system that invests immense amounts of time, energy, and money into “inclusion” can be increasingly inhospitable to not only Indigenous students, but all BIPOC students. The recent focus on inclusion across school divisions and governments could be viewed as yet another way to perpetuate white norms and bring BIPOC students into the mainstream settler-state. Ruitenberg (2011) acknowledges the difference between inclusion and hospitality, writing “hospitality, by contrast, does not seek to fit the guest into the space of the host, but accepts that the arrival of the guest may change the space into which he or she is

received” (p. 32). This is a stark shift from the notion that the goal of inclusion is to get students to *fit* into the same learning space, coexisting and adhering to the established social orders. The change to a model of hospitality, however, accepts that the other will change the space, and will require schools, and the people who work within them, to adapt to the unique set of needs that the other brings. This requires that teachers, schools, and levels of government become ethically obligated to leave space for the other, learn from the other, and shift the social hierarchies that have historically been perpetuated within institutionalized education.

Educational hospitality is not limited to curriculum, although this aspect does play an important role in an overall hospitable education system. In addition to curriculum, social factors and school design also contribute to (in)hospitable experiences of education. Social factors relate to the way in which students, staff, and community members work together to reduce barriers for marginalized students, while also anticipating the unknown guest. This is an important component of creating and maintaining hospitable learning environments for Indigenous youth (Battiste, 2013). In addition to curriculum and social factors, the physical school building and its related infrastructure also play a key role in ensuring Indigenous students are receiving a hospitable education. What this may look like varies among contexts, and will change as the students do. For this reason, it is imperative the school leaders and policy makers understand that adapting to the needs of Indigenous students in schools is needed, rather than top-down mandates. Ruitenberg (2011) writes of this noting “to what extent are schools spaces in which young people have a chance to respond, to enter into the world and make a space there? To what extent do we see children and youth as subjects who have the right to be not merely socialized – that is adapted to the world – but received into the world and who have the ability to respond to it?” (p. 137). This eloquently outlines the very core of a hospitable education, while also

reaffirming the need for all levels of the school system to be adaptive rather than prescriptive, and thus, hospitable.

This study will utilize Ruitenberg's framework of educational hospitality to examine the ways in which a sense of hospitality can be created and maintained for Indigenous students navigating Canada's colonial education systems. Using Ruitenberg's theory as a central framework, both macro and micro systems within the larger Canadian school context will be examined, questioned, and critiqued as a means to address the ways in which educational institutions consistently fail to meet the distinct needs of Indigenous learners.

Key Terms

Settler in the context of this study relates to any person who is non-Indigenous who lives on the traditional territories we now call Canada.

Reconciliation in the context of this study utilizes the definition put forward by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (2015) final report, which highlights the central tenet of reconciliation being the process of establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada.

Educational hospitality, in the context of this study refers to the ethical obligation that governments, administrators, and teachers have to create and maintain spaces, pedagogies, and relations that are relevant, inclusive, and malleable to, and by, Indigenous students. This philosophy accepts that the teacher is placed in the position of *host* within a classroom ecology, and the student as *guest*, understanding that the guest may change the space into which they are received.

Colonialism, in the context of this study relates to the process by which Indigenous lands, bodies, languages, traditions, and ways of knowing are deemed as inferior to that of Settler people and are treated in a way that is both unethical, inhumane, and genocidal.

Settler colonialism, in the context of this study relates to ongoing system of power, enforced by the Canadian Settler-state that validates, justifies, and perpetuates the oppression and genocide of Indigenous People. A contemporary manifestation of this can be seen in the systems and structures within schools that uphold whiteness and white dominance, both subtly and overtly through physical spaces, curriculum/pedagogy, and relations.

Indigenizing hospitality, in the context of this study refers to the extent to which educational systems and spaces change and adapt as a result of Indigenous people being in them.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The following chapter examines literature that will highlight the progress, and recent initiatives that have resulted in school systems becoming more hospitable to Indigenous students. In addition to recognizing the progress made, this review will also underscore the many areas in which current policy and practice are inadequate and ineffective at achieving true hospitality and belonging for Indigenous students. First, a general examination of hospitality and belonging will be explored, with a specific emphasis on why this is a crucial component in retaining Indigenous students to graduation. Next, physical spaces and curriculum within schools will be investigated through a lens of hospitality, underscoring how these constructs interact with one another to marginalize Indigenous students. Lastly, this chapter will investigate how the social relations within school systems have historically been ineffective at fostering a sense of hospitality, with specific focus on teacher-student relations, as well as student-student (peer) relations, drawing attention to where further work is required.

Hospitality and Belonging

Through policies of inclusion, multiculturalism, and diversity, school systems are (seemingly) attempting to ensure that students navigating the education system feel welcome, accepted, and secure. On Manitoba Education's Student Services website, inclusion in school is described as "...a way of thinking and acting that allows every individual to feel accepted, valued, and safe. An inclusive community consciously evolves to meet the changing needs of its members. Through recognition and support, an inclusive community provides meaningful involvement and equal access to the benefits of citizenship" (Manitoba Education, 2017) this definition of inclusion is reminiscent of Ruitenberg's (2011a) definition of educational hospitality, where she writes "in my work I have proposed that our responsibility to children and youth is to receive them into the world *and* to accept that they will change the world into which they are received" (p. 134). Through these two excerpts, the idealistic vision of school systems becoming malleable by students in order to foster a sense of belonging is clear. However, as mentioned in Chapter 1, there is a clear distinction to be made between inclusion and hospitality. Using a hospitable framework to understand school success, it becomes important to recognize that students who leave school before completion are not "dropping out", rather, they are being *pushed* out, as the school system was not flexible and malleable enough to accommodate them (Bradley & Renzulli, 2011). It is in this distinction that many students, and particularly, Indigenous students, get *pushed* from the school system. In a Canadian context, the students who are most at-risk to be pushed from the school system, are Indigenous people (Battiste, 2013). Through deficit narratives and the belief that schools are already equitable and just spaces, educators widely have come to believe that poor student achievement is the result of laziness, or poor parenting (Yosso, 2005). Such a view negates the impacts of colonialism, poverty, and

intergenerational trauma, and perpetuates inhospitable schooling. In this way, policies of inclusion become a “box” to be checked, rather than a culture and philosophy that is truly lived within schools.

The notion that in order for schools to achieve higher results and retain more students up to graduation, they must become welcoming and inviting, is a relatively new concept within the Eurocentric, capitalist-driven model of schooling. A common *buzzword* within school settings in the past 10 years has been that of the “classroom community.” Alfie Kohn (2008) was one of the first educational scholars to popularize this saying. Kohn discusses classroom and school community, writing:

in saying that a classroom or school is a ‘community’, then, I mean that it is a place in which students feel cared about and are encouraged to care about each other. They experience a sense of being valued and respected; the children matter to one another and to the teacher. They have come to think in the plural: they feel connected to each other; they are part of an ‘us’ (p. 101).

This notion is in direct opposition to previously held beliefs about children and learning, where individualism reigned superior. Kohn also notes that building true community is not easy, with many micro and macro-level components being at play. Kohn writes “a real or authentic community doesn’t feel empty. It is constructed over time by people with a common purpose who come to know and trust each other. Of course, it is precisely the commitment to make a community that helps these things happen” (p. 109). This sentiment is echoed in Ruitenberg’s (2011a) contention that in order for schools to become hospitable, they must provide students the power and opportunity to make a space there. This would require the adults in the building to abandon their deeply held beliefs and biases of what school could and should look like and allow

students the ability to change and alter systems, processes, and spaces so that all are truly included, and thus, achieving authentic hospitality.

It would be rather naïve to believe that the concept of classroom community, belonging, or hospitality is a new understanding. In fact, believing that this concept is a new revelation, revealed by the Western academy is but another manifestation of White supremacy within educational spaces (Galla & Holmes, 2020). In traditional Indigenous models of teaching and learning, “the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual needs of each person were the foundation for learning. The teaching of children was a communal responsibility, and educators came in many forms (e.g. human, spirit, land, animals)” (Toulouse, 2018, p. 7). In this model of learning, students were able to create spaces that fit their unique needs, gifts, and talents, and it was up to the adults to accommodate this. Traditional Indigenous pedagogies were, and are, built upon notions of hospitality. There did not need to be official state-imposed policies of inclusion, as this notion remained a central tenet of Indigenous worldviews and continues on today. Toulouse (2018) writes that “traditional Indigenous education collided with non-Indigenous forms of education because they are complete opposites. Non-Indigenous forms of education introduced in North America were embedded with beliefs about superiority/inferiority, expert/non-expert, living/dead, and civilized/savage” (p. 7). It has taken decades for the imposed educational institutions on these lands to begin to understand the ways in which deeply held beliefs need to be *un*learned. In many ways, the recent developments in educational philosophies focused on experiential learning, inquiry, and community are not new. These beliefs have long been understood, practiced, and embraced by Indigenous communities for centuries, and are only now beginning to receive their due merit.

Indigenous Understandings of Hospitality

Traditional Indigenous understandings of hospitality are built around diversity, acceptance, and accommodation. Marie Battiste (2013) writes “Indigenous knowledges are diverse learning processes that come from living intimately with the land, working with the resources surrounding that land base, and the relationships that it has fostered over time and place. These are physical, social, and spiritual relationships that continue to be the foundations of its world views and ways of knowing that define their relationships with each other and others” (p. 33). In this central understanding, one can begin to see the ways in which an ethic of hospitality permeated through Indigenous culture. Fundamental understandings of not taking without also giving back, never taking more than one needs, and valuing the gifts and talents of others are at the heart of an Indigenous worldview and are inherently hospitable. In this world view, taking care of each other and the land ends up being beneficial to all (Stonechild, 2020). Unfortunately, however, this worldview and educational philosophy were met with contention and hostility upon the development of new systems and infrastructures on these lands. Candace Galla and Amanda Holmes (2020) write of this phenomenon stating that “as academia continues to entrench and expand the colonialist project, other knowledge systems are excluded, marginalized, invisibilized, and de-legitimated as inferior” (p. 52). This becomes apparent when one compares traditional Indigenous pedagogies, to imposed settler pedagogies occurring on Turtle Island. As Settler models of education slowly start to understand what Indigenous people have known for millennia, this perceived superiority becomes further abhorrent, and ultimately harmful to all.

The concept of belonging, a central component within hospitality, has consistently been a foundational tenet of Indigenous pedagogies. In fact, belonging is one of the four quarters of the *Circle of Courage* model (Brendtro et al., 1990). Brendtro et al. (1990) write that “Native

American philosophies of child management represent what is perhaps the most effective system of positive discipline ever developed. These approaches emerged from cultures where the central purpose of life was the education and empowerment of children. Modern child development research is only now reaching the point where this holistic approach can be understood, validated, and replicated” (p. 44). Once more, it becomes apparent how recent policies of inclusion, and buzzwords like “class community” are not new, rather, they are belief systems that predate European contact on these lands, and were violently eliminated through colonization and white supremacy. Belonging plays an incredibly integral role in Indigenous worldviews, understanding that belonging stretches past one’s community and includes the natural world. Brendtro et al. (1990) discuss belonging, noting that “the presence of a strong sense of belonging makes young people more receptive to guidance from other community members. Native youth have learned to listen and reflect on advice from concerned adults who approach them in a caring manner. Peer-group controls are also highly effective with Native youth; if a youngster is not responsive to group influence, this is a sure sign that the person does not feel he or she belongs” (p. 47). In addition to belonging, the spirit of mastery, independence, and generosity are positioned equally on the Medicine Wheel as being foundational components to a holistic approach to education (Figure 3).

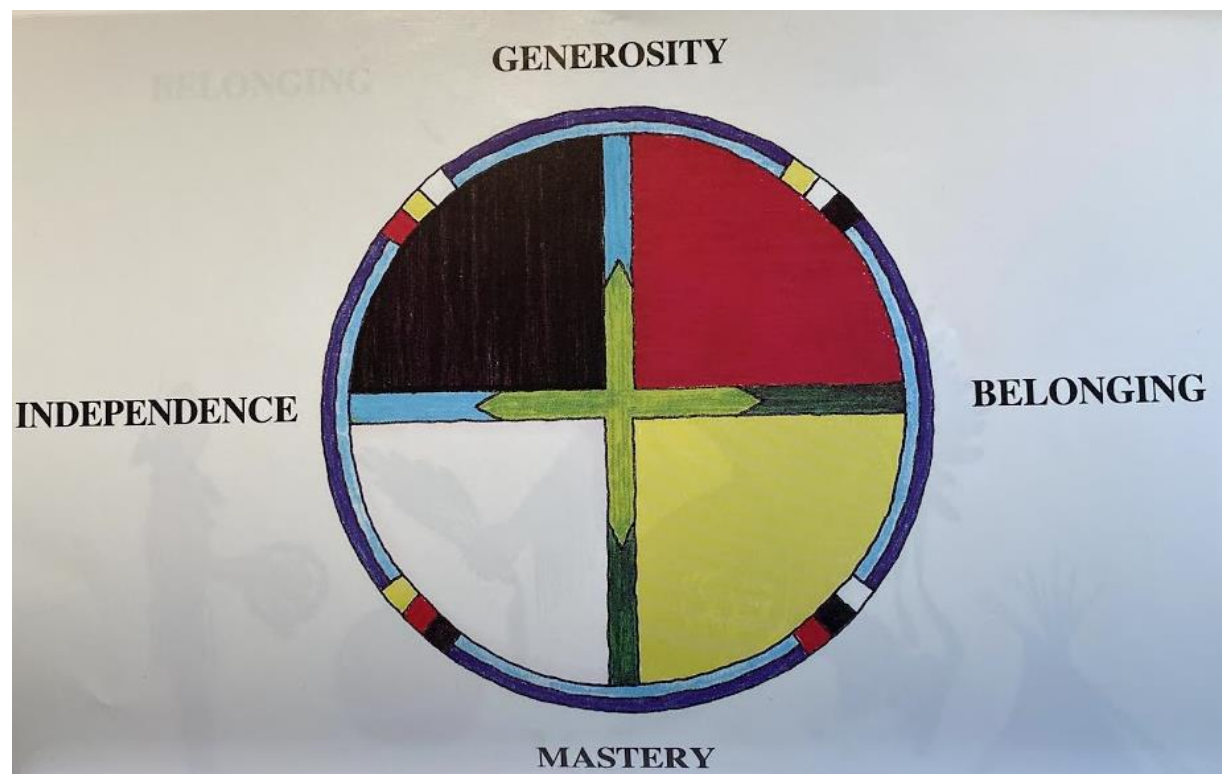


Figure 3: The Circle of Courage. Brendtro et al., 1990

Physical Spaces

Physical space, and more specifically, land has been at the heart of settler and Indigenous contention from the moment of first contact (Denis, 2020). Emma Battell Lowman and Adam J. Barker (2015) write of this contested relationship, noting that “land is at the root of any issue or conflict you could care to name involving Indigenous and Settler peoples in Canada. The land is what sustains Indigenous communities and identities. The land is what Settler people need in order to have a home and economic stability. The land is what colonialism seeks to turn into a commodity for power and profit. The land is what is contested, what is shared, what is danced, and what is discussed without words” (p. 48). If one is to look at land through a lens of hospitality, it becomes abundantly clear that Indigenous people have not only been treated in an inhospitable way on their lands, but in a manner that is genocidal in both policy and practice.

Through settler colonialism, Indigenous people have been systemically and violently dispossessed of their sacred lands. This process, occurring simultaneously with colonial violence toward Indigenous knowledge systems, women, and two-spirit (Saramo, 2016) has resulted in an exceptionally inhospitable infrastructure across Turtle Island, with places of learning being no exception (Battiste, 2015). While this ongoing violence occurs, Settlers have laid false claim to this land, endowing it with white nationalism that is built upon Indigenous suffering. Lowman and Barker (2015) write “they [Settlers] differentiate themselves from their societies of origin by intensely identifying and focusing on the aspects of their new homelands that are ‘unique’ and also by committing violent or displacing acts against Indigenous peoples who have competing claims to these unique, special places. Developing nationalisms grow out of this identification, which justifies the Settler community in gatekeeping the special settler homeland” (p. 28). Once more, it becomes extremely apparent to see the ways in which this phenomenon has, and is, playing out on these lands.

Through white nationalism, a sense of “white space” develops across geographies and institutions. In this paradigm, Settlers begin to lay claim to both physical and metaphorical spaces that they have recently deemed to be *theirs* (Toews, 2018). In the school system, White space becomes exceptionally apparent, especially upon attempts to authentically Indigenize school spaces. One example of this desire to maintain White space within schools is the integration of smudging as a part of a school’s programming. In their work *Indigenization of the Curriculum: Smudging, Public Schools, and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, Paul Clark, Nora Findlay, and Anna-Leah King (2019) write of a case in Alberni, British Columbia, where a class of students participated in a smudge, supported by their teacher and school administrator. The parent of a child in this class argued that in doing a smudge in a public school,

her child's Charter rights were being violated. This case ended up being brought to the supreme court, where it was eventually struck down. Although this case reached the highest court in Canada, it is but a microcosm of the daily hurdles teachers and school administrators have to overcome before they are able to bring in authentic Indigenous worldviews. It is also important to note that the parent involved in this case, received immense support through funds by members of the larger community, demonstrating the widespread discomfort many Settler Canadians appear to have with Indigeneity in schools. Clark, Findlay, and King (2019) write that "fostering reconciliation through shared, voluntary, and consensual experiences with proper parental notice and consent differs from book learning about a subject such as smudging because it has the potential to open up empathetic pathways that may further understanding and respect in deep and meaningful ways" (p. 216). This is a crucial component of classroom pedagogy to note, and is where much contention lies. In a settler worldview, objectively learning about smudging, without actually participating in it might be considered "good enough", however, actually welcoming and participating in this practice in a colonial institution such as a school, in some parent's minds, is too far. Because of this, many teachers also feel fearful of the repercussions, should they wish to begin to decolonize their learning spaces.

Likewise, Clark et al. (2019) have also noted that Indigenous education is not only for Indigenous students, writing "what is more, the infusion of Indigenous culture and worldviews throughout curricula and classroom instruction not only supports Indigenous students, but also benefits 'all students (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike) in making sense of the complex and ever-changing nature of their communities and their country'" (p. 225). Exposing settler students to Indigenous worldviews is actually mutually beneficial. This is a crucial component that must be acknowledged, not only in regard to smudging, but across all tenets of Indigenous

philosophies. The disregard for privilege, and the desire to maintain white space are at the heart of cases such as this and are symbolic of the larger paradigm that Canada finds itself in in its path toward reconciliation.

In addition to smudging, teachers are also being encouraged to begin, and continue using the Treaty Kit as a pedagogical tool for developing an understanding of the treaty relationship amongst their students in Canada. The Treaty Kit is a set of resources available to teachers, and includes videos, handouts, discussion prompts, and project ideas that get students thinking and learning about the meaning and history of the numbered treaty system in Canada. Although this kit is flawed in many ways, it can be used as an entry point to discussing larger issues surrounding land, displacement, and colonialism in Canada. In her work *White Resentment in Settler Society*, Carol Schick (2012) writes of the importance for treaty education, noting “in spite of the importance of the treaties and the extent to which the settler colonial portion of the nation has flourished as a consequence, until the recent requirement to teach the contents of the *Treaty Resource Kit*, almost nothing has been taught in schools about this historic relation” (p. 90). Schick is underscoring the importance of settlers understanding the treaty relationship from which they benefit. Unfortunately, as Schick goes on to highlight, the move by teachers to incorporate treaty education into classrooms is frequently met with resistance by settler students and their families.

Schick (2012) notes how educating about treaties within the colonial institution of a school, and while employing colonial pedagogies should appear to be a rather non-political, non-confrontational act, yet, is often met with hostility. Schick writes that “as important as the Kit may be, it can be delivered in a way that completely ignores the effects of colonization and White privilege and the more challenging discussions about power relations and racism that have

produced such unequal outcomes in Canadian society and especially on the prairies. And yet, even though most of the teaching will be devoid of a political orientation, this most commonplace type of culturally responsive teaching still meets with resistance” (p. 90). Schick is highlighting here the hypocrisy and pervasive hostility with which education, even something as basic as education *about* the other (Kumashiro, 2000) is met with. It seems almost unfathomable that the simple act of delivering lessons surrounding the history of the land one is situated on, could be met with such resistance. The resistance noted by Schick comes in various forms, both subtle and overt. In one instance, Schick (2012) writes of a principal recounting White parents asking for their children to be absent from an assembly where traditional Indigenous drumming would be occurring. In another instance, a principal recalled having parents not wanting their children to interact with Indigenous students in community building activities. While discussing the Treaty Kit, Schick writes of an occasion where a group of students shrunk from 70+ pupils, to only 10 upon the delivery of treaty instruction. This was followed by a call from school administrators to parents, who did not seem concerned that their children had missed the opportunity. These examples, as upsetting and disturbing as they may be, are extremely commonplace amongst settler students and their parents, and are but symptoms of a much more widespread and prevalent problem in Canadian society.

Although land continues to be at the heart of violence against Indigenous people and bodies across all settler institutions, land has also been positioned as an anecdote to the colonial project. Using Ruitenberg’s (2011a) host and guest relationship in the context of a true, decolonized education, the teacher must be viewed as a facilitator. In this sense, the classroom teacher is one who provides learning opportunities, yet is not the traditional fount of knowledge as idealized in Eurocentric, settler models of education. Rather, the land is the teacher, and its

inhabitants are guests. This stark contrast to traditional notions of institutionalized education demand that students leave the confines of their classes, schools, and cities, and return to the land to learn from and through it. In her work *Land as Pedagogy*, Leanne Simpson (2014) writes “the land, aki, is both context, and process. The process of coming to know is learner-led and profoundly spiritual in nature” (p. 7). In this definition of education, there is no mention of teacher, in the traditional sense. The land is positioned as central to the education of children. In so doing, the classroom teacher is decentered, allowing space for the land, and its inhabitants to educate youth based on their innate curiosities and imaginations. Teachers, schools, and policy makers would need to abandon their closely held affinity for standardized curriculum, and trust that the land would educate students in a way that has equal or greater academic merit.

Similarly, land-based learning develops the whole-being, where mind, body, spirit, and emotion are coming into balance through learning from systems in nature that are inherently balanced. Simpson (2014) writes of this, saying:

Nishnaabewin did not and does not prepare children for successful career paths in a hyper capitalistic system. It is designed to create self-motivated, self-directed, community-minded, inter-dependent, brilliant, loving citizens, who at their core uphold our ideals around family, community and nationhood by valuing their intelligences, their diversity, their desires and gifts and their lived experiences (p. 23).

In this departure from traditional educational norms, the goal of learning from and through the land is not to generate obedient workers who are able to compete in a global economy. A land-based education, rather, creates learners who are motivated, empathetic, skilled in their creator-given talents, and socially minded in their endeavors. Given the recent developments in the global economy surrounding innovation, confronting injustice, and fighting climate change this

is a style of education that is not only individually beneficial, but globally essential.

The path to a decolonized future, one that rebukes settler colonialism, is one that takes place on the land. This model is in direct opposition to the “add and stir” model, as critiqued by Marie Battiste (2013). Reclaiming Indigeneity must come from the land, positioning it as host, rather than artificial attempts at including Indigenous pedagogies within the confines of a classroom, where explorations and lessons focus on superficial, performative notions of culture. There may be opportunities for classroom explorations of Indigeneity, but at the heart of a decolonizing education is a return to the land as teacher, land as host. State-imposed aspects of Indigeneity must be critiqued and replaced with a land-centered approach that gets learners onto the land, sparking curiosity of the lessons that are waiting to be taught. Simpson (2014) writes of this, stating “we cannot carry out the kind of decolonization our ancestors set in motion if we don’t create a generation of land based, community based intellectuals and cultural producers who are accountable to our nations and whose life work is concerned with the regeneration of these systems, rather than meeting the overwhelming needs of the western academic industrial complex or attempting to ‘Indigenize the academy’ by bringing Indigenous Knowledges into the academy on the terms of the academy itself” (p. 13). This is extremely poignant in this context, as it reminds educators that the policy-makers who are encouraging the inclusion of Indigenous ways of knowing within schools are the same policy-makers who are benefiting from settler colonialism. Rather than viewing Indigenous approaches to education as a box waiting to be “checked”, educators must view the heart of an Indigenous approach, the land, as a central, irreplaceable tenet of Indigenous education.

Simpson (2014) goes on to note that there is a difference between land-based pedagogies, and land *as* pedagogy. In a land-based pedagogy, the teacher remains a central figure,

interpreting what children are experiencing, and relating it back to settler-state curriculum outcomes. In the latter, land *as* pedagogy, the teacher trusts that the land will, in fact, teach learners more than they could ever imagine. Simpson uses a story of a young Nishnaabeg girl, Kwezens, observing the routines of a squirrel looking for sap in a tree. As Kwezens quietly observes the squirrel, she begins to mimic its routine for getting the sweet water from the tree. Kwezens learns from the squirrel, and brings the sweet water home to her family who is excitedly anticipating her new learnings. Kwezen's family asks her a myriad of questions about what she observed and participated in, and then teaches her about reducing the sweet liquid into maple syrup, along with the variety of variables such as heat, temperature, and time that go into creating the perfect batch (Simpson, 2014). Although this story is seemingly simple, embedded within it is a complex system of learning, that could never be recreated within a traditional classroom. For a start, the story of Kwezens is learner centered, where she is finding that which is interesting to her, guided by her innate curiosity. Similarly, Kwezens does not know what the end-goal of this experience will be, but finishes with learning that is extremely rich. Through observing the squirrel, Kwezens leaves this story with a deep, profound understanding of animal behavior, simple machines, fluidity, and reduction. She also relied on a supportive community to interpret and facilitate further learning based on her experiences with the land. This lesson wasn't pre-recorded in a day planner on a teacher's desk, it was held within the land, waiting to be taught and experienced. It required patience, observation, and a community of people who took a genuine interest in what their children were experiencing. Paramount in this story is also the hospitality that Kwezens experienced through the land being host. There is no talk of outcomes, differentiation, or individual education plans, the land does this innately, and the depth of learning is incomparable to that of classroom experiences. Simpson summarizes this

eloquently when she writes “within this system there is no standard curriculum because it is impossible to generate a curriculum for ‘that which is giving to us lovingly from the spirits,’ and because it doesn’t make sense for everyone to master the same body of factual information” (p. 10). Once more, this is placed in direct opposition to mainstream settler education, where all learners are accessing the same content, and special adaptations are in place for those students who are struggling to access the pre-determined knowledge deemed necessary by the state. In a land-based education, these adaptations are presupposed, meeting each learner where they are at, allowing students to hone their unique set of skills, talents, and gifts.

Using Ruitenberg’s (2011a) model of hospitality, and the host/guest relationship, educators on Turtle Island can meaningfully walk the path of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, recognizing the inherent value of Indigenous bodies of knowledge and ways of knowing. Allowing a paradigm shift of teacher as host, to land as host, will not only serve Indigenous learners, but all who now call these lands home. Although these understandings have far-reaching implications, including pre-service teacher training and policy, individual teachers have the professional capacity, and authority to implement needed change. Positioning the land as context, land as pedagogy, and land as host, offers teachers a substantially more meaningful way of reconciling their practice, and creating a hospitable environment for Indigenous peoples. If land is at the heart of settler colonialism, then perhaps, a return to the land might also be at the heart of its demise.

Curriculum

Canadian curriculums historically have centered and upheld white narratives, while simultaneously discounting and neglecting Indigenous experiences. Very often the narrative that unfolds is one that glorifies the destruction and degradation of Indigenous lands, bodies, and

minds, projecting an image that these acts were, and are, essential to building a nation (Grande, 2015). This system of neglect has, and continues to, further the colonial project by projecting an image of Canada, and its history, as one that is not rooted in racist ideology. Marie Battiste (2013) writes “although efforts have been made to sensitize teachers to part of the cultural and psychological context of Indigenous pupils through in-service programs, little has yet been done to include a realistic portrayal of their knowledge, languages, heritages, histories, or governments into the standard curricula” (p. 31). In this way, it becomes clear how curriculum continues to function in a way that is not hospitable to Indigenous learners, as it fails to authentically incorporate an accurate Indigenous worldview, with most notions of Indigeneity being primarily tokenistic, folkloric, and performative. In this section, the physical curriculum will be examined, with specific attention given to the ways in which outcomes further marginalize and dehumanize Indigenous peoples, with specific attention on what often gets taught, and what does not. Next, specific attention will be given to notions of multiculturalism present within curriculum, and how these policies further harm authentic Indigeneity.

If one needed proof of inherent racism and white supremacy within Canadian curricula, a brief examination of Social Studies outcomes across grade levels offers a disturbing image. In an excerpt taken from Manitoba Education’s Grade 6 Social Studies document (2006), a deeply inhospitable curriculum emerges immediately. Cluster One is titled *Building a Nation*, projecting the illusion that this land wasn’t already home to thriving nations, further positioning Indigenous peoples as First Settlers, rather than First Nations (Battiste, 2013). Within Cluster One, events such as the construction of a national railway are discussed, offering a settler-only view, with no mention of the devastating impact that this project had on Indigenous lands and bodies. Similarly, the creation of a national police force (NWMP/RCMP) is highlighted as a crucial

component of “building a nation”, yet there is no mention of how one of the responsibilities of this newly formed police force was to forcibly remove Indigenous people off of their land to make way for colonial projects (such as the railway), once more presenting the image that Canada has always been a nation built on equality. The omission of these perspectives not only discounts Indigenous people’s lived experiences, but also denies students (both Settler and Indigenous) opportunities for authentic, empathetic, and critical discourse surrounding *true* Canadian history (Wotherspoon, 2014). This type of decolonizing pedagogy is not only of benefit to Indigenous learners, but is exceptionally meaningful to all students (Jabbar & Mirza, 2017).

Understanding curricular outcomes as an intentional omission of Indigenous perspectives is an important component of educational hospitality to understand, especially when seeking to comprehend the ways in which curriculum plays into the much larger phenomenon of settler colonialism occurring on these lands. Sandy Grande (2004) highlights how the omission of Indigenous perspectives from curriculum has manifested in five areas; independence (rather than community-mindedness), achievement (rather than cooperation), humanism (rather than spirituality), detachment from local knowledge, and detachment from nature. This has resulted, Grande contends, in a hyper-capitalist, individualist, and detached population. Dwayne Donald (2012) helps to understand this phenomenon through his Fort Pedagogy model, writing “fort pedagogy works according to an insistence that outsiders must be either incorporated – brought inside to become like the insiders – or excluded in order for progress and development to take place in the necessary ways. These fort teachings and their educational implications cannot be understood in isolation from the colonial takeover process and Eurowestern notions of civilization and development that descend from imperial capitalist ventures” (p. 101). In

recognizing this phenomenon playing-out within Canadian curriculums, it becomes quite easy to observe the ways in which curriculum has, and continues to, enforce an ideology of *insiders* and *outsiders*, with the *outsiders*' voices being intentionally excluded from participation within the curriculum (Donald, 2012). Through this omission, Indigenous calls for redress and justice are ignored, rejected, and denounced because a colonial curriculum has intentionally ignored authentic Indigenous experience, thus creating an exceedingly ignorant general population.

In addition to uncovering what is and is not taught, it is also important to understand *how* content is taught. Understanding teacher's "perfect stranger" positioning (Dion, 2007), it begins to become clear that not only are specific outcomes inhospitable to Indigenous learners, but that for the most part, teachers are ill-equipped to offer meaningful Indigenous content, because they themselves are the product of an education system that did not teach authentic history. Higgins et al. (2015) write that "such a system causes white Euro-Canadian teachers too to become centralized as the curriculum privileges their identities, languages, and epistemologies, as well as settler versions of history. Through false notions of universality and meritocracy, whiteness becomes the norm, the standard, the good, and in the process overrides one's own distinct culture as a recognizable, articulated quality" (p. 26). Through this, it becomes further apparent that not only does *what* is taught (curricular outcomes) need to become culturally relevant, and inclusive, so too does *how* it is taught. This requires that teachers, the majority of whom come from a privileged, settler worldview, develop the capacity to authentically engage their students with Indigeneity. Shauneen Pete (2017) echoes this, noting "when pressed for what they think 'cultural teaching' looks like, they (teachers) often respond simply 'bring in elders' or 'community-based knowledge keepers,' often missing the point that their learners come to the classroom with rich identities which could drive curriculum choice" (p. 62). This is not to say

that incorporating knowledge keepers and elders within one's classroom is wrong; however, these events are often a "one off" and often do little to integrate meaningful inter-cultural understandings or further reconciliation efforts (Battiste, 2013). Rather, teachers have the opportunity to utilize the lived experiences of their students as the driving force behind their pedagogy. This ground-up approach allows students to not only relate to curriculum, but also begin to position themselves in relationship to one another, what Donald (2012) has named "ethical relationality" (p. 104). In this way, the critique of curriculum becomes multi-faceted in the acknowledgment that content (what gets taught) and pedagogy (how it gets taught) must work together to decolonize curriculum.

Multiculturalism and Curriculum

An ever-present manifestation of settler colonialism within curriculum is that of state-imposed policies of multiculturalism. In 1971, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau enacted the world's first ever policy of multiculturalism, seemingly projecting the image of Canada as a country defined by acceptance, respect, and intercultural understanding (the Canadian Encyclopedia, 2011). As this piece of legislation reaches its 50th anniversary, the colonial narratives that underscore it continue to silence and further marginalize Indigenous peoples. This phenomenon can especially be seen in the hallways and classrooms of Canadian schools, necessitating the need for further critique of this enshrined staple of the Canadian settler identity. Multiculturalism was adopted by the Government of Canada in 1971 as a means to further the settler agenda on these lands, placate Francophones in Quebec, and provide a paradigm through which to address the growing cultural diversity across the country (the Canadian Encyclopedia, 2011). In their work, *Diversity ideologies and intergroup relations: An examination of colorblindness and multiculturalism*, Aneeta Rattan and Nalini Ambady (2013) write that "the

ideology of multiculturalism also aims to address the divisiveness associated with group memberships, but by focusing on the positive consequences of group memberships, both for the individual and for society more broadly” (p. 13). Through this, multiculturalism can be viewed as a recognition and a celebration of difference. A policy of multiculturalism attempts to ensure that newcomers to Canada receive support for maintaining crucial pillars of their culture, access to culturally relevant social services, as well as achieve broader acceptance amongst the wider Canadian demographic. Rattan and Ambady go on to write that “in response to this, a multicultural ideal construes group memberships as a positive and valuable source difference between people – something to be celebrated rather than ignored” (p. 13). This excerpt highlights clearly the central tenet of multiculturalism – the projection that difference is clearly noted, celebrated and respected amongst groups.

Multiculturalism places itself in direct opposition to other paradigms that seek to unite citizens of a country. Colorblindness is another mechanism that aims to navigate intercultural relations, with the hope of mitigating conflict between racial and cultural minorities and the dominant white majority. In a paradigm that employs colorblindness, difference is “ignored”, and all people are (supposedly) treated the same, thus discounting the unique ways in which race, culture, religion and privilege position us in relationship to each other. Rattan and Ambady (2013) write of colorblindness, noting “the concept of colorblindness was an organizing principle in ground-breaking efforts to increase equality between African Americans and Whites in American society because this diversity ideology, at the time, stood for equal treatment across groups” (p. 13). Through this lens, a colorblind approach imagines that there are no systemic barriers to success, and presupposes that everyone enters the world on an equal playing field. This approach has clear flaws, and further perpetuates prejudice and racism among dominant

groups in society. Because of this, multiculturalism appears to be a more popular framework through which to create unity amongst a country's diverse population, however, a multicultural approach has proven to do little to further goals of reconciliation, or create hospitable spaces for Indigenous students in schools.

Schools are indeed a microcosm of the larger Canadian society. The ideals, values, and conflicts present in the wider community are made quite obvious inside the walls of a school, and multiculturalism is no different. Schools in Canada have widely adopted multiculturalism ideologies as a way of building relationships, understanding, and respect among students. Events such as "culture days" where students bring in components of their culture to share with their peers are common in schools. These events demonstrate a surface level, performative aspect of culture with the hope that students will become more understanding of their peers if they can learn a little bit more about how they are different, and develop a mutual respect for this difference. These events provide the illusion that Canadian schools, and their surrounding communities are just, inclusive spaces. Unfortunately, however, policies of multiculturalism do little to interrogate the ways in which systems and structures continue to oppress minority groups, and could potentially be furthering misinformation, bias, and settler-colonialism amongst citizens. The group most harmed by multicultural policies in schools are Indigenous people. Through these policies, the Canadian illusion of a just, equitable, and polite society is furthered, and the ongoing colonization of Indigenous spaces can be overlooked. This is also harmful when considering that real instances of racism and injustice across all cultural groups are often overlooked, and are not interrogated, because multiculturalism seeks to uphold the illusion of a unified and diverse Canada.

The relationship between settler colonialism and multiculturalism is quite clear. Multiculturalism as a policy makes possible the further degradation of Indigenous land, languages, and customs, through positioning Indigeneity as one voice among many. The policies of multiculturalism purposefully and tactfully disregard Indigenous contributions, concerns, and violations, and fail to take into account the vast history and experience of Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island. In their work *Settler Identity and Colonialism in 21st Century* Emma Battel Lowman and Adam J. Barker (2015) write of the relationship between settler colonialism and multiculturalism, stating “multiculturalism in Canada has little to say about relationships to land and place” (p. 75). This excerpt eloquently highlights the central flaw in multiculturalism, this being that land is not regarded as a crucial component, thus further silencing Indigenous peoples in Canada. As mentioned earlier, Lowman and Barker write that “when Indigenous peoples are positioned simply as another ethnic or cultural group meriting the same rights as all other Canadians under the Charter and Multiculturalism Act, then Indigenous peoples’ only means of redress for colonial harms is through the elected governments, courts, and other institutions of the settler society. As such, Indigenous peoples’ own systems are treated as invalid, and Indigenous sovereignty is subsumed under the state” (p. 75). In this way, multiculturalism further forces Indigenous peoples to navigate colonial systems that are innately and directly in contrast to their unique positioning and worldview. An institution where this unjust phenomenon clearly is at work is within the education system. Lowman and Barker (2015) go on to note how policies of multiculturalism do little to eliminate racism directed toward Indigenous people, writing “multiculturalism that does not recognize the difference between racism deployed against Indigenous people in order to dispossess them of the land, eliminate Indigenous identity, and disappear them as autonomous nations, and racism deployed against immigrants and minority

populations in order to ‘discipline’ them and uphold white supremacy, risks reinforcing settler colonialism through a flattened, colonialism-blind notion of equality” (p. 75). In this way, multiculturalism fails to combat racism directed towards Indigenous people, because the racism directed at them is vastly different than the type of racism directed toward newcomer Canadians. Because of this, policies of multiculturalism perpetuate further harm to Indigenous communities in Canada, and ignore the explicit racism directed at Indigenous people.

One need only step foot into a school to truly see multiculturalism at work. Although this projection of schools as vibrant, diverse, and accepting communities appears to be ideal, they are harmful to Indigenous students. Multiculturalism in schools is romanticized and idealized in a way that presents culture as a folkloric projection or performance, and fails to interrogate the ways in which oppressed groups are marginalized and marked by racism. By the same token, the policies of multiculturalism that continue to harm and marginalize BIPOC populations across Canada also have detrimental effects on Indigenous students navigating an exceedingly inhospitable education system. In her critique, Verna St. Denis (2011) argues that policies of multiculturalism do little to bring forth reconciliation in schools. In fact, St. Denis writes that “by inciting multiculturalism, public schools effectively limit meaningful incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives into public schools” (p. 307). This excerpt outlines the central critique that St. Denis brings forward, that policies of multiculturalism in fact work against the incorporation of meaningful Indigenous pedagogies across the curriculum. St. Denis also notes how teachers working to create more equitable spaces for Indigenous students are often faced with comments that sound something like “Aboriginal people are not the only people here” (p. 306). Considering this, it is quite clear to see the ways in which settler colonialism employs

policies of multiculturalism to further displace and marginalize Indigenous peoples across systems and institutions.

St. Denis (2011) writes of main reasons why multiculturalism is an ineffective, colonial structure that does not bring forth unity. It is argued that multiculturalism does not bring about intercultural understanding, but division through intensifying misunderstandings. It is also regressive and performative (St. Denis, 2011). This overall critique takes into account the experience of many cultural groups, not only Indigenous. St. Denis goes on to write that “whether through anti-racism or multiculturalism, when colonialism in Canada is left unaddressed, racialized ethnic immigrants are too easily positioned as innocent” (p. 311). Through this, St. Denis is contesting the claims made in Rattan and Amabady’s (2013) work that insinuated that multiculturalism is a relatively effective ideology. This may be accurate when comparing multiculturalism and colorblindness however, when examining multiculturalism in isolation, and through a lens of hospitality, it is clear that other, Indigenous-lead ideologies must be explored in Canadian contexts, across all systems and institutions. Simpson (2014) echoes this, writing “Nishnaabeg must stop looking for legitimacy within the colonizer’s education system and return to valuing and recognizing our individual and collective intelligence on its own merits and on our own terms” (p. 22). Hospitality for Indigenous learners within the curriculum cannot be achieved through using a multicultural ideology, but rather, must come from Indigenous people themselves.

In considering multiculturalism in schools St. Denis (2011) writes that “multiculturalism in schools suggests that Aboriginal content and perspectives are to be regarded as merely one perspective among many” (p. 313). This positioning is extremely problematic, in that it fails to take into the unique histories of Indigenous people on Turtle Island, and the ongoing systems that

continue to oppress their existence. St. Denis expands this argument, writing “multiculturalism in schools makes it possible for non-Aboriginal teachers and schools to trivialize Aboriginal content and perspectives, and at the same time believe that they are becoming more inclusive and respectful” (p. 313). Through this, St. Denis is recognizing that the ways in which teachers and schools celebrate multiculturalism is very often tokenizing, inaccurate, and indirectly racist to Indigenous people. Indeed, these “recognitions” of Indigeneity in schools are very frequently poorly researched, inaccurate, and are done without the consultation of any Indigenous people. In her book *Decolonizing Education*, Marie Battiste (2013) writes of this phenomenon, noting “the ‘add and stir’ model of bringing Aboriginal education into the curricula, environment, and teaching practices has not achieved the needed change, but rather continues to sustain the superiority of Eurocentric knowledge and processes” (p. 28). What Battiste is noting through this is exactly what St. Denis argues as well: an intended consequence of multiculturalism in schools is the further relegation of accurate and authentic Indigenous pedagogies. In presenting Indigeneity in this way, teachers indirectly teach that Indigenous cultures are something of the past, and fail to take an antiracist or decolonizing approach that would foster critical thinking within their students. St. Denis (2011) highlights this again when she writes “the folklorization of multiculturalism and culture results in public schools not only trivializing Aboriginal content and perspectives, but also conflating multiculturalism with Aboriginal education” (p. 314) This presents schools as well as educators with a critical question when presenting Indigeneity in classrooms, and it is a question of authenticity. There is a large distinction to be made between authentic Indigenous education, and education that presents as Indigenous, but is really only a performative and folkloric mirage of Indigeneity. In presenting Indigenous perspectives in this

way, teachers are perpetuating settler colonialism on these lands by positioning Indigeneity as “arts and crafts”, while still believing they are creating equitable spaces in their classrooms.

The implications for practice in schools are clear, yet uncomfortable. While many would prefer to celebrate how Canada has embraced multiculturalism, rather than colorblindness as an ideology, these closely held beliefs must be challenged, specifically within school settings. St. Denis underscores this, writing “if we want success for Aboriginal students in public schools, perhaps our schools and educational institutions must be committed to challenging the Canadian fantasy expressed by Harper, when he made the statement that Canada does not have a history of colonialism” (p. 315). This calls upon teachers to resist pressures to present Indigenous perspectives in tokenistic and performative ways, and truly reflect on what is being taught, and further, *how* it is being taught. Teachers are called upon to recognize the difference between authentic Indigenous education, and performative representations of Indigenous cultures. In addition to this, St. Denis also implies that teachers, administrators, and policy makers must recognize that if Canada is to move toward true reconciliation, difficult lessons and hard conversations must occur. Canadian institutions must move away from the norm that presents Canada as a country without racism, injustice or harm, and toward one that recognizes that harms of the past, reflects on the ways in which these harms are being carried out today, and truly moves forward with Indigenous peoples in a nation-to-nation relationship. These implications for practice are also directly in line with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s *Calls to Action*. Thus, the transition away from multicultural ideals will not only be of benefit to Indigenous learners, but indeed, to all students navigating a colonial school system.

Social Relations

Teacher and Student

Just as Kohn (2006), and Brendtro et al. (2002) have highlighted, a sense of community is fundamental and foundational in fostering a sense of belonging and hospitality within learning spaces. This relatively recent understanding within Western education has also raised the important discussion around who is responsible for creating a welcoming, hospitable space. Utilizing Ruitenberg's (2011a) framework of hospitality, it becomes clear that it is the responsibility of individual teachers to create hospitable learning environments for their students, including students who they have yet to meet. Given this understanding, it would make sense that pre-service teacher training programs would be adequately preparing future teachers to develop some level of cultural capacity in order to build strong relations with their students. Unfortunately, in many instances pre-service teachers are ill-equipped to provide a sense of hospitality for Indigenous students, or are outright hostile towards the notion of unpacking colonialism, and its manifestations within educational institutions. Indigenous students have expressed a desire to form deeper connections with their teachers, noting how there are cultural barriers that seem to inhibit meaningful relations. Lee and Cerecer (2010) write of this in their work *(Re)Claiming Native Youth Knowledge: Engaging in Socio-culturally Responsive Teaching and Relationships*, highlighting "students voiced an interest in forming stronger and closer relationships with the teachers and other adults. Students wished adults would talk to them and get to know them as a method of building community" (p. 203) This excerpt underscores the need for deeper cultural understanding among teachers so that they are better able to relate to Indigenous students in their classrooms. To understand this critique, it becomes important to

develop an understanding of pre-service teacher training, and where it may be falling short in regard to cultural understandings and interactions with indigeneity.

Despite repeated requests for formal, required Indigenous education courses taught to pre-service teachers (*Truth and Reconciliation, 2015*), many teachers enter the profession with little to no understanding of the local Indigenous cultures on the very lands that they are teaching on. Sandy Grande (2015) writes that “also, programs in mainstream colleges and universities that prepare educators are based on certification standards with little room for critical theory, critical pedagogy, and Indigenous knowledge. The purpose of education remains to assimilate Indigenous peoples into the mainstream without serious consideration to cultural, linguistic, values, and the devastating and disrespectful treatment of Indigenous peoples since colonization” (p. 38). Because of this, teachers are unable to meet the unique needs of Indigenous students in their classrooms, and end up assuming the “perfect stranger” position that Dion (2007) has put forward. When a teacher assumes the role of “perfect stranger” due to lack of formal education on the topics of race, cultural understandings, privilege, and Indigeneity, opportunities for deficit narratives become commonplace. Terry M. Pollack (2012) highlights the phenomenon that many teachers fall into when they are starting their careers, recalling many instances of informal *teacher talk* that reinforced many deficit beliefs. Pollack notes:

Although their stories may not explicitly state overt racist views, they clearly reveal an uncritical, taken-for-granted acceptance of historically based systems of social, economic, and educational inequalities and the failure to see how these structural inequalities affect school outcomes for students of color (p. 95).

More needs to be done in order for teachers entering the teaching profession to possess the required level of cultural competency in order to create and maintain ethical, hospitable spaces for Indigenous learners.

In addition to teachers needing appropriate professional development and pre-service training on Indigenous content, they also need to remain open to accepting new knowledges and reflecting on their own privilege (St. Denis & Schick, 2003). This remains a challenge across many pre-service teacher training programs upon the implementation of required Indigenous education courses. In Lilach Marom's (2016) work that outlines her experiences with reconciliation as a newcomer to Canada, educators are further called to be critical of multicultural policies. She writes that "Canada, the country that symbolizes multiculturalism in both policy and practice, is actually using it as a mechanism to ignore the systemic operation of racism and colonialism at the structural and institutional levels" (p. 27). Marom recommends that institutions, particularly schools, practice *critical multiculturalism*, which is a way to challenge power relations and inequalities, as well as the growing disparities between white settlers and oppressed minorities (Marom, 2016). Teachers can draw large implications from the concept of critical multiculturalism as it relates to school, divisional, and provincial policies put in place. Critical dialogue and thoughtful reflection are key for educators who seek to ensure that all voices, not just the privileged majority are being heard in their places of learning. Marom (2016) draws on the importance of preservice teacher education to combat white settler resentment to Indigenous pedagogies and narratives. Marom notes that when a mandatory "Aboriginal Education in Canada" course was offered to University of British Columbia teacher candidates, there was extensive resistance experienced (Marom, 2016). She argues that "many Canadians are not informed about or engaged with Indigenous knowledges, perspectives, or political struggles;

the same is true of many teachers and teacher candidates” (Marom, 2016, p. 29). Likewise, most preservice teachers belong to the privileged majority, and are willfully ignorant to the plight of their Indigenous neighbours, and when confronted with their own privilege, push back and resist. This is an unfortunate phenomenon, which makes it increasingly difficult to ensure that Indigenous narratives are being honoured in school settings across Canada. Marom points out that this is due to “settlers taking on an innocent position that allows them to overlook the distinct form of settler colonialism” (p. 32). Marom makes it clear that if the education system is to undergo a paradigm shift, pre-service teacher education must be a priority. This is consistent with the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions’ final report that highlights teacher-candidate education as a priority on the path to reconciliation.

In order for teachers to create a truly hospitable classroom environment for Indigenous learners, they first must become culturally competent, and self-aware of their own positioning as educators. Without this understanding, teachers will enter their classrooms failing to understand how privilege places us in relation to one another (Donald, 2012). Without this crucial component of critical pedagogy and decolonizing practice, the classroom environment will be one that is not truly hospitable to Indigenous learners, as it is one predicated on white, capitalist, privileged norms. Galla and Holmes (2020) write of this, highlighting that “education in the context of settler colonialism carries a long legacy of violence (physical, emotional, spiritual, cognitive/intellectual) for Indigenous peoples, with residential/boarding schools experienced as part of the genocidal practices of the US and Canada at the centre of intergenerational trauma. When cognitive, intellectual violences and macro/microaggressions are encountered again in new contexts of education, the impact is compounded, as layers of colonizing sediment are freshly deposited on thick layers of traumatic experiences and histories of schooling” (p. 55). In order to

not perpetuate further harm, it is the responsibility of teachers, and those who are responsible for their professional development to develop a critical awareness so that their classroom spaces can become welcoming, inclusive, and hospitable to Indigenous students.

Peer Relations

The relationship that teachers have with their students is a critical component of creating hospitable classrooms, especially with marginalized and racialized youth (Ruitenber, 2011a). Yet, equally as important, are the relationships that occur amongst peers in a school, or classroom setting. Once more, Ruitenber (2011b) as well as Kohn (2006) would contend that it is the responsibility of teachers to create environments in which supportive, nurturing, and respectful relationships can blossom amongst students themselves. In their book *Teaching Each Other: Nehinew Concepts and Indigenous Pedagogies*, Goulet and Goulet (2014) write of the importance of interpersonal relationships amongst students in creating welcoming, hospitable spaces, noting “teachers can connect individual students to the class in a way that creates a social system that acknowledges and respects the students’ sociocultural and ethnocultural situation” (p. 113). This underscores the importance of creating a strong classroom community (Kohn, 2006) that is grounded in intercultural understanding. However, this ideal becomes far more challenging when Indigeneity is often tokenized and presented in performative, folkloric ways, with many settler students viewing Indigenous peoples as a monolithic culture of the past, rather than a present, changing, and current culture (Higgins et al., 2015). Goulet and Goulet go on to note that “effective teachers of Indigenous students teach for the intellectual growth of the children, but not in isolation from the emotional, social, and spiritual development of students” (p. 120). Acknowledging the social development of students as paramount to a holistic education is essential, and very much in-line with Indigenous worldviews on relationality (Grande, 2015).

Unfortunately, relationality and the fostering of mutually respectful relationships does not seem to be a goal in a hyper-capitalist, colonial education. Through settler colonialism, Individualism has reigned superior. Grande (2015) writes of this, arguing “children are expected to be self-reliant, to complete school tasks on their own, and accept personal responsibility for their own behavior. The value of independence is so highly regarded that students themselves become suspicious of cooperative efforts as potential impediments to their own academic achievement and personal success” (p. 100). When this is paired with ignorant, racist attitudes, and a colonial infrastructure, Indigenous students become further marginalized from their peers, making the possibility of forming strong interpersonal peer relationships all the more challenging, all while reinforcing racist deficit narratives (Pollack, 2012). This critique would seem to necessitate the need for both Indigenous student groups, where Indigenous students were able to connect with each other, as well as far more implementation of intercultural understandings, with a strong understanding of Indigeneity (Goulet & Goulet, 2014). Many schools have begun to adopt such programs with varying degrees of success, however, there continues to be a need for further implementation of social supports for Indigenous students in schools, as well as individual classrooms.

Many initiatives have been studied that place Indigenous students in leadership roles in schools, positioning them as cultural teachers for their peers. The results of these studies have been extremely successful, with many schools continuing the implemented programming. In one study S. Lopreseti et al. (2020) implemented an Indigenous youth mentorship program, where Indigenous high school students mentored Indigenous elementary students, with a specific focus on health and culturally relevant activities. One of the main takeaways of their study was the importance of relationships amongst peers, they write “all participants stated the importance of

building relationships to facilitate program delivery” (p. 5). This excerpt once more indicates the necessity of first forming strong interpersonal relationships before aiming to meet objectives, whether they be related to health or curriculum. S. Lopreseti et al. (2020) go on to note that “the relationships formed in the program created a sense of belonging for participants, sustaining enrollment of both youth mentors and mentees” (p. 5). Once more highlighting the impact that relationships among peers has on enrollment. In another study in which high school students were once again positioned as mentors, offering cultural teachings to younger students (both settler and Indigenous) in their schools, the necessity for relationality became apparent. M. Coyne-Foresi et al. (2019) write that “the current study demonstrated that culturally relevant school-based peer mentoring programs can encourage connection to school, specifically through group affiliation and improved peer relationships” (p. 545). These studies have uncovered what Indigenous people have always known; that relationships are foundational and inseparable from education (Stonechild, 2020), a notion that the western academy is just now beginning to understand.

Should hospitality be said to have taken place in schools, the literature highlights the need for both curricular, spatial, and relational reform. In reforming the pedagogies, ontologies and epistemologies of schooling to become more Indigenized, teachers and policy makers are both furthering reconciliation efforts, while simultaneously creating hospitable spaces for Indigenous and settler students alike. In so doing, the system of schooling can be one that centers Indigenous knowledge, increases enrollment and retention, and become places of ethical, responsible, and respectful relationships between settlers and Indigenous people.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter will provide a detailed overview of the methodological framework used, the methods chosen, as well as ethical dimensions that are inherent within this study. I begin with a general discussion around qualitative research and Indigenous research methods, with a specific focus on dialogic social inquiry as a potential approach to the methodological process, and why this is an ethical approach to utilize for a project centered on notions of hospitality. Lastly, in this chapter I will provide a description of the research practices and premises that will be embraced, including the study participants, data collection, ethics, researcher's positioning, credibility, and reliability, as well as data analysis.

In considering the many approaches available within qualitative research, a tension has emerged within this project. Utilizing a ready-made, prescribed, euro-american methodological process feels antithetical to the underlying goals of this research project. As this inquiry explores the extent to which Indigenous students were able to adapt and alter their school experiences, arriving with a pre-set agenda would run counter to the overall aims of this study. There also remains the demands of academia, which in some ways inhibits the researcher's ability to develop a research process that develops concurrently and organically with participants. It is from this tension that I reflect on my positioning as an outsider to the group of participants, as well as the participants themselves, and context of the inquiry. It is from this understanding that my methodology is one that utilizes both Indigenous and dialogic inquiry methodologies to attempt to understand the unique phenomena at play in Canadian schools. I first utilize the work of Creswell and Creswell (2018) to understand the demands and requirements of qualitative research, followed by an overview of how Indigenous and dialogic methodologies might be situated within this approach.

This study aims to explore the social, systemic, and individual factors that either hinder or support the extent to which Indigenous students experience hospitality within the K-12 public-school system, while also revealing barriers to hospitality and belonging within school ecologies.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework guiding this study is a qualitative inquiry relying on semi-structured interviews and interpretive data analysis that are inclusive of both Western and Indigenous approaches. In terms of Western approaches, I rely on the work of Creswell & Creswell (2018), and Braun and Clarke (2006) utilizing these scholars' unique approaches to data interpretation and analysis. In terms of Indigenous approaches, I rely on the work of Kovach (2021) and Wilson (2008), drawing specific foci to the ways in which data collection may be done so that it is predicated on relationality, reciprocity, and trust.

The conceptual framework is a combination of qualitative inquiry, namely semi-structured interviews, and dialogic inquiry inclusive of Indigenous perspectives and epistemologies. In this way, this conceptual framework utilizes both Western and Indigenous worldviews to achieve its purpose. The merging of two approaches to research has been referred to as *bricolage*, stemming from the French expression which symbolizes craftspeople who creatively use materials left from other projects to create something new and original (Rogers, 2012). Within this study, the symbolism of a bricoleur has clear potential implications and benefits. Rogers (2012) writes that bricolage research is simultaneously critical, multi-perspectival, and multi-theoretical. Rogers goes on to note that bricolage research "signifies approaches that examine phenomena from multiple, and sometimes competing, theoretical and methodological perspectives" (p. 1). Given the historical and contemporary contexts that this study finds itself in, utilizing a nuanced approach to the inquiry process, as highlighted within

bricolage research, offers a multitude of possibilities for new understandings and knowledges to be revealed and generated through this process. Kellner (1999) writes how a multi-perspective approach such as bricolage not only create possibilities for knowledge creation, but also create opportunities for political action. Given the political nature of this study, employing multiple philosophies and epistemologies to the research process will help to ensure that the overarching purpose of the study is achieved with the greatest success possible.

This study is qualitative in nature, adopting qualitative research methodologies, Indigenous methodologies as well as being inspired by dialogic social inquiry as a foundational approach to generating data to better understand how Indigenous students and recent graduates in Winnipeg experience(d) educational hospitality in their school ecologies. This framework draws heavily upon the works of Margaret Kovach (2021) and Shawn Wilson (2008), utilizing their extensive knowledge of Indigenous research methodologies as a foundational tenet of this process. Specifically, the approaches used to gather data utilized the recommendations made by both Kovach and Wilson as they relate to establishing relationality as central tenets of the research process. Further, the use of story as a means to gain a deep insight into the lived experiences, interpretations, and feelings of Indigenous youth navigating the school system served as a key component within this research project, and one that is inextricably tied to that of an Indigenous episteme.

Creswell & Creswell (2018) write about qualitative research, noting that “qualitative research is interpretive research; the inquirer is typically involved in a sustained and intensive experience with participants” (p. 183). A qualitative approach to research is required when studying a social phenomenon such as the experience of Indigenous students navigating (in)hospitable spaces, relations, and pedagogies within the school system. Creswell & Creswell

(2018) also note that “qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 4). This excerpt once more necessitates the need for this philosophical approach to research, as this study is aiming to understand the experience of a social problem that exists within school settings. Using a qualitative approach to study Indigenous understandings and conceptualizations of hospitality in schools provided me the opportunity to work far more in-depth with subject matter, as well as develop relationality with participants, which I believe to be key to this work. Given the complexity and historically rooted racism inherent within this topic, the only way to ensure that this important area is addressed adequately is to engage in a sustained and intensive (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) relationship with the participants involved in the study. Listening to and attempting to understand the experiences and stories of Indigenous high school students (past and present) navigating the education system allowed me to gain valuable insight into the ways in which schools create (or do not) a sense of hospitality for Indigenous youth. In listening to, attempting to understand, and contextualizing these experiences, elements that contribute to, or inhibit a sense of hospitality in schools emerged. Once these elements (themes) have been uncovered, implications for educators, administrators, policy makers, and scholars will be further understood.

Indigenous Methodologies and Relationality

Going into this study, it would feel unethical, and further, redundant to utilize a primarily European methodology. In opposition to this approach, Indigenous methodologies offer a holistic, relational method to qualitative research that offer many bridges to traditional understandings of epistemology. Margaret Kovach (2021) writes of the history of research done *on* Indigenous people, noting “positivist studies of Indigenous peoples reveal an epidemic of

researching Indigenous cultures from the outside by the outside” (p. 39). It is in this understanding that as a researcher, I am forced to confront the history of qualitative research and White epistemologies forced onto Indigenous people. Given this, I aim to find a nuanced, workable blend between the type of qualitative research popularized by scholars such as Creswell & Creswell (2014), and that of Indigenous methodologies. In approaching research in this way, it is my hope that reconciliation – two nations and worldviews learning from and *with* each other – may be reflected in the methodologies, and thus, implications uncovered in the words and stories of participants.

The ways in which Indigenous and European methodologies differ are multifold, symbolic of the ways in which Indigenous and European worldviews are also diametrically opposed (Stonechild, 2020). Kovach (2021) writes of this, highlighting that “there is an epistemological difference between Western and Indigenous thought, and subsequently a need for both Western and Indigenous methodologies. Indigenous methodologies offer a systematic but different approach to knowledge construction and are prompting Western institutions to expand the notion of what counts as knowledge” (p. 40). For Kovach, worldview and methodology are tied. This being said, there remain opportunities for connection, as seemingly disparate as these two approaches may seem.

Inherent within an Indigenous approach to research is the notion of relationality – the understanding that in order to learn from another being, a strong sense of trust, respect, and humility must be paramount. It is in this central tenet of an Indigenous approach that European and Indigenous epistemologies may be bridged. Kovach (2021) notes the necessity for relationality when she writes “researchers need to ‘do the work’ of honouring place and being in relationship with the research community regardless of whether it is urban or rural. At the end of

the day, it's all about relationships" (p. 52). In this approach, the relationship between researcher and participant, but also between researcher and *place* become key. This is also a central tenet of a dialogical inquiry approach. This understanding offers an opportunity for both Indigenous and European methodologies to find a balance within the research project. Kovach (2021) goes on to note that "the relational possibilities of interpretive research are a strong bridge for appreciating Indigenous methodologies" (p. 52). Given this information, as well as the context of this study, the relational component inherent within Indigenous epistemologies may be reconciled with that of European methodologies. Because of this, being informed by a dialogic inquiry approach becomes a clear "common ground", as it is centered in the relationships occurring within the living ecology being studied.

Indigenous Methodologies and the Use of Story

Both Kovach (2021) and Wilson (2008) examine how the use of story may be utilized within an Indigenous approach to research to help the researcher better understand the phenomenon being uncovered. Utilizing story to understand phenomena provides the researcher with an immensely in-depth view of the topic of investigation. Kovach writes that "if research is about learning and discovery, so as to enhance the well-being of the Earth's inhabitants, then story is research. Story provides insight from observations, experience, interactions, and intuitions that assist in developing a theory about a phenomenon" (p. 184). In the context of this study, the use of story is honoured and utilized in instances where participants feel comfortable sharing their stories.

In order to approach the gathering of story in a good way, my first goal as a researcher was to establish a strong sense of trust amongst myself and participants. Kovach writes that "contemplated within an Indigenous episteme and applied to Indigenous methodologies,

collecting data is the gifting of another's story to a researcher: data are more than things; they are living connections animated through the use of story" (p. 179). In viewing one's story as a *gift*, the researcher becomes obligated to ensure that the words, experiences, and knowledges that have been gifted are consistently honoured, protected, and cherished. It is my hope that through establishing relationality before the study, a sense of trust emerged so that participants felt safe in sharing their stories. Kovach writes of the necessity for trust noting that "given the egregious past research practices in Indigenous communities, earning trust is critical and may take time" (p. 182) she then goes on to underscore this, writing "for story to surface, there must be trust" (p. 182). It is in this understanding that I was compelled to ensure that a sense of trust amongst group members developed before the research process began.

Utilizing story to attempt to understand phenomena is an approach that is also very much coherent within a dialogic approach to research. Rather than taking one's words and breaking them apart, thus decontextualizing them, relationality compels the researcher to regard the use of story as a gift that has been given within the context of relationship. Wilson (2008) has noted that in breaking apart participants' words, the researcher is actually destroying all of the relationships that surround it. This notion is very much in alignment with a dialogic approach, which understands the ethical obligation that a researcher has in honouring the words and stories of participants. Regarding these words as a gift reinforces the sacredness of this process. This sentiment is echoed by Kovach (2021) who writes that "but listening intently to one another's stories, as a method of knowing, elevates the research from an extractive exercise serving the fragmentation of knowledge to a holistic endeavour that situates research firmly within the nest of relationship" (p. 183). This once more necessitates the researcher to resist dividing the gift of story into small pieces, thus honouring the relationship base that allowed the story to surface.

Rather than formal “interviews”, an Indigenous approach encourages participants to share their stories and understandings in relation to a question or a prompt (Kovach, 2021). This elasticity not only makes space for organic, flexible dialogue, but also makes it possible for unforeseen findings, interpretations, or understandings to emerge, as participants may take the conversation in an unanticipated direction. Kovach (2021) writes of this, stating “it [research] becomes less about research participants responding to research questions and more about participants sharing their stories in relation to the question” (p. 190). This approach maintains fluidity and malleability, yet also remains grounded in the overall research question(s) being asked. Allowing participants to respond through story, or in a way that feels comfortable for them allows the researcher to get a far more nuanced, contextualized, and broader understanding of the phenomena being studied.

Utilizing a Dialogic Social Inquiry Approach to Understand a Phenomenon

Utilizing a dialogic social inquiry approach as a potential means to invite the lived experiences of Indigenous youth appears to be an ethical, anti-colonial, and effective approach in the unique context of this inquiry. Given that this study utilized a bricolage approach to research, in addition to Indigenous relationality and storytelling, as well as qualitative thematic analysis, dialogic inquiry serves as a relevant framework to inform the inquiry process. In their book *Dialogic Social Inquiry: Qualitative Research Without a Methodological Map*, Jan N. DeFehr, Cynthia Loreto Sosa Infante, and Christian Israel Lizama Valladares (2021) highlight that dialogic inquiry can be understood as an organic, malleable, and participant-driven approach to better understanding a specific social phenomenon. In the context of this research, this approach is further necessitated by the need to do no further harm to an already marginalized group. DeFehr et al. (2021) write that “each dialogic inquiry process emerges from the living, changing

social ecology at the center of each inquiry project, whereas methodologically driven research is ready-made elsewhere. When the living research context shifts and develops, presenting unanticipated constraints or possibilities, dialogic inquiry process recalibrates accordingly” (p. 3). Arriving as a researcher with a pre-set understanding of how and what will guide the process seems antithetical to an authentic anticolonial research process, while simultaneously imposing primarily white epistemologies and ontologies onto research participants. DeFehr et al. Write on the back cover of their book:

When produced outside of its sites of application, methodology may be incoherent with participant realities and rationalities; it may displace local traditions of inquiry. As a non-living device, methodology cannot sense the emergence of unanticipated changes, constraints and possibilities. Led by agendas produced elsewhere, researchers may be unanswerable to prompts and invitations found only within the research context itself

In the routine application of European systematic methodologies made by others in other locations in time and place, unchallenged social structures may be more likely to remain intact, negating the potential for the study to bring about intended social change. DeFehr et al. (2021) write that “we are concerned that the routine activities of academic institutions, such as research, commonly function to merely reflect and reinforce the unjust social order in our world” (p. 3). This concern can be addressed by adopting a living, changing, and adaptive approach to qualitative research.

DeFehr et al. (2021) write that “genuine dialogic inquiry is inherently generative and transformative” (p. 70), then go on to quote the late communications scholar, John Shotter, noting that “something very special occurs when two or more living beings meet and begin to *respond to each other*” (p. 70). Given the need for this work to become transformative in both

policy and practice, a dialogic inquiry approach avoids imposing presupposed settler ideals or activities upon participants, but rather actively tries to understand *with* them the phenomena at the centre of the research project. In this context, a dialogic approach requires the researcher to establish relationality (Donald, 2012) with participants, fostering a sense of trust and belonging before, during, and after the research process. DeFehr et al. (2021) write that “when inquiry participants collaboratively shape both content and process, qualitative research can become participant-driven, not merely participatory” (p. 4). In this way, it is my hope that participants in this study see themselves in the implications, will not have their words subjected to interpretive tactics conducted by an outsider, and will be actively engaged in the entire research process as the active producers of that process. Through this process, the researcher maintains adaptability, adjusting to the needs and understandings of participants. As a classroom teacher, this approach is central to my daily pedagogy, while also being effective, socially-just, and academically sound.

In the context of this study, a dialogic approach first took the form of developing a respectful relationship with participants. This was done in the initial interaction, where research goals and objectives were discussed. Once ethical relationality (Donald, 2012) was established, I met with individuals to engage in a conversation surrounding the central topics of this study and their potential roles within it. These meetings first began as informal opportunities for (re)connection, as well as platforms to inform participants on the goals for our time together, potential research questions, as well as consent procedures. Margaret Kovach (2021) has referred to these early conversations as a “pre-interview cup of tea” (p. 191) this rather informal time for connection was at times accompanied by food. Shaun Wilson (2008) highlights the importance

of establishing this type of relationality early on in the research process, noting how gathering ought to be accompanied by food, as well as a gift such as tobacco, or food.

As dialogue unfolded and a broader understanding of phenomena emerged, the use of story via dialogic social inquiry allowed me opportunities to engage with content in a way that would not have been possible with presupposed, Eurocentric methodologies. Christian Lizama Valladares (2021) write that “in dialogic inquiry, there is no one moment of data collection that serves as a static chalkboard for analysis. Instead the process and outcomes are one and the same. New meanings and possibilities emerge as the dialogue continues” (p. 46). It is through this dialogic process that an authentic account of Indigenous perceptions of hospitality within schools can be adequately understood, and utilized to bring forth wider attention and transformation to this important area.

Within the context of working with Indigenous participants, it would feel hierarchical to arrive with a pre-determined, set-in-stone methodology, that is not rooted in the unique social ecology of the group. Cree Scholar Shawn Wilson (2008) notes that conventional research methodology inevitably reflects bias; he suggests that methodologies made elsewhere mean that the research agenda is determined outside of the community being studied. DeFehr et al. (2021) echoes this sentiment, noting how often qualitative methods “reflect their sociopolitical contexts of origin” (p. 11). Within this approach are components inherent within Indigenous philosophies such as reciprocity, relationality, and mutual respect. As such, a dialogic approach appears to be one of the most ethical means to inform the politically-charged phenomena of Indigenous student experiences in schools. Further, as a researcher I must be consistently reminded of the history of research within Indigenous communities, and the devastating legacy that remains today. Absolon & Willett (2005) write that “in many Aboriginal communities, the very word ‘research’ makes

our skin crawl as we remember the way our knowledge has been misrepresented and extracted. The word ‘research’ evokes images of ethnographers, missionaries, explorers, and social scientists voyeuristically noting their observations and labelling Indigenous peoples as hedonistic, barbaric, and savage” (p. 97). Absolon & Willett (2005) go on to note that “the word ‘research’ has too much racist and colonial baggage attached to it to be used in an Indigenous context” (p. 97). It is in this understanding that I feel ethically obliged to utilize a dialogic social inquiry approach so as to not reinforce historical colonial epistemologies on a racialized group that is living at the margins of Canadian society. I am drawn to the spirit and intent of a dialogic approach, as it allowed me the opportunity to engage with participants in a way that was relevant to their personal lives and experiences, without necessitating the need to also come from their specific worldview myself. Given my positioning as both an insider and an outsider to the participants in this study, being informed by a dialogic approach reminded me to shift, alter, and recalibrate when the needs of participants warranted so.

Research Methods

Creating and Maintaining a Hospitable Research Community

In keeping with the purpose, intent, and theoretical framework that guides this study, creating and maintaining a sense of hospitality for participants throughout the research process was of vital importance to me. As a classroom teacher, I begin this process every September with my students, and am acutely aware of the need to not only build community, but maintain it throughout the year as well. For this reason, I first aimed to introduce myself, where I am from (both ancestrally as well as practically), and offer participants snacks and tea. Through informal conversations, I aimed to position myself as someone who is trustworthy, kind, and who entered into the study as a fierce ally. In these initial interactions, I let participants know the purpose of

the study, and their potential role within it, letting them know they are able to adjust or leave their position in the study at any point. I also informed participants that the research process is designed to be malleable by them, and that they were free to respond (or not) in any way that feels comfortable for them.

After our time together was finished, I remained in contact with participants through my University of Manitoba email, informing them of the prospective themes that emerged from our time together. At this stage, I encouraged participants to respond to the proposed themes, ensuring that they were agreeable to them. Further, upon positioning the words and stories of participants within literature, I offered portions of analysis and gave participants a couple of weeks to respond; if they didn't respond, I assumed that my analysis was agreeable to them. It was my hope that through constant care and attention, our research community could be one that not only discusses hospitality as an abstract concept, but actively lives it throughout the research relationship.

Data Collection Procedures

Utilizing Kovach's (2021) recommendations for engaging in research with Indigenous communities, I first established a strong sense of trust and rapport with participants. Kovach notes how, if the researcher is viewed as a stranger to the group, this relationship may take time to form. In this understanding, and in the spirit of dialogic social inquiry, I did not enter into the space of participants with a pre-set timeline or agenda for the sharing process. Keeping in mind that this project is informed by a dialogic inquiry approach, I entered into this process understanding that the participants involved may have introduced me to a very different agenda, and entering into the process with reflexivity in mind was fundamental.

Recruitment

For my first step, I made contact with the Indigenous student success teachers in Pembina Trails School Division, as well as leaders of the University of Winnipeg's Indigenous Student Centre. I also was able to create short statements advertising this study, which were posted in student newsletters.

To gain access and establish trust and relationality with participants, I first received approval from the Research Ethics Board. Within this application, I outlined the factors present within this study that ensure trust and rapport between researcher and participants is established. I was sure to make participants aware of my research topic, and allow them to share their thoughts, feelings, and reactions to the topic. This step is a critical component of building relationality and trust, as providing transparency as well as reciprocity are central tenets of this research project. Because of this, the thoughts and ideas shared at this stage of the research process were not used for data collection. It is at this time that we began to develop a living, changing agenda that was reflective of the needs and values of the group.

Informed Consent

In order to ensure that the recruitment of this study was ethically sound, I first made contact with the Indigenous Student Success team in Pembina Trails School Division, as well as the appropriate administrators of Pembina Trails Schools division. Teachers in a student support team have the unique positioning of working with multiple students across a variety of grade levels and schools, giving them distinctive insight into potential participants for this study. Upon receiving the names of potential participants, I approached students via email and offered them a detailed explanation of this study's objectives, purpose, and overall goals, as well as directed them to my University of Manitoba email address for our primary mode of communication. I also outlined the potential risks and benefits to participating in this study, and offered to meet

and discuss the questions and concerns that the participants had directly. This stage was done in collaboration with teachers and administrators in Pembina Trails School Division. Next, I explained to participants that they may leave the study at any point without penalty or consequence, as well as highlighted the purpose and implications for the study. In addition to this, I offered an outline for timelines and ensured participants and (if necessary) their parents/guardians that a high degree of confidentiality will be maintained throughout the study, as well as after the study. Given the current state of the COVID-19 pandemic, I was also prepared to adjust this process to a virtual platform, should it be deemed necessary.

Where and How was consent obtained?

Prospective participants were provided an information letter from the contact person at their location. If interested in participating, participants received a letter of consent from the contact person, or alternatively, from the principal researcher directly. These documents were returned to either the contact person, or scanned and emailed to the principal researcher directly. In these documents, participants were informed that they are able to leave the study at any point, even if it is incomplete, without penalty. The consent letter was returned before the initial research sessions began. Participants were also informed that they could retract or rephrase statements made at any point, once more, without penalty. The Informed Consent document also outlined the potential risks and benefits related to this study, and answered potential questions the participants may have had. This was communicated through the letter, as well as informed consent form sent to potential participants.

Criterion Sampling

To ensure that participants were an appropriate fit, I utilized criterion sampling as a means to engage with participants that have experienced the specific phenomena being studied. In criterion sampling, a set of pre-determined criteria are outlined prior to recruiting participants to ensure that the participants involved are appropriate for the phenomena being studied. In doing this, the study ensured that participant's experiences and positioning provided information that was useful and meaningful within the goals of this inquiry.

Data collection occurred through semi-structured interviews, with a specific emphasis placed on the use of story, utilizing a discussion prompt if necessary, and allowing dialogue to flow in an organic manner. Through individual discussions, artifacts (pictures, stories, images) were utilized to gain a better understanding of the phenomena being studied. Once more, participants were invited to participate in a way that was comfortable for them. If participants were more comfortable with one approach over the other, I adjusted accordingly. Having data emerge from group, as well as one-to-one dialogue provided me with differing contexts so as to better understand the stories being shared. Using a dialogic social inquiry approach allowed me the ability to be present with participants in a very human, engaged manner, with no pre-set list of questions that guide what was discussed. Offering the initial discussion prompts allowed this process to be focused, yet maintain a fluidity that is a key fixture in authentic human interactions. To ensure that data was properly collected, discussions were recorded so that they could be reviewed at a later time. This also allowed me, as the researcher, to be fully invested in the conversation, knowing that it was available for investigation and further discussion at a later time. Upon reviewing data, follow-up discussions (emails, calls, in-person dialogue) occurred so that participants were able to clarify, extend, revisit, or retract statements. If participants used

artifacts to describe a lived experience, they were only be used as a contextual tool to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

Discussion guides can be found on *Appendix A*, which highlights the discussion prompts that guided this process. Utilizing Ruitenberg's (2011a) model of hospitality, potential discussion prompts are provided. However, due to the dialogic nature of this inquiry, not all prompts were used and/or answered directly. In using prompts to spur organic discussion surrounding the central themes of educational hospitality, it was my hope that participants felt at ease and comfortable. As a guest in the space of participants, and in the spirit of hospitality, it was my objective to approach conversations in a manner that communicated authentic trust, humility, and respect – qualities that are also paramount within many Indigenous worldviews. To start each conversation, I first clarified what is meant by hospitality and belonging, in an age-appropriate manner. There was no order to how the prompts were addressed, as this would appear rigid, pre-scripted, and would limit possibilities for further connection and relationality (Anderson, 2012). Prompts explored the extent to which a sense of hospitality was felt and experienced across curriculum/pedagogy, physical spaces, and relations within a public-school ecology. Once more, as a researcher I was not set on these prompts, as participants naturally discussed factors that were meaningful to them, covering multiple topics within one discussion, thus negating the need to readdress a given topic.

Discussion protocol was one that was engaged and connected, without the hindrance of excessive note-taking, which stands as a barrier to connection. Margaret Kovach (2021) writes of the barriers that note-taking can create in forming authentic connections with participants. As key ideas or themes emerge within the dialogic process, brief themes will be noted so that they can be explored at a later time. Recordings of discussions were transcribed, and examined, with a

follow-up set of prompts or curiosities that emerged from the initial encounter. In this way, connected dialogue unfolded, with opportunities for further dialogic inquiry in the future.

Anticipated field issues I imagined encountering were that of willingness to participate in a study. This once more comes back to the historical trauma that Indigenous people have often experienced at the hands of researchers, as well as people working within the education system. I was hopeful that through my positioning as a Métis person, as well as my experience building trust with youth, that this obstacle could be overcome in a mutually beneficial manner. Another anticipated field issue was that of gaining access to a marginalized group. As someone who is responsible for the wellbeing of children, I too would be hesitant to expose a marginalized group of youth to an outside adult. Once more, the need for reciprocity, honesty, and respect became paramount, further necessitating the need for a dialogic approach.

All field data, both field notes and audio recordings will be stored in a secure filing cabinet, with the only person who has access being the research facilitator. Data will be stored for five years, after which time all electronic recordings will be deleted from any hard drives, and all written notes will be shredded. To ensure that this study upholds the sacredness of story, honours the trust that was established, and respects the accounts that unfold within the “nest of relationship” (Kovach, 2021, pg. 183), I utilized the before, during, and after recommendations that Kovach (2021) highlights in her work *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*. An excerpt of these recommendations can be found in *Appendix B*.

The Logistics of Interactions

The principal researcher was the sole facilitator of conversations and discussions throughout this project. Participants were met with individually to ensure a high degree of confidentiality. As the initial meeting was meant to establish relationality and rapport, it was not

audio recorded. The discussions, related to the discussion guide, were recorded using the app "voice recorder". This was the first data-collection conversation which occurred after the initial "get to know you" interaction. A recording app was used to record participant's and researcher's voices only. In addition, the pre-discussion overview in which I explained key terms and reviewed participant consent was not recorded before the data collection conversation. Audio recordings were uploaded to University of Manitoba's OneDrive system, after which, recordings were deleted off of the app used by the principal researcher. These interactions took place in a mutually agreed upon location, that was comfortable and accessible for participants, or via Zoom/Microsoft Teams, if this was preferred by participants.

Upon completion of recordings, transcripts were developed by the principal researcher. All transcripts were completely anonymized with any personally identifiable information omitted. Participants were given pseudonyms to ensure they are not identifiable upon the release of this project. Transcripts will be kept for up to five years. This study commenced in December 2022, and all data will be destroyed in December of 2027.

Risks and Benefits

Risks

There are certain emotional risks that this study contains. Given the history of colonialism, and the role that education has played in the genocide of Indigenous People, there was the potential for emotionally-charged feelings toward this specific study. Many Indigenous students are marginalized within their school ecologies, and inviting them to share their unique experiences offers the potential for stories and feelings that could be triggering for participants. This study had the potential to be emotionally triggering for participants as they shared their experiences and feelings toward the education system. The steps that were taken were the

following. First, an ethic of relationality and trust was established before the research conversations began. This was crucial to this work, and is also a central tenet within an Indigenous approach to research. Second, the potential risks and benefits were communicated to participants, both in writing as well as in conversation. Participants were allowed to leave, omit, or skip any question that they did not feel comfortable answering. Third, the principal researcher worked closely with divisional personnel (in the case of current students) throughout the research process, and informed them of any concerns that arose during the research process. In the case of university students becoming emotionally overwhelmed, the contact information for University mental health services was provided to participants. Fourth, participants were given the time and space they need to engage in this work, which could mean returning to a topic at a later time, if at all, or taking a break from the conversation if needed.

Benefits

There are many benefits of this study. Given graduation rates among Indigenous students (especially in Manitoba), it is clear that schools and systems must do more to keep Indigenous students engaged in school. Through this study, critiques, as well as suggestions for improvement were made by Indigenous youth themselves. The potential benefits to society that arise from this work have the potential to be quite large in scale. If teachers, administrators, and policy-makers are interested in reconciliation and improving outcomes for all students in the public-school system, they will find this study informative and practical.

The indirect benefits for participants are that they are able to contribute to a study that has the potential to make life at school more inclusive, welcoming, and relevant to Indigenous students. While these participants will likely not feel the repercussions of this work directly, future generations of students will benefit from the words and stories of participants within this

study. This study also has the potential to leave a positive, lasting impact on society as a whole, as when all members of society receive a just and effective education, everyone benefits.

The direct benefits to participants are that they were able to share their frustrations, critiques, and (possible) appreciations regarding the work that is being done in schools. Allowing Indigenous students to vocalize how the system is/isn't working for them leads to a sense of voice and autonomy over systems and institutions. Participants were also exposed to academia and post-secondary graduate studies, illuminating potential paths for future studies.

Criteria for Participants

For this study, I asked numerous current or former (recent graduate) Indigenous students to be participants, utilizing their unique experiences and worldviews to understand this phenomenon. To ensure that selected students were an appropriate fit, certain criterion were required. The first criteria that was required was that participants are currently High School-aged, or a recent high school graduate from a Winnipeg high school. This was fundamental to this study, as it sought to investigate real-world accounts of lived experiences within the public-school system. Requiring that students were attending, or had recently graduated school was also important, as it provided a real-time vision of the complexity of the phenomena being studied, while also providing the researcher opportunities for discussion surrounding recent events and stories and memories which may not be as readily available to participants who had not attended school for some time.

In addition to this, the second criteria that was required necessitated the requirement for students to be attending (or recently graduated from) any public-school with the exception of alternative or Indigenous-run (for example, Niji Mahkwa) schools. This is to say, the school was not an alternative program geared towards Indigenous students, or a specifically Indigenous

schooling context. The reason for this being that this study aims to understand ways in which the majority of schools can further reconciliation efforts, and foster a sense of hospitality and belonging for Indigenous students who are navigating mainstream education. Although alternative programs for Indigenous students are important, they would not be sufficient in addressing what the majority of students experienced, and would not provide a proper context for understanding the social relations between Indigenous and settler students.

Ethics

I was certain to ensure that all participants were aware of the goal of the study, as well as general themes that our dialogue were focused around. In addition to this, I also gave participants advance notice of the discussion prompts that were used, while also informing them that we were not “tied” to these prompts, and that our conversation would [hopefully] unfold in a natural way, as per the aims of dialogic social inquiry.

Participants gave free and informed consent, and were reassured that they were able to leave the study at any point, without any kind of penalty even if the study is incomplete. An information letter and accompanying consent form were sent with participants for review. All participants were required to sign the forms, understanding that they had agreed to be in this study. Once more, these forms stipulated that participants were able to leave the study at any point, should they choose. As most participants were anticipated to be over the age of 18, parental/guardian consent was not required.

In order to maintain confidentiality, pseudonyms were used for all participants, with any information collected being stored in a secure filing cabinet, as well as on the University of Manitoba’s cloud services (OneDrive) with only the principal researcher having access.

Insider vs. Outsider Researcher Positioning

As mentioned in Chapter 1, I enter into this study with intersections of both privilege and oppression. As a member of the Métis Nation, I feel that I am placed in a more insider position than a researcher with no Indigenous ancestry. This positioning, I hope, helped create a sense of trust amongst participants and myself. It is because of this that I first introduced myself to participants by honouring my ancestors through sharing where my people are from (both Indigenous and settler), as well as encouraging participants to share this as well.

I also occupied an outsider positioning to this group. My physical appearance (race, gender, and class), as well as social and educational capital belong to that of the dominant culture, and may have created a sense of the *other* to the participants of this group. Because of this, I was once more compelled to create a strong sense of relationality, trust, and humility before entering the data collection phase of this study. In addition to this, I also occupied the role of teacher, once more placing myself in an outsider position to this group. Given that the participants were students, there is an unequal power dynamic in perceived authority. Because of this, I once more aimed to be transparent and open about this, further necessitating the requirement for trust and reciprocity in the group dynamic.

Occupying both an insider and outsider positioning offers this study many possibilities for connection and reconciliation. This more nuanced positioning hopefully allowed a sense of trust and collaboration to occur, while also serving as a reminder to be consistently reflective and open. Once more, the need for member-checking became important at this stage of the research process, as there remained a potential for biases or cultural misunderstandings to skew data and findings. I am grateful for the members of my committee, and specifically, for the perspective of

Dr. Frank Deer in helping me to ensure this study is both ethical, and credible from an Indigenous scholarly perspective.

Credibility and Reliability

Ensuring that this study is both credible and reliable is of upmost importance. Given that the words and stories shared have been done so within the context of mutual trust and relationship, I innately trust that the stories and words of participants are accurate, credible and reliable. In a dialogic approach, there are ample opportunities available to check for understanding, revisit a story or comment shared, as well clarify the intention or meaning behind a particular story or account. In approaching research in this way, the notion of trust is carried throughout the process. In the context of this study, multiple sets of data were provided (artifacts, notes, follow-up conversations, etc.) to reaffirm the validity of the stories that were shared.

In addition, *member checking* is cited by Creswell & Creswell (2008) as being a crucial aspect of maintaining credibility and reliability, and is also very much in alignment with the processes of dialogic inquiry. Ensuring that participants were given voice and input throughout the inquiry process ensured that the implications and themes found within the study are in alignment with participant's intent. This notion is especially important within this context, as historically, research done with Indigenous populations has superimposed settler meanings and interpretations onto participants personal narratives. It is because of this reason that participants were actively engaged in the process, even after the data collection phase was complete.

As themes emerged, I was in communication with participants to guarantee that no misunderstandings had occurred, and that they were comfortable with what was being done with their words. Shawn Wilson (2008) writes about the importance of maintaining communication with participants throughout the analysis and interpretation phase of research, highlighting how

Indigenous research approaches are relational in nature, and cannot be done without the constant consultation of participants. To do so would be colonial in nature, and antithetical to true dialogic inquiry.

Speaking to reliability, Creswell & Creswell highlight the importance of checking transcripts to “make sure they do not contain mistakes made during transcription” (p. 202). In this study, the use of a tape recorder app ensured that the research facilitator was able to review transcripts in a way that guaranteed there were no mistakes within the transcription. The use of a tape recorder also provided the researcher the ability to return to the conversation, utilizing different lenses each time, listening for nuances, or recurring themes that could not be achieved without the use of recording technology. In addition to the use of a tape recorder, transcripts and field notes were also utilized to provide a multi-modal account of the interaction between researcher and participant(s). Researcher field notes were also available to supplement recordings. This also provided insight into non-verbal themes that may have emerged in the moment, which can often be missed when only reviewing recordings and transcriptions, as subtleties like body language, facial expressions, and inferences are not shown.

Data Analysis

The data analysis of this study built upon the trust, respect and reciprocity that had been foundational throughout the process. Shaun Wilson (2008) writes that “by reducing the space between things, we are strengthening the relationship that they share” (p. 87). In keeping with this intention, it was my commitment to ensure that the words and stories of participants were not broken apart, dissected, or decontextualized, as doing so would be a violation of the relationship that allowed these conversations to flourish. It was my hope that by reducing the space (both literal and metaphorical) between what participants said, and what was done with

their words, the relationship base that surrounded their words could continue to be strengthened. It is from this philosophy that participants were engaged in the data analysis process, with frequent checks to ensure that their words were not being misconstrued, broken apart, or decontextualized.

In keeping with the spirit and intention of Indigenous research methods and dialogic inquiry, the process of analyzing data must be respectful and relational in nature. Wilson (2008) notes that often the data analysis stage of qualitative research can be extractive in nature, thus decontextualizing the knowledge and relationship base surrounding the statement or story gifted by participants. Once more, a tension can emerge at this phase between the demands of the academy, and the relational nature of an Indigenous, dialogic approach to research. Kovach notes that the use of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) is one approach to data analysis that is in alignment within an Indigenous methodology. Kovach writes that “when one bases research on Indigenous theorizing (philosophy), a thematic analysis, even though it is an established academic tradition, can be consistent with an Indigenous conceptual framing” (p. 234). Keeping with the intent of dialogic inquiry and Indigenous methodologies, this study utilized a thematic analysis approach to bringing forth themes that surfaced during the research process.

Braun and Clarke (2006) write of the six phases of thematic analysis, which occur after data collection has finished. In phase one, becoming familiarized with the stories and words participants shared is placed as a key component. Braun and Clarke (2006) note that “it is vital that you immerse yourself in the data to the extent that you are familiar with the depth and breadth of the content” (p. 87). At this stage, audio recordings were transcribed, with an immense amount of time being spent on becoming familiar with the shared stories and experiences of participants. This occurred through reading and re-reading of transcripts, as well

as reviewing recordings until such a time that I felt I had a broad understanding of the stories that were shared during the data collection stage.

In the second phase, Braun and Clarke (2006) postulate that initial “codes” can be developed. In this phase, the researcher identifies key features within data that appear to be most interesting, and that are related to the phenomena being studied. Braun and Clarke (2006) note how often at this stage, knowledge can be decontextualized during the coding process, and write of the importance of maintaining inclusivity of data, or, ensuring that some of the surrounding data is included (if relevant) so as to provide a broader context of the excerpt. At this phase of the research process, it was my aim to also ensure that all inferences and “codes” that were made, were done so with the consultation and approval of research participants.

In the third phase of thematic analysis, the researcher begins searching for themes, using the codes that were developed in the previous phase. In this phase, codes are sorted into potential themes and sub-themes, with the researcher having the option of using tables, organizers, or “mind maps” to situate codes within the emergent themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) write that “some initial codes may go on to form main themes, whereas others may form sub-themes, and others still may be discarded” (p. 90). This phase ends with a collection of potential themes and sub-themes, as well as all data extracts that have been coded in relation to them (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The fourth phase of data analysis within a thematic analysis framework is that of reviewing the themes that emerged in phase three. Braun and Clarke (2006) write that this stage involved two levels of review. In the first level, all data extracts are read in relation to the potential theme from stage three. If candidate themes appear to form a pattern, the researcher is able to move to the second level of review. If candidate themes do not appear to form a coherent

pattern, the potential themes need to be revisited and revised so that data extracts are coherent within the established candidate theme. At level two, Braun and Clarke (2006) write that “level two involves a similar process, but in relation to the entire data set. At this level, you consider the validity of individual themes in relation to the data set, but also whether your candidate thematic map ‘accurately’ reflects the meanings evident in the data set as a whole” (p. 91). After this phase, it is understood that the researcher should have a clear sense of what the themes are, and the overall story that they tell about the data and phenomena. Once more, any themes that emerged were done with the consultation of research participants, ensuring that findings were deemed acceptable by participants.

In the fifth phase of a thematic analysis approach, the researcher defines and names the themes from the previous phase. Braun and Clarke (2006) write that at this stage, the researcher conducts a detailed analysis which explains the “story” that each theme tells, as well as how this story fits in, and contributes to the larger “story” at play. Within this phase it is also important to question whether or not a theme contains any sub-themes, and bring these to light as well. Braun and Clarke (2006) note that by the end of this phase, the researcher should be able to articulate what the themes are, as well as what they are not, with each theme having a name that is easily understandable by potential readers of the study.

In the sixth and final phase, the researcher produces the report for their study. Braun and Clarke (2006) write of this stage, highlighting that “the task of the write-up of a thematic analysis, whether it is for publication or for a research assignment or dissertation, is to tell the complicated story of your data in a way which convinces the reader of the merit and validity of your analysis” (p. 93). It is within this phase that the researcher utilizes specific evidence gathered in the field to support the developed themes, and concisely articulate the story that the

themes and data tell about phenomena. In doing so, the researcher is able to honour the words and stories of participants by bringing wider attention to the underlying themes and sub-themes contained within their gifted stories. At this final stage of thematic analysis, I was certain to make direct contact with research participants and invite their evaluation, ensuring that the stories, themes, and excerpts used were deemed acceptable and appropriate.

It is my hope that through approaching qualitative research within an Indigenous and dialogic approach, and by utilizing thematic analysis, findings are both ethical, just, and clear in their potential implications. Through relationality, reciprocity, and trust, the stories shared are honoured and treated with constant respect, regarding the personal narratives of participants as gifts, rather than extractions.

Chapter 4: Summary of Findings

This study focuses on the extent to which five Indigenous students experience(d) a sense of hospitality within their K-12 public school education. The following chapter will explore vignettes of each participant, the researcher's observations on each participant, as well as a description of the experiences of participants as they navigated the school system, followed by a summary of the themes and subthemes that emerged from the research conversations. Data was examined utilizing the discussion prompts found in Appendix A. Data was examined through the lens of hospitality, exploring the extent to which participants felt a sense of "home" while navigating curricular, physical, and relational spaces. Participant's stories were reviewed numerous times, adhering to the data analysis approach outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). After participants stories and statements were categorized as either curriculum, relationships, physical space, or a variation of the three, many themes and sub-themes began to emerge. Some of the themes that became apparent include overlooked and disregarded Indigenous content, the inadvertent prevalence of deficit narratives when discussion Indigenous topics, overt racism, settler pedagogies, the physical layout of learning spaces, smudging, the use of visual art as decoration, teacher/student interactions, solidarity with other oppressed students, and finally, a strong sense of what a hospitable school could be.

Individual Portraits

Five participants were chosen to be a part of this study. All five participants had diverse experiences with the K-12 public school system, and offered many important reflections on what led to them feeling a sense of hospitality, as well as what did not; both offering valuable information for the purpose of this study. Although some participants were recent graduates and

some were current students, all have the common experience of navigating a colonial institution on their own territories. The following offers individual portraits of each participant.

Participant #1

Frank was a 17-year-old high school student, who was looking forward to finishing her final year at her urban Winnipeg high school. Frank had a unique schooling experience, having attended school in both rural and urban settings, including in an Indigenous community during her elementary years. Frank lived with her mother in a suburban community in Winnipeg, and described her life as being comfortable, with a very supportive and humorous family. Frank mentioned how large her family was, and how much laughter they shared when they all got together, which she wished would happen more often. Many of Frank's family lived out of the city, or in different provinces altogether which made it harder to connect with them. Frank spoke passionately about the level of enjoyment she received from being a part of her high school's drama class, as well as sharing the ease with which she grasped the concepts in mathematics.

Frank currently works part-time in customer service, and has a love for animals and spending time with her friends. Frank said she wasn't too sure what she wanted to do after high school graduation just yet, and was debating the idea of possibly taking a year off before pursuing further studies at the university level. Frank also described herself as being an introvert, yet feeling more extroverted when surrounded by a group of likeminded peers, which is likely why she enjoyed her drama class so much.

Frank spoke about her skills as a learner, and was quite reflective in mentioning that her favourite way to learn and be at school is through movement rather than direct instruction. When discussing opportunities for Indigenous people at her school, Frank explained that there was an

Indigenous student group at her school, but that she had never personally attended, and that she had heard positive reviews from her peers who have attended. In addition, Frank spoke of life in her previous community, where she had poor attendance at school due to some of the barriers influencing her school life. Frank discussed how her school was over an hour from where she lived, making it exceptionally cumbersome to arrive on time every day. It was also noted at this point that this had a negative impact on her sleep habits, and that she worried that there might be gaps in her learning due to this.

Researcher's Observations

I had made contact with Frank through sending recruitment documents to various school and community leaders. Frank made contact with me, and agreed to meet to discuss the goals of this study. Frank and I initially met over the phone to become acquainted and go over some of the details of this study. We then agreed to meet at a local pizza restaurant a few days later, where we established relationality connecting over food. During our conversation, Frank would take her time responding, often asking for clarification on some of the language being used. This was a good reminder for me as a researcher that it is necessary to seek alternative ways of explaining academic research that is understandable, yet also not overly simplified. I greatly appreciated Frank's honesty when she did not understand a word, topic, or concept being brought forward.

When asked about her school experiences, I found Frank to be quite honest and upfront, with a welcomed touch of adolescent candour. Many times, Frank's responses were quite short, and were more brief statements than stories or recollections. As our conversation evolved, her responses became more detailed and nuanced as her comfort level grew. I came to appreciate the

way in which Frank would incorporate humour into her recounting and retelling of events throughout her school life, and the insight she would use to explain her personal feelings and interpretations surrounding the shared event(s).

Participant #2

Marie was a recent high school graduate, who was studying to become a teacher herself at a university in Winnipeg. Marie is Métis, with Oji-Cree and Inuit heritage, and was living in Winnipeg. Marie graduated from the French Immersion program within the public-school system, which was a valuable perspective to have within this study. Marie was in the process of reclaiming her indigeneity through ceremony and beadwork, and mentioned how her family was joining her in this process. Because Marie's family had been directly affected by residential school, many aspects of her culture were never discussed, as to admit one's indigeneity would have historically carried immense oppression and marginalization. Marie was proud to note how this was in the process of changing, and that members of her family were beginning to show their pride in being Indigenous.

Marie mentioned that part of the reason she wanted to participate in this study was to honour the experience of her grandparents, and viewed efforts to make schools more hospitable spaces for Indigenous students as both timely and needed. Marie's love for her parents, grandparents, and siblings came through immediately, and pointed to a deep sense of duty and care for her family and ancestors.

In addition to being a full-time university student, Marie also worked part time at a vet clinic, and noted how much she loves animals, and how she hoped to continue working in this role throughout her university career. Marie hoped that after graduating, she would be able to

bring aspects of her culture into her role as a teacher, and hopefully inspire other Indigenous students to embrace their identities.

Researcher's Observations

I met Marie through recruitment material sent to her university's Indigenous student center. We initially met virtually over Zoom, where we established a sense of relationality, connecting over our mutual engagement with the school system, and love for animals. Following this, we made plans to meet in person. We ended up meeting at a local café a few days later, and enjoyed connecting over coffee. I was immediately struck by the way Marie articulated herself, and the honesty with which she spoke and shared.

Further, it was quite helpful that Marie had an understanding of some of the vocabulary associated with teaching and the education system, given that she was pursuing her education degree at the time of our conversation. I felt that our conversation was able to reach a different level of depth, as Marie was able to not only reflect on her experience as a student, but do so through the pedagogical lens that she was developing as a pre-service teacher. Throughout our research conversation, I found Marie to be honest, clear, and upfront, sharing stories and reflections that offered this study many rich opportunities for deeper understanding.

Participant #3

Zoya was a recent graduate of a suburban-Winnipeg high school, and who had begun some general studies at a university in Winnipeg. Zoya was from an Indigenous community in Northern Manitoba originally, and had moved around quite a bit before ending up in urban Winnipeg. Zoya's family growing up were all politically engaged, and were themselves working

within the fields of education or law. Zoya had mentioned that her family had struggled financially, until her mother received her graduate degree, which in turn offered Zoya more opportunities educationally and socially.

Zoya described herself as being a good conversationalist, and credited this attribute to the fact that she and her family had moved around a lot, offering her numerous opportunities for connecting with others. Zoya also described herself as being somewhat of an activist for Indigenous rights, something that was also a major aspect of her identity in high school. Zoya ran many committees, student groups, and leadership initiatives at her high school, and was quite well known within the ecologies she inhabited. Similarly, Zoya noted that her high school experience was relatively positive, which is a privilege that she recognized many Indigenous students do not share.

Zoya is currently working as an educational assistant in Winnipeg, while simultaneously pursuing her university education. Zoya noted how tight-knit her family was, and how highly education was valued by her mother in particular. Zoya had many hopes for the future, and entertained the possibility of perhaps leaving Winnipeg to be closer to family again.

Researcher's Observations

I made contact with Zoya through the Indigenous Student Success teachers at a school division in Winnipeg. They directed me to her because of her activism and strong reputation in the division. Zoya and I initially met virtually, where we discussed the aims of this study, as well as created a sense of trust. It was important to me to ensure that participants felt a sense of hospitality from early on. In the case of Zoya, this was established through me explaining my positioning as a Métis person, as well as a teacher committed to change within the school system.

Trust and hospitality were further developed as the aims of the study were explained with frequent reminders on the adaptability and flexibility of the research process. After this initial meeting, Zoya and I met at a local library that was close to where she lived. We had a lengthy and in-depth conversation that offered this study many profound takeaways.

I was immediately impressed with Zoya's personable nature, and ease with which she connected interpersonally. Because Zoya spent the early parts of her public education within a northern Indigenous community, she offered this study a unique duality wherein she was able to articulate the ways in which her urban education differed from the education within her home community. I also was quite impressed by the many initiatives Zoya had accomplished throughout Winnipeg, many of which have caught the attention of the media. Her ability to bring about needed change, using the platforms available to her left me feeling inspired and hopeful for what is possible within schools and school systems.

Participant #4

Natalie was a recent high school graduate, who spent a portion of her childhood in an Indigenous community in Saskatchewan, as well as urban Winnipeg when her mother was in university. Natalie attended public school in Winnipeg, and went through the French Immersion stream until she graduated. Natalie spoke in depth about her time in school, as well as the role that sports had on her overall adolescence. Throughout high school, Natalie played softball and volleyball, and offered many insights into the ways that sports can perpetuate racism and harm onto Indigenous peoples.

Natalie was enrolled at a university in Winnipeg, as well as working part time at the time of our meeting. Natalie mentioned how she enjoys reading, spending time with her partner, and

connecting with friends. Natalie mentioned enjoying community service as well as social activism, taking a lead role in many community initiatives focused on helping those in need. Natalie also spoke of how supportive her family is of her, and how grateful she was to have such a diverse network of family and friends in her life.

Researcher's Observations

I met Natalie through another research participant sharing their experience of participating in this study with her. Natalie then made contact with me via email, and asked to participate in the study. We set up a time to meet via Zoom, and had a wonderful conversation reviewing the different aspects of this research, as well as getting to know one another on a relational level. Natalie and I agreed to meet in-person at a local bookstore that had spaces for us to sit and talk. I was immediately taken with the ease with which Natalie spoke and told stories. Throughout the majority of our conversation, I really did not have to do much prompting, as Natalie was very much willing to share her experiences.

Natalie's experience with youth sports, which operated out of her school, also provided a different context with which to explore hospitality. This is a setting that I had not originally considered exploring initially, however, Natalie's experience offered this study many implications in the pursuit of hospitable spaces across education. This also reminded me that learning spaces are not limited to the physical school building, and also include athletic venues. Natalie also was able to share with me many instances that she experienced racism in various content areas within her school. Once more, having the perspective of French Immersion was of value to this study, once again reminding me that a wide-range of educational spaces are required in order to showcase a far-reaching overview of the experiences of Indigenous students.

Participant #5

Marlowe was a recent graduate of a public high school in urban Winnipeg. Marlowe had tried attending university, however, realized later on that this was not the path for her. Marlowe was working at a daycare during the time of our discussion, and appeared to be enjoying this work greatly. Marlowe is a part of the Métis nation, and viewed life through a uniquely Métis worldview. Marlowe's parents had separated when she was a child, and had both remarried since. Marlowe mentioned how important her family was to her, and how often she needed their support throughout her schooling.

Marlowe described herself as being a "theatre kid", and how this was a strong part of what got her through high school. Marlowe mentioned how she continued to love the arts, and how she had also developed a love for writing as well as reading. Marlowe spoke very freely and openly about the positive and negative aspects that were present during her public-school experience.

Researcher's Observations

I had met Marlowe through connecting with the Indigenous Student Success teachers in a school division in Winnipeg. Marlowe and I initially met over Zoom, where we discussed the overall aims of this study, and answered a few questions. Marlowe agreed to meet in-person at a local dessert shop, where we spent a large amount of time first establishing relationality before beginning the official research conversation. Marlowe was able to highlight both positive and negative experiences in her educational experience, both of which offer this study valuable information. Overall, I found Marlowe to be extremely reflective and forthcoming, offering specific stories that related to the discussion prompts.

Summary of the Participants

In Ruitenberg's (2011b) model of educational hospitality, students occupy the positioning of *guest*, and teachers, as well as other school personnel, occupy the positioning of the *host*. Within the context of this study, participants were asked to reflect on their experiences being a guest. The stories that participants told together highlight the complexity, and the tension that exists in Canadian classrooms between Indigenous students and colonial institutionalized education. All participants had the shared experiences of navigating these imposed colonial spaces on their own ancestral territories. These stories provide an exceptionally valuable means to better understand the extent to which hospitality was, or was not experienced when in the positioning of guest. All five of these participants came from a local, Indigenous worldview, and were able to articulate the myriad of ways in which schooling is often in direct contrast to these worldviews. Each participant also was able to identify the ways in which schools, individual teachers, or peers did embody an ethic of what Ruitenberg (2011a) would describe as educational hospitality.

Conceptualizing (in)Hospitality

All participants discussed, both directly and indirectly, notions of hospitality. Participant narratives contained stories that modeled clear examples of educational hospitality, as well as inhospitality, which often appeared in the form of unresponsive, monolithic systems. When asked to conceptualize educational hospitality, participants discussed feelings of safety, inclusion, or that their peers and teachers actually saw them for who they were. When asked to discuss hospitality, Marie noted that "I think it's really just having everyone feel safe and comfortable in their environment. They feel like they can freely express themselves, that maybe

they see themselves specifically in school settings, like in their teachers, in their staff members.” This type of statement was common across all participants, and highlighted that feelings of safety and comfort in schools is a central tenet within youth understandings of hospitality. When asked to conceptualize hospitality, Marlowe’s response was quite similar to Zoya’s, where she noted that “When I think hospitality, I think comfort and a welcoming environment to everybody. Trying to fit the needs of everybody.” The concepts of comfort, safety, and inclusion within schools echoed throughout numerous participant statements, further leading one to the conclusion that relationality based on trust is central to an ethic of hospitality.

The inverse of hospitality is that of *inhospitality*. After participants conceptualized their understandings of hospitality, they often went on to further define hospitality by explaining what it is *not*. Many participants discussed feeling the need to change who they were in order to succeed in their schools. Under an ethic of hospitality, this should be the exact opposite; schools being reflective to students. Natalie echoed this idea when she shared “I felt like I had to mold to fit with them” she then went on to note that “I just felt like I always had to please them [teachers], almost. Like I had to be what they want me to be to succeed rather than be myself.” In this way, understanding what hospitality is *not* helps to better understand what it is, from the perspective of Indigenous youth themselves. From these statements, participants highlight that at the center of hospitality is the concept of safety, comfort, and being included. In understanding what hospitality is *not*, we also better understand that hospitality also involves spaces in which students are able to be their authentic selves, and where they do not feel that in order to succeed, they must alter who they are as individuals. Throughout research conversations, the theme of responsive systems emerged as a central theme with which to understand educational hospitality from the perspective of Indigenous students.

Responsive Systems

When discussing instances of positive schooling experiences within the framework of hospitality, lying at the center of participant accounts was the notion of systems and structures within schools being responsive and adaptive toward students. This emergent theme parallels Ruitenberg's (2011a) statement that "I have proposed that our responsibility to children and youth is to receive them into the world *and* to accept that they will change the world into which they are received" (p. 134). In this way, responsive systems are the very heart of conceptualizing hospitality, and likely result in the feelings of safety, comfort, and inclusion that participants described as being foundational.

When reflecting on instances of schools being reflexive (or not), all participants shared accounts that offer important insight. In particular, Zoya had many instances of her high school being reflexive to her, and her peers' needs. Zoya reflected on seeing the need for an outdoor classroom at her school, and having this become a reality through administration support and allocation of funds. Zoya spoke in-depth about being invited to speak with divisional senior administration, and share first-hand what Indigenous students at her school needed. In Zoya's case, their response was swift and demonstrated a clear desire to create socially just, hospitable spaces for Indigenous students. Reflecting on this, Zoya shared that "it was supported by the administration, but these were things that were led by students, and I think it was also because they gave us the voice to do it. Hand-in-hand, it was like a hand-in-hand kind of thing. It's not being shot down. Where we voice concerns, and now they're getting heard, and things are happening because of it." Through this statement, an ethic of hospitality begins to emerge, and serves as a testament to the power of listening and responding to students themselves. When reflecting on notions of hospitality, Natalie shared the story of a teacher she had who recognized

that he did not possess the cultural knowledge to teach an Indigenous Studies course at her school. Natalie shared that frequently, this teacher would invite local Indigenous community members into the classroom to lead the class. Natalie noted that the classroom space was also changed to better represent the content being taught. Natalie's teacher would move the desks out of the room, and position all the chairs in a circle so that students were able to learn whilst in circle. Although these actions might appear insignificant, they show a teacher who de-centered himself, while simultaneously facilitating a learning environment that was responsive to the students in his class. In the cases of Frank, Marlowe, and Marie, system reflexivity was also addressed, however, a little more discretely. When sharing instances of feeling seen, heard, and welcomed in their schools, Frank, Marlowe, and Marie all shared similar stories of systems and structures responding, rather than remaining unchanged. These participants reflected on how changes like a teacher arranging for land-based learning, a school permitting smudging inside the building, or having school staff alter start times to accommodate commute lead to a sense of hospitality, and showed the willingness of policies and practices to adapt and respond.

Curriculum

After sharing conceptualizations of educational hospitality, participants were invited to share stories, experiences, and reflections on the curriculum. Participants reflected both on what content was (and was not) taught, as well as *how* this content was taught. In this way, both curriculum and pedagogy were explored in relation to educational hospitality. From research conversations with participants came the following themes: disregarded Indigenous content, imposing settler pedagogies, as well as the sub-themes of educating peers on behalf of the teacher, and the use deficit narratives.

Disregarded Indigenous Content

All five participants in one way or another touched on the theme of overlooked, or inadequate Indigenous content throughout their school experience. In the cases of Frank and Zoya, when asked to discuss instances of Indigenous content being brought into the classroom and their reactions to it, it was expressed that there were not many instances that stood out. We discussed why this might be, and both participants explained how there were Indigenous issues courses that were taught as electives, as well as a “club” for Indigenous students, however, other than these, there was little integration of Indigenous perspectives or pedagogies into the classroom. In this way, the emergent theme of disregarded content becomes clear from what was *not* done, rather than what was.

When reflecting on Indigenous content in school, Marie had many stories and experiences to share, where the inadequacy of instruction was made clear. Marie first spoke of the feeling that when discussing Canadian history, everything prior to European colonization was completely rushed through. Marie noted that in most cases, there would be one or two classes dedicated to “pre-contact” life on Turtle Island. Following this, Marie’s teachers would spend the rest of the year focused on the 150 years that followed European contact, often skipping over the numerous parts of this history that did not position Canada and its settlers in a positive way. Marie reflected on why this might be, noting that “I feel like maybe it's just going quickly over it so that they can get to the next thing.” Marie explained that when Indigenous histories were brought into the classroom, it was through the use of division-approved videos that were oversimplistic and outdated. Marie went on to express feelings of frustration at the perceived lack of knowledge held by the teacher to properly address the thousands of years of history that occurred before Europeans ever set foot on this land. Marie shared her reactions to this, saying “honestly,

just anytime we were talking about Indigenous culture, Métis culture. I don't have a story specifically, but I just always remember being so annoyed consistently. I just felt like there was such bad representation.” Marie then went on to say a poignant statement that summarized her reactions to what she was, and was not, taught in school: “it’s like there’s so much more that could be told and we’re not textbook people, we’re right here.” This excerpt succinctly summarizes the major theme of Marie’s reflections on curriculum. She also noted later on that ignorance was not an excuse for teachers to not teach Indigenous histories, and that if they are unable to do it, and do it well, then, in her perspective, they ought to find a community member who can.

When asked to reflect on the integration of Indigenous content in her school experience, Natalie offered many examples of inadequacy. Similar to Marie, Natalie had the sense that her teachers were rushing through thousands of years of history before European contact, and then “sugar-coating” the topics that did not present Canada in a positive way. Natalie shared that her experience with Indigenous histories in school “felt like a filler episode or something to take up space... It’s like we ‘learned’ it all in one week.” Natalie also recalled feeling the sense that her teachers, in attempting to not say the “wrong” thing, often said nothing at all. Natalie shared that often teachers would “sugar-coat” lessons that dealt with difficult topics, and that rude, racist comments from students would often go unaddressed or unchallenged by the teacher. Natalie also reflected on an art class that she was in, where the teacher decided to incorporate Indigenous art as one of the units that students would study. To begin, Natalie first shared that from the beginning of this unit, it felt like a “filler”, made to take up time between assessment blocks. She then explained that the teacher took a very pan-Indigenous approach, rather than exploring the local connection to the land that Indigenous art is rooted in. Students in this class were looking at

totem poles at the same time as Métis beadwork and not being taught the history or cultural significance of these. Natalie concluded by noting that “it all felt very performative.”

When Marlowe was reflecting on her experience with curriculum and Indigenous content, she too expressed a sense that teachers were rushing through Indigenous histories. When sharing a story about her Grade 11 History class, Marlowe shared that she was hoping the course would include women’s suffrage, the women’s rights movement, and Indigenous sovereignty. She shared that I felt like I wanted to learn about that so much and it was just always about war. Canada becoming a country, which I guess is important. How many times can you learn that or hear that story before you're like, ‘Okay, let's move on.’” Marlowe then went on to note that “for me, I felt like a lot of the teachers I had seen seemed they were bored with the material and they weren't very open to hearing how the students wanted to learn, which is everybody learns in such a different way. I feel some teachers were so stuck to the way they do things every year that there was no room for change.” Through this excerpt, notions of inhospitable learning become quite clear. Through stagnant, unresponsive pedagogies, to disengaged and/or uninformed teachers, Marlowe’s experience highlights the importance of curriculum to creating and maintaining hospitable learning environments.

Settler Pedagogies

While sharing their experiences with curriculum, all five participants reflected on their experiences navigating pedagogies that do not come from an Indigenous worldview. These imposing pedagogies were often in direct contrast to Indigenous ways of knowing, and did not help to facilitate student learning. When asked to share the ways in which she likes to learn, Frank explained that she was a hands-on, tactile learner who did not enjoy being seated for too long. Frank explained that for much of her school life, sitting still and completing worksheets

was what was expected, and therefore what was also rewarded. In reflecting on this, it was explained how many Indigenous ways of knowing are inherently tactile in nature, upon which Frank expressed a desire to learn in such a way. Marie also had similar experiences to Frank with respect to navigating imposing settler pedagogies. Marie frequently noted the prevalence of Western-centric teaching methods, and that attempts to add diversity to curriculum and pedagogy normally took the form of viewing documentaries which almost exclusively came from a settler perspective. When asked to respond to this, both participants expressed feeling as though there had been many missed opportunities to engage with Indigenous pedagogies in ways that would have deepened student understanding of the concepts being taught in a very concrete way.

When Zoya was explaining her experiences with teacher pedagogy, she expressed frustration with what she called “receive, regurgitate” teaching. Zoya explained that in most of her classes, what was expected and rewarded was the ability to receive content, remember it, and then recall it for a test or assessment, often resulting in an inevitable forgetting of the same content just a few weeks later. Zoya then went on to contrast this to the tactile nature of Indigenous pedagogies, sharing “what I've learned culturally as an Indigenous person, it's a lot of hands-on. I've done medicine picking, it's all hands-on, right? I've done medicine picking and I've learned about different medicines and also sewing, just different things that require your hands. I can do those well, but listen and regurgitate? I can't.”

As Natalie was explaining what she would like to see done differently in schools, the topic of land-based learning came up. Natalie explained how in a university biology course she had taken, she was brought out to the land for each class. This resulted in Natalie realizing how many lessons are waiting to be taught on the land, not by a teacher, but by nature itself. Natalie shared that there was not much land-based learning throughout her high school experience, and

that this was a huge missed opportunity. Natalie shared that “land-based is so important, it gives you such a unique way of teaching in general. Just being out there in the real world, just to see and feel and look and just being out there in nature, connected. It's allowing students to view things as, everything has a life, plants have a life, water has a life, animals have a life, they all have a role too.” In reflecting on this, it was expressed how unfortunate it is that Natalie had to wait until university to have a pedagogical experience that took her out onto the land. This also reminded me of the relationship to land, and the host-guest positioning, with land being centered as the true host to all peoples on these territories. It is clear to see the many curricular areas that could be reached by simply bringing students out of the classroom and onto the land. It was Natalie’s hope that, moving forward, land-based learning would be a key component of the curriculum for future students.

As Marlowe shared her experiences with curriculum and pedagogy, she noted that the dominant pedagogies in school often feel rigid and impersonal. Marlowe shared that her home life in school was not ideal, and that she felt this should be a factor when relating to, teaching, and assessing student growth. Marlowe shared that “there was no flexibility with students who maybe don't have a great home life and can't do boatloads of homework when they get home or focus in class. I guess if I could change something, I wish that I could learn more. I don't know if there ever will be a perfect way to find out if every kid is absorbing all of it but I did feel maybe the teachers could have done more to check in with students.” Marlowe then went on to discuss the importance of teaching wellbeing from an Indigenous perspective. Marlowe explained how approaching personal health from the perspective of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing would have provided students with valuable skills as they entered adulthood, and that this would have been an exceptionally beneficial teaching to receive while in school.

Instrumentalization of Identity

One of the subthemes that emerged in three out of five participants was the experience of participants having to educate, by request of the teacher, their peers when Indigenous topics were brought into the classroom. Marie shared that frequently she would be asked to educate the class on a certain topic related to Indigenous content, or would feel the need to defend herself, and her people from violent rhetoric. In one instance, Marie recalled having to educate her peers on the legacy of Louis Riel, as they were pushing the narrative that he was a “traitor.” Marie felt that the teacher in this scenario did not control the classroom, and allowed these views to go unchallenged, despite being deeply offensive and violent to other students in the room. Marie then felt that, rather than being able to participate in the lesson as other students were, she was forced into a position of defence. Marie noted that she often personally enjoyed this positioning, however, upon further reflection, and from the perspective of a future teacher, realized that constantly putting youth in the position where they need to defend their own heritage and identity from slander and misinformation is not effective pedagogy. Once more, Marie noted that having a teacher who was competent in Indigenous history, or using community resources, would have made this a more educational experience for everyone.

Similarly, Zoya and Natalie were both frequently put into the position of *educator* while in school. Zoya pointed out that this was such a common occurrence in her high school, that it was an ongoing joke amongst Indigenous students. She explained, “it’s a going joke. Everyone who’s in high school or anything who is an Indigenous person knows that if you’re going to talk about something Indigenous in the class, immediately a teacher will go, ‘and if you have anything you want to say or add, just let me know and you can if there’s something incorrect,’ it happens every time.” Again, Zoya explained that she personally did not mind this, however,

realized that as a student she should not have had to take on this role so frequently. Additionally, Zoya mentioned that many of her Indigenous peers would feel quite anxious, and some would even miss class to avoid being singled out and asked to educate others. In one case, Zoya explained that one of her close friends actually took additional years to graduate, as their anxiety levels when at school were overwhelmingly high, and that being called-out in class was a large contributing factor to this.

In Natalie's experience, she too, on numerous occasions, was asked to speak for Indigenous people on a wide range of topics, and would frequently be asked to educate her peers on topics that appeared throughout the year. Natalie reflected on a particularly troubling instance that occurred when she was around the age of 9 or 10 years old. When discussing Indigenous peoples in her elementary class, Natalie shared the following story: "I didn't know this was bad until I told my mom years later, but because I was the only First Nation student in that class, she [the teacher] outed me in a sense where she was like, 'today, class, we have our very own First Nations student with us.' It was so awkward. I didn't know what to do." Natalie explained that now as an adult she recognizes the harm that can be caused, especially through the use of words like "our" that imply a sense of ownership. Natalie explained how this experience left her feeling confused and embarrassed, having been put on display as if she were an object, rather than a child seeking an education.

Deficit Narratives

A recurring subtheme with four out of five participants was the use of deficit narratives within the curriculum, or incorporated inadvertently through teacher pedagogy. While Frank was explaining her experience with curriculum, she explained how infrequently she hears her people being talked about in a positive way. Frank shared that:

I think most of the time Indigenous culture is brought up because of what's happened in the past and they don't really bring up all the good things that's happened or our traditions or anything. I don't hear that often, but when I do, it's really nice. That club, that credit I got, that was actually the first time I was learning about something that wasn't just grim and dark.

Frank went on to note that she hopes that moving forward, teachers remember to focus on the positive, strength-based aspects of Indigenous culture as well.

As Marie was reflecting on what she would change, if she could, about schooling, she also recognized how the only times her people were discussed in class, it was usually done so with deficit thinking. Marie shared that “there was no beauty. It was very much historical; this happened, historical this happened, and so on, so on. There was no now for us, it was always in the past and it was always all this stuff happened and it was really bad.” Marie explained how frequently Indigenous people and culture is presented as a monolith, unchanging and of the past, and how damaging this can be to both Indigenous people, as well as settlers in the classroom who are missing out on opportunities for connection and reflection.

While Zoya was describing her experiences in school, she recalled a fieldtrip that her class went on to a homeless shelter in Winnipeg’s downtown area. Zoya explained how little pre-teaching went into this, and how uncomfortable it made her to see her classmates, most of whom were white, viewing a largely Indigenous population experiencing homelessness. Zoya shared how, because so little teaching occurred before the trip, she feared her classmates would leave with even more stereotypes about Indigenous people than before. Zoya wrapped up her recount by adding “it felt like we were taken on a trip to look at homeless people.” Zoya shared that this experience made her feel rather resentful towards some of her peers, who came from a place of privilege, and who she felt were having their biases confirmed by the fieldtrip.

While Marlowe was speaking of her experiences within the school system, on numerous occasions the theme of deficit thinking became apparent. When reflecting on what advice she would give school leaders and policy makers, Marlowe explained “don't only talk about the hardships, but also talk about the successes of Indigenous people because there's great Indigenous music, there's great Indigenous fashion, and I think it would be nice if we added that as well to the curriculum.” Marlowe also went on to share that she hopes that the curriculum is beginning to change in a way that Indigenous students feel like their true story is being told, and that they actually get a say in how their story is told.

Social Relations

After sharing their experiences with curriculum and pedagogy, participants explored the relationships that developed within their school experiences. In particular, the relationships with their teachers, as well as their peers were examined in relation to educational hospitality. From these conversations, the themes of teacher relationality, overt racism, and solidarity with oppressed students surfaced. In addition, the sub-theme of teacher representation also emerged as a significant contributor to hospitality within the category of social relations.

Teacher Relationality

Across all five research conversations, the theme of establishing relationality with teachers surfaced. In some cases, participants had a strong working relationship with their teachers, however, in other cases, participants felt that their teachers did not get to know them as individuals, and carried with them deficit thinking and interpretations that often left participants questioning whether or not they were being treated a certain way because they were Indigenous. While Frank was discussing the relationships with her teachers, she mentioned frequently having

to defend herself from misinterpretation by her teachers. Frank shared that on many occasions, teachers made assumptions about her attendance, home life, or ability to handle school work. Frank shared the story of being called into the principal's office, where she was made to feel a sense of shame. Frank explained that "I must admit my attendance wasn't the best, but it wasn't horrible either. She [the teacher] was talking about how I was rude and I ended up having to apologize. She was asking me if I had at-home problems, so why I wasn't at school every day, which really bothered me because I was like, 'I did not miss enough school for you to ask that.'" Frank went on to explain that she often questioned whether or not her Indigeneity was the reason for the teacher to question her home life, and immediately jump to deficit thinking when her attendance was less than ideal. Frank went on to speculate that "Teachers questioned me probably because I'm Indigenous, because I cannot see them asking the other students that." While reflecting on this occurrence, Frank explained that whether or not she was being treated a certain way because she was Indigenous, the fact that she had to question this was the larger issue.

While Marie was explaining her schooling experience with teachers, she noted that most of her relationships with teachers were rather uninspiring. Marie shared that as she got older, she began to push against authority which challenged the relationship with her teachers, however, she never questioned whether or not she was being treated a certain way because she was Indigenous. When asked to reflect on a teacher who did make an impact, Marie shared the story of a teacher who was leading a storytelling workshop where students were invited to share a personal story to the group. On the day Marie was planning to share, the class ran out of time and she felt quite upset that she would not get to tell her story. Her teacher invited her to come back over lunch hour and share, which Marie explained as being "really nice." While reflecting on this

story, Marie noted how it may seem small or insignificant, but having her teacher set aside time to connect with her created a lasting memory.

Similarly, Zoya shared stories of teachers throughout her public-school education who positively shaped her school experience. In particular, Zoya reflected on being invited to speak with the senior administration of her school division with the goal of giving advice on how they might better support Indigenous students across the division. Zoya shared that “he [divisional superintendent] was there to discuss things with us. He joined us, and he would sit with us and talk with us. He would talk about different ways that we could have inclusivity in the schools. He was amazingly supportive with different things like that.” Zoya was a part of a group of Indigenous students who frequently met with senior administration, which made her and her peers feel that they were cared for, seen, and supported by divisional staff. Zoya also reflected on the fact that she also was a very “likeable” student with good attendance, strong academics, and a sociable nature that made her experience with teachers different than other Indigenous students in her school. Zoya shared that she knew of many students who did not have similar experiences, and that her ability to easily navigate the settler school system enabled her to make strong relationships with those who work within it.

Similar to Zoya, Natalie also cited the ability of teachers to establish relationality as a key component within feeling a sense of hospitality. When discussing a teacher who helped establish a sense of hospitality, Natalie referenced an Indigenous studies teacher who, despite being white, would attend Indigenous cultural events, such as sweats, as a way to get to know his students and their culture. Natalie explained that she was skeptical of this teacher at first, but he was eventually able to earn her, and her peers’ trust. Natalie also shared instances of teachers who did not take the time to get to know her, and how this did not contribute to a sense of hospitality in

their classes. Natalie explained that overall, she did not feel that her teachers were attempting to develop any meaningful relationship with her. Natalie shared that “there was just no emotional support. There's no emotional connection. It's faculty to students. It was very much like, ‘I'm a teacher, you're a student. That's our relationship.’ There's no care. There's no love. You know what I mean? It was just really nothing.” In comparing the teacher who Natalie felt a connection to, and the others with whom she did not, Natalie recognized that it was the seemingly simple act of a teacher taking the time to get to know their students outside of the classroom, and outside of the content area being taught. This instance in comparison to the emotionally void atmosphere that she and her peers navigated highlighted the importance of teacher and student relationality in creating and maintaining hospitable learning environments.

Marlowe expressed a feeling of dissimilarity with her teachers, feeling as though they couldn't quite relate to her in a way that made her feel like she belonged within her school. Marlowe shared that “I feel like when you're in school, it always feels like teachers never really catch anything.” This statement was in reference to Marlowe expressing a sense of disconnect from school, and being questioned whether or not her teachers noticed this and made any attempt to get to know her, or offer her additional supports. Marlowe stated that overall, she did not feel a sense of relationality with her teachers, which felt to her like a missed opportunity.

Overt Racism and Race-Based Incivility

A recurring theme with four out of five participants was that of overt racism and race-based incivility occurring within classroom spaces. In particular, the unchallenged racist language that was often used in class that went unaddressed, or inadequately addressed by teachers. This theme is placed in the category of social relations, as it caused tensions between

participants and their peers, as well as participants and their teachers who failed to protect them from violent language in these moments.

Marie explained that she frequently encountered racist language directed at Indigenous people (as well as other groups) both in her classes as well as in the hallways of her school. Marie shared that her teachers did not stop the language, often ignoring it or pretending they did not hear it. Marie recalled feeling quite frustrated, sharing “if there was maybe an ignorance or something teachers were like, ‘oh, that's just people's opinions.’ It's like, ‘well, we don't think like that anymore. You don't say that.’ I feel like there was the space to be like, ‘share your thoughts,’ and everyone's accepted, but maybe some viewpoints need to be controlled and brought back to where we need to think now.” Marie noted how it would have actually made her feel a stronger connection with her teachers had they silenced the use of this rhetoric immediately.

Similarly, Zoya shared an experience where a teacher made a racist remark surrounding residential schools, essentially stating that they were not as bad as they were made to seem. Zoya explained that other students in the class tried to hold this teacher accountable and educate her, however, the teacher did not change her position. Further, the teacher did not apologize to the students in the room who she had harmed with her language. Zoya explained that she found this type of language to be extremely troubling, especially when the teacher was non-Indigenous and was speaking to a class with multiple Indigenous students in it, many of whom had relatives who attended residential school. Zoya then went on to share an experience she had at a school assembly where Indigenous people were performing traditional song and dance. Zoya shared that “it was an assembly. I overheard them [students] making fun of the singing. That's not the first time I've heard people who are non-Indigenous laugh and make fun of Indigenous culture,

especially throat singing, it's made fun of a lot by people who are non-Indigenous.” When asked what the teacher response was, Zoya noted that no teacher intervened, and in-fact, she had the sense that some of the teachers found the presentation to be “funny” as well. Zoya went on further, sharing that at one point during her high school experience, a private social media account was created which featured a group of students dancing around a fire in a way that mocked Indigenous people. Zoya shared how this made her have an extremely negative view of many of her peers who were either at the party, who liked the video, or who failed to intervene in what was a clearly racist act.

Similarly, Natalie had numerous experiences with overt racism throughout her school experience. Natalie shared one story where her teacher presented the class with the question “are Indigenous headdresses culturally significant, or just a regular hat?” Beyond this question being exceptionally ignorant, some students in the class felt that this was an invitation to espouse racist language. Natalie explained that a few students continued to push the narrative that the headdress was nothing more than a hat, and that this appeared to be completely acceptable by the teacher who felt that they were facilitating a rousing conversation with their students. Natalie explained how this made her relationship with both her teacher and her peers strained. Natalie also noted that there were a large group of students who took offense to the question, and voiced their anger to the teacher and class. Natalie also recalled an incident where an Indigenous student and their non-Indigenous peer got into a fight in class, at which point a racial slur was used against the Indigenous student. Once more, this language went unaddressed by the teacher in the room, despite the very public nature of the incident. Once more Natalie expressed that this changed the way she viewed this particular teacher, as well as the different students in the class who did not take issue with the use of racial slander directed at their Indigenous classmate.

Likewise, Marlowe shared many examples of overt racism and race-based incivility in her public-school education. The first story Marlowe shared took place when she was in grade 6 during rehearsals for her school's theatrical production of *Peter Pan*. Marlowe shared that her and the four other Indigenous students in the play were all given the roles of "Indians 1-4" and then were asked by the teacher to teach the other students how to drum and dance like they did in the movie version. Marlowe shared that "it was never acknowledged that those were offensive scenes or anything. I could just remember the discomfort of seeing these characters portrayed and look like my family or look like my friends or whatever and the disrespect of it." As Marlowe reflected on this experience, she expressed how she immediately developed a sense of distrust for the teachers who failed to interject and stop this humiliating, racist incident. Marlowe then went on to explain numerous other incidents that happened throughout her school experience. In one case, a French teacher was attempting to explain how the Métis nation came to be, and did so in an exceptionally racist way. In addition, Marlowe also shared the experience of having her peers laugh during a cultural presentation put on by Indigenous people during an assembly. Once more, her teachers failed to stop this, leaving Marlowe feeling further feel disconnected from both her peers as well as her teachers.

Solidarity with Oppressed Students

Throughout the research conversations, four out of five participants expressed a sense of solidarity with students who also experienced systemic oppression. In many cases, this took the form of feeling a sense of unity with other Indigenous students, newcomer students or student who were members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community. Marie explained that her school did not have a high number of Indigenous students, so she found comfort and safety in becoming friends with

the Nigerian students who had recently started at her school. Marie also explained how she eventually found another Indigenous student, who she immediately became close with.

Similarly, Zoya and Natalie expressed a sense of solidarity with the BIPOC and Muslim students in their schools. Zoya explained that she did not feel a sense of familiarity with white students in her school, or with students who came from traditional family arrangements. Natalie shared that her friend group was “very diverse” and included students from Asia, Black students, Indigenous students, and students from the 2SLGBTQ+ community. Natalie shared that when she was with this group of friends, she felt safe, and like they somehow understood her in a way that her other peers could/would not.

Marlowe attended a school with a higher population of Indigenous students than the other participants in this study. Marlowe explained how her school was mostly Indigenous and white students, and that she always made friends with the Indigenous students, as she felt that they had a shared worldview as well as shared experiences of systemic and institutional oppression. While reflecting on this, Marlowe shared that her group of friends appeared rough, which created a sense of unity, and that perhaps this served as a form of protection for her.

Teacher Representation

The sub-theme of teacher representation (or lack of) emerged as a sub-theme throughout research conversations. All participants touched on the fact that they had never had a teacher who was Indigenous, or who never discussed being Indigenous with the class. Marie shared that she “never had an indigenous teacher that I knew that. Even if they were Métis or something, I never knew. I was like more representation, and I know there should not be a quota to be like, ‘Hire indigenous people,’ but there needs to be more opportunities for indigenous kids to become teachers. That goes for all races for me, and cultures where it's just like we need more teachers

that look like the kids.” This feeling was echoed by Natalie who expressed how frustrating it was to have only white teachers throughout her school career. Natalie explained how not only were there no Indigenous teachers at her school, there were only two BIPOC teachers in what was quite a large high school. As participants reflected on why teacher representation was important, they expressed the importance of teachers being reflective of the populations they serve, and how a racially homogenous teaching faculty often resulted in one worldview taking precedence over others.

Physical Spaces

During our conversations surrounding physical spaces, participants explored their experiences with the physical layout of their schools, and the extent to which Indigeneity was “allowed” into these spaces. From these conversations, the themes of having a space to gather and the importance of visual representations of Indigenous culture emerged. In addition, the sub-theme of smudging within the school was also positioned as being important in establishing hospitality for Indigenous students.

A Space to Gather

All participants cited the importance of having a physical space within their school to gather with other Indigenous students as contributing to a sense of hospitality. In particular, Frank mentioned how she felt an immediate sense of calm and relaxation when she was able to sit in a circle with her peers during Indigenous student meetings. Frank went on to note that sitting in a circle in other classes also provided a similar sense of calm. When asked if she had a space to gather with Indigenous students in her school, Marie explained that there likely weren’t enough Indigenous students to make a group, but that if such a group were to exist, she imagines she would have been a keen participant in it. Natalie and Marlowe also explained the

significance and importance of having a group of Indigenous students with whom they could gather. Both Natalie and Marlowe explained how being in circle with their peers provided a sense of community that they missed in their other classes. Marlowe in particular noted how important creating such a space was, sharing “I think just sitting in a desk and looking forward in this hard chair is such a hard way to learn. Which is so funny because when people were working from home, people were like, ‘Urgh, I hate sitting in this chair all day.’ It’s like, that’s what school is [laughs]. That’s what we’re doing to the children.” In Marlowe and Natalie’s cases, they did not have a designated space in which to gather with Indigenous students, however, they were provided with opportunities to meet and share while in circle, a memory that they recalled with fondness.

Zoya explained how she and other Indigenous students pushed for her school to create a space for Indigenous students to gather, a request that was eventually answered. In this space, Indigenous students and allies would have lunch together, meet, smudge, and talk. Zoya explained how having a space like this led to a strong sense of community amongst the Indigenous students in her school, and allowed new students and students who had just moved from their reserves to experience a sense of belonging to a group of supportive peers. Zoya shared that “if you’re going to make a space, if you’re going to create an environment where you want Indigenous students to feel welcome, there’s nothing more connecting to Indigenous students or Indigenous people than other Indigenous people.” Zoya then went on to reflect on the impact that having this space had on Indigenous students at her school, saying “I think that was crucial for that environment, for those students, because I know some of them hated school, and they hated being there, but they liked going to the committee meetings, which was really good.”

Zoya shared that a school being willing to create such a space, in her mind, demonstrated an ethic of educational hospitality, as well as a willingness to learn.

Visual Representations of Indigeneity

Visual representations of Indigenous culture, often taking the form of *authentic* art became a strong theme when discussing hospitable physical environments. All five participants shared that they felt a sense of belonging when they saw local Indigenous culture being represented on school walls and displays. Frank mentioned how her school library had locally made posters that represented the turtle, as well as the seven sacred teachings, and that she enjoyed having them in such a public place. Frank explained that having the posters presented made her feel that aspects of her culture were being somewhat recognized by her school.

Marie, Zoya, Natalie and Marlowe all shared how they appreciated seeing Indigenous student artwork displayed across their schools. Zoya explained that, in a previous school with a high Indigenous population, student artwork covered the school's walls and ceilings. Zoya shared that when she walked through this school, she felt like her teachers were proud of their students, and that students were encouraged to share aspects of their culture and identity with their peers and teachers, and that this made her feel a sense of hospitality and comfort. Zoya noted that "I remember high schools, different schools up north on reserve and that, that are a majority of indigenous students. It's probably 90%, and the rest of them are Metis somehow. You would see, you would walk into the hallways, and there would be artwork, everything was art related, the walls and that. It wasn't Plain Jane white [walls] with poster, poster, poster, laminated poster here, laminated poster there." This highlighted the difference between authentic, student-generated art, and mass-produced "art" that can be found at teacher supply stores. In addition, Marie, Natalie and Marlowe shared that they felt it was more authentic, and

more welcoming when the artwork was made by the students, rather than having laminated posters all over the walls. In reflecting on this, all participants mentioned feelings of comfort, feeling relaxed, as well as feeling celebrated.

Smudging

Three out of five participants shared that smudging lead them to feel a sense of hospitality within the physical school building. Frank explained that when she smelled sweetgrass burning, it reminded her of her auntie and made her feel like she was at home, she shared that “I do like when I can smell sweetgrass. It definitely reminds me of my auntie and what she taught as kids.” This directly related to the sense of feeling “at home” while at school, a central component inherent within educational hospitality. Frank shared that smudging did occur within her physical school building, and that even if she wasn’t participating, just having the scent present in the halls made her feel a sense of belonging and feeling at home within the school.

Both Zoya and Natalie shared that they had to request for smudging to be allowed in the school building, and that this was a difficult endeavour. These participants shared that there was at times pushback from teachers or students who would have reasons against allowing smudging, despite their efforts to educate them. Zoya shared that when she first began at her school, the Indigenous students would have to smudge outside by the home economics doors. Zoya explained that in the winter this could be rather unpleasant, and at times made her and her peers feel like they were doing something wrong as they huddled against the outside wall. Zoya shared that “before smudging was allowed in the school, we had to go to the nearest exit, which happened to be the foods room, which happened to be right beside the doors. When we would smudge, it would be, if it was winter, we would go out one at a time, but as we would just go out

there to do that.” Zoya explained how frustrating it became to have teachers and students use excuses about allergies or smoke sensitivity, which delayed her group’s goal of having smudging inside the physical school space. Both Zoya and Natalie agreed that being able to smudge inside the school, as well as being able to smell sage and sweetgrass burning throughout the day was a sign that their schools were responsive to them, thus creating a sense of hospitality.

Chapter 5: Discussions and Implications for Practice

The Indigenous population in Manitoba continues to be the fastest growing demographic in the province, with close to 20% of residents claiming Indigenous ancestry (Statistics Canada, 2016). This has also been a population that has continuously been targeted, marginalized and disenfranchised directly through the school system, with policies and practices designed to perpetuate white dominance. This study was conducted in order for teachers, administrators, and policy makers to critically examine their role(s) within the education system, and begin to resist and challenge the systems and structures inherent within school settings that perpetuate colonialism. Most importantly, the central aim of this study was to begin to address the factors that contribute to low graduation rates and high “drop out” rates among Indigenous students navigating the public-school system. This chapter examines the experiences of participants using the theoretical framework, drawing particular foci to the host and guest relationship. Next, the findings outlined in Chapter 4 will be compared to the literature review, highlighting both similarities, differences, and areas where further research is needed. Finally, implications for practice will be discussed utilizing the symbol of the medicine wheel to indigenize educational hospitality.

Indigenous Experiences of Hospitality

Viewing hospitality through the lens of Indigenous and settler history in Canada reveals a structure that is complex, violent, and oppressive. Exploring the concept of the host and guest relationship in this context is important. Specifically, questioning the notion of who is *host* and who is *guest* demands further critique, specifically within the context of this work. Positioning Indigenous students as guests while simultaneously being on their traditional territories does not seem appropriate, however, while at school this positioning might be more of a spectrum rather

than a binary. Specifically, I argue that there is room for nuance between the binaries of host and guest as well as conditional and unconditional hospitality, as these binaries reinforce and perpetuate Western-centric ways of knowing and thinking. These positionalities underscore much of the tension throughout Indigenous and settler history, and can be felt within the walls of schools to this day. Specifically, I explain how the ideology *terra nullius* has manifested itself within educational spaces, with settlers failing to view the ways in which Indigenous people educate(d) their children as true education, bringing up the concept of “*education nullius*.”

Additionally, a significant understanding emerged within this data related to educational hospitality. Although participants were navigating a largely *inhospitable* education system, they often found moments of hospitality wherein they were enabled to center themselves in their own learning and experiences within curriculum, relations, and spaces. In this way, participants generated microspaces of hospitality where they were, for a moment, able to experience a sense of educational hospitality while at school, despite the larger system being overwhelmingly inhospitable.

Who is the host and who is the guest?

In her work *As we Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance*, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2017) writes of life pre-contact on Turtle Island. She describes a place where the water is pure and sweet, where tall grass prairies and dense forests thrive, and where communities are connected, diverse, and in harmony. She writes: “it sounds idyllic, because compared to now, it was idyllic. Our knowledge system, the education system, the economic system of the Michi Saagiig Nishinaabeg were designed to promote more life. Our way of living was designed to generate life – not just human life but the life of all living things” (p. 3). This is a valuable reminder when one begins to question the notion of the host/guest

relationship that has played out on these lands since first contact. What is particularly important notion to be reminded of is that immediately after the initial contact with Europeans, and in the following decades, Indigenous peoples embodied the very essence of unconditional hospitality, taking newcomers in, curing them of disease, and teaching them how to survive in a foreign land. Derrida (2000) writes of unconditional hospitality, problematizing it explaining that if hospitality is truly unconditional, eventually the *guest* will occupy the position of *host* due to the lack of conditions present. The history of Indigenous peoples and settlers highlight in a concrete way this phenomenon occurring. By all standards, Indigenous people were exceptional hosts, and were under no obligation to be as hospitable as they were. The newly arrived Europeans, however, maintained the position that they had “found” “*terra nullius*”, and were therefore under no obligation to respect the people, plants, animals, and systems that thrived on these lands for millennia (S. Denis, 2020). As the settler population grew, so too did efforts to take lands, language, and bodies from the Indigenous population. In this way, colonization can be viewed as a disruptive, selfish, and disrespectful guest continuing to push their values and beliefs onto a welcoming, tolerant, and selfless population until they feel they have comfortably occupied the role of “host.” Even once the position of host has been established, the practices, institutions, and systems of colonialism remain in place to ensure that the original hosts of these lands are unable to reclaim their original host status (Fontaine & McCaskill, 2022).

Derrida (2000) writes of absolute, or unconditional, hospitality noting that “to put it in different terms, absolute hospitality requires that I give not only to the foreigner, but to the absolute, to the unknown, anonymous other, and that I *give place* to them, that I let them come, that I let them arrive, and take a place in the place I offer them” (p. 25). The lack of conditions present for the newcomer Europeans makes clear how hospitable the Indigenous population was.

Westmoreland (2008) writes that in order to be considered unconditional hospitality, there can be no invitation, nor can there be any expectation of reciprocity. In this way, the host opens themselves up to the possibility that the guest could, if they chose to, overtake the guest's space, thereby making it the space of the guest. In considering this, it becomes further apparent how Indigenous peoples were (and I argue spiritually remain to be) hosts to a rather loud, unruly, and disrespectful guest. In this way, a tension emerges that problematizes the conditional versus unconditional binary that is put forward by both Ruitenberg (2011a) and Derrida (2000). This binary operates within the presupposition that the original host lives within a worldview that land, people, and place are things that can actually be owned and controlled by individuals. Within an Indigenous worldview, however, the land and the resources that surround and inhabit community could never be owned (Sontechild, 2020). In this way, Indigenous people could not have fathomed that offering unconditional hospitality to their new guests could have resulted in such disrespect. Because of this, the binaries of conditional vs unconditional seem inappropriate within an Indigenous worldview, and highlight the epistemology and ontology of Western thought being diametrically opposed to that of Indigenous peoples. In offering unconditional hospitality, if host and guest are operating within an Indigenous worldview, the original host is able to continue to maintain "mastery" of the home, as understandings of ownership of people, places, and bodies do not exist. Blair Stonechild (2020) writes that "what purveyors of history are loathe to admit is that if the original cultures of the Americas had been allowed to continue unmolested or if the newcomers had been more respectful, a far healthier and more stable civilization would have emerged" (p. 61). This excerpt highlights the tension that exists in unconditional hospitality – the reckoning that there exists a possibility for the guest to subjugate the host, thereby creating the illusion that the guest is now actually the "host," imposing their

laws and ways of life in a relatively short amount of time. Ruitenberg (2011a) writes that “hospitality is all about giving space to the guest and not about the host controlling that space – but without the host fully surrendering the space to the guest, because then he or she would no longer be host, hence no longer in a position to offer hospitality” (p. 134). This further illustrates how the binaries of conditional and unconditional hospitality perpetuate Western ideals of ownership and control, ideologies that were, and are, incoherent within an Indigenous worldview. This becomes important within this study, as the offering of unconditional hospitality is needed within school spaces, however it need not be synonymous with the notions of transfer of power. In fact, what I argue is required to promote and sustain educational hospitality for Indigenous students is a power structure that is not vertical in nature, but rather circular, fluid, and nuanced.

The themes that emerged throughout this study point to a system that, despite claiming to be committed to inclusion, is overall inhospitable to Indigenous people. I believe that this inhospitality has its origins in the same belief that allowed Europeans to colonize these lands – *terra nullius*. In the same way that settlers viewed these territories as having “no master”, so too did they fail to see the rich, deep learning that was occurring within Indigenous communities. In this way, the concept of “*education nullius*” becomes apparent. In not seeing the rich learning that was occurring on these lands as true education, settlers felt they could impose their imported ideologies of education onto these territories, and subjugate Indigenous children to them. It is from this racist ideology that the residential school system became “justified” by the recently arrived settlers. Although the physical institutions of residential schools no longer exist, I argue that the ideology of *education nullius* continues, and helps to explain why the education system is largely inhospitable for Indigenous learners, as it presupposes the superiority of Western

pedagogies while simultaneously discounting or excluding Indigenous ways of teaching and learning.

Further, within these spaces, the teacher occupies a vertical positioning in which they maintain power vis-à-vis their students. This does not necessarily mean that these spaces are automatically inhospitable, however, what is revealed is that there is little room for movement between power relations. This understanding of power relations, I argue, is directly correlated with understandings of host and guest positions, as well as conditional vs unconditional hospitality. The ability to fluctuate between host and guest, while also offering unconditional hospitality within an Indigenous worldview do not presuppose the granting of power or control when the host and guest positioning is nuanced. Within this study, the moments in which students felt a sense of hospitality were when they occupied power over their space, with their teachers facilitating this. From this understanding, I argue that a hospitable space allows room for nuance and fluidity, and is not vertical in nature, but rather, is circular.

Within educational contexts, this understanding further complicates the dynamics between Indigenous students and their non-Indigenous teachers within classroom spaces, as Indigenous people are the true hosts of this land, however, might be positioned as guest while in a classroom space. It is from this tension that I propose that a duality may exist – that Indigenous students may co-occupy both host and guest positions, and also move between these positions throughout their school day. When Zoya was explaining some of the initiatives within her school that made her feel a sense of hospitality, she explained how often her Indigenous student group would meet with other students, welcome them into their space, and teach them about aspects of Indigeneity. In this sense, it becomes clear to see how Zoya was operating from both a host and a guest positionality, and that this presented her with a feeling of hospitality. This fluidity allows

for nuance and multiplicity, which makes the question of who is truly host and who is truly guest when the teacher occupies a settler positionality, and the student occupies an Indigenous positionality, all the more flexible.

If Indigenous students, while at school, can move in between a host and guest positioning, could it be that they may also be able to operate these positions simultaneously? In this way, Indigenous students would be positioned as the true hosts of these lands called Canada, however, while in the setting of a school, they may also move between the position of host and guest, depending on the setting in which they find themselves. In other words, Indigenous people, in whichever setting or institution they are in, remain in a constant position of host on these territories, however, they may also fluctuate between the position of host and guest simultaneously, depending on the context. In a school setting, the majority of a student's day is largely spent in the position of *guest*, however, this positioning has the ability to change, and indeed, *should* change when demanded or required by the student. At Zoya's school, she, and a group of other Indigenous students asked for a place to gather with other Indigenous students. In this way, the guest (Zoya) was asking for a space from the host (her teachers) in which she, and her peers, may take the position of host. Zoya explained that this experience led to a greater sense of hospitality. This highlights the nuance present within this study, in that in receiving an unconditional gift (Ruittenberg, 2011a) from the host, the guest is able to move into the position of host. In the case of Zoya, however, this positioning would move back to the stance of guest upon leaving the space in which she requested. I take up this concept later in this chapter, where I utilize the symbol of the medicine wheel to conceptualize what Indigenized hospitality might be.

Microspaces and Micropractices of Hospitality

The stories within this study revealed a largely inhospitable environment for students, wherein teachers maintained a vertical power structure, and participants were largely made to feel not at home while navigating physical, social, and curricular spaces at school. At times, however, under certain conditions, participants *did* experience a sense of hospitality. I argue that these experiences can be seen as microspaces of hospitality, wherein the host (teachers) relinquish their control over their physical, social, and curricular spaces, and allowed Indigenous students to become the (temporary) hosts. It was within these small, fleeting moments that participants experienced senses of hospitality.

Within accounts of participants of this study expressing instances of perceived hospitality within their K-12 education, was a through-line in which microspaces of hospitality emerged as significant. Bendixson and Wyller (2019) write of micro-spaces of hospitality, and explain that “Derrida has been critiqued for limiting his discussion on hospitality to that of state-based actions and for centering it on sovereign power. This limits the potential to look at the multiple practices of hospitality – micropractices of hospitality – that nonetheless can have substantial consequences on practices and values at both the structural and institutional level in the longer run” (p. 7). This makes it clear how although participants may be operating within a seemingly inhospitable system, there are instances of microspaces and micropractices of hospitality. Microspaces in this context refers to a physical place or setting in which participants felt a sense of hospitality within a larger system that did not feel hospitable. Similarly, micropractices of hospitality refers to the individual actions of people who operate within these inhospitable systems to briefly or momentarily offer a sense of hospitality.

Microspaces of hospitality

Perhaps the most poignant instance of a participant feeling a sense of hospitality within a larger system that was largely *inhospitable* was that of Zoya, who shared the significance of having a physical space to gather with other Indigenous students. Although most of Zoya's school day was spent navigating inhospitable pedagogies and attitudes, she expressed an immediate sense of belonging when in the space meant for Indigenous students. The concept of microspaces of hospitality was highlighted when Zoya shared that "I think that [the space for Indigenous students] was crucial for that environment, for those students, because I know some of them hated school, and they hated being there, but they liked going to the committee meetings, which was really good." In this way, Zoya and her peers were able to experience a microspace of hospitality, even when they expressed a strong dislike towards school. Once more, Zoya and her Indigenous peers also took on the role of host within these spaces, while visitors and allies occupied the position of *guest*. This allowed for a sense of hospitality to occur, even though it was temporary.

Similarly, Frank noted how the smell of sweetgrass led her to a feeling of hospitality, and to a sense of connection with her relatives. Although Frank was operating within a larger context of colonial education, the act of bringing sweetgrass into the physical building, and having this smell be noticeable throughout the school was a small action that led to a momentary sense of hospitality – feeling of being "at home" (Ruitenberg, 2011). In fact, four out of five participants highlighted the importance of smudging within the physical school building, rather than being pushed outside, as leading to a greater sense of hospitality. Even when participants were unable, or experienced resistance to smudging inside their schools shared their feelings, they expressed that having smudging occur within their physical school building *would* have led to a greater

sense of hospitality while at school. The smell of a smudge dissipates quickly, and occurs rather infrequently throughout the school day, however, this led participants to feel a momentary sense that they had a place within their physical school spaces, thereby generating a sense of temporary hospitality, i.e. a microspace of hospitality.

Micropractices of hospitality

Participants spoke in-depth about small actions that some of their teachers took which led them to develop a greater sense of hospitality, a sense of feeling at home, while in school. Zoya, Marie, and Natalie all noted how they would like to see more artwork on display that was created by Indigenous students. These participants explained how when they would be in a classroom or in a common area within their schools, seeing student-generated artwork led to a sense of hospitality. In order for this to occur, however, individual teachers must invest the time and energy into creating the conditions necessary for Indigenous students to express themselves artistically. This is not mandated by the curriculum, and therefore requires that individual teachers take it upon themselves to center Indigenous art within their pedagogy. This once more points to a micropractice of hospitality, in which seemingly small acts of hospitality occur within a larger context that is largely inhospitable.

Similarly, Marie explained how special it was for her when an individual teacher set aside time for her to share her story over lunch hour. This story may appear seemingly insignificant, yet Marie was able to recall it many years later as leading her to a momentary sense of hospitality while at school. Once more, this points to the role that micropractices of hospitality have on a student's larger perceptions of the school system. Marie's teacher was under no obligation to set aside time to speak with her, however, took it upon themselves to connect with their student, thereby generating a micropractice of hospitality.

Frank, Nathalie, and Marlowe expressed that when teachers would set up their classrooms to be circular, they felt a sense of hospitality. Again, this occurred because an individual teacher deviated from traditional pedagogies, decentered their classroom space, and welcomed students into the circle. Natalie shared that “I felt safe sitting in circle. I felt he [the teacher] understood me, and that I could talk. Almost like I could relax a bit.” From Natalie’s perspective, the seemingly simple task of rearranging the seating in the classroom to be circular immediately led to a sense of calm and hospitality. Additionally, Marlowe expressed how much she valued sitting in circle, sharing “going back to the sitting in a circle thing, every time we came in the classroom and if the desks were moved or if they were put in a new space, everyone would be excited for class. Right? Imagine if it was like that once a week.” This excerpt directly points to the notion of a micropractice of hospitality, in that Marlowe recognized that sitting in circle was not a common pedagogical practice, however, that even just having this once per week would lead to a greater sense of connection and engagement within her school day, thereby generating a stronger sense of hospitality. Once more, Frank, Nathalie, and Marlowe’s teachers were under no obligation to move seats into a circle, and in fact, were positioned in spaces (classrooms) that do not lend themselves to this type of arrangement naturally. However, in temporarily modifying their teaching practice, they generated a sense of hospitality for the Indigenous students in their class.

A circle within a square

I appreciate the symbolism of a circle within a square classroom as highlighting a central tenet of microspaces and micropractices of hospitality. A traditional classroom has a whiteboard and projector at the front, with rows of students facing the same way, thereby positioning the teacher as the power-holder in the space. In introducing a circle into this space, a micropractice

of hospitality emerges, as the larger system is still clearly visible, yet is simultaneously accommodating an small component of an Indigenous pedagogy. The physical structure of the room remains unchanged; the projector and whiteboard are still at the front, so too (likely) is the teacher's desk. However, the circle is able to momentarily occupy this space, operating within the larger confines of an environment that does not lend itself to circular teaching and learning. Although schools are not designed for this type of learning, it is still possible if teachers make it so. This lies at the heart of accounts of microspaces and micropractices of hospitality, in that these occurrences run counter to systemic design, and require that powerholders within these spaces (i.e. teachers and administrators) find ways to bring aspects of indigeneity into seemingly rigid and fixed structures.

Curriculum

Participants explained in great detail the ways in which they did, nor did not connect to curriculum throughout their school experiences. In this section, the themes of disregarded Indigenous content, settler pedagogies, instrumentalizing identity, and deficit narratives will be further explored in relation to the existing literature within these themes. Additionally, the correlations between existing literature, as well as the ways in which this study's findings deviate from the literature will also be explored.

Disregarded Indigenous content

A common sentiment amongst participants was that they felt that if Indigenous content was being addressed in their classrooms, it was done in a way that felt "rushed." This was noted across all participants, and in particular, Marie who shared that "I feel like its maybe just going quickly over it [Indigenous content] so that they [teachers] can get on to the next thing." This feeling is discussed quite in depth in the literature surrounding Indigenous content and the

curriculum. Marie Battiste (2013) has titled this the “add and stir” model of Indigenizing education. Battiste writes that “the ‘add and stir’ model of bringing Aboriginal education into the curricula, environment, and teaching practices has not achieved the needed change, but rather, continues to sustain the superiority of Eurocentric knowledge and processes” (p. 28). This excerpt underscores much of what participants perceived when (and if) Indigenous content was actually brought into their content areas. Higgins et al. echoes this sentiment noting that “such a system causes white Euro-Canadian teachers too to become centralized as the curriculum privileges their identities, languages, and epistemologies, as well as settler versions of history” (p. 260). In this way, it becomes clear that the act of disregarding Indigenous content serves a much larger function, which is to uphold systems of white supremacy and dominance.

In addition to Indigenous content being overlooked, participants also felt that much of the Indigenous content they did “learn” was “sugar-coated.” This notion is also echoed by Battiste (2013) who writes that the purpose of educational institutions is to “create and transmit an imagined culture of Canada or the provinces in a market-driven society” (p. 29). By failing to accurately and intentionally examine Canadian history, teachers are able to continue operating under the “perfect stranger” (Dion, 2007) model, whereby they teach in the way they were taught, and from the same cultural lens in which they grew up. From this standpoint, instances of violence, genocide, and extreme injustice are able to be ignored, downplayed, or viewed as necessary. Galla & Holmes. (2020) write of this idea of “sugar coating” noting that “Western knowledge production – its processes, structures, methodologies, and ideologies – arouses a host of exclusionary practices and violences of the subtle, implicit, and unstated (and oftentimes unconscious) in its exercises of authority and dominion over the knowledge-making world” (p.

54). Once more, this underscores the notion that overlooked or “sugar-coated” content is a function of the design of the system, and isn’t a phenomenon that has occurred as a by-product.

Settler pedagogies

It likely does not come as a surprise that participants felt an overwhelming sense of settler pedagogies whilst in school. This is an area that is discussed extensively throughout the literature within the area of decolonizing education. Zoya spoke of having to participate in “receive, regurgitate” education, where she was primarily focused on remembering content without actually feeling like she had *learned* the content. This style of teaching has been widely critiqued as ineffective at producing critical, creative, and empathetic minds (Giroux, 2001), yet remains as hallmark within the Western education system. Battiste (2013) speaks of this directly, writing that “students regularly are memorizing textbook content without critiquing its origins, its practices, its outcomes, and its inequities. Whiteness is hidden in this system, because it never looks at itself, only the perceived ‘different other.’” (p. 106) Battiste then goes on to write that these hidden “norms” are then either rewarded or punished with low grades and outcomes to those who do not conform. In this way, the hidden curriculum (Giroux, 2001) becomes quite apparent, as working-class norms and values become rewarded. Giroux (2001) writes that “these pedagogical practices must also be decoded and measured against their potential to foster rather than hamper intellectual growth and social inquiry. This becomes particularly important for those students who experience daily the pain of humiliation and powerlessness because their own lived experiences are at odds with the dominant school culture” (p. 68). Giroux goes on to write that the antidote for this is for students to be “placed in classroom social relationships that affirm their own histories and cultures while at the same time providing them with the critical discourse they need to develop a self-managed existence” (p. 68). This notion was echoed by participants

who expressed a desire to participate in more culturally-relevant spaces as a way to move through curriculum. In particular, participants expressed a desire for more authentic, land-based pedagogy, which would empower them to learn in a way that is socially and culturally relevant. This sentiment is echoed by Grande (2015) who writes in detail of schooling and colonialist consciousness. In particular, Grande notes that “children and the reservoirs of local knowledge with which they come to school are not perceived as sufficient or valid foundation of real or universal knowledge” (p. 101). In this way, it becomes clear to see the significance of culturally relevant pedagogy in creating a sense of educational hospitality for Indigenous students. In delivering culturally relevant, land-based learning, Indigenous students are immediately put in the position of host over their own learning, thereby generating a sense of being “at home” within curriculum and pedagogy.

Instrumentalizing Identity

Participants expressed that on many occasions, when Indigenous content was actually (attempted to be) brought into their classrooms, they were often placed in the position of “teacher” without their consent or warning. The literature surrounding this offers potentially conflicting views. In one view, offering students the opportunity and space to share is viewed as a particularly effective pedagogical tool (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008). This practice has often been referred to as “student voice” (Mayes et al., 2019), and is characterized by students taking on a leadership role in their classroom or school communities, leading initiatives that are frequently overlooked by those in higher power positions within the school infrastructure. In this light, student voice sounds like a powerful tool for systemic change, and was embodied in Zoya and Natalie’s advocacy work in their respective schools. However, when student voice becomes conflated with the instrumentalization of identity, or, a student being forced to educate their

peers simply by belonging to a marginalized group, it leads to feelings of otherness, disconnect, and social anxiety (Grande, 2015). This practice becomes further problematic when one takes into account the perceived lack of cultural awareness possessed by the classroom teacher, or, the “perfect stranger” (Dion, 2007) positioning. In this way, a tension emerges for teachers. In their positioning, most teachers do not possess authentic, culturally relevant, local Indigenous knowledges, yet on the other hand, are being asked to incorporate Indigenous pedagogies across their curricula. Instrumentalizing the identity of their students becomes a way to continuously occupy the comfortable *perfect stranger* (Dion, 2007), or in the language of hospitality, an *alienated guest* while providing the illusion that they are, in fact incorporating Indigenous pedagogy by means of their own students.

Participants noted that at times their Indigenous peers felt such high levels of anxiety at the thought of being “called out” in class, that they would miss class all together. This further reinforces the theory put forward by Bradley and Renzulli (2011), which states that marginalized students do not “drop out” of school, but rather insidiously become *pushed out* from school through policies and practices that lead to a sense of unwelcome. This makes it clear that a clear distinction lies between student voice, which is voluntary and accommodated by the school and instrumentalization, which is forced, coercive, and allows teachers to continue operating under their *perfect stranger* positioning. This reinforces the need for teachers to provide the space for students to share, however, not demand that they actually do. This notion also draws many parallels to that of educational hospitality and “the empty chair” (Ruittenberg, 2011a), whereby school systems and structures remain unfixed, and ready to adapt when the needs of the unknown *other* demand so.

Deficit Narratives

The theme of deficit narratives emerged throughout every conversation I had with participants. This is also an area that is widely addressed throughout the literature, and unfortunately did not come as a surprise during my interactions with participants. Participants expressed that *if* Indigenous content was brought into their classrooms, more often than not, this was done with exceptionally negative narratives underscoring the lesson, often focussing primarily on the acts of dispossession, rather than on what it was that was being dispossessed. In approaching content this way, teacher's and settler students are unable to develop an emotional and spiritual connection to what was (almost) lost. Marie summed this up eloquently when she recalled that "there was no beauty," pointing to the need for strength-based teaching in schools surrounding Indigenous people. This type of teaching only reinforces negative beliefs rooted in racism, and has consequences that reach far beyond the classroom. Pollack (2012) writes of deficit narratives noting that they "may not explicitly state overt racist views, they clearly reveal an uncritical, taken-for-granted acceptance of historically based systems of social, economic, and educational inequities and the failure to see how these structural inequities affect school outcomes for students of colour" (p. 95). When this is coupled with classroom instruction that reinforces deficit thinking, dominant discourses will "continue to be reproduced maintaining the 'imaginary Indian' as 'the Indian' Canadian's have in mind" (Dion, 2007, pg. 330). It becomes clear to see how this system not only perpetuates settler domination, but also reinforces the negative assumptions that allow these systems to go unchallenged and unaddressed by those who hold power within them. Manu Sharma (2018) writes in depth of the power of deficit thinking, and notes that not only does deficit thinking reinforce negative stereotypes, it also restricts social class mobility amongst BIPOC students, as teachers accept these deficit "norms" and lower

expectations for marginalized students, thus limiting their ability to achieve high outcomes in their school careers.

Shields et al. (2005) write that deficit thinking about students can be viewed in a pseudo-scientific model whereby deficit thinking is used to pathologize marginalized students. In this way, marginalized students are viewed as a deviation from the “norm,” and further marginalized through hegemonic discourses. Shields et al. (2005) write that this pathologized thinking has its roots in colonization, writing that:

At the time, colonization was deemed by many as intrinsically beneficial, if not desirable, for Indigenous societies and their transition to a European/Western mode of social organization... Policies and practices based on these views persisted well into the second half of the twentieth century, with notions of ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’ being perceived largely as antithetical, positioned on extreme ends of a linear evolutionary development (p. 3).

Participants expressed a feeling of “otherness” when listening to deficit narratives in their classes. This feeling indirectly points to a “deviation from the norm” addressed by Shields, which simultaneously allows for pathologized thinking to occur. Similarly, within this excerpt it becomes clear that, although it is necessary to teach authentic history, this must also be coupled with strength-based narratives of Indigenous people so that students are able to not only understand what happened, but are able to emotionally connect to the beauty of what was almost lost. In doing so, a critical awareness emerges that questions how a country that professes to be inclusive and well-intentioned could so violently attempt to erase nations built on acceptance, diversity, and multiplicity.

Social Relations

Across all participants, the importance of relations within school contexts was placed as a significant contributor and at times, inhibitor of establishing and maintaining a sense of educational hospitality. Specifically, the themes of teacher relationality, overt racism and incivility, solidarity with oppressed students, and teacher representation emerged as being significant when seeking to establish hospitable relations in school ecologies.

Teacher Relationality

A strong theme that emerged with participants was that of feeling a sense of relationality with teachers. In some form, each participant had experiences with teachers in which they felt a strong sense of connection, or in some cases, where they did not feel a connection, and expressed how the lack of relationality led to a sense of inhospitality. Lee et al. (2010) write of the importance in establishing a relationship with Indigenous learners, noting that “students voiced an interest in forming stronger and closer relationships with the teachers and other adults. Students wished adults would talk to them and get to know them as a method of building community” (p. 203). This feeling was strongly echoed across all participants, and in particular, by Natalie who offered rich insight into the importance of relationships in her school day. Natalie spoke of a teacher with whom she felt a strong sense of connection, and explained how he set up his classroom in a way that fostered a sense of community, and made himself available to his students. Conversely, Natalie acknowledged that this was not the norm, and how most of the time, teachers struggled to relate to, and connect with their students. This perception was heightened by the fact that participants belonged to a marginalized group, and were frequently questioning whether or not they were being treated a certain way because of their Indigeneity. Frank mentioned how when she would have negative interactions with her teachers, she

automatically questioned whether or not it was because she was visibly Indigenous. Grande (2015) writes of a sense of detachment between teachers and students, signalling that this is not a common stance within an Indigenous worldview. Grande writes that “teachers retain caring but detached relations with students and actively discourage personal interaction. ‘appropriate,’ on-task behaviour is measured by the degree to which students behave as if they were in solitude, even though they are not” (p. 100). This excerpt further points to the sense of disconnect that was perceived by participants, and further, why this lead to a sense of inhospitality.

An area that demands further attention is the connection between teacher pedagogy and learning relationships. Participants who felt they had negative overall experiences with their teachers expressed that because their teachers were teaching them settler-dominant accounts of history, they felt a sense of disconnection from those same teachers. Conversely, the teachers who embraced authentic Indigenous pedagogies and histories were viewed more favourably by participants. This sentiment is echoed in the literature as well. Lee et al. (2010) write that “they [students] sought teachers who would engage in reciprocal transformative learning relationships with them. They also sought a school climate that appreciates, respects, and honours their Native heritage and language. Similarly, participants took notice of the pedagogical practices of adults in their school setting” (p. 204). In this way, the themes of settler pedagogy and teacher relationality have an interesting intersection that I had not considered. As a teacher, is important to be an open, welcoming presence within a school, however, just as important relationally is to be sure that the pedagogies employed embrace an Indigenous episteme, worldview, and history, as this dramatically influences the quality of relationships with Indigenous students within that space.

Racism and Classroom Race-Based Incivility

Unfortunately, yet not unexpectedly, a common occurrence amongst the majority of participants was that of having to deal with overt racism and incivility during their time at school. In some cases, such as that of Marlowe, the racism was not subtle, and occurred from both the teacher as well as students, and went unchallenged each time. In each instance brought forward by participants, an overwhelming sense of inhospitality understandably unfolded. Callan (2011) writes that “a student subject to serious verbal insult of any kind in the classroom is deprived of educational opportunity on fair terms once the teacher leaves the insult uncorrected, and that general fact has nothing to do with race or similar stigmatizing categories” (p. 6). This excerpt not only points to the necessity for teacher intervention if a verbal insult is made, but also delineates the negative educational impacts when incivility is left unchallenged or unaddressed by the teacher. Zoya spoke of being in an assembly and hearing her peers making fun of the traditional Indigenous singing that was taking place, again, this went unaddressed by the teachers in the room. Zoya expressed how this had made her feel disconnected from school, but also that her relationships with her peers and her teachers suffered greatly as a result. Piquemal et al. (2019) write that “consequently, the role of the teacher is key to ensuring those at the receiving end of the perceived attack are able to reclaim hospitality by being given the space and the means to respond to the offense with agency” (p. 189). This further makes clear the significant role that teachers play when faced with blatant racism, or other forms of dehumanization and discrimination.

Participants not only spoke of their peers making overtly racist remarks, but also of their teachers making racist claims during classroom instruction. Marlowe shared her horrific story of being asked to dance around a fire while preparing for her school’s production of *Peter Pan*, as

well as a disturbing story where a teacher attempted to explain Métis ancestry in vile and racist ways. In addition, Natalie shared a story of a teacher asking the class whether or not a traditional headdress was culturally significant, as if this were a question that was actually up for debate. These instances not only reinforce Dion's (2007) notion of the "perfect stranger" positioning amongst teachers, but also reveal an area that is not frequently addressed within academia: what if it is not the students who are overtly racist, but the teacher? Not only does this negatively impact the relationship between the student/victim and their teacher, but also interpersonally between students themselves, as the power-holder in the room (the teacher) has inadvertently permitted hate-speech to occur, thus eliminating the possibility for hospitality to occur. This is far more insidious, as the teachers would likely argue that they were seeking intellectual candour (Piquemal et al., 2019) amongst their students, something that is widely viewed as good pedagogy. This has devastating consequences to marginalized student's experiences of hospitality within the wider education system, and builds upon the historic distrust that has occurred between "teachers" and Indigenous students in Canada. Further research that explores overt, yet accepted teacher racism and incivility toward Indigenous students is required to better understand this unique and unsettling phenomenon.

Solidarity with Oppressed Students

Throughout conversations with participants, the feeling of solidarity with other students who were marginalized and/or oppressed emerged. Zoya shared that she would connect with all the BIPOC and immigrant students at her school. Natalie shared similar insights, as well as feeling a sense of solidarity with members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community. There is conflicting research within this unique area. As mentioned in Chapter 2, multiculturalism as a policy presents challenges that further relegate Indigenous peoples to the margins of Canadian society,

while simultaneously presenting a performative view of cultural awareness (Marom, 2016). Winnipeg is a unique city in that it has a rapidly growing immigrant population, as well as a high urban Indigenous population, making opportunities for tension and/or connection apparent. In one viewpoint, Indigenous people and newcomers view each other as competing for similar resources and services, with newcomers taking on many of the dominant stereotypes that exist about Indigenous people in this country (Kasparian, 2012). Similarly, many immigrant groups do not receive adequate education surrounding Indigenous histories on these lands (Gyepi-Garbrah, et al., 2014). From another standpoint, however, newcomers and Indigenous people may develop a sense of solidarity based on some of their shared experiences. Nejad et al. (2021) write of this experience in a study completed in Winnipeg noting that “several immigrant participants drew a parallel between current Indigenous issues and the historical dispossession and marginalization of their communities” (p. 98). Nejad et al. go on to write of the Indigenous worldview of inclusion and of continuously “widening the circle” (Ralston Saul, 2008), expressing “by contrast, many Indigenous participants expressed their positive perspective towards welcoming Immigrants into this country. Some pointed to the Indigenous traditional teachings which promote openness and hospitality” (p. 98). In this way, the literature has conflicting accounts of this unique relationship. What ought to be taken into account in this context, however, is that of the inclusive nature of youth, especially when navigating spaces, such as schools, that were not designed with them in mind.

Teacher Representation

Throughout conversations with participants, the theme of having stronger teacher representation emerged as significant. Participants spoke of this not only within the context of Indigenous education, but also spoke to the importance of having a wide range of races, genders,

and orientations within their teaching faculty. Marie noted right away that she “never had an Indigenous teacher.” Natalie shared that her school did not have much representation of different cultures or world views, and this was shown clearly within the staff at her school. Natalie shared that throughout her K-12 education, she remembers only two staff members who were members of the BIPOC community, one of whom was a teacher, the other being an educational assistant. I found this interesting, and quite coherent with the existing literature that notes the importance of teacher representation in school performance. Egalite et al. (2015) write of the effect of own-race teachers on student performance. They note that “overall, the results presented here indicate that assignment to an own-race/ethnicity teacher has positive and potentially policy-relevant reading achievement impacts for black and white students, and significant math achievement for Black, white, and Asian/Pacific Island students” (p. 50). Although this is relying on the quantitative data of test scores, it can be argued that the sense of belonging that occurs from a student having an own-race teacher inadvertently leads to higher performance outcomes (Keane et al., 2022) due to the sense of belonging felt. Egalite et al. (2015) also noted that “assignment to a demographically similar teacher may also affect student achievement more directly if teachers display unintended biases or different expectations for students with different demographic traits than their own” (p. 45). In this way, it becomes clear to see the ways in which teacher representation for Indigenous students both directly, and indirectly led to a heightened sense of inhospitality while at school. This also points directly to the need for more Indigenous people to enter faculties of education, and pursue professional careers as teachers.

Physical Spaces

Discussions surrounding physical spaces within schools uncovered unanticipated notions of (in)hospitality from participants. In the following section, the themes of spaces to gather,

visual representations of Indigeneity, and smudging in schools will be placed within the literature to develop a greater understanding of these emergent themes.

A Space to Gather

During conversations with participants, the desire for a culturally-relevant space for Indigenous people, as well as allies, within the physical school building emerged as being a significant contributor to senses of hospitality. Zoya in particular spoke of the challenges she went through in her school setting to create a space for Indigenous students. Zoya shared that, although she had some teachers who advocated for this change, there were many obstacles present that made it quite difficult for this dream to become a reality. Throughout the literature, there is limited research surrounding the importance of physical spaces for Indigenous students to gather, however, the notion of having a “safe space” to go, stretches across demographics. I draw on the work of Donn Short (2017) who writes of the importance of spaces for 2SLGBTQ+ students to gather within school settings. Short’s work explored the experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ students navigating the public-school system in the Toronto area, and produced similar findings related to the need for safe spaces within schools for queer students to gather. Interestingly, the notion of “making space” is central to many of Ruitenberg’s discussions on hospitality. Ruitenberg (2011a) questions this, writing “to what extent are schools spaces in which young people have a chance to respond, to enter into the world and make a space there?” (137). In this way, the idea of occupying space within a school setting becomes central to understandings of hospitality, and further highlights this as a crucial tenet of educational hospitality for Indigenous students.

Unfortunately, many schools are over-populated, and finding a space that is purely dedicated for Indigenous students may not be a possibility. In this case, participants expressed a

desire to at least have a classroom space to go, where they knew the teacher was an ally, and where there was an open-door policy. These themes were also present in Donn Short's (2017) study exploring the experiences of queer youth. As Manitoba continues to develop plans for new schools, being sure to include spaces for Indigenous students to gather within school design and construction becomes exceptionally poignant within reconciliation efforts.

Visual Representations of Indigeneity

Participants expressed the importance of displaying authentic, local Indigenous visual art. Four out of five participants specifically mentioned this as being an important factor when considering educational hospitality. Participants also made the distinction of having pre-made posters that often perpetuate pan-Indigenous mindsets, versus student-made art that gets displayed across the school. Marlowe noted that "I like it when there is art on the wall that was made by the students. Murals are also really nice" this sentiment was echoed across conversations with participants, and truthfully came as a bit of a shock. Literature that discusses this often critiques the use of art. For example, Marie Battiste (2013) writes of the use of art as contributing to the "add and stir" approaches to incorporating Indigenous perspectives within curriculum. Within a Canadian context under policies of multiculturalism, art, song, dance, and cuisine are often used as the sole means to "understand" a culture, and often do not move beyond the performative (Lowman & Barker, 2014).

This being said, what participants were expressing was not "add and stir" at all, but was visual art that was rooted in the lived experiences of Indigenous youth, and was inherently local and contextually specific. Mills and Doyle (2019) write of a study completed with Indigenous students in Australia, where they were invited to express themselves through the visual arts. The results were incredibly successful, as students were able to communicate cultural knowledge

using a medium that was less restrictive than pen and paper writing tends to be. Mills and Doyle write that “pedagogy can be enhanced when children are afforded choice in their expression of meanings innate to their cultural perspectives and language” (p. 539). They go on to write of the positive relational impacts as well, noting “teacher and student relationships can develop constructively when cultural and historical meanings of visual arts are given value and respect” (p. 539). In this way, teachers and school leaders can begin to develop (or continue to develop) a sense of hospitality by learning about, engaging with, and displaying local, student-created visual representations of Indigenous culture throughout their schools, and within their classrooms.

Smudging

Unsurprisingly, smudging was a practice that participants noted as being very significant to their feelings of hospitality within school. Participants expressed how having smudging as a part of their daily routine at school led them to a sense of belonging and connection with their culture while at school. Participants such as Zoya noted how many barriers were in place for them when they pursued greater access, awareness, and acceptance of smudging within the physical school building. Zoya explained how she and her peers were forced to go outside (i.e. forced to leave “the home”) when they wanted to smudge, despite there being provincial policy in place that permits for smudging indoors. When viewed through the lens of educational hospitality, which must be given as an “unconditional gift” (Ruittenberg, 2019), it becomes clear that many *conditions* appear to exist for Indigenous students seeking educational hospitality. During these conversations, I was reminded of Dwayne Donald’s (2012) symbol of the fort, and how its structures and functions remain visible across Canada’s institutions today. Donald writes that “fort pedagogy works according to an insistence that outsiders must be either incorporated – brought inside to become like the insiders – or excluded in order for progress and development to

take place in the necessary ways” (p. 101). This excerpt highlights in a symbolic way, the infrastructure that operates within Canada’s institutions that uphold and maintain white supremacy. Donald goes on to write that “schools and curricula in Canada are largely predicated on this fort pedagogy and have both served to enforce epistemological and social conformity to Euro-Western standards established and presumably held in common by *insiders*” (p. 101). When viewing efforts to bring smudging inside the school (“the fort”), participants were frequently met with resistance, underscoring the deeply held, and often unchallenged belief surrounding conformity within schools. Although participants were eventually permitted to smudge, they expressed frustration with the amount of obstacles present.

In addition to smudging being important for Indigenous people, there are also many noted advantages for settlers as well. Clarke et al. (2019) write that “given Britain and Canada’s colonial, racist, and assimilationist policies and practices related to Indigenous Canadians, the need to educate all Canadians about Indigenous ways of knowing and being through the teaching of important ceremonies and practices such as smudging may lead to greater awareness, tolerance, and more respectful interactions between First Peoples and those whose forebears colonized them” (p. 215). In this way, smudging becomes a mutually beneficial act, and might be viewed as a means to achieve authentic reconciliation. Further, it became shocking to hear that all participant’s schools/divisions had a public statement surrounding land and/or reconciliation. Often, these statements include something to the effect of “a dedication to reconciliation.” The hypocrisy of making such a statement public, while simultaneously presenting obstacles for Indigenous students points to a system that is performative and inhospitable in practice and lived experience.

Indigenizing Hospitality

Understandings of hospitality have received the critique of being vertical in nature. The structure of the host and guest binary places the host in an unequal power relationship with the guest. In a sense, these understandings of hospitality, which have their origins in the work of Derrida, impose an unequal power structure, in which the guest, by their very status as *guest* is expected to adhere/conform to the demands of the host (Bulley, 2017). This understanding of hospitality is linear in structure, as the host still maintains power and authority over the guest. This understanding can be incoherent within an Indigenous worldview, in which everyone has a place in the circle, and where members of the circle share equal power relations (Goulet & Goulet, 2014). It is from the symbolism of the circle that I propose a new view of hospitality, one that places Indigenous students as the hosts on these territories, that permits for fluctuation between host and guest status while in school, and that is inclusive of Indigenous pedagogies.

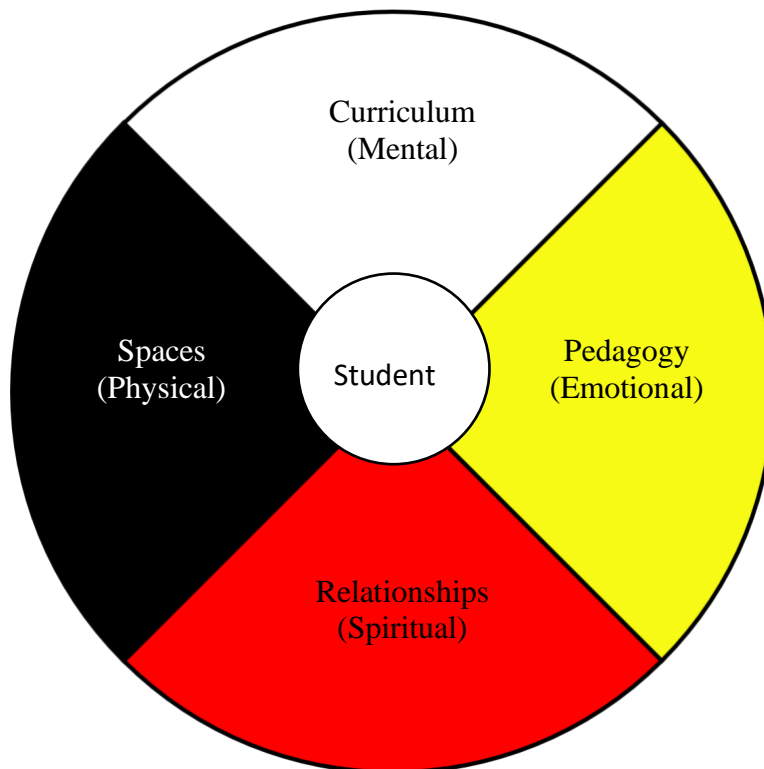
Circular Thinking and Hospitality: Disrupting the Linear

Goulet and Goulet (2014) write that “effective teachers of Indigenous students teach for the intellectual growth of the children, but not in isolation from the emotional, social, and spiritual development of students” (p. 120). From these four quadrants, a circle emerges, often symbolized by the Medicine Wheel, or in the Circle of Courage. The teachings of these circular models are built on the belief in balance, reciprocity, and holism (Robertson, 2021). It is from these symbols, that I propose an Indigenized view of educational hospitality, utilizing Martin Brokenleg’s (1990) Circle of Courage model. Within the Circle of Courage are four components which can symbolize the four seasons, the four directions, as well as a myriad of other meanings. For the purpose of this work, I derive meaning from the quadrants of the emotional, the spiritual, the physical, and the mental, and situate these within my research. This work has been done in

consultation with a local knowledge keeper, Kungsi (Grandma) Pahan Pte San Win to ensure that it is being represented in a good way. I am exceptionally grateful to Kungsi for her time, wisdom, and knowledge in blessing this work. I use this model to highlight the need for balance, duality, and fluidity when understanding notions of educational hospitality. These are concepts that are inherent within an Indigenous episteme, and which lend themselves to both decolonization and hospitality efforts.

In the model below, the child is placed in the center of the circle, as they are the sacred fire in which the entire system of education, and all those who work within it are meant to serve. I argue that pedagogy is an emotional act, relationships a spiritual experience, that spaces and one's place in them a physical construct, and that curriculum functions to serve the mental/cognitive development of students.

I propose the circle below as a framework for an Indigenized view of educational hospitality:



In this model, the teacher acts as a facilitator, responding to the needs and educational demands of their students within the four quadrants listed. The four quadrants work together to create educational hospitality, balancing each other with equal merit and attention in service of the student, the sacred fire in the center. In this model, a teacher may at times occupy a host position, however, it is not hierarchical in nature, but rather is respondent to the unique educational needs of the student(s) in their care. Further, at times a teacher may also occupy a guest positioning, particularly in instances where students are guiding their own learning in a way that does not center settler pedagogies or thought. It is in these moments that the teacher relinquishes host status, and is placed in the position of guest, learning from and with Indigenous students, and under the conditions of those students. In this way, although the teacher may be in charge of pedagogical approaches and setting the conditions for learning (according to the needs of the child), this does not place them in a hierarchal structure, but rather, as respondents within the circle. Similarly, the student may fluctuate between host and guest status, depending on the context in which they are in during their school day. However, what remains constant in the context of Indigenous learners is their host positioning on these territories, an acknowledgment that alters the way in which hospitable education might be viewed by those who engage with the system on a daily basis. To further develop this model, I begin by entering the Eastern gate – emotion – which in the context of this study, is also an examination between the connection between pedagogy and emotion.

Pedagogy and Emotion

As I was speaking with participants, what immediately struck me was the role that emotion played in learning. Participants spoke in depth of not just *what* they were learning, but, indirectly, of the pedagogies utilized by their teachers, and how this made them feel. Natalie

expressed feeling disconnected from much of the teaching methods her teachers used, and expressed a strong desire for a more hands-on, land-based way of learning in her school experience. Kind et al. (2005) write of this, expressing that “education is longing for a deeper more connected, more inclusive, and more aware way of knowing. One that connects heart and hand and head and does not split knowledge into dualities of thought and being, mind and body, emotion and intellect, but resonates with a wholeness and fullness that engages every part of one’s being” (p. 33). The connection between pedagogy and emotion, with a strong consensus arising that true, deep learning is inherently tied to emotion (Goulet & Goulet, 2014). In this way, a hospitable education is one that adapts pedagogies to meet the emotional needs of students, rather than utilizing the same teaching methods regardless of the students, and their unique set of emotional/pedagogical needs. Dyson et al. (2021) completed a study in which teachers embraced and infused Social Emotional Learning throughout their content areas, with results showing higher levels of student engagement and performance outcomes, pointing once more to the strong connection between emotion and pedagogy. A hospitable education, within an Indigenous framework must pay specific attention to this important realm, while simultaneously recognizing the need for balance amongst the other three quadrants as well.

Relationships and Spirituality

The term spiritual in this context refers to the way it is often used by Elders, as discussed by Goulet and Goulet (2014). In this definition, spiritual development is seen as “becoming a good human being” (p. 120). Relationships, wherever they exist, are innately spiritual. Blair Stonechild (2020) writes that “all things, plant and animal and inanimate, have spirit essence and all interact in a web of interrelationships. It is through the interaction of energy that beings learn” (p. 9). The concept of humans being inherently spiritual is a central tenet of Indigenous

spirituality, and is inseparable from being in relationship with others. Stonechild goes on to note that “The Great Law of Relationships, also known as the Great Law of Peace or Law of Harmony, has its roots in the Great Principle that humans are spirit beings on a physical journey” (p. 31), then goes on to note that “this philosophical concept explains why it is important to create positive familial and community relationships as well as connections with the natural and spiritual realms” (p. 31). These excerpts highlight the spiritual nature of relations, a concept that is often overlooked, downplayed, or outright ignored across institutionalized education. In ignoring the spirituality of relationship, teachers maintain the “caring yet detached” (Grande, 2015) positioning that has been widely critiqued by scholars and students alike. This feeling of detachment was frequently addressed by participants in this study, who expressed a longing to feel a stronger sense of connection to both their teachers, and their peers. Through the lens of Indigeneity, what participants truly were seeking was a spiritual connection, by way of relationship.

Indigenized hospitality, then, must view relationships as spiritual connections. Hospitable relations change and adapt to the unique needs of the people invested in them, with a spirit of reciprocity permeating each relation (Battiste, 2013). A hospitable relationship does not feel “disconnected,” as a sense of disconnect is a clear sign that a relationship, i.e. spirit, needs specific attention. When classroom teachers develop a sense of “community” in their spaces, a heightened sense of belonging, and thus, achievement ensues (Kohn, 2008). From an Indigenous perspective, a classroom community is a spiritual connection amongst peers and their teacher who share a space. These relations require constant attention and nurturing, and become key to establishing a hospitable education.

Spaces and the Physical

When participants spoke of the sense of hospitality they did, or did not experience throughout their school journey, a common theme was having a physical space in the school to come to, as well as having physical representations of culture present throughout the school. In this way, the physical, that which we can see and touch, becomes an essential part of creating and maintaining a hospitable learning environment. A hospitable physical space adapts and changes to the needs of students, as showcased by the incorporation of an Indigenous meeting place in Zoya's story. Interestingly, in creating and maintaining these physical spaces, relationality (spirit) amongst students is able to also flourish. In this way, these two quadrants are in some ways mutually reliant and codependent. The concept of *space* is discussed frequently when considering educational hospitality. In fact, Ruitenberg (2011a) specifically notes the importance of students having a *space* in schools, and being able to make a space there. This understanding underscores the importance of the physical school building, and how its very infrastructure can either promote or hinder a sense of educational hospitality. A hospitable physical space may not be within the four walls of a school, but in nature, learning from and with the land (Simpson, 2017). In this sense, the physical space ought to be fluid and reflexive, being continuously altered by the very presence of students. Participants expressed how sitting within circle while in school enhanced their sense of educational hospitality, further pointing to the small ways in which teachers might further develop their physical hospitality within schools, but also being reminded that they are not confined to these spaces, and should change their physical location when deemed necessary by their students.

Curriculum and the Mental

Participants expressed frustration when the content they received did not engage them intellectually or culturally. In many cases, participants such as Marie felt a sense of frustration with the continued perpetuation of settler accounts of history. It became clear that educational hospitality must pay specific attention to the actual content being taught, ensuring that it is cognitively engaging for students. It is not hard to understand the ways in which curriculum, the actual content that is taught, is a mental endeavour. This is an area that receives a lot of attention in pre-service education, as well as within school professional development days. When compared to the other three quadrants of the wheel, the current system is exceptionally out of balance, with the majority of attention being brought to the mental, at the expense of the emotional, spiritual, and physical. This is not to say that this area is not important – it is. However, the frustration experienced by participants points to a curriculum that is out of touch with Indigenous minds. Simpson (2014) critiques Canadian curricula, writing that “within this system [land], there is no standard curriculum because it is impossible to generate a curriculum for ‘that which is given to us lovingly from the spirits,’ and because it doesn’t make sense for everyone to master the same body of factual information” (p. 10). Within this quote what becomes clear is that a hospitable curriculum comes from the passions, interests, and desires of the students it is meant to serve, rather than serving a capitalist-driven system perpetuated by white dominance. In this sense, a hospitable curriculum is not standardized or based on age, but rather, comes from the innate curiosities of the children it is meant to serve. Participants frequently expressed the desire to learn more about Indigenous history, about medicine picking, or about Indigenous games in their school days. What this points to is the fact that students know what they want to learn about, yet are constrained by an outdated, racist document in which teachers and students alike are beholden. In serving the mind, a hospitable education recognizes

that content must be driven by student interest and curiosity, and is adaptive so that this is a possibility for all.

Piecing it all together

In viewing hospitality through the symbolism of the medicine wheel, the tenets of a student's school day are broken apart, and positioned as equals on the circle. This symbolism provides a way for teachers and administrators to interrogate the ways in which they are, or are not achieving educational hospitality in that the contributors to hospitality are able to be isolated and analyzed, without separating them from the whole. A hospitable education within an Indigenous worldview pays specific attention to the emotional (pedagogical), spiritual (relational), spatial (physical), and mental (curricular) needs that surround a child each day at school. In interrogating each of these realms, teachers and policy-makers are able to critically reflect on the extent to which hospitality is, or is not occurring for their students. This also places teachers as the facilitators in the circle, thereby not generating a hierarchical structure. Educational hospitality within an Indigenous worldview must recognize the inherent emotional, spiritual, physical, and mental needs of each student, and be reflexive to these needs so that true hospitality is able to develop, flourish, and be sustained.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This study explored the extent to which five Indigenous youth experienced a sense of educational hospitality within the public-school system, and how they made sense of what educational hospitality meant. Four out of five participants were recent graduates, with one participant still being in the school system. Participants had mixed experiences as they travelled through the school system, however, all participants shared feelings of *otherness* related to curriculum, pedagogy, relations, and physical spaces. In many cases, participants felt a sense, and generated their own experiences of educational hospitality, despite the wider system being largely inhospitable. This sense of fleeting hospitality has been referred to as a microspace of hospitality, and was a common occurrence for participants. What also emerged as significant was the binary of hospitality between host and guest, as well as between conditional and unconditional nature of hospitality, offering a needed contribution to academia that out forward an Indigenized view of hospitality.

Discussions occurred first through an informal, pre-conversation interaction which largely occurred virtually. Following this, discussions occurred face-to-face in settings that felt comfortable for participants. These interactions were semi-structured, however, not fixed in place, changing and meandering with the individual, unique set of experiences that each participant brought with them. The purpose of this study is to inform teachers and policy makers of the ways in which they are, or are not, establishing a sense of hospitality for Indigenous students in their classrooms. Even broader, this study aims to systemically address the lack of cultural awareness, belonging, and relevant pedagogies within the current system of education ranging from pre-service teacher education all the way to the policies within the Ministry of Education. In this way, those who design, create, and sustain schools and school culture are

implored to ensure that Indigenous students are represented, not just through arts and crafts, but within the design, professional practice, relationships, and curriculum that occurs within a school building.

Implications for Practice

This study paid specific foci to the areas of curriculum, pedagogy, physical space, and relations, and the extent to which hospitality was felt within these constructs. As such, the implications for practice will specifically focus on these four areas, with both systemic and more acute implications being highlighted. I will follow the path of the circle outlined in Chapter 5, beginning at the Eastern gate: pedagogy, followed by relationships, spaces, and curriculum. Following this, general recommendations surrounding Indigenous approaches to research at the graduate level will also be put forward, as well as implications surrounding policies of inclusion at provincial, divisional, and school levels.

Pedagogy

Pre-service education. The lack of hospitality felt by participants within the quadrant of pedagogy speaks to a rather detached teaching body. Although each participant had moments where a teacher engaged in a pedagogy that generated a sense of engagement and belonging, the overwhelming sense amongst participants was a pedagogical system within school that was largely settler-dominant and disconnected from Indigenous philosophies. This understanding has far-reaching implications, perhaps most poignantly being within that of pre-service teacher education. The lack of awareness amongst the dominant majority of teachers when it comes to the authentic integration of Indigenous pedagogies within school spaces became clear throughout conversations with participants. This speaks to a failure of pre-service education to adequately equip teachers to *authentically* integrate Indigenous philosophies into their practice. Moreover,

participants who did feel a sense of hospitality with certain pedagogies spoke of how the teachers who embraces said pedagogies often were teacher leaders within existing Indigenous groups within the school and/or taught Indigenous-themed subjects. This understanding highlights the need for adequate pre-service training, as it was shown that teachers who *do* possess Indigenous cultural awareness are then able to extend hospitality, or a feeling of “being at home” (Ruitenberg, 2011a) to Indigenous students in their classrooms.

In-service Teacher Professional Development. In addition to reaching and educating teachers on Indigenous pedagogies before they enter the system, attention must also be paid to teachers who are already working in the education system. Although school divisions claim that Indigenous learning is a top priority, I question the extent to which this is shown in professional development funding and implementation. Winnipeg in particular is situated in a context that is full of Indigenous scholars, knowledge keepers, and activists who possess the cultural knowledge to facilitate engaging professional development for teachers. This work is underway in numerous schools, and should continue to become a central component of professional development planning, and given equal or greater value to that of numeracy and literacy. Rather than positioning Indigenous cultural learning as one of many options during school/divisional professional development days, having this as a required, mandatory opportunity ensures that not only the teachers who have a pre-existing interest in this area are the ones who are given knowledge.

Individual Teacher Learning. In addition to professional development, I also argue that individual teachers must take it upon themselves to engage with Indigenous worldviews and pedagogies on their own, or with smaller professional learning communities (PLCs). Just in the way that teachers are expected to be competent and informed within their content-areas, so too

should be the expectation that teachers are competent in engaging with Indigenous pedagogies in a way that is not performative or folkloric. The amount of literature that exists in this area continues to grow, and engaging in independent study related to this area emerges as a significant contributor to building and sustaining Indigenous hospitality within schools. In viewing many school division websites, there is often a section on funding for professional reading for teachers, with some school divisions offering up as much as \$600 per year for independent study materials (books, journals, lectures, etc.). Teachers given this rich opportunity are implored to utilize these funds to gain the cultural competency to engage with Indigenous pedagogies meaningfully and critically within their educational spaces.

Relations

Addressing Racism and Incivility. I was shocked and saddened by the amount of overt, targeted racism that participants were forced to navigate, with five out of five participants having experienced some type of overt racism while at school. I believe this understanding points directly to the need for accountability within school settings. Once more, I browsed various school divisions' websites looking for sections on student code of conduct. In each of these, there is mention of a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination of any form. I question the legitimacy of such statements, when clearly, there is a tolerance for discrimination; in fact, many times, this racism was ignored or actually caused by a teacher. This requires that individual teachers, as well as divisional policy makers be familiar with their codes of conduct, and further, actually enforce them when racism occurs. Students must know that there is an expectation of accountability if and when overt racism occurs, thus maintaining a sense of safety while at school. Much like the treaty statement being read at the start of each school day, it is the action

that follows that generates a sense of hospitality and well-being in schools, not just the statements in isolation.

Indigenous Teachers. Across school divisions, faculties of education, and government policy, the need for more representation of Indigenous teachers is needed in Manitoba schools. This was echoed throughout conversations with participants, where they shared their desire to have teachers who came from a similar cultural background to themselves. This need has far-reaching implications, and will likely be a challenge to properly address. As this study revealed, there are many barriers in place in schools that prevent a sense of educational hospitality from occurring. Many participants expressed a feeling of not belonging while at school, and noted how many of their Indigenous peers struggled to make it to graduation. It becomes difficult to expect that those who felt they did not belong in the education system would somehow seek to reenter that system for a career. Further, when considering the professional requirements needed in order to become a teacher (i.e. five years of university and two degrees in Manitoba), there remain many barriers for entry for those with knowledge that academia does not view as valid or significant, and those who were pushed from the system are then barred from pursuing professional careers. This is not to say that the standards and rigour required to become a teacher should be lowered – rather, this is to say that stakeholders in all sections of society must work together to develop ways in which Indigenous students will feel compelled to pursue a career in education. This requires faculties of education, school divisions, school leaders, and government officials to work together to retain Indigenous students who are currently in school, limit barriers to entry for Indigenous students who would like to study at the university level, and develop a specific program for Indigenous people to obtain their teaching credentials. This could occur in a

setting and format this is culturally relevant, and have this certification carry the same level of status as those who went through a traditional teacher education program.

Building in Connection. Both between peers themselves, and between teachers and students, the need for more connection in schools emerges as significant. Participants spoke of a feeling of detachment from their teachers, and at times, their peers. This understanding points directly to the need for intentional opportunities for connection (i.e. for humanizing one another) throughout the school day. Alex Wilson (2008) writes that “by reducing the space between things, we are strengthening the relationship that they share” (p. 87). In this way, intentionally bringing people together is crucial to establishing relationality. At a classroom level, teachers are called upon to employ pedagogies that are rooted in interpersonal connection. Interestingly, Indigenous pedagogies offer spaces and moments for human connection inherently. At a school-level, administrators are called upon to set aside time for their school community to come together in a way that authentically connects community members. Once more, this will not only be of benefit to Indigenous students, but to all students and faculty, as their sense of community at school will deepen, thus generating a sense of hospitality.

Spaces

School planning. As mentioned previously, construction projects for new schools continue to be planned across Manitoba. Within the planning for these buildings must be spaces set aside for the use of Indigenous students and community members. This planning also must be done with the consultation of Indigenous community members, to ensure it is a space that feels welcoming and supportive. Similarly, developing places within the landscape of schools designed for outdoor learning (i.e. “outdoor classrooms”) is a reminder that learning is not confined to the four walls of a classroom, but is abundant outdoors. While speaking with

participants, many spoke highly of the outdoor spaces that their schools created for student learning, and were excited and engaged when learning took them outdoors.

Similarly, existing schools are called upon to engage with local Indigenous artists and students to develop authentic artwork to place within their spaces. Indigenous students must be given the space to share their creativity with their school communities without fear of censorship, with school spaces welcoming the artistic contributions of Indigenous students and community members. Similarly, schools must also, to the best of their ability, find a physical space within the school for Indigenous students to gather. Ideally, this space would be available for students throughout their day and to be used as students deem appropriate. Understanding that many schools are filled to capacity, identifying a space that might be free for a portion of the day, and informing students of this can serve as a step towards educational hospitality for Indigenous learners.

Smudging. At a systemic, governmental level, clear and concise messaging must continue to be provided that smudging is welcomed, safe, and to be expected within school buildings. Having this policy allows divisions, schools, and individual teachers to offer smudging without fear of community pushback and/or retaliation. At a divisional level, clear messaging about the acceptance and accommodation for smudging within the physical school building must be provided, ensuring that all students, staff, and community members are aware that smudging is welcomed within the school building each day. At the school level, ensuring that Indigenous students are given the space to smudge within the physical school building is crucial to establishing and maintaining educational hospitality. If students are being asked to go outside, or to a less-desirable area of the school (e.g. woodshop or human ecology class), the message being communicated is that smudging is not tolerated as a part of the school day.

Similarly, ensuring that students are able to access smudging when needed, and being given the space to do so is central within hospitality efforts.

Individual teachers. Individual teachers are called upon to center Indigenous creativity throughout their physical classroom spaces, drawing on the artistic abilities of students and/or community members. Throughout research conversations, displaying local, authentic works of art created by Indigenous peoples emerged as a significant contributor to educational hospitality within physical school spaces. Participants expressed that in taking the position of host and having their artwork centered within their schools, a feeling of hospitality emerged. In this way, teachers relinquishing their host positioning when deciding on how physical spaces might be decorated, thereby positioning students as host, a sense of being at “home” is able to be built and sustained.

Curriculum

Ministry of Education. It became immediately clear through conversations with participants, as well as through reading the literature surrounding Indigenous education in Canada that there is a clear need for updated curriculum surrounding Indigenous peoples and their expansive history on these lands. This need stretches into every content area, but is especially needed and felt within the Social Studies curriculum. In fact, the last time Manitobans received an update to the Social Studies curriculum was in 2004 (Manitoba Education, 2004). In addition to updating the curriculum itself, it is also important to be aware of the content held within it. Participants expressed a frustration at having their culture continuously presented as monolithic and of the past or having only negative, deficit narratives be the focus of the content. An updated curriculum must build critical awareness of Canadian colonialism and white supremacy while also recognizing the strength-based beauty inherent within Indigenous nations.

In scaffolding curricula in this way, students not only develop the ability to critique systems and structures, but simultaneously are presented with the beauty of what was attempted to be erased from the Canadian schema altogether. Partnering with Indigenous knowledge keepers, academics, and educators (thereby positioning these people as hosts) would be a strong first step in developing a hospitable curriculum for Manitobans.

Teachers. Although teachers have been presented with an outdated, racist, and monolithic document, there remains responsibility on their part. Canadian teachers are fortunate to not have prescribed, scripted curriculum, but rather, are able to adapt, alter, and instruct in a way that they deem to be professionally sound. It is from this understanding that educators are implored to critique the curriculum related to their content area, to question whose voices are not being included (and why this might be), and to continuously model what it means to be a critical, empathetic, and engaged citizen. In fact, the outdated curriculum document offers much room for students to critique by its own flawed design. In the Grade 6 outcomes, for example, students are asked to explain why the construction of a transcontinental railway was essential for “the growth of Canada.” Rather than teach these facts directly, a teacher might build critical competency with their students questioning how Indigenous people may have felt about this project, and why. Another teacher may even take this one step further and ask students if they noticed any similarities to current projects happening in Canada (i.e. pipelines). In noting the ongoing perpetuation of colonialism, perhaps it might begin to be challenged and dismantled. Once more, this requires that teachers themselves take the time to read, listen, and learn from Indigenous voices so that they are able to build an awareness in themselves first. Again, this requires that teachers occupy the position of guest in order to learn from Indigenous narratives.

I am inspired by some of the recent works that seek to build critical awareness amongst teachers and students alike, while also centering Indigenous voices. The recent work *Resurgence: Engaging with Indigenous Narratives and Cultural Expressions in and Beyond the Classroom* by Christine M'Lot and Katya Adamov Ferguson (2022) is an excellent example of a resource that builds critical awareness while simultaneously engaging with Indigenous content in a strength-based way – through art. As more study occurs within this area, educators can look forward to more authentic, relevant Indigenous material to incorporate into their pedagogies.

Universities

I am impressed and proud of the work that universities and post-secondary institutions are doing to further reconciliation. As I reflect on what contributes to and/or inhibits senses of hospitality in educational spaces, I note how the major universities in Manitoba have incorporated many contributors to educational hospitality within their design and programming. For example, both the University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg have specific spaces at their campuses that are for Indigenous students to gather and participate in culturally relevant events and ceremonies. Initiatives like these are crucial to establishing hospitality, however, there remains work to be done.

Throughout much of the writing of this thesis, I found myself reflecting on the type of knowledge that is valued by academia, as well as the ways in which this knowledge is expected to be shared. I question how flexible institutions are to non-written examples of student expertise, or if the expectation is that in order to *know* one must be able to put this knowledge into written language. As a teacher, I recognize that students carry with them immense experience and knowledge about the world around them, as well as class content, and I would be missing a large portion of student learning if written assessment was all that was measured, or if

it was measured in a way that placed it as superior to alternate ways of knowing. Further, I was saddened throughout the ethics process to lose many of the methodologies centered on relationality; components central to an Indigenous episteme. In each version of my ethics application, methodologies that were centered on situating myself within the community being studied (i.e. building community and trust) were forced to be altered or outright abandoned. I understand the need for confidentiality and privacy, however, I wonder if there may be space for more nuance, humanity, and the role of community in research. Additionally, the recruitment materials required tended to be exceptionally confusing for participants. In fact, many participants explained that they would have much preferred to hear about this study in a more informal setting in which the language and protocol employed felt more organic and connected. In viewing the recruitment documents through the lens of a high school student, I completely agree with this sentiment, and wonder to what extent the extensive formalities required stood as barriers for more participation. Additionally, when the only option provided for joining a study is to read and navigate various formal documents, potentially interested participants are turned away due to limited academic literacy, or the feeling of being overwhelmed by academic protocol. Given the population that this study learned from, a population with the highest “dropout” rates in Manitoba, an overly-complex, academic document likely does not feel very inviting (or hospitable).

Policies of Inclusion

Policies of inclusion largely aim to fit the “other” into educational spaces while providing accommodations and supports so that the student is able to access as much of their grade-level content as possible. This approach is antithetical to understandings of educational hospitality, wherein students themselves are centered and are able to adapt and alter systems, processes, and

content to fit their unique needs and skillsets. Often times, policies of inclusion utilize the medical-model in sorting students out based on their perceived needs and challenges, with the more “extreme” cases being moved to further specialized educators within the system. This practice is accompanied by the writing of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and countless meetings and paperwork, all with limited measurable impact on student achievement and learning. Inclusion, as it functions now, decenters students from their social ecologies, and positions them as subjects rather than participants in their own education. Becoming familiar with models of educational hospitality, and beginning to operate from this framework would ensure that each student in school was receiving an education that embraced human dignity and diversity. This would be quite a large paradigm shift, yet carries with it the potential to ensure that schools become spaces that feel “at home” rather than spaces that are dreaded, avoided, or all too commonly, outright abandoned.

Limitations and Areas for Future Research

This study carries some notable limitations that are worth examining, as perhaps future studies may further examine these areas. As mentioned, recruitment was a challenge in this study. Participants were just coming out of years of COVID lockdowns, and many people were not interested, or felt overwhelmed in reviewing the extensive recruitment material that was required. In some cases, invitees expressed interest, but then stopped responding once they received recruitment information. Having a larger number of participants would have provided further academic merit and ensured that the proposed themes were indeed common across multiple data sets. A future study that engages with similar content will hopefully be able to draw upon the experiences of more participants with more varied backgrounds.

Additionally, this study only engaged with participants who had successfully gone through the school system, or were currently experiencing success within said system. Given the high “dropout” or nonattendance rates amongst Indigenous students in Manitoba, some valuable contributions, experiences, and stories were likely missing from this study. I found it interesting how males were missing completely from this study, a realization that made me question the extent to which Indigenous males might be further marginalized within school settings. A future study surrounding the experiences of Indigenous people who did not complete their Grade 12 education positioned in relation to education hospitality would be an exceptionally revealing and much needed contribution to academia and society at large.

Further, I was struck by the prevalence of connection that participants felt towards the arts, and particularly to that of their theatre classes. In fact, many participants noted that their favourite class to be in was theatre, or that the only time they felt “at home” at school was in their theatre class. Perhaps it was the artist in myself that felt an openness to their words and stories within these special spaces in schools, but I am drawn to a study that explores in-depth the connection(s) between the arts and educational hospitality through an Indigenous lens. As I reflected on the components and structures inherent within a theatre classroom; community, support, sitting in circle, celebrating each other’s gifts, etc. I began to recognize the multitude of similarities between theatrical spaces and the central tenets of Indigenous pedagogies. At a time where the arts continue to be underfunded, this connection deserves immediate further attention and examination.

Reflection

As I reflect on the multitude of ways that I grew as a researcher throughout this process, I am immediately drawn to the word *patience*. There were countless lessons within this process

that taught me the importance of patience, whether it be a faculty strike, navigating a global pandemic, obtaining ethics approval, or recruiting participants, it felt as though each obstacle presented throughout the writing of this document was another lesson in the importance of having patience. As a researcher, I was consistently reminded that quality work requires patience, and that approaching this work in a task-by-task manner, rather than by strict, self-imposed deadlines was beneficial in a multitude of ways, the most poignant being that of doing the words and stories shared by participants their due justice. It is my hope that this work will go on to inspire future studies related to Indigenous education, and that perhaps over time, the education system may evolve into one that is truly welcoming, reflective, and supportive of Indigenous populations. This pursuit will likely present numerous unforeseen obstacles and delays; it will take patience as well. I am grateful for this teaching being presented in a small way throughout the writing of this thesis.

Further, as a scholar and as an educator, this process has further committed me to re-imagining schools as sites of acceptance and belonging. The stories shared by participants, whether they were beautiful or horrible to hear, reinforced just how crucial schools are to individual's sense of self and self-worth. I was reminded how seemingly small acts within schools have the power to promote or hinder senses of hospitality and belonging, offering the potential to dramatically change the course of one's life. As a researcher, I feel I have been put on a path of bringing to light the areas in which schools are not functioning in ways that allow students to feel at home within them. I am eager to begin future studies, perhaps at the PhD level that continues this work. Similarly, as a teacher, I have adapted my practice in a multitude of ways in order to operationalize the learning that I have gained throughout this process, and am eager to share this learning with my colleagues.

Finally, my appreciation for the crucial role that academia plays in a free and open society has grown immensely. In experiencing the processes involved with graduate school and creating an original study such as this, I am immediately in awe of the vast amount of knowledge that is being generated and disseminated both locally and globally, and the rigour involved in these processes. In a time where knowledge and the freedom to truly *know* are being discredited and challenged, the role of academia becomes even more clear, and reaffirms my love for learning, questioning, and challenging.

Summary

The aim of this study was to uncover the extent to which Indigenous students experience(d) educational hospitality while navigating the public-school system. The works of Claudia Ruitenberg (2011a) were used as the theoretical framework to guide this study. Ruitenberg's writing surrounding hospitality provided a strong foundation in which to build, question, and focus this study. Particularly, educational hospitality was broken down into three (which later became four) tenets: curriculum, relations, and physical spaces. These were viewed as the systems and structures that students encounter daily within school, and therefore, deserved to be examined in relation to educational hospitality.

Throughout the research process, I was able to meet with five participants. Research conversations lasted from between one to two hours, and placed a strong emphasis on the significance of storytelling and relationality as a means for understanding phenomena. The works of Margaret Kovach (2020) and Alex Wilson (2008) were used to gain a stronger understanding of Indigenous research methodologies. The works of DeFehr et al. (2021) were used as a framework to better understand the importance of understanding phenomenon dialogically, alongside participants. Additionally, Western approaches to research were also

employed, utilizing bricolage, the “mixing” of two approaches to research. Finally, the data was analyzed using a thematic analysis approach, as deemed suitable by Indigenous scholar and researcher, Margaret Kovach.

The findings in this study highlighted the ways in which curriculum, pedagogy, relations, and physical design do or do not foster a sense of educational hospitality in school ecologies. When discussing curriculum, participants expressed a desire for more culturally relevant, strength-based teachings related to Indigenous history and culture. Participants spoke in-depth of the prevalence of Settler pedagogies, and how this did not lead to a sense of hospitality, but rather, to a feeling of disconnect. Additionally, the impact and importance of relationships emerged as an exceptionally strong contributor to the development of educational hospitality, with participants expressing a desire for their teachers to relate to them authentically. Unfortunately, yet unsurprisingly, participants discussed the numerous ways in which overt racism was a part of their lives while at school, with the perpetrators oftentimes being teachers themselves. When discussing physical spaces, participants discussed the significance of culturally relevant, locally-created art that was selected or generated from and by the students themselves. Additionally, participants noted the importance of having a physical space in the school to gather with other Indigenous students, as well as having smudging become an accepted practice within the physical school building.

Microspaces of hospitality emerged as an important contribution to this study, in that participants were able to express how, although the school system itself was largely inhospitable, there were moments of hospitality. Examples of a microspace of hospitality developing were shown when a teacher would set aside additional time to meet with a student, or when a group of peers were able to form an Indigenous student group in which a sense of hospitality emerged, if

only fleetingly. However infrequently, these microspaces of hospitality become crucial and central to participants achieving success within the school system, as they were able to rely on these spaces when needed. This understanding serves as a reminder for teachers of their impact, and as a clear implication for educational leaders and policy makers to begin to dismantle the oppressive, racist systems inherent within schools that continue to marginalize and disenfranchise Indigenous youth.

References

- Absolon, K., & Willett, C. (2005). Putting ourselves forward: Location in Aboriginal research. *In L. Brown & S. Strega, Research as Resistance: Critical, Indigenous, and Anti-Oppressive Approaches*, 97–126.
- Anderson, H. (2012). Collaborative Practice: A way of being “with.” *Psychotherapy and Politics International*, 10(2), 130–145.
- Battiste, M. (2015). *Decolonizing education: nourishing the learning spirit*. Purich Publishing Limited.
- Bradley, C. L., & Renzulli, L. A. (2011). The complexity of non-completion: being pushed or pulled to drop out of high school. *Social Forces*, 90(2), 521–545.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- Brendtro, L. K. (1990). *Reclaiming Youth at Risk*. National Educational Service.
- Bulley, D. (2017). *Migration, ethics and power: Spaces of hospitality in international politics*. SAGE.
- Callan, E. (2011). When to shut students up: Civility, silencing, and free speech. *Theory and Research in Education*, 9(1), 3–22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1477878510394352>
- Catholic Ladder’ Pictorial Catechisms*. (2009, January). Retrieved May 26, 2021, from <https://cdm16280.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p128701coll4/id/48>
- Clarke, P., Findlay, N., & King, A.-L. (2019). Indigenization of the curriculum: Smudging, public schools, and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. *Education and Law Journal*, 28(2), 201–237.

- Cote-Meek, S., Moeke-Pickering, T., Galla, C. K., & Holmes, A. (2020). *Decolonizing and indigenizing education in Canada*. Canadian Scholars.
- Coyne-Foresi, M., Crooks, C. V., Chiodo, D., Nowicki, E. A., & Dare, L. (2019). Teaching them, teaching me: youth conceptualize benefits of being a mentor in an indigenous high school peer mentoring program. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 27(5), 531–548.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design*. Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. SAGE Publications, Inc.
- DeFehr, J. N., Infante, C. L. S., & Vallafares, C. I. L. (2021). *Dialogic social inquiry: qualitative research without a methodological map*. Taos Institute Publications.
- Denis, J. (2020). *Canada at a Crossroads*. University of Toronto Press.
- Denis, V. S. (2011). Silencing Aboriginal curricular content and perspectives through multiculturalism: “There are other children here.” *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, 33(4), 306–317.
- Derrida, J., & Dufourmantelle, A. (2000). *Of hospitality*. Stanford University Press.
- Dion, S. D. (2007). Disrupting Molded Images: Identities, responsibilities and relationships—teachers and indigenous subject material. *Teaching Education*, 18(4), 329–342.
- Donald, D. (2012). Forts, colonial frontier logics, and Aboriginal-Canadian relations. *Decolonizing Philosophies of Education*, 91–111.
- Duncan-Andrade, J. M. R., & Morrell, E. (2008). *The art of critical pedagogy: Possibilities for moving from theory to practice in urban schools*. Peter Lang.

- Dyson, B., Howley, D., Shen, Y., & Baek, S. (2021). Educators' experiences of establishing social and emotional learning pedagogies in an elementary school with at-risk students. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education, 13*(5), 625–638.
- Egalite, A. J., Kisida, B., & Winters, M. A. (2015). Representation in the classroom: The effect of own-race teachers on student achievement. *Economics of Education Review, 45*, 44–52.
- Galla, C. K., & Holmes, A. (2020). *Decolonizing and indigenizing education in Canada*. Canadian Scholars.
- Gaudry, A., & Lorenz, D. (2018). Indigenization as inclusion, reconciliation, and decolonization: Navigating the different visions for indigenizing the Canadian Academy. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples, 14*(3), 218-227.
- Giroux, H. A. (2001). *Theory and resistance in education: Towards a pedagogy for the opposition*. Bergin & Garvey.
- Goulet, L. M., & Goulet, K. N. (2015). *Teaching each other: nehinuw concepts and indigenous pedagogies*. UBC Press.
- Government of Canada, S. C. (2023, March 24). *Statistics on indigenous peoples*. Government of Canada, Statistics Canada. Retrieved March 20, 2023, from https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/subjects-start/indigenous_peoples
- Grande, S. (2015). *Red pedagogy: Native American social and political thought*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Gyepi-Garbrah, J., Walker, R., & Garcea, J. (2013). Indigeneity, immigrant newcomers and Interculturalism in Winnipeg, Canada. *Urban Studies, 51*(9), 1795–1811.

Integrating Aboriginal Perspectives into Curricula: A Resource for Curriculum Developers, Teachers, and Administrators. (2003). Retrieved February 1, 2022, from

<https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/policy/abpersp/index.html>

It's Our Time: First Nations Education Toolkit. (2020). Retrieved April 5, 2021, from

<https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/support/its-our-time/full-doc.pdf>

Jabbar, A., & Mirza, M. (2017). *Culturally responsive pedagogy: Working towards*

Decolonization, Indigeneity and Interculturalism. (F. Pirbhai-Illich, S. Pete, & F. Martin, Eds.). Springer International Publishing AG.

Jedwab, J. (2011, June 27). *Multiculturalism.* Retrieved July 5, 2021, from

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/multiculturalism>

Kasparian, S. (2012). Aboriginal Peoples: Canada's first welcoming community where do aboriginal-immigrant relations stand today? *Canadian Issues*, 3–12.

Kerry Benjoe, R. L.-P. (2020, June 2). *Thomas Moore Keesick more than just a face.* Retrieved May 25, 2021, from <https://leaderpost.com/news/local-news/thomas-moore-keesick-more-than-just-a-face>

Kind, S., Irwin, R. L., Grauer, K., & De Cosson, A. (2005). Medicine wheel imag(in)ings: Exploring holistic curriculum perspectives. *Art Education*, 58(5), 33–38.

Kohn, A. (2008). *Beyond discipline: from compliance to community.* Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Kovach, M. (2021). *Indigenous methodologies: characteristics, conversations, and contexts.* University of Toronto Press.

Kuly, M. B. (2021). *Stories Indigenous inner-city young adults tell about school* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Manitoba].

- Kumashiro, K. K. (2000). Toward a Theory of Anti-Oppressive Education. *Review of Educational Research*, 70(1), 25–53.
- Lee, T. S., & Cerecer, P. D. Q. (2010). (Re) Claiming Native youth knowledge: Engaging in socio-culturally responsive teaching and relationships. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 12(4), 199–205.
- Lopresti, S., Willows, N. D., Storey, K. E., & Mchugh, T.-L. F. (2020). Indigenous Youth Mentorship Program: key implementation characteristics of a school peer mentorship program in Canada. *Health Promotion International*.
- Lowman, E. B., & Barker, A. J. (2015). *Settler: identity and colonialism in 21st century Canada*. Fernwood Publishing.
- Manitoba Education. (2006). Retrieved from https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/socstud/foundation_gr6/index.html
- Manitoba Education. (2017). Retrieved from <https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/aep/inclusion.html>
- Marom, L. (2017). A new immigrant experience of navigating multiculturalism and indigenous content in teacher education. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 46(4), 23–40.
- Mayes, E., Finneran, R., & Black, R. (2019). The challenges of student voice in primary schools: Students ‘having a voice’ and ‘speaking for’ others. *Australian Journal of Education*, 63(2), 157–172. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0004944119859445>
- Mills, K. A., & Doyle, K. (2019). Visual arts: A multimodal language for indigenous education. *Language and Education*, 33(6), 521–543.
- N., B. S. K., & Wyller, T. (2021). *Contested hospitalities in a time of migration: Religious and secular counterspaces in the Nordic region*. Routledge.

National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation. (2015). *Truth & reconciliation: calls to action*.

Nejad, S., Viswanathan, L., & Walker, R. (2021). Ethnocultural diversity, indigeneity, and intercultural understanding in the context of planning for reconciliation: Perspectives from the City of Winnipeg, Manitoba. *Canadian Planning and Policy / Aménagement Et Politique Au Canada, 2021*, 91–108.

Pailthorpe, B. C. (2017). Emergent Design. *The International Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods*, 1–2.

Piquemal, N., Misir, D., & Heringer, R. (2019). Responding to racial incivility in classrooms: Hospitality and responsibility. *Journal of Global Education and Research, 3*(2), 181–192.

Pirbhai-Illich, F., Pete, S., Martin, F., & Pete, S. (2017). *Culturally responsive pedagogy working towards Decolonization, Indigeneity and Interculturalism*. Springer International Publishing.

Pollack, T. M. (2012). The miseducation of a beginning teacher: One educators critical reflections on the functions and power of deficit narratives. *Multicultural Perspectives, 14*(2), 93–98.

Rattan, A., & Ambady, N. (2013). Diversity ideologies and intergroup relations: An examination of colorblindness and multiculturalism. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 43*(1), 12–21.

Robertson, L. H. (2021). The medicine wheel revisited: Reflections on indigenization in counseling and education. *SAGE Open, 11*(2), 215824402110152.

Rogers, M. (2012). Contextualizing theories and practices of Bricolage Research. *The Qualitative Report, 17*(48), 1–17.

- Rudman, L. A., & Saud, L. H. (2020). Justifying Social Inequalities: The Role of Social Darwinism. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 46(7), 1139–1155.
- Ruitenbergh, C. (2011). Hospitality and Subjectification: On Seeing Children and Youth as Respondents. *Jeunesse: Young People, Texts, Cultures*, 3(2), 133–140.
- Ruitenbergh, C. W. (2011). The Empty Chair: Education in an ethic of hospitality. *Philosophy of Education Society*, 28–36.
- Ruitenbergh, C. W. (2018). Hospitality and Embodied Encounters in Educational Spaces. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 37(3), 257–263.
- Saramo, S. (2016). Unsettling spaces: Grassroots responses to Canada's missing and murdered Indigenous women during the Harper government years. *Comparative American Studies An International Journal*, 14(3-4), 204–220.
- Saul, J. R. (2015). *The comeback*. CNIB.
- Schick, C. (2012). White resentment in settler society. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 17(1), 88–102.
- Sharma, M. (2016). Seeping deficit thinking assumptions maintain the neoliberal education agenda: Exploring three conceptual frameworks of deficit thinking in inner-city schools. *Education and Urban Society*, 50(2), 136–154.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124516682301>
- Shields, C. M., Mazawi André Elias, & Bishop, R. (2005). *Pathologizing practices: The impact of deficit thinking on Education*. P. Lang.
- Short, D. (2017). *Am I safe here?: Lgbtq teens and bullying in schools*. On Point Press.
- Simpson, L. B. (2014). Land as pedagogy: Nishnaabeg intelligence and rebellious transformation. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 3(3), 1–25.

- Simpson, L. B. (2019). *As we have always done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance*. W. Ross MacDonald School Resource Services Library.
- St. Denis, V. (2011). Silencing aboriginal curricular content and perspectives through multiculturalism: “there are other children here.” *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, 33(4), 306–317. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10714413.2011.597638>
- Stonechild, B. (2020). *Loss of Indigenous Eden and the fall of spirituality*. University of Regina Press.
- Toews, O. (2018). *Stolen city: racial capitalism and the making of Winnipeg*. ARP Books.
- Toulouse, P. R. (2018). *Truth and reconciliation in Canadian schools*. Portage & Main Press.
- Westmoreland, M. W. (2008). Interruptions: Derrida and hospitality. *Kritike: An Online Journal of Philosophy*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.3860/krit.v2i1.566>
- Wilson, S. S. (2008). *Research is ceremony: Indigenous research methods*. Fernwood.
- Wotherspoon, T. (2014). Seeking reform of Indigenous education in Canada: democratic progress or democratic colonialism? *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 10(4), 323–339.
- Yosso, T. J. (2014). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Critical Race Theory in Education*, 181–204.

Appendix A

Discussion Prompts

Time:	Date:
Place:	Researcher:
Participant(s):	Positioning of Participant(s):

Description of Research:

Utilizing Ruitenberg’s (2011) theory of educational hospitality, the experiences of Indigenous students navigating public education will be explored and understood to examine the ways in which schools are, or are not, fostering a sense of hospitality within spaces, curriculum/pedagogy, and relations.

It is important to note that these are not interview guides, merely potential prompts should our conversation need additional guidance/support in meeting the intended research outcomes of this study. These prompts may be used interchangeably, or not at all, depending on how dialogue is unfolding in the moment. These prompts are designed to be open-ended conversation starters, not necessarily interview questions.

Discussion Prompt:	Response Highlights:	Researcher Notes:
<p>1. Building relationality.</p> <p>a) Can you tell me a little bit about your life in your school?</p>		

<p>b) Can you tell me a little bit about yourself?</p> <p>c) What is it like to be an Indigenous student in your school?</p> <p>d) As you know, I am interested in whether you experience a sense of hospitality while at school. How would you define hospitality at school?</p> <p>e) What makes you feel at home? Can you share a story?</p> <p>f) What makes you not feel at home? Can you share a story?</p>		
---	--	--

<p>2. Pedagogy</p> <p>a) What do you enjoy learning about at school?</p> <p>Can you think of a time where you really felt connected to what you were learning?</p> <p>b) When was a time that you felt disconnected, offended, or left-out from a lesson or unit?</p> <p>c) What could schools/teachers do more of to make you feel more engaged with curricular content in school?</p>		
--	--	--

<p>d) If you could change anything about what/how you learn, what would you change? Why?</p> <p>3. Physical Spaces</p> <p>a) When you look at your school's physical appearance, what makes you feel comfortable? What makes you feel uncomfortable?</p> <p>b) Do Indigenous students in your school have a space that they can gather? What does this space look and feel like?</p>		
---	--	--

<p>What might you change about this space?</p> <p>c) Do you feel that the learning spaces (classrooms) in your school help you feel a sense of hospitality?</p> <p>4. Relations</p> <p>a) What is the relationship like between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students at your school?</p> <p>b) Do you feel like you have a strong relationship with your</p>		
---	--	--

<p>teachers/school staff?</p> <p>c) Can you share a story or experience where you felt a sense of <i>hospitality</i> from a student and/or teacher at school?</p> <p>d) Can you share a story or experience where you felt a sense of <i>inhospitality</i> from a student and/or teacher at your school?</p>		
--	--	--

Appendix B

BOX 7.1 BEFORE AND DURING THE RESEARCH CONVERSATION

Before the Research Conversation

Prior to hearing story (i.e., as method), it is helpful if

- The researcher has an embodied and conceptual knowing that story as research method is embedded in Indigenous epistemology, theory, and context – these cannot be separated.
- The researcher has an appreciation that story is a gift given with responsibilities associated with it.
- The researcher has contextual knowledge of the research participant's Indigenous community (whether that be territorial, organizational, or community of interest).
- The researcher has a consciousness of her, his, or their identity positioning and has unpacked any assumptions or biases about the research, research participant, and the community to which the research participant belongs.

- The researcher knows that one's credibility and trustworthiness as a researcher and person will factor into whether a research relationship is forged.
- There is an understanding that if the researcher is unknown to the research participant, time will be required to build trust.

During the Research Conversation

Hearing story as a research method includes the following practices and sensibilities:

- The researcher has a "pre-interview" cup of tea with the research participant (or participants) to share information about the purpose of the study, the research questions that will be asked, the approach to be taken, consent procedures, how findings will be shared, and the benefits of the research for the Indigenous community.
- The research conversation begins with a protocol of greeting and appreciation where gifting (for example, of tobacco, a jar of salmon, or a cup of tea) takes place. Russell Bishop (1999) describes his interviews as

beginning with a metaphoric "powhiri" (welcome). Depending upon the context (e.g., if it is a focus group), there might be food prior to the interview or conversation.

- The researcher is comfortable with allowing participants to tell their stories in their own way and at their own speed and recognizes that the research conversation will take its own time.
- The researcher is actively and reflectively listening given that both are necessary. There is a recognition that audiotaping might be the wise route given that notetaking can be distracting to the organic nature of the conversation.
- The researcher is part of the conversation and the conversation is dialogic, relational, and reflective, not just a matter of extracting information from participants.
- The researcher has an understanding that if questions are not answered sequentially, they can be revisited prior to the end of the research conversation.
- The researcher acknowledges that emotions may be triggered by the

research, and if the research participant shows anger or sadness, the researcher does not aggravate the situation.

- The researcher asks individuals if they have support systems to debrief should the interview prompt an emotional response.
- The researcher is knowledgeable about professional codes such as those related to child abuse and neglect disclosures and informs research participants about the duty to report if there is the potential that the research conversation might trigger a disclosure.
- The researcher is prepared to turn off the audiotape and halt the conversation if necessary.
- The researcher recognizes that her, his, or their own emotions may be triggered and knows to take time between interviews as needed and has a support system available.
- The researcher does not "bag the data" and run. There is an expectation of reciprocity, respect, and care for the research participant.

(Kovach, 2021)