HOW INDIGENOUS TEACHERS INCORPORATE TRADITIONAL WORLDVIEWS AND PRACTICES INTO CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT

by

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Abstract

Due to contextual factors that affect Indigenous populations, as well as high school graduation rates that are significantly lower than the general population, there is a need for culturally responsive behaviour support practices for Indigenous students within educational settings. The purpose of this study was to explore the traditional worldviews and practices that Indigenous teacher incorporate into the classroom to support Indigenous student behaviour. Using an ethnographic methodology, Indigenous teachers were interviewed and observed within the classroom setting. Interviews, observations and visual data were thematically analyzed. Overarching themes included: respect as a vehicle for learning, connectedness, incorporating traditional practices, social responsibility, behaviour support practices, and challenges to incorporation. Results are discussed in terms of implications for practice and use of culturally responsive behaviour support practices by Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers. Some of the practices discussed can be incorporated by any teacher into the classroom, but some practices may be appropriate for incorporation only by teachers with Indigenous heritage.
Preface

The present study was conducted by the graduate student, under the supervision and direction of her research supervisors, Dr. Kent McIntosh and Dr. Marla Buchanan. The graduate student was responsible for the data collection and the analysis and writing of the present study. Analysis was completed with the guidance of Dr. Marla Buchanan. This study was approved by the school district as well as UBC’s Behavioural Research Ethics Board, H12-01207.
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1. Introduction

Indigenous peoples in Canada face higher rates of poverty and unemployment, over-representation in the justice system, poor living conditions, higher involvement with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD), and lower rates of graduation (Statistics Canada, 2010). Education is an important factor in the amelioration of these numerous challenges, and research has shown a positive relationship between high school completion and outcomes such as post-secondary attendance, employment, income, health, and well-being (White, Peters, & Beavon, 2009). There is a saying by some Indigenous Elders that “education is our buffalo” (Christensen, 2000), meaning that education is the medium through which Indigenous peoples will strengthen their identities, families, communities, and economies (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996).

However, despite a positive upward trend in high school completion rates since 1981, there is still a large education gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students (White et al., 2009). The high school completion rate of Indigenous students across Canada is consistently at least 22% below that of non-Indigenous students (Richards, 2008). In British Columbia, the current completion rate of Indigenous students is 57%, as compared to 84% for non-Indigenous students (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2013). Additionally, Indigenous students are over-represented in special education categories; in BC, they are 3.5 times more likely to be designated with a Behaviour Disorder and 1.5 times more likely to be diagnosed with a Learning Disability than the general student population (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2013).

Importance of Acting to Avoid Negative Outcomes

Current graduation rates reflect that the existing education system is not supporting Indigenous students in ways that promote academic success, and change is required to foster
success in education. It is important to identify and ameliorate barriers to success in education for Indigenous students, especially as the size of Canada’s Indigenous population is rapidly increasing. Indigenous populations are increasing at a rate of six times that of the non-Indigenous population, and a high proportion (over 50%) of Indigenous Peoples in Canada are under the age of 24 (Statistics Canada, 2001, 2008). It is estimated that by 2026, Indigenous peoples will comprise a large proportion of Canada’s population and labour force (Hull, 2008). Consequently, the importance of designing education systems to cultivate positive learning environments to improve outcomes for Indigenous students is great. The need to improve education systems is especially salient for students living off-reserve, who have higher mobility rates and may not have access to extended family and social and cultural support than those living on reserves (Canadian Council on Learning, 2008; LaFromboise, Hoyt, Oliver, & Whitbeck, 2006).

**Barriers to Success in Education**

As negative academic and behaviour difficulties in school are related (Hinshaw, 1992), it is important to consider both academic and cultural factors that affect Indigenous students’ educational experiences. Gay (2000) describes that “failure is an experience, not an individual” (p. 8) and thus, instead of viewing deficits as residing within students, it is important to consider the barriers students may experience in school and work to break down these barriers.

A subtle barrier can occur when the learning needs of Indigenous students are over-generalized to create specific learning profiles that describe how Indigenous students learn best. Although the intention of learning profiles is to aid teachers in facilitating student success, the use of these profiles is considered to be problematic for a variety of reasons. For example, it limits understanding of the Indigenous learner as a unique being and underestimates the diversity within and between Indigenous groups (Castellano, Davis, & Lahache, 2000). Additionally,
Castellano et al. discuss that learning styles or learning profiles of Indigenous students describes student learning within a Western educational framework rather than within an Indigenous framework.

As a result, it may be worthwhile to consider the larger, societal barriers often faced by Indigenous students, rather than focusing exclusively on individual experiences. Poverty, the effects of colonization, intergenerational trauma and disparities between Indigenous and Western worldviews are key barriers and may have a direct relationship with Indigenous students’ success at school.

**Poverty**

Poverty has been found to be a grave issue for Indigenous peoples across Canada; on average, Indigenous individuals have higher unemployment rates and lower annual earnings as compared to non-Indigenous individuals. Statistics from the 2006 census reveal an unemployment rate of 14.8% for Indigenous peoples, as compared to 6.3% for the general population (Statistics Canada, 2008). In 2006, the median employment income for Indigenous individuals was found to be $18,962, as compared to the median income for non-Indigenous individuals of $27,097, 30% lower than the general population (Wilson & Macdonald, 2010). Additionally, Indigenous children are more likely to be raised in single parent families, which can further affect income and earning potential.

The lower employment rates and income disparities experienced by Indigenous peoples may be due to lower educational attainment. These barriers can have a reciprocal effect across generations, as socioeconomic status has been found to be negatively related to academic achievement, increasing the risk of dropout (Sirin, 2005). Additionally, unemployment rates and low annual earnings may be related to increased student mobility; in 2005, the likelihood of
moving within the same municipality was 4% higher for Indigenous than non-Indigenous peoples; additionally, Indigenous peoples were 3% more likely to relocate to a different municipality than non-Indigenous peoples (Statistics Canada, 2010).

Mobility can have a negative effect on student’s schooling and can contribute to a lack of connectedness to school and a lack of a sense of belonging (Beavon, Wingert, & White, 2009; Richmond & Smith, 2012). Additionally, the more times students move among schools, the less likely they are to graduate. A study by Aman and Ungerleider (2008) found high school completion rates for Indigenous students decreased from 48.9% for one school change to 11.3% for four school changes. Taken together, it is clear that the higher rates of poverty exert multiple negative influences on outcomes for Indigenous students. However, although poverty can be cited as one of the main barriers to success, educational challenges can also be explained by other contextual factors, including colonization, intergenerational trauma and disparities between Indigenous and Western worldviews.

Colonization

Colonization is the process by which Indigenous peoples were denied their sovereign rights to land and rights to self-governance due to the European presupposition that their way of life and worldviews were superior to those of the Indigenous peoples. Through colonization, Europeans attempted to “civilize” Indigenous peoples (Chartrand & McKay, 2006). As part of this process, the Canadian government took increasing control over the the lives of Indigenous peoples under the guise of protection. Colonization began in the mid 1700s and was formalized in legislation with the Indian Act of 1867 (Bourassa, 2004). The goal of colonization was to remove Indigenous peoples from their homelands, suppress Indigenous forms of governance, restrict cultural practices and suppress Indigenous identity (Royal Commission on Aboriginal
Colonization has resulted in continued endemic racism, power imbalances, loss of land and resources as well as loss of language and practices.

Wesley-Esquimaux and Smolewski (2004) describe the impacts of colonization in five domains: physical, economic, cultural, social, and psychological. The physical domain relates to the transmission of diseases through which Indigenous communities were significantly reduced and weakened. Economic refers to the forced removal of Indigenous peoples from their traditional lands and its associated negative economic impact, as they could no longer use the natural resources from their lands as a way of life. Cultural and social refer to the imposition of European cultural values on Indigenous cultures, the prohibition of Indigenous cultural practices and ceremonies, such as the potlatch and the subjugation of Indigenous languages and governance. Furthermore, as Indigenous cultural practices and belief systems were interconnected with everyday life, which was directly tied to the land, when Indigenous peoples were forced to leave their traditional lands, this change also altered the methods of transmission of cultural knowledge and contributed to alienation from culture (Poonwassie & Charter, 2001). This disruption also resulted in changing of social structures and altered the traditional way of life and social systems. The final factor, psychological, refers to the marginalization of Indigenous people as a result of colonization. Taken together, these factors resulted in a loss of identity and loss of autonomy, leading to uncertainty and helplessness (Charter, Hart, & Pompana, 1996).

The effects of colonization continue to this day and have a widespread impact on the lives of Indigenous peoples, including effects on health, socioeconomic status, cultural transmission, and education. The current education system is built on colonialism and Westernized methods of teaching. It does not take into account Indigenous values, history, or
knowledge systems and superiority of Western values is inherent in the system (Ledoux, 2006).

Battiste (2002) discussed that because the education system in Canada does not take into account Indigenous worldviews, it may give rise to self-doubt within Indigenous students and cause them to question their natural abilities and gifts. Poonwassie and Charter (2001) described that one of the most deleterious and challenging factors at school for Indigenous students is racism and discussed that this issue may be one of the biggest reasons for the low retention rates of Indigenous students across Canada. (Bourassa, 2004; Wesley-Esquimaux & Smolewski, 2004).

**Intergenerational Trauma**

The residential school system was one of the primary agents of colonization in Canada. Across Canada, residential schools were operated for over 100 years, from 1860 to 1996. Indigenous children were often forcibly removed from their families and required to attend residential school for months or years at a time (Coalition for the Advancement of Aboriginal Studies, 2002; Smith, Varcoe, & Edwards, 2005). While at these schools, children were separated from their traditional cultures, punished for speaking their native languages or engaging in cultural practices and made to feel ashamed for their traditional ways of life (Haig-Brown, Hodgson-Smith, Regnier, & Archibald, 1997). Additionally, many children experienced abuse and neglect during their time in the residential schools. Isolated from their parents, communities, and even from siblings also attending the same school, children grew up without appropriate, nurturing adult role models (Kirkness, 1999; Smith et al., 2005).

The impact of residential schools led to a deficit in parenting and cultural models; lacking these models, some individuals did not learn how to develop healthy family relationships (Mussell, Cardiff, & White, 2004). This may, in part, account for the high proportion of children of survivors of residential schools being placed in care of the state from the 1960s to 1980s, in
what is known as the “Sixties Scoop” (Alberta Education, 2005). The attempted assimilation of Indigenous students into Western culture through residential schools and cross-cultural foster placements has resulted in multi-generational trauma and arrested the transmission of Indigenous cultural traditions and languages to subsequent generations (Maina, 1997). The legacy of the residential schools has also contributed to a sense of alienation and lack of belonging described by many of today’s Indigenous youth (Chansonneuve, 2005; Smith et al., 2005). Furthermore, many Indigenous individuals feel a mistrust of the institution of education, feelings of powerlessness, and fears of their children being removed (McBride & McKee, 2001).

**Disparities between Indigenous and Western Worldviews**

Kirkness (1999) describes the current education system, in which Indigenous students are integrated into general education, as a “physical presence” rather than a true, respected, and recognized incorporation of Indigenous worldviews. She describes Indigenous students as being caught between cultures and thus belonging to neither culture. Due to this disparity, many students experience alienation and identity confusion. This lack of consistency between school and home expectations and values may lead to challenging behaviour (West, Leon-Guerrero, & Stevens, 2007). Cultural disparities and differences in behaviour expectations between home and school can be misinterpreted by teachers and lead to viewing students as challenging and defiant and perceiving diverse backgrounds as risk factors (Curran, 2003).

Teachers may misinterpret culturally based behaviours of students that are accepted in the home but not at school and are subsequently punished (Utley, Kozleski, Smith, & Draper, 2002; West et al., 2007). Culture exerts a powerful effect on student behaviour, as students come to school equipped with values and behaviours from their cultural background, and teachers do a disservice to students when they ignore or diminish the importance of culture (Gay, 2000). A
study by Deyhle (1995) found that teachers and administrators cited more community and environmental than school factors for Navajo students’ school failure or dropout, including lack of self-esteem, lack of parenting skills and language development, poor attitudes and motivation of students, and difficult home life. These factors place blame on students and families rather than identifying school factors that could influence student success. Conversely, Deyhle found that the Navajo students’ reasons for leaving school included overt and covert racism, perceived lack of teacher caring, lack of feeling of belonging, and lack of relevance of curriculum to their lives, as well as home difficulties. Therefore, it may be helpful for educators in Canada to consider cultural disparities in the curriculum or behaviour management techniques within the classroom before considering within-child or family variables. Examining Indigenous worldviews may help remove these barriers to educational success for Indigenous students.

**Indigenous Worldviews**

Indigenous knowledge is constructed through practices, values, and beliefs related to worldviews (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005). Teaching and learning encompass these values and are rooted in Indigenous language and culture (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009). The whole community (e.g., extended family, Elders) takes responsibility for teaching children, thus strengthening community relationships and promoting a sense of belonging (Brendtro, Brokenleg, & Van Bockern, 2002). Knowledge is orally transmitted, and education of children and youth often includes modeling of tasks accompanied by storytelling (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005). Traditionally, youth were expected to watch, listen, and learn through these methods (Hare, 2011). Rarely were children told directly what to do, but led to come to their own understanding. It was each individual’s responsibility to take ownership of their learning and decide when to accept responsibility for a task (Swan, 1998). Children and youth were
encouraged to consider their behaviour in terms of the community, thus promoting responsibility (Kirkness, 1999). Traditional transmission of cultural values often occurs through storytelling, with trickster archetypal characters, including Raven and Coyote, used to transmit social values such as humility, honesty, courage, and respect (Archibald, 1997; Kirkness, 1999).

Investigating Indigenous worldviews represents a balance between examining commonalities while paying respect to diversity. Although Indigenous cultural groups share common values, all groups possess their own specific cultural values and practices. Across Canada, there are many Indigenous cultural groups, including over 615 Nations and 50 languages (Statistics Canada, 2008). The common values between related groups can be referred to as foundational worldviews (Alberta Education, 2005). These foundational worldviews reflect the guiding principles and values of Indigenous peoples in Canada and indicate how Indigenous peoples view themselves in relation to their world. These common threads running through many Indigenous cultures include a holistic perspective, interconnectedness of all living things, connection to land and community, changing nature of the world and culture and “power with” rather than “power over”.

**Holistic Perspective**

Many Indigenous groups believe that learning involves more than just intellect and encompasses mind, body, heart, and spirit to engage and expand all facets of an individual (Archibald, 1997; Canadian Council on Learning, 2009). From an Indigenous worldview, literacy is viewed as the understanding of all of life and the connection between mind, body, and spirit (Alberta Education, 2012). The holistic lifelong learning model includes learning that takes place over a lifespan and involves the development of the individual, as well as how the
individual can give back to the community and ensure cultural continuity. In the words of Dr. Lorna Williams,

“[The purpose of Indigenous learning] is to contribute to becoming a whole human being... This means that learning can be acquired only by being a full participant in life. This includes participating in the ceremonies, work life, joy and humour that exists in each Aboriginal community.” (as cited in Canadian Council on Learning, 2009, p. 11)

**Interconnectedness of all Living Things**

An Indigenous worldview acknowledges the interconnectedness of all living things and that all living things possess a spirit. Therefore, community, individual, and environmental health are thought to be interrelated (Alberta Education, 2005).

*All things are connected like the blood that unites us. We did not weave the web of life. We are merely a strand in it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves.*

—Chief Seattle, Squamish Nation, (as cited in Alberta Teachers' Association, 2008, p. 39)

As all things, including plants, wind, mountains, and rivers, have a spirit and are imbued with awareness and life, it is vital that the relationships with all beings is respectful so as to maintain the balance of the universe (Kawagley & Barnhardt, 1999). All individuals in a community have a unique role to play in the well-being of the community and are responsible for their own actions in relation to the group. Cooperation and sharing are vital as is the uniqueness of each member’s gifts (Kirkness, 1999). *Wahkohtowin* is a Cree word that embodies this worldview and is defined as relationship to all of creation (Anderson & Ball, 2011). It encompasses kinship relationships within the family and community. In terms of traditional child-rearing and education, a child would have many role models, from whom discipline, teaching, and play were provided for a child to have a balanced upbringing. To ensure continuity of the community, children were taught their place in the interconnected web of people, plants, animals, and spirits.
Children were taught how they were cared for by these entities and the responsibilities they held towards them.

The sacred circle, or medicine wheel, is considered a foundational symbol in many Indigenous cultures. It is often used to show the interconnections of the community, as well as all living things. Within the sacred circle, all things are seen as interdependent and harmonious. The sacred circle has also been used to represent education, with the goal of education to pursue wholeness, connectedness, and balance through participation in ceremonies and self-directed learning throughout the lifespan (Haig-Brown et al., 1997). Lifelong learning is embedded in relationships with the community (including ancestors, clans, and nations), as well as the relationships between all living beings. In this view, learning occurs through lived experience, including observation, imitation, and participation in traditional ceremonies (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009).

**Connection to Land and Community**

The interconnectedness of all living things is closely related to the worldview of connection to land and community. Indigenous peoples have a sacred relationship with nature, a core aspect of many traditional teachings and practices (Alberta Education, 2005). The sacred circle is also part of this aspect of Indigenous worldviews, as the circle represents the natural patterns of time, including the seasons and the lifecycle from birth to death and rebirth. The circle also represents respect for all living things and for the cycle of life. Connection to the land as a way of life signifies connection to a place of belonging (Haig-Brown et al., 1997). The concept of respect towards the land and all living beings is important, as many gifts, such as medicine and food, are given by the land (Alberta Education, 2012). Animals were thought to offer their lives in exchange for prayers and stewardship of the land (Cajete, 1995). Learning
takes place in relation to the land and within the natural environment, utilizing the five senses to gain knowledge about oneself and the world in which one lives. Knowledge comes from direct experience with the natural environment and, therefore, cannot be separated from the context in which it is to be employed (Kawagley & Barnhardt, 1999).

“Power With” Rather than “Power Over”

This principle reflects that all living things are equal and also uses the concept of a sacred circle, in which “power with” shows equality within a circle, whereas “power over” would be represented as a hierarchy (Alberta Education, 2005). One individual is not better than another; this principle shows the unique gifts of all. Each person had a unique role to play in the community to ensure care for one another and survival of the community (Anderson & Ball, 2011). Elders impart knowledge to children, who, in turn, help the Elders when needed. The teacher can be viewed as the student, or the student as the teacher, depending on the context (Alberta Education, 2012). Traditionally, individuals followed the law of co-existence, which comes from the Creator. This law represents the principle that nobody’s status is above that of any other person. These principles are based on honesty, trust, respect, and honour. The principle of “power with” can be reflected in education in that all students have unique strengths and knowledge bases that can be used to help other students succeed (Battiste, 2002).

Changing Nature of the World

Although Indigenous worldviews contain many traditions, stories, and practices that have been passed on since the human origin, Indigenous cultures are dynamic and are constantly evolving and adapting in response to changing environmental conditions (Alberta Education, 2005; Archibald, 1997). In the present time, learning is spiritually and traditionally oriented but also integrated with Western knowledge (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009). The individual
is ever changing, and learning is an ongoing process from which new practices and knowledge develops. Elder Jerry Wood describes that although the culture evolves from generation to generation, the basis of the culture is still the natural way of being and living in the world (Alberta Education, 2012).

**Culturally Responsive Classroom Management**

Culturally responsive education is the belief that “all culturally and linguistically diverse students can excel in academic endeavours when their culture, language, heritage, and experiences are valued and used to facilitate their learning and development, and they are provided access to high quality teachers, programs, and resources” (Klingner et al., 2005, p. 8). When learning is culturally responsive, all students have the opportunity to succeed in education and are respected for their culture and diversity, rather than having culture seen as a barrier to learning (Villegas & Lucas, 2007). However, there currently exists a disconnect between theory and practice, and many teachers do not have the knowledge necessary to implement culturally responsive strategies in the classroom (Weinstein, 2003).

**Universal Culturally Responsive Strategies for Classroom Behaviour Support**

Culturally responsive classroom behaviour support includes actively incorporating and adapting curricula and teaching practices to support students of diverse cultures in the classroom. Rather than just acknowledging diversity, teaching can be directed to students’ cultural strengths. Gay (2000) describes pedagogy as being truly culturally relevant when it supports culturally diverse students’ success to the same extent as the current education system supports student of Western descent. Culturally responsive classroom behaviour support includes inclusion of cultural knowledge, classroom restructuring, predictable expectations, caring, and creating a
sense of belonging and inclusion for diverse students in the classroom (Brown, 2003; Curran, 2003; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Weinstein, Curran, & Tomlinson-Clarke, 2003).

To be culturally responsive, it is important that teachers have an awareness of power imbalances that may exist within the school or system and strive to ensure that these power imbalances do not affect the classroom environment negatively (Weinstein et al., 2003). It is also important that teachers are aware of the diverse cultures of students in the class and learn about these cultures in a genuine manner to promote diversity. Educators can learn about students’ cultures in a variety of ways, through community mentors, student presentations, or personal research (Curran, 2003; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). However, it is important not to overgeneralize cultural characteristics to all students, which can lead to challenges in itself.

The use of universal culturally responsive techniques in the classroom can aid in creating an accepting classroom environment (Brown, 2003; Curran, 2003; Soodak, 2003). To promote a classroom environment where students feel safe and accepted, teachers can develop explicit expectations for behaviour that can help students understand how to behave in the classroom (Weinstein et al., 2003). Routines and expectations can promote stability in the classroom and avoid miscommunications or misperceptions from both the teacher and students. Additionally, it is important to structure the classroom environment and teaching to promote learning and language acquisition rather than responding to student behaviour with punitive practices (Curran, 2003).

In addition, culturally responsive strategies include effective communication and genuine caring for all students. Considering different communication styles and communicating effectively with students from diverse backgrounds are important behaviours in the classroom (Brown, 2003). Brown described the need to be aware of specific verbal and nonverbal
communication styles of students from different cultures, including the ways students prefer to respond to classroom questions and work with one another. Gay (2000) described the practice of “cultural caring” as one in which teachers facilitate learning through forming genuine interpersonal relationships with their students. Teachers who practice cultural caring empower their students to achieve by having high expectations of all students, regardless of their cultural backgrounds.

**Culturally Responsive Classroom Behaviour Support for Indigenous Learners**

Promoting Indigenous worldviews in the classroom does not mean ignoring other cultures, but respecting Indigenous peoples and their history and transmitting this respect to all students (Alberta Education, 2005). With this idea in mind, Gutierrez, Baquenedano-Lopez, and Tejada (1999) discussed the creation of a “third space” within education that values Indigenous cultures but also includes aspects of Western education practices. The idea of a third space is consistent with the Indigenous worldview of the “changing nature of the world” and the synthesis of Western and Indigenous schools of thought (McIntosh, Moniz, Craft, Golby, & Steinwand-Deschambeault, 2013 manuscript submitted for publication). Respecting and promoting Indigenous worldviews includes having high expectations of Indigenous students and considering students’ learning and behaviour needs to help them meet these expectations (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008). More specific practices are described in the following sections.

**Utilizing Cultural Values to Promote Social Responsibility**

Brendtro, Brokenleg and Van Bockern (2002) described four core values of social responsibility from a traditional Indigenous perspective using the sacred circle imagery, including belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity. Independence is encouraged first through teaching respect for the wisdom of Elders and reinforcement of desired behaviour with
increased opportunities to make independent choices. The goal is to teach children self-discipline and self-control. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions, and teachers are encouraged to highlight the value of a task (Hammond, Dupoux, & Ingalls, 2004). Traditionally, Indigenous children learned life skills and cultural values through listening to and observing Elders. This traditional practice can be modified for use in the classroom context, through the use of teacher modeling. Swan (1998) discussed the use of modeling in the classroom, and described that students should have a role model to observe before attempting a task on their own, this role model may be the teacher, an Elder, or a community guest in the classroom. Additionally, all individuals (not just children) are encouraged to listen with their three ears, “two on the sides of [their] head and one in [their] heart” (Archibald, 1997, p. 131). Individuals are also encouraged to listen twice as much as they speak. Indigenous teachers have been found to use less discourse than in typical Western classrooms, as well as the use of modeling of acceptable behaviours; these practices were demonstrated through a study of a Yu’pik teacher (Lipka, 1991).

Behaviour management techniques focus on virtue awareness rather than reprimands, and the focus of teaching social responsibility is on the understanding of core values and acting upon these values rather than focusing on behaviour problems (Jacobs, 2003; Lickona, Schaps, & Lewis, 1997). Lickona et al. described core virtues as enduring qualities, such as courage, generosity, humility, honesty, and patience that help a person to lead a good life. As such, instruction in behaviours associated with virtues, as opposed to behaviours that are disconnected from a larger purpose, may lead to enhanced life outcomes. The seven sacred teachings, which can be found across Nations, include the virtues of humility, honesty, wisdom, truth, respect, and love (Bouchard & Martin, 2010). Each of the teachings is represented by an animal to symbolize
balance and Indigenous peoples’ connection with nature (Calgary Board of Education, n.d.). Traditionally, guidelines for acceptable behaviour were transmitted through stories and myths so as not to single out or embarrass a person who may have engaged in socially unacceptable behaviour (Poonwassie & Charter, 2001).

Storytelling practices are used not simply to entertain but to promote values (Eder, 2007). Repetition of these stories reveals meaning and helped in the acquisition of values (Brendtro et al., 2002). Eder (2007) described story-telling as a means by which to teach children the principles of living well; stories contain implicit messages from which students draw upon their own experiences and perspectives, and thus, a story may hold different meanings for children as they grow and develop. Additionally, storytelling encourages children to form imagery corresponding to the story, thus potentially solidifying the learning (Alberta Education, 2012). Stories often accompanied a task in order to impart the importance of that task and contained information on history of the people, the land, and traditional practices such as using herbs and natural medicines (Hare, 2011). Storytelling can be used in the classroom to impart cultural values or classroom expectations and promote conceptual learning.

**Inclusion of Traditional Cultural Practices in the Classroom**

Inclusion of cultural practices includes incorporating Indigenous language and culture into learning to make learning more relevant for the students (Hyslop, 2011). However, few teacher education programs include training directly related to Indigenous students (Kanu, 2011). Consequently, many teachers, although they may desire to incorporate teachings into the classroom, do not have the knowledge necessary to do so. Therefore, involvement in community ceremonial activities (especially for non-Indigenous teachers) can promote inclusion of values in the classroom as well as expand teacher understanding of the culture (Ginsberg & Craig, 2010).
The resulting increase in knowledge can lead to an increased understanding of student behaviour and use of culturally responsive behaviour management strategies. However, it is important for non-Indigenous teachers to be aware that one needs to be invited to ceremonial events to learn and participate in Indigenous culture respectfully (John, 2012). There are also specific protocols and rules as to who can share particular stories and knowledge. For example, some stories are owned by families or clans, and the information shared within a story is of great significance and is told not merely to entertain but to share knowledge for a specific purpose. Battiste (2002) described that there are no written guidelines for these protocols, and thus it is important for educators to be aware of guidelines surrounding the sharing of Indigenous knowledge and who is allowed to share which information. Therefore, in addition to teachers’ knowledge of, and involving themselves in, the larger community in which their students live, it is also important to involve the community in the education process (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008).

**Creation of a Classroom Community**

Many Indigenous students have experienced racism or prejudice; therefore, it is important to create a “community of learners” where students feel respected and accepted (Alberta Education, 2005). The concept of belonging is important across Indigenous groups. As echoed by Deloria (1943) “be related, somehow, to everyone you know: make [he/she] important to you, [he/she] is also a [person]” (p. 49). Encouraging students to treat their peers as a classroom “family” can increase students’ sense of belonging and respect for other students (Brendtro & Brokenleg, 1996). Establishing a relationship of trust with students is also an important factor in students sense of belonging in the class (Ledoux, 2006). Understanding of Indigenous cultural values can aid in the development of a trusting relationship and can also foster student understanding of these values.
The use of Talking Circles is one method to create community in the classroom and draws on traditional practices (Triplet & Hunter, 2005). In this method, the class comes together to practice the skills of respectful listening and sharing or problem solving as a group. Students sit in observance of the principle of the sacred circle. Everyone is equal and all belong. The student holding the talking object (e.g., rock, pencil, feather) has the turn to share, so that all students feel comfortable to share their thoughts and express their opinions. The other students are encouraged to listen non-judgmentally, and everyone has the opportunity to share, if desired (Alberta Teachers’ Association, 2008). Kanu (2011) described that the use of Talking Circles helped student to feel a sense of belonging and respect. Kanu described the comments of one student who shared that in her class no one was forced to speak if they did not wish to, thus respecting individual students’ needs for silence as well as their needs to share.

Use of cooperative (rather than competitive) learning strategies can also increase a sense of community and belonging (Hammond et al., 2004). Attaining mastery and competence in a certain area is a personal goal and not a competitive goal. Therefore, an individual who has already attained mastery can be seen as a model rather than a rival, and success of individuals in the group can be celebrated by the group as a whole (Brendtro et al., 2002). Students may be unwilling to perform a task in public until they have attained mastery, and thus self-determination of mastery and cooperation is an important aspect of the learning community (Vasquez, 1990). Expert apprentice modeling and joint productive activity are strategies that can increase student engagement in academic tasks as well as promote a sense of community. Expert apprentice modeling occurs when the teacher, or a skillful student, models the task for the class and joint productive activity occurs when the whole class, including the teacher, engages in a task at the same time (Lipka, Sharp, Brenner, Yanez, & Sharp, 2005). For example, in a study by
Lipka et al. (2005), during a lesson on geometric shapes, the teacher instructed the students to sit in a circle and then modeled the activity for the students while giving verbal instructions. Once students were independently engaged in the task, the teacher then engaged in the same task alongside the students. It is important to provide students the time for reflection and development of mastery of skills (Hammond et al., 2004).

**Involving the Larger Community: Inclusion of Parents and Elders**

Involvement of parents and Elders as integral members of the school community respects traditional Indigenous worldviews and promotes the values of interconnectedness. It is important for teachers to develop bonds within the Indigenous community and build relationships of trust (Deyhle, 1995). Audrey Weasel Traveller, from the Piikani Nation, describes the importance of building rapport and valuing a person as a person and not just for the knowledge they hold (Alberta Education, 2012). Providing a gift in exchange for knowledge is a sign of respect for the knowledge that person holds and maintains long term relationships with those in the community.

**Parents.** Involvement of parents in the school community promotes not only continuity of culture but also healing, as many parents may be mistrustful and wary of the education system (Jacobs, 2003). Additionally, parental support has been found to increase student resiliency, and parental involvement in education is associated with higher attendance and graduation rates (Friedel, 1999; LaFromboise et al., 2006). A study of parental engagement in Nunavut schools revealed that parents desired the inclusion of more cultural practices in their children’s school, and the inclusion of these practices encouraged parental involvement in the school, despite potential negative feelings they may have held regarding the school system (Berger, 2009). Additionally, as parents are the first teachers of their children (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009), Kanu (2011) urged educators to respect Indigenous parents’ perspectives on education.
Parents need to be empowered to become involved in the school community. Furthermore, it is important to recognize the various methods that Indigenous parents support their children’s education, including speaking with their children about their school day, encouraging their children to take responsibility for their learning and promoting cultural values (Berger, 2009).

**Elders.** Elders are the largest remaining population of Native language speakers and can be viewed as the “professors” of First Nations culture (Hyslop, 2011). Elders have an important role to play in education and can foster links between the school and Indigenous communities. Elders have knowledge of traditional practices, recreational activities, and traditional methods of healing and can help to foster self-esteem and overall well-being through developing students’ senses of cultural identity (Agbo, 2004). Therefore, Elders are an invaluable resource when developing culturally relevant classroom management techniques. Rogers and Jaime (2010) discuss the importance of consulting Elders when transmitting cultural teachings to students, as well as involving Elders in the classroom to relay these teachings. Some customs mandate that certain traditions and ceremonies should only be taught by Elders, and it is important that teachers be sensitive to these boundaries and not inadvertently overstep them. Additionally, it is important to respect the value of the knowledge that is being imparted by Elders and abide by proper protocol when asking Elders to share their knowledge (Alberta Education, 2012).

**Present Study**

Culturally responsive classroom behaviour support for Indigenous learners has rarely been explored in the literature. Some studies discuss adapting curricula to make them more culturally relevant, yet few studies address culturally responsive classroom behaviour support strategies. A number of studies demonstrate that when students feel connected to their culture, they are more resilient and experience greater academic success than those students who feel
disconnected from their culture (McCarthy & Benally, 2003; Vardas, 1995). Additionally, in a study with Navajo youth, it was found that students who were not raised in a traditional manner or who were disconnected from their cultural background, received more discipline referrals to the office (McCarthy & Benally, 2003). Therefore, inclusion of Indigenous cultural values and practices in effective classroom behaviour support is important, especially in light of the over-representation of Indigenous students with educational behaviour disorder designations in B.C. (McBride & McKee, 2001). A number of practices show promise, including integration of language, teaching of cultural values and promotion of community in classrooms and schools (Kanu, 2011). However, how these practices are integrated into general classroom instruction is unknown. Therefore, this study sought to examine: how do teachers incorporate an Indigenous worldview or Indigenous practices regarding the support of Indigenous student behaviour in the classroom?
2. Methodology

History of Ethnography

Ethnography is the study of social interactions, behaviours, and perceptions that occur within groups, organizations, or communities (Reeves, Kuper, & Hodges, 2008). Taken literally, ethnography is “writing about groups of people,” specifically the culture of groups of people (Creswell, 2005). Ethnography emerged as a field of study in cultural anthropology in the early 1900s, with early ethnographers including Bronislaw Malinowski, Franz Boas, and Margaret Mead (Lichtman, 2010). The early goal of ethnography was to view “native” cultures from an objective standpoint; however, early ethnographies were most often conducted in third world countries with a Western worldview (Creswell, 2005). Traditional ethnographic studies took place over an extended period of time, typically a number of years, for the researcher to become fully immersed in the cultural group being studied (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010).

The use of ethnography as a method in educational and psychological research began in the 1950s, with school environments and classrooms examined as cultures with specific rituals and social structures (Creswell, 2005). As the field of ethnography has evolved, contemporary ethnography is not just a single, unified approach. The term “ethnography” comprises a variety of approaches that can be conducted using a variety of epistemologies including positivist, structuralist, and constructivist paradigms (Miller, Hengst, & Su-hua, 2003). Additionally, contemporary ethnographies typically take place over shorter time periods due to restraints of time and resources (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010).

The current study took an ethnographic approach with a post-positivistic theoretical underpinning. Post-positivists uphold that there is no one true conceptualization of reality. According to a post-positivistic stance, reality is subjective depending on one’s experiences and
environment, and triangulation across different types of information can help researchers to arrive closer to a more objective reality. Within this framework, a detailed, holistic examination of social behaviours was undertaken with the goal of “identifying cultural meanings, beliefs and social patterns” of the cultural group through observations and interviews (Letts et al., 2007, p. 3). Culture within the current study was defined as the classroom culture within a teaching framework that incorporates Indigenous worldviews and teaching practices.

**Rationale for Method**

Undertaking a qualitative study respects the oral traditions of Indigenous peoples. An ethnographic approach views participants as “experts” and allows for a rich understanding of the culture being examined. Additionally, ethnography is described by Griffin and Bengry-Howell (2007) as an especially useful methodology when the phenomenon being investigated has been little examined in the literature and when examining complex behaviours, such as within a classroom environment, as in the current study. Furthermore, an ethnography provides a holistic and multifaceted understanding of the role of Indigenous culture within a classroom, thus helping to dispel current overgeneralizations or oversimplifications of the learning and behaviour needs of Indigenous students. Therefore, using an ethnographic approach, the current study sought to address the gaps in the literature, using accounts of Indigenous teachers and observations of day-to-day classroom behaviour support within the natural environment of the classroom.

**Researcher’s Positionality**

As a Caucasian female with a primarily Western lens I am an “outsider” examining Indigenous culture. However, I sought to authentically capture the experiences and views of Indigenous teachers and strove for a non-judgmental perspective throughout this study. Although it was impossible to completely remove my own influence on the study, I was interested in
hearing from an “insider” perspective and sought to interpret the data as closely to this perspective as possible.

I have experience both researching Indigenous education and working in the education system with Indigenous students and teachers. From these experiences, I bring the presupposition that there is inherent discrimination in the education system and that change is required in the system to better support Indigenous students. Therefore, I may have been biased towards looking for changes or adaptations needed in the system, rather than looking at the picture as a whole.

**Description of Procedures**

**Participant Recruitment.** The sample included 4 teachers of Indigenous descent. As this study sought to discover an Indigenous perspective on classroom behaviour support, it was important that participants were Indigenous teachers who were strongly rooted in Indigenous cultures and currently practicing within a school environment, preferably within a classroom. Therefore, sampling of participants was purposeful in order to locate participants who met these selection criteria. Individuals who met the criteria and were interested in participating in this study were located through emails of invitation and phone calls by the researcher. Initially, participants were located through personal contacts of the researcher and her supervisor; following this step, the researcher received further suggestions from participants.

**Research Protocols.** Data were collected through four different methods: (1) literature review, (2) interviews, (3) participant observation and (4) visual analysis. A review of the literature served two purposes, to identify “expert” theories on what constitutes Indigenous practices of classroom behaviour support and a description of these theories in practice in the current education system. These findings also provided a foundational framework for the
anticipated results of this study. Although the literature can provide a framework for the results, it is important that this information does not bias the researcher during data collection.

Fetterman (2009) described the importance of taking a nonjudgmental perspective, “suspending valuation of any given cultural practice” (p 549). Additionally, bias was controlled through data triangulation and member checks of the analyzed data by participants. Providing the option of member checking to participants was also intended to honour the participant’s role in the research project, as the expert, and respect the importance of research being conducted “with” Indigenous individuals rather than “on” Indigenous culture (Sinclair, 2003).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants. Written consent was obtained from all participants. Prior to the interview, participants were invited to create their own interview questions in order to honour their part in the research process and invite the story they wished to tell. However, none of the participants elected to create their own questions, and thus the interview protocol developed by the researcher was used. The interview protocol contained open ended questions that explored the interviewee’s perceptions of Indigenous classroom behaviour support as well as how the interviewee put these culturally responsive methods into practice. The interview protocol was developed with the literature review in mind. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis as described below. A copy of the interview protocol is included in Appendix A.

Each interview was transcribed in its entirety before the data were coded and analyzed for themes. Initially, the audio-recorded interview data were transcribed verbatim. The researcher transcribed through a methodical process of listening and re-listening to the audio recordings in order to ensure accuracy of the transcription (Lapadat, 1999). Data were transcribed as closely as possible to what was heard on the tapes. Brief reflexive notes were taken by the researcher
during each interview, to note anything that could not be captured on the audiotape, such as facial expression and body language. These observations were then noted in the transcript. A transcription key was created to denote body language, expression, emotion and tone of voice expressed during the interview.

The third source of data came from direct observations of participants’ teaching practices. Although observations were intended to be conducted with all four participants, observations were conducted with only two of the four participants. One of the participants did not feel comfortable having the researcher in the classroom, as she was teaching in a new program in which there had been an abundance of visitors in the classroom that year. The other observation could not be conducted due to an extended absence of the participant. Observations, both in elementary schools, took place across a morning or afternoon, and field notes were taken throughout the observations in a field journal. As both of these teachers worked in supporting roles as district resource teachers, observational data were collected from the two teachers during a time when they were working in a classroom setting. The goals of the lesson for each observation session were quite different; one teacher was invited into a classroom to teach about salmon from an Indigenous perspective, as the class had been studying the life cycle of salmon. The other teacher supported students in both a Grade 3/4 classroom and a 6/7 classroom, working one to one or with small groups of students. She had been supporting these students for the school year as part of her job responsibilities. Although the teaching goals of both observations were quite different, a number of commonalities existed within their teaching practices. The researcher remained a “nonparticipant” observer within the classroom environment (Creswell, 2005). Field notes contained both descriptive and reflective components and included descriptions from the following domains: space (layout and design of the
classroom), participants (people involved, including teachers and students), events and sequences (including structure of the day and sequence of activities that take place), goals (purposes of the lessons), feeling (emotions expressed by students and teacher), behaviours (of students and teacher), interactions within the classroom, and the researcher’s personal reflections as they related to the research question (Creswell, 2005; LeCompte & Schensul, 2010; Spradley, 1980). School as well as parental consent and participant consent were obtained prior to any observations.

Artifacts were collected from each participant to provide concrete examples of classroom behaviour support; these artifacts included photographs, pamphlets, and a book on Aboriginal ideologies. Photographs were taken in two of the four participants’ classrooms and included pictures of the classroom layout, permanent products of the students, classroom displays or art work and behaviour support tools. Consent was obtained from the teachers prior to taking photographs of any materials or locations, and no students were photographed in any way. Visual materials provided support for data obtained from observations and interviews.

Data Analysis

**Braun and Clarke’s Thematic Analysis.** As much of the existing research tends to generalize Indigenous learning styles, inductive analysis was used to determine to what extent the analyzed data corresponded with current research (rather than fitting data to research/theory). Interview and observation data (field notes) were analyzed according to Braun and Clarke’s (2006) method of thematic analysis, which allowed for a rich, thematic description of the data set. This method has six phases, including (1) becoming familiar with the data: transcribing interviews, reading the data and noting initial thoughts; (2) generating initial codes: coding noteworthy parts of the data in a systematic way across the whole data set and pulling together
data that match each different code; (3) looking for categories: sorting codes (and corresponding data) into potential categories to create an initial thematic map; (4) reviewing categories: confirming that initial themes work with the coded extracts (Level 1) and whole data set (Level 2); (5) defining and naming themes: clearly defining and analyzing themes; (6) producing the report with interpretive analysis of themes. In addition to the thematic analysis, visual data were analyzed using a visual content analysis (Riessman, 2008) which is the analysis of events, characteristics or phenomena in pictures or other visual data.

**Rigour and Validity.** A number of steps were taken to ensure validity and reliability of the data collection and analysis. The analyzed interview data, observations, visual analysis and literature review results were cross validated and triangulated to make comparisons between types of data as well as to verify and strengthen results. As the researcher may have been less impartial towards the observational field notes, a peer expert, a graduate student studying school psychology, re-coded and analyzed the observational data to ensure inter-rater reliability. Consensus was established where differences were noted. Furthermore, as described in more detail below, interview participants were given the opportunity to examine the interview transcripts (to confirm that their words matched their intended meaning; Shenton, 2004) and the observational data from their own classrooms.

Criteria for judging worth included resonance, pragmatic usefulness, and relational validity, which are commensurate with Indigenous ways of knowing. Resonance is defined as “research’s ability to meaningfully reverberate and affect an audience” (Tracy, 2010, p. 844). Resonance is attained when a reader feels that the experiences of the research participants correspond to their own personal experiences. To provide evidence supporting resonance, a member check with the interview participants was conducted, as well as a peer review of an
Indigenous teacher working in the field who was not an original participant. Participants were asked if the themes resonated with what they told the researcher during the interview and with their experiences as Indigenous teachers. They were also asked if the observational data corresponded with how they saw their own practices within the classroom. The peer reviewer was asked if the themes resonated with her own experiences and knowledge from the field.

Pragmatic usefulness examined whether the research contributed to the development of knowledge in the field and examined if the study could become the basis for other scholarly work (Riessman, 2008). To determine if the study has pragmatic usefulness, the peer reviewer was asked if they saw the results of the study as being useful to their own knowledge base as well as that of their field of Indigenous education. Relational validity is related to resonance and examines if the research established integrity through relational connections. Relational validity explores if people can connect with the research and if the researcher was able to connect with the participants and their ways of knowing. Evidence to support relational validity was given through member checks by re-interviewing participants to ensure that the interpretation of the researcher was commensurate with an Indigenous worldview. As the researcher is an outsider, relational validity authenticates the importance of the relationship with the research participants in the research process and their expert knowledge. It also showed respect for the relationships establish during the research process.

All participants were sent a description of themes, including one of their quotes from each theme. They were asked the questions as described above. Two of the four participants responded and reported that the themes resonated with their own experiences as well as with an Indigenous worldview. One participant remarked that although she had not spoken about respect for protocol in her interview, this was an important part of Indigenous culture. She also
cautioned that she was not sure whether all Indigenous peoples deal with murder in the same way and suggested that the examiner research if this is attached to a particular Nation.

The external reviewer was also sent a description of the themes with quotes that exemplified each theme. The external reviewer agreed that the themes were generally commensurate with an Indigenous worldview but didn’t believe that one of the themes should be called behaviour support practices, as this theme was the main focus of the study. She also believed that the themes were more interconnected instead of discrete entities. For example, she stated that respect was part of every theme and that building relationships was a part of connectedness. She provided feedback on the use of the word “teaching” and did not agree with the way that this word was used by the researcher, as in traditional practices nothing was taught directly. Children were taught indirectly through stories, modeling, and gently guiding them in the understanding of how their behaviour affects others. The external reviewer commented that respect cannot be taught or modeled but must be incorporated into everything the teacher does so that students can absorb respect. She disagreed with the participants’ use of the word sorry as she said that the word sorry is not a traditional practice. She discussed that restorative practices and their traditional use. She stated that the goal of restorative practices is for the person to get to the understanding that an injustice has been done and how their behaviour contributed to this feeling of injustice. A person has to come to this understanding on their own and cannot be forced to get there. Additionally, she did not agree that there were a lack of resources as she had knowledge of and experience with a wide variety of resources that she had used when she worked as a teacher. She described that there was a hesitation by teachers to use the resources that are available. The results were not altered in response to the comments provided by the external reviewer.
However, her comments were compared to those of the participants’ as well as to the researcher’s interpretation of the data. These comparisons are addressed in the discussion.
3. Results

Participant Demographic Information

Participants included three female teachers and one male teacher. All participants had experience working as a classroom teacher at the elementary level. Three of the participants had over ten years of teaching experience and one participant was in the first five years of her teaching career. Participants had previous experience in variety of teaching roles, from kindergarten to Grade 10 as well as working as resource teachers and district Aboriginal resource teachers. Two of the participants were currently working as classroom teachers; one in a multi-age classroom from kindergarten to Grade 4 and one in a Grade 6/7 classroom. One of the participants had recently completed her maternity leave and was working as an Aboriginal resource teacher for kindergarten to Grade 7 students but was planning to return to classroom teaching the following school year. Another of the participants had just switched from classroom teacher to resource teacher, working with vulnerable students across eight different schools. All participants strongly identified with their Indigenous heritage were belonged to a variety of nations, including: Métis, Mohawk, Haida, Tsimshian, and Anishinabe.

THEME ONE: Respect as a Vehicle for Learning

Respect was one of the most central themes throughout the interviews. Teachers described both the importance of respect as a way of being and how they shared this concept with their students. Encapsulated within the theme of respect was respect for land, respect for Indigenous cultures and protocol, teacher’s embodiment of respect, and teaching respect to students.
Teachers described that Indigenous peoples are stewards of the land and stressed the importance of caring for all creatures. Alison expressed that connectedness to land is a common principle across all First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. Alison stated that this principle:

. . . needs to be talked about all the time in the classroom and I’m constantly, we have caterpillars, agogo right now, so it actually is the perfect kind of pedestal for talking about caring for little creatures and how important, you know, everybody is to the world, so the world can function properly and the balance of the world, you know how the medicine wheel plays into that whole concept, so that is something we really work on a lot in this school.

Alison discusses respect for land often in her classroom, and this principle is included as one of her class rules. She described that little boys and little girls sometimes want to squish animals and she uses this as a platform to teach Indigenous values of respect: “Aboriginal people say if you are not going to eat it, you don’t kill it so are you going to eat that caterpillar, you just squished now?”

Lynn often discussed the importance of respecting nature with her class. She described the interconnections of Indigenous spiritual knowledge with Western scientific knowledge. Lynn demonstrated this by sharing with students a story she read where electrodes were attached to a tree and the tree emitted vibrations, providing support for the Indigenous belief that every plant has a song. Joseph discussed the relationships with animals and that traditionally animals shared information with people, such as which berries were safe to eat, and “in some cases shared themselves, and if it was shared respectfully, then that would be replenished.” A way of respecting the gifts from plants and animals is through song. Lynn shared a story in which one of her friends went medicine picking with his Auntie, afterwards the
Auntie sang a song to thank the plants for letting them pick them. Lynn described that when her friend’s Auntie was singing the song, the plants were dancing:

And another Auntie of a friend of mine from University, he went picking medicine with his Auntie and the Auntie said “okay well now I am going to sing a song to thank the plants for letting us pick them and I don’t want you to look” and when I say this story to the students I say, “What did he do?” “He looked.” “Yes he did,” And he said, “Lynn, the plants were dancing.”, you know the little fiddleheads, they were doing this (demonstrated with her hand), they were dancing, when his Auntie was singing the thank-you song, and I was like, “Wow, wow.”

With regards to respecting Indigenous culture and protocol, Lynn discussed the importance of asking permission; as Lynn is not Coast Salish she had to call the Chief of the Coast Salish and ask his permission to sing the Coast Salish anthem at school assemblies. It was important for the Chief that Lynn made sure the students knew where the song came from, why it was sung, and that any Coast Salish students at the school come to the front during the anthem.

Lynn incorporates traditional singing and drumming into the classroom and often students will ask her to sing a particular song. Sometimes she is not able to sing the songs as “those are not my songs to sing, that’s Auntie’s song about the Coast Salish.” Lynn described the importance of traditional spiritual knowledge and how special this knowledge is. There are protocols for communicating with nature. For example, she described that if someone wants to learn a tree’s song, they have to go out to the tree every morning for a year, pray, give some tobacco, and spend time with that tree and then perhaps at the end of the year, the tree will share its song.

Joseph also discussed the protocol of introducing oneself in the traditional way, so you “know who you are.” He related that he does this when there are other Indigenous people around
because they will respect this but that he does not often do this with non-Indigenous people, perhaps because it does not carry the same meaning.

There is also protocol surrounding traditional art forms; for example, in one of Lynn’s classes, the students made drums. As is the protocol, the students had to give their first drum away, although many of the students wanted to keep them. However, Lynn let the students know that it was tradition to give one’s first drum away and they could keep their next drum.

Elders are important figures in Indigenous cultures, as they are carriers and teachers of cultural knowledge. Joseph differentiated between Elders versus Olders, an Elder “is not just because you are the oldest person around, there is also a little bit of respect there. . . . and you may be someone’s Elders but you may not be mine.” However, if he goes to a reserve that is not his own, he will treat their Elders with as much respect as he can, especially as he is on their territory.

Teachers embodied respect through their interactions with students, including honouring students’ emotions, not shaming students in front of the class, and respecting students' individuality, personal gifts, and learning process. Joseph described the importance of embodying respect and patience, “because if I don’t have them, how can I teach them.” Lynn shared that everyone has their gifts to share with the group and the importance of respecting an individual’s gifts.

Ya, Aboriginal cultures, they are all really big on not shaming a child, you know, and I think a lot of how we teach ends up doing that, like we expect kids to come up with the answer that we have in our heads, so you play that guessing game, and the one who guesses it wins, you know and gets the accolade. And we don’t really respect, Western teaching doesn’t respect, when kids have a different view of how things should be or
even when kids are shy, it’s considered something that “oh we need to bring them out of their shell”, it’s like “that’s who they are right now, it’s okay.” But you get…we see that oh all kids should be this way, and it’s like no, if a child is shy let them be that way. They have their gifts, they are quieter, you know and now we need to find out where those gifts are, and maybe that person is just going to be a writer, and a fantastic writer, but they will never get up and do a book reading. Get somebody else to do that. You know so, you never know, you never know, you just have to let the child be the child, guide them as best you can, show them some good boundaries, some consistency and they will blossom however they are going to blossom.

Lynn described that respecting the child means not shaming or yelling at the child. Rather than calling a child out in front of the class, Lynn will take the child aside, into the hallway and talk with them. Joseph also engages in this practice and described that it is often “a discussion on the side or a little look.”

Elaine respects student’s autonomy and individuality by allowing students to make choices in the classroom. She described that giving students’ choices, especially students who have been labeled with “bad behaviour” and may not have had a lot of choice in their education, can be empowering.

I think some of it’s that Indigenous teachings where giving choice has a huge impact on how kids look on the world. So, in the situation where the skateboard kid making the choice and letting the kids choose partners, letting them choose where they want to sit after you set, give them some criteria, I think that does have a huge impact.
Elaine tries to set some boundaries around student choice and helps to guide students to the option that is the best for them and for the situation. Joseph respects student’s learning process and realizes that students learn in different ways and at different times. He stated that:

I spoke to you about respect has many different forms. My understanding and what I’ve been taught and have been shown is that as someone who has information to pass out, if you use that as the educator, you put it out there, how the people take it is up to them. In an educational setting like this, with an age group like this, sometimes you have to repeat the message in a few different ways because you are trying your best to find the way that this student and this student and this student hear the message or understand the message and that for me goes right up to how watching a particular elder that I was involved with, how he handled people and I hate to use that word handled because he really wasn’t he wasn’t manipulating or anything like that, he was just understanding what he knew of the person and answering the questions that that person had, in the way that he felt would best benefit that person, and then if it got too complicated he just said well this is what I think, take it or leave it, and there is a lot of that to this too. So, I don’t know if that’s a worldview, but that’s an elder who has impacted me, that meant a lot to me, that’s how he taught.

The concept of respect was taught to students through modeling, discussions, and reinforcing students’ acts of respect. Both Joseph and Alison stated that they teach this principle through modeling and discussion. Alison stated that anything she teaches her students falls under the category of respecting oneself, the environment or others. Joseph discusses respect in small groups or individually with students. He helps students to understand their own version of respect. He also allows students the opportunity for leadership roles as a vehicle for which they
can demonstrate respect for their fellow students. Alison uses the term respect in her classroom all the time. She asks student what respect looks like and sounds like. She described that through this, her students have an understanding of what respect means. She stated that:

respect is a really big word, especially for kindergartens and Grade 1s and they don’t know what it is but I think that the more you just kind of use it in common language and are constantly giving examples of it, I mean that’s how you learn something right, just submerge yourself into it.

Observational Theme of Respect. The theme of respect from the observational analysis includes teachers’ responsiveness to student needs, respect for the collective, respect for student choice and respect for the learning process. Both Lynn and Elaine were responsive to individual student needs as well respectful of the group as a whole. As Elaine and Lynn were both invited guests in the classroom, they were respectful of the existing culture of the classroom. At the beginning of the observation, Elaine stated that when she is invited into a classroom, she takes her direction from the classroom teacher, thus respecting the role of the teacher in the classroom. Lynn adapted the classroom environment so that she and all the students could be sitting in a circle on the carpet. She made sure to ask permission of the classroom teacher before moving classroom materials. Lynn ensured that everyone in the group was part of the circle and could see her as well as each other. One student had hurt his knee and Lynn was respectful of his needs and asked if he wanted to sit on a chair rather than sitting on the carpet. While working in the classroom, Elaine moved around quietly, helping students and not drawing attention to herself. Elaine monitored the functioning of the group as a whole, stopping to prompt students who appeared unfocused or assist students who needed extra support in learning the material. Elaine let students know she was going to help another student but that she would be back to check on
them. Lynn monitored the group and interspersed the story with a song when she noticed the student were becoming restless. When working with a student who was hard of hearing, Elaine adapted her teaching by writing down what page the students were supposed to be working on.

The following example from Lynn’s teaching depicts both respect for individual students’ needs as well as respect for the group. Lynn had brought her drum to the classroom and shared a number of songs with the students. During an Ojibway song, one of the students started to tap her hands and move her body to the beat. Some of the other student tried to stop her from doing this, perhaps they thought this was rude and took it upon themselves to correct her behaviour. Lynn did not call anyone out in front of the group but instead injected some humor into the situation and used it as a teaching opportunity. She responded by saying “I noticed someone in your class really likes music . . . I noticed everyone in your class trying to shush her. It’s okay to move and enjoy it.” She described that she also needed to move when she hears music and described a situation where she had wanted to move around but no one else did. This way of responding to the students provided validation for the individual student’s need to move but also respected the students’ feelings who had tried to stop her.

Students were given the opportunity for autonomy and to make choices in regards to their learning within some boundaries. Before assisting a student Elaine would ask “Do you need help?” giving students the choice to accept her help or not. When moving on to help another student, Elaine said “if you need me, just wave and I will come over,” allowing the students the opportunity to ask for help, if they needed it. When assisting two students who were English Language Learners (ELL), Elaine gave them the choice of reading a book on their own or taking turns reading, thus allowing the student some autonomy in terms of her education. She asked the students to identify any words that they did not know but also stopped at certain words to
confirm that the words were part of the students’ repertoire. As described previously, the students sat in a circle at the beginning of Lynn’s teaching. They eventually moved and scattered across the carpet, Lynn noticed this and asked the students if they wanted to move back into a circle or stay where they were.

A situation that occurred in the Grade 3/4 class, in which Elaine was teaching, helps to illustrate respect for student choice within the boundaries of appropriate classroom behaviour. The students had all made dioramas at home and had brought them to school that day. One student was upset as his diorama was not as good as the other students; he described that his mother had wanted him to spend more time on his math homework than on the diorama. Elaine could tell this student was upset and spent some time problem solving with him. She gave him some possible solutions but then left the choice with him of what to do. She gave the student some space to make his decision and went to help others students across the classroom. However, after a period of time, the student had still not reached a solution and was not completing his class work; Elaine returned to him and saw he had not completed any of his math work. She let him know that it was time to focus on math and then went to help another student, thus modeling appropriate behaviour. After about three minutes, the student started to do his math work.

Respect for the learning process is defined as connecting learning to student’s life and asking questions for clarification and comprehension. Elaine, confirmed students current knowledge by asking questions “do you remember the criteria for a parallel line?” and helped to build on student knowledge through modeling and direct teaching. Lynn connected her teachings to the student’s life and asked the students a lot of questions, such as, “how would you feel if…” When reading a story about an Indigenous boy who helped his father catch and dry salmon, she asked “this student is only a year older than you, would you feel comfortable using a sharp
knife?” When students started talking during the story she said “I like that people are sharing their stories” and asked if they were ready to continue with the story. Rather than shushing the students, she respected the time they needed to process the information and discuss but then returned to the story. Lynn also asked the students to repeat back certain things during her lesson to aid in student learning and comprehension of the materials.

Due to the establishment of respect, the students felt comfortable asking Lynn questions. When the students started to get a bit restless and started talking, Lynn did not demand their attention but instead, gave them the opportunity to speak. In turn, the students were very respectful of Lynn as she was teaching. Lynn had stated in the interview that when she walks into a classroom, she is in charge. This does not mean being directive towards students but that she has high expectations for student behaviour. She expected the students to listen to her and it was observed that students were engaged in her teaching over the entire course of her lesson.

Lynn engaged with the students in a similar way that she engaged with observer, demonstrating that she displays respect for people despite their age. Elaine also had a calm demeanor and was not directive in her teaching style. She gave the students choices but was also firm and set boundaries for interaction with the students.

**THEME TWO: Connectedness**

The theme of Connectedness describes teacher’s helping to build connections between students and the wider community and the interconnectedness and importance of all beings to the world. Teachers described the importance of knowing oneself and one's ancestry, being connected to one’s school and classroom as well as building connections to the community and knowing the importance of Indigenous people to the world. Joseph described these connections as a whole and likened this connectedness to throwing a pebble in the water:
... and the rings happen those are those rings of connectivity, if you will, it’s got you, you’ve got your family, you’ve got your community, if you will, and it goes from there, your city and your country, continent, planet, that kind of thing, but initially what I do here is identify the you and then build on the community and how do we tie into the community and for kids whether or not they are really great at understanding how igneous rock is formed, is good, in the process of it, but if they are connected to this school, then this school is a better place to be, it’s a happy place to be, and you want to be here. And maybe you create that next year in high school and that’s the other connections I am trying to build.

Joseph described the importance of introducing oneself so “you know who you are.”

From his own experiences Joseph described the process of understanding both his Native and non-Native side in order for him to understand how he was going to operate in the world.

I used to have this whole, I need to get the costume, in order for people to believe who I was. I shed that but when I first started to go, I thought geez, I got to get the right stuff, heck, I gotta get an Indian name. Well, those, you get those if you need them, and if you deserve them, and if they’re required. But, and I’ve been to ceremonies where people have gotten an Indian name. But, it took me a little understanding of that to shed my own, how I was raised, in conflict, because I went to an elementary school that talked about” I is for Indian” or “I is for igloo”.

He described that people of Indigenous ancestry are diverse and just because someone does not look “they type” does not mean they are not Indigenous. Joseph describes that his teaching style is directly affected by his ancestry because it is “who I am.” He helps students to discover their ancestry through a yearly project where the students explore the many nations in the classroom.
He described that this project has evolved over the years but that presently he has students draw the nations that represent their family on a hand and then puts these hands together to create a Canadian flag. He described that this is an empowering project for the students and they all had a chance to show some pride in their ancestry. Alison stated that although all her students are Indigenous she does not believe that they fully understand what it means to be an Indigenous person. Since the beginning of the school year, she has fostered this knowledge through a “Who am I?” unit, and they now know their nation but described that it is a slow process for them.

Joseph described one of the rings of connectivity as being connected to the school and classroom and then building connections from elementary to high school. Elaine’s philosophy is also to build connections in the classroom and views the class as a family. During the interview, she described her practice of creating an inclusive environment where students want to be:

I’m thinking that just brings me back to another situation where I was teaching Grade 6/7, and new to the school, the kids, weren’t sure how to take me and they could already tell that I was very, had firm guidelines and that, but before the end of term one, I walked down to the classroom and, or to the staffroom, and the secretary said “Elaine what are you doing to those kids”, and I said “what?” She says “they’re here” and I said “They want to be here. It’s not what am I doing to them it’s just I’ve created an environment where they want to be.” and I think that’s the key. I don’t know if I am doing anything that comes back on my cultural aspect but I think that part of my philosophy is to create an inclusive school environment where the kids feel like that they’re part of creating that environment.
In addition to bringing the class together as a group, Lynn creates connections between school and community. She believes it’s important to give back to the community in some way and describes how she plans to do this:

. . . in the fall I am really hoping to get outdoors a lot with the students a lot, so shared experiences right, and another one that is really good is giving back to the community, so if we can do that as a group, you know, whether it’s host a tea for the Elders down at the friendship centre or, just help out somewhere, you know, with people, and space, with the community and I think that’s a real bonding thing. But ya, I am hoping to do some experiences where we have a really good time together.

Elaine values connecting to the students’ community and their family life. She believes that in order to help students learn and achieve, you have to understand how home life impacts school life. Joseph also values the connections between classroom and community but described that unfortunately the community surrounding his school is not as receptive to this idea as he would like, and building those connections has been a struggle. However, he described that one of the ways his class has attempted to build connections is through fundraising for their annual Grade 7 camping trip. He said that they asked the community for help and through this were able to raise all the money for camp, which is a start in building connections.

Alison stated that rather than trying to build community in the classroom, she focuses on connection of Indigenous peoples to the world. She stated that the students know they belong in the classroom and are connected to her, but do not understand the importance of Indigenous peoples to the world at large as they do not yet have an understanding of what it means to be Aboriginal.
I think I connect it as much as to the classroom, I actually connect it to the world a lot, so because they don’t fully understand that concept of what Aboriginal people are, I talk about us a lot and especially with Aboriginal day coming up I say like “we are really special people, we are the first people on this land, like we hold a special place in government, we hold a special place just in society and you know remember that and remember who you are” and I talk about that connectedness and that shared history that we all have, so I try to kind of connect it with more the bigger issues than belonging in the classroom because they know I love them, they tell me every day . . . so they definitely have, they are very connected to me and to the classroom, it’s just that sense of belonging I want them to have a more global sense like how important they are to Canada and to the world at large, right?

**THEME THREE: Incorporating Traditional Practices.**

A number of traditional practices were incorporated into the classroom, including inviting Elders and Carriers of Knowledge to teach in the classroom, teaching through stories and songs, using circles to help focus and connect the group as well as to teach respect, and the use of a talking stick or talking object for class meetings or when the group is experiencing challenges. Other traditional practices that were incorporated into the classroom included burning sage, taking students to a sweat lodge, and traditional art forms, such as drums and button blankets.

All four teachers have invited Elders, parents, or other carriers of knowledge into the classroom. The school where Lynn works used to have an Elder connected to it. The Elder would come in, give drumming workshops, and share stories and songs. Alison welcomes parent involvement and stated that she “invites them with open arms [as she is not] the only carriers of
knowledge here.” She described that one of her student’s grandmother is a resident Elder in the classroom, who has taught some lessons to the students.

Mary’s come in and like sang songs with them and she’s done a raffle with them, she came and sang the, I always want to say the Strong Woman song, or is it the Woman Warrior, I get those two song’s mixed up, but anyways, she came and sang a song on Woman’s Day with our class and that was really cool.

In terms other Elders, outside of those related to the students, Alison stated that she is always looking for Elders to come in to the class but that they are hard to find in the city. Elaine has invited family members into her class to share their knowledge with the students as well as other carriers of knowledge.

I do try to bring in other people because when you’re as a teacher trying to be, when you are always up there standing and delivering, they don’t always realize that some of those teachings that you are giving them have, even though it might be historical information, there are connections to current day, so in social studies it’s always talking about how did some of the practices right now relate to historical practices so and bringing in some of the people that are major knowledge carriers, that, and are able to even describe it more with some relevancy that’s it’s nice to bring in, someone else, that live encyclopedia, the living encyclopedia rather than going based on this fact and that fact.

Joseph has invited Elders into the class, but stated that he is protective when it comes to Elders and the reason that they come to the class has to be “valid for their time because they are important people.” He has had Olders come into the classroom who have completed activities with the students including teaching about and making button blankets with the students.
Teaching and sharing through stories and songs was also an important teaching tool for all four teachers. Elaine discussed the value of sharing in the form of a story:

I share some, you know, sometimes by sharing in the form of a story has more impact than lecturing them and pointing a finger at them and saying this is the way it is, so through stories gives it a softer approach but I think a more in depth approach.

Joseph described that he has storytime all the time. Sometimes he will share personal stories of his own experiences, but he also uses traditional stories as a way to teach different perspectives and different ways of seeing the world. For example, as a platform to discuss evolution, he shares a traditional story about how mosquitoes and biting insects came about. When teaching pro-social behaviour, Lynn teaches through storytelling and talks about what the certain virtue looks like and discusses where kids see and do this in their own homes. Alison uses a curriculum of traditional and contemporary Indigenous stories to teach prosocial behaviour. Each story is tied to a certain virtue. She likes that these stories mix traditional and contemporary Indigenous teachings and values:

. . . because we’re not just a traditional people living in the past, we’re also here in the present and it’s really important for our students to see them and ourselves in both lights, that we do have really great values and we need to not forget from our past so let’s not get rid of these stories that are traditional just because we are living in today, no they still have value and they still have a place but just let’s put some context into it.

Lynn incorporates singing and drumming into her teaching. Alison’s class starts each morning with the Cherokee morning song and she uses this time as a time for reflection for the students. She encourages the students to think about something they are thankful for or someone they love or something kind they are going to do that day. Each day one of the students gets a
turn to be the drummer and lead the group. Elaine also teaches through song. She stated that she shares some of Susan Aglukark’s songs with her students, including the Circle of One.

Lynn described in the interview that she had class meetings with her class where the class sits in a circle and the atmosphere is very relaxed. The teacher is on the same level as the student, everyone is equal, and they would pass around a feather or a rock, making sure to respect the feather by not dropping it. Joseph described how he came to use the concept of a circle as a way to focus the students. He sometimes uses a talking object with students and, although similar to the practice of a talking circle, he does not necessarily define it as such.

But all the way through, we talked about things in a circle, and I do things here now, in a circle, I didn’t start that way, but a lot of times, to start our discussions in the day, to focus them in the day, to bring them here, we try our best to have a circle in this space, it’s not always a perfect circle, but it changes things. And humans are pretty general across nations, so if they are sitting here they have got stuff they can fiddle with, if they are sitting down there they don’t, right away, so the novelty brings the focus. But then, it’s there you start your teachings of respect, your teaching of patience, those two are big for me, here. . . .we have two things that were designated by other students, named by other students, we got that uninflated basketball, but we also have a beanbag, and one student randomly called it red beanbag of justice, but we use that when we are playing a game, so whoever has the beanbag gets to guess, okay, and then when we are in the circle, sometimes if you have the basketball, you get to speak. And it’s similar to the talking stick or the feather or any of those things, but I don’t go into it and talk too much about that tradition, I did a little bit but I don’t hammer it home.
Alison uses a talking stick only in specific situations, as although she feels it is a valuable practice, she doesn’t feel that it is always practical in a classroom setting. She stated that she uses it when new students come to the classroom or to pull the group together when they are experiencing turmoil. Because the talking stick is a cultural practice, there is also an element of respect with its use.

I’ll say everyone sit on the carpet and I’ll get the talking stick out, so it’s really, I use it at a time when I really want the kids to stop, be calm, be quiet and be respectful, so they know when that talking stick come out it’s more serious than anytime I’m every serious, it’s like you need to be respectful, this is our culture and you need to respect it kind of thing and very, no funny business about it when the talking stick comes out.

A number of other traditional practices were discussed throughout the interviews, including use of ceremonies, musical instruments and traditional artforms including drums, rattles, and button blankets. Lynn stated that she had class smudging at least once a week, to which parents were also invited. She also engaged in various forms of art, drumming and going outside of the classroom and experiencing things. Lynn also would take her students to the sweat lodge at the University of British Columbia. Alison made rattles with her students at the beginning of the year, which they use every morning. Joseph has had guests come into the class and make button blankets with the students. He also used to do “artist in residence” with students, where he would play the flute and the students would make a diorama of how the flute came to the people. However, Joseph called this a “dog and pony show” as he did not feel that this was a genuine representation of First Nations culture.

**Observational Theme of Incorporating Traditional Practices/Worldviews.** The theme of Traditional Worldviews/Practices of the observational analysis includes using traditional
teaching practices and teaching about Indigenous peoples and practices. During the observation period, Elaine did not teach about traditional practices or traditional ways of life, but it was not appropriate for the context during the observation period. However, she does do this when invited into a classroom to do so, and described this in her interview.

In keeping with Indigenous practices, Lynn formally introduced herself and acknowledged the territory on which the school stood. She taught the students about the traditional territories all over Vancouver, including that of the Tseil-Wauthuth, Squamish, Musqueam, and Coast Salish Nations. She described the practice of sharing land, using the example of the students’ backyard; there were no fences and an agreement that anyone could go in anyone’s backyard, of which the students were amazed. Lynn described that many things about Indigenous people could not be learned in books. She explained that First Nations practice is remembering together; in the traditional way, nothing is written down. She described “rememberers,” people who are tasked with witnessing and sharing about certain ceremonial and important events in the community. Lynn shared her drum with the students and explained that the different sides of her drum case signified her girl and boy side and reminded her about the importance of balance in her life. She told the students how different drums were made and used by different Nations, demonstrating that although most Nations make and use drums, they are not all made in the same way and from the same materials. She described that families owned certain songs and it was important to ask for permission before singing a song owned by someone else. She also read the student a traditional story that described the order in which the salmon come and the importance of respecting the gifts of nature and the protocol to ensure that these gifts are replenished.
Traditional teaching practices that were observed include the use of modeling, remembering, and allowing students to come to their own understanding, which relates to respect for student choice described above. Lynn emphasized the collective memory of the group. She told them that even without the use of pen and paper, they were going to remember so many things but they had to “remember to remember.” She described that she uses different memory strategies. Lynn’s review of her teachings and her frequent reflective questioning helped students to remember the information. At the very end of her lesson she reviewed what she had taught them about the traditional territories of the different Nations and taught them how to say thank-you in Coast Salish.

Both teachers used arm and hand movement along with words when teaching. Elaine engaged in the traditional practice of modeling, such as showing students how to identify parallel lines. She also used visuals and carried a notebook where she could draw things for students to aid in learning. When working with the students who were ELL, Elaine drew pictures of the signs for cents and dollars and also described and drew the difference between a sloping line and water slopping over a bucket. Lynn also used visuals and would refer often to the pictures in the stories she read. Lynn used modeling in conjunction with verbal teachings. When teaching the students to sing a song, it was observed that she used less dialogue and more showing. Initially, Lynn demonstrated the song for the students and then would point to the students when it was their turn to sing and then to herself when it was her turn to sing. She started singing, and initially the students did not understand. Instead of stopping and giving verbal instructions as many teachers would do, Lynn started again at the beginning of the song and the students practiced again and again until they had successfully followed along.
Elaine also taught students in small groups and maintained proximity to the students when teaching them. When helping a student one to one, she did not stand over him or her but sat beside the student, on a chair or at the table, on the same level as they were. This act relates to the theme of respect but also relates to the traditional practice of getting to know the students you are teaching and teaching in small groups, which allows more time and flexibility to guide students to come to their own understanding on a subject.

**THEME FOUR: Social Responsibility.**

The theme of social responsibility encapsulates how teachers view positive behaviour and social responsibility within the classroom from an Indigenous worldview. Social responsibility includes key virtues that are important in terms of students demonstrating positive behaviour in the classroom, including patience, generosity, and kindness. When students make a mistake or hurt another person, it is important for them to be accountable for their actions and make amends as well as apologize. Additionally, in Indigenous cultures, the functioning of the group is important. It is important for individuals to act as a team, and working together despite differences shows strength.

Key virtues that teachers discussed included the seven sacred teachings of respect, wisdom, honesty, love, courage, humility and truth (Bouchard & Martin, 2010). Alison stated that the seven sacred teachings are more common to Nations on the East coast than the West coast but that the principles are common across Nations. In addition to the seven sacred teachings, other virtues discussed by teachers included patience, generosity, compromise, kindness, determination, and forgiveness. Common across the key virtues discussed were those behaviours that could be demonstrated in a group and that promoted group functioning. Elaine discussed that positive behaviour includes “supporting each other as well as supporting the adult
that they are working with [and being] engaged in working with each other.” Alison described that students demonstrated positive behaviour:

. . . anytime they are helping something, helping the classroom community, so you know, cleaning up without asking, pushing the chairs in around the desk, treating their friends kindly, you know, maybe even, you know, being the bigger person, somebody gets in a fight and they are the first to apologize or to make amends. So, anything that helps the classroom community and shows, anything that’s kind basically, kind deeds, any sort of kind deeds.

Joseph stated that positive behaviour included being able to ask for help if you needed it as well as being able to assist others without interrupting the “major class flow.” Elaine also described that positive behaviour is demonstrated through connectivity: the conversation, activity, and body language are all connected to the task at hand. Students demonstrate positive behaviour through paying attention, which Lynn stated may or may not be indicated with eye contact.

Student accountability includes the virtues of honesty, courage and truth. Accountability for one’s actions involves the process of restitution. Teachers described that it is important for students to be accountable for their actions and own up to their mistakes. Joseph described this principle:

Here’s the first thing I do, because this is a lesson taught to me, if you make a mistake, you own up to it, you own up to it face to face, the sooner you do that, the easier life is. The moment you try to hide it, it becomes part of you, in a bad way, and look at that, I just had a hiccup because of it. . .
He described that he talks often about the mistakes he has made and when he makes a mistake in class he makes it public. He owns up to mistakes in front of the students right away, thus modeling accountable behaviour.

Lynn described that in traditional stories, if someone murdered someone’s son, that person had to go and live with that family for healing and forgiveness. Not only should students apologize for their actions but they need to make amends as well.

... well, firstly if they have hurt somebody, they have to go apologize, that kind of goes without saying. So they, a big thing in Aboriginal cultures is making something right, so if they have hurt somebody’s feelings obviously they have to go and say sorry, but they have to do something. It’s not just the words; they have to do something to make the person feel better. And then they need to understand that sorry means that you are not going to do it again, it’s not just, “oh sorry,” you know, so really really trying to reinforce that when you are apologizing you don’t, you are not going to do that again, you know, and they need to understand what they did, so talking about it, and making sure that when the talking is done, an action hopefully happens with it, and that the person who was sad or hurt feels better, and I ask them “is that okay now”, and hopefully they will say “yes.”

In Indigenous cultures the functioning of the group is important and everyone has certain gifts and strengths that they bring to the group. Joseph described teamwork in terms of a wolf pack:

Well, see I was always impacted early on by teams, you show your strength in a group to help the group. That also was told to me by... an animal that means something to me is like a wolf, so to me, and I carry a wolf ring, and I have a wolf on my wedding ring, that to me is the ultimate of team, you get to be who you are, you get to be strong, you get to
be courageous, you get to be caring, you get to be nurturing, but you are in a pack and that pack, helps identify you, that pack helps protect you. If you work for the pack, the pack will work for you, and your pack is only as good as you can be. And weakest link, strongest link you are all part of it. I try to get that here, not in a way that we are working towards something but just in a way that we are trying to connect to each other and make this a place happy place to be.

Lynn described that if a person was to do something unforgiveable, such as commit a murder, that person could be thrown out of the group and would not be allowed to return. This practice may not be common across Nations but demonstrates the importance of group functioning and working as part of the group, as all students want to belong and be part of the group. Elaine describes that, in the classroom environment, it is important to get along with everyone despite differences.

I said this is a classroom environment, what, how you deal with sitting by different people will create that positive environment or not so positive environment because we are going to be here for the next nine months, you have to learn get along, sit with, work with different people and keep on remembering that they are part of your family, they are the students that, they are part of our whole class family and you just have to learn to get along, you might have your differences, you might have you’re different personality traits, you might have your best friend but when we are working in the classroom you still have to get along.

Elaine engages in activities with her class to promote group functioning, such as rotating the seating arrangements every one or two weeks so that students can sit with and get to know everyone in the class. Alison promotes group functioning through giving the students a class
goal. Unfortunately her students did not make the class goal this year but “set a goal and you don’t make it well then you didn’t make it as a group, you should have pulled together as a group.”

**THEME FIVE: Behaviour Support Practices**

This theme encapsulates the different strategies and tools that teachers use in order to support student behaviour in a culturally responsive manner. This includes specific teaching practices, such as the use of humor, firm guidelines, and making learning more personal, such as connecting learning to the students’ lives. Building relationships with students is an important part of behaviour support; it is important to know the student, their family history and current life circumstances, in order to understand why a student is behaving in a certain way. Strategies such as virtue awareness, or focusing on students’ strengths as opposed to what they are doing wrong, as well as building student capacity and teaching students’ skills to self-regulate and identify and describe emotions were also described as important behaviour support practices.

In describing their teaching practices, all teachers described themselves as being “firm.” Elaine stated that she has “firm guidelines.” Lynn stated that when she walks into the room, she is in charge and she has high expectations of student behaviour. She uses as few words as possible and tries to be succinct. When Joseph asked his students what they thought his class would be like, they responded: “we knew it was going to be fun in here, we knew it was going to be exciting in here but we knew it was going to be, sometimes you can get really intense.” Alison described herself as a strict and structured teacher but stated that she uses humor all the time in the classroom.
Joseph, Alison and Lynn described their use of humor in the classroom. Shelia said that if a student is cheeky, she will be cheeky right back. She gives the example of a student she just met:

. . . but in the classroom he sits up front and centre, and he was starting to be cheeky as soon as I walked in the room, so I was just cheeky back, you know, and I didn’t make eye contact with him and I just spoke low and firm and was teasing back and so, you know, almost like a bear establishing some territory, right? So, I think kids respond to that too, teasing him a little bit, making a few jokes where he looks good you know and playing that way and starting to have a relationship.

Joseph stated that when a student is not doing what they are supposed to be doing, often times he will try to make light of it and have fun with it, up to a certain point. Alison said that one of the main things she brings to teaching as an Indigenous person is her humor. She stated that:

I’d say that Aboriginal people because we’ve had to endure such hardships in our lives and in our histories that they way that we have survived and continue to is we laugh . . . so I really do bring that to my classroom, I’m silly, like I said I’m a very structured pretty strict teacher, but I’m really silly, like I’m a clown at the front of the classes, I’m making faces, so I do bring that humor into the class.

In describing how they support student learning, teachers reported that they often connect learning on a personal level, either with the student’s life and experiences or their own life and experiences. Elaine described how, when teaching a social studies unit, she brought in some of her own mementos to share with the students:

I really wanted to teach the kids when they’re studying ancient cultures of the world and how you have to look at artifacts, pictures, maps, and deduct information from those. . .
one of the activities I did with them was a Redland’s box and I inherited this box, cigarette box, from my dad, he kept letters, mementos and over time I put things in there that were my own mementos and so I brought in this box, the kids got to look at and learn a bit of my history, so looking at it from a personal perspective but then as I went further, we were looking at, I was drawing on some of the artifacts that I’ve inherited over time. And I think, many teachers would do that, where they bring, when you want to teach a certain, a skill, start from the personal, and from one’s own ancestry and then draw from their ancestral teachings in order to go to be able to dwell into other ancient culture and in, to look at it from a very critical and analytical perspective rather than just looking for basic facts.

Lynn reported that when teaching, she connects learning to a story of some kind and tries not to read too much out of a textbook. She also tries to get out of the classroom and experience things, such as a field trip to reserves to learn about governmental issues and social studies. Alison also takes the students to experience learning; she took her class to the UBC farm where they learnt about traditional Indigenous plants. Joseph will be taking his class on a camping trip in the bush in Squamish, which he said many of the students have never experienced.

Lynn described that traditionally the person teaching the child would know the child well. Elaine strongly believes in this principle, she discussed the importance building relationships with students and in the importance of knowing the students current family situation and living situation. She stated that “you have to dig deeper than finding out what level they are academically, you have to take into account the socioemotional aspects of their life, their family life.” She has worked with many at-risk youth over her years of teaching and knows that by not
taking on anyone else’s assumptions about students and building relationships of trust have allowed them to be successful at school.

I just know the kinds of impact that I have on those at-risk students is more immediate and direct because I know I’ve had many, I’ve taught many students over the years that, some were getting to that point where the teachers thought they were lost causes, and even at very young ages, just thinking, you know you can never give up, we always have to remember that we as teachers, we might be outside of their immediate family but we are one of those stable people in that child’s life and knowing the family helps develop that consistency for the child and their life

Joseph also believes in building relationships with students and looking deeper, because sometimes “what’s on the surface isn’t really what’s going on, so, watch, listen, and observe.”

Lynn discussed the importance of building relationships of trust with students and sometimes this can take time especially in Indigenous communities.

. . . relationship is huge, when you are teaching but also in Aboriginal country, like, I took a workshop a couple years ago and it was about service providers going into Aboriginal communities, and trying to make change. And it’s like well a) because you are non-Aboriginal you will have a certain amount of distrust right of the hop, just from the colour of your skin, because of historical relationships with the government and other people with light skin or whatever colour your skin is. You know, just because you are not from the community you will be under a microscope and probably for a very long time, until that relationship and that trust is established, until people see how you are and how you move in the community.
Virtue awareness occurs when teachers observe and acknowledge prosocial behaviours in students, such as the seven sacred teachings. Alison discussed the importance of highlighting student’s positive behaviours rather than pointing out their mistakes or what they are doing wrong. As her students have increased needs for behaviour support, she makes an effort to constantly reinforce her students when they are displaying pro-social behaviour. She described that it takes all of her “spoken energy” to ensure that she is reinforcing her students constantly. Alison has a behaviour management system that she uses in conjunction with verbal reinforcement. Anytime the students are engaging in pro-social behaviours, such as helping another student in the class, she gives them a card, which they can trade in for prizes at the end of the day. Alison gave an example of how she reinforces student behaviours in conjunction with her behaviour management system:

Oh look what Maya did, she just picked up the pencils that her friend dropped and it wasn’t even her fault, good job Maya or “Look at, Jessica decided to go help her friend clean up the puzzle and she wasn’t even playing with the puzzle, good job Jessica. You know, that kind of reinforcement and then I’ll give them cards as I’m saying it. Look at everybody, look what so and so is doing, so really pointing out those positive ah those positive things that are helping our classroom community.

Building capacity was an important process in teaching social responsibility. Teachers described the importance of not only identifying and reinforcing cases of positive behaviour but also giving students the tools to be independently successful without external support. This practice included teaching and practicing specific skills and supporting students on their lifelong learning process towards mastery. There are many different skills that teachers can use to help students to learn. Elaine described that teachers sometimes become surrogate parents for their
students and can teach them some of the life skills that they may not be learning at home. Joseph described how on sports day, students were given the opportunity to be leaders and care for each other. He stated that the students received a chance to try their leadership skills and a chance to model for other students.

Alison described that many of her students have difficulty with self-regulation and she works on helping her students gain the tools and the language they need to help them self-regulate.

I try to get them, I give them, again, the words that they need to use to solve things theirself and I say the first thing you need is you need to tell the person that you are bothering them for whatever reason and if that’s not working them come and find a teacher, so it’s really about just constantly reinforcing that they have the skills inside of them to resolve the conflict, they just need to use the appropriate words, which is, you know, sometimes successful, sometimes not.

As well as trying to give students the tools to self-regulate and advocate for themselves, she has a number of tangible supports she uses to help students, including a sparkle ball and a beanbag chair. She described that when her students are really upset she will give them the sparkle ball and they will “shake it and they do breathing exercises while they watch it settle and then they can calm themselves and bring themselves back to the group.” Alison also will direct students to the beanbag chair when they are distressed:

I say “go sit on beanbag chair and when you’re ready to join the circle again, please come back, but please don’t disrupt everybody else, just cause you’re feeling upset.” I really try to give them the tools to self-regulate, rather than sitting next to them and “oh
are you okay, are you okay” and then they get more and more carried away, cause they are just looking for that adult attention.

Lynn described the importance of students recognizing the new tools they have acquired and their improvement. She thinks it is important to point out students’ progress and their own sense of mastery. Alison stated that as Indigenous people are lifelong learners, she questions whether one can ever fully master something or if there is always improvement. She discussed that she would never expect a student to master a skill but that students can improve greatly. She described that the process towards mastery is taking steps “being a better person, and isn’t that what we all want to be, a better person, however that is?”

THEME SIX: Challenges to Incorporation

Although many Indigenous practices and worldviews can be incorporated into the classroom to make behaviour support more culturally responsive, the teachers also noted challenges, including incongruence of Indigenous and Western educational worldviews, lack of resources, and tokenism. Elaine described that as an Aboriginal person she has to live by her teachings but also by the rules of the school district. Some of these rules may be incompatible, as Alison discussed:

...I’m a pretty strict teacher and I’m pretty structured and that’s probably not, as congruent with how Aboriginal people teach their children, it’s not, it wouldn’t be applicable for the classroom though, I mean they very much teach in a very exploratory sense, which isn’t, it just doesn’t work in the classroom unfortunately and the structure that we have to, that we have to work under, certain schedules and tasks you have to accomplish and you have to have evidence of those tasks so you know traditionally it was
good enough to see that the child could do the task but it’s not always task based now, it’s output based.

Additionally, some attempts to incorporate Indigenous practices or teachings into the classroom end up becoming overgeneralizations of the culture. Due to this, some people hold misunderstandings of Indigenous cultures and the importance of discussion and learning about Indigenous practices in a genuine manner as opposed to a tokenistic manner was discussed by Joseph.

I was torn by the tokenism, cause it’s what I worry about, but I also have some friends who make a lot of money from being a token, they come in, they are big guys, they got the braids, they got the feather, they do a little dance and everybody is “oh, wow, that’s great”. But for me, it needs to be this is who I am, this is why I do it. Now they do that but the impetus for it is token. But when they get there, they kind of help in washing that tokenism away, for most of the people, some of them are never gonna, they are just going to say “hey, that’s an Indian, look at the Indian with the feather.” They don’t understand that, that person, flew in from Calgary, they are Tsuu T’ina in a Musqueam territory, they’re totally different nations, they sort of get it but really don’t, some people will never change, lots of people get it and I guess that’s what we are trying to do. . .

The caricaturization of Indigenous cultures and practices was of concern to Joseph. He strongly believes in the importance of genuine teachings done for the right reasons with meaning behind them rather than a “dog and pony show.”

Finally, there is currently a lack of resources for incorporating Indigenous worldviews, such as the seven sacred teachings, into the classroom. Alison described “our people are still coming around as a nation.” She described that there are not many resources from the West
Coast, and most come from the East. However, she described that resources are currently being created in her district.

Visual Artifacts

Visual Artifacts were collected from all four participants; artifacts included photographs of the classroom layout, teaching tools, classroom artwork, and student art. Additionally, artifacts included a brochure from one of the classrooms and a book entitled “The Sacred Tree” that helped guide one of the participants when she first started teaching. Visuals of the classroom layouts (See Figures 3.1 and 3.2) show the arrangement of desks in a circle around a depiction of a medicine wheel and desks clustered in groups of four around the perimeter of the room, leaving an open space in the centre of the room for the class to work. These arrangements demonstrate the importance of having the class come together in a circle for learning and teachings of respect.

Figure 3.1 Classroom Layout
Visuals of tools to support behaviour and learning include a behaviour support chart, in which students obtained blue cards for engaging in pro-social behaviours, as well as a notebook used as a teaching tool, to draw pictures for students. Classroom visuals include the classroom rules of respect yourself, respect others, and respect the environment (Figure 3.3). Student artwork includes a project where students drew the flags of their ancestry on hands, which were then put together to make a Canada flag. This project represented the nations that make up Canada and the interconnectedness of all beings (Figure 3.4). Students drew flags of Mexico, Canada, Denmark, Australia, France, and the Philippines. Traditional practices depicted in the brochure include students using Indigenous drums and rattles and practicing traditional dances. Depicted in the brochure is an Elder singing with the students. Additionally, the brochure describes that students start each morning with a song, work on teamwork, and discover their stories.
Figure 3.3. Classroom Visuals

Figure 3.4 Students’ Nation Project
4. Discussion

Findings in Light of the Current Literature

An ethnographic study was conducted to examine how Indigenous teachers incorporated Indigenous worldviews and practices into classroom behaviour support. Four teachers who identified as Indigenous were interviewed; additionally two of these teachers were observed while teaching in a classroom. Visual artifacts were obtained from each teacher to support the interview and observational data. A thematic analysis was conducted, and six overarching themes were found across the data, including the following themes: respect as a vehicle for learning, connectedness, incorporation of traditional practices, social responsibility, behaviour support practices, and challenges to incorporation.

Overall, this study found that Indigenous teachers incorporate a variety of culturally responsive behaviour support practices in the classroom. These practices include ways of being and interacting with students that promote positive behaviours, as well as more tangible practices such as teaching through songs and stories, building community in the class, and specific behavior support tools. Important virtues were those that supported the group and contributed to the class as a whole. These virtues included respect, patience, generosity, and kindness. Teachers discussed the importance of highlighting students’ individual strengths and positive behaviour and encouraged accountability for students’ actions. Furthermore, relationships were an important factor in supporting behaviour in the classroom. Teachers sought to build relationships with not only their students but also the students’ families and the wider community.

Many of the overarching values and practices as discussed in the literature review were also held by the teachers, including the values of a holistic perspective, interconnectedness of all
living things, connection to the land and community, and power with rather than power over (Alberta Education, 2005; Archibald, 1997; Canadian Council on Learning, 2009). The seven sacred teachings are also congruent with the overarching worldviews and were found to be important virtues to impart to students. Respect was an important theme throughout the interviews and observations and was supported by the visual data. The theme of respect embodied not only how the teachers interacted with their students but how they modeled and taught social responsibility. The theme of respect is congruent with the principles of power with rather than power over, interconnectedness of all living things, and connection to land and community. Alison’s class rules included “respect for self, respect for others and respect for the land.” Observational data revealed that, when helping students, teachers sat at the same level as students and spoke to them calmly and were responsive to student needs, showing power with. Furthermore, Indigenous education is very much tied to place and respect for land includes stewardship of the land and reciprocity between humans and nature (Kawagley & Barnhardt, 1999). Kawagley and Barnhardt discuss that traditionally, learning takes place within the natural environment and through experience with the environment student develop competency and come to recognize the interconnectedness of themselves with the land. As everything in earth has life, spirituality is also inherently tied with respect. Lynn described the world of spiritual knowledge and discussed showing respect for nature through the singing of thank-you songs for the gifts of plants. Joseph described how traditionally, Indigenous people learned from animals and animals would share themselves. If these gifts were accepted respectfully, then they would be replenished.

Respect in the classroom was demonstrated through teachers’ behaviour. Teachers described how they respected students’ learning processes and that all students learn differently.
Generalized learning styles of Indigenous students have been described as kinesthetic, visual, tactile and right brained (Ross, 1982; Wauters, Bruce, Black, & Hocker, 1989). Pewewardy (2002) discusses learning styles more broadly in terms of behaviour support and community and classroom relationships. Battiste discusses that Indigenous students are diverse and do not have identical learning styles; as such, teachers must use a variety of teaching methods and avoid accepting generalized perceptions of cultural differences (2002). Teachers in the present study did not describe these generalized learning styles for Indigenous students, but instead discussed that each individual learns differently and at different rates. Joseph described that his job as a teacher is to find the best way that each student hears and understands his teachings. This was something he learned from observing an Elder. When Lynn is teaching students, she ensures their comprehension through review and repetition. Lynn respects students learning process and described that each student has individual gifts. However, she also has high expectations for student behaviour, consistent with a review by Castagno and Brayboy (2008), in which respecting and promoting Indigenous worldviews includes having high expectations for behaviour and assisting students to meet these expectations through responsive teaching practices. Observations of Elaine and Lynn demonstrated that they were not directive or prescriptive in their teaching styles but invited student involvement and gave students choices about their learning. This finding is congruent with traditional practices, as described by Swan (1998) in which students were led to come to their own understanding rather than being told what to do. Ledoux (2006) described that traditionally, children were allowed the opportunity for autonomy to make decisions and problem-solve independently and were gently guided to the appropriate action.
Brendtro (1996) describes four key components of social responsibility: mastery, belonging, independence, and generosity. Belonging and independence are closely interrelated in an Indigenous worldview, as both the collective and an individual’s autonomy are important. As discussed above, individuals are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning and allowed opportunities for problem-solving (Swan, 1998). Joseph described the importance of the group and how each member brings strengths and weaknesses and he tries to promote a sense of group within in the class. It was observed how Elaine monitored the function of the class as a whole, stopping to help students who needed extra support. When teaching students about salmon, Lynn was both responsive to individual student’s needs as well as the group as a whole.

Additionally, it is important to consider how one’s behaviour would affect the community (Kirkness, 1999). Kirkness (1999) discussed that traditionally the classroom was comprised of the community, and adults in the community helped children learn how to live a good life. Seton and Seton (1977) stated that living a good life can be interpreted as the contributions one has made to the community and that all acts are significant. Accountability and restitution is an important part of living a good life and social responsibility. Restitution is defined by Gossen as “creating the conditions for the person to fix their mistake and return to the group strengthened” (as cited in Amendt & Bousquet, 2006, p. 17). Gossen’s model of restitution is based on Indigenous practices and group functioning is based on a social contract of acceptable behaviour (2001). In the current study, teachers described that it is important for students to not only acknowledge and apologize for their mistakes but to make amends with the person they have hurt. Teachers discussed that they try to facilitate student accountability as well as acknowledge and apologize for their own mistakes to model accountable behaviour. The external reviewer stated that the act of apologizing is not a traditional practice but accountability
and restorative practices are important in traditional behaviour support. She stated that when a particular student is experiencing behavioural challenges, it is the teacher’s job to help the student learn what they need to learn but also to respect the other students in the class. She explained that the teacher should try to help the student understand that an injustice has been done and what the student’s behaviour did to create that feeling of injustice in others. If two students are experiencing difficulties with each other, this conflict may affect the whole class and not simply these two students. Therefore, it is important to bring the group together to share their feelings. However, a student can only be led to an understanding and may or may not come to understand the impacts of their behaviour on others. This ultimate realization may be a lifelong process for the student.

Brendtro and Brokenleg (1996) discuss mastery as one of the four pillars in their model of youth empowerment. They define mastery as one’s journey towards competence, although this goal does not mean striving to be better than someone else. Lynn and Alison described that mastery does not mean that students are able to do something perfectly, but that they have shown improvement. Mastery seemed to be a controversial term for the participants, and many participants did not believe that mastery was an appropriate goal for students. Alison described that the goal of teaching and learning is not necessarily to achieve mastery but to “become a better person.” She believes that mastery “gives the impression you have learned all you can learn”. As Indigenous people are lifelong learners, one can always improve at something. Lynn likes to show students in a tangible way the gains they have made and highlight their positive changes.

Creation of a community in the classroom promotes belonging and trust (Alberta Education, 2005; Brendtro & Brokenleg, 1996). Brendtro and Brokenleg (1996) discuss that
students should be encouraged to treat their peers as a family. Elaine engages in this practice and encourages students to get to know each other by rotating the seating chart. She encourages students to get along and remember that “they are part of your family. . . part of our whole class family.” Although students might have differences, Elaine tries to create an inclusive trusting environment within the class and has the students be part of creating that environment. The incorporation of talking circles is often discussed as a traditional practice that can be incorporated to create community in the classroom. In the current study, talking circles were incorporated by teachers but not necessarily as an authentic traditional practice.

In addition to connection within the classroom, the concept of connectedness was important to teachers. Connectedness includes not only creating connections within the classroom community but also building on the “rings of connectivity” with oneself in the middle and surrounded by school, family and the wider community. The knowledge of self as a behaviour support practice is not something that has been highlighted often in the literature. However, due to historical trauma, many Indigenous people are reconnecting with their cultural roots and knowledge of self is an important factor in this. Knowledge of self helps to build self-awareness and connections with one’s roots. Kawagley and Barnhardt (1999) discuss that the self is the “central drawing force [which] . . . is grounded in the profound silence of the universe-it’s sustenance is spiritual, it is love, it is a sense of belonging to a tribe, belonging to the universe, belonging to something greater than one’s self” (p 128). Alison discussed that rather than trying to create belonging within the classroom, she tries to instill the importance of Indigenous people to the world. This strategy was not discussed in the literature as a classroom behaviour support practice. However, this viewpoint highlights the empowerment of Indigenous students to recognize their unique gifts and helps to “instill positive pride” in their culture. Alison goes a
step beyond recognizing and respecting Indigenous views within the classroom to facilitating this into everyday life and to the community.

Another connection that was discussed in the literature was inviting parents and elders into the classroom (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009; Kanu, 2011). All teachers have invited parents into the classroom. Although Alison welcomes them “with open arms,” she described that it is difficult to get parents to come into the classroom even for parent teacher interviews. She described that this may be due to the socioeconomic concerns. However, she lets them know that she is not the only knowledge carrier and invites them to come and teach a lesson if they would like to do so. Elaine believes it is important to bring in the “living encyclopedias,” as their teachings carry more weight. Some of the other teachers described that they also invite Elders into the classroom, although it is difficult in an urban environment to find Elders who are able to come into the classroom. Joseph described that even if an Elder is available, he wants to make sure that the reason they are invited into the classroom is important for their time. Additionally, he distinguished between Elders and Olders. Olders are people who may be older and carry knowledge; the term Elders carries with it respect.

Stories were another important way of teaching social responsibility in the classroom. Traditionally, storytelling was a way to teach children how to live well and values are deeply embedded within a story (Battiste, 2002; Eder, 2007). Battiste (2002) described that stories contain deeper meanings than what can be seen on the surface. She gives the example that stories about animals may not necessarily be about animals but contain deeper values and teach about appropriate behaviour. Eder discussed that storytelling is an important practice as it teaches children how to live a good life, which includes relationships to the community and one’s ancestors, relationships to the land and responsibility to the community and to future generations.
(2007). In the present study, teachers not only used traditional stories to transmit values, as highlighted in the literature, but also incorporated personal and contemporary stories into teaching students values and social responsibility. Stories were also used to highlight different viewpoints and different ways of looking at the world. As noted by the external reviewer, stories can be interpreted in different ways, and the message of a story can be interpreted by a student in different ways at different points in their life. Lessons from a particular story can sometimes surface later in life to help guide the student to a certain action. Alison described that it is important to remember and pass on traditional stories but also the importance of new and contemporary stories as Indigenous culture is alive and changing.

Although the results from this study are consistent with Indigenous values and practices in regards to education, as discussed in previous studies, few of these studies have discussed the application of these practices directly to supporting student behaviour. Behaviour is closely associated with learning and academic progress (Hinshaw, 1992) and education from an Indigenous worldview is interconnected with social responsibility. Traditionally students were taught by the community as a whole, and through relationships with the natural environment, they were taught how to contribute their gifts to the group.

Due to the Western framework in which the participants teach, many of the practices described by teachers are traditional practices and worldviews that have been adapted for use in a Western classroom, or conversely, Western practices to have been used to teach Indigenous worldviews. As previously discussed, the external reviewer noted that from a traditional Indigenous perspective, social responsibility was not taught directly. Students were not told how to behave; instead appropriate behaviour was modeled for the students. Acceptable behaviours were taught through stories to help individuals arrive at their own understanding. The coyote, or
other "tricksters of learning," provided the opportunity for an individual to learn appropriate
behaviour for one’s actions but also provided the ability to laugh at oneself without feeling
ashamed for one’s actions. Applying these practices within a Western educational framework
creates a “third space” where both aspects of Western education and Indigenous educational
practices are valued (Gutiérrez et al., 1999). Rather than providing more indirect methods for
students to come to understand social responsibility, Alison creates a third space in her
classroom by taking Indigenous principles and teaching them explicitly. She both models
appropriate behaviour for students and directly acknowledges appropriate student behaviour.
Although traditionally students would be allowed to come to their own understanding and virtues
would be taught indirectly through stories, Alison teaches virtues, such as respect, directly. She
teaches to her class rules of respect and asks students what respect looks and sounds like. She
verbally reinforces student behaviour as well as reinforces student behaviour with tickets as part
of her behaviour management system. Some literature suggests that it is not culturally
responsive to praise Indigenous students directly for their behaviours or single out individuals
from the group (Ledoux, 2006). Lynn would agree with this principle in terms of not shaming
students in front of the group and taking them aside to discuss when they are having difficulties.
However, she also believes in making student look good in front of the group through humor and
gentle teasing. Alison discussed that her students display a number of challenging behaviours,
and to help them learn self-regulation and appropriate behaviour, she will praise them anytime
she sees them doing anything that support the classroom community. However, she does not call
out students for engaging in less pro-social behaviours. She will instead direct them to a place in
the classroom to calm down and then ask them the rejoin the class. She directly teaches them
strategies for self-regulation, which is consistent with Western teaching practices. However, she
also allows students the responsibility to decide when they need to use these strategies and when they are able to rejoin the class, which is consistent with the Indigenous worldview of accountability and student responsibility for their actions and to the group.

The highlighting of students’ positive attributes is consistent with an Indigenous educational technique of focusing on virtue awareness as opposed to reprimands and focusing on students’ positive acts rather than problem behaviours. Virtue awareness includes teaching core values and then reinforcing students acting upon these values (Jacobs, 2003; Lickona et al., 1997). Likona stated the importance of directly teaching key virtues and noted that learning includes first understanding key virtues and then behaving in accordance with them. Jacobs wrote that teaching of virtues should be woven into everyday learning. He described that understanding of virtues relates to the understanding of interconnectedness of living things. The external reviewer also described that once students understand the key virtues as a way of being, it becomes commonplace for a student to consider how one’s actions affect others and the interconnectedness of one’s actions with the world. She gave the example of a glass of water that represents oneself. Everything that one does either keeps the glass clean or contaminates the water. For example, when one does not take care of one’s body, then there is dirt in the glass.

Pewewardy (2002) discusses that humor is a useful teaching practice to bring students together and form connections between teachers and students. Humor is a virtue that is not often discussed in the literature, and discussion of how it can be incorporated in the classroom is somewhat unique to this study. Alison described that humor is one of the main things she brings to the classroom as an Indigenous person. She described that Indigenous people have had to endure so much throughout history but have not lost the ability to laugh. Joseph also uses humor in the classroom, especially when students are trying to gain his attention through their
behaviour. Lynn described that everyone enjoys laughing together and uses humor often with her students. During the observation, Lynn gently teased the students for not understanding her instructions.

Finally, overgeneralization of the culture and misunderstandings was of concern to teachers. This is done in a variety of ways and can be seen in some outdated literature. However, participants discussed ways in which they were working against these stereotypes. When Lynn is invited into classrooms to teach about Indigenous peoples and practices, she helps to work against tokenism and against overgeneralizations as seen in some textbooks. She even explicitly told the students that there is a lot of information about Indigenous peoples that can’t be found in textbooks.

Overall, findings were consistent with the literature reviewed. The key virtues, including the virtues of respect, patience, humility, generosity, and honesty, are commensurate with the worldviews and virtues described in the literature. The discussion of humor as a behaviour support tool is not a virtue that was discussed in the literature but was highlighted by participants. The importance of the group was discussed both by participants and in the literature reviewed. The group allows for belonging and for each student to show their individual gifts for group strength. Accountability to the group and restitution for one’s actions is also an important part of individual as well as group functioning. The findings expand upon the literature in terms of the incorporation of specific practices and worldviews into the classroom. Teachers incorporated practices and adapted them for use in a Western classroom, creating a third space. For example, teachers shared traditional, contemporary, and personal stories as a way of teaching social responsibility and as a way of teaching about different perspectives to their students.
Additionally, traditional practices, such as talking circles, were incorporated into the classroom but were not always used in their traditional manner.

**Implications for Education**

This study examined culturally responsive behaviour support practices from an Indigenous Canadian lens. Many of the previously published studies that examined Indigenous pedagogy have an American lens or are not specific to Canada. Additionally, few studies focus on behaviour support in the classroom. This study looked at factors that affect Indigenous students’ success at school in BC, although many factors are common across Canada.

There are a number of implications both for teacher education as well as for the incorporation of Indigenous worldviews on behaviour support into the classroom. There are implications for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers. These implications include educating teachers as well as students about Indigenous practices and worldviews. It also includes helping students to understand what it means to be Indigenous and fostering a sense of pride in their ancestry rather than the systemic discrimination that can sometimes occur as a result of a mismatch between cultural beliefs. It is important for non-Indigenous teachers to educate themselves and be culturally responsive in their behaviour support practices but also to be attentive to protocol and respectful of Indigenous knowledge.

Teachers described that many of their students did not fully understand what it meant to be Indigenous but that they were slowly learning. This learning process was facilitated by the participants and was only possible because these teachers were themselves grounded in the knowledge of their identities as Indigenous. Many of the teachers discussed that, because they grew up off of their reserves, they did not grow up with their cultural teachings and knowledge but learned much of these principles and practices when they attended university. All
participants were part of the Native Indian Teacher Education Program (NITEP) at the University of British Columbia.

Therefore, university seems to be a place where individuals who identify as Indigenous can learn about and connect with their cultural roots. Although advanced education seems to facilitate personal knowledge, this practice does not seem to have filtered down into school boards and elementary and secondary education. Even if it does occur, teachers described many of these practices as a “dog and pony show” as opposed to an authentic representation of the culture.

It seems disadvantageous for Indigenous individuals to be learning about their culture as adults. School boards should examine the transmission of cultural teachings and knowledge in post-secondary and attempt to incorporate some of these practices within the school system. Caution should be taken so that the incorporation of practices and worldviews is authentic and not overgeneralized or tokenistic.

When teachers complete programs with an Indigenous focus, such as the NITEP program at the University of British Columbia (UBC), and can learn about Indigenous culture, they are able to bring these teachings to the classroom to share with their students. All teacher education programs, not just the NITEP program, can include coursework on Indigenous pedagogy. It is important that these classes are taught by an Indigenous person and authentically represent the culture. Indigenous teachings, including those of respect and connectedness can then be shared with students. These teachings can support Indigenous students who may feel a sense of alienation from their culture or feel that something is missing but do not know what this is. In turn, this knowledge can foster a sense of belonging within school and the community and support student behaviour. It may also help to increase self-esteem and instill cultural pride in
Indigenous students. Additionally, the methods of supporting behaviour from an Indigenous worldview are something that all students can benefit from, not only Indigenous students. When students are respected for who they are and how they learn and are taught to respect others in return, this type of behavior support may lead to the development of individuals who are contributing members of society.

Many of the culturally responsive practices described by the teachers can be incorporated into the classroom for use by a non-Indigenous teacher. This incorporation may require a paradigm shift in teachers’ approaches to behaviour and ways of interacting with students. For example, the concept of “power with” rather than “power over” recognizes that all individuals have gifts and talents and the teacher and student can both learn from each other and should be respected as such. Learning is not unidimensional. Integration of an Indigenous worldview on social responsibility into one’s teaching practices requires a change in perspective and an active attempt to alter current ways of seeing and responding to challenging student behaviour. Virtue awareness as an Indigenous practice is commensurate with reinforcing positive student behaviour rather than focusing on negative behaviors. Teachers can actively seek out opportunities to reinforce positive student behaviour rather than focusing on less desirable behaviours. Additionally, teachers can lead by example and model appropriate behaviour for their students. These appropriate behaviours can be based on the seven sacred teachings and virtues of respect, kindness, and patience. Teachers can then reinforce students for embodying these virtues. Additionally, teachers can respect individual learning processes by avoiding generalizations of Indigenous learning styles. It is important to allow students the opportunities to make choices and lead students to the making the right choice for themselves rather than attempting to do so by coercion or force.
Another key feature of culturally responsive behaviour support practices for Indigenous students is relationship building. This includes taking a genuine interest in students and building relationships with the students’ family. As described by Lynn, this may take time but, as described by Elaine, viewing the student holistically as well as the context in which he or she lives is an important factor in behaviour support. It is important to be non-judgemental of differences in beliefs and practices when building relationships. Fostering relationships with students also promotes belonging in the class and builds a stronger classroom community.

Commensurate with an Indigenous worldview, teachers can facilitate student accountability and lead students to an understanding of how their behaviour affects others in the classroom community.

Although many Indigenous worldviews can be incorporated into the classroom to support student behaviour, many traditional practices should not be used by non-Indigenous teachers. The discussions of Indigenous protocol and concerns in regards to overgeneralization highlighted the importance for non-Indigenous teachers to inform themselves about Indigenous practices. Protocol is very important in Indigenous cultures, and not following protocol is viewed as disrespectful. Although teachers may desire to be culturally responsive and make teaching and behaviour support more responsive for Indigenous students, they may unwittingly incorporate practices, such as sacred ceremonies, into the classroom that they should not be using as non-Indigenous people. If a non-Indigenous teacher wishes their students to experience or learn about a certain ceremony or specific cultural practice, they should consult an Elder or Knowledge Carrier from the Indigenous group in question and invite this individual into the classroom. This process will also allow for a more genuine teaching of the practice and the reasons why these practices are done.
Furthermore, this study has implications for the field of School Psychology. Many non-Indigenous people have limited knowledge on the historical factors that impact students in the classroom. School Psychologists need to be aware of these historical factors and aware of barriers to education for Indigenous students as well as knowledge of how to help ameliorate these challenges. One of the roles of School Psychologists as defined by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) is to ensure equitable access to education and to work against discrimination and prejudice. By knowing the specific challenges that face Indigenous students, School Psychologists will be better equipped to help support student success. Additionally, as School Psychologists are often called upon to consult on student behaviour, knowledge of Indigenous worldviews on behaviour support can allow School Psychologists to better support behaviour with a culturally responsive lens.

**Limitations**

As this study is qualitative in nature, the results are not generalizable to the general population. However, the results do give a rich example of four teachers’ experiences as Indigenous teachers within a Western educational framework and provides examples of how these teachers incorporate Indigenous worldviews into classroom behaviour support. Additionally, due to various contextual factors, observations could not be conducted in all participants’ classrooms. Ideally, future research would contain at least one observation for each teacher interviewed.

**Implications for Future Research**

It is recommended that this study be replicated with more participants to further explore classroom behaviour support practices from an Indigenous worldview. As observations could not be conducted in the classrooms of all participants, it is recommended that this study be
replicated with opportunities for observation within each classroom. Additionally, it would be interesting to compare the worldviews and experiences of teachers in urban schools, as in this study, with teachers in rural environments to see to what extent their experiences and practices differ. Finally, it is recommended that future research in this area take into account the experiences of Indigenous students and their families with culturally responsive behaviour support and how incorporation of traditional practices relates to positive changes in student behaviour.

**Conclusion**

The themes identified are consistent with an Indigenous worldview and offer rich information into incorporating Indigenous worldviews in the classroom. Practices described by teachers were incorporated in a meaningful and authentic manner. Teachers’ incorporation of Indigenous worldviews and practices were authentic because “it is who I am.” Incorporation included not only some of the more overt practices that one would generally associate with an Indigenous worldview, such as incorporation of stories, song, traditional art forms, and talking circles, but also personal values, such as respect for oneself, others, and the land, and key principles of virtue awareness, building relationships, making connections, and not shaming children. Respect was inherent in the way teachers discussed and interacted with their students and led to a relationship in which it appeared that students themselves felt valued and heard in the classroom.

Students may be more likely to experience success at school when they are understood and respected for their cultural backgrounds in a genuine manner. It is important that incorporation of cultural practices is not done in a tokenistic manner. In many circumstances, tokenism is not done purposefully but occurs due to misunderstandings or misinterpretations of a
specific culture. Teachers also described that it is important to be aware of protocol surrounding particular practices and sharing of information. Some of the practices described by teachers cannot and should not be used by non-Indigenous teachers. However, culturally responsive teaching can be used by any teacher, and some of the practices, such as virtue awareness, allowing student choice, and building relationships, can be incorporated and as expressed by Alison are “just good teaching.” For non-Indigenous teachers, it may take more time to build a trusting relationship with students and families, as Lynn discussed that in Indigenous communities, respect needs to be earned, especially from those who are non-Indigenous, and people need to see how an individual behaves and moves in the community.

Contemporary practice may often be viewed as how Indigenous students can fit into a Western worldview of education (Kawagley & Barnhardt, 1999). However, it is important to examine changing the existing education paradigm to blend Western and Indigenous worldviews. The goal of education from an Indigenous worldview is not academic in its origins but to prepare children for life and prepare children to contribute to society (Kirkness, 1999). The results of this study demonstrate that it is possible to incorporate Indigenous worldview into a Western education paradigm. Kawagley and Barnhardt (1999) discuss that there are ways to “break out of the mold in which we are oftentimes stuck. . . . [and] to develop linkages that connect different worldviews” (p 126). Although this process may take time and effort, this study has demonstrated that teachers are able to blend aspects of Western and Indigenous worldviews. These practices help to build capacity for Indigenous students and may help to ameliorate some of the contextual factors that affect Indigenous student success at school.
References


McIntosh, K., Moniz, C., Craft, C., Golby, r., & Steinwand-Deschambeault, R. (2013 manuscript submitted for publication). Implementing school-wide positive behaviour support to better meet the needs of Indigenous students.


Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Prior to the interview taking place, the researcher will observe in the interviewee’s classroom and meet with the interviewee/participant. During this meeting the researcher will briefly outline the research topic and the purpose of the interview. The participant will be asked: “what questions do you want me to ask you? How can I invite the story that you want to tell?” The participant and researcher will then collaboratively come up with some interview questions and a time for the interview will be set up.

Name _____________________         School________________________
Date: __________________         Grade________________________
Time: ________________         Place: ____________________

Consent and Introduction

- Re-review the study's purpose, how long you expect the interview to take, and your plans for using the results from the interview
- Note that the interview will be audio-recorded and that you will keep their identity confidential.
- Have the interviewee sign the consent form

The purpose of my study is to examine how Indigenous teachers incorporate traditional worldviews and practices into classroom behaviour support. I would like to learn about your own practices and views on this subject. First, we will discuss the questions that we created when we last met. Afterwards, I may have some follow up questions to ask you.

Co-created Interview Questions

These questions may include: **What do you see as positive behaviour and how do you support this in the classroom?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee’s Question:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[insert interviewee’s question here]</td>
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</table>
Interviewee’s Question:

[insert interviewee question here]
The following questions will serve as back-up if the participant has difficulty coming up with their own interview questions or if needed during the interview for any reason.

BACKGROUND

How long have you been a teacher?

What grade(s) do you teach/have you taught?

What band or Nation do you belong to?

TRADITIONAL APPROACHES

In your opinion what is a traditional Indigenous worldview on education with regards to supporting the behaviour and emotional development of children and youth?

What key qualities or virtues are important?

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT

Do you think that your personal approach to classroom management /classroom behaviour support has been influenced by your Indigenous knowledge, experiences and culture?
What Indigenous worldviews/practices do you utilize or draw upon when giving lessons or teaching students in the classroom? (i.e. What is your Indigenous worldview on education?)

When would you use that? /What would you use that for?

How do you incorporate this worldview into the classroom in term of supporting student behaviour?

Probe if necessary for:

Inclusion of Parents and Elders?

Using cultural values to promote social responsibility?

Incorporating traditional practices?

Creation of community in the classroom?

Other than what we have already discussed, how do you think Indigenous students are best supported in the classroom, in terms of classroom management/behaviour support?
When the interviewee and researcher have finished discussing the collaboratively created interview questions, the researcher will confirm that all content areas have been discussed and if needed, may ask follow-up questions from the more structured interview questions in order to cover the main themes discussed from the literature.

Thank-you for taking the time to meet with me and share your views.

Ask if interviewee would be able and willing to do a member check of the interview analysis.

At the end of the interview, the observational data from the classroom observations will be shown to the interviewee and discussed. This will be done to confirm that the researcher’s observations correspond with the teacher’s practices and if they see the observations are commensurate with how they see their practices in the classroom.
Dear Parents:

Our school is fortunate to have a graduate student in the Faculty of Education from UBC conducting research in our school this year as part of her thesis project. The purpose of this research is to examine how Indigenous teachers incorporate traditional worldviews and practices into classroom behaviour support for Indigenous students. Your child’s teacher has been invited to take part in this research study.

As part of this study, the graduate student will observe in the classroom for one school day. Focus of this observation will be on the teacher and [his or her] teaching practices. The graduate student may also take pictures of the, classroom layout or student art work. However, your child will not be photographed in any identifying way. Your child will also not be identified in the study. The graduate student will be supervised throughout the process by a UBC faculty member.

If you have any questions concerning this, please call me at the school. If you would prefer not to have your child participate in this project, please let me know prior to [insert date] and alternate arrangements can be made for your child on this day.

Sincerely,

Add Principal Name
Teacher Recruitment Letter

How Indigenous Teachers Incorporate Traditional Worldviews And Practices Into Classroom Behaviour Support

Project Information

**Note: this letter may be personalized based on contacts**

Principal Investigator: Dr. Marla Buchanan  
Education and Counselling Psychology and Special Education

Co-Investigator(s): Christina Moniz, M.A. student  
Education and Counselling Psychology and Special Education

Dear Teacher,

I am writing to invite your consent to take part in a research study examining how Indigenous teachers incorporate traditional worldviews and practices into classroom behaviour support for Indigenous students. You are being invited to take part in this research study because you have been identified as an exemplar teacher who has strong knowledge of Indigenous practices and worldviews and are currently practicing within a school environment.

Taking part in the study is voluntary and will not affect any services you receive from the school district. You will also have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

Your Participation Would Consist of the Following:

- A 1 to 1 ½ hour interview to discuss your use of culturally relevant behaviour support practices for Indigenous students.
- Observation in your classroom for one school day to observe your use of culturally relevant practices within a normal school day.
- Two 15 to 30 minute follow up meeting after the interview to ensure that the interview data was transcribed according to your intended meaning and to ensure that the themes that arise out of the interview data resonate with your experiences.

Benefits for Participants:

- We are not aware of any risks if you take part.
• Each teacher will be provided a $20 gift card (e.g., Chapters card) for participating in the study.

• At the end of the study, you would be given the opportunity for results to be presented to you and the school staff. Results may be beneficial in your development of culturally responsive behaviour support practices for Indigenous students.

It is very important to us that the right to privacy of you and your students are respected. All information collected as part of this research study will be kept confidential. **No individual information will be shared by the team with the school district, Ministry of Education, or elsewhere, and no staff member, student or school will be identified by name** in any reports about the completed study.

**Contact for information about the study:**

If you have any questions or desire further information with respect to this study, you may contact Dr. Marla Buchanan or Christina Moniz

If at any time have any concerns about your treatment or your rights as a person taking part in a study, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at the University of British Columbia

Sincerely,

Marla Buchanan, PhD
Principal Investigator
Dept of Educational and Counselling Psychology and Special Education
University of British Columbia
Parent Information Letter

How Indigenous Teachers Incorporate Traditional Worldviews And Practices Into Classroom Behaviour Support

Principal Investigator: Dr. Marla Buchanan
                        Education and Counselling Psychology and Special Education

Co-Investigator(s): Christina Moniz, M.A. student
                    Education and Counselling Psychology and Special Education

Purpose:

This purpose of this study is to examine how Indigenous teachers incorporate traditional worldviews and practices into classroom behaviour support for Indigenous students. Your child’s teacher is being invited to take part in this research study because she has been identified as an exemplar teacher who has strong knowledge of Indigenous practices and worldviews. This study will be conducted as the Co-Investigator’s thesis and the final document will be held in the UBC library. Data may also be used as part of a future publication in an academic journal.

Study Procedures:

Your child’s teacher will be asked to take part in an interview with the Co-Investigator to discuss the use of traditional practices and worldviews within the classroom. Prior to this interview, the Co-Investigator will observe in your child’s classroom for one school day. The purpose of this observation will be to document the use of traditional practices within a normal school day and the observation should not interfere with the normal activities of your child’s classroom. School consent will be obtained prior to the observation. You will be given the opportunity to withdraw your child from the classroom on the day of observation. If you choose to withdraw your child from participating in this study, he/she will be found another location within the school where he/she can complete his/her work. These arrangements will be made in conjunction with your child’s teacher and the school principal. The Co-Investigator may also ask to take pictures of the classroom layout or classroom artwork. Your child will not be photographed in any identifying way.

Potential Risks:

There are no known risks to your child’s participation in this study.
**Potential Benefits:**

It is anticipated that this study will be beneficial to your child’s teacher by facilitating self-reflection and a review of aspects of his/her culturally responsive practices. If desired, results from the study may be presented to your child’s school and/or district in order to facilitate future culturally responsive behaviour support practices for Indigenous students. Additionally, participation in the study will add to the body of research in the area of culturally responsive behaviour support and could benefit the development of behaviour support practices for Indigenous students.

**Confidentiality:**

The identity of all participants in this study will be kept strictly confidential throughout the research process. No names will not be identified in any reports of the completed study and any potentially identifying information will not be included in the thesis document. All documents will be identified using an alias and kept in a locked filing cabinet at UBC. Computer documents will be password protected and deleted after completion of the study. De-identified documents may be shown to an Indigenous scholar for the purposes of analyses. Five years after thesis completion computer documents will be deleted and paper documents will be shredded.

**Contact for information about the study:**

If you have any questions or desire further information with respect to this study, you may contact Dr. Marla Buchanan or Christina Moniz.

**Contact for concerns about the rights of research subjects:**

If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research subject, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services.
Teacher Consent Form

How Indigenous Teachers Incorporate Traditional Worldviews And Practices Into Classroom Behaviour Support

Principal Investigator: Dr. Marla Buchanan  
Education and Counselling Psychology and Special Education

Co-Investigator(s): Christina Moniz, M.A. student  
Education and Counselling Psychology and Special Education

Purpose:

This purpose of this study is to examine how Indigenous teachers incorporate traditional worldviews and practices into classroom behaviour support for Indigenous students. You are being invited to take part in this research study because you have been identified as an exemplar teacher who has strong knowledge of Indigenous practices and worldviews and are currently practicing within a school environment. This study will be conducted as the Co-Investigator’s thesis and the final document will be held in the UBC library. Data may also be used as part of a future publication in an academic journal.

Study Procedures:

If you consent to participate in this study, you will be asked to take part in an interview with the Co-Investigator to discuss your use of traditional practices and worldviews within the classroom. You will be given the opportunity to develop the interview questions that you would like to be asked. This interview will take approximately one to one and a half hours. Interviews will be audio-taped in order for the Co-Investigator to transcribe the interview.

Prior to the interview, the Co-Investigator will observe in your classroom for one school day. The purpose of this observation will be to document your use of traditional practices within a normal school day and the observation should not interfere with the normal activities of your classroom. School consent will be obtained prior to the observation. Parents will be given the opportunity to withdraw their student from the classroom on the day of observation. If this occurs, these students will be found another location within the school where they can complete their work. These arrangements will be made in conjunction with you and the school principal. The Co-Investigator may also ask to take pictures of your classroom layout or classroom artwork. Your consent will be obtained before taking any photos and no students or teachers will be photographed in an identifying way. Additionally, on the day of observation, the Co-Investigator will meet with you for approximately 20 minutes to discuss the interview procedures.
After the observation and interview, you will be given the opportunity to read through the interview transcript in order for you to confirm that the written interview transcript matches your intended meaning during the interview. You will be given the opportunity to delete or change any of the information from the transcript. You will also be given the opportunity to view the notes taken by the Co-Investigator during the observation. This will take place through email and telephone communication. Finally, the interview and observational data will be organized into themes. You will be given the opportunity to look over these themes to ensure that they resonate with you and your experiences as an Indigenous teacher. This will also take place through email and telephone communication. These activities should take no more than 30 minutes each.

The total time required for participation in this study, including interview, observation and follow-up will be approximately 7.5 hours.

Potential Risks:

There are no known risks to participation in this study. It is possible yet highly unlikely that the recalling of experiences in the work setting could be upsetting. In regard to this potential but small risk it is important to note that you will be given the opportunity to develop your own interview questions prior to the interview and questions will most likely pertain to experiences concerning educational practices that would not normally evoke emotional stress.

Potential Benefits:

It is anticipated that this study will be beneficial to you by facilitating self-reflection and a review of aspects of your culturally responsive practices. If desired, results from the study could be presented to your school and/or district in order to facilitate future culturally responsive behaviour support practices for Indigenous students. Additionally, participation in the study will add to the body of research in the area of culturally responsive behaviour support and could benefit the development of behaviour support practices for Indigenous students.

Confidentiality:

Your identity will be kept strictly confidential throughout the research process. Your name will not be identified by name in any reports of the completed study and any potentially identifying information will not be included in the thesis document. Pictures taken of the classroom will not include you or your students or any identifying objects. If a picture is accidently taken that includes an identifying object, it will be deleted from the camera before being uploaded to a computer. All documents will be identified using an alias and kept in a locked filing cabinet at UBC. Computer documents will be password protected and deleted after completion of the study. De-identified documents may be shown to an Indigenous scholar for the purposes of analyses. Five years after thesis completion computer documents will be deleted and paper documents will be shredded.
**Remuneration/Compensation:**

In order to defray the costs of inconvenience you will receive an honorarium in the amount of -$20.00. If you decide to withdraw from the study before completion, remuneration will be pro-rated based on the length of your participation.

**Contact for information about the study:**

If you have any questions or desire further information with respect to this study, you may contact Dr. Marla Buchanan or Christina Moniz.

**Contact for concerns about the rights of research subjects:**

If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research subject, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services.

**Consent:**

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time prior to publication without jeopardy to your employment or future participation in UBC research.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records and that you consent to participate in this study.

_______________________________________
Subject Signature

_______________________________________
Printed Name of the Subject signing above
How Indigenous Teachers Incorporate Traditional Worldviews And Practices Into Classroom Behaviour Support

Project Information

Dear School Administrator,

I am writing to invite your consent for your school to take part in a research study in your district. You are receiving this letter because you are the principal of an elementary school in the district and one or more of your teacher’s has been identified as a potential participant in the study. The purpose of this study is to examine how Indigenous teachers incorporate traditional worldviews and practices into classroom behaviour support for Indigenous students.

Taking part in the study is voluntary (by you and the individual teacher) and will not affect any services you receive from the school district. You and the personnel at your school will also have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

Participation of teacher(s) in your school would consist of the following:

- Observation in the teacher’s classroom for one school day to observe the teacher’s use of culturally relevant practices within a normal school day.
- A 1 to 1 ½ hour interview with the teacher to discuss his/her use of culturally relevant behaviour support practices for Indigenous students.
- Two 15 to 30 minute follow up meeting after the interview to ensure that the interview data was transcribed according to the intended meaning and to ensure that the themes that arise out of the interview data resonate with the teacher’s experiences.

Your participation would consist of the following:

- Sending a parent information letter and tacit consent form to parents’ of students in the participating classroom (s) (forms will be provided to you).
- Liaising with parents in regards the study if parent’s have questions or would like their child to be withdrawn from participation.

Benefits for Participants:

- We are not aware of any risks if your school takes part.
• Each classroom teacher will be provided a $20 gift card (e.g., Chapters card) for participating in the study.

• At the end of the study, you would be given the opportunity for results to be presented to you and the school staff. Results may be beneficial in your school’s development of culturally responsive behaviour support practices for Indigenous students.

It is very important to us that the right to privacy of you, your school staff and your students are respected. All information collected as part of this research study will be kept confidential. **No individual information will be shared by the team with the school district, Ministry of Education, or elsewhere, and no staff member, student or school will be identified by name** in any reports about the completed study.

If you are interested in taking part or would like to learn more about the study and what is involved, you may contact Marla Buchanan.

If you do wish to take part please complete the attached consent form and return it to my office in the enclosed envelope. We will arrange times that are convenient with the teacher(s) for the observation and interview.

If at any time you have any concerns about your treatment or your rights as a person taking part in a study, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at the University of British Columbia.

Sincerely,

Marla Buchanan, PhD  
Principal Investigator  
Dept of Educational and Counselling Psychology  
and Special Education  
University of British Columbia
School Administrator Consent Form

How Indigenous Teachers Incorporate Traditional Worldviews And Practices Into Classroom Behaviour Support

Principal Investigator:
Marla Buchanan, Ph. D.
Department of Educational & Counselling Psychology and Special Education

Co-Investigator:
Christina Moniz, B. Sc.
Master of Arts Student
Department of Educational & Counselling Psychology and Special Education

Dear School Administrator,

This is a request for you to take part in a study in your district. This study will be conducted as the Co-Investigator’s thesis. Please read the following form carefully. Sign and return one copy. Keep the other for your records.

Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to examine how Indigenous teachers incorporate traditional worldviews and practices into classroom behaviour support for Indigenous students. Select teacher(s) in your school are being invited to participate in this study. You are being invited to take part in this project because you are the principal of an elementary school in the district.

Research Study Participation:

1. Taking part in the study means that you agree to allow the teacher(s) in your school the opportunity to participate in an interview regarding their use of culturally relevant behaviour support strategies for Indigenous students. Additionally, teacher(s) will be observed in the classroom for one school day in order to observe their use of these strategies and participate in two short follow-up meetings to the interview. The Co-Investigator may also ask to take pictures of the classroom layout or classroom artwork. No pictures will be taken that contain identifying information. It is not expected that all teachers in your school would choose to participate, so your consent does not imply their consent, and they can freely choose.
2. The observation would take one school day and should not interfere with normal classroom activities. The interview would take approximately 1 to 1 ½ hours to complete and the follow up meetings would take 15 to 30 minutes. These events would be scheduled at yours and the teachers’ convenience.

3. Tacit parent consent would be obtained prior to the observation. Parents would be given the opportunity to withdraw their student from the classroom on the day of observation. If this occurs, these students would be found another location within the school where they can complete their work. These arrangements would be made in conjunction with you and the classroom teacher. The teacher’s consent would be obtained before taking any photos and no students or teacher(s) will be photographed in an identifying way.

4. Specifically, your participation in the study would include sending a parent information letter and tacit consent form to parents’ of students in the participating classroom(s) (forms will be provided to you). As well as liaising with parents in regards the study if parent’s have questions or would like their child to be withdrawn from participation.

5. To compensate them for their time, each teacher will receive a $20 gift card.

6. The teachers, students and school identity in this study will remain strictly confidential; only the investigators of the study (not the school district, not the Ministry of Education) will see the teacher’s responses. All documents will be identified only by code name and kept in a locked lab and password-protected computer files at the University of British Columbia. No individual or school will be identified by name in any reports of the completed study.

7. If at any time you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research participant, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the Office of Research Services at UBC.

8. Your participation (and the teachers’ participation) in this study is entirely voluntary, and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without jeopardy to your employment or relationship with the school district.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact the Principal Investigator, Marla Buchanan.

Your signature below indicates that you consent to participate in this study and you have received a copy of this consent form (Pages 1-2) for your own records.

Participant’s signature (please sign):

Date:

……………………………………