

**DECOLONIZING THE NUNAVUT SCHOOL SYSTEM:
STORIES IN A RIVER OF TIME**

by

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Abstract

This research explores the recent history of educational change in Nunavut's public school system, primarily between the years 2000 and 2013. During this time, decision makers mandated that schools deliver programs in accordance with Inuit foundations of knowledge, values and ways of being. I show how new school system initiatives were largely informed by long-term Nunavut educators—Inuit and non-Inuit—as well as Elders and Inuit knowledge holders, whose perspectives reach into the remembered past and towards an imagined future. My inquiry centres in-depth interviews with Cathy McGregor, an educational leader who carries 40 years experience North of 60°, and was responsible for facilitating many recent curriculum, policy, and leadership changes. Cathy is also my mother. Illuminated by her memories and vision, materials developed for the Nunavut school system, and my own research journey, I examine processes of bringing knowledge from and about the past forward in educational change. I describe three sites as demonstrating decolonizing: 1) The role of Inuit Elders in the school system, including full-time Elder Advisors; 2) Processes of curriculum development based on Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit; and, 3) An annual leadership development workshop facilitating history education. Building on these stories of change, I work towards theorizing two concepts, and the relationship between them, in the context of the Nunavut school system: decolonizing and knowing with historical consciousness. I find the sustainability of change in this context is elusive and challenging. Educators are unlikely to reach a stable moment of fulfillment wherein they hold sufficient knowledge of the context, or where the institution of schooling is decolonized. Using the metaphor of a river melting in spring throughout the dissertation, I find it is unsettling to acknowledge that time constantly slips away; that what was done before may no longer be relevant or possible now. However, knowledge from and about the past may serve educators by illustrating that knowing is always conditioned by place, time, identity, and relationships; therefore, knowledge can, and must, be remade. I argue that this warrants practices of continuously and recursively revisiting what is called for in Nunavut schools, to support educational change towards decolonizing.

Preface

This dissertation is an original piece of work and no part of it has appeared in publication to date. I conceived of, designed, and carried out the research program following guidance from my committee and building on the support of many individuals named in the Acknowledgements. Cathy McGregor, the sole research participant, contributed significantly to the content through interviews I conducted with her, as well as by reviewing drafts of the work and commenting on her contributions. I was responsible for the process of analysis and writing.

I sought and received permission to access the Nunavut Department of Education documents used in this dissertation from Kathy Okpik, Deputy Minister.

This research required and received approval from the UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board, the certificate for which is #H13-01782.

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List of Abbreviations

ANKN - Alaska Native Knowledge Network

BDBE - Baffin Divisional Board of Education

C&SS - Curriculum & School Services division (of the Nunavut Department of Education)

DEA - District Education Authority

EAC - Elders Advisory Committee

ELP - Educational Leadership Program

GN - Government of Nunavut

GNWT - Government of the Northwest Territories

IQ - Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit

ITK - Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

NDE - Nunavut Department of Education

NWT - Northwest Territories

NWTDE - Northwest Territories Department of Education

QTC - Qikiqtani Truth Commission

RSOs - Regional School Operations (of the Nunavut Department of Education)

TLC - Teaching and Learning Centre

WNCP - Western and Northern Canadian Protocol

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the Nunavut educators who respond to inclement weather by remembering days of clarity in the past, showing focus and persistence through uncertainty, and looking towards the horizon with a vision of education that is informed by the people, and place, schools serve.

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Executive Summary: English Translation

Decolonizing the Nunavut School System: Stories in a River of Time

Heather E. McGregor

This research explores the recent history of educational change in Nunavut's public school system, primarily between the years 2000 and 2013. During this time, decision makers mandated that schools deliver programs in accordance with Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and began work on implementing associated goals. I use the metaphor of a river melting in spring to represent the dissertation—both how it is organized, and how I understand knowledge to be affected by time and place. Using the metaphor, which I explain in Chapter 1, this research is made up of four “story streams.”

The first stream follows the story of how the school system has been expected to envision and implement changes since the Nunavut government was established. I provide examples of new initiatives that were largely informed by long-term Northern educators—Inuit and Qallunaat—as well as Elders and Inuit knowledge holders, whose perspectives reach into the remembered past and towards an imagined future.

The second stream is made up of the experiences and memories I collected through interviews with a long-term Nunavut educational leader, Cathy McGregor, who is also my mother. Cathy carries 40 years of experience in northern schools, and was involved in many of the changes Nunavut has called for. In particular, I explore how she understands the reasons changes are needed, where the ideas for change originate, and processes of making change in the school system. I focus on how knowledge from and about the past is brought forward in these processes, and in Cathy's stories. This story stream is most prominent in Chapter 3, which describes Cathy's career biography, but also flows through each subsequent chapter.

I feature my own research journey as the third story stream, which is found to a great extent in Chapter 2. I grew up in Nunavut, attended Nunavut schools, worked for the Nunavut Department of Education and still consider Iqaluit my home. The methodology I used in this research unfolded in ways that I did not expect, but in ways that I hope build on the unique experiences and skills I bring to this topic, under present circumstances. This research is more than a strictly academic curiosity, but rather an inquiry deeper into questions, initiatives, stories, relationships and places that have shaped my life, the lives of my family members, and the lives of many people I know.

These three story streams intersect and circulate around three sites, or “ice pans” in the “river”: Elders, curriculum and leadership. Chapter 4 outlines the changing role of Elders working in schools and at the Nunavut Department of Education. I provide the rationale for their contributions to educational philosophy and policy, and the complexities of collecting and drawing on Elder knowledge to inform present ways of teaching in schools. New processes of providing Nunavut curriculum is the subject of Chapter 5, with an emphasis on that which has been developed and implemented specifically with Nunavut students in mind. I note the length of time, specific expertise, and many considerations involved in facilitating curricular change. Chapter 6 offers a description of how educational leadership development (i.e. training for principals and other administrators) has become increasingly Nunavut-centered, such as through the design, content and facilitation of pedagogy for decolonizing, using Nunavut and Inuit histories.

In response to my first research question: *What are some policy, curriculum and leadership initiatives in the Nunavut school system since 2000 that can be considered new decolonizing efforts?* I argue that these three sites—the role of Elders, recent Nunavut curriculum, and leadership development—are most important.

My second research question drove me to look for knowledge from and about the past: *What sources and kinds of knowledge led to, and informed, recent decolonizing initiatives in the Nunavut school system?* I found knowledge from and about the past in the form of Cathy’s memories and experiences as a long-term educational leader, as well as the stories of other educators that she references. She has exposure over a long period of time to Indigenous and cross-cultural education contexts and scholarship. I also found knowledge from and about the past in the traditional, historical, linguistic and experiential knowledge, skills, and attitudes shared by Inuit Elders. In curriculum materials I found knowledge from and about the past sourced from anthropological research, European or Euro-descended theorists and experts, as well as Inuit sources. In the Educational Leadership Program I found Inuit oral histories of colonization/decolonization; Inuit political leaders’ stories; and, educators’ and community members’ memories of schooling from the past. The challenges of making change in the Nunavut school system in relation to these sources of knowledge were often in the translation, interpretation and cross-cultural bridging between Elder knowledge, IQ, histories of colonization, and contemporary school contexts informed by Eurocentric knowledges and structures.

My third research question is: *How and why is knowledge from and about the past brought forward by Nunavut educators in initiatives intended to facilitate change to the school system?* I offer evidence of how educators have participated in educational change through Cathy's memories, including the expectations and invitations she advanced as an educational leader in consultation with her colleagues. I show what has been expected of educators through documents: legislation, standing procedures, curriculum examples, handbooks, program objectives and reports. I share what can be learned about teacher and leader experience, particularly in relationship building amongst school partners, from other published sources such as educational research. I explain that this knowledge has been brought forward to create schools that are more culturally responsive to Nunavut communities, in contrast to the Eurocentric knowledge and programs that have characterized schools—and not worked well—in the past.

My fourth research question is: *How might an understanding of knowledge held by long-term educators in Nunavut by extension help new educators understand what is asked of them in participating in educational change towards decolonizing?* I work towards telling stories of the Nunavut school system, with an emphasis on what long-term educators have centred and promoted within the institution. The purpose of including a high level of detail about these examples is to be more specific about what is involved in commitments to Inuit education: why such commitments are warranted; why the work takes a long time; what it asks of staff; what supports are necessary; and, what some of the outcomes may be for teachers, students, communities, and school systems. Elders and long-term educators offer us stories and can act as mentors in the opportunities and challenges of this work.

The fourth story stream becomes prominent in Chapter 7, where I theorize two concepts: decolonizing and knowing with historical consciousness. I suggest the concept of decolonizing in the Nunavut school system may be understood as: *deliberately, inclusively and continuously reflecting on stories that have shaped education and schools in Nunavut; and, using such stories in envisioning and acting on decisions about schools that are sourced from Nunavut communities, with particular attention to Indigenous self-determination.* In order to participate in decolonizing, one must use local stories from the past in order to create different relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the present and future.

Therefore, I suggest that knowing with historical consciousness in the Nunavut school system may be understood as: *drawing on knowledge from or about the past in an encounter that changes the self in the present; recognizing that understanding is historically conditioned; and, knowing understanding is limited by conditions that will pass away with time, or may not be*

valid in another place. This concept helps to address the ways a person or society understands the present and projects expectations for the future, with reference to the past. I suggest it is important to remember that knowledge is contingent, or shaped by time. We are historical beings situated in a place and caught in the river of time, which constantly moves ahead.

Through this inquiry I found that the sustainability of change in a cross-cultural, decolonizing context is elusive and challenging. Educational leaders, educators and schools are unlikely to reach a stable moment of fulfillment wherein they hold *sufficient* historical consciousness, or the present reality *is* decolonized. Even when the river is frozen in winter, it responds to changes in weather, temperature, sunlight, and other conditions. It is unsettling to acknowledge that time constantly slips away, and that what was done before may no longer be relevant or possible. However, knowing with historical consciousness may serve educators by illustrating that knowledge is always conditioned by place, time, identity, and relationships; therefore, it can, and must, be remade. I argue that this warrants practices of continuously and recursively revisiting knowledge about what is ethical and desirable in schools, to support culturally responsive educational change.

Chapter 1: Beginning to Look for Stories from the Past

1.1 Introduction

After much thought about the relationship between history and education, I am still curious. I wonder: How can the history of education be used to address present educational concerns? More specifically, I am interested in how teachers and leaders involved in educational change bring forward and mobilize knowledge from and about the past, particularly when such actions are undertaken for decolonizing purposes. I understand the phrase “knowledge from and about the past” as comprising traditional knowledge, experiential knowledge, and historical knowledge that may come from various sources: both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. Despite the term’s length I view it as useful in attempting to avoid categorizing such knowledge at the outset of my study, for example as only “history” or only “memory” (which are hardly simple categories). I am inquiring into what kinds of knowledge are called on, where evidence of that knowledge can be found in the texts of education systems—such as documents containing recommended practices—and how educators put such knowledge to use. If knowledge from and about the past is brought forward by an individual to inform present and future policies, programs or recommended ways of being together in schools, it suggests that individuals somehow recognize themselves as being in the flow of time. What does it mean to recognize one’s position in the flow of time when working in and for school change? What warrants lead to consideration of the past and what opportunities or challenges follow from such consideration? It may be that educators demonstrate consciousness of the past, including that the present is shaped by the conditions of the past and that what we know now is limited by the fact that time and space continue to change. In trying to learn about, and participate in, an educational movement such as decolonizing Nunavut schools, how might engagement with historical consciousness have a role in relation to understanding place, culture and education?

I am interested in the perspectives of long-term Northern educators, those who have been engaged in witnessing school change, and may offer insights into how and why such change has come about. Long-term experience is usually also linked to sustained influence, and higher levels of responsibility or input into policy, practice and decision-making. What knowledge do these individuals hold and use in their work, that educators who trained or arrived more recently have less access to? These educators are often, though not exclusively, non-Indigenous. What processes of individual learning, change and consciousness of the past have non-Indigenous

educators participated in to become leaders who are responsive to the decolonizing aspirations of Inuit?

To engage with the concepts and questions of historical consciousness, educational change towards decolonizing, and the role of non-Indigenous educators in Indigenous contexts, I explore the recent history of Nunavut education. The focus will largely be on the 15 years since Nunavut was created—but my research will also delve farther back into the past, seeking the roots of ideas and stories in circulation now.

Metaphorically, this dissertation is made up of a river with four story streams, as described in the section entitled “Structure of the Study” at the end of this chapter, as well as in Chapter 2. Briefly then, the first stream follows consideration of the recent history of education in Nunavut, and what changes have been envisioned, developed and implemented. The second stream is made up of the experiences and memories of a long-term Nunavut educational leader, Cathy McGregor, who was involved in and responsible for a great deal of this change work. In particular I explore how she understands the changes—and warrants for the changes—based on the remembered past and imagined future. I feature my own research journey as the third story stream. This research is more than a vicarious or strictly academic curiosity, but rather an inquiry deeper into questions, initiatives, stories, relationships and places that have shaped my life, my family’s lives, and the lives of many people I know. These three story streams extend to circulate around new sites that have been important since the creation of Nunavut: Elder employment, curriculum change, and leadership development. I work towards describing how such initiatives draw on new Nunavut-based philosophies for education, and bring Inuit knowledge, values and principles into a public school system that has roots in Eurocentric and assimilationist philosophies and structures. Finally, I come to the fourth story stream. I explore how and why knowledge from and about the past is figured in these initiatives, with the intent to identify how educators in Nunavut may engage with such knowledge in decolonizing learning processes. My purpose is to show how these stories may help to understand decolonizing and historical consciousness in the context of Nunavut education.

1.2 Context for the Study

This inquiry is shaped by the Nunavut public school system, administered by the Nunavut Department of Education (NDE), and the change it has recently undergone. Consider these three quotations:

It is the responsibility of the Minister, the district education authorities and the education staff to ensure that Inuit societal values and the principles and concepts of Inuit

Qaujimaqatugangit are incorporated throughout, and fostered by, the public education system. (GN, 2008, [Education Act Section 1(3)])

Participants [principal training candidates] will explore their own personal cultural background and how that unconsciously affects their assumptions about teaching. Moving from the personal to the societal level, this theme's sessions will review the history of education in Nunavut and the implications of that history for schooling today. Participants will gain an understanding of the effects on schooling of living in a bilingual/multicultural context struggling to overcome colonialism. This historical analysis will explore reasons why schools need to be transformed to reflect Inuit culture and to meet the needs of modern Nunavummiut. (NDE, 2010b, [Educational Leadership Program Instructional Objectives])

Students will learn about the unequal relationship that developed between Inuit and the newcomers, and will reflect on that relationship in today's context. They will be introduced to many examples of challenges Inuit had during the transitional times, which led to Inuit wanting a land claim. A large component of this unit will be to engage the community and to learn from people in the students' communities who experienced these transitions. (NDE, 2009, [grade 10 social studies unit])

These excerpts demonstrate some of the ways the public education system is called on to reflect and respond to the Inuit population of Nunavut. Such calls come from those who make laws (elected representatives of the Inuit-majority public), those who make policies (public servants), and those who design, develop and implement programs for staff and students (education staff). Nunavut educators, and all those involved in overseeing schools (including school, district, regional and departmental staff), were and are being asked to "ensure" they are fostering a system that incorporates Inuit ways of knowing, being, and doing. Educators are expected to become culturally responsive in teaching and learning. This has not always been the case in the history of Arctic schooling, as I have documented elsewhere (H. E. McGregor, 2010). These calls imply change.

Many questions are raised in reviewing these quotations; questions that might occur to new teachers and school staff expected to be responsible for what is contained in them. What is Inuit Qaujimaqatugangit (and how do you learn it)? Who are Nunavummiut?¹ What were the "transitional times"? What logic asks Inuit and non-Inuit principal candidates to explore their personal cultural background to become administrators? Do Inuit and non-Inuit educators have to consider their personal background too? What does a (re)conceptualized school system that is responsive to Inuit knowledge and Inuit communities look, sound and feel like? How has it been

¹ Nunavummiut are the residents of Nunavut, who include Inuit and people of other ancestries.

defined differently (and in what detail) through legislation and policy, and on what values, principles, knowledge and intentions is that difference drawing? How have those involved in Nunavut education imagined a school system to be different and then proceeded to implement it? Why do decision-makers view it as important for principals, teachers, and students to learn about the past? How do the new students, teachers, parents, administrators, government staff and other participants in the education system discover and practice what it is to teach and learn differently in this context? How do non-Inuit and Inuit participants need to be supported differently, and how do they collaborate in this shared work? What policies, processes, programs and pedagogies support systemic and individual change while centring Inuit knowledge, values and visions for education? These are large questions and they cannot all be answered through this research, but they give a sense of the issues and considerations that comprise the landscape of what I am calling decolonizing around my research.

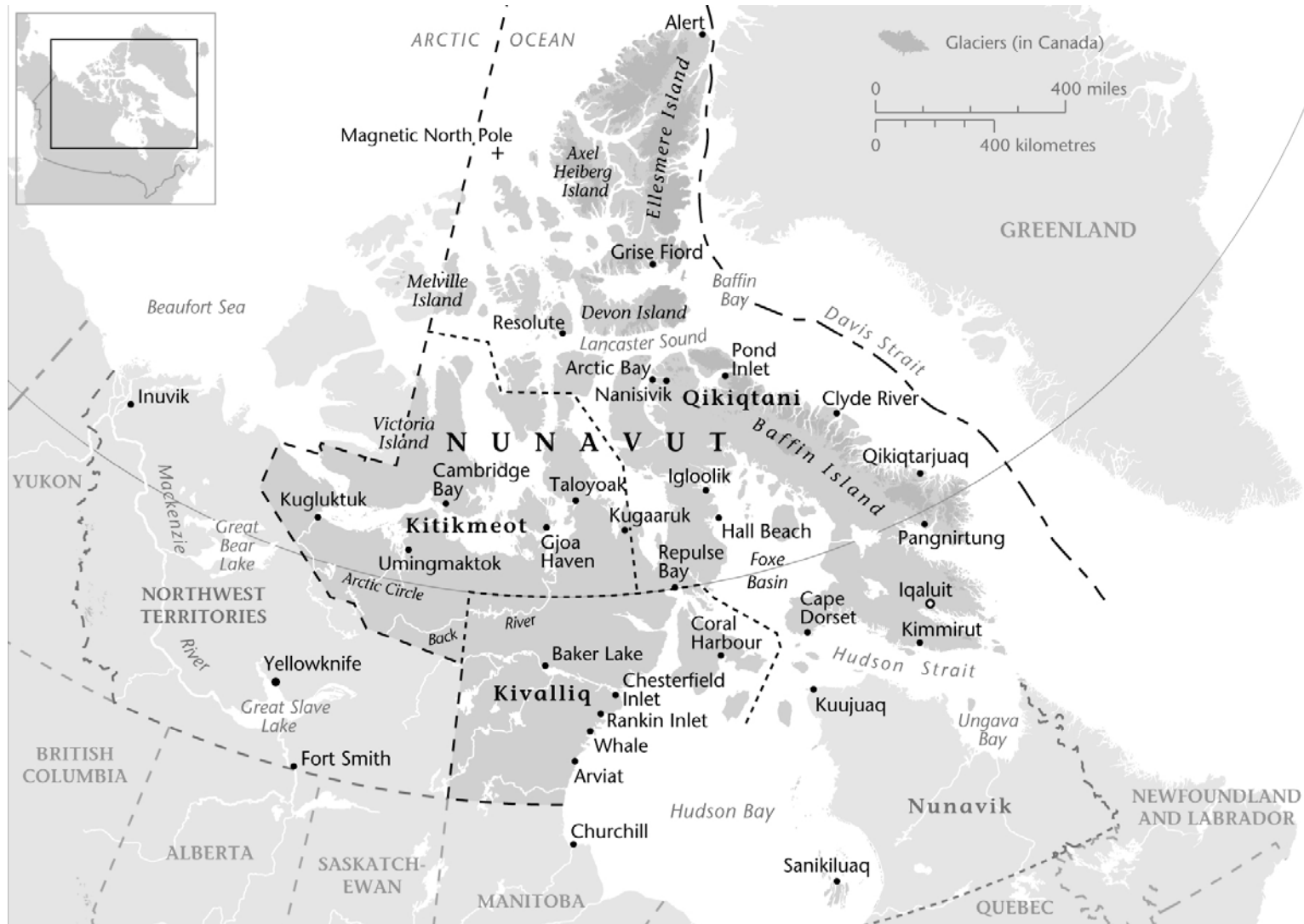
The Nunavut school system is diverse and complicated. In some ways schools appear to have the trappings of any other school in Canada, and are generally well funded. In many other ways they differ significantly from “the south,” and each school is different from others. The challenges are many, but so are the opportunities for staff and students who take initiative and invest the energy usually necessary to self-organize. In the year 2009-10 the Nunavut school system consisted of 43 schools in 25 fly-in communities, with 651 staff serving 9,038 students from kindergarten to grade 12 (NDE, 2012). By contrast, the Vancouver School District has 110 schools serving 54,000 K-12 students (which is more than 1.5 times the entire population of Nunavut). Fifteen Nunavut communities have one K-12 school, several communities have two schools—usually an elementary for grades K-6 and a high school for grades 7-12, and in Arviat and Rankin Inlet there is a middle school as well. Iqaluit is the exception to this, with two elementary schools, a middle school, a high school and a French school run by the Commission scolaire francophone du Nunavut.² Approximately 97% of Nunavut students are Inuit (NDE, 2012). The student graduation rate, using the federally recommended calculation (percentage of graduates to the total population of people who are 17 and 18 years old), has increased from 22.8% in 2000-01 to 37% in 2011-12 (NDE, 2013b).

² Created in 2004 and reinforced through legislation in 2008, the Commission scolaire francophone du Nunavut (CSFN) manages Ecole des trois soleils (opened in 2001) in Iqaluit serving 50 eligible students in grades K-9. The CSFN is supported by a bureau of French Services within the NDE, as well as financial contributions from the federal government.

Each school reports to a municipally elected district education authority (DEA), which corresponds to each Nunavut community. The communities/DEAs are organized into Nunavut's three administrative regions: the Qikiqtani in the east, Kivalliq in the centre and Kitikmeot in the west, as indicated on the map in Figure 1. Three regional school operations (RSOs) offices of the NDE—located in Pond Inlet, Baker Lake, and Kugluktuk respectively—coordinate direct supervision and support for schools. The NDE also employs staff through the Curriculum & School Services division (C&SS) in several decentralized government offices as well as headquarters in Iqaluit. The annual budget for all components of K-12 programs in Nunavut was \$158,333,152 in 2012, making it one of the largest administrative bodies of the entire Nunavut government (NDE, 2013b, p. 14). The average Nunavut student attendance rate, taking into account all grade levels, hovers around 70% (NDE, 2013b).

Figure 1 Map of Nunavut

Reprinted with permission from UBC Press. Adapted from Atlas Canada by Cartographer Eric Leinberger.



In terms of eliciting a sense of Nunavut schools and the NDE, this context section has provided only a brief introduction. I have written elsewhere more specifically about high school programs in four Nunavut communities, including some historical background, student composition, graduation and attendance data, staff composition and retention, and other special considerations in understanding the successes, challenges, and variables faced by educators and students (H. E. McGregor, 2011; 2013a; 2013b). These case studies, along with my other previous work, the section “Brief History of the Topic” in Chapter 2, and the stories I share in Chapters 3 through 7 following, are intended to provide more insight into the unique opportunities and limitations of the school system in Nunavut.

My contribution in this complex scenario is to focus the lens on the past—that “stuff” which makes up histories and memories, and how it is represented through words, stories and images within the school system. I do so through some sources and evidence that are publicly available (if one knew to look or ask for them), whereas other sources—such as Cathy’s stories—I know of and can access as a result of my family and experience. My intention is to make a contribution to the field of educational research in Nunavut that draws on the unique conditions I bring to the context.

1.3 Key Theoretical Concepts and Use of Literature

Educational research in Nunavut requires the development of working definitions of key concepts that make sense in accordance with particularities of place and culture, and that relate to Inuit knowledge and values. I continue to work towards developing and reconsidering such situated understandings of key concepts (although, only in English) through the processes of reading, listening and conducting research. Researchers are expected by the academy to provide citations and, to differing degrees, demonstrate the influences on their understanding of language and concepts. By showing that one understands how ideas have developed, the use of key theoretical concepts better facilitates engagement with scholarly conversations about similar topics in other jurisdictions, so as to extend what one finds towards readers with similar questions elsewhere. On the other hand, language and concepts that work well in scholarly conversations may not be the same as those that work well in the community or institution in which one works/researches. This necessitates compromise and translation on the part of the researcher.

Whereas I am cautious about transplanting theories from other contexts into Nunavut, I know that I came to this research with ideas about what words and concepts mean. My

understandings have been informed by my academic lineage—by the teachers from whom I have learned, the research they tend to privilege, the people from whom my teachers learned, and the access I have to particular collections (such as sources in English, but not French). I have also made choices, generally, to focus on literature that is based in North America, relating to Indigenous contexts, and coming from scholars I view as participating in culturally and politically proximate societies. I do so because of the legacy of collusion between Eurocentric ideas and imperialism, that has privileged the circulation of such ideas over local ways of making meaning, perpetuated through the knowledge economy (L. T. Smith, 2008). Exceptions to these choices will be explained in more detail.

To provide clarity at the outset of this inquiry, I briefly outline my use of the following key concepts here, followed by more theoretical and contextual detail throughout the dissertation, especially in Chapter 7.

1.3.1 Culturally Responsive, Cross-cultural

Culture refers to shared norms, values, beliefs, expectations and conventional actions amongst individuals in a group that create a sense of collectivity and belonging, or distinguish one group from another (Aikenhead & Jegede, 1999; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008). Participation in culture(s) is negotiated between individual agency and what is made possible within social structures. The tendency toward stability or fluidity in any given culture, whether or not cultural characteristics are implicit or explicit, degrees of permissibility, and the criteria for inclusion, are all variable and contested, as is nearly every other aspect of the concept and what it represents.

Theory regarding culturally responsive schooling (CRS) for Indigenous youth grows out of intellectual roots in educational anthropology, multicultural education, and educational psychology, as a “promising strategy” advocated by scholars and more recently by Indigenous communities (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008). CRS theory attributes lower educational attainments by minority students to the difference, and frequent incongruence, between their home culture and school culture (Vinz, 2009). It also highlights the history of costs to Indigenous students through the Eurocentric expectations associated with school culture, such as exclusive use of European languages and disruption of cultural practices. CRS theory holds that educators must respond to the heritage language and culture of the community of students participating in schooling, by extension adapting the qualities and practices of school activities (i.e. curriculum,

pedagogy, etc.) so that students can achieve both “educational and cultural well being” (ANKN, 1998; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008).³ Greater compatibility between students and school programs in terms of cultural norms and expectations is expected to result in better outcomes for individuals and schools. CRS standards advance an approach to education that complements the jurisdictional education standards, but extends beyond notions of multiculturalism, diversity, or fragmented and superficial cultural add-ons:

By shifting the focus in the curriculum from teaching/learning *about* cultural heritage as another subject to teaching/learning *through* the local culture as a foundation for all education, it is intended that all forms of knowledge, ways of knowing and world views be recognized as equally valid, adaptable and complementary to one another in mutually beneficial ways. (ANKN, 1998, p.3, emphasis in original)

Cultural responsiveness includes consideration of, and adaptation to, the local context. Curricular content and pedagogical approaches should be informed by “knowledge, norms, values, resources and epistemologies of local communities,” ensuring they are “viewed as legitimate and valuable and intimately integrated into schools” (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008, p. 981). CRS can be employed in meeting the needs of any minoritized youth, however, it fits more appropriately in places where Indigenous youth are local to their heritage lands and their communities have been subject to colonization (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008, p. 946). Culturally responsive educators, among other qualities, utilize cultural competence related to the community in which they are working, and recognize that a one-size-fits-all approach is not sufficient (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008, p.948; Vinz, 2009).

It is impossible to characterize fully what makes a school or educator culturally responsive because of the degree of fluidity and situatedness in notions of culture, the influence of language, how schooling is administered, what signifies responsiveness locally, the composition of communities, and the relationship between schools and other levels of educational institutions. In this dissertation I use the term to refer to shared expectations that have been articulated for Nunavut schools through legislation, policy, training programs and approved materials, laying out how educators should adapt schooling to Inuit culture. While CRS theory or the history of its use may carry with it some limitations from use in other contexts (i.e. perpetuating the view that Indigenous culture hampers the ability to be successful in supposedly

³ The Alaska Native Knowledge Network (ANKN) has taken a leading role in defining CRS standards for schools, school boards, teacher preparation, cross-cultural orientation, nurturing healthy youth and libraries. The resources they have produced have been influential in Indigenous communities across North America and beyond.

culturally-neutral schools), it is the best fit with the expectations articulated for Nunavut schools. NDE documents refer to developing schools on the foundation of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (as discussed below)—which is understood to be “beliefs, laws, principles, values, skills, knowledge and attitudes” (NDE, 2007, p. 20). This corresponds closely to culturally responsive language above.

I use the term cross-cultural to refer to the encounter, exchange and dialectic between two or more differing cultures in one space. This may implicate different norms, traditions, boundaries, explicit references and unspoken understandings (Dulabaum, 2009). We all participate in “border crossings” between cultures, and between micro-cultures, each time we encounter a new social community, such as the difference between the way one behaves at work and home (Aikenhead & Jegede, 1999). However, in particular contexts and depending on the degree of exposure, the experience of a cultural border crossing may land anywhere on the spectrum between smooth and impossible, accompanied by an equally variable degree of intellectual, emotional, spiritual and physical impact (Aikenhead & Jegede, 1999). To learn in and navigate a cross-cultural context, individuals usually need to recognize: 1) the significance of culture and self-awareness of one’s own cultural scripts; 2) an appreciation for cultural difference and understanding that difference can lead to emotional responses and conflict; 3) translating knowledge of cultural difference into practices and skills that accommodate it; and, 4) recognition of societal and structural patterns that are informed by culture, and how they may differently impact on individuals belonging to different cultures (Dulabaum, 2009).

1.3.2 The Past, Memory, history, History, Historical Consciousness

The past is everything that ever happened, all events in time and space that have occurred. Memory is what is known, retained, shared, or practiced by individuals from experience in the past or the experiences of others. The sharing and practicing of memory need not reference traces or evidence in the way that other forms of documenting the past do. History (small h) is the meaning attached to traces from and of the past, and articulated in language through narratives about how, why, when and where humans and other beings have come to be in the present. The processes of history, such as how claims are made with reference to evidence, are deeply cultural and often relational.

History (capital H) is the academic discipline that studies interpretations of evidence about and from the past, based on practices in the scholarly community that are largely drawn from Western, Enlightenment-oriented and Eurocentric knowledge systems. While it may appear

that the practices of History and historiography are agreed upon by scholars within the discipline, contestation within and across disciplines is always present and due careful consideration. For the most part, History need not explicitly reference, nor account for, the present and future in engaging with the past.

Historical consciousness usually refers to the understandings of the past (including memory) held by individuals, how they communicate that knowledge in groups, and how they explain the present and future in relation to their knowledge about the past.

In Canada, historical consciousness has been linked to sites and practices of public memory, school-based history education, citizenship, and democratic participation in addressing hard questions about the past, present and future (McLean, Rogers, Grant, Law, & Hunter, 2014; Sandwell, 2006; Seixas, 2004). Connections between historical consciousness and critical pedagogy, as well as ethical considerations of remembrance, testimony and historical injustice have also been drawn (Regan, 2010; R. I. Simon, 2004). Differences in how some Indigenous societies understand historical consciousness are being identified (Carlson, 2010; Marker, 2011). Drawing on Gadamer (1975/2013) from the hermeneutic tradition, I am interested in historical consciousness as it shapes knowledge practices; coming to understand the present with reference to the past, and in so doing, requiring a high degree of self-reflexivity (i.e. awareness of one's preconceptions, the tradition within which one understands, and limitations of truly knowing the other). "Historical consciousness as an event" (Gadamer, 1975/2013) produces a changed understanding of oneself. It is also characterized by the paradox of historicity—that the present is always slipping into the past. I view these aspects of knowing with historical consciousness as less evident in Canadian scholarship to date, and potentially generative in relation to theories dealing with decolonizing schools. I suspend further detailed discussion of this term until Chapter 7, so as to bring it in conversation with the stories I collect about and from Nunavut.

1.3.3 Decolonizing

My understanding of decolonizing is premised on recognizing that Indigenous peoples from lands that are now called Canada have a relationship to those lands, as with the beings within them, that is preeminent in accordance with their length of stewardship (Marker, 2006).⁴

⁴ Another useful explanation of Indigenous peoples is, "those who have inhabited lands before colonization or annexation; have maintained distinct, nuanced cultural and social organizing principles; and claim a nationhood status. Indigenous peoples are both self-identified and recognized by members of their community" (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008, p. 944).

Indigenous peoples' (different) ways of living with their places, in the past and present, matter in terms of their sovereignty⁵ and sustainability of their knowledges/knowledge systems,⁶ which were (differently) interrupted through colonization. Indigenous place-based lifeways also matter in relation to the ongoing quality of life of many human and non-human beings.

Colonization is constituted by processes of gaining control over land, relating to that which is held on or in that land (plants, minerals, animals, knowledge), and the people who held it before, as resources to be reformed or extracted. Decolonizing begins with the process of coming to know the structures (i.e., language, state institutions, access to knowledge) and experiences of colonization (Smith, 1999/2012). It is the process of recognizing the outcomes of such structures for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the past, as well as implications reverberating from the past or ongoing in the present (Donald, 2012). Given the diversity of experiences with colonization, this process usually begins by engaging with understanding one's local region, however that has been historically and politically defined (Sium, Desai, & Ritskes, 2012). This learning is directed toward engaging in a multiplicity of activities to disrupt the colonizing structures and experiences that serve to reinscribe Eurocentrism on an individual and collective level (Battiste, 2013).

Canadian education systems have systemically excluded (and sometimes explicitly attacked) Indigenous culture, values, knowledge, language and ways of being, thereby excluding, marginalizing, reforming, and harming Indigenous learners, for nearly the entire history of education. Decolonizing should serve to overcome divisions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada, divisions produced by historical legacies such as differentiating people who are "civilized" and those who are "not" (Donald, 2011). It should re-centre Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing, and advance Indigenous self-determination in the present and future. I hold that it is the responsibility of Settlers, the descendants of Settlers, and the beneficiaries of the present Settler colonial state, to recognize and implement agreements

⁵ See Fine, Tuck & Zeller-Berkman (2008) for a well-articulated discussion of Indigenous sovereignty and social justice/democracy.

⁶ Knowledges and knowledge systems nurtured by different Indigenous peoples often have common features and values, but are not homogenous or fully accessible outside deep training and experience with a particular place and people. Castagno & Brayboy (2008), drawing from a range of Indigenous scholarship, list some of these common features as: focus on communities; sense of relationality; notions of responsibility to self and community; rootedness in place; responsible use of power; holistic nature of knowledge; and, use of knowledge for benefit of others (p. 951-952). See also Stewart-Harawira (2005) for an excellent summary of commonalities in Indigenous ontologies. In some sections of this dissertation I intentionally use the plural term "knowledges" to signal this multiplicity and undercut the hegemony of Western epistemic dominance (Kerr, 2014), following common use of the term by Indigenous (and other) scholars.

made through treaties and land claims, and continuously participate in renewing relationships with Indigenous peoples through decolonizing (Regan, 2010).

1.3.4 Eurocentrism and Eurocentric Knowledge

Cultural responsiveness and decolonizing are called for in Nunavut because of the persistence of Eurocentrism and Eurocentric knowledge that have accompanied colonization. These are found within the school system, and more broadly in Nunavut and Canadian society. I understand Eurocentrism as a range of manifestations emanating from the belief that ways of knowing, being and doing developed by European peoples are valuable, advanced, and therefore desirable, beyond those of other peoples and places. The problem with such knowledge is not simply that it may be derived elsewhere, but its “centric” qualities—that Eurocentric knowledge is usually not understood as culturally- and historically-shaped, but rather objective and neutral. Blaut (1993) points out that Eurocentrism exceeds “an attitude” that can be easily corrected—it is powerful because of the presupposition that European beliefs reflect empirical reality, science, scholarship and “facts” (p. 9). I have heard Dwayne Donald (2014) describe this same feature by referring to such knowledge as “stories that refuse to be told as stories.” In this sense, Eurocentrism and Eurocentric knowledge displaces Indigenous knowledges, positioning them outside knowledge that is valuable (at best) or outside knowledge altogether (at worst).

Jeannie Kerr (2013) makes an important point that all European-derived knowledge does not operate with the same “centric” qualities, nor produce the same effects. For example, she distinguishes between that which perpetuates modernist, Enlightenment epistemologies from critical/post-structural intellectual traditions (Kerr, 2013, p. 130). Another example is the work people of European descent are doing in Canada today to contribute to theorizing decolonizing and unsettling (i.e. Celia Haig-Brown, Paulette Regan, Jeannie Kerr). It is important to avoid painting knowledge held or advanced by European peoples as the same, but rather to look at situated manifestations. Indeed I point out (as Kerr does) that Gadamer’s work—though obviously European in geographic and historic origin—has an important non-Enlightenment orientation.

In the context of Nunavut, what is of concern is knowledge derived from other places and peoples with hegemonic properties, imposed in ways that silence and marginalize Inuit, and their language and knowledge. Generally this can be equated with Eurocentrism and Eurocentric knowledge for the purposes of this study. Of course, such impositions may be advanced by anyone, of any ancestry. Calling for outcomes like “21st century skills,” “a modern education

system,” “graduation on par with the rest of Canada,” can—and do—carry Eurocentric knowledge with them, and I have heard these things called for by Inuit. My view does not preclude cases where there is importance and relevance to European-derived knowledge, cases in which it should be given primacy. What concerns me is when this use occurs without conscious consideration for how such clashes impact on Inuit, IQ, Inuit language, and Nunavut as a place, or without Inuit participation in decision-making. I am a researcher descended from European/Settler ancestry, and I cannot avoid using such knowledge and theories in my own research. This carries with it the risk of perpetuating Eurocentrism, even as I attempt to bring forward greater consciousness of Inuit ways of knowing, being and doing. This is an important conversation to expand in the context of Nunavut schools.

1.3.5 Inuit Knowledge and Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit

To refer to knowledge that emerges from place, culture, tradition, language and relationships that are indigenous to Nunavut, I variously use the terms Inuit knowledge, Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ), or sometimes Inuit ways of knowing, being and doing. IQ is defined by Elders as: “knowledge that has been passed on to [Inuit] by our ancestors, things that we have always known, things crucial to our survival” (Bennett & Rowley, 2004, p. xxi), or that which “embraces all aspects of traditional Inuit culture, including values, world-view, language, social organization, knowledge, life skills, perceptions and expectations” (Nunavut Social Development Council, 1998). IQ as a “theory of knowledge,” has been outlined by Jaypetee Arnakak (2000), an Inuit intellectual working closely with Elders, as:

- a set of teachings on practical truisms about society, human nature and experience passed on orally (traditionally) from one generation to the next;
- the knowledge of country that covers weather patterns, seasonal cycles, ecology, wildlife, use of resources, and the inter-relationships of these elements; and,
- holistic, dynamic and cumulative in its approach to knowledge, teaching and learning—that one learns best by observing, doing and experiencing.

The term IQ has been subject to oversimplification and institutionalization in Nunavut, which makes it important for me to reference (as my study examines knowledge within institutions), but also important for me to use carefully, given the differing notions of what IQ

entails (sometimes explained specifically and other times entirely unclear).⁷ There is the added complication of differences in language and epistemology that makes translation of IQ challenging.

I use these terms to include that which is advanced by Inuit who have a long and deep education in the language and culture that existed before, and persisted within and against, colonization of the Arctic, regardless of whether or not components of this have been documented or described “officially.” It is important to clarify that while I view knowledge in the present to be shaped by the past, I do not equate IQ and Inuit knowledge directly, or necessarily, with knowledge from and about the past. Not all components of IQ are knowledge from and about the past, and even if knowledge comes from the past, it is not excluded from being vital in the present. Likewise, when I look for knowledge from and about the past, I identify sources that are non-Indigenous as well: non-Indigenous teacher experiences, historical narratives and even Eurocentric knowledge.

1.4 Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this research is to draw on evidence including Nunavut government-developed policy and program documents, interviews with a long-term educational leader, and my own experience and knowledge from the past to understand decolonizing and historical consciousness in this context. More specifically, I look for how the past figures in: the career biography of an educational leader; processes for documentation of Elder knowledge to develop educational philosophy, policy and curriculum (Elders Advisory Committee [EAC], curriculum development projects, foundation documents); curriculum and program development with a focus on integration of IQ; and, designing and delivering a leadership program for principals in accordance with Nunavut educational policy (Educational Leadership Program [ELP]).

The research questions are as follows:

1. What are some policy, curriculum and leadership initiatives in the Nunavut school system since 2000 that can be considered new decolonizing efforts?
2. What sources and kinds of knowledge led to, and informed, recent decolonizing initiatives in the Nunavut school system?
3. How and why is knowledge from and about the past brought forward by Nunavut educators in initiatives intended to facilitate change to the school system?

⁷ McGrath (2011) provides a cogent critique of IQ as it is used by the GN.

4. How might an understanding of knowledge held by long-term educators in Nunavut by extension help new educators understand what is asked of them in participating in educational change towards decolonizing?

How I arrived at these research questions and their design in relation to my methodology and sources is further explained in sections 2.6.1 and 2.6.2.

1.5 Rationale

The national Inuit representative organization Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) has identified that a significant challenge to improving Inuit education is the “comparatively small amount of performance monitoring data and evidence-based research that exists to illustrate trends or document and disseminate promising practices” (2011a, p. 97). To accompany and inform ITK’s national strategy on Inuit education, several literature reviews and annotated bibliographies were commissioned on topics including Building Post-Secondary Success; Inuit-Centred Curriculum and Teaching Approaches; Bilingual Education; Capacity Building in Inuit Education; Mobilizing Parents; and, Early Childhood Education (ITK, 2011b). While providing useful overviews, these documents are now several years old (completed in March 2010), and they generalize amongst all Inuit jurisdictions in Canada—jurisdictions that have significant political and administrative, amongst other, differences. In some cases the reviews cover scholarship dealing with primarily Aboriginal/Indigenous education generally, do not include unpublished materials such as government-led research projects, and references to graduate student research are minimal. Nevertheless they convey the scarcity of research on education in Nunavut at any level.

Abele & Graham (2010), in the abovementioned literature review of Inuit-centered curriculum, found that in research on Inuit education, “[t]here is little thought given to appropriate roles and relationships between schools, community and territorial/provincial governments in setting education policy, developing curriculum and in teacher training, recruitment and retention” (p. 8). They go on to point out, “Looking further at the administration of education in Inuit Nunaat [homelands], we see no analysis of the impact of specific events and decisions on the spread and entrenchment of Inuit-focused curriculum and teaching” (Abele & Graham, 2010, p. 8). I too find that most research on Nunavut education takes a relatively narrow approach in terms of subject matter, time and geographic scope, representation of Inuit perspectives, levels of complexity in navigating the cross-cultural context, and insights that are as useful to a Nunavut audience as to other (i.e. academic) audiences.

I am concerned that education research in Nunavut does not place enough emphasis on historically-situated, place-based, comparative, long-term or appreciative (strengths-based) views of education. Indigenous (including Inuit) perspectives and research methodologies are not featured to the extent that I see in education research in other jurisdictions. Education research has reinforced simplistic binaries (ie. unrealistic calls for replacing all non-Inuit educators with Inuit educators, without considering the range of factors contributing to teacher recruitment and retention). It tends to reinscribe well-known observations and problems that emerge from itinerant teachers' short-term perspectives. Deficit and crisis framing is dominant in the media (Hammer, 2012), through some scholarship (Rasmussen, 2009), as well as in federal reviews (T. R. Berger, 2006). This emphasis has not been counter-balanced with consideration of the time- and resource-intensive start-from-scratch processes that have been underway for decades, and have resulted in change.

O'Donoghue, Tompkins, McAuley, Metuq, Qanatsiaq & Fortes (2005), informed by a consultation with long-term Inuit and non-Inuit educators, recommend that a history of Inuit education be written, "so all new educators, including younger Inuit, would realise that a great deal of positive growth had already occurred and the directions for education in Nunavut have a successful past" (p. 12). They explain that institutional memory is lost when individuals leave their positions and valuable progress is delayed when new educators reinvent practices that were already established, or implement practices they bring from southern Canada. These gaps have informed my approach to research. I have described the history of education, including Inuit conceptions of education and the introduction and adaptations of the school system in the eastern Arctic until 1999 (H. E. McGregor, 2010). I have also documented the development of the *Nunavut Education Act*, its links with policy change in the past, and the extent to which it represents a significant precedent (H. E. McGregor, 2012a). Most recently, I have pursued inquiries that examine the behind-the-scenes, foundation-building curriculum and program development underway through the Department of Education (H. E. McGregor, 2012b).

I construct the rationale for this research by outlining the new contributions I expect to make in terms of content, theory, methodology and practice.

1.5.1 Content

This research combines the personal narratives and memories of a long-term Nunavut educational leader with a study of school system documents. Cathy's career biography offers stories from her 40 years of public service, holding different responsibilities within two territorial

departments of education—NWT and Nunavut. I draw from her stories about Elders, curriculum change, and leadership development to study how and why work was done. This leads to consideration of how knowledge from and about the past can be brought into public education systems with decolonizing aims. Through the interviews with Cathy we discuss decolonizing and historical consciousness, linking them with gaining perspective on educational change in Nunavut.

Documentation of processes underway between 2000 and 2013 is needed to address the challenges associated with the fast pace and high degree of change seen in the education system since the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement* in 1993 and creation of the Nunavut territorial government after 1999. The high turnover of government and education staff (both Inuit and non-Inuit) and high vacancy rates in existing government positions result in tenuous institutional memory. I understand institutional memory as slightly different from educational history, and usually refer to it here in terms of operations at the administrative level higher than schools (regional or territorial administrative bodies). Institutional memory is specifically focused on administrative ways of operating, decision-making authorities, precedents and processes (i.e. type and frequency of consultation with stakeholders), logic and rationale for established directions, and vision or objectives shared by staff. There is an ongoing need to document change processes and goals in order to continuously bring people into a common conversation about the past, present and future of education in Nunavut. There is also a need to provide supports that orient, inform and sensitize teachers to the philosophy, culture, context, challenges and opportunities of schooling. Communities are highly dispersed and school staff can easily become insulated and isolated from territorial dialogue. Changes in policy at headquarters must be accompanied by ongoing supports for changes by and amongst individual educators in schools. Documenting the why and how of change may be part of pursuing sustainability.

The education system is a crucial vehicle through which the future of Nunavut is determined and shaped because all youth are expected to pass through it. It provides entry into employment and, ultimately, realization of the land claim agreement (T. R. Berger, 2006). Unfortunately, the importance of the school system frequently comes to public attention in a negative light. The Nunavut public often perceive the education system to be in crisis and to be failing youth (Auditor General of Canada, 2013; North Sky Consulting Group, 2009b), without recognition for the challenging work that is occurring to identify and build from scratch philosophies of education, knowledge sources, skill acquisition criteria, assessments and pedagogies based on Inuit knowledge. Some have argued that the education system has not

changed enough, or at all (Rasmussen, 2009). Inuit have called for more research into education so as to improve its quality and outcomes (ITK, 2013). More recently, emphasis has been placed on the need to raise standards, standardize instruction and assessments, offer job skills training, and ensure post-secondary preparedness (Varga, 2014). Between these divergent demands, some researchers focus on exposing colonizing influences (i.e. Eurocentric assumptions in school curricula/programs and relationships between non-Inuit teachers and Inuit students) as ongoing (P. Berger, Epp & Moller, 2006; P. Berger, 2009), whereas others highlight processes of decolonizing (Aylward, 2012; Tompkins, McAuley & Walton, 2009). I consider the evidence offered by a long-term educational leader who has negotiated these demands, and how she understands schools to have changed, or not changed.

Lastly, there are few other public institutions that have a mandate to support and make accessible heritage, history and collective memory in Nunavut. The schools remain the primary vehicle for public history and history education. This research serves to mobilize the stories of a long-term educational leader, including how she came to draw on local knowledge, local decisions, and local histories, to advance decolonizing initiatives within the NDE.

1.5.2 Theory

In the literature concerning processes of decolonizing in relation to education, responsibility is variously attributed to institutions and individuals. For example, the editors of *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society* pose a critical question, “Is it possible to decolonize institutions of colonial power (such as the academy, government, etc.), but, further, is it possible to decolonize *through* them?” (Sium et al., 2012, p. iv). Paulette Regan (2010) argues, “Real socio-political change will not come from hegemonic institutional and bureaucratic structures within these societies [where decolonization is yet to occur]. If it is to happen, it will come from those people who are willing to take up, again and again, the struggle of living in truth” (p. 215). In Nunavut, government institutions including the school system have obligations “concerning Inuit self-reliance, Inuit cultural and social well-being and Inuit participation in the government and economic opportunities of their homeland, including participation in the public service to a representative level” (GN, 2008, p.1). It is now the responsibility of government and schools (institutions) and education staff (individuals) to engage in the complex work of decolonizing education and decolonizing through education. This research makes a theoretical contribution by considering how decolonizing in Nunavut schools can be understood. That is,

how the work of an institution that has served colonizing aims in the past, can now participate in decolonizing aims. What does this ask of educators?

The decolonizing space of engagement involves analysis of the past in relation to the present and future. Current conditions of inequity for Indigenous peoples are embedded with past politics, policies and structures that have ongoing effects, and risk the possibility of ongoing colonizing. Therefore, this research contributes to theorizing historical consciousness in cross-cultural and Indigenous educational contexts, a venue that has potential for long-term influence on the public. Looking closely at both the “what” and “how” of interpreting the past for the purposes of educational change, and engaging in decolonizing teaching and learning, is crucially important. How decolonizing is being pursued, how learning about the past is involved in this process, and how to continue change in the present and future—in culturally responsive ways—are complex and challenging questions that have not been thoroughly explored in Nunavut.

1.5.3 Methodology

This research is positioned at the intersection of educational history and the study of historical consciousness. It is not limited to an analysis of what has occurred in the past. Neither is it only concerned with using evidence from the past to advance a vision for the future of the Nunavut education system. Rather, this research intends to make a contribution to scholarship by documenting personal narratives, collected through interviews with a long-term educational leader, as well as analysis of documents created for the Nunavut school system. It explores what can be learned from stories held by one person with long experience, as well as what potential lies in the process of listening to stories, framed as historical consciousness practices. It will be informed by theory that is relevant to the context of Nunavut, as well as Nunavut philosophies for education, attempting to engage deeply with educational change in the ways Nunavut is articulating and promoting it. I will thus proceed not by measuring the Nunavut school system against external criteria, but by better understanding it on terms set by those who have been involved in running schools for a long period of time. If learning about the educational past and the role of the past in educational change constitutes the kind of learning Nunavut educators may need to pursue in becoming culturally responsive teachers, then it should be a generative methodology for research as well.

This research explicitly reflects my own implication in, and responsibility for, participating in decolonizing Nunavut education, just as each educator (and researcher) in Nunavut bears such a responsibility. This approach reflects my understanding that processes of

decolonizing must begin with each person's own history, learning journey, relationship to place and relationship to people. As such this research explores the history of my own mother's role in Nunavut educational change, and her own learning journey and relationship to people and place, that brought her to be involved in and responsible for many of the changes discussed here. It also reveals how I became positioned to do this research.

1.5.4 Practice

Many non-Inuit educators and educational leaders arrive in Nunavut without knowledge or experience of the history, culture, language or social context of education. Likewise, Inuit educators who went through school and were trained as teachers without in-depth engagement with Inuit ways of teaching and learning need additional supports. The process of new education staff coming to know about the distinctions of education in Nunavut can be highly draining on the school, parents, students and community. The contribution of this research to practice is in making stories of educational change, explanations for decolonizing processes and knowledge informed by long-term perspectives more accessible to educators. It is to explicitly demonstrate how such stories implicate them, as they implicate me. Describing how work has been done, and why, may show some of the ways and reasons educators might, for example, work with Elders, participate in developing curriculum, and consider local expectations for educational leaders. This analysis of decolonizing can be used to consider how educators may position themselves in relation to Inuit expectations for educational change. It may also show how story can be used in learning to learn within cross-cultural contexts, that is, remaining open, considering one's positionality, suspending opinion, and responding to knowledge holders.

1.6 Relevance to Other Audiences

Around the world, educational theorists, scholars and policy makers committed to postcolonial, anticolonial, decolonizing and Indigenous resurgence initiatives through education have established networks, created journals, held conferences and gained momentum towards raising awareness and pursuing change.⁸ Recently in Canada there has been increased recognition of the educational imperatives of Indigenous peoples, and the importance of institutional and government endorsement through mechanisms such as accords or enhancement

⁸ See for example the recently developed journal *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society* and the ongoing activities of the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium.

agreements. This research examines the only provincial or territorial education system in Canada that has, in its entirety, legal obligations to address the strengths and needs of a majority Indigenous population.

Nunavut's unique context does not preclude existing and potential commonalities with other jurisdictions in Canada and around the world. Nunavut has many stories of success and challenges in educational change. However, such stories are inconsistently accessible to other Indigenous peoples and allies who are experiencing similar struggles with education systems. While there has been some sporadic professional/educational exchange between Alaska, the Northwest Territories (NWT), Nunavut and Greenland, and amongst the Inuit homelands within Canada at different points in time, such initiatives often benefit only the handful of individuals directly involved in the exchange. With few scholars publishing on the work of the NDE and territorial school system, and with staff from Nunavut experiencing high demands that limit their research and publishing capacity, there is room to improve the sustainability of sharing and learning across borders.

This research may have particular relevance to other places experiencing decolonization alongside Indigenous cultural, political and linguistic resurgence with a legal endorsement, robust community mobilization initiatives, and high Indigenous population base. In addition to the Circumpolar regions mentioned above this could include New Zealand, Australia, Hawaii, Sami land, Peru, South Africa, and possibly other regions of Africa, the Americas and South Pacific. It may also present findings that are useful to post-conflict societies that are engaged in social reconstruction or educational change that takes into consideration difficult histories. Interested parties may include government policy-makers/public servants, administrators, education staff (in-service teachers, teacher consultants, principals), teacher educators and higher education faculty, historians of education and public historians. Topics through which other audiences may find relevance in this research are:

- Difficulty changing hegemonic educational structures over the long-term;
- Designing and implementing processes of recognition for difficult histories and legacies of colonization within institutions;
- Developing a sustainable community of culturally responsive educators, and training educators to support enhanced educational self-determination for Indigenous peoples; and,
- Informing and driving educational change with reference to situated knowledge about the past.

Aylward (2009b) points out in her discourse analysis research on the development of the 1996 curriculum document, *Inuuqatigiit: The Curriculum from the Inuit Perspective*, that: “Although the authors’ references were very local and rarely global, some discursive strategies employed to establish the legitimacy of Indigenous knowledge could also be understood as efforts of working toward agency and empowerment for all Indigenous peoples” (p. 156). Likewise, it is not likely that the words used in the documents I examine or used by Cathy will explicitly convey a pan-Indigenous or global sense of solidarity. The relative cultural and linguistic homogeneity and vitality across Nunavut, and the differences between Inuit and First Nations or Métis culture and language within Canada, has created a distinct context. From my understanding, Inuit insist on the importance of doing things in the Inuit way, not a generalized “Indigenous way.”⁹ I would expect that this place-based focus will be well recognized by readers from other Indigenous places and understood to be a strength in the process of decolonization. Whereas the main purpose of this research is to reflect and present the findings using language, concepts and approaches that are relevant in Nunavut, I also hope readers find implications relevant to audiences elsewhere.

1.7 Traces of Me

We are never as steeped in history as when we pretend not to be, but if we stop pretending we may gain in understanding what we lose in false innocence. (Trouillot, 1995, p. xix)

Reflecting on the traces I have already left about myself in publications, I have grown into the practice of including personal anecdotes in my public writing. This more often came about at the urging of a supervisor or editor than from my own instinct. It is not that I ever thought my specific experience and abilities could be detached from the equation that made my academic composition possible. And I enjoy writing descriptively, breaking into something more like story as we think of it in everyday experience, as opposed to the style of narrative we usually expect from academic work. Most students-becoming-scholars must develop their own voices over time. And, I was taught through typical academic and historiographic conventions that they

⁹ Jackie Price (2007) touches on the divide between Inuit and First Nations, which she identifies as politically popular in Nunavut, commenting that both federal funding allocations and federal recognition have contributed to this divide (to get the same guaranteed access to federal program dollars) (p. 90).

do not usually incorporate personal experiences. I thought my work was about the past, or about Inuit, or about policy; it would not be relevant to talk about myself. I was not who was important.

However, when writing my Masters thesis, later published as a book, I wrote about a part of my school experience in Iqaluit. As I recall this was largely at the urging of my supervisor, Ruth Sandwell. We both recognized that it could be difficult for people to relate to the northern context, and a description of school might provide a degree of insight. I chose the school experience that was most foreign to me as a Qallunaaq¹⁰ child, the moments that produced the earliest cross-cultural discomfort I had to navigate on my own. I was eight, turning nine, when I began participating in cultural class instructed by Inuit women Elders. We sewed together. I will not repeat the story (H. E. McGregor, 2010, p. 13-15), but it offers the best vehicle I have to imagine how Inuit students might feel about school most of the time. The teachers did not speak my language, or pronounce my name correctly. They had expectations I wasn't used to and that went undisclosed. I did not know when my work would be finished and if it was any good. I was not sure if I could express an opinion or ask a question. The purpose of the learning was often unclear. I did not want to be noticed or singled out because it probably meant I did something everyone else knew not to do. Relating to the teacher brought self-consciousness to differences in skin, hair, body... I so badly wanted to be respectful, to be a good student, but I was not sure how. I kept as quiet as I could.

I did not then, and do not now, write this to gain sympathy or suggest that there was something damaging about this experience. On the contrary, I was proud of myself and I like to think I developed greater sensitivity that has served me well over the years since then. I reflect with gratitude on the sewing skills, and relational skills, I gained. The point is that my historical research was about cultural difference and disjuncture in schools in the Arctic. This story showed a small, and personal, part of how I came to be concerned about that, and what drove me to write about it.

There were other bits about me in the book too—not a lot, but enough that it seemed (to me) I had established why a reader might trust the narrative I offered without making the narrative about me. “White people” aren't supposed to make it *about them*, I thought.

¹⁰ Qallunaaq (singular) or Qallunaat (plural) is the Inuit Language term for people who are non-Inuit or those from away. Alex Spalding and Thomas Kusugaq's *Inuktitut: A Multi-Dialectical Outline Dictionary* (1998) defines the term as “white man” or “European,” but the term only specifies ancestry to distinguish non-Inuit from Inuit (i.e. not necessarily phenotypic characteristics). It is also not generally used as a pejorative label. I use Qallunaat interchangeably with non-Inuit throughout the dissertation.

When Celia Haig-Brown (2012) reviewed my book she did not see it that way. She suggested that I had not said enough to position myself or explain how I came to have access to the knowledge that could produce this history—and a history to what end? What was my agenda? She wrote:

Who is Heather McGregor? I am reminded of the words of Michael Agar (1996:41): “Who are you to do this?” While I appreciated the prologue outlining the author’s familial connections to the Arctic and the intricacies of observing varying local protocols, I continued to wonder about the production of this text. Is it a labour of love? A revised doctoral dissertation? A public service report? Reflexivity in scholarly production, that is, acknowledgement of the researcher’s reasons for engaging in the work and relationship to the research, has become a standard, particularly in cross-cultural work (in this case, Qallunaat-Inuit). (Haig-Brown, 2012, p. 104)

Having begun doctoral coursework in education by the time I received this review, I understood Haig-Brown’s critique. I emailed her (even though I was told authors do not usually contact the reviewers of their books), so I would not remain mysterious, and we had a nice exchange. Nonetheless, this became something of a challenge for me, and a question: Why are expectations of reflexivity taken as obvious in some scholarly circles and not in others? If Haig-Brown’s position was “standard” why had the reviewers and editors involved with my Masters work and published book not pointed it out? I came to find that it is not necessarily expected—nor accepted—that historians describe their methodological approaches reflexively,¹¹ whereas it has been more common in qualitative research and especially Indigenous research, for several decades (see: H. E. McGregor, 2014b). Where would my future work land amidst these stances?

In her own work, Haig-Brown has attempted to both make explicit the possibility of research becoming a form of colonization, and to counter that possibility by modeling more ethical research relationships (for example: Haig-Brown, 2008; 2010; Haig-Brown & Archibald, 1996). She called the space in which non-Indigenous ally researchers engage with First Nations communities (particularly related to education) “border work,” explaining:

Many First Nations people today seek access to and acceptance within mainstream Canadian educational structures while maintaining and developing their heritage cultures. They seek change both in the process and content of schooling. By necessity and design, they become involved with non-Native people. In this meeting place, the border world,

¹¹ Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995) deftly explains, and critiques, this feature of historiography: “The traditions of the guild, reinforced by a positivist philosophy of history, forbid academic historians to position themselves regarding the present. A fetishism of the facts, premised on an antiquated model of the natural sciences, still dominates history and the other social sciences. It reinforces the view that any conscious positioning should be rejected as ideological. Thus, the historian’s position is unofficially unmarked: it is that of the non-historical observer” (p. 151). If it is not already clear, I doggedly attempt to resist being seen or thinking myself as non-historical.

non-Natives feel the ever-present tension between being useful and being undesirable. (Haig-Brown, 1990, p. 230)

While written 25 years ago, this summary rings true today. Reflexivity then, may contribute to documenting the assumptions and relationships that shaped the research, offering insight into whether the researcher was useful or undesirable, and whether the research was beneficial or harmful for the Indigenous community in question (and everything in between). How well can reflexivity practices meet such high expectations? Eve Tuck & K. Wayne Yang (2012) have described “settler moves to innocence” that “attempt to relieve the settler of feelings of guilt or responsibility without giving up land or power or privilege, without having to change much at all” (p. 10). Perhaps simply declaring one’s identity at the outset of a project and proceeding with research in ways that differ little from the colonial past is one such move to innocence.

Reflexivity need not only be about a perfunctory list of identity markers or a superficial self-endorsement. Reflexivity has been used in identifying the researcher’s values and identity locations; making explicit how the researcher is part of the setting, context and social phenomenon under study; a procedure for establishing validity; and/or used in an ideological sense to signal theoretical or political commitments (Schwandt, 2007, p. 260). Wanda S. Pillow (2003) outlines reflexivity as a process of self-scrutiny regarding the production of knowledge, and one that conveys consciousness of an “other.” This may include demonstrating one’s awareness of research problems such as power relations with research participants. I concur with Pillow that reflexivity is in no way guaranteed to transcend those problems, or make a researcher’s data “more valid,” but pays attention to ways research and representation falter (as Indigenous communities, amongst many others, have told us they do). Pillow (2003) suggests, “This is a move to use reflexivity in a way that would continue to challenge the representations we come to while at the same time acknowledging the political need to represent and find meaning” (p. 192). I view reflexivity as necessarily offering attempts at transparency around the production of a text, the conditioning an author brings to research, the unexpected outcomes and limitations of research, writing and pedagogical intentions, and the idea that we—like our work—are always in the making, always undergoing change.

That it is useful for researchers to disclose how they are always in the making became clear to me following a doctoral seminar experience that Brooke Madden and I have written about together (Madden & McGregor, 2013). This is the most forthcoming of my personal stories in publication, and I refer to it briefly here because it references my own difficult memories and emotions from the past, within an educational experience that was itself difficult

and emotional. It is important for some of the same reasons noted above about learning from Elders: Who I was in the classroom seemed unacceptable—too complicated. How I thought my body was being read and understood by others through markers of identity flattened who I understood myself to be, in my mind, heart and experience. In the Arctic and outside of it, there is nothing that marks or inscribes my body as a Northerner or different than any other “white Canadian.” I have benefitted from the privilege and I have encountered the misunderstanding of that in many ways. In the educational moment Brooke and I describe, I could not perform in accordance with my life experience, and felt deep dissonance about the possibility of being only, and problematically, non-Indigenous. At the same time, I wondered: was it, in fact, what others thought that mattered, or was it that who I am remains uncertain to me?

As much as I was unable to maintain composure during the classroom scenario Brooke and I describe, I was able to consider and reconsider every word in the composition we produced about it. Even with that safety net, I advocated that we maintain a certain fidelity to what was said and what happened in the moment, even as it might shine an unflattering light on us both. I thought of it like an historian would: I was a witness, but not an objective one, and that which shaped my perspective mattered. We each remember the experience differently, but describing how I remembered every uncomfortable part of it felt crucial to the process of remaking myself and making meaning for others. While the story only offers a trace of who I am, bound by one classroom moment and my reflection on it, the story could not have unfolded as it did for anyone else. I would suggest that this is the case for research as much as it is for participating in teaching and learning. Research is messy, unpredictable, and it is shaped by who we are. I have tried not to iron out all of those parts of the past from this work, but rather include them in the meaning making.

I am interested in how we arrive at moments like this in educational institutions, and how our abilities to act in such moments are conditioned by our own experiences and histories. How we draw on experience to guide present and future actions, what options are possible within current relations of power, how they inform our sense of self, and how they impact on relationships in cross-cultural contexts, continues to drive my passion for learning, research, writing and teaching.

1.7.1 My Work in Nunavut

I have not only been an historian and researcher in the Arctic. I have also worked in the government, most recently as a contract writer involved in the development of materials for

Nunavut staff and schools, including residential schools history curriculum. Before that I developed and filled the position of coordinator of implementation activities associated with the 2008 *Nunavut Education Act*. It brought me in contact with nearly all staff at the NDE and most school principals across Nunavut, amongst others, particularly through training initiatives associated with the new laws.

I remember with fondness the hard work, anticipation, planning and creativity in getting ready for workshops with departmental staff, school staff and sometimes Elders. I also remember the many hours spent at my desk trying to revise documents so they would take into account whatever feedback I could rustle up from my colleagues and those to whom I reported. I listened a lot in my work; at least I tried to. I took the work of making change in accordance with the Act very seriously. That I took it seriously was sometimes a problem though, because Nunavut school system staff had a lot of other pressing issues to take seriously. Changing ways of doing things was not always welcome news. I heard: “We can’t take anything more.” “We’ll try to get to that on the weekend.” “I’m dealing with a lot of calls from principals here.” This was not entirely unreasonable resistance; it was a reflection of the vacant positions, staff turnover, and reality that there was always too much to manage in our government (Varga, 2014b). It was difficult simultaneously holding a belief in the purposes expressed by the new legislation, and holding the knowledge that it was beyond our capacity as education staff at the time. The momentum of commitment to implementation dissipated after the first year. So, it was with an ache in my heart that for several personal and professional reasons I decided to leave to pursue doctoral studies. I felt extremely guilty about abandoning the work, the team, my commitments to improving Nunavut schools, and even my mother, with whom I had worked professionally. These feelings have not been relieved as I have seen the coordinator position sit vacant after the person who replaced me also left. But I believed there was some better way for me to contribute on the horizon, particularly with the credential of a completed doctorate.

On the other hand, I do not have a teaching certificate and I have not worked in Nunavut schools directly, although I have spent a lot of time listening to teachers who have. My role in Nunavut education has been through project work with teachers, principals, curriculum development staff, teacher-consultants and senior management, as well as through writing histories. While this is not the same as having been a teacher in a classroom, I assume a shared (if slightly different) role with those who teach for contributing to, and learning about, what education in Nunavut means now and what it may come to mean. This serves to illustrate why I

have shaped the context of this research to connect disparate components of the educational system, rather than focus on teaching exclusively.

1.7.2 My Role as a Researcher

Celia Haig-Brown asked me to account for myself, implying that it cannot be taken for granted that a non-Indigenous researcher ought to represent an Inuit context, even when—as in this case—the context is also a public education system (accountable to all residents, be they Inuit or not). And, non-Indigenous researchers carry greater—or at least different—ethical considerations in pursuing their research and the associated relationships in Indigenous contexts, so as to account for historic and ongoing colonizing relations. The corollary offered me by Michael Marker, a member of my committee and professor from whom I have learned a great deal while studying at UBC, is: “If not you, then who?” What I understand him to mean by this is twofold: That there is a great deal of work to be done in Indigenous research, and paralysis in the face of identity politics (that suggest only certain people can do certain work) will not get us very far on a path of decolonizing. Secondly, when one learns what is expected of researchers undertaking work in Indigenous communities, when one establishes appropriate relationships accordingly, and when one has the opportunity to conduct responsive research, then one should take up this responsibility and model it for others. According to Marker (2004b), in Indigenous learning traditions it is important to participate in processes of getting ready for research that foreground self-reflection and consideration of how to receive knowledge without harm to the self or relationships within the community. I have benefitted from a great deal of mentorship in this regard and I hope to honour it by carrying out reciprocal research. Marker (2000) also urges researchers to include “a more detailed analysis that includes the perspectives and location of both Natives and non-Natives” (p. 31), and to recognize that research demands “an analysis of history, hegemony, and self” (Marker, 2003, p. 367).

I was born, raised, and continue to maintain relationships in the NWT and Nunavut. I am also a non-Indigenous researcher affiliated with an academic institution. It is important that I take care to recognize, and begin to deconstruct and expand, the ongoing tendency toward “monolithic, monocultural, and mono-epistemological academic traditions” (Biermann, 2011, p. 386). This is combined with the colonial context of Canadian Settler society that has, and will inevitably, shape my frame of reference. Such concerns require the paradox of getting comfortable in reflexive stance, and finding techniques to continually participate in decolonizing, because what is called for to decolonize changes with time and place.

I come from several generations of highly-educated, social justice-oriented teachers, scholars and ethicists, and I have received a great deal of apprenticeship and cultural capital necessary for success in institutions such as schools and governments. I have received top grades and financial awards at post-secondary and graduate levels, and I have published in the discipline of history. I am pursuing a PhD at the University of British Columbia (UBC), and to be in that position denotes educational success, capability to work within academic systems that emerge from European traditions and capability to reach audiences that read scholarly publications. With these gifts comes responsibility (an individual expression of accountability), and “response-ability” or the ethical ability to respond and be responded to (Kuokkanen, 2010; Rossiter, 2012).

My work is also influenced by an academic community networked through a faculty, department, supervisory committee, cohort, peers with similar and dissimilar interests, and a full, prolific “knowledge economy” at my disposal. It is a vast understatement to say that thinking with those to whom I have had access at UBC has been an opportunity to expand my research capability. And I recognize that this academic community is located in Vancouver, BC, on the unceded territory of the Musqueam First Nation and in the midst of a movement towards greater mainstream recognition of Indigenous approaches to education. There is colonization here too, and the privilege I exercise to live and study here may be at the expense of Musqueam people, whose land claims have not been settled. As Jay Johnson (2008) says:

My academic genealogy, my “disciplining,” plays a significant role in colouring the tint of these spectacles too; it brings yet another ontological and epistemological frame through which I attempt to engage the world critically. My academic genealogy is securely founded within Western tradition and its canon...(p. 128).

I have been trained as an historian, and now I am trying to make space in the intersection of history and education for more recent histories—most importantly, histories that better reflect Indigenous and Arctic experience.

I have several other skills, experiences and characteristics that I bring to this particular work and shape my ability to make a contribution with it. As a child I was shy and self-conscious, as an adult I am serious and sensitive. These tendencies follow me into being a researcher and usually mean that I collect and absorb a great deal of information before I interject with my own impression or expression. I have the instinct to look for “the big picture” in any context, and work towards identifying how small parts, small interactions, or moments of illumination, are illustrative of these greater and longer processes. Through travel and education elsewhere in Canada and the world, I have come to observe the unique and peripheral experience of life of the Arctic. This has nurtured an ability to engage in complex comparisons, as well as to

become frustrated with trying to describe the particularities of place in a meaningful way. I have watched northern history being made and continually going unnoticed by so many Canadians.

I continue to be alarmed at the loss of knowledge, relationships, capacity and sustainability in the Arctic due to the high turnover of Qallunaat residents, and the difficulties Inuit still experience participating in institutional employment. Much is being lost in this context. The ignorance and hubris of those who come and go continues to enact harm. My observation of these dynamics, and the characteristics I have outlined above do not guarantee anything about my scholarship, but they provide insight into why I ask to be held accountable for participating in the academy and researching in a respectful, responsible, relevant and reciprocal way (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Marker, 2004a).

I also see myself in this work because so few others are taking it up. There are few Indigenous scholars working in the field of history and history of education. Currently there are few Inuit from Nunavut participating in PhD level research, and many non-Indigenous long-term Northerners have not found the time or inclination to participate in academic publication. I have concluded that there is a political and social need to risk representing Indigenous and cross-cultural perspectives on history, education, and Canadian society, past and present, even if (and perhaps because) I am non-Indigenous. This may contribute toward the ongoing movement to centre Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing in education, in the Arctic and across Canada.

As I complete this research and release it, I see the ways in which my own voice has changed and how different the presentation of the text is from the way I wrote only a few years ago. I admit that a remaining sensitivity I have, in completing this work, is the possible accusation that I, as a Setter/Qallunaaq/non-Indigenous researcher—but also a Northerner born and raised—have neglected the voices of Inuit. I will discuss this further in the next chapter and hope it is not entirely what readers find, but I can understand that a reader most interested in the voices of Inuit may not find this research particularly helpful. It is a story about a non-Indigenous educational leader, how she narrates educational change in response to my research questions, and how I take up those stories to advance the work we both believe is required. There are others like us—as well as many other Qallunaat educators with different perspectives—who continue to shape the Nunavut school system. Revealing some of their influence is the work I need to do now, to bridge between the work I did before and the decolonizing purposes I see for my research and writing in the future. In some ways it is an extended answer to Celia Haig-Brown, but it is not limited to that. This is not the end of my reflexivity. It is just another trace.

1.8 Structure of the Dissertation: The Metaphor of a Melting River in Spring

Canadian curriculum theorists must come to understand that the topos from which they write is the physical, imaginary, and sociopolitical landscape they share with the communities and children on behalf of whom they work and write. (Chambers, 1999, p. 148)

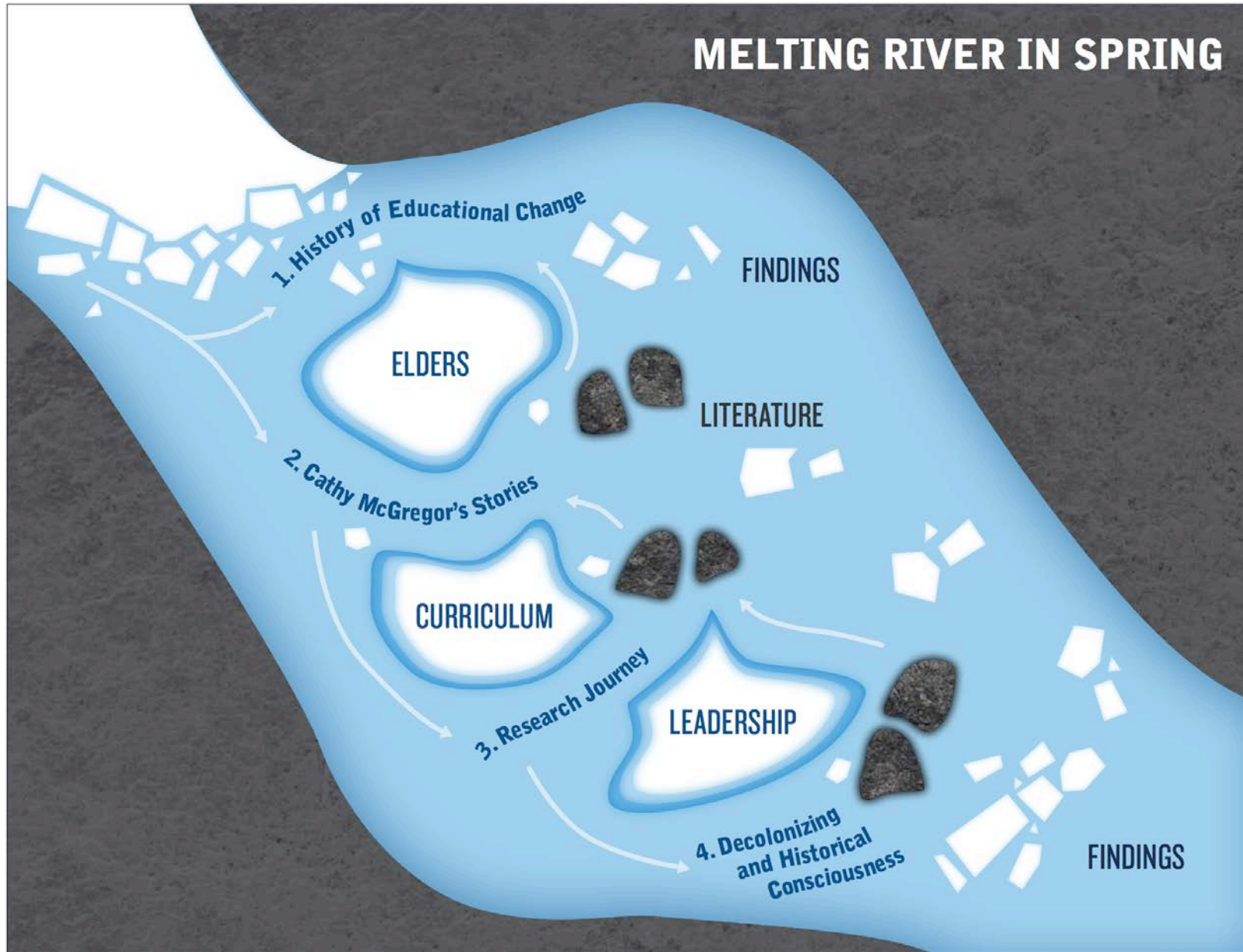
This dissertation does not follow a conventional format of five chapters progressing from introduction through literature review to methodology, and through research processes to findings. To help make my organizational choices more clear, I have developed a metaphor to signal what to expect, and help readers follow my work. An image of this metaphor can be seen in Figure 2.

The metaphor I use to represent the intentions for, and organization of, my research is a river melting in spring, like the Sylvia Grinnell River or Iqaluit Kuunga.¹² The name Iqaluit means “place of fish” in Inuktitut, referring to the fishing site close to the mouth of the Sylvia Grinnell, where it flows into Frobisher Bay.

After a long winter during which the river has been frozen solid, water begins to run underneath the ice, and melting snow runs onto the river. The force of this water breaks up the icy crust on the surface diligently, but unevenly. The water finds its own way amongst the ice pans and melts the ice at the same time, creating large chunks, or smaller chunks, and eventually carrying it all down stream to meet the Arctic Ocean. Every spring my family and I visit Sylvia Grinnell regularly to watch it change, as temperatures warm and summer approaches.

¹² Like many Arctic geographic features the river’s English name, and official name, was decided by a Qallunaaq. American explorer Charles Francis Hall named the Sylvia Grinnell River in 1860 for the granddaughter of a family friend and benefactor. The Inuit name “Iqaluit Kuunga [river]” is not commonly used by Iqalumiut [people of Iqaluit] in my experience, however I recognize the importance of noting it so as to account for colonizing histories in our understandings of place.

Figure 2 The Metaphor of a Melting River in Spring



In my dissertation the river represents the context of time and space around the stories I tell. Four story streams comprise it—each stream is a place where water finds its way around pans of ice. The first story stream is the most general and meandering: the history of recent educational change in Nunavut. This stream can be found throughout the dissertation and connects to stories I have told in previous research. There are no specific places where this history is the exclusive focus of the work, but it suffuses the work entirely. Many of the NDE documents and figures I utilize as evidence throughout Chapters 3 through 6 are intended to help show this story.

My descriptions of the context and history of schooling in Nunavut, and how it changes over time, runs close by the second, and largest, stream: Cathy McGregor's stories. This dissertation is most significantly informed by the interviews I conducted with Cathy. Chapter 3 features Cathy's career biography, in order to provide a foundation and touchstone for the claims that will be made by Cathy and me later in the dissertation. Her stories are about her experience, but also about many things, including procedures and responsibilities carried out within the NDE. She connects her stories to those she has heard from other long-term educators, both Inuit and non-Inuit, as well as Elders. I also attempt to extend her stories outside of her own experience, keeping her stories connecting and moving with other perspectives and evidence.

My role in relation to Cathy's stories links the second stream with the third: my research journey. I have already begun to show this story stream in Chapter 1 by discussing reflexivity and sharing experiences from my own life that have brought me to do this research now. In Chapter 2 I extend this story stream by explaining the choices I made in shaping methodology, in pursuing a stance of reciprocity, and in reshaping the research as unexpected ways forward presented themselves. I try to keep attention on this research stream in Chapters 3 through 7 by keeping an active voice, and sometimes showing my dialogue with Cathy explicitly.

The fourth story stream is theorizing how story may be placed in understandings of decolonizing and historical consciousness that respond to the context of Nunavut schools. This stream is substantially more theoretical, which is why it appears at the bottom and towards the right side of the metaphor. It is not possible, nor warranted, until the water has moved through the other streams and amongst the ice—until we hear more stories from Nunavut. All of the places the water has been contribute to the meaning drawn in this stream. It is in this stream, fed by the others, that the river's water heads out of view. Conceptualizing decolonizing and historical consciousness is the end of these stories, and yet not the end of the river.

None of the streams are permanent, discrete or entirely separated. They are created by the spring conditions and will blend as the ice changes. Likewise, the streams do not correspond to the chapters. The water/story does not flow in an exclusively left-right direction, but rather recycles around, as water does, of course, in rivers. Each stream is made possible, and constantly informed by, the streams running alongside them, as well as the ice pans/sites they encounter: Elders and their knowledge (Chapter 4), curriculum change (Chapter 5) and leadership development (Chapter 6).

My own meaning making occurs as the water moves around the edge of each ice pan. The water, or story, hits the ice first, is pushed in particular directions by it, and also works on the ice as it passes by. The water does not force the ice into being something specific, but attempts to remain open to the trajectory made possible at that moment. As a researcher I attempt to remain open to Nunavut stories before imposing views from elsewhere on those stories, in order to establish meaning, significance or particular theories.

The story streams also encounter rocks at the bottom of the river, representing existing educational research or literature. I view rocks as an appropriate metaphor for literature because scholarship—the process of publishing evidence based research—often facilitates the sedimentation of knowledge. Rocks feel solid and they get in the way of the water and the ice. But in fact they can also be changed—molded and eroded—by both water and ice. And without rocks, the river loses its form. Rocks cannot, nor should be, avoided in the story streams, but I attend to them after the water has moved along a stream and around the ice. Literally in the dissertation, I introduce new literature at different points in relation to the topic at hand, and I include a greater share of literature at the end of each chapter as well as at the end of the dissertation. This is an effort to give primacy to Nunavut knowledges and stories. I analyze the relevance of literature in relation to the specifics of the stories, rather than the other way around. I also try to keep the literature proximate to the stories, rather than dealing with it at the outset as a justification for the study and not returning to it in presenting my analysis.

As a result of the water's work on the ice, a story's work, small pieces of the ice pan break or melt off, becoming chunks. Chapters 4 through 6 contain findings from the movement of the story streams and relationship to the rocks/literature, usually at the end of the chapter. Some of these findings may reattach to larger pieces of ice downstream, or they might melt away and not be taken up again or necessarily feed into my last chapter. Some readers may find these small findings most interesting, indeed, perhaps more interesting than the direction the story streams go in Chapter 7. Other researchers may pick up these pieces. I view them as important to

documenting educational change, ways of working in Nunavut schools, as well as serving my overall story.

I view this metaphor as consistent with my theoretical framework. First of all, it attempts to be responsive to place—to the features of the landscape-waterscape-mindscape I have learned on and from in Nunavut, most often in Iqaluit. It connects with Cathy's use of an iceberg metaphor in Chapter 3. One can look at ice from above the surface of the water, but there is always more to see below. In accordance with that, I attempt to offer depth in many of my stories, in order to represent the complexities of these stories. However, I can never offer a complete view.

Secondly, this metaphor is informed by decolonizing theory as I apply it to the context of Nunavut. It is intended to keep the processes of knowledge production in closer alignment with the ends desired by those processes. That is, I do not desire sedimented, certain, replicable or authoritative knowledge. My intention is to document stories and how they move in a particular time and space. I attempt to incorporate the complicated nature of such story streams into my writing process, rather than ignore or simplify them. At times those intentions make this dissertation seem long. This approach may test the patience of the reader, asking them to suspend their expectations and leave behind ideas about linear progression in writing, or literature reviews coming before data. Suspending these expectations for dissertations is similar to suspending the assumptions one brings to cross-cultural encounters, and the discomfort one experiences when they find their assumptions do not work the same way in a different context. This metaphor, like my dissertation, asks readers to practice ethical relationality with the story contributions offered by Cathy and the other individuals—and people like them—encountered through the work. That is, to give story streams space to move.

This metaphor is also consistent with hermeneutic approaches to understanding, such as those I draw from Gadamer, especially in Chapter 7. Dwayne Donald (2011) argues the “task of interpreting the difficulties and contradictions of Aboriginal and Canadian relations requires ‘hermeneutic imagination’ (Smith, 1991)” (p. 15). This is because of the hermeneutic call for “deep attentiveness to the centrality of history, culture, tradition, and philosophy in producing standpoints of interpretation,” in which hermeneutic inquiry offers “organic recursive engagement” with life itself (Donald, 2011, p. 14). This research is affected by historicity as everything else is. Offering this metaphor is a way of bringing the reader into my preconceptions; I try to continue doing so explicitly throughout the dissertation. The story—like the self—changes as movement occurs, organically, recursively. In a melting river there is no

solid place to stand. Like time, it moves along continuously and is always unpredictable. Stories remind us of this. We know that in the future the river will be frozen again. We know that in the future the river will melt again, and another story will be told. Acknowledging these conditions will contribute to understanding.

Chapter 2: Methodological Movement - Centering Interviews with Cathy McGregor in Looking toward the Past

2.1 Introduction

At the end of Chapter 1, I outlined the metaphor of a melting river in spring, as a way to understand how this dissertation works. It includes four story streams: the history of educational change; Cathy McGregor's stories; my research journey; and, conceptualizing decolonizing and historical consciousness. The story streams find their way around three important sites in the context of the Nunavut school system that relate to knowledge from and about the past: the role of Elders; Nunavut-based processes of curriculum development; and, educational leadership development. The story streams encounter literature, like rocks underneath the water and ice. The relationships among the streams, the ice, and the rocks, are what produce findings within each chapter and at the end of the dissertation.

Chapter 2 is organized according to this metaphor. I begin with a rationale for my research and a description of how I view the role of stories in knowledge construction and ethical relations. I then delve into story stream 1: the history of educational change in Nunavut. The three other story streams follow, the longest of which is the section where I describe my interviews with Cathy and how they informed my work.

To separate out the four story streams, even temporarily within one chapter and even for clarity's sake, feels uncomfortable. They are inextricably intertwined, as they exist within one river. For that reason, and to forefront the following explanations with my theoretical and ethical commitments, this introduction is intended to foreshadow the ways in which my research has lived and moved during its course.

I am trying to learn how educators have been asked to work differently in the cross-cultural spaces of Nunavut schools, and the knowledge on which they draw to change schools to better respond to Nunavut families. I describe the change called for in Nunavut schools as becoming culturally responsive, and suggest that working towards such goals should be considered decolonizing. In trying to understand how educators have undertaken such processes in the past, my methodological design process was informed by these interconnected intentions: to make decisions at the outset, and throughout the research process, consistent with decolonizing approaches to teaching and knowledge construction as I understand them; and, to use methods comprehensible and relevant to educators working in Nunavut schools.

There are important distinctions between the opportunities available to me and expectations of me as a doctoral student, in comparison to any other educator in Nunavut who might like to learn about the past (i.e. the opportunity of an extended period of time to think and write, and expectations to engage with academic literature and conduct my work relatively independently following degree-granting regulations). Nevertheless, I hoped to use methods of inquiry similar to processes that Nunavut educators could also realistically and appropriately follow to answer complex questions about schooling. This might be an improvement over relying on approaches or methods that are imported, ill-fitting or harmful (accompanied by incomprehensible and non-transparent findings produced by such methods). I hoped my research would—at the very least, but crucially—avoid the harmful impacts of research that have been identified in the past, those that benefit outsiders at the expense of northern Indigenous peoples (ITK, 2013; L. T. Smith, 1999/2012). At best, I hoped my design decisions would contribute to a growing conversation about responsive and reciprocal research methodologies for those involved in the Nunavut education community.

My methodology changed substantially during the process of the research. It became more personal and situated; a project based on some of the more unique features of my relationships and skills than what I had originally planned. Insight into that research journey in and of itself, including the way I made changes within my theoretical and ethical commitments, will hopefully be of value to others who research in Nunavut or elsewhere. My methodology emerged between the spaces of who I am, the evidence and relationships to which I have access, the constantly shifting present moment, the changing conditions of schooling in Nunavut, and my own willingness to revise my research methods in accordance with what fit best with the preceding variables.

I attempt to identify ways that research might become more culturally responsive and contribute towards decolonizing. However, I am not sure it is ever possible to fully achieve such an objective. As much as I value these goals, I will not claim to have met them. Instead I continuously ask myself how to keep working towards them. Elsewhere I have illustrated the questions researchers might ask themselves in designing educational or historical research in environments such as Nunavut, generally pointing out that the challenges are as high as the stakes (H. E. McGregor, 2014a; 2014b). The length of this chapter reflects my concern and interest in such issues. This is not to demonstrate that I have gotten it right or that there is a “good” methodology here, but rather to provide evidence of my work so that a critical reader can access insights into my process and assess my work on that basis. This is a move towards

producing research as well as relating ethically with others, in a complex situation still inflected with colonizing histories and relations.

I set out on my research journey with the desire for a Nunavut-based mentor who could support me in thinking through knowledge processes, as well as content. Likewise, building a relationship with, and learning from, an experienced educator or Elder is a realistic and generative approach to learning about schools and educational change. For me, at this time, the best person to fill that role was my mother, Cathy. In the following pages she shape-shifts amongst roles—in relation to me and in the stories she tells—as educator, Elder, mentor, leader, mother, colleague and friend. When I wrote my research proposal I referred to Cathy’s role as a “guide and touchstone,” but as the research unfolded, her role became more significant. A few interviews with Cathy became many, and other methods I had planned changed.

The interviews with Cathy partially inform a career history, an organizational history, and a cultural history of the Nunavut school system. Alongside a concern with “what happened” in the past, personal narratives demonstrate how people think and feel about what happened, and how those articulations can change. The stories Cathy shared with me offer this personal interest, and a dose of on-the-ground-ness that readers often enjoy and benefit from in engaging with the past, thinking about the present, learning about an unfamiliar place or remembering their own experiences in that place.

Cathy’s career history also helps to explain why and how I am interested in, and suited to, doing this research. By sharing some of Cathy’s experience the reader is given more insight into how I have come to know what I know. My understandings about education in Nunavut are often reached through casual discussion with Cathy; she has always been an informal part of my learning process. This is an effort to make that learning more transparent, central and comprehensive in my research approach. Not to do this would risk being disingenuous or opaque, and not in keeping with the ethical considerations I try to uphold, including attributing knowledge to those from whom I learn.

In this chapter I show my analysis, use of literature, and applications of the following methodological approaches: interviewing experts; portraiture; personal narratives in social science and history; and, the epistemological challenges of working with story. I address how I went about working with Cathy, and conducting other methods, to produce the chapters of this dissertation. I explain how my research unfolded in ways I could not have anticipated as I set out on the journey, including methods I had planned but did not complete, and provide a rationale for

the decisions made along the way. I close with conclusions about how the methodology and methods I chose resonate with the decolonizing theoretical framework from which I work.

2.2 Rationale for Research Questions

Below I explain my rationale for each of the research questions, how each connects to the story streams, and what contribution I intend each question to make in the research.

1. What are some policy, curriculum and leadership initiatives in the Nunavut school system since 2000 that can be considered new decolonizing efforts?

I do not attempt to document all changes in the Nunavut school system, but rather feature some changes associated with the new Nunavut government mandate. I chose examples, or what I call sites, which are particularly revealing and have received less attention in other research or documentation. To link closely with the commitment of the government to support Inuit self-determination, I chose initiatives that can be considered decolonizing. This question allows for theorization of what counts as decolonizing in Nunavut, and what decolonizing asks of educators. It places emphasis on policy, curriculum and leadership as the content spectrum within which I am working, although the examples I take up within each of those categories are more specific than constituting all policy or all curriculum. Featuring multiple types and levels of decolonizing practice and programs within the school system is important to illuminating the complexity within which this history has occurred, and must occur.

Cathy's role is important in working with this question, in terms of helping me to select the topics within each site to cover in depth, as well as to discuss what she thinks is new or decolonizing about that topic. Cathy's realm of responsibility and involvement as Executive Director of C&SS during the period bridged policy, leadership and curriculum, so she is well positioned to inform documentation of all of those topics. My interviews with Cathy reached back into her early career, and stories pre-dating 2000 will be referenced to provide illustrations for how she understands and gives significance to the period between 2000 and 2013. However, in undertaking this project, Cathy and I both understood my purposes to be tied closely to documenting parts of the recent history of educational change in Nunavut.

This "what" question prompts me to describe some of the changes in detail, often drawing on documents to support my description. The unusual context of education in Nunavut and the unusual measures taken to change the school system will be largely unfamiliar to readers outside of Nunavut, and deeply familiar to only a relatively small group of staff in the education community inside. To suit both audiences, description serves to bring readers into the world of

Nunavut education, as well as placing those stories in the flow of time and with measures of significance.

2. What sources and kinds of knowledge led to, and informed, recent decolonizing initiatives in the Nunavut school system?

I am looking for how NDE staff members who participated in the initiatives identified through my first research question know what they know. What are the assumptions, experiences or sources on which commitments to decolonizing are based? Are staff members making intelligible claims in newly designed materials, processes or programs? How can a new educator—someone who does not have their experience—learn or enter into the realm of knowledge on which they are drawing?

In contexts of decolonizing, the clash of differing systems of knowledge—in form and content—is an ever-present tension. Schools are known to struggle with securing sources that are credible and accurate for integrating Indigenous knowledges, and educators are known to struggle with engaging Indigenous knowledges appropriately and effectively (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009; Dion, 2009; Kanu, 2011). How is Nunavut negotiating this challenge? How can those outside Nunavut “see” and learn from its process of creating school system materials with an IQ foundation? This question is intended to identify the warrants used to defend decolonizing initiatives and what informs the content of those initiatives.

In addition to looking at the documents produced through such initiatives, Cathy is well positioned to contribute to answering this question because she has been in a position to approve or review most materials developed for Nunavut schools for a ten-year period between 2003 and 2013. She led or continued the design of start-from-scratch processes of knowledge production carried out by staff during that time. Nunavut has been engaged in the project of developing its own materials for everything from curriculum to teacher evaluation, attempting to move away from purchasing materials from textbook companies or adopting them from other jurisdictions. With Cathy’s prior experience in northern education she can comment on why certain processes or sources of knowledge have been pursued, in comparison to the way work was conducted before Nunavut was created. The interviews with Cathy help to illuminate the rationale—as well as the challenges and opportunities—for the approaches taken to knowledge production by staff involved in this context.

3. How and why is knowledge from and about the past brought forward by Nunavut educators in initiatives intended to facilitate change to the school system?

This research question is distinguished from the one above, about sources and kinds of knowledge, in two significant ways. First, it narrows in on knowledge from and about the past, which is what I am most interested in, and might not necessarily come to the surface through my other research questions. I am interested in knowledge from and about the past because it contributes to a deeper understanding of how Nunavut has come to be shaped in the present. It also figures in designing educational change based on responsive and situated decolonizing practices, as discussed elsewhere. Secondly, this question asks what is done with the knowledge: how is it used and why? This allows for the detailed description, mentioned above, that should facilitate both greater insight into what the Nunavut school system was like during this period, as well as how decolonizing is being pursued. I place emphasis on facilitating educational change so as to get outside of history education per se. In other words, in order to learn about decolonizing in the Nunavut school system I am curious about how knowledge from and about the past is made explicit in different spaces, rather than in the spaces where it might be expected (i.e. history classrooms).

When I refer to Nunavut educators in this question, I do not mean that I can make a generalization about how all Nunavut educators use knowledge from and about the past. Rather, I expect to show examples of some of the ways it was being taken up by Nunavut educators who contributed to initiatives intended to create change across the school system: in policy, curriculum and leadership programs. Cathy is one of those educators (though I usually refer to her as an educational leader), and she worked directly with many educators, or supervised them. She is well positioned to answer both the “how” and “why” questions for the same reasons identified above: her explanation of the antecedents that led to such activities, her participation in calling for these types of activities, ensuring they were entrenched in departmental structures, and carrying out the activities herself.

I extend what Cathy experienced, and the claims she makes, by looking for how Nunavut educators are called on to use knowledge from and about the past in NDE documents. The sites that I examine through this question are significant because of their endorsement by government legislation, regulations or directives, such as mandatory content in professional development programs.¹³ The documents surrounding these mandated initiatives show some of the ways

¹³ Legislation and policy are developed by long-term educators and departmental staff in Nunavut (I have participated in such processes) in collaboration with lawyers, and then sent for approval by elected members of the legislative assembly—most of whom are Inuit. The resulting policy does not necessarily account for everything

knowledge from and about the past was brought forward in their development, and is intended to be used on an ongoing basis.

This question intentionally avoids a focus on the outcomes of these initiatives. Rather I am interested in illuminating the intentions, goals and approaches being taken by Nunavut educators who have been using knowledge from and about the past, to the extent that interviews with Cathy and the documents themselves can illustrate this.

4. How might an understanding of knowledge held by long-term educators in Nunavut by extension help new educators understand what is asked of them in participating in educational change towards decolonizing?

This question points to the potential differences between long-term educators and new educators in Nunavut, a theme I have consistently had in mind in designing the research. “Long-term” refers to length of service and residency in Nunavut, rather than experience as an educator anywhere. I do not intend to convey that all long-term educators hold exactly the same perspectives on the school system. I view their contributions as distinct from recently arrived or trained educators because of the length of time and breadth of experience they bring to forming views of education in Nunavut. I have found there to be some consensus among long-term educators, for example in the importance of culturally responsive approaches, but recognize there are (potentially important) contrasting views. The question assumes that long-term educators may hold more knowledge from and about the past, particularly regarding the context of Nunavut schools. It assumes that there are understandings that accompany decolonizing: things people who are unfamiliar with the context of Nunavut or the nature of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations in Nunavut and Canada may need to learn. That this tends to be an issue in schools and that it has not been dealt with effectively in the past is well documented in scholarly literature (Aylward, 2007; 2009a; 2010; P. Berger, Epp, & Møller, 2006; P. Berger & Epp, 2007; P. Berger, 2009b; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Harper, 2000; Lewthwaite & McMillan, 2010). Rather than assigning responsibility for educating new teachers exclusively to community members, Elders, or pre-service teacher education programs, I am interested in what strengths can be drawn from among educators working together in schools. I am interested in to what

long-term educators (or elected representatives, for that matter) may think or feel about a topic. Policy is always bent into shape by what can and cannot be upheld legally, and cannot be considered unproblematically the result of full consensus. However, Nunavut processes of development are distinct in that, particularly because of the ratio of educators that may participate in such negotiations in relation to the population of the territory, brings “government” closer to “educators” in Nunavut.

extent those who have been involved in Nunavut schools for a long period of time—both Inuit and non-Inuit—can contribute something significant or generative in facilitating this process, with those who are learning.

This question has methodological implications as well as content implications. I am, to a certain extent, positioning myself as a new educator, even though I am a long-term Northerner. This research attempts to show a process of learning from Cathy about her career history, the history of education in the Arctic from her perspective, the ways that experience and knowledge have informed her views on education in the present, and the ways she has tried to bring forward that long-term knowledge in creating school system processes and programs. In our interviews I asked Cathy specifically about how and what new educators can learn from long-term educators. This question allowed me to explore the limits of what can be known or learned from a long-term educator, and what else may need to inform the development of educators who attend to the mandate established for Nunavut schools. Cathy's stories may be framed more explicitly as the contributions—teachings—of an expert and leader herself. The question aims towards using the knowledge from and about the past generated through this research, assuming it is read by educators in Nunavut, in the very same project of decolonizing.

2.3 Learning from Stories

This dissertation is largely about sharing stories. Here I describe how I view the construction of knowledge in this inquiry, and more generally. I have intentionally written most of the section below without academic references and vocabulary, introducing themes that will subsequently be woven through this chapter using other techniques. I attempt to illustrate the epistemological and ontological assumptions I hold throughout the dissertation, particularly what stories *do*. The description below is not linked to a concrete example because I am trying to account for the conditions that surround stories, some of which would not occur in every event of storytelling. I also do not draw generalizations about Inuit story or how Indigenous or non-Indigenous peoples' stories are differently mediated by these factors, because I view the factors to be constantly, and differently, at play in events of storytelling. Many examples will be found in the chapters that follow, and it is my hope that this will add foundational framing to them.

In listening to a story told by another person—an articulation of truth held by that person at a particular place and time—an individual can learn. An individual can begin to know differently through the meaning they make of the story. Action is produced in the sense of the

learning itself, as well as in the actions that follow the learning, because of the learning. These actions are deeply affected by the unique interplay of languages, emotions, embodied knowledge, rational thought, prior experiences, and education held by listeners as they listen. Learning from stories is constituted by the story told, the intention with which it is told, the process of listening, the meaning constructed and the actions produced.

Through a story the listener-learner can begin to understand the contexts and conditions that have made their relationship with the storyteller possible, that have shaped the quality or characteristics of that relationship, and that shape the quality of understanding produced by telling and listening. Of particular concern here, the learner can begin to know how the storyteller views the way things were in the past, and how that produces the way things are in the present. The story of another being can affirm, contest or extend how the listener understands the way things were and the way things are. The actions resulting from the learning can take a multiplicity of situated forms that reinforce, negotiate or bridge across difference. I use the word “can” here intentionally because I do not hold that any of these outcomes are guaranteed, linear or universal. Learning is always unpredictable. Learning can nevertheless be mediated by conditions that increase the likelihood of learning in the ways intended by the storyteller. This is why the “how” of learning from stories—the pedagogy, the telling—is often as important as the story itself.

In coming to a new understanding or learning, a listener can transfer that learning to other beings, to other communities of beings. Individuals can, carefully, take particularities and transfer them to generalities—although this process usually warrants more self-questioning and reflection than it is given, and damage can easily occur when unwarranted assumptions about difference are hastily applied. Ideally, a listener can begin to know what is asked of them in better relating to the storyteller in the present and future, potentially reducing direct or symbolic violence in engagement with them. On the other hand, a listener can continue viewing the storyteller in a light that has little correspondence with the teller’s context, conditions or intentions, and real or symbolic violence can be re-enacted.

The possibilities and limitations associated with telling and listening to a story, the content of the story, and the range of outcomes resulting from the sharing are not neutrally or independently conceived. All are affected—though not exclusively defined—by the ways power circulates. Power is not conceived here as necessarily negative, but rather that which every individual encounters in a variety of ways while moving towards what they need, desire or think to be right.

The ways power circulates are determined—although, again, not exclusively defined—by how power circulated in the past, and what individuals in the present know about the past. Power may mediate the choice of language used to tell the story, because for example that language is the established language of government or, on the other hand, precisely because it is *not* the language of government. The length of time the teller can speak without interruption is often determined by protocol, convention, and how participants have been educated to listen respectfully in that context. How the words used by the teller are made intelligible to various listeners may be determined by the authority or credibility associated with the storyteller. Authority and credibility have dimensions rooted deeply in the continuity of traditions or institutions that have enacted power in the past. How the teller receives responses from listeners, such as through questions or comments, is often determined by whether the story reinforced or disrupted what the listener already knew, or thought, to be “true.” These situated manifestations of power are conditioned by the things we see—material dimensions, and things we may not see—discursive structures, as well as individual agency. It is always possible to disrupt, however briefly, systems, conventions and that which we take for granted or assume to be fixed.

Such processes are concerned with truth in the sense that individuals carry with them stories that they hold to be true and that underlie their actions. When actions are in conflict or produce conflict, questions are raised about which story—explicit or underlying—is more true. In such conflicts, the stakes can be high. Processes of comparing claims to truth are complicated, situated, and conditioned by power in which other layers of stories—stories about criteria for assessing truth claims—pre-emptively extinguish the possibility of taking some stories to be true. As a result, some stories are simply not spoken, heard or witnessed because their content is inconsistent with accepted truths. Or, the way the stories are told is inconsistent with accepted ways of assessing truth claims. These issues affect people unevenly when the truth stories held by particular individuals and groups are not given equitable opportunity to be heard because of relationships between those individuals or groups in the past. Indeed, the relationship may not even be acknowledged.

The sharing of stories, the relationality that can be produced by the use of knowledge from stories, and the actions resulting from stories can produce change and they can also (re)produce continuity. Learning about the past through stories and learning stories from the past is not necessarily progressive or teleological. The present is not necessarily better than the past and the future will not necessarily be better than now. Confusion, digression, regression, fragmentation, deconstruction, forgetting and intentional ignorance persist constantly in

negotiations of truth and power. The telling of stories, listening to stories, the grasp of knowledge, the expression of values, the transfer of particularities to generalities, the ways power circulates, and the formation/reformation of relationships, is a cyclical endeavor that constantly requires attention.

By inviting the sharing of truths, through stories, we do not arrive at the Truth. Rather, we move with a collection of truths that is more representative of the collection of beings in a place and time. Recognizing the impermanence outlined here, it is the responsibility of people in the present to direct change towards ethical relations. This involves an engagement with that which is held to be “good” by people in a place and time. Understanding what is held to be good, and determining how to advance or change it, requires engaging with the past, including the sources and contexts for the ideas of goodness (and much more).

I convey here that stories are capable of acting on us and making our world (Frank, 2010). While I wrote this section before reading Frank’s *Letting Stories Breathe* (2010), much of what he claims about stories (frequently drawing from the work of Julie Cruikshank and Jo-ann Archibald in Indigenous contexts) resonates with my view.¹⁴ For example, he explains:

The primary work of stories is making the “blooming, buzzing confusion” [quoting William James] habitable by ordering it into foregrounds and backgrounds of attention and value. The more fine-tuned work of stories as a default guidance system involves two axes. One axis traces how stories help people to understand who they are, and how stories connect them to affiliations. On the complementary axis, stories show people what can be good about themselves and about life, but stories also make life dangerous; they get people into trouble. (Frank, 2010, p. 48)

Disciplinary history, public history and memory are all implicated here as *story* because they all work in spaces between facts, silences, interpretations and adaptation to audiences (Trouillot, 1995).

Gadamerian hermeneutic principles (Gadamer, 1975/2013) can be seen at work in my description above and will be discussed further in Chapter 7. This includes the ideas that a person

¹⁴ As I have had the opportunity to study directly with Jo-ann Archibald at UBC, my use of Frank (who draws on her work) to theorize story might seem like an odd choice. While I refer to Archibald’s *Indigenous Storywork* (2008) in numerous places throughout the dissertation, I use Frank here because he melds together so many different types and uses of story. This flexibility aligns with the multiple and differing understandings and uses of stories in the context of my research—those that come from and are taken up by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, communities, and organizations. While my views of story have been deeply informed by Archibald’s careful and specific work advancing Indigenous stories from Indigenous Elders and oral traditions, my methodology has not been parallel with hers.

learning from story brings pre-conceptions and expectations to it, formed by the tradition within which they have participated to gain understanding (i.e. conditioned by the particular times and spaces they inhabited), and that understanding is mediated by processes of (re)forming identity, subjectivity, context, and power that constitute the new horizon (i.e. new present moment) after listening. Frank (2010) states this well:

The hermeneutic commitment is to ask not only what the story means within my horizons, but also how far I can understand what it means within the horizons of the storyteller and other listeners. Perhaps most important: how does the story call on me to shift my horizons? A hermeneutic interpretation presupposes the interpreter's personal transformation but then redefines the personal within the dialogical. Hermeneutics is clear that the issue is someone else's story, but knowledge of that story always proceeds within the horizons of an interpreter as knowing subject. (p. 96)

The hermeneutic commitment, particularly in Gadamer's conception, is concerned with the conditions under which all knowing arises, bringing about transformation dialogically. It is not necessarily oriented towards value-laden objectives or to advance ethical imperatives in relation to understanding the other/Other.¹⁵ However, I view the presupposition that one must attempt to understand another's story on their terms, even as one recognizes the limitations of doing so, as generative in the work of establishing more ethical relations (Donald, 2012; Ermine, 2007) between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples through decolonizing. Also, to learn from story, all the while recognizing that we are storied and historical beings, is knowing with historical consciousness. That is, our understandings of stories will slip away and new understandings will arrive; all understandings are subject to previous constructions, change and continuity; there are multiple truths; and, the future always remains unknowable despite any depth of historical knowledge. Trouillot reminds us: "The inability to step outside of history in order to write or rewrite it applies to all actors and narrators... This does not suggest that history is never honest but rather that it is always confusing because of its constituting mixes" (Trouillot, 1995, p. 140).

Cathy's work was often about making and remaking shared stories about what education was all about in Nunavut. The stories of what education was all about were not always shared widely enough—with parents, with the public, with elected officials, or even with teachers. This work is about extending access to knowledge from and about the past that may be again used in (re)making stories about education in the present and future. This is how I would ask readers to

¹⁵ In fact, Gadamer insists: "...it is not my intention to make prescriptions for the sciences or the conduct of life, but to try to correct false thinking about what they are" (1975/2013, p. xxii). This is one of the reasons Gadamer has been accused of being politically conservative but I view that as a misreading of his intent.

engage with what I share here: as a collection of stories that attempts to make more accessible understandings of what was occurring in Nunavut schools. It is not to tell A History but to share stories that comprise human experience and relationships. It is not just for the purpose of having more information, but also for the purpose of modeling how we gain knowledge to change the quality of relationships that are steeped in colonizing/decolonizing and cross-cultural, multilingual, Arctic spaces at this moment in time.

2.4 Story Stream 1: History of Educational Change in Nunavut

The first story stream is the history of education in Nunavut, which is how I generally characterize my research. This history is not meant to be comprehensive. Rather, building on previous work mentioned below, I focus on sites within Nunavut's recent history of educational change at the school system level, between 2000 and 2013. This stream is primarily related to my first research question: to identify recent initiatives that can be considered decolonizing (which can only be defined as such with reference to what has come before, i.e. history). It begins in Chapter 1, through the section "Context for the Study," and continues below in "Brief History of the Topic." This stream is prominent in Chapter 3, where it flows along with the second story stream—Cathy's career biography—returning to earlier events in this history of territorial education, and offering context for what follows. Through this stream we see how twists and turns in political and administrative decision-making have affected educational policy significantly, producing that which is possible or impossible when shaping, or decolonizing, the school system at different times. This stream flows around Chapters 4, 5 and 6, supporting the background necessary for discussion of the role of Elders, curriculum development and leadership programs. It becomes more prominent again in Chapter 7, when dialogue with Cathy aims towards putting the challenges and opportunities of educational change—that arise from the sites under study—into perspective. The end of the dissertation offers ways to think about educational change over time in Nunavut, using the concepts decolonizing and historical consciousness.

This work differs substantially from my previous historical work (usually relying on documentary sources exclusively), through the use of interviews with Cathy as a key source, and my explicit interest in knowledge held by long-term educators. I began this research with an interest in how knowledge of Nunavut histories, Elder knowledge, long-term educator knowledge, and experience with educational change in the Arctic, inform efforts associated with Nunavut's new goals for schooling. In previously working for the NDE myself, I experienced

and heard discussion of the gap between educators, administrators and department staff who had been involved in Nunavut schools for a long period of time, and those who had recently arrived or are part of the significant pattern of teacher itinerancy. In a context constantly plagued by loss of institutional memory and deficit framing of educational outcomes, I attribute importance to recording what work is being accomplished and the theories behind that work. Such efforts would provide an opportunity to engage with the perspectives of long-term northern educators, whose understandings of schools in Nunavut—individually and collectively—inform the materials being implemented, and yet might represent knowledge new teachers struggle to access.

The result of moving towards evidence offered through interviews with Cathy has produced something beyond educational history. This is discussed with reference to methodology, ethics and theory, throughout the rest of this chapter. In other work I have identified many critiques of history in general, and the history of education specifically, from Indigenous scholarly and community perspectives (H. E. McGregor, 2014b). While this work is not necessarily an answer to those critiques (and what I do here is not intended to constitute Indigenous history or research methods), the decisions I made to produce this work were driven by my knowledge of such problems with historiography.¹⁶ That awareness often drove me towards qualitative methods that lie beyond what most historians might pursue. Throughout this dissertation, and particularly in my discussion of historical consciousness in Chapter 7, these divergences become clearer.

What follows in this section is a brief overview of Nunavut's educational past, intended to give the reader access to some of the more salient themes and conditions that characterize the unique context of schooling in the Arctic. I outline it here as a reference section for convenience, because the historical narrative in the rest of the dissertation is more dispersed.

¹⁶ Because I have written a long article about this I am reluctant to risk oversimplification here, but I will highlight several concerns that are particularly relevant: the inadequacy and unrepresentativeness of existing written records for documenting Indigenous and northern experience; the unsuitability of institutional ethical guidelines in relation to community expectations of researchers; disregard of epistemological-ontological difference, flattening ethnographic distinctions; disregard of ongoing processes of colonization/decolonization; lack of accessibility to research findings; and, overlooking the importance of situating oneself (identity, experience, relationships) in the research explicitly.

2.4.1 Brief History of the Topic

Elsewhere I have described the history of education in Nunavut in more detail (H. E. McGregor, 2010; 2012a; 2012b), but recent developments since the creation of the Nunavut government remain largely undocumented. The history of education in Nunavut consists of many varying engagements in colonization and decolonization that form unique movements within the Indigenous experience of education in Canada. This is primarily because of the geographic conditions of the Arctic, the differing relationship with the Canadian state resulting from those conditions, and the cultural and linguistic strengths of Inuit communities that have shaped particular political directions.

Despite intermittent contact with explorers, whalers and traders, in the early decades of the 20th century, traditional Inuit education was occurring much as it had within hunter-gatherer societies for centuries. Education was integrated into the daily lives, daily responsibilities and daily relationships within extended families. This approach to education resulted in a competency, worldview and knowledge base now often referred to as IQ. I have previously argued that in simplified terms, the most central aspects of Inuit education were environmental knowledge, experiential learning, caring between teacher and learner, and family control over childrearing, although this does not begin to represent the sophistication and complexity of lifelong learning in the Inuit tradition. The generation of Inuit now in their 70s were largely born “on the land,” and participated in this form of education rather than in schooling.

The condensed nature and timing of colonization in the Canadian Arctic is crucial to understanding this context. Frank Tester and Peter Irniq (2008) have asserted:

There is likely no other group of indigenous people in the world that has made such a transition—from scattered hunting camps to settlements steeped in the organizational logic and material realities of high modernism—in such a short time (from ca. 1955 to 1965). (p. 57)

The comparatively short colonial period, fast pace of change and era in which change was experienced by Inuit, sets their history apart from most Indigenous peoples elsewhere in North America. That this transition took place more recently did not insulate Inuit from treatment by the Canadian government that fluctuated between neglect, ambivalence, paternalism, experimentation, lack of consultation, and deep disrespect. The manifestations of such relations were unique to the Arctic, but echo problems other Indigenous peoples have encountered.

Mary Simon (2011), former president of the national Inuit representative organization Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, describes the colonial experience:

We Inuit suffered a steady loss of control over our ability to make decisions—decisions

for ourselves and for the lands and waters that have sustained us for thousands of years. We became a colonized people. We were pushed to the margins of political and economic and social power in *Inuit Nunangat* [homelands]. (p. 880)

Similarly, the Qikiqtani Truth Commission (QTC) (2013) has pointedly described the response of government decision-makers and individuals who represented the state to Inuit as follows:

If officials were aware of the challenges of rapid modernization, they did not accept that it was out of all control, or that Qallunaat should concede much autonomy to the different wisdom of the Inuit. Official writings and speeches showed infrequent awareness of the interdependence of Inuit and Qallunaat in either the short or the long term. The decision-makers did not seriously consider Inuit to be immediately useful or competent as partners, let alone leaders, in planning the response to change. In fundamental ways, most officials do not seem to have really believed in the potential of either the North or its people, yet they felt responsible for rescuing those people from a multitude of social and economic ills, and shouldering the burden of telling Inuit how to prepare for the future. (p. 76)

“Telling Inuit how to prepare” included youth being sent to residential schools and resulted in the “forced rupturing of bonds between parents and children” (M. Simon, 2011, p. 881; see also King, 2006). However, Inuit attendance at residential schools occurred largely after WWII, varied considerably by community and family, and does not fit the same pattern seen in southern Canada (H.E. McGregor, in press).

While the timing of colonization and pace of change in the Arctic left Inuit extremely vulnerable, it also offered an opportunity. Only approximately twenty years—fewer for some—passed between the time of permanent settlement, engagement with schooling, and the beginning of political mobilization toward self-determination. The transfer of administrative responsibility for education was passed from the federal government to the NWT government in 1969-70. The Government of Canada had no ongoing involvement in education in the Arctic, whereas they retained it for First Nations holding status. By 1985 local education committees (referred to now as DEAs) were imbued with greater responsibilities and then organized to form regional boards of education. This combination—of parental and community administration over local schools and representation at the regional level to participate in policy decisions and input into curriculum and programs—offered Inuit the opportunity to envision their own system of education. They largely chose to identify and integrate the important aspects of Inuit education: instruction in Inuit languages, traditional environmental knowledge, experiential learning opportunities and Elders as instructors.

Despite early acknowledgement of, and direction to, incorporate language and culture (NWTDE, 1972; 1973), Canada’s northern territories have relied on borrowing curriculum and texts from other jurisdictions (depending on the subject and grade level), with some adaptations

and additions. This was due to less administrative and development capacity, and the need to uphold standards recognized by post-secondary institutions across Canada. Imported curriculum and programs continued to alienate Inuit students and communities from schools. There was a disjuncture between direction and teaching materials, but there was also a tradition of articulating made-in-the-North curriculum expectations. In the 1980s curriculum developers and community members in Nunavut began on the reconceptualization of curriculum to better address the strengths and needs of Inuit and Northern students, as well as to reflect, preserve and revitalize Inuit worldview, language and culture (Aylward, 2009b; H. E. McGregor, 2012a).

Following the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement* in 1993, and acknowledgement of Nunavut as an Inuit homeland through creation of the new territory in 1999, the Government of Nunavut eventually received a mandate to reform educational policy and program delivery in accordance with the wishes of the public in Nunavut, a vast majority of whom are Inuit. In 2009 a made-in-Nunavut *Education Act* came into force mandating that all public schooling facilitate education in accordance with Inuit knowledge and values (GN, 2008). This is the only territorial or provincial jurisdiction in Canada in which an Indigenous people figures so significantly in setting policy, and has engaged the education system in what I call decolonizing (H. E. McGregor, 2012b).

After 2009, to undertake this legislative, policy, curriculum, leadership and program change process, new foundations (philosophies) for education have been in development to facilitate greater responsiveness to Inuit language,¹⁷ culture, values and needs. To inform these new foundations, education staff continued working to document traditional Inuit knowledge generally, as well as in regards to education, child-rearing, and a range of topics relevant to schools, and then apply and combine that knowledge to create contemporary educational objectives (Aylward, 2009b; H. E. McGregor, 2012a). The knowledge shared by Elders and promoted in Nunavut as a guiding framework for change references IQ directly (NDE, 2007). For the most part, this work has been led by a group of long-term northern educators, both Inuit and non-Inuit.

¹⁷ “Inuit Language” is the term used in Nunavut legislation to refer to Inuktitut, including various dialects of Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun, written in syllabics or roman orthography.

2.5 Story Stream 2: Cathy's Stories

The second story stream flows from the interviews I conducted with Cathy, offering her expertise, stories and perspectives on sites of change in the Nunavut school system over time. Describing the methodology by which I engaged with Cathy, built a research relationship with her, conducted the interviews, and made use of the resulting data, forms the largest portion of this chapter. I introduce methodological literature from the areas of expert interviews, portraiture, and the use of personal narratives in historical research, intentionally interspersed with my explanation for how the interviews unfolded. The detail I share here reflects the central role of this story stream in the rest of the work, building towards answering all four of my research questions.

This section is lengthy for two other reasons. First, because of the personal and professional relationship between Cathy and me that precedes and blends with our research relationship. I have faced some predicaments in engaging with Cathy's voice, representing her, and positioning myself in relation to her through this academic work. How much personal information is too much? How much do I remind the reader that I am her daughter? Recognizing that I cannot pre-emptively answer all such questions, I imagine that readers might wonder about the challenges associated with representing one's mother as a person and public servant, including whether or not I take a critical view of her or her stories. I weave commentary on this issue throughout this section, but particularly direct readers to section 2.6.3 "Reciprocity in Research with Cathy" wherein I discuss our research relationship.

Second, to show how my methodological choices relate to the stories constructed necessitates that I draw from several areas of scholarship; my research does not fit cleanly into one methodological niche. Some examples of work that could be considered similar to mine (i.e. portraiture), demonstrate limitations when researchers do not provide enough access to their methodology, as I discuss further below. I view methodological non-transparency as a problem in research, and particularly for Indigenous communities interested in engaging with research—either through producing their own or through critiquing the findings of other researchers.

2.5.1 Timing of Interviews

When I began to prepare for interviews with Cathy, she was in the midst of her final four months of work as Executive Director of C&SS, a position she had held for 10 years. Her retirement in November 2013 also fell exactly 40 years after she had begun work as a teacher in the Nunavut community of Kugluktuk (formerly Coppermine, NWT). Cathy's commitment to

northern education was such that for her to leave her position with the department was one of the most significant changes to a consistent feature of her identity up to that point.

I did not plan for this moment in Cathy's career to coincide with the interviews for my dissertation research. When I began I did not know her retirement date, and I had not viewed the possibility of her retirement as particularly significant to my research (especially because I did not originally plan for Cathy's stories to take as much prominence as they now have). In retrospect, we both view it as a useful and positive coincidence. Leaving her position was already causing Cathy to reflect on what her role had been, and how continuity of departmental projects would be supported in her absence. It freed her from speaking exclusively "on behalf" of the department—an obligation she would have felt more acutely as an ongoing employee. The interviews provided a venue for the feelings and observations she might have had at this sensitive time, but otherwise might not have shared.

Cathy was supportive of my intention to document long-term views on education in Nunavut, although she sometimes expressed scepticism at her ability to contribute something of value. She oscillated between deferring to me in articulating what might be significant about her experience and perspective, and strongly suggesting or identifying things she wanted to talk about—stories she wanted to tell. Knowing that she was leaving her position at times seemed to heighten her sense of purpose in sharing with me. On the other hand, Cathy expected and hoped to continue to be involved in Nunavut education somehow, through project work of some kind, and my parents were not planning to move away from Iqaluit. Therefore, the interviews were not viewed by either of us as constituting ultimate closure on her role in education.

My research also coincided with significant moments of transition in the history of education in Nunavut, which could not have been anticipated. The 16 interviews in 2013, and one more in 2014, took on greater comprehensiveness because of the loss of institutional memory as Cathy (and several other senior managers, coincidentally) retired from the NDE. During the months before her departure Cathy was grappling with project, staff and reporting transitions, made more uncertain because it remained unclear—up until close to her departure—whether, or when, a replacement would be sought to fill the position.

In terms of the larger context, Nunavut turned 15 years old and was entering its third political mandate. The election closely preceded Cathy's retirement date. Politically, this moment was one in which politicians and public servants were being held to account, particularly in education with the impending presentation of the Auditor General's report on education

(2013). These are some of the most identifiable ways in which the interviews were shaped by the river of time.

In working towards understanding and conveying the historicity of any given experience, the flow of time is relevant to offering context for the life of an individual and an individual's sense of time. Put differently, Maynes, Pierce & Laslett (2008) note that "...when events happen within the individual life course and when they happen with reference to historical temporalities are, we suggest, analytical keys to understanding people's lives and the stories they tell about them" (p. 3). Also, as the following quote demonstrates, the views of the researcher and participant are always located with contemporary understandings, even if the research focuses on the past: "Effective analyses of personal narratives must take into consideration that *any rendition of the past has to be seen in the context of its motives in the present (i.e. at the time of the telling), its symbolic power, and its contextual framing*" (Maynes et al., 2008, p. 148, emphasis in original). While the importance of the timing of our interviews cannot be underestimated, it is in terms of producing a particular set of stories, rather than producing the "best" or "right" stories. Had the interviews been held another time, some of them would have been different and that is a level of contingency within which narrative research always works. I view it as a strength of this inquiry that relates to each of the story streams, and is discussed further in Chapter 7.

2.5.2 Expert Interviews

My interviews with Cathy can partially be considered "expert interviews" because I draw on her knowledge of work processes within an institution, following her position of responsibility for such processes. The emphasis in literature on expert interviews concerning scientific and techno-rational forms of expertise¹⁸ do not dovetail well with the situated experience and wisdom related to historically-informed social, political and educational change that I was looking for. Nevertheless some points are worth referencing so as to clarify how my work speaks to and differs from expert interview practices.

¹⁸ These are, for example: using it as an efficient and concentrated (time-saving) method of gathering data; substituting an expert for another source that is difficult or impossible to access; opening doors to further delve into the field or access other individuals; quickly obtaining good results; privileging an 'elite' perspective in contrast to that of a lay person; or, reconstructing specialized, technical or procedural knowledge (Bogner, Littig, & Menz, 2009, p. 2-3). None of these reasons for selecting an expert interview as a method were primarily driving my methodological design decisions.

There is little discussion of expert interviews as distinct from other forms of interviews in qualitative research guides commonly used by educational researchers (Delamont, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; 2011; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Schwandt, 2007). The edited collection *Interviewing Experts* (Bogner, Littig, & Menz, 2009) addresses issues surrounding the definition and methodology of expert interviewing, particularly in Europe where it seems to be more commonly distinguished from other forms of qualitative interviews. Meuser & Nagel (2009) define an expert as: a person who actively participates in some field or community of practice, holds knowledge that others operating in the field do not, and is recognized by that field or community in such a way that gives them authority/responsibility to enact the knowledge. The expert contributes to constructing social reality (ie. identifying and solving problems) on the basis of their expertise (Pfadenhauer, 2009). This is useful in describing the potential I saw in holding extended interviews with Cathy in terms of her role in the NDE, and my interest in the organizational and cultural history of the Nunavut school system.

My questions to Cathy often followed a flow comparable to Meuser & Nagel's (2009) "process-oriented analytic view," centering on how expertise is developed and leveraged. This includes consideration of the plurality of sources of knowledge; the embeddedness of experts in socio-cultural settings; communicative practices; and, "in view of the complexity, uncertainty and ambiguity of expert knowledge, it is the expert's habitus, his awareness of contingencies, and his strategies of self-assurance, which finally come into focus as an essential component of her or his knowledge" (Meuser & Nagel, 2009, p. 31).

Despite emphasis on placing experts in context and even offering nods to ethnography, I found little attention in this collection to the blending of career history work with institutional description and professional knowledge that I have pursued in my research. On the other hand, how they characterize the motivations of an expert to participate in research resonates with what I understand to have been at play between Cathy and me. We share a common: professional background, understanding of the social relevance of the research, desire to help "make a difference," professional curiosity about the topic, and interest in exchanging ideas with another person (Bogner, Littig & Menz, 2009, p. 2). These points are further explored in the section "Reciprocity in Research with Cathy" below.

In terms of my purposes for the interviews with Cathy, some partially align with the literature. For example, they did serve an *exploratory* purpose "helping the researcher to develop a clearer idea of the problem", and "structure the area under investigation and to generate hypotheses" (Bogner & Menz, 2009, p. 46). Particularly in looking for areas of educational

practice to place my focus, Cathy's input has helped me to explore the landscape. Another type of expert interview is *systematizing*, wherein the expert is "a source of information with regard to the sequences of events and social situations" (Bogner & Menz, 2009, p. 47). In my research Cathy offers this kind of contribution when we discuss how she facilitates a leadership development workshop on the history of Nunavut, for example, or when she discusses how education staff go about working closely with Elders. Thirdly, the *theory-generating* interview has been conceptualized as "subjective action orientations and implicit decision making maxims of experts from a particular specialist field are the starting point of the formulation of theory" (Bogner & Menz, 2009, p. 48). In my research this can be seen in the ways that I work towards understanding how decolonizing and historical consciousness have been enacted in Cathy's practices as an educational leader, and in some cases extended into policy and procedure within the NDE.

The three types of expert interviews described in the collection do not fully account for how I engage with Cathy, particularly not fully describing the career history components. Clearly, I do not position Cathy exclusively as a source of objective knowledge independent of her biography, relationships, context or participation in the construction of meaning along with her colleagues, and along with me through our interviews. This gap takes me into linking my inquiry with theory in the area of using personal narratives in history/social science and portraiture.

2.5.3 Preparations for Interviews

As I prepared for the first interview I became convinced we should begin chronologically, from early in Cathy's life, and proceed like a life history, but focused on her career. This instinct was driven both by my own sense of narrative coherence and by what I expected Cathy would consider important in providing context for the stories that would follow. This differed somewhat from the plan contained in my research proposal, when the draft interview questions were more exclusively focused on her recent work responsibilities.

The decision to take this approach was also shaped by a minor accident in 2013, in which Cathy suffered a head trauma resulting in temporary amnesia and concussive symptoms. She recovered fairly quickly and without lingering impacts. However, seeing my mother struggle with her memory—even temporarily—led me to feel the opportunity should be taken to document her career stories as comprehensively as we could manage. I viewed this work as important personally, as well as in terms of informing the dissertation. Cathy agreed that taking a

more comprehensive approach would be useful to her, and potentially valuable to our family or the Nunavut education community in future. With this intention, I was not sure how many interviews would be necessary to cover the key events and themes of her career, though I always maintained a mental map of how it might unfold based on my prior knowledge. This certainly would have been harder to anticipate had I not known a great deal about her life already.

I developed a more thorough list of questions I hoped to ask based on this career history approach, and asked Cathy to make her own list of topics to discuss. When we met to compare our lists, most of Cathy's topics were specific projects that had been important to her work over the years. The topics I had were more personal, chronologically organized, and more thematic in terms of work responsibilities. Cathy agreed to go about the interviews using my questions, potentially revisiting any of the projects she noted, if we missed them through my questions. We agreed that I would always let Cathy know the general time period or theme of each interview in advance, and that in some instances I might provide a list of my prepared questions in advance so she could gather her thoughts before the interview.

We also agreed that the unedited interview transcripts would become intellectual property belonging to both of us: she could use the data in any way she wanted, and I would use the data for my dissertation and subsequent publications. Use of the transcripts was valuable to Cathy because of her interest in pursuing her own writing projects during retirement. We also discussed that I would give her opportunities to edit or clarify what she said in any excerpts used in my dissertation, and that I would invite her to read and provide feedback on the draft work more generally. In this way, I tried to build the sense that we would negotiate decisions for how her stories would be used in my research on an ongoing basis.

Cathy and I also discussed how to navigate sensitive material that might arise. She expressed her desire to tell stories about challenges in the past, as well as successes. This desire was mediated by her awareness of still being part of the relatively small education community in Nunavut and not wanting to "name names" or damage relationships within it. During one of the last interviews she said: "Even though I'm actually retired, I still feel that it's such a small world. And there's almost nothing you can say that people can't identify who you're talking about." We agreed to see whether, and how, any potentially sensitive material would arise, and make judgments at the time of drafting the dissertation about what she was not comfortable with, including in the final work. We also discussed that the potential sensitivity of some stories might be diminished given that the dissertation, or publications associated with it, were probably not

going to be produced for several years after her retirement—a period in which much could change.

To prepare for each interview I drafted between 8 and 11 questions related to the chronological period or the theme I had identified, taking into consideration things I already knew or expected she would want to talk about. I also thought about what might be a logical flow of conversation that did not necessarily ask directly about topics, but rather let things arise. There were always a few questions that I did not use, or changed the order of the questions, depending on how it felt at the time. I was continually revisiting or stretching the order of the interviews and the questions within them depending on whether or not she and I were both satisfied with the topic being “covered”—our shared sense that “enough” had been said. In order to leave room for discussion of things I did not anticipate, I asked open-ended questions and at the end of an interview I would usually ask her, “I have finished with my questions, is there anything else you would like to discuss or are you ready to move on?” and sometimes she would think of something more to add.

2.5.4 Personal Narratives and Portraiture

Several methodology books have helped me refine how I describe the career history and story elements of my research: *Telling Stories: The Use of Personal Narratives in the Social Sciences and History* (Maynes et al., 2008), *The Art and Science of Portraiture* (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997) and *Letting Stories Breathe: A Socio-Narratology* (Frank, 2010). Each book is discussed here in terms of how it has instigated questions and clarifications in describing the process I undertook.

Maynes, Pierce & Laslett (2008) review and synthesize research from a range of disciplines that use personal narratives: in-depth interviews, oral histories, autobiographies, diaries, and other sources referred to as “a retrospective first-person account of the evolution of an individual life over time and in social context” (p. 4). Personal narratives provide, “access to individuals’ claims about how their motivations, emotions, imaginations—in other words, about the subjective dimensions of social action—have been shaped by cumulative life experience” (Maynes et al., 2008, p. 3). I am interested in the motivations, knowledges and imaginings—the stories—that educators in Nunavut have applied to create change. My interviews with Cathy, as well as an analysis of the assumptions embedded in Nunavut school system materials and documents, are intended to illuminate subjective dimensions of social action and the perspectives of those with long experience negotiating education in Nunavut.

Portraiture methodology is one such approach to capturing personal narratives in social science research. It seeks “the richness, complexity, and dimensionality of human experience in social and cultural context, conveying the perspectives of the people who are negotiating those experiences” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997, p. 3). If there is resemblance between what I write here and portraiture methodology I hope it is in the sense of creating, “a narrative that is at once complex, provocative, and inviting, that attempts to be holistic, revealing the dynamic interaction of values, personality, structure and history” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997, p. 11). My approach to research echoes portraiture in terms of: a concern for documenting success in contrast to the focus on pathology and failure in much education research; an interest in using language that may help to communicate beyond the walls of the academy; the goal of developing a convincing and authentic narrative; a self-consciousness of voice; and, a pursuit of reciprocity in research relationships that gives credit to participants for their wisdom. However, as will be discussed below, I am unsure as to whether some of these objectives can—and should—actually be met. What is lost and gained in working towards an “authentic narrative”? What is lost and gained in using language that appeals to audiences beyond the academy? These are questions I asked myself, among many others. I maintain several reservations in my engagement with portraiture methodology because the authors’ defense of it as a social science reads as overstated and under-problematized, such as the description “blending art and science, humanistic sensibilities and scientific rigor” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997, p. 3).

2.5.5 Validity and Constructing Good Stories

How can validity be understood and established when the researcher has so much interpretive control over personal narratives in qualitative research? The process of validating knowledge claims depends on the kinds of evidence and interpretive claims presented, as well as the characteristics and degree of believability that a given community (i.e. academic discipline) agrees should constitute a valid claim (Polkinghorne, 2007). Researchers must offer persuasive arguments in this regard. For example, Fenwick English (2000) draws on postmodernist influences to critique Lawrence-Lightfoot’s portraiture because her accounts *are* so convincing. English (2000) makes the point that: “there is no way to unmake the omelet (portrait) once it is cooked (constructed)” (p. 21). He argues that portraiture—while attempting to distinguish itself from positivist research tenets—actually relies on a stable notion of truth, with little attention to the possibility of multiple truths and the contingency of knowledge. English (2000) states:

What remains shrouded in portraiture is the politics of vision, that is, the uncontested right of the portraitist/researcher to situate, center, label, and fix in the tintured hues of verbal descriptive prose what is professed to be “real.” Admitting that such an activity is subjective does not come close to dealing with the power to engage in it. It is that power that remains concealed in portraiture. (p. 21-22)

In other words, the researcher appears to have an omnipotent and monological view, instead of speaking with the participant dialogically (Frank, 2010).

Extending these concerns with more specificity, Polkinghorne (2007) articulates four “threats” to validity in narrative research that flow from differences between what an individual experienced and how they report that experience in story, and whether either can be taken as “truth” or “reality”:

The disjunction between a person’s actual experienced meaning and his or her storied description has four sources: (a) the limits of language to capture the complexity and depth of experienced meaning, (b) the limits of reflection to bring notice to the layers of meaning that are present outside of awareness, (c) the resistance of people because of social desirability to reveal fully the entire complexities of the felt meanings of which they are aware, and (d) the complexity caused by the fact that texts are often a co-creation of the interviewer and participant. (p. 480)

Likewise, English (2000) points out that in portraiture, “there is no external, independent referent that can be used to reliably ascertain the truth-telling capacity and limitations of the portraitist” (p. 23). These points resonate with a metaphor offered by Frank (2010), drawing on Russian theorist Shklovsky, that stories should not necessarily be thought of as a window into someone else’s experience but rather a sketch of a window: “The viewer does not attempt to look through it to something beyond, much less assume that the sketch perfectly represents what lies beyond. Instead, the sketch itself is well worth looking at” (p. 89). In this work I weave back and forth between taking Cathy’s stories as sketches of windows, and looking through them as evidence of the past or as procedural knowledge about the school system.

While I cannot profess to have taken the unconscious into account as noted by Polkinghorne in (b) above, aspects of the other concerns were addressed both directly and indirectly with Cathy during the research. These include: maintaining focus on the co-constitutive relationship between the individual whose personal narratives are being shared and their social context; and, working towards transparency around the intersubjectivity and non-finalizability of research.

2.5.5.1 Working between the spaces of individual and social

Maynes, Pierce & Laslett (2008) insist researchers maintain a dual analysis towards the “individual” and “social” throughout their methodological framing, avoiding privileging one

over the other, “to understand human lives as governed simultaneously according to the dynamics and temporalities of the individual life course and of collective histories” (p. 69). While the co-constitutive and interrelated characteristics producing “individual” or “social” experience are oversimplified in this characterization, the authors rightly point out the importance of context: “Alertness to the role of historical and institutional context is critical to the effective analysis of personal narratives, but it is not sufficient. To put our point bluntly: Individuals are shaped by their contexts but never reducible to them” (Maynes et al., 2008, p. 67). By shifting in and out of interviews with Cathy throughout the dissertation and referencing other literature and evidence (i.e. policies, approved documents, newspaper articles), I mean to oscillate between individual and context.

The life history of an individual used in research with this epistemological approach is not viewed as limited by being entirely subjective, nor taken to be complete truth, but part of a situated narrative. Another definition of life history methodology helps to illuminate these contingencies:

Hence life history is a dynamic and recursive process between researcher and participant. The two parties jointly construct a narrative via multiple data sources, [...] The final document is a contextually bound representation of the life of the participant along with his or her relationship with the researcher. (Tierney & Clemens, 2012, p. 267-268)

While I did not pursue a comprehensive life history with Cathy (rather, focusing largely on her career), such characteristics of personal narratives apply here. Her stories form work in progress, partial narrative sequences imbued with memories, and are shaped by storytelling conventions of the specific social context in which they were told. They were also shaped by the timing of the telling, as discussed above. And yet, “personal narrative evidence can never be taken as a transparent description of ‘experience’ or a straightforward expression of identity” (Maynes et al., 2008, p. 41). The characteristics of being “incomplete, open-ended and contingent” present a challenge to readers of social science or historical research who expect more stable claims to be produced (Maynes et al., 2008, p. 127; see also Frank, 2010). In Chapter 3 I list some of the limitations of Cathy’s view, which can be better understood after describing her career history.

Therefore, sharing a story or memory from Cathy concerning her experience with developing a curriculum, for example, is not primarily to be used in this dissertation as a universal representation of experience or reality in Nunavut, or as “complete” or “strictly factual” evidence, but rather an anecdote and insight that is expected to be revealing. While I recognize that every Nunavut educator is different, I attempt to demonstrate why I view Cathy’s stories as particularly significant for answering my research questions. Seixas (Seixas & Morton,

2013), Flyvbjerg (2001), and Frank (2010) (who also cites Alessandro Portelli in this regard) all point out the value of choosing revealing exemplars in historical and social science research—as opposed to necessarily relying on sampling or generalizability advanced in other paradigms—while working from different disciplinary affiliations. Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis (1997) claim, in contrast to “classical conceptions of social science,” “the portraitist seeks to document and illuminate the complexity and detail of a unique experience or place, hoping that the audience will see themselves reflected in it” (p. 14). While the “unit of analysis” here is frequently Cathy’s own experiences with, or memories of, initiatives in the Nunavut school system, I attempt to illuminate them so that educators who have worked in Nunavut through this same period would find some resonance. Cathy’s stories and observations can be brought into dialogue with other documentary sources and with my own experience—these are the external referents on which I will draw.

2.5.5.2 Working towards transparency in intersubjectivity

Maynes, Pierce & Laslett (2008) recommend a careful balance between the voice of the participant and the voice of the researcher, as well as commentary by the researcher about how both come together to produce intersubjective findings. Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis (1997) recommend, “a constant process of calibration between the researcher’s conceptual framework, her developing hypotheses, and the collection of grounded data” (p. 43). They declare: “A reader who knows where the portraitist is coming from can more comfortably enter the piece, scrutinize the data, and form independent interpretations” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997, p. 96).

However, my experience reading Lawrence-Lightfoot’s work aligns with English’s (2000) critique: I usually cannot see how she, as the portraitist-researcher, follows the data (the words of her participants, her own observations and other evidence) into creation of the story she tells. What questions did she ask her participant? Did she offer them the opportunity to comment on transcripts of their conversations? Did the interviews go on longer than they had planned, and if so, why? The imperative to let readers into the process of construction seems to be in tension with one of the central strategies of portraiture, that representations should use authenticity as a standard. To that end, Lawrence-Lightfoot’s practice of portraiture in books such as *I’ve Known Rivers* (1994) and *Balm in Gilead* (1988) feature immensely detailed description, novel-like narration and artistic evocations that reach towards providing the reader with an experience of resonance. In my experience her narratives feel authentic, and they are beautiful. But that is

partly because they do not reflect the messy work—breaking the narrative flow—of making meaning. I would have more ground from which to measure my experience of authenticity, were Lawrence-Lightfoot to provide more commentary on how she constructed the terms by which narration was made possible, and choices the narrator made.

One strategy to better illustrate how the researcher traces evidence towards interpretations, and finally to conclusions, is sharing excerpts of conversations between the researcher and participant(s) for readers “to make their own sense of them” (Maynes et al., 2008, p. 4). To this end, I often use extended quotations from Cathy that demonstrate the way she tells stories. I provide examples of the dialogue between Cathy and me, giving the reader some access to our engagement and her voice in response to my prompts. I also continue to feature Cathy’s perspective (story stream 2) in Chapter 7, discussing my theoretical framework with her explicitly. This breaks with the convention of reserving the conclusion for a place where the researcher’s “expert” voice is expected to be most prominent—and dominant. I do so partly because Cathy is interested in, and capable of, engaging with me at this level, whereas some research participants may not be so inclined. More importantly, I do so to move towards drawing conclusions in relationship with Cathy as a participant, and in relationship to the context of the Nunavut school system as a place. This offers no guarantee and is never itself perfectly representative or transparent, but increases insight into how I went about listening and making meaning in learning from, and with, Cathy.

In well-defended personal narrative research the author offers context, fact checking or interpretation of inconsistencies, synthesis between multiple narratives, and denotes significance. Maynes, Pierce & Laslett (2008) point out: “Narrators of life stories, in other words, should be regarded as privileged but not definitive observers of their own historical contexts” (p. 45). Likewise, in portraiture the researcher’s role and voice is said to be extremely active in the research and resulting representations,

...not only in defining the focus and field of the inquiry, but also in navigating the relationships with the subjects, in witnessing and interpreting the action, in tracing the emergent themes, and in creating the narrative. At each one of these stages, the self of the portraitist emerges as an instrument of inquiry, an eye on perspective-taking, an ear that discerns nuances, and a voice that speaks and offers insights. (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997, p. 13)

Indeed, I chose most of the topics and designed the questions used to prompt our interviews, while working towards offering flexibility and responsiveness to Cathy’s suggestions of things to cover, or stories towards which she moved. This assertiveness and direction setting on my part is not necessarily in keeping with the way a young person would engage an Elder’s

teachings, either in my understanding of Inuit tradition or in my own family tradition. In this sense, my interviews with Cathy slid between a qualitative interview in a professional setting with an expert, a conversation about our family's history with my mother, and a process of seeking guidance from an older person holding wisdom. This approach is not to position Cathy as having all the answers, but rather providing informed insight into what questions may be of most worth, where to look for answers, how to look for answers, and also a person with whom to reflect as the learning proceeds. The interviews with Cathy are a jumping off point to explore the kinds of conversations about change that are occurring in the Nunavut school system, and how ideas about change have been formed. They provide examples of stories that deserve further exploration in dialogue with other sources.

Attempts at transparency in the process of collecting and analyzing personal narratives allows readers to make judgments about how sound the conclusions are, and may help show audiences less familiar with this type of evidence how to assess the knowledge claims (Maynes et al., 2008, p. 12). This may involve discussion of: the potentially differing motivations of the researcher and the participant(s), the constraints and rewards of participating in the research, the situations and positions that impact each person, the categories of analysis—and the language—that each brings to the encounter, and the potential for different intended audiences between the researcher and participant(s) (Maynes et al., 2008, p. 99). Several of these topics are dealt with in the section entitled “Reciprocity in Research with Cathy” below.

I work towards research that is balanced and careful and, similar to portraiture, I am interested in seeking representations that offer as much attention—if not more—to “goodness,” as to pathology and failure in education. Lawrence-Lightfoot is careful to clarify that in using the word “goodness” she is not advocating for a solely celebratory or idealized representation. She recognizes that in every human experience, “there will, of course, be ample evidence of vulnerability and weakness,” and “counterpoint and contraindications of strength and vulnerability [...] are central to the expression of goodness” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997, p. 9). I may suggest implications of Cathy's experiences for other teachers, and whether or not those implications are positive or negative ought to be considered critically in relation to other evidence and literature, and the perspectives made possible through the illumination of context in this study.

The prominence of Cathy's contributions is not primarily intended to venerate her accomplishments, but reflects that Cathy has a considerable range of experience and depth of knowledge. She is a respected member of the education community in Nunavut, now retired.

Cathy raises useful questions to be asked of, or considered by, other educators in the Nunavut school system. Cathy is a reflective person, skilled and capable of thinking critically, and willing to consider other points of view. She is capable of observing, describing and engaging with the differences between ways of knowing, being and doing in Inuit language, culture and tradition with those of Euro-Canadians and outsiders who have influenced relationships in Nunavut. She attributes her views to her experience and her interactions with others, and she does not claim a monopoly on good ideas in Nunavut. The Nunavut school system is one that struggles from poor and thin institutional memory, because of a high rate of staff turnover, poor documentation procedures and generally high expectations of staff, leaving them little time to reflect/record. Cathy's long experience and good memory are an archive in this context simply by virtue of there being few other people with her length and depth of involvement. And yet, she is implicated in the system of schooling that emerged from colonizing relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the Arctic, as a non-Inuit educational leader having held a position of responsibility for many years. I discuss this again briefly in Chapter 3, "Limitations of Cathy's View."

2.5.6 Characteristics of Interviews

Describing some of the characteristics of our interviews here is important because of the partial and fragmented ways in which Cathy's stories will appear later in the dissertation, and the difference between how it will look and how we conducted the work. Each interview lasted between one and a half hours and two hours. The first time we met I could feel that we were both aware of the performance of "an interview": we were sitting stiffly, speaking haltingly and looking at the audio recorder as if it were another sentient being in the room. By the second and third time we had become less conscious of the recording device and spoke more freely, but maintained a pattern that was distinct from how we would speak to each other outside the event of an interview.

I asked Cathy whether she had moments of feeling interrogated, or whether she felt I had an answer already in mind that I wanted to hear in response to a question. She said neither had arisen for her, but that she wished sometimes there had been more dialogue between us. For most of our research process I insisted on calling the interviews "conversations," with the idea in mind that this would facilitate a more reciprocal engagement between us. Cathy's summative description is that they did not feel like a reciprocal dialogue: "I have wished sometimes that it could be more of an actual discussion. And not just sort of—it feels sometimes a little one-way."

I contributed less to the interviews than I may originally have intended or would have contributed if we had not been sitting with an audio recorder between us, so I have switched to calling them interviews as a way to reflect more closely what occurred between us. I recall a strong awareness of the interviews as events; a context in which time was very precious because there was so much to ask Cathy about. I did at times share memories or observations, but I did not wish to take up space that was best used for her to speak uninterrupted by my lines of thought. I was also influenced by the methodological approaches to interviews that I had read and discussed in qualitative research classes, in which emphasis is placed on the interviewer holding back from intervening in—and therefore shaping—the participant’s responses (even though that can never absolutely be the case).

Characteristic of our similar capacity for focus and work ethic, we maintained formality and discipline about each meeting, in the sense that we chose times and spaces so that we would not be interrupted. We never stopped the interviews mid-way through for a break, and only once or twice did we continue talking after the audio recorder was turned off. I remember distinctly the feeling of being filled up with words and ideas after that length of discussion and being ready for quiet and a change in activity when we were done. I took some notes during our interviews, particularly indicating on my list of questions any changes to the order that I would make and noting things to come back to later. Cathy would often write down my questions as I asked them and refer to her notes as she began to talk, or at the end of an interview, putting them aside in between. She often brought books, notes or documents with her that she thought might be relevant, and sometimes referred to them directly.

Cathy slid in and out of talking as though she was aware of the eventual audience for her stories. Sometimes she seemed to think of me as her audience, but other times she would refer directly to a wider readership. She would say “I don’t know if I want you to use this...” but usually proceeded to tell the story without the necessity of an answer from me. Other times she would explain something with more detail than she knew I needed to understand her story, demonstrating she was conscious of how someone less familiar with the context might need details and cues. There were few occasions when I felt I needed to prompt Cathy to provide more clarification or explanation. She is a motivated storyteller and only seemed reluctant when she did not understand what I meant by a question or could not immediately see how to answer it.

In one of our last interviews I invited Cathy to describe the process we had undertaken from her perspective. I asked: “If you met someone new and were explaining it, what would you say about the process?” She proceeded to answer:

...it was like doing a history of education in the NWT and Nunavut. So the process was like reviewing the history. Because I've experienced a lot of that history; most of that history. It was... it was sort of like doing a retrospective on my whole career. Um, I think it was very challenging at times. Because some of the questions were really surprising to me and unexpected, and I couldn't get over 'Where did they come from?' How could you think up those questions when I... they aren't necessarily questions that I had thought about? And a lot of it I've thought about maybe over the years, but not as intentionally as it is now being explicated through the questions and the process.

Cathy's description of our process being like a history of education made sense to me, but her depiction of the questions being unexpected was surprising. I did not remember her responding with the kind of incredulity she seems to convey in this passage, although I had sometimes observed hesitation or uncertainty as she collected her thoughts. When I asked if she could remember or provide an example of a question that was particularly surprising nothing came immediately to her mind. Later in reading the transcripts she noted several of the questions that produced this response, such as one I asked in the first interview: "If you could talk to the young you, as a mentor to yourself [as a teacher in Kugluktuk], what would you tell yourself?" As I have often observed, and as Cathy explained, she sees herself as a reflective professional: "In so many activities that I've done, I've always been thinking about 'What are the implications, what's the significance, what would I do differently, what have I learned, what does this make me think of?'" Being asked new questions about the past and about a context in which she had consistently been a person who held answers—usually answers to questions she had thought about many times before—was unusual for her.

I went on to ask Cathy how it had *felt* participating in the interviews. She explained:

The first word that came into my head was 'emotional.' There's been a lot of ups and downs, a lot of 'ahas,' a lot of sadness, a lot of... like a whole range of emotions. Maybe even sometimes anger, wonder, joy, probably cognitive dissonance in a good—and I mean that in a good way—not a bad way.

In my memory we certainly talked about many things that elicited pride and appreciation in Cathy but we also discussed topics that were punctuated by sadness and frustration, expressed in her tears. Nevertheless, I would not have singled out emotion as an overriding feature. I followed up by asking if it was my questions that produced the emotion in her, and if she could give an example of a question that had elicited the anger or sadness she mentioned. Cathy said, "It is not the question but what the question generates in terms of thinking about: how do you make change—that's the right kind of change—to meet the needs that aren't even clear to everybody?" Grappling with this issue is not an unusual occurrence for Cathy and the emotion associated with it does not necessarily distinguish our interviews from what she experienced in the workplace

regularly. When I asked her to confirm that these emotions arise outside of our interviews, rather than being produced by them, she answered:

On a regular basis. And have always. And that's because, I guess, caring so much. And um, having such conviction about what... I don't know if 'should' is a good word, but what is the right thing to do? And how to do it? And seeing it *not* happen, and seeing it being completely cut off and denied, and opposite things happening. Seeing backsliding and seeing the momentum, and knowing, again, 'this isn't new.' So if you look at the phases of history of education in Nunavut, this has happened before.

As Cathy spoke in more detail I began to perceive that the issue of “backsliding” had already been on her mind that day, independent of our reflection on the interviews. I sensed a connection emerging between her memories of being emotional when telling stories about the past, with feeling emotional about her view that Nunavut schools were in another moment of backsliding in the present. For Cathy, negative emotions were associated with changes in direction and implementation that she did not think reflected a shared vision for culturally-responsive education centering the unique needs and strengths of Nunavummiut. Despite her own efforts at sustaining positive changes, Cathy experiences this awareness of the past and her perception of the flow of time as being cyclical, “this has happened before.” The tension between knowing one must ask, “what is the right thing to do?” and also facing the possibility that regardless of what one does history will bring the same problems back again, is an overriding intellectual and emotional feature of thinking and talking about education in Nunavut for Cathy. Her memory of emotion associated with the interviews was not disassociated from her awareness of challenges in the present, which elicit emotion because they are connected to memories of similar challenges in the past.

Frank (2010) notes these features of story as it works with memory. Story offers a process of memory in action (as opposed to a repository) that responds to the needs of the present, offering salience and emotional impact, as the teller “constantly reassembles” their individual life and collective experience: “these stories help people deal with their fears of what change brings, and they express hopes for what change might bring” (Frank, 2010, p. 83).

I asked Cathy if she felt she had been able to articulate and represent the truth as she understands it. While at this time I had not read Polkinghorne's caution about the threat to narrative validity in “the limits of language to capture the complexity and depth of experiential meaning” (2007, p. 480), my reading in the areas of poststructural theory and memory studies made me curious about this problem in storytelling. My question was: “Do you think that you'll remember a sense of not really being able to align what you thought with what you said?” Cathy responded that occasionally she struggled with putting things into words, and being conscious

that readers will engage with her words without being able to really access what she is trying to represent. She did not see the issue as something she would have remembered or been significantly concerned with. More significant in her mind was that there had been examples she could have provided to clarify or specify what might otherwise be dismissed as a generalization, but she did not feel sharing such specifics would be appropriate in the small and sensitive community of Nunavut educators:

If I remember anything that's kind of negative, it will be some of the examples that would have made what I'm saying come to life that I'm a little hesitant to actually use. I make a generalization and usually it's helpful to give an example because then that does help the generalization to be understood. And sometimes when I'm saying something negative I'm a little hesitant to give the actual example.

Again, touching on the potential sensitivity associated with “inside” knowledge held by a public servant or committed community member, this kind of slippage is a regular occurrence of self-editing, silences and censoring that research participants engage in (Maynes et al., 2008, p. 121-124).

On several occasions Cathy expressed concern about her story being appropriately contextualized and depicted as no more than one person's narrative. She did not want her story to preclude contrasting perspectives and experiences in Nunavut education, nor depict her as working in isolation. She said stridently:

This could be just ‘Here's a story’ as long as it's presented as ‘a’ story, not ‘the’ story. Because other people, as I said earlier, will have a different perspective about what might have been valuable to do. They might think that attention should have been paid to other things than what I've chosen to pay attention to. And I'm also concerned that it isn't just me that's done this work, it's many people that have done every one of these things that I've talked about. So that has to come out. I mean maybe I have been a catalyst. Maybe I've been an innovator. But it isn't just my story, it's lots of other people's stories.

To address this concern I explained that in the dissertation and resulting publications there would be as much transparent and specific attention to what claims can reasonably be made using her stories, and that her stories are significant even while primarily reflecting one person's experience. Part of the purpose of including these discussions between us regarding the methodology of the research is to demonstrate the intentions we both held for the work and what we think the stories can do when they are made accessible to the public. In her view and mine, there is no reason to mask the limitations of the study or overestimate the claims made possible by it. As I have argued above, however, there is a more complicated relationship between method and outcome here than is traditionally held by quasi-scientific research methodologies in which notions of validity closer to positivism are sought and upheld.

2.5.7 Process of Looking for Stories

The words that appear in these chapters emerged from close, recursive engagement with the transcripts of interviews with Cathy. I set out to write about her career biography, working with Elders, developing curriculum and supporting leadership—and I made the choices that constructed the chapters as the reader finds them. What the reader receives is my story about Cathy and about education, made up from a retelling of stories shared with me. That process was in some ways systematic and in others more emergent. Developing and extending my understanding of Cathy's stories—what felt a bit like living with them—through review of the 17 transcripts, I came to negotiate between the forces of her experiences and expertise, as well as my interests and research questions. Much of what she said, of course, does not appear in this dissertation at all. Also, in sharing the stories during the interviews and in writing the stories in the chapters, Cathy repeatedly encounters my interventions (verbal and written). I hope that, on balance, these interventions enhance her intentions and make her stories more accessible. But I have no assurance of that. There is an element of decision making at play based on what felt right, and that dynamic or variable is excessive to what can be documented and accounted for. What I can do here is explain the process I undertook and provide some insight into it throughout the rest of the dissertation.

2.5.7.1 Transcribing and analyzing

I transcribed approximately 30 hours of audio recording held over 17 interviews, into 365 single-spaced pages. I completed all the transcriptions myself. This involved listening to the audio recording once (at a slow speed via ExpressScribe) to complete the typing, as well as re-listening to it to double-check for accuracy. I then saved these as the “raw” transcripts, meaning I did not add any spaces to create paragraphs between ideas, or edit Cathy's words, or remove small words like “um” and “ah.” This version, which was as close to what Cathy and I said as I felt was possible, became her intellectual property (I provided these transcripts to her electronically).

I reviewed literature on coding interviews prior to undertaking my analysis (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997; Silverman, 2011), but what I found did not offer tools that seemed right for my project. To be more specific, in identifying themes, Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis (1997) recommend listening for: repetitive refrains that appear persistently; resonant metaphors that reveal how participants illuminate their

experience; how cultural and organizational coherence is maintained through ritual or practice; data converging from a variety of sources; and, contrasting dissonant perspectives (p. 193). This is to a certain extent what I did, but I can only say that in retrospect, it did not guide my process at the time. I proceeded to look for themes and track where they arose. When I began the themes were 1) Elders; 2) Policy; 3) Curriculum; 4) Leadership. By the end I had added (in this order): 5) Notable Stories; 6) Notable Questions; 7) ‘Speaking Up’; 8) Cathy’s Teaching Philosophy; 9) Teacher Qualities; 10) Knowledge from the Past; 11) Decolonizing; 12) Process (i.e. research process). To find stories related to these themes I began with the first transcript and worked through each document by using the “Find” function in Microsoft Word to search for the word, and then highlighted it in a distinct colour along with the sentences around it that pertained to that topic. I found this function was not thorough enough, so I read every transcript again to search for each theme, meaning I may have read each transcript upwards of 10 times following transcription.

The sites that form Chapters 4, 5, and 6 (Elders, curriculum, leadership) were already in my mind as potential areas of decolonizing as I began the research, because of my involvement in the system previously. I also worked with them on the basis of Cathy’s interviews, and having considered other sites. The way in which educators participating in these sites were asked to reference or bring forward knowledge from and about the past, expressed through Cathy’s stories and the documents, is the most original product of my analysis. This dissertation does not reflect all of the themes that we covered or that Cathy is capable of, and interested in, exploring.

2.5.7.2 Writing

In developing Cathy’s career biography, I looked for stories or quotes that were particularly poignant in giving a sense of her personality, or in places where my own description would not seem sufficient to conveying the detail. I moved into introducing what her biography has produced in the way of her vision for education, providing frames that could be reinforced and followed up through the following chapters. In this way I tried not to surprise readers with Cathy’s perspective, but clarify from the beginning the type of view she offers.

The other chapters were developed by working closely with sections of the transcripts covering the relevant theme (i.e. Elders) to select quotes and stories. When I selected quotes I wanted to use, I did some light editing on the quote itself as I imported it into my chapter, mostly to remove repetition and extraneous words such as some instances of “ah,” “um,” etc. At times I edited Cathy’s grammar slightly to facilitate clarity, but what remains still conveys her oral style.

In reviewing the chapters Cathy often cringed at her own speech—as an editor herself she found it difficult to live with—but we agreed that how she said things was worthwhile preserving. I referred again and again to the themes worksheet to see if any aspect of what Cathy had said on that theme would add more complexity or significance to the story as it was unfolding. While I cannot say that this was systematic or complete, I aimed towards comprehensiveness and multi-dimensionality with each topic.

When I felt satisfied that the stories, quotes and narrative arc from Cathy that were most significant to each topic had found their place in each chapter, I turned towards incorporating literature and primary documents from the NDE. With the exception of the evaluation of *Aulajaaqtut* curriculum in Chapter 5, I did not usually systematically and separately analyse the documents prior to considering Cathy's stories. I use the documents primarily as corroboration, additional detail, and to illustrate how Cathy's claims were at work in the system. This is partially intended to draw out how the ideas held by long-term educators like Cathy become explicit in materials associated with schools or accessible by school staff. It is also to determine the degree of sustainability and structural supports associated with decolonizing efforts or intentions, and ways of drawing on knowledge from and about the past in school operations. Through my previous employment at the NDE and my ongoing historical research into education in Nunavut I utilize and access many of these documents regularly and maintain a sense of their significance and content that exceeds my use of them for this dissertation. It is also worth noting that Cathy sometimes reminded me of documents that I might draw on when she read over the draft chapters.

The literature review aspect of this dissertation is embedded in each chapter. The literature element of the work was often a layer added after the fact, and back loaded—found at the end of each chapter¹⁹ and in more depth towards the end of the dissertation. The reasons for this have to do with, as explained earlier, my emphasis on the primacy of place, and concern about not imposing distant theoretical or research-based frames on the context of Nunavut. Much as long-term northern educators want to give space for Nunavut ways of knowing, being and doing, I wanted to provide space for the same, before holding ideas up against those from other origins in comparison. I primarily used literature to see how it might extend what I found in Nunavut, but tried not to use it as a measure of validity or quality.

¹⁹ Exceptions to this are where there is a greater amount of Nunavut-based education research on which to draw, so it is featured at the beginning of the chapter to provide, for example, historical context.

2.5.8 Editing and Review with Cathy

In the editing and review stage, I sent Cathy the transcripts, an index, and the excel spreadsheet of my themes electronically. I did not feel it was necessary for my purposes that she read all the transcripts, but she elected to read each one anyway. This is, again, characteristic of her work ethic, attention to detail, and interest in the research. I noted that if there was anything she wanted completely removed from the transcripts we should discuss it, but she did not find anything that warranted removal. Cathy came to Vancouver for two weeks when I had drafts of each chapter for us to review. She read each draft chapter carefully, providing specific editorial suggestions, general comments, and clarified or corrected historical details that I had misunderstood.

Generally this process produced interesting conversation and reinforcement of the approach I took, as well as giving Cathy reassurance and a level of comfort with the work. It did not, however, significantly reorganize or change the work. Most of what we discussed involved the rationale for the way chapters were constructed, and how I anticipated that it would have significance or relevance for the audiences I had in mind. She found some of my analysis and story construction work surprising, but expressed no serious disagreement. Cathy seemed to enjoy and appreciate the process of looking closely at the work and has been involved since in review drafts as well.

2.6 Story Stream 3: Research Journey

The third story stream of this dissertation is my own research journey. In this section I attend to the twists and turns that my research took during the inquiry, with greater attention to detail and greater separation from the other streams than will appear elsewhere in the dissertation. While all of the foregoing content in Chapter 2 fits within this story stream, I also view it as relevant to describe below some of the intentions for the research that I held but did not pursue, the reasons for those choices, and the adjustments I made as a result.

2.6.1 Reshaping Methodology

In my first research proposal, I intended to pursue interviews with Cathy, interviews with other long-term NDE staff and/or a focus group with NDE staff, and document analysis. In making methodological design choices I was not only looking for sources and approaches that would be most effective and direct in terms of answering my research questions, but that would privilege the integrity of relationships, the responsibility I hold as the researcher, and my

decolonizing interests. I intended to stay close to the processes and ways of speaking, working and being in the NDE, asking staff about the antecedents, processes and objectives of their initiatives. This, I hoped, would contribute to documenting the processes and assumptions of change work occurring in Nunavut, information that fewer educators outside the department have access to, let alone parents and community members. This led to the design of my original research questions, approved in my proposal and behavioural research ethics application.²⁰

My methodology changed during the course of the research. Describing these events reflects an effort at transparency associated with the process I undertook, and accounts for how unexpected events and conditions always occur in our research, but they need not necessarily derail projects entirely. First, I decided not to proceed with inviting departmental staff into individual interviews based on concerns expressed by UBC ethics review board. Second, what I estimated as 5 interviews with Cathy turned into 17. I found myself with an extensive amount of data that I thought would provide engaging context and stories on which to draw. Third, just before I began recruiting for a focus group with other NDE staff, a significant series of changes to curriculum and ways of doing business occurred in the NDE. In response to these changes, I decided not to hold the focus group either. The ethical considerations involved in deciding not to involve other participants are discussed in the next section.

When I made the decision not to hold the focus group I returned to my research proposal and began to consider changing the methodological design. My goals were to better feature the stories Cathy had already shared with me, while still connecting with my original intentions for the research, and producing defensible insights about educational change in Nunavut. I considered rewriting my research questions to reflect the proportion of the research that would now feature interviews with Cathy, shaping them with more focus around her career biography. Rather, I slightly adapted the questions to make them more clear and specific, but retained their original approach. The research questions had already partially informed the interview questions with Cathy, and I viewed them as relevant to organizing my analysis and selection of the data for the dissertation. I saw potential in determining how, and to what extent, the spirit of my original questions could be addressed using the methods that had become available to me, where the

²⁰ These questions were: What has changed in terms of policy, curriculum and leadership in Nunavut education since 1999 and how have those changes been facilitated? How and why does the NDE figure knowledge from and about the past in initiatives intended to facilitate change to the education system? How does the way the NDE figures the past in their policies, programs and pedagogies contribute to its decolonizing aspirations?

sources come up short, and what outstanding questions remain for further investigation by me or others in future.

2.6.2 Ethical Considerations

In designing this research I was concerned about how to go about working within and beyond institutional ethical guidelines.²¹ Put differently, I do not view institutional ethical guidelines as necessarily sufficient to guide research that recognizes situated understandings of ethics. The following is an excerpt from my proposal that describes the questions I used initially, and when methodological design or redesign decisions had to be made during the course of the research:

In explicitly describing the approaches, principles and concepts that are most central to my ethical framework, I am partly following what resonates with me from the teachings I have received including but not limited to: (Archibald, 2008; Cruikshank, 1998; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Marker, 2004a; Marker, 2004b; Regan, 2010), as well as what feels right in my mind, heart and spirit. In my conception, the words respect, responsibility, relevance, and reciprocity come together under an umbrella of research *responsiveness*, echoing the key concept of cultural responsiveness described elsewhere in my work. I conceive of my research as working towards the goal of responsiveness through the following key aspects. I have formed the aspects as questions here to signify that I cannot guarantee that my research will fully meet these expectations as I conceive of them or as others do, but nonetheless they are the factors I will return to in making decisions and judgments about my research. Does my research (in the community of Nunavut public K-12 education):

- Support respectful relationships as respect is conceived within the community?
- Facilitate my responsibility towards, and solidarity with, those in the community through my best and most unique skills?
- Address the specific strengths and needs of the community?
- Reflect and respond to the specifics of place? (culture; annual cycles; infrastructure)
- Connect understandings of the past with the present and visions for future?
- Address structural power relations and contribute towards decolonizing?
- Remain responsive and reflexive, that is, open to listening, learning, feeling and changing?

I cannot be the sole evaluator of whether or not my methodological design would have held—or did in the end hold—to these values and intentions, so I share them in an effort to

²¹ Institutional ethical guidelines relevant to social science researchers working in Nunavut communities include those provided by ITK and Nunavut Research Institute (Nickles, Shirley & Laidler, 2007), the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies (2003), and the *Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (2010), particularly chapter 9, “Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada.”

convey where I focused my attention as methodological changes were made. An example of how the questions above informed my considerations was my awareness of, and sensitivity to, the burden of work placed on (and sometimes too easily accepted by) most long-term NDE staff. This tendency towards overwork, under-staffing, and lack of systemic resiliency has had a significant impact on my own family and my own wellbeing during my employment with the government. Education staff are frequently approached by researchers and organizations who wish to “help” improve education in Nunavut, but who also become a drain on already thin resources, energy and time (H. E. McGregor, 2014a). From the beginning, I did not wish to approach my research in such a way that placed significant further burden on education staff.

I expected that some relatively brief interviews with long-term education staff specifically regarding their work, which I assumed they might be happy and proud to talk about, would not be unreasonable for any of the parties involved (me, the staff or their employer). When I applied for UBC behavioural research ethics board (BREB) approval and a Nunavut Research Institute licence,²² my mother held the position of Executive Director for C&SS, although at the time it was public knowledge that she was scheduled to retire a few months later. Asking NDE staff for their involvement in my research took on a completely new appearance after receiving feedback from BREB. They expressed concern that “[i]n Nunavut, senior level civil servants” such as Cathy, “often have and/or are seen to have influence beyond their retirement” in the government. Therefore, I was asked to address “concern or acquiescence that may be present among other study subjects as a result of the researcher being related to someone in a position of power and authority.” Initially I viewed this concern about Cathy’s perceived and potential influence as likely inflated. However, whether or not Cathy’s influence would actually

²² The Nunavut Research Institute (NRI) licence is required by anyone conducting research in Nunavut that involves participation of Nunavut residents. Researchers submit evidence of their research intentions (translated into the relevant dialect of Inuit language), their institutional ethics approval (completed or in process), their participant consent forms (translated into the relevant dialect of Inuit language), and consultations conducted with Nunavut organizations in preparation to conduct relevant and appropriate research. NRI provides resources about how to undertake these steps appropriately in collaboration with Inuit and Nunavut residents and organizations (Nickels, Shirley, & Laidler, 2007). NRI approval is contingent on the review and approval of the application by: municipal councils of the communities in which the work is being conducted or affected residents reside; any governmental organizations affected; the local Inuit representative organization; and other agencies deemed relevant. Researchers are expected to report to NRI annually and submit their findings to their library of research. NRI also supports researchers by providing space to present their findings and through other activities. However, NRI does not have the authority to decline or police researchers, only Nunavut communities/organizations can do that themselves (see also: Gearhead & Shirley, 2007, Grimwood, Doubleday, Ljubicic, Donaldson, & Blangy, 2012). For that reason, I think it important to note that it remains the responsibility of researchers to determine and carry out ethical actions in Nunavut research, in collaboration with Nunavut partners.

play a part in staff deciding to participate in my research was something I would likely never know; the issue raised by BREB here is the potential for a perception of influence and pressure. I also realized there was a possibility that the staff I had in mind to interview could feel put on the spot by my questions about their projects—regardless of my identity—even if I perceived them to be generally proud of their work.

The suggestion put forth by BREB was to make the pool of participants more inclusive so as not to put undue pressure on the staff members who had been directly supervised by Cathy; and, to use a blind recruitment process where prospective participants would not know it was me recruiting them. This blind recruitment process felt exceedingly strange, potentially misleading, unlikely to lead me into respectful relations with the individuals I had in mind, and not something that would be well understood or accepted by my former colleagues at the department. I decided instead to propose a focus group in which they participated as a group and did not have to be accountable for any particular topic or portfolio, hopefully diffusing the pressure on them and the potential or perceived influence of Cathy.

I went on to design a focus group to be held in the spring of 2014 with long-term staff currently employed by the NDE. I scheduled this potential event after Cathy's retirement in November 2013, and planned to conduct it without her involvement. BREB approved this proposal, and I also received permission to proceed from the Deputy Minister of NDE. However, the focus group was not held for reasons that relate to a series of internal and external changes carried out by the NDE prior to the date around which I intended to hold the focus group. Evidence of this can be seen in public announcements made between November 2013 and the spring of 2014, including the following:

The Department has a documented plan in place to implement the Education Act. However, it underestimated the level of effort required to implement the legislation. Further, the Department is not meeting the Act's bilingual education requirements and has not determined how many bilingual educators are needed to meet the requirements of the Act. (Auditor General of Canada, 2013, p. 26)

Adopting and adapting math, science and English language arts curriculum and resources from our partner jurisdictions of NWT and Alberta will provide us with updated standard curriculum that will ensure consistent and relevant learning experiences for all Nunavut students. (NDE curriculum Backgrounder reported in Varga, 2014a)

The Nunavut Department of Education put a special emphasis on literacy as an important foundation for the territory's education system, citing "underdeveloped literacy skills as the number one reason why students fail to graduate from high school." To overcome this, the department will introduce "standardized assessments" at every level, as part of a new system that will include programs in guided reading, writing, and word study, the department said in a March 21 news release. Although the source material is in English,

the new system will teach literacy in all of Nunavut's official languages. (Varga, 2014a)

That this is a substantial change from previous educational philosophy and policy can be seen in contrasting statements in the IQ foundation document (NDE, 2007): "Curriculum in Nunavut is different because Inuit perspectives inform the basic elements of curriculum" (p. 3); "Made-in-Nunavut curriculum, teaching materials and learning resources, which combine Inuit knowledge with the best of western educational thought and practice are essential to achieving this shift [to ensure students have a strong sense of identity...]" (p. 5); "All students are entitled to an education that validates learning at different paces in order to ensure success. Each personal learning path is unique, but can be tracked against sets of milestones or benchmarks along the continuum that are described by the NDE..." (p. 37). Changes in direction and practices at the NDE during 2013-2014 were related, in my view, to staff changes in several senior management positions. This was compounded by the territorial election in the fall of 2013 that produced several months of outcomes reporting exercises on the part of public servants for the legislative assembly. Along with these demands came an increased emphasis on accountability and speedy outcomes—both in terms of student achievement and departmental projects. I heard questions and confusion expressed by departmental staff inside and outside the department in more than one Nunavut community during this time. My impression was that not only were new curriculum directions being sought, but that some staff were unhappy with the changes in organizational culture that were accompanying this new curricular policy. Overall there was a feeling of discensus and uncertainty.

I wrote to my committee at the time to express concern about the possibility that prospective focus group participants would see my research as directly connected to the policy and organizational culture changes in 2013-2014, instead of the changes up until 2013. I was concerned that the focus group would not result in discussion aligning with my research intentions to document the reforms underway in the early years of Nunavut, because continuity with those reforms seemed to be interrupted. Based on my perception that group dynamics and project directions had shifted greatly, my knowledge and assumptions about the culture of the organization were no longer accurate. I was highly cognizant of being perceived as trying to document these recent changes, which some might associate with the departure of my mother. This was never my intention because there were no hints of such policy changes when I began my research in 2012.

In deciding not to proceed with the focus group, and having abandoned my intentions to hold individual interviews with other staff, I was in a position to feature and centre the stories

Cathy had already shared with me. I planned, as noted above, to continue positioning Cathy as a wise person and reference point throughout the whole project. When it was suggested by BREB that Cathy might be viewed as a figure with substantial influence in this context, it occurred to me to position this as an opportunity and strength rather than something to avoid. I thought: perhaps interviews with her are exactly what should be centered in my research about the rationale and processes for educational change in Nunavut. I decided to move towards conducting a project in which I held more autonomy, and addressed a topic that could logically be done more independently using my skills and position. With this strategy I would then take the brunt of any missteps or disappointments, were they to occur, which I viewed as a more considerate and cautious approach.

2.6.3 Reciprocity in Research with Cathy

I attribute importance to taking a stance of reciprocity (Trainor & Bouchard, 2012) towards participants and the other relationships that constitute the research context.²³ This involves consideration of situated (i.e. local) meanings and practices of respect, responsibility and benefit, so that they are made possible for all who participate in or are impacted by research. This view has partially been informed by teachings and mentorship I have received in research methodologies from scholars advocating for Indigenous interests (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Marker, 2004a). My understanding of reciprocity is also informed by research concerning the production of constructivist research (Harrison, MacGibbon, & Morton, 2001; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997; Trainor & Bouchard, 2012; Weems, 2006); setting culturally responsive terms of collaboration and shared authorship (Cruikshank, 1990), as well as solidarity in decolonizing (Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2012; Regan, 2010). Crucially, I view reciprocity as important throughout the research project, rather than as circumscribed by a formal protocol or scholarly “give-back” at the end. Space does not allow me to enter into a detailed account of the many facets and experiences of reciprocity that emerged between Cathy and I in this research process, and it may prove impossible to completely account for it. I have elected to write about it through a separate paper, now in progress. However I would be remiss not to include some discussion of reciprocity as a foundation of the research.

²³ I acknowledge Elsa Lenz Kothe and Julia Ostertag for exploring ideas about reciprocity in reading and conversation with me.

A researcher may create the conditions for reciprocity by extending invitations and maintaining an open stance (Trainor & Bouchard, 2012) towards negotiated relationships. This stance must be accompanied by actions that result in benefit to the participants, as well as willingness to make changes that respond to those relationships as they unfold (i.e. an action the researcher chooses may not turn out to be the correct one and they must try again). In other words, I question the possibility of achieving directness, equivalency or arrival at any stable or final reciprocity. To constantly keep in mind the tenuousness and fallibility of reciprocity, the possibility of unintentional or coercive reciprocity, the vulnerability associated with attempting to enact it, and to address the mistakes, incommensurability, failures and dark side of reciprocity (Adams, 1998), is to increase the likelihood of reciprocity emerging. I kept these considerations in mind throughout the research with Cathy, and they also informed my decisions about methods I did not undertake.

In an interview with Cathy intended to reflect on the research process, including our relationship in it, I asked: “What has been positive about having a daughter involved in the work that is so close to yours?” I certainly did not ask this question to seek a compliment, but rather to begin identifying the advantages and disadvantages from her perspective of our personal relationship in our shared work and research, including before my dissertation research and what she expects to follow after. Quoting her at length is worthwhile here because of what it reveals about Cathy’s perspective on the project of educational change in Nunavut more broadly, our roles differentiated within it, and part of her rationale for being willing to participate so substantially in this inquiry.

I think it’s been very heartwarming. It’s been very important. It’s been very meaningful. It’s been very significant. It’s been... what’s the word I’m looking for? It’s been a wonder, I guess. That you would turn out to be interested... I mean just because you grew up [in Nunavut] and it’s been important to me and important to Dad, why would you necessarily be interested in the same thing? [...] And I think it’s very important because you are telling the stories that I’ve been too busy to tell. You’re sharing the lessons that I’ve been too busy to write about. You’re making the analogies and, you know, the connections to academic theories that other people will pay attention to, that will make people stop and maybe think that we do have something that’s worthwhile listening to and hearing about. That for years I wished I would do, but I never did. So, it feels like that gap—you’re filling that gap, that hole that was never addressed. And nobody in Nunavut really has addressed in a meaningful way. A few people have written odds and ends, and sometimes not very helpful odds and ends. But not in a concentrated, intentional, linked way that actually might help people understand what’s been happening. So to me that’s extraordinarily valuable. I guess in a way it feels very validating and confirming that what we’ve been doing—and it certainly isn’t just me—is important and it’s worth telling about and there is something to share. Because it’s just what we do, to us, it’s just what we do.

I view this passage as being most useful in revealing Cathy's perspective regarding the potential contribution of my work to the project of educational change itself. Referring to the depth of her involvement in doing education rather than documenting it, "I've been too busy to write about," "for years I wished I would do," she identifies me with advancing the stories of what has been happening, and making them meaningful for audiences among and outside of Nunavut educators. She identifies my work with bringing into relief the assumptions that she and her staff have worked with—"it's just what we do," and making it possible for people to understand why and how Nunavut beliefs about education emerged. She expresses a desire that the work being done be validated and confirmed, rather than dismissed or forgotten.

In terms of other outcomes or purposes for the work Cathy noted again the usefulness of the timing. She expressed that a significant outcome for her was the opportunity to reflect on her career and identify phases and trends within it: "It's really quite interesting to think about how each phase built and led and helped the next phase unfold. That's been a really valuable process for me." This comment was immediately followed by her ever-present concern for making knowledge accessible and useful to those who are continuing with the work of educational change: "And I hope out of it we're gonna come up with some things that are important to share. You know, I think that would be very helpful for people who are working, who are doing this work in so many places." On more than one occasion Cathy expressed hope that my work would continue to be appreciative, or feature strengths within the Nunavut school system as an organization rather than strictly offering a critique of their accomplishments.²⁴ What becomes evident in this conversation is that Cathy identifies with the institution of schooling in Nunavut to such an extent that she considers contributions to improving the institution as a form of reciprocity that is worthwhile recognizing. Her view of reciprocity is collective, extending beyond individualized or personal benefit to her from the research. It is also the case that beyond reciprocity with Cathy, I hold the desire to be reciprocal with the colleagues I knew and worked with at the NDE, and Nunavut educators more broadly, through all of the choices associated with

²⁴ Upon reading this draft chapter Cathy expressed, in retrospect, that she was also concerned about how NDE institutional practices may not have attended often enough to what has *not* been successful and what has been neglected, from the perspectives of long-term staff doing the work. She wonders what was left out or not pushed hard enough—for example, to counter ongoing Eurocentrism and legacies of a colonial school system. Illuminating such limitations through self-study or evaluation processes with a close and specific eye to the projects that have been undertaken since Nunavut has been created would also be helpful, she told me. Her concern with past critiques is in relation to the fact that evaluators or researchers have not taken a comprehensive look at materials that have been developed or implemented, and/or that the work is not done with the input of those who have long-term experience in Nunavut schools.

the research—from the topics I have written about, to the ethical considerations outlined above. I hope to honour that which I have received in teachings and support from the Nunavut school system, as a former student and employee, by offering this research in return.

I went on to ask Cathy what has been uncomfortable about having a daughter involved in work so close to hers. She responded by mentioning that I had stopped doing contract work for the NDE at the time of starting my dissertation research, suggesting that her position had indirectly affected the already complicated situation surrounding my previous contract work. She also noted that I always had to take into account the “extra” factor of our mother-daughter relationship when defending my work, whereas other researchers would not have to. While I would not narrate either of these concerns the way she did, and nor do I see them as problems, they show her tendency to remain concerned with negative impacts on me resulting from working closely together, rather than on herself.

I asked Cathy whether she was anticipating vulnerability in how she would be represented in my research. In her answer Cathy spoke about her confidence that we work well together, implying that she knew what to expect from me and what values inform my work. She did not overtly or passively express concern to me about whether the research would represent her in a positive light. During the interviews we discussed many tough things, such as moments of learning and failure on her part, and she did not shy away from that because of a concern for herself. She emphasized that I must be responsible for decisions in my own work. On the other hand, this conversation led to her remembering a situation in the past where I had debated using information that I had learned from her and my father, but at the time was not able to acknowledge them as sources or contributors.²⁵ Recognizing that a situation like that would not arise in this work because of the formal interview process, we agreed it was unlikely to become an issue again. That she remembered this relatively minor event, and I still feel badly about not having been able to acknowledge my parents at the time, demonstrates how sensitively we both approach these negotiations.

Beyond the above noted interview, reciprocity has been enacted in other ways. I did not pay or compensate Cathy for the time she specifically invested in this dissertation in any direct

²⁵ This had been for two reasons: because it was primarily documentary research for which I did not have formal ethics approval or a research license to conduct interviews, and because she was a government employee at the time who could be taking a risk by talking with a researcher without permission. Because of that I did not even note their names in the acknowledgements, which I continue to feel regretful about.

way. Rather, in knowing (and relearning) Cathy's needs, likes and dislikes, hearing her commentary on other researchers that have come and gone in Nunavut, and listening to her views on our research process, I found ways to offer her respect, responsibility and benefit, which she often accepted. These include: the ongoing opportunities Cathy has had to give input into the direction of the work; reviewing transcripts and drafts; receiving the interview transcripts as her own intellectual property; and, learning more about theory and literature that I am using to illuminate the Nunavut context (about which she has expressed great interest). I have gained access to the many documents and books she has saved in her archive of educational history. She and I have cooked many meals together before and after the research work, and gone for many walks too. I covered the cost of her air travel and accommodation to visit Vancouver so we could work together on reviewing the draft chapters, and when I was in Iqaluit to conduct interviews I received accommodation from my parents in their home. As Trainor & Bouchard (2012) suggest:

Discussions of reciprocity as value, method, or lens are necessarily tangled, but in our view a missing thread is one that ties these loose ends together to develop a stance of reciprocity whose sum effort is more than any one of its methods isolated to recruitment, data collection and analysis. (p. 5)

Did my sense of reciprocity, or my care for Cathy as my mother prevent me from engaging with her critically? I do not think it did, but I must leave it to the reader to assess the claims in this dissertation, alongside their own experience or knowledge (certainly in the case of those who worked with Cathy), and determine the credibility found here. The ways in which this project has become interconnected with our practices of being mother and daughter, being colleagues, and being friends, could hardly be fully accounted for. I am sure I have some blind spots. But in my mind that is what it has become—interconnected with who we are—not completely as a result of my design or her expectations, rather in the spaces between those things and, like anything else in life, sometimes because of circumstances beyond our awareness, planning or control.

2.7 Story Stream 4: Decolonizing and Historical Consciousness

The fourth story stream is constituted by the theoretical conversations around decolonizing and historical consciousness in which I participate. Traces of this stream can be found in my research questions and throughout the chapters, before being taken up as the focus of Chapter 7. It is also evident in how the study is laid out, beyond the metaphor of a melting river. For example, it is intentional that I begin by introducing Cathy's life and career history, to give readers a sense of her as an informant-participant. As would be expected when a new person is

introduced to an Indigenous community, an extended introduction offers information about the place and people from which the new participant has come. I then move into featuring the knowledge of Inuit Elders. This is also meant to echo the practice of inviting Elders to speak first in Indigenous contexts, as I have seen practiced in many NDE meetings and workshops as well as other contexts. I go on to consider specific school system structures and issues, like curriculum and leadership. I finish by using these situated stories to carefully form overarching discussions about what is needed in the education community. I most often use literature to inform my theoretical framework that is proximate to Nunavut or my own learning: that is, from the Arctic, from Canada, from scholars working in Canadian Indigenous education, or scholars with whom or whose work I have long studied—with some exceptions that are explained. I use each chapter of the dissertation to build towards this theorizing work, so as to show how knowledge of the people and place under study informs the resulting theory. All of these decisions have been informed by my understandings of decolonizing and the role of history and the past therein. In the following section I offer research precedents and influences for this approach.

2.7.1 Inuit Perspectives, Qallunaat Positionality and Decolonizing Intentions

How Inuit come to the cross-cultural space of Nunavut schools differs from how non-Inuit/Qallunaat come to it, recognizing the significant spectrum within each of those two groups that should not be discounted. These differences are predicated on shared social/political/economic experiences through time, length of residency, ancestry, language, education (in and outside of schools), land claim beneficiary status, and access to decision-making and self-determination. I do not point here to an essentialized or fixed difference, but many fluctuating differences that matter differently in different spaces. Recognizing such differences, I hope to share stories from my position and perspective, and those of Qallunaat educators, stretching from there towards a respectful engagement with Inuit perspectives.

Dwayne Donald (2011) articulates this relational imperative:

...relationality is not just a simple recognition of shared humanity that looks to celebrate our sameness rather than difference. Rather, this form of relationality carefully attends to the particular historical, cultural, and social contexts from which a person or community understands or interprets the world. It puts these considerations at the forefront of engagements across frontiers of difference. This concept of relationality instantiates an ethical imperative to acknowledge and honour the significance of the relationships we have with others, how our histories and experiences position us in relation to each other, and how our futures as people in the world are tied together. (p. 4)

I write with the intention to acknowledge how I have come to be in relation to the Inuit population of Nunavut. I was born in Yellowknife, raised in Iqaluit, and have thought a lot about what it means to hold a Qallunaaq-Settler identity in the Arctic. That does not absolve me in any way from the responsibility to maintain vigilance towards decolonizing purposes in my individual relationships, as well as larger goals of participating in the Nunavut education community.

It is important to acknowledge place in this approach. Nunavut is ubiquitously characterized by the presence of the Inuit majority population and their long history in the Arctic. Even as Qallunaat form the group that has historically held great power in the colonial context of the Arctic, and still tend to enact their characteristic (over)confidence in the Arctic, one can hardly forget that one is not on one's own land. Nunavut is also a Canadian territory run by a public government, a form of government chosen by Inuit at the time of the land claim. Land claim beneficiary status is extremely meaningful and carries access to rights and benefits, but all residents of Nunavut vote for the government. Likewise, many educators working in the Nunavut system currently (teachers, principals, superintendents, department staff) are Qallunaat. Nunavut schools are not band/tribal schools. This creates a situation that is not the same as Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations in other contexts of Canada, for example, the way First Nations and Settlers interact presently in BC with land claims outstanding, a history of Indian reservations and the *Indian Act*. I view the sense of a shared future established in Nunavut, by the history of political engagement and inclusiveness expressed by Inuit towards those who come to their territory, such that non-Indigenous people have a significant responsibility and opportunity to contribute to the decolonizing imperatives put forth.

Some may argue I should begin research by centering Inuit perspectives, that it would be a retrenchment of colonial views to consider decolonizing by conversing with a Qallunaaq participant, and someone who has been in a position of relative power. They might challenge me by asking, "Haven't 'white people' had voice all this time, isn't it time Inuit had their say?" It is certainly the case that the production of academic and historical narratives in the Arctic to date demonstrates that Inuit have held unequal access to the means for such production (QTC, 2013; Trouillot, 1995). I am concerned about that, but also view the process of addressing it as a long-term project that necessitates contributions from many angles and cannot simply be achieved through one methodological approach.

Elsewhere I have written about attending a conference regarding Inuit educational research where I heard clearly from Inuit leaders in the school system that they are becoming

tired of participating in research (H. E. McGreogr, 2014a; see also: ITK, 2013). I have also been in other contexts (including a classroom at UBC) where I have heard Indigenous people say, “Don’t ask us for all the answers, why can’t you [Settlers/white people/Qallunaat] figure out decolonizing for yourselves?” “Why do I have to constantly explain myself to you?” I take these views seriously.

Michael Marker has repeatedly suggested in his scholarship and in many classrooms, presentations and conferences I have attended, that non-Indigenous researchers should be just as interested in themselves (or in the non-Indigenous societies implicated in their research) as they are in Indigenous people or communities (Marker, 2001, p. 31; 2003, p. 367; 2006, p. 483). Taking this approach, a clearer cross-cultural comparison can be achieved and lead to, as Marker points out, a dialectic. Bringing forward the experiences, stories, interpretations and philosophy of education held by Cathy, a long-term Northerner and Settler, is part of considering the role of Qallunaat teachers in Nunavut schools. Rather than taking a deficit approach and highlighting their limitations, I am looking for ways that they may grow in that role, a topic for which Cathy carries expertise.

When there are non-Indigenous people taking up the work of decolonizing, especially when they have been in positions of power and responsibility, it is worthwhile finding out what has informed their actions. How can others learn what they have learned? Again, the intention is to take responsibility amongst people who are (more) similar to me rather than to leave it to Inuit to repeatedly demand responsiveness. This approach is not to exclude the views of Inuit or mandates for Nunavut schools put forth by Inuit, but rather to look more closely at how these are being interpreted and undertaken by Qallunaat educators in the school system.

Cathy’s stories offer insight into relationships in cross-cultural spaces that have the potential to contribute to decolonizing. Some have argued that decolonizing will fail if it is limited to policy change or systemic change (Regan, 2010, p. 215), but rather it depends on the relationships of real people in real places. By drawing on the personal stories of someone to whom I am related, I am demonstrating my own implicatedness and my family’s relationship to schools as both colonizing and decolonizing institutions in Nunavut. By looking at documentary sources that come from a system/institution, and engaging with a person’s stories, I am trying to take more than one angle on decolonizing. In this sense it is relevant that Cathy is my mother, as well as someone who has participated in trying to shift relations of power in Nunavut schools for many years.

A comparable academic precedent for this approach is illustrated by the work of Paulette Regan (2010). Regan also emphasizes the implicatedness of Settlers in decolonizing, foregoing interviews with Indigenous people by instead drawing on her own life stories and experiences. In the Forward to Regan's book (2010), Taiaiake Alfred points out:

Writing from a settler perspective primarily for other settlers, the author avoids the trap that so many non-Native scholars fall into – telling Native people how we must live. Instead, she homes in on what settlers must struggle to do to fix the “settler problem.” By this, she means that non-Natives must struggle to confront their own colonial mentality, moral indifference, and historical ignorance...” (p. x).

Recognizing Settler strengths and the ways in which they have come into allyship, as well as the Settler problem, my work targets those involved in Nunavut education as an audience. While that audience includes Inuit, it is in alignment with this move by Regan that my research does not incorporate direct Inuit participation. And yet, I hope readers will find Inuit sources, voices, influences, and knowledge throughout this work.

There are other ways in which my work is similar to Regan's, related to the use of story and historical consciousness. To address persistent ignorance, Regan (2010) attempts to model the kind of decolonizing listening Settlers might do in the context of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada:

An unsettling pedagogy is therefore based on the premise that settlers cannot just theorize about decolonizing and liberatory struggle: we must experience it, beginning with ourselves as individuals, and then as morally and ethically responsible socio-political actors in a Canadian society. (p. 23-24)

And later she notes experientially based, embodied Indigenous pedagogy rooted in storytelling and emotion as informing her theory of pedagogy: “teaching/learning practices that connect head, heart, and spirit can sometimes transform people in powerful ways that may not be fully understood on a rational level alone (Regan, 2010, p. 205). These themes emerge in my work, particularly in Chapter 6.

Regan (2010) goes on to describe her research methodology as: “using oral history evidence in the form of auto-ethnography—my own storytelling—to document and analyze my own lived experience” and to “demonstrate the transformative personal and socio-political pedagogy I am advocating” (p. 29). She acknowledges encouragement by Indigenous community members, colleagues and scholars to tell her own story, or start the work of decolonizing with herself. Regan (2010) tells her story on the premise that sharing life experience with humility is a “way of provoking critical reflection in others, while continuing to learn” and an “interactive exchange between the teller and listener in which both learn and teach” (p. 31-32). In this form

of pedagogy and storytelling, she explains, there must be a thread between listening, bearing witness, invoking a sense of personal responsibility, and taking socio-political action (Regan, 2010, p. 32). Not only is this close to the purposes I hold for sharing Cathy's stories, this appears to have significant relevance to the challenges of decolonizing schools in Indigenous contexts.

Regan describes common barriers that have prevented decolonizing relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada to date: ignorance as a colonial strategy inhibiting recognition of intergenerational transfer of moral responsibility; colonial empathy/humanitarianism that can obscure complicity with ongoing colonizing relations; attributing pathologies to Indigenous peoples, viewing them in crisis or responding to their testimony voyeuristically; and, many other primarily emotional responses, including denial, guilt, shame and outright rejection. Many of these barriers highlight a (mis)understanding of the past at the root of problems between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians. This extended quote, illustrating how Regan (2010) represents the work necessary by Settlers, is worth considering here:

Historically and to the present, we remain obsessed with solving the Indian problem, even as we deflect attention from the settler problem. In doing so, we ignore our complicity in maintaining the status quo. The question now is whether we will remain colonizer-perpetrators or strive to become more ethical allies in solidarity with Indigenous people. As a settler ally, I must continuously confront the colonizer-perpetrator in myself, interrogating my own position as a beneficiary of colonial injustice. Exploring the epistemological tensions of working between these two identities means embracing persistent uncertainty and vulnerability. If we have not explored the myths upon which our identity is based, or fully plumbed the depths of our repressed history, we lack a foundation for living in truth. What we have instead is a foundation of untruths, upon which we have built a discourse of reconciliation that promises to release Indigenous-settler relations from the shackles of colonialism but will actually achieve just the opposite. (p. 236)

Regan (2010) describes her pursuit to counter these forces as "insurgent remembering," in which she conceptualizes history "not simply as the intellectual study of the past—the facts and interpretations through which we gain knowledge about our social world—but as a critical learning practice, an experiential strategy that invites us to learn how to listen differently to the testimonies of Indigenous people" (p. 50). As noted in the previous section, I hold that listening to, and sharing, stories has the potential to reshape actions and relations in the ways Regan describes. I inquire into how this is, and might be, done in the Nunavut school system.

Turning to another scholar, Dwayne Donald (2012) explores how and why decolonizing relates to knowledge from the past and change in the future within schools. Donald moves beyond Indigenous counter-narratives towards ethical relationships that will provide the

foundation for engagement with both shared histories and futures. He argues, the “process of imagining decolonizing Aboriginal-Canadian relations begins with carefully tracing the colonial nature of those relations—in the past and today—and acknowledging that colonial frontier logics continue to have a tremendous influence on how the relationship is conceptualized” (Donald, 2012, p. 93). Meaningful consideration of Aboriginal experience and knowledge have been placed outside accepted curricula in educational institutions. To link decolonization with history is a pedagogical pursuit that revisits history to demonstrate the ways Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada are already, and always have been, in deep relations:

The process of decolonizing in Canada, on a broad scale and especially in educational contexts, can only occur when Aboriginal peoples and Canadians face each other across deeply learned divides, revisit and deconstruct their shared past, and engage carefully with the realization that their present and future is similarly tied together. What are required are curricular and pedagogical engagements that traverse the divides of the past and present. (Donald, 2012, p. 102)

My research investigates how and what to learn about the past within the context of decolonizing the Nunavut school system, as well as the learning process I will undertake myself through the pursuit of this research. In some ways my topic is more focused than either Regan and Donald’s work, directed at the processes and goals of decolonizing public school education amongst a small population, in a geographically, economically and politically remote Canadian jurisdiction. My research is oriented towards those working in the system now and in the future, rather than the entire Canadian public. On the other hand, my scope is more general because it extends beyond the focus on residential school histories and injustices, towards any Nunavut histories that can be deemed relevant to schools and communities, including complex aspects within histories of social, political, economic, educational, ecological, cultural and linguistic practices between/amongst Inuit and non-Inuit in the Arctic. It also takes into account long-term processes of learning over time, rather than one event of pedagogy that results in learning to produce transformation.

I am not convinced that it is possible to reach a place that is, finally, decolonized. For that reason, careful and responsive pedagogy is even more important so as to continuously renew relationships rather than reconstitute violence through this ongoing process. I am concerned and humbled in the face of challenges that I have experienced in trying to do this work (see for example: Madden & McGregor, 2013). In nearly equal measures I am indignant towards the inflexibility and lack of responsiveness on the part of individuals and systems that do not account for Indigenous individuals and communities, and passionate about reconceptualizing

expectations for those individuals and systems. I am committed to working towards the goal of decolonizing history and using history in decolonizing society, so far as I can.

Chapter 3: Looking for Experience in Arctic Education: Cathy's Stories

Using my philosophy of language experience, the whole program was based on the kids and their lives. We had very few materials to use anyway. So, our language program was: Stephen's sister went off to [residential] school in Yellowknife so that became the story, and we used all our vocabulary and reading and writing around that. Or, Nicky's father was the fiddler and played at the concert the evening before. Or, you know, Margy's grandmother being sick and having to go to the hospital in Yellowknife. And our social studies program was all the jobs their parents did, whether they were paid jobs, or hunter, seamstress, you know, those kinds of jobs.

We studied Arctic animals and made big life-size versions of them. We learned about how children lived in the past. We invited Elders in, and we made a diorama of a village the way it would have been with iglus made out of sugar cubes and dog teams and stuff like that from plasticine. I had a tent in my classroom, like a real tent instead of a house, because I had Kindergarten-grade 1 and in a Kindergarten down south you'd have a house with a kitchen and all. So we had an empty stove, one of those Coleman stoves. We couldn't find a qulliq [traditional Inuit lamp] unfortunately. I had an old skidoo in my classroom, I had caribou skins in my classroom. We had some Inuinnaqtun²⁶ lessons. Unfortunately, my classroom assistant was often at her teacher education program, so she was only there sometimes. We didn't have as much Inuinnaqtun as I would have liked to have had, but we had some when she was around.

So I was feeling I'd done a pretty good job of looking at what was going on in the community. Based on my philosophy of 'start with the child', try to find things they are interested in, build on their interests and strengths and what they know. And it was a lot of hands-on. We had a water table and trucks and blocks and games and listening centre, lots of centres. I tried to build on all those things, so I thought I'd done a pretty good job.

But at the end of the year, the superintendent came in and interviewed me about my year. He was evaluating me. And I thought 'I don't really know how you can evaluate me because you really weren't here.' Like he might have [visited from Yellowknife] a couple of times, but he hadn't really spent very much time in my classroom. So I explained my program; I had evidence of the reading stories we'd developed and things like that, and some of the stuff was still up in the room.

I just remember him saying on my evaluation, 'Well I don't think you actually did enough to teach about what being an Eskimo is...' or something like that. And I was really insulted because... I felt that compared to any other teachers that had their own classrooms, I'd done as much if not more. And I couldn't figure out why he was so hard on me, and what it was that I could have

²⁶ Inuinnaqtun is the Inuit language spoken in the western Arctic and written in roman orthography. It is considered an official language in Nunavut, and similar enough to the other Inuit dialects for mutual intelligibility. Inuktitut is the term used in the eastern Arctic, written in roman orthography or syllabics. I often use the term "Inuit language" to refer to all dialects and orthographies, following the convention in Nunavut legislation and educational policy.

done. I know I could have done more language, but I only had the resources I had and I didn't have much in the way of human resources. So that was actually... that became a defining moment for me because I thought, 'Ok, I don't know what else it could be but I'm going to start trying to figure it out,'
~ Cathy McGregor

3.1 Introduction and Purpose

Cathy often uses the preceding story to explain why she has been working so hard, and for so long, in Indigenous education in the region of Canada that is North of 60°. I have heard her tell it in workshops, at formal presentations, and to individuals over tea. If you were sitting with her, asking that she share a formative moment in her teaching career, she would very likely tell you this story.

Northern teachers often perceive that their teaching has not been adequate to meet the needs of Inuit students, keep them engaged, and make them “successful” (frequently mentioning the lack of resources and preparation they receive) (Aylward, 2009a; Balfe, 2013; P. Berger & Epp, 2007; Harper, 2000; Lewthwaite & McMillan, 2010). Cathy's story is different for two reasons. First, she thought she was successful, and she thought she had incorporated Inuit culture. Second, she believed her supervisor when he challenged her to do more, and she turned the challenge into a reflective question and inquiry that came to drive her career farther and farther into school system change. That she asked herself, “What more could I have done?” and returned to that question over and over throughout her career, is part of the reason this research with Cathy has the potential to contribute to the conversation about what northern schools need.

At first you might wonder: How did a young, woman from the United States come to teach this way in a small school in the NWT in 1973? Then, you might wonder: How did she attempt to answer the superintendent's challenge, to discover what her absentee supervisor was trying to suggest to her? Did she ask for examples, for prescribed learning outcomes, for more textbooks? Did she throw up her hands, give up her job, and move somewhere the expectations were simpler and clearer?

The purpose of this chapter is to outline Cathy's career in education, at least to the time of her retirement in November 2013. This requires some attention to her early life and formative educational experiences. It is to demonstrate how she—as a Settler²⁷ in an isolated region of

²⁷ Cathy identifies as a Settler (her British ancestors came to America in the 17th century), and considers herself to have spent most of her adult life working towards being an ally to Indigenous people in Canada.

Canada, the Inuit homeland we now know as Nunavut—came to participate in developing a unique philosophy of education. Her role as a parent is intertwined in this story, so this chapter touches on the history of my own life, my early influences, how I became exposed to conversations about education in the North, and Indigenous experience more broadly.

This chapter should provide insight into the kind of person Cathy is, her values and her commitments, by extension demonstrating why I view her perspective as illustrative in understanding the history of education in the NWT and Nunavut.²⁸ It focuses on the stories of her work, but also the questions she grappled with in education and the positions she took strongly as a result. In other words, it is not only about what happened in Cathy's work in the past, but how she remembers her experience and how she has put it to use informing more recent work. Beyond Cathy as an individual, this chapter should demonstrate the kinds of stories long-term Northern educators carry with them. It may begin to show why it is productive to engage with their experience in understanding a system concerned with the interests of Inuit families, yet still staffed mostly by non-Inuit educators. This chapter sets up the context of Cathy's career to substantiate the evidence she offers in the following chapters on how educational change was undertaken in Nunavut.

3.2 Early Influences and Family Life

Cathy is the youngest of four children born to Emma Hayes Bickham Pitcher (1915-2010) and William Alvin (Al) Pitcher (1913-1996). She was raised in Hyde Park, Chicago, Illinois where her father was a professor at the nearby University of Chicago Divinity School. Her family was not financially well off, with six people drawing from Al's single income, but they were rich in terms of education, experience and intellectual life.²⁹

²⁸ Sorting out similarities and distinctions between the history of education in the NWT and Nunavut is a complicated matter. It is important to recognize that the two territories shared an educational story, notwithstanding significant regional variation in school administration, until 1999/2000. Many northern teachers worked in communities in both the east and west. However, another layer of difference between the jurisdictions is cultural/linguistic and became political; while there was some solidarity between First Nations and Inuit communities within the NWT, there clearly was not enough to hold the territory together through the Nunavut land claims process. This is made even more complex when considering the position of the Inuvialuit, who stayed in the NWT, and the diversity within the First Nations and Métis communities of the west. Most of this dissertation is more relevant to the history of the jurisdiction that is now Nunavut, and situates itself in conversations about Inuit education, touching only on First Nations communities in the west through Cathy's experiences living and working there. I have written more on the history of the NWT, though again focusing less on the First Nations educational history, in my book (H. E. McGregor, 2010).

²⁹ Cathy's maternal grandfather Martin Hayes Bickham had a PhD, working in the areas of sociology and human rights. He helped to found the Illinois Human Rights Commission and served on national initiatives during the

Cathy's mother Emma was an avid naturalist: a bird-watcher and bird-bander, a vegetable and flower gardener, a conservation advocate, a forest caretaker, a writer and teacher of all things ecological. Emma loved classical music, poetry and fiction, she followed the news closely, she maintained friendships with many through correspondence by mail, and she was a consummate reduce-reuse-recycler. After she retired, Emma lived in Indiana and Michigan.

Emma had a big role in my own life. She attended my birth, visited at least annually and would stay for long periods of time. She would entertain me with projects and go along with just about anything I enjoyed, or entertain herself by (from my perspective) wandering around outside staring enthusiastically up at the sky or intently down at the ground—studying, of course, Arctic birds or flowers. Emma was incredibly curious. She was also quick-thinking, opinionated, and towards some she was judgmental. She usually knew a good way to do things, leaving her impatient with those who could or would not follow her instructions. She was warm with me, though. I remember her frequently offering me stories from her own life, or traces from family history. In some ways she was a historian, though often a selective one. Her divorce from Cathy's father Al had been acrimonious and formed a rift in the family that she would remark on too briefly and bitterly, or conveniently avoid. Cathy said little about what her mother or father were like as parents. My impression of Emma is that she was less overbearing with Cathy than her older children, and there seemed to be the most common ground between them despite the greatest geographic distance in later years.

Cathy's father also had a strong environmental ethic, but focused his efforts in the areas of action in social change, social justice, civil rights and the spiritual dimensions of equity. When Cathy was young, Al's energy was often taken up with the civil rights movement in Chicago, in which he figured as a major project organizer and strategist, at times working directly for Martin Luther King Jr. and also as a mentor with Jesse Jackson. The central issues taken up by the movement in Chicago were the integration of public schools and school bussing, the integration of residential neighbourhoods, the economic interests of Black businesses whose products were often overlooked by distributors, as well as boycotting businesses who would not hire Black

Depression. Cathy's aunt (Al's sister) Avis worked as a teacher educator at National Teacher's College, Evanston for which she received an honorary doctorate. Avis' philosophy of education was shaped by John Dewey, and in turn strongly influenced my mother's work. Cathy remembers visiting Avis' teacher training classes as a child, when she was instructed to be "quiet as a mouse." Hugh and Betsy, Cathy's eldest siblings, attended the University of Chicago Lab School. There are many family stories of social gatherings held with U of C students or faculty at the Pitcher household. Many of her peers at Hyde Park High school would have had family ties to U of C.

employees. Al's role in the movement has only recently been documented in any degree of detail (McKersie, 2013), and I would suggest there is more research to be done in the area of allies to the civil rights movement. Al's civil rights work went far beyond, and was often in tension with, the expectations of his employment with the university. As a result of the time he invested in community organizing, his compulsion for living his everyday life in accordance with his values, and his disappointment with the academy for neglecting to give tenure and promotion credit for activities beyond narrow academic interests, Al retired as an Associate Professor after 25 years at the Divinity School. After his divorce from Emma, Al married Sara Wallace and they had a son, Paul.

Al's civil rights legacy is how friends, and even family, often think of my grandfather. His life was full of other pursuits: abstract painting, playing ultimate Frisbee or basketball, leading cooperative housing initiatives, writing, giving sermons, building a farm in Michigan, and developing a spiritual retreat village at Holden, Washington. As a grandfather he was busy and remote. His presence felt to me like equal parts towering and unassuming, humorous and profound. I was young when he died but I remember the sound of his voice clearly, the clarity of his ideas, and that he was not above playing the card game UNO with me, riding with me down a water slide, or dancing with me at Uncle Charley's wedding. As a father to Cathy, I expect he was equally busy and remote, but thoughtful and principled in his advice when asked for assistance. Indeed, Cathy says that as an adult she was not always sure her father was listening when she tried to talk about her work—the thing that seemed most common between them. Around the time of the sickness that led to his death, she heard second-hand from a family member that he thought of Cathy as most closely aligned with his own intentions, purposes and values in her professional work. This was a deep compliment coming from him. When I find one of his letters, sermons or essays I am always struck by his honesty and forthcoming speech, never clouded with insincere proprieties, and this is something I admire significantly.

Evidently, the Pitcher home was filled with and surrounded by busy, determined people in the buzzing, changing, challenging era of 1960's America. Her siblings were eight, six and two years older than her, all highly capable in school, sports and other hobbies. Cathy was often left to entertain herself as a child. With a more quiet and shy disposition, she was drawn to reading and did so voraciously. Cathy also developed close friendships at Hyde Park High School, was active in a variety of school activities, and became leader of a multicultural, multi-religious youth group intent on addressing current issues in their community. This group

provided her first experiences organizing workshops, retreats and activities for peers with varying interests and backgrounds.

Cathy's ability to connect with people who were different from her also came from a year living in southern Germany when she was 14. Al had a sabbatical placement in Tübingen, Germany, and Cathy attended a German school. She had the experience of crossing the Berlin wall into East Berlin with her older sister. Following a brief but terrifying detainment, the Pitcher girls brought supplies to a contact there, whom they met and communicated with in a park so as not to be overheard and possibly reported to the authorities. Crossing the wall and being exposed to the politics of a divided Germany, watching the French forces carry out exercises through her village, visiting a former concentration camp, attending school in a second language, and watching other American tourists in Europe led Cathy to develop greater sensitivity to the extremes of social and political experience. She views the relevance of this to her later years as providing an appreciation for the opportunities—rather than only the challenges—of cross-cultural and multilingual contexts:

These experiences opened up for me the fact that people do live in different ways, that their cultures are legitimate for them as much as my culture is for me. It's exciting and interesting to speak different languages, and those languages represent a different way of thinking. I had learned that not just from learning German but when I learned to speak French through German. You start to understand that each language represents somewhat different ways of looking at, and thinking about, the world. You get outside yourself and your own values and your own way of life, and you see—you open up to other people and different ways of doing things.

While completing high school and university Cathy went on to volunteer and work in recreation programs for youth in a range of underprivileged and diverse communities in several different states, including her first encounter with American Indian tribes in Arizona.

At Ottawa University in Ottawa, Kansas, Cathy was finishing her fourth year of undergraduate study when she got to know a crowd of students who had transferred as a group from Mackinac College, a financially troubled institution in Michigan. Amongst these students was my father, Cameron. Cam was (and still is) a dyed-in-the-wool Canadian, born in rural Saskatchewan and raised partly in rural Ontario and later outside Montreal, Quebec. He is also a “preacher's kid,” the son of a United Church of Canada minister Rob Roy Walter McGregor (1916-2002) – of Scottish heritage – and Delia Moffatt McGregor (1914-1999) of Irish heritage. Cam is the youngest of their three children. Cathy has often remarked on how inspired, and in some ways intimidated, she was by this group of students who were confident, actively engaged

in public affairs, and several of whom were patriotically Canadian. It is surprising to me when she says that, given how much she seems to fit the same description. But in the Vietnam War era Cathy was not proud to be an American and felt surrounded (in Kansas) by youth who showed little interest in social movements. Following graduation, Cathy was offered a position with the Ottawa University President's office coordinating implementation of new innovative programs, and collecting student feedback. During that year, Cameron was required to return to Canada or face eligibility for the war draft. They were married in Chicago in April 1971 and settled thereafter in Toronto, where they both pursued teaching degrees.

3.3 Becoming a Teacher and Going North

I wanted to be a primary teacher because I thought they're still interested in learning, and excited about learning because they're so small. I went into my teacher training program with a very clear idea that it was going to be fun, interesting and meaningful to teach little kids. ~Cathy McGregor

After gaining her teaching certificate, Cathy taught for one year in a large kindergarten program on the east side of Toronto with a team of four other teachers. Cameron and Cathy were soon looking elsewhere for work though, and Cameron's lifelong interest in the North turned their sights in a different direction. In the fall of 1973 they began teaching in a K-9 school in Kugluktuk (then called Coppermine), a small Inuit village on the Arctic Coast, what is now the western-most region of Nunavut.

I asked Cathy how she remembered feeling in anticipation of taking a teaching job in such a different geographic and cultural context. She expressed confidence, seeing herself as a hardworking and reflective teacher, but not without some naiveté: "I don't think we knew enough about it to be fearful." This was the case particularly in adjusting to the new rhythms of life in such a small community,³⁰ but also in terms of the students. She describes it as a "huge uptake in order to figure out where the kids were coming from." Cathy's background may have made her somewhat more conscious of cultural contrasts than other new teachers, but she had her share of adjustments. For example, an early moment of realization about the difference between herself and her students occurred when children in her kindergarten class showed utter

³⁰ "The first morning we arrived it was 8 o'clock in the morning – we left at 5 o'clock, because they needed to do two flights that day. One of the people who met us at the airport gave us a loaf of bread. And I remember thinking, 'Wow this is really weird, why are they giving us a loaf of bread?' Well of course I had no idea that when I went into the store there was going to be nothing on the shelves – literally – either canned goods or fresh stuff or bread, because it was August and the Hudson's Bay store was sold out. In those days you didn't have much groceries arrive by plane. It was all by sealift. They gave us a loaf of bread because otherwise we wouldn't have had much to eat."

fascination with playing with water at the sink, turning the taps on and off repeatedly. She could not understand this until she participated in requisite home visits to meet parents (many of whom she communicated with through an interpreter), and realized that whereas teachers' homes had running water, Inuit homes (in that era) usually did not. The inequality of this situation struck Cathy hard.

As the kindergarten/grade 1 teacher, Cathy was watching children navigate the substantial contrast between home and school. The school was the largest building in town, and parts of it were new that year; it was the first time the community had had a gymnasium. Formal education had only been in place for all children for approximately 10 years.³¹ Some children arrived with Inuinnaqtun as their first language, and it was her job to teach them in English. During teacher's college Cathy had been highly influenced by the work of Sylvia Ashton Warner, from which she learned: "If you ignite children's passions, so what they're interested in, they will want to learn and they will want to learn literacy. And they won't even realize they're learning literacy because they're so excited by the topic." Cathy also used the "language experience" approach.³² These ideas drew her towards bringing the lives of Inuit children into the classroom, as the starting point for language development, as well as subject-integrated studies.

I asked Cathy what she thinks now about her teaching then. In addition to the story shared as a preface to this chapter, I wondered, if she could go back in time and talk to her younger self, even mentor herself, how she would assess her teaching? She said:

I made assumptions about what was good for the kids and I didn't ask. So, I think that's a mentoring point to myself then. I didn't ask parents, and I think that's a huge mistake because it's their kids. It's not my kid. So I was being the teacher who thought they knew what was best. Very much. It's just fortunate that what my best was, was not so harmful to the kids. But it could have been.

This characterization is one that could apply to most new teachers arriving in the North, recognizing that the assumptions of some teachers actually have been quite harmful to the children (King, 2006). This concern is something that Cathy has gone on to try and address, as will become more evident below.

³¹ More on the history of schooling in Kugluktuk can be found in H. E. McGregor, 2013a.

³² Cathy explains: "This is an approach to teaching literacy using students' experiences. Not so much their passions per se, but you take something that you've done together with them as a class, or something from their own experience outside of school, and you start to teach them to read using those experiences. The students tell you the story, you write it down, you help them learn to read it, and then they study the words and they become familiar with the words because they mean something to them."

Cathy and Cam took well to the conditions and community in Kugluktuk and still always refer to it with fondness, especially to the relationships they formed that continue today. After three years of teaching there and following personal, staff and community tensions with both principals they had worked for, it seemed a change was in order. In 1976 they enrolled in the Masters-level Indian and Northern Education Program at the University of Saskatchewan. With access to professors knowledgeable about and experienced in the North, as well as peers interested in the same context, Cathy was able to explore deeply some of her questions about northern education that had emerged from her first three years. When I asked her to describe the learning process during her Masters studies with a metaphor she summarized:

I think it was like an onion, peeling the layers. What I had seen superficially in Coppermine [Kugluktuk] or things I had tried to do in my classroom... I didn't always understand exactly why I was doing them. This study enabled me to define some theories and some images, some descriptive ways of talking about that work. I read everything I could about Inuit. A lot of it was from the explorers' journals because at that time that was one of the only sources of information we had. And I always had to remember they were through the eyes of an explorer but... I was able to pull away some of the layers and see more about the values, the ways that children learned, and bring more content and knowledge to my work... Before it was all kind of from my own perspective but I was able to begin to see more of an Inuit perspective—as translated as it was through the eyes of others. I was beginning to dig a little deeper into the middle of the onion than when I had been teaching, but only still very much on the outer core.

As will be seen below, exposure to educational anthropology at this stage of her career supported Cathy to develop and articulate a philosophy of teaching that she has worked with ever since.

After the year of education leave in Saskatoon, Cathy and Cam found positions in Fort Simpson, NWT, a Dehcho First Nation (then called South Slavey Dene) community situated at the intersection of the Liard and Mackenzie Rivers. With few teaching positions open there, Cathy answered an ad for a newly-created teacher consultant position in Fort Simpson with the NWT Department of Education, and she was hired. Cam took up a position teaching industrial arts.

For the most part it was left to Cathy to determine what to make of the consultant job in Fort Simpson. Generally, she was expected to support teachers across the region—some of whom were teaching in one-room schoolhouses in “bush” settlements, and she was the only colleague they had. This meant you had to be “up for anything” and always negotiate professional boundaries far beyond what was typical in other contexts, including building relationships with teachers outside schools. She remembers:

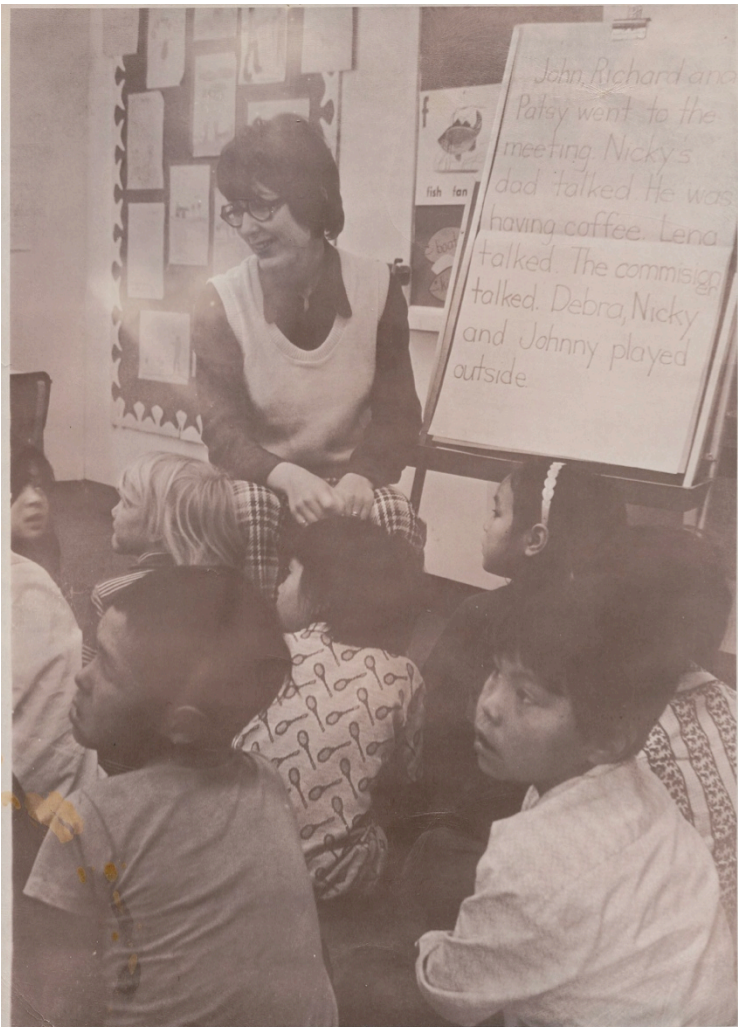
You did anything and everything that people needed, way beyond professional stuff. I think that was a really good experience to understand that work with teachers is more

than just the academic work, or the professional work, it's also about the 'heart work.' And, I don't know if I would have ever seen that in quite the same way if I hadn't been in such extreme circumstances.

Cathy devised her own ways to provide professional development and mentoring to the teachers she worked with, from K-12 and in all subjects. In retrospect she said she did not know exactly what she was getting into by taking the position, and was often "flying by the seat of her pants." Fort Simpson was the place in which she developed and grew her philosophy of team building, culturally responsive teaching, individualized and strengths-based professional development, and interest in creating teaching and learning resources that were relevant for northern Indigenous students.

Figure 3 Cathy Teaching in Kugluktuk 1974

McGregor Collection



Working in the western NWT also brought Cathy into contact with more communities that had a higher percentage of non-Indigenous families, and parents who expressed scepticism at the cultural content being increasingly taught in schools. These parents expected schools to teach using the approaches they were familiar with, from their education in southern Canada, to prepare their children to return to southern Canada. Direction from Yellowknife, and the feelings of many teachers with whom Cathy worked closely, were that the majority of students—Aboriginal students—should have their needs met, and the non-Indigenous students could benefit from cultural inclusion as well. Cathy remembers, “We had to really develop our arguments about why education was different. And why their child *was* still learning literacy skills... It was kind of like the Quebec language situation. You had to have the strength of belief that this was the right thing for the majority of the children.” These arguments did not always go over well or easily, and form a recurring theme in the experience of northern educational change that will be further explored through this work.

Figure 4 Student Working on Language Arts Activity Designed by Cathy, Kugluktuk ca. 1974

McGregor Collection



3.4 Language and Curriculum Work Across the NWT

Following four years in Fort Simpson (1977-1981) Cathy was recruited by Fred Carnew, the former superintendent who had challenged her in Kugluktuk to look deeper into her teaching, to take a position at the NWT Department of Education Headquarters in Yellowknife. Up to that

point Cathy had participated on several territorial committees, such as kindergarten program development, given workshops in many communities, and taken a leadership role on the consultants' council. She also contributed to the development of a philosophy of education guidebook for NWT schools (NWTDE, 1978). It was in her position as Social Studies Program Coordinator, and later in Language Arts, that Cathy developed a more comprehensive territorial perspective on education, working across the various regions on initiatives that would bring more consistency to northern schooling. In the early 1980s Cathy worked on outlining a language-across-the-curriculum³³ approach based on some of her Masters work, and then actively on developing subject-integrated northern teaching units. This reflected her commitment to providing made-in-the-North materials with culturally relevant content.

Following publication of the report *Learning, Tradition & Change* (Special Committee on Education, 1982; see also H. E. McGregor, 2010, p. 118-122) and subsequent legislative changes, significant school reforms were being implemented across the NWT. This included increased provision for instruction in Aboriginal languages, and transfer of administrative responsibility for schools to the newly formed regional school boards. The Linguistics Division of the Department was divided into Teaching and Learning Centres (TLCs), established in regional centres and then transferred to the school boards for oversight. This was intended to enhance regional capacity for culturally-specific resource development, particularly publishing books in local Aboriginal languages. Cathy became the manager responsible for TLC set-up, staffing and training in the western Arctic, and transition to board responsibility. Upon completion of that project, Cathy became director of Aboriginal Languages and Bilingual Education.

This sketch of Cathy's involvement in education across the NWT in the years she worked in Yellowknife is altogether too brief. It will have to suffice for present purposes—providing an overview of career experiences that informed her views on education as a long-term Northerner. The discussion of Yellowknife would be incomplete, however, without mentioning that I was born during that time and eventually began school at Mildred Hall Elementary. Cathy experienced the conflicting roles of being a parent with high expectations for teaching, as well as

³³ The approach used second-language acquisition techniques to design lessons that make connections between concepts, vocabulary, practicing listening, speaking, reading and writing, and finally application. This was intended to accommodate the wide variety of language levels (and different first languages) amongst students, flexible for intellectual challenge, as well as what they called then “non-standard English” spoken by the students (influenced by the ways Aboriginal languages work).

working in education. Reflecting on what she came to know about northern schooling differently as a result of being a parent, Cathy said:

When I wanted things for my daughter and I didn't see her getting them in school, then I knew better how parents felt. And I thought 'Ok, so we do really need to listen to parents.' It's important to listen to parents and be more aware of what their desires are for their child. And we do have some responsibility as educators to respond to that in some way. That doesn't mean we give in to everything they want. But we should... we should know what it is, for one thing. And then we should respond. They have a right to expect a response, which I probably hadn't really treated... I hadn't really accepted before.

In the case of my kindergarten experience, Cathy was concerned that the program was not varied and experiential enough, rather than any issue of culture or language.³⁴ Her dual roles as a parent and senior manager in educational administration were a challenge that would continue, and intensify, as I grew older and as Cathy worked more closely with parents—as well as having more responsibility for schools—in the eastern Arctic.

As a mother, Cathy did more than make up for anything she might have thought I was not getting at school. She continued to work hard at the department. But, when she was home, I had her full attention and my early childhood was filled with the exploratory learning experiences that a passionate kindergarten teacher can provide.

In 1990 my family decided to leave the North and try to set down roots in British Columbia. Cathy was extremely torn about leaving her work in Yellowknife. It was a time when she was experiencing the simultaneous feelings of high stress and high fulfillment, but she agreed to leave for various family reasons. Cathy worked as a program coordinator at District #46 in Gibsons, BC and she identifies three significant influences from that phase on her later career. The first was the experience of working on a district-wide educational change strategy, the “Year 2000” project, designed by the province, with one aspect particularly spearheaded locally by school trustees. This involved participating in events to inform and involve parents in the mandated changes. Secondly, Cathy was given more exposure to working with a school board of trustees, attending board meetings regularly, working closely with the district superintendent, familiarizing herself with union relations, and generally seeing behind-the-scenes in a district that had more history, structure and sustainability than in the NWT. Thirdly, she observed the operation of a unique elementary school (where she transferred me for one year) in which problem solving with students, involving parents in student assessment, and teacher team-

³⁴ Generally speaking at that time Yellowknife schools had primarily served and reflected the non-Indigenous English-speaking majority.

building were significant school goals. The story of this school has since been documented in Ed.D. dissertation research in which Cathy participated (Skelcher, 2011).

During her time working in Gibsons, Cathy was invited to return North periodically to help facilitate a new project led by and involving Inuit educators and Elders from the eastern Arctic. The project entailed development of a curriculum from the Inuit perspective—later named *Inuuqatigiit* (NWTDE, 1996; see also Aylward, 2009b; H. E. McGregor, 2012a). The curriculum was intended to use Inuit language and consolidate cultural content from which teachers could draw. The potential of continuing to participate in such projects and the impending end to the Year 2000 project work for which she was hired with District #46, made Cam and Cathy revisit the idea of living and working in the North. By 1992 the prospect of an Inuit land claim and the creation of Nunavut were inevitable. Being part of that project was attractive to both my parents, and they also saw the opportunity of raising me in such a unique place, at a unique time.

3.5 Leadership in the Baffin Region and Transition to Nunavut

Cathy was hired by the Baffin Divisional Board of Education (BDBE) in 1992 as principal of their TLC. Soon after her arrival it was announced that the BDBE director would be leaving his position. The assistant deputy minister of education in Yellowknife, who had been the first director of the BDBE, encouraged Cathy to apply for the job. As she remembers it:

He asked me if I was applying for the director job and I said ‘No, I don’t have that kind of experience.’ I’ve never been a principal so to me that was a huge—I mean being principal of a TLC is not the same thing as being principal of a school. And he said to me ‘Can you live with the person they might hire if you don’t apply?’ and that question threw me because I knew exactly... I mean I knew what he was doing. He was saying, ‘You might not have that kind of administrative background, but you certainly have other administrative background having worked in the department, you’ve been a teacher, you’ve been a program person.’ He was basically saying, ‘They’ll get somebody from the South probably, and they won’t know what they’re doing, and you’re gonna have to live with it, and can you live with that?’ And I thought to myself ‘No I can’t.’ So I applied, and to my surprise I got the job.

Figure 5 Cathy as Director, BDBE, Iqaluit, ca. 1995

McGregor Collection



The BDBE had a \$40 million budget, responsible for: staffing and employee relations associated with all schools; running several high school student residences; coordinating and training community-level committees (district education authorities) and supporting oversight of their budgets; managing infrastructure and purchasing school materials; developing or approving program/instruction materials; providing professional development; providing oversight and guidance to teacher education; and, developing and implementing Inuit language programs. Technically Yellowknife maintained responsibility for establishing curricular objectives, but in practice many decisions were made, or reinterpreted, at the board level.

In her role as Director, Cathy was employed by and reported to the 16-member Board, consisting of almost entirely Inuit representatives—one from each community in the region—for the eight years she was employed there.³⁵ Cathy was responsible for liaising with departmental headquarters in Yellowknife and managing a variety of political agendas, but she took her direction from the Board. Cathy's priorities were to expand the Board's vision for Inuit schooling and tailor it in each community, so that schools would have their own strategies and programs for improvement. Her goals also included growing and nurturing leadership, both Inuit and non-

³⁵ Each member of the board was democratically elected to their community district education authority, and usually the chairperson was appointed to represent the community at the BDBE.

Inuit, as well as engaging parents, Elders and community in participating in decisions related to school programs. She participated in, and led, substantial efforts to prepare for the coming of Nunavut including building consensus and consistency with the other two school boards that would form the new territory. Inuit educators and researchers who have reflected on this period of Inuit education in Nunavut recall a strong shared vision, and the role of board staff in supporting this vision:

There appeared to be a sense that everyone believed in similar ideals and that caring was vital in the process of building ownership, supporting emerging leadership and empowering individuals to take on leadership roles. Careful mentoring based on relationships of equality was mentioned as critical. (O'Donoghue et al., 2005, p. 7)³⁶

This is, again, but a thumbnail sketch of this period of Cathy's career.

While the land claim was signed in 1993, most public services remained unchanged until the new territory was created in 1999. There were six years of anticipation and collaborative preparation for the new government, including many meetings between the three regional boards of education that were operating in what would become Nunavut. Cathy showed me the binder associated with this planning and preparation process across the three jurisdictions. It evidently involved a significant investment of time and energy, including a territory-wide conference, the Nunavut Education Symposium, in 1997. Meeting minutes in the binder showed the presence of representatives from the Department of Education in Yellowknife (including the minister and deputy minister), Nunavut Arctic College, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and Nunavut Implementation Commission. Other work included: a 10 page statement of history, common needs, principles, priorities, goals and budgets; a collaboratively-developed statement of beliefs about education in Nunavut; documents associated with projects on capital, finance, record keeping, a new education act, alternative governance structures, history of education, public relations, curriculum, student support, program development and professional development (to name a few); and, as the position of boards in the new government was known to be insecure, the three jurisdictions worked together to develop costing estimates and models for different governance/trusteeship structures.

³⁶ Premier of Nunavut and Minister of Education (2008-2013), and former educator, Eva Aariak also noted this in her remarks at Cathy's retirement event. She said, "Every time I say the Baffin Divisional Board of Education I have a warm heart. Those were great years that really started well, and we still have to continue the good initiatives the BDBE started. Even in today's education system, we still have a lot to do, to catch up to the BDBE days." 13 November 2013.

This joint preparation seemed to be for naught when the regional boards were dismantled by an act of legislation passed by the Government of Nunavut. While it may seem peripheral to the focus of this dissertation, this history does set the background against which new directions began at the territorial level, and is therefore important to describe. The change in administrative and decision-making structure was, and remains, controversial, as I have outlined elsewhere (H. E. McGregor, 2010, p. 157-169; H. E. McGregor, 2012b).³⁷ Cathy remembers resistance by the elected board members when this decision was enacted:

The [BDBE] board members all always agreed by consensus. I mean there usually were votes, but by the time it came to the vote, everybody had already agreed to what it was going to be. The only time I ever remember there being 'No' votes on a policy or a motion, even, was when the Department of Education directed the boards to vote to disband themselves in 2000, when they were disbanded by law during the creation of Nunavut. And our board voted against disbanding itself. That's the only time I remember people voting against anything.

The most significant structural differences in government implemented after the creation of Nunavut were departure from the previous political oversight of education and health by regional boards, the new government decentralization policy,³⁸ and the emphasis on incorporation of Inuit language and culture in bureaucratic operations (Henderson, 2007). There were high expectations that ways of doing business would depart from NWT precedents, not the least of which was a priority hiring policy for Inuit beneficiaries that has never been fully accomplished (T. R. Berger, 2006; Timpson, 2008). Long-term staff began leaving their positions during the territorial transition. Annis May Timpson (2006) conducted interviews following territorial division with officials and reports that those "who micro-managed division at the department level... revealed frustration with the process and skepticism about core objectives of the new Nunavut government" (p. 84).

Cathy remembers the "acrimonious divorce" between the territories was such that Nunavut staff members were told not to speak to staff in the NWT. She remembers seeing staff

³⁷ This controversy continues to emerge, and receive little response, in public discourse. For example, despite rhetoric about and legal expectations for consultation with communities by the NDE, the Government of Nunavut report card in 2009 stated otherwise: "Many communities feel that since the dissolution of the divisional boards they have had almost no effective means to communicate their concerns or their positions on educational matters to the Department of Education" (North Sky Consulting Group, 2009a, p. 16).

³⁸ Henderson explains that: "For the Nunavut Implementation Commission, the establishment of a decentralized bureaucracy provided the chief deviation from the structure of NWT political institutions. Positions with the Nunavut public service were to be distributed among the ten largest communities, spreading expertise and wealth throughout the territory" (2007, p. 4). Implementation of the decentralization policy has been inconsistent, controversial and even considered wasteful (Henderson, 2007, North Sky Consulting Group, 2009a, Timpson, 2006).

being treated inconsistently and non-transparently in the transition to the new government. Henderson (2007) notes anecdotal reports of non-Inuit staff feeling less valued and secure in their jobs in the Government of Nunavut (p. 180), whereas community consultations with Nunavummiut paint a picture closer to desertion: “many experienced GNWT public servants chose not to join the new government at a time when new operating systems had to be created. In many people’s minds this resulted in a rocky start for Nunavut” (North Sky Consulting Group, 2009a, p. 2). Across the government Cathy observed a tendency to end projects that had been done in the NWT with the goal that, as she interprets it: “everything be different in Nunavut.” This is also reported by Timpson (2006), who refers to reports of arbitrary changes in procedure just “for the sake of it” and a “broad pattern of resentment against Yellowknife” (p. 93). Cathy felt that many projects underway were already well poised to deliver the new mandate, and it was short sighted to write off work already conducted in anticipation of the split.

Ironically, Timpson (2006) notes that education was reported to have been “easier” to divide between the NWT and Nunavut than other departments because of the legacy of strong regional oversight (p. 93). Nonetheless, while regional operations offices remained, many long-term staff left or were shuffled into different positions and the continuity of leadership provided by the elected boards evaporated. Cathy believes that the extensive preparatory work that was done by the three boards of education “went to the dump,” and thinking about this still upsets her. While it is not my intent to determine all the variables that caused such dislocation, there is ample evidence that the new government struggled significantly as a result of many new, and old, demands; capacity, partnerships and shared understandings about schools were lost.

Before these difficulties arose Cathy had anticipated needing a break after a long stretch in a leadership position. Having accumulated professional development benefits in exchange for overtime, Cathy decided to pursue a doctoral program at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. The time in Fairbanks (2000-2002) presented another opportunity to consolidate and deepen her understanding of the educational needs of Northerners. As well as gaining greater exposure to another circumpolar context, Cathy completed course work in interviewing Elders, community development, Aboriginal teacher training, cross-cultural program development and Indigenous youth identity.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, my father Cam was also a teacher who worked in schools at the secondary level in Kugluktuk, Fort Simpson, Yellowknife and Iqaluit. As tends to happen with children of northern teachers, he was my seventh grade homeroom teacher at Inuksuk High School in Iqaluit. Cathy notes that the way he worked with students—his

willingness to try unconventional strategies to engage students who struggle with the routines and strictness of schooling—influenced her to be more inventive and flexible. I have crossed paths with his former students who remember taking trips to the dump with him to find materials for shop class, a welcome change from less engaging activities in most of their classes. I remember watching him create work experience programs and learning opportunities for students that were practical and individually tailored. Cam continues to mentor and reach out to many of his former students in Iqaluit, and elsewhere, in ways that I admire highly. After my parents went to attend the University of Alaska, Fairbanks he no longer worked as an educator in the K-12 school system, instead taking a position in adult training and development work with the new Nunavut Department of Human Resources and for a short time working for the NDE in Arviat.

It is worth noting that Cam has always supported and facilitated my mother's career, agreeing to move around the Arctic as was required by her job changes, taking up available jobs that met his skills. I do not think he sees this as having been a sacrifice but rather the nature of their shared commitment to northern teaching and capacity building. He occupies a big presence in determining the directions our family has taken, and making possible the security, comfort and support we have felt along the way. He was a very active (often teaching) parent with me, and because I am an only child a lot of time was spent “just the two of us” when Cathy was travelling for work. Especially during the years in Iqaluit when my mother was Director of the BDBE, I understood that he took up many domestic responsibilities in our household to free Cathy's time, because he understood that her professional gifts and goals were important to others. I have also learned a great deal from him in his role as an amateur northern historian who brings big-picture, sociological views, distinct from my mother's depth of content knowledge specifically about the school system.

3.6 Working in Curriculum and School Services, Nunavut

Upon returning to Iqaluit from Fairbanks, much had changed in terms of the way educational decision-making and school administration was being carried out, whereas less had changed in the everyday lives of Nunavummiut—and this was becoming a disappointment to many. Cathy intended to set to work on her doctoral research. As a result of creating a committee of Inuit educators and conducting consultations with them (informed by her reading of decolonizing methodologies articulated by Smith (1999/2012)), her research was to be focused on the impact of Elders in the schools prior to the creation of Nunavut. However, she ran into

logistical challenges in terms of time and funding, and no interest expressed on the part of the NDE in supporting her research.

Needing to return to work full time, Cathy filled a short contract at Nunavut Arctic College and then was hired as the Director of C&SS in 2003. Immediately her position was decentralized to Arviat. In 2003 there was substantial turnover in the leadership at the department: the deputy minister, assistant deputy minister, and the position Cathy was stepping into. At the time Cathy arrived in Arviat there were significant communication issues between the branches of the NDE and with the RSOs (that had replaced the school board offices, except now without direction of the boards themselves). Staff members at Headquarters in Iqaluit were preoccupied with establishing working procedures for the new government, whereas staff in Arviat prioritized language, culture, and documenting traditional knowledge. RSO staff felt unheard by both groups, so Cathy attempted to build bridges. She remembers:

It was an adversarial relationship. So I spent the first maybe four years, if not five years, in this job trying to rebuild that relationship. Because I felt that if you're ever gonna cross the bridge over the gap between the new people in the schools, and the more experienced people who worked in the Department, and in some cases new people in the regional offices as well—you had to build a working relationship. And the material that we wanted to implement in schools had to be done through the regional offices. Their staff had to support it and know about it so they could help implement it and help teachers implement it.

She also remembers one of the most personally rewarding aspects of working in Arviat was learning from the Elders they had on staff, as will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Cathy took advantage of the government decentralization policy to reorganize and expand the division to better meet the demands for made-in-Nunavut curriculum, teaching and learning materials and student assessment. Such requirements were expected to accompany reforms formalized by the impending *Nunavut Education Act*.³⁹ In the midst of this, Cathy's position was recentralized, so to speak, to Iqaluit in February 2007. Cathy went about growing the staff from 17 to more than 50 in six different communities around Nunavut.

³⁹ The Act passed in October 2008 but was in development since 2000 (H. E. McGregor, 2012b).

Figure 6 Government of Nunavut Office Building where Cathy worked, Arviat, 2005
McGregor Collection



She recruited long-term staff, some on secondments from the school system and others permanent, to lead program development projects. Her responsibilities spanned (for example) curriculum, student support and assessment, leadership development and staff training, in-service, teacher certification, program development and evaluation, student information system, and Inuktitut language instruction. Among her priorities were: establishing procedures for running collaborative committee-driven projects that drew on teacher and community expertise across Nunavut; integrating Elder knowledge and participation into school programs; and, exploring creative, culturally responsive made-in-Nunavut solutions to long-standing problems. I asked Cathy what she loves doing in northern education after all these years. She responded:

It has been a privilege to be able to conceive of an idea that is probably often quite off-the-wall compared to what other people would be expecting to do. To design the idea into a project, to actually develop the project, and then to implement the project and see it come alive in schools with students. That is an amazing creative—I don't know—creative what? Creative opportunity? Creative life.

The opportunity for creativity was counterbalanced with a demanding workload. The tendency to overwork is typical of any high-level public servant, but worsened by the perpetual challenges faced by the Government of Nunavut, such as few administrative assistant staff, delays in staffing processes and limited staff housing. I observed senior management in the NDE to regularly work on weekends and late into evenings, as the business of running schools is not

conducive to delay. The demands were also a function of Cathy's huge portfolio, her ability to see how much needed to be done in the school system, and her willingness to continue expanding that portfolio by taking on more projects. When I also worked at the NDE I observed how her experience, her vision, her administrative and project management capability, and her sense of accountability to the Nunavut public became indispensable to those with whom she worked. This was so much the case that she struggled to say "No" to tasks of nearly any size, or delegate them, or see them left hanging. Her commitment to the work not only meant many hours at the office or travelling, but also prevented her from sleeping well and caused other symptoms associated with stress. Cathy takes her work seriously, and personally, and she views herself as deeply connected to education. The toll I perceived it to be taking on her health, personal life and even our relationship had become a point of tension between us at times, and certainly a topic of constant concern on my part. For several years before she left her job I had been encouraging her to make preparations to retire. When Cathy suffered a concussion in March 2013 I became the liaison between her and her staff for several weeks, attempting to limit her access to work information so that she would rest and relax. I was again reminded of the breadth and depth of ways she supported colleagues. By then, however, Cathy had already set a retirement date within the calendar year, for November 2013.

3.7 Someone who "Speaks up"

During several interviews Cathy shared instances when she saw decisions being made or actions being taken in education that she did not agree with. In these instances she responded by raising questions or comments outside of her realm of responsibility or job description. She conveyed that this led to her having a reputation for being someone who would "speak up," or in some cases an implication that she had a tendency to "stir the pot." Several of these stories were things I have heard her describe on other occasions, to other people, or rather casually. I have not interpreted them as things she felt concerned about in the sense of wanting them kept quiet, but she does express concern about the weight she felt of speaking up when others would not. In most cases she describes the outcomes of speaking up as having been positive or constructive, without an implication of regret. Nevertheless, that she remarks on such instances still indicates some consciousness of the consideration given to her choices. I have understood from her that this 'speaking up' is not something she can easily resist or avoid, and that she views it as a part of her character, for which she must bear any inevitable consequences.

I asked Cathy: “Throughout your career, what has often been different about you from other educators?” This was intended as a general and open question; I was not aiming towards information about this tendency to “speak up” or anything predetermined. The way she answered is worth an extended quote for the insight it brings into Cathy’s character and the role she has played in Northern education:

So to me, the ability to speak up about things that you think are important despite knowing that other people don’t agree with you, and that the powers that be may not agree with you, takes courage. And I would say that that’s something I’ve been willing to do often. Somewhat, sometimes, to my detriment, in cases when nobody else was willing to do that for whatever reason. And I mean that started right at the beginning [of my career] when we were in Coppermine—the first principal who changed the school overnight and nobody... the community was getting very upset about what he was doing, and nobody was saying anything. I was the one who told the powers that be that this was going on. And it wasn’t so much that we thought everything was bad, but that obviously the community wasn’t happy and somebody needed to do something to smooth it all out, or fix it, or deal with it. That’s just one example but that’s the first example. When we left Coppermine and were interviewing for a job in Fort Simpson, the Superintendent said ‘Well I hear you’re a shit disturber.’ And I said ‘No, that’s not how I would characterize it. It was done to try to help deal with the problem because nobody was.’ Because in those days Superintendents didn’t drop by very often.

I think another thing is the business about seeing things as they are, and asking why they are that way. And then seeing things as they aren’t, and asking why can’t they be. ‘Why are things the way they are and why aren’t they this way? And why can’t we make them this way?’ So that kind of questioning. I think, within the group of people that may have the same passion and dedication [as I do], there are fewer people who are willing to or able to ask those kinds of questions, especially at the big picture level, at the system level. Or if you work in a school, then at the school level, but outside of their own classroom. Lots of teachers are happy to stay in their own classroom and be concerned about that. I’ve never—I’ve never been one of those people.

When I worked for the NDE for a short period of time I saw Cathy’s efforts to bring senior managers into conversation about things that were bothering them, frustrating them, or that they felt needed to be attended to. I have seen over the years that Cathy is someone people will confide in or trust with their conflicts, and she often felt motivated to assist them, respond to them, or take action. Her approach generally is that problems should be named, and in naming them they must then be acted upon. Not identifying problems or conflicts, and not following up on them once they are named, would fray at the edges of professional relationships as well as the system’s integrity. Her ability to observe problems herself, to name them or to speak up about them—as well as work towards solutions—are all reasons her perspective is worthwhile exploring.

3.8 A Changing View and The Iceberg Metaphor

In the period between 1973 and 2013 Cathy lived in five different Northern communities, including in each of the three regions that are now Nunavut. She worked at the community, district/region and territorial levels. She was never a school principal or a superintendent, rather taking an approach more focused on curriculum and program, but through which she was often directly involved in staff supervision and leadership development. Her responsibilities with the BDBE and C&SS were substantial in terms of potential to influence and carry out made-in-Nunavut education policy and programs. Few others involved in the education system have the length of service, familiarity with both territories and both departments of education, the depth of experience, or the willingness and interest in narrating the changes seen in a systematic way. She maintains an archive of resources, and is an archive herself.

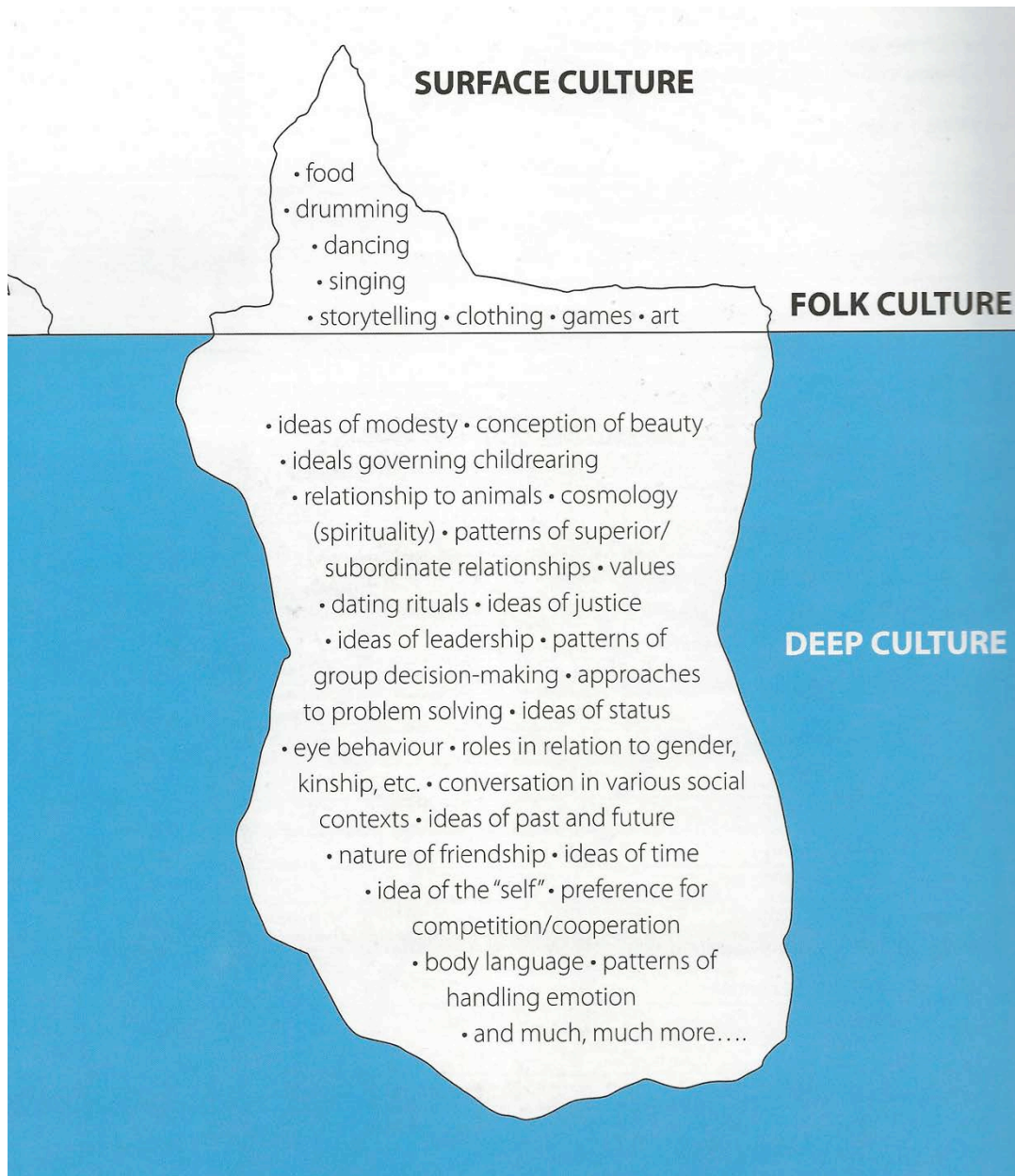
Having shared aspects of Cathy's career biography, my next line of inquiry is to list the educational questions Cathy has taken an interest in, and long grappled with, as they emerged during her career.⁴⁰ I would suggest that Cathy's curiosities reveal a deepening view of successes and challenges in northern education over time, reflecting how those working in Nunavut education have taken their shared view deeper into the realm of culture and cross-cultural experience. As Cathy has shown me, this process of learning might be compared to exploring the cultural iceberg: examining that visible tip first, and rather than being satisfied by that view, sending a water camera under the surface to examine the lower extremities. Cathy frequently uses this metaphor, so I will explain it first as a tool with which to engage her questions about northern education in the next section, as well as a tool useful to the remainder of this inquiry.

The metaphor of an iceberg as a representation of culture arises frequently in conversation with Cathy; in seven of our 17 interviews and often more than once. This is a commonly used metaphor in education that has been made more specific to and frequently used in the Arctic context. For example, it is used by the Alaska Native Knowledge Network (ANKN) (2012), as well as by Nunavut in a social studies activity within *Staking the Claim: Dreams, Democracy and the Canadian Inuit* (NDE, 2009), represented in Figure 7.

⁴⁰ Cathy asked me to note that while they do not appear here, she has been significantly interested and involved in questions/issues related to teacher education, in relation to the Eastern Arctic Teacher Education Program later becoming the Nunavut Teacher Education Program (certified by McGill University and then the University of Regina). While the Departments of Education (NWT and NU) have had various forms of partnership with, and even oversight for, teacher education, it falls outside of the K-12 school system in the view I take in this study.

Figure 7 Iceberg Analogy for Indigenous Knowledge Systems

Reprinted with permission (NDE, 2009, Unit 4).



The first time the iceberg came up in our interviews was when Cathy was describing herself as a new teacher in Kugluktuk. Even though she remembers feeling more comfortable in a cross-cultural context than some of her new teaching peers who came from southern Canada, she said she was missing a view of the lower part of the iceberg, with respect to Inuit culture. “If you think of the cultural iceberg and the sort of everyday life parts being the tip, and then the values and beliefs and perspectives being the bottom of the iceberg... I was still dealing very much with the tip of things.”

Later I asked Cathy if she could say more about what she means by the “lower part of the iceberg”—what it means to her, rather than according to how the metaphor is used by others. She went on at some length, parts of which I have quoted here:

Well, I think [the lower part of the iceberg] means getting parents to talk about what they think is important for their children, what their wishes and dreams are for their children. And then determining what that means for what we do in school. [...] I think the lower part of the iceberg is about what is important to us. A lot of what I brought to teaching came from what I learned as a child from my family, from the values and beliefs that my family held. And fortunately my values and beliefs allowed other people to have *their* values and beliefs, but if I had been the kind of teacher who said ‘You’ve got to do it my way’ then, there would have been a real disconnect. [...] I probably was trying to live principles, but I don’t know if I could have articulated them. I probably was respecting the students’ experience but I didn’t articulate it. So, I think doing that is really important. Talking to the Elders about what they wanted for children? We didn’t do that. And that’s an ‘underneath part’ of the iceberg. Thinking about the long-term consequences of what the effects were, of what we were doing? I don’t think we did that. It was very much ‘in the now.’ And I don’t think anybody was asking. You know, it wasn’t just me, but nobody was asking parents what they wanted. I don’t think we thought we needed to ask parents what they wanted. Which, when I think now, is shocking.

This quote shows that Cathy uses the lower part of the iceberg to represent the assumptions, what she would also call the “hidden curriculum”: expectations, purposes, and values of people involved in schools. She emphasizes the parents whose children are taught in school. In the case of the Arctic, these parents are mainly Inuit, but those who are non-Inuit—teachers, administrators or parents—also operate from their own cultural iceberg, parts of which are viewable and parts of which are not. Whether or not culture can be seen, it is nevertheless always in operation. Cathy says that she believes these aspects of culture should be brought out from being hidden, sub-surface, or implicit. They should become explicit, shared, exchanged through dialogue. She often refers to the lower part of the iceberg as a way of expressing the problems associated with not talking about what we do, and why we do what we do.

Cathy later explained that one of the ways the deeper part of the iceberg can be missed is when you ask Elders to talk about, or share traditional knowledge regarding, a specific topic without giving them time to explain the context or without listening to stories in a more open-ended way. This was often the approach when doing curriculum development, where Elders would be asked about caribou hunting, but the context of the hunt was missed when emphasis was placed on practices:

It’s kind of a Qallunaat way of just taking a topic and drawing it out of the lifestyle and talking about it separately. Which doesn’t really honour how integrated life was, and how complicated it is to talk about that. I think we’re conscious of that but it’s hard to—you sort of need both I guess. You need some of the specific topics and you need the more

fundamental deeper parts of the iceberg as well.

What I am beginning to see in using the iceberg metaphor for a tool is how Cathy came to know that Inuit culture has aspects that cannot be ‘seen’ immediately or quickly, but also must be learned, felt, experienced or embodied over time, through respectful questions and dialogue that supports respectful relationships. The iceberg can also be used to understand how to go about developing a cross-cultural education system that reflects Inuit culture, that is, as teachers learn about the deeper aspects of another culture teachers must return to look again at their own iceberg and bring the contrast into relief in order to make sense of it. Throughout Cathy’s career, her view of the iceberg grew larger, and while the answers to some questions may have grown clearer, other angles remain(ed) unknowable.

3.9 Cathy’s Educational Questions

Many educational questions have emerged in and driven Cathy’s career. I collected these questions from the 17 interviews, which appear in Appendix B. Some of the questions were expressed explicitly, whereas others arose more organically, were asked rhetorically, or implicitly. They are representative of the enduring inquiries to which Cathy has given attention through her career, and represent considerations that do not necessarily have easy or evident answers.

In summary, her early teaching years raised questions about English language learner instruction, relevant curricula and assessment materials and Inuit learning styles. Later, as a consultant, her questions centred on parent involvement in school, teacher in-service provision, jurisdictional consistency and literacy across subject areas. As BDBE director her questions took up parent and community involvement in school, Inuit leadership development, nurturing northern identities, Inuit pedagogy, school board governance and the impact of Elders as instructors. Questions raised throughout her career connect to curriculum development based on Inuit knowledge, building positive relationships between Inuit and Qallunaat staff, high quality consultation, understanding what makes youth “successful” in Nunavut, and identifying sustainable processes of change.

At the end of our interview process Cathy summarized her career as moving from “old” questions that could be summarized as dealing with system change, to a “new”, or more recent, set of questions (which will be outlined in Chapter 7). She summarizes her “old” questions as follows:

When I took an anthropology course back in 1977 on Eskimo culture, the professor Bob Williamson who was an Arctic expert, talked about teachers as change agents in the sense

of trying to change the students to fit a southern school system. I've tried to think about teachers as change agents who actually change the system to fit the students. And the two questions that we've talked about in relation to that are: 'How do we help educators gain the experiences they need to change their... to open their eyes, to open their ears, to open their hearts, and to open their heads to a cross-cultural bilingual situation that has different goals and different foundations from what they may be used to from their own experience?' The second of the old questions is, 'How do we support teachers on an ongoing basis in the classroom to learn the instructional strategies that address the whole child?' So, not just the head, not just the knowledge, but the skills and the attitudes that will enable them to become confident human beings, to live in the world they live in today, but have a sense of what their identity is. So those are kind of the two questions we've talked about a lot.

Here Cathy places emphasis on the role of the teacher and the change expected of teachers in contrast to the previous emphasis on developing materials or system processes. The emphasis on teachers instead of on schools (as an institution or system) is somewhat of a departure from the way I have heard Cathy discuss the many moving parts of a school system—especially curriculum and leadership—that may impact on students. Teachers cannot be separated from the many other moving parts, but I wondered as I read this whether her analysis shows a leaning towards teachers as a site of focus for change, that distinguishes her retrospective view.

Before following the track laid out by Cathy's thinking any further, it is worthwhile engaging more closely with Cathy's "old" questions, and how she has worked towards answering them. According to Cathy, what makes a "good" educator from the perspective of Nunavut schools? When she imagines the teacher as "change agent" for making schools fit the people they serve better, what kinds of things can that teacher do? These are questions partially answered in the next section, but which also warrant further investigation.

3.10 Cathy's Philosophy of Education

Teaching is about connecting with people where they are, or students where they are, building on where they are, connecting with that and giving them the skills to move forward. But it's that connection, it's that connecting piece that's really important.
~ Cathy McGregor

The section above describing Cathy's career biography conveys a sense of her commitments and views of teaching, moving towards a picture of the philosophy of education she espouses. This philosophy is both important and relevant because it has driven her to stay involved in education in the Arctic for 40 years, and to participate in changing the school system to meet the needs of Nunavummiut. On this point I must be very clear: I am not arguing that Cathy's philosophy of education is the right philosophy, nor that it has matched exactly with the philosophies and policies of the institutions she has worked for at various points in time.

Secondly, what Cathy says about education has been deeply influenced by learning from Indigenous educators, leaders and scholarship. She would not wish to be seen as appropriating the views of Indigenous peoples for her own benefit, presuming to offer an Indigenous view of education, nor even describing something “new” for which she deserves credit. Rather, what appears below is my interpretation of the stance she takes, as a result of what she has learned and what she believes, after working in a cross-cultural context for so long. Those familiar with Indigenous teachings will see them blended with her own interpretations, and mobilized in her role as an educational leader. To tease out the commonalities with what others have said would be too detailed for this purpose, but greater clarity on specific issues will be offered in later chapters (such as her views on the definition of an educational leader in Chapter 6).

By engaging with the philosophy below one can begin to see a portrait of a long-term educator who has been influential in the territories. Indeed, after completing the interviews with Cathy, I came across a short article she published in *Aurora: the professional journal for NWT teachers* (C. McGregor, 1980). Because it was written many years ago, it is a rich example of the consistency in Cathy’s thinking to what I heard her articulate in our conversations. The article, entitled “The Teacher as Change Agent,” was evidently informed by her Masters study in educational anthropology and the time she had invested in refining her ideas while working as a consultant in Fort Simpson. Citing from a territorial philosophy document (NWTDE, 1978) along with Margaret Mead, John Collier, George Spindler and Robert Redfield, Cathy offers a clear model of the problem that “the school system in the N.W.T. is not designed and implemented by northerners, with northern students in mind” (C. McGregor, 1980, p. 5) and how teachers may come to make sense of their role in this discontinuity. I found the article to be such a clear exemplar that I use it in several places below to reinforce or elaborate on the interviews.

3.10.1 Classroom Teaching and Professional Development

Cathy names Sylvia Ashton Warner and Hilda Taba as educational scholars who significantly influenced her approach to classroom teaching. This includes the premise that: “Your job as a teacher is to discover that child’s passion and then teach to that passion,” and that curriculum should start with the child’s world and work outwards into the wider world from that place. She views the ability to learn about other people(s) as beginning by making explicit what a person’s own life is like—an approach that could be called the “cultural comparative” rather than the “cultural microscope.” Cathy taught literacy with the language experience approach, as well as integrated curriculum based on themes. Skill development, according to Cathy, should be in a

context that is as relevant or realistic as possible. She experienced team teaching in her first year as a teacher before going to the NWT, so she continued looking for opportunities to engage in and support team teaching. Cathy believed the benefit for teachers would be to make best use of their respective skills as well as offering students both consistency and opportunity to get richer learning experiences across classes/subjects.

Cathy refers to the earliest NWT curriculum document, *Elementary Education in the Northwest Territories: A Handbook for Curriculum Development* (NWTDE, 1972)—often referred to as the “Red Book” for its red plastic cover—as something she aligned with, and that reinforced what she thought about education upon her arrival in the Arctic. Drawing from the curricular and pedagogical recommendations allowed her to continue working with those ideas in new ways:

So almost everything I encountered in the official information from the department supported my philosophy and what I was doing for teaching. That made me confident enough to kind of share that with other people in the school [...]. The message from the department elementary curriculum, reinforced what I was doing and gave me the opportunity then to try to dig even deeper and figure that out over the next few years... what, what else I could do even stronger.

Cathy still refers to the “Red Book” as something that fits with her views of education. She will also mention the landmark progressive approach described in *Summerhill*, not advocating that a “come as you please” school necessarily works, but that “one of the biggest challenges in Nunavut is to make the school fit the child.” Cathy said this to me passionately on several occasions:

...instead of the teacher being a change agent that—because they’re white—changes the experience of the Inuit child into a white experience, the teacher has to be a change agent who goes into that cookie cutter white school and tries to change it into an experience that reflects the children’s experience. So, to me that was kind of a real cognitive shift in understanding that first of all, that first role was what we played. Or that most teachers played—was trying to make a white world for the Aboriginal child. But if we did it consciously and learned more about the culture and the community and the parents and the kids, we could in fact change the school to reflect them.

The expectation that children’s needs be met extended from an identity/cultural consideration to an academic one as well, in which Cathy advocated for in-classroom differentiation, or inclusive education, rather than a pull-out system for children with exceptionalities. For the teacher to be capable of this, Cathy suggests: “Perhaps educators can learn something from applied anthropology about the role of people involved in community development work” and she lists these considerations as: being self-conscious about one’s own cultural attitudes, values and beliefs; being open, flexible, adaptable; initiating personal friendships within the community;

earning rather than assuming respect; fulfilling the community's expectations for the role of a teacher; and, becoming familiar with all aspects of community life (C. McGregor, 1980, p. 7).

Cathy's view of what makes good professional development was also developed during her time as a consultant in Fort Simpson, when it was her responsibility to find resources and assist teachers with problem-solving of all sorts. "I figured out that it was a good idea at the beginning of every year with every teacher I worked with to say 'What do you think you're good at doing, what do you think you need to learn to get better at doing, and how can I help you get better at doing whatever that is?'" She would then find ways to attend to the needs of teachers, through her own suggestions, through recommending a teachers' conference session, or sending a resource. She continues to hold that professional development should be about attending to the specific needs of the teacher, so they can help their specific students be more successful in the contexts of their families and communities. As her career progressed, Cathy developed a more comprehensive view of the ways in which teachers need to develop, in terms of self-reflection, critical thinking, problem solving, and relationship building, discussed further in Chapter 6.

3.10.2 School Community

Cathy advocates strongly for teachers and school leaders to actively build relationships and communicate with parents. In her view this is not limited to teachers telling parents how their children are performing, but rather asking, and seriously considering, what parents view as best for their children. She asserts:

...parents have a right and a responsibility to participate in their children's education, but it's our job as a system to go out and ask them. Because it's their kids. We can't expect them to just volunteer and just suggest it themselves, because they are busy as parents and have their whole lives. So it is our job to go out to them, wherever you are, and say 'Here's a chance for you to be involved.'

Cathy recommends that parents be involved on a casual, flexible basis but also through more formal activities including consultation and school governance, a point she made clear in her article for teachers in 1980 as well (C. McGregor, 1980, p. 7). She often says that she learned from Inuit educators that the most important role of a school principal is to build positive relationships within and outside the school:

...they really saw the job of the leader as trying to build the bridges between all the cultural groups, age groups and different roles. Particularly because of the history of education in the North, and many negative perceptions of education in communities. You had to build positive relationships if you were going to get past all those complications in a cross-cultural, bilingual environment with so many different expectations of the school.

Cathy also views the principal as an instructional leader and someone who should be involved in, and responsible for, what goes on in classrooms by working directly with teachers to develop their curricular and pedagogical skills. She often talked about the importance of protecting non-instructional time for staff to participate in team building, theme planning, working towards team teaching, mini-professional development sessions, or in-services, focused on school improvement and what is best for students. Elders working as instructors and mentors in schools can make a positive difference to the atmosphere and benefit both students and staff, according to Cathy. She views their importance not only in terms of bringing expertise in Inuit language and culture but also in social-emotional supports for students and staff, by contributing life experience, understanding and a presence that calms people down.

3.10.3 School System Change

Cathy frequently talks about school systems in terms of institutional and operational change at the community, regional and territorial levels, as well as the benefit of consistency of key messages across all three levels. Arctic schools have been grappling with internally-driven and externally-mandated expectations for change nearly perpetually since their inception. Cathy speaks passionately about the need for change in various ways and often advocates for experimental, radical or unprecedented approaches, if they are conceived by and led by Nunavummiut to address their own unique conditions. She says, “No one can predict exactly what kind of an educational system this process might create [...] A major goal of each model would be to help create the strong personal and cultural identity needed to survive and succeed as Dene, Métis, and Inuit adults” (C. McGregor, 1980, p. 8). She has much less interest in change associated with meeting a set of standards or outcomes defined by other school systems or in direct comparison to other systems, though knowledge of those expectations and processes is part of the work to identify unique Nunavut solutions.

This commitment, and her consideration of the wishes of Inuit decision-makers, led her to initiate and participate in visioning processes with schools around the Qikiqtani region when she was director of the BDBE. These workshops were designed to identify the purpose(s) of schooling according to each community, and build goals and action plans for schools accordingly.

In terms of change processes, she also attends to continuity with previous ways of doing business. Cathy sees limitations and inadequacies in change models when older ways are dropped cold, or disregarded completely, without discussion of how and why new policies and

practices relate to or improve upon the old ones. Cathy expressed frustration repeatedly in remembering how often she has seen processes or resources overlooked, thrown out, reinvented, or changed arbitrarily, remarking on the wasted energy and short-sightedness she associates with that approach to change. “Seeing it go backwards” was identified by Cathy as the worst part of being an educational leader. This is not necessarily assuming that old(er) ideas are better, but to work openly with people involved in the system to define what changes are desired, and attend to how they view it, rather than making an administrative decision without shared ownership. “If the change process does not make sense to achieve the desired impact” (C. McGregor, 1980, p. 7). Cathy and her colleagues, working on visioning workshops or school improvement processes, devised metaphors and processes to show school staff and community members how schools were changing over time, to give them a view of the ‘big picture’ of continuity and change, and to support participants in imagining the ways schools could change in the future. They often did this through a participatory history of education timeline activity (as will be described in more detail in Chapter 6).

Visioning processes and school improvement were seen by Cathy as a way for parents, Elders and community members to be meaningfully involved in education, following a history in which schools had been places that were not welcoming to the community:

The shared purpose that everybody together would create for the school system needed to be explained to people. It wasn’t just good enough for the school to decide. And that was basically the message we were giving, that up until around the time of the boards, most of the decisions about the school were made by the school staff, most of whom were outsiders and therefore the community itself and even the Inuit educators didn’t have a huge voice in those decisions. And that had to change.

Cathy holds this view with reference to the school level as well as regional or territorial levels, where she worked to lead collaborative educational change initiatives. Even in 1980 Cathy was warning teachers about taking too big a role in such processes, presenting the risk that they would unravel with itinerancy:

It is particularly important during this process for teachers to remember that, for the large part, they are transients in the community. Their role is as facilitators, they cannot allow themselves to become indispensable to the change process... By working with community leaders, and training local people, continuity can be built into the new plan. (C. McGregor, 1980, p. 8)

Identifying what has been done in the past, determining the merit or worth of those ways of doing business, using those impacts to inform decision making in the present, and working towards a shared vision of the future: this is the way Cathy conceives of effective change at any

level of administration. This feeds a shared vision and sense of community that Cathy values highly in the workplace:

When I had the opportunity to work at the BDBE—that had a very clearly articulated vision that fit my vision—then I could help make that happen in a way that I think is, I know now, is very unique. You don't get that opportunity very often to both have an organization that has the vision, and then have the opportunity to make the vision come real.

She also viewed the last 10 years of her career in C&SS in this light.

3.10.4 Success in Education

Cathy spoke with me on a few occasions about how success in education is defined by her, by department staff, by Elders and by others. Given the description above regarding her view of educational change as tied tightly to a place-based and culturally responsive notion of educational success, it is perhaps not surprising that this discussion would arise several times. It is not a straightforward question or answer in Nunavut, just as it is not straightforward anywhere else. From Cathy, I heard a distinction being made between those who believe you have to attend to the social and emotional wellbeing of students and their cultural identity in order to support them academically, and those who believe that establishing, raising and assessing for academic outcomes ought to be given primacy in the function of a school. I will begin by sharing what Cathy told me about her own view of success:

The way I've been trying to define success is, someone who crosses the stage when they leave school—notice I didn't say graduate when they leave school—with options open to them. Whatever those options are that they want. Graduating may not be what they want. But they can have doors open for them because they have an idea of what they do want, and they have some skills to address what they want. And they know how to get what they want, whatever that might be. So if they want to be a hunter, fine. If they can actually afford to be a hunter, and they have some skills that they've developed in order to be a hunter, that's good! That isn't academic quality, that's something else. And to me that's about identity—I sort of summarize that as 'identity.' They know a little bit, as much as you do when you're 17 or 18 or 19, about who they want to be and what direction they want to go in their life. They feel they have the foundation, at least some foundation of knowledge and skills to get them there. And I would say that they've been expected to do the best they can along that journey. But it may not be academic success.

What I hear in this assertion is that by creating a flattened view of school success, tied exclusively to academic achievement in a Eurocentric sense, would be to exclude students from school who hold more alternative, traditional or culturally-informed views of their future purpose. Therefore, schools must provide pathways for learning that are flexible with regard to the objectives articulated by local students and families, rather than replicating objectives sourced from one epistemological frame. This view was put in contrast by Cathy with the

academically-oriented view, which she characterized as follows: “If you just focus on literacy then you don’t have to do this touchy feely stuff”; “You just need to focus on skills. And really, Nunavut is no different than anywhere else”; “...kids only need English because that’s what you have to have to be economically viable in the 21st century world we live in”; “We don’t know how to teach the Inuit perspective, we don’t have it, we didn’t experience it.”

I asked Cathy to clarify what she thought was fundamentally different about the views that emphasize academic achievement, English, and 21st century skills from her own views—or from the perspective of someone who wants to make schools more responsive to the Inuit population. She explained further:

One goal is to have quality. So, whether it’s academic quality, or life skills quality, or content quality, or attendance quality, the goal is to have the best you can have. The problem is that sometimes some people see that only as academic quality. And they don’t understand that academic quality is linked to other things that you also have to have. [...] If you don’t meet the social-emotional needs, if you don’t meet the mental health needs, if you don’t meet the needs to have trusting, positive relationships with other people you’re not going to be able to focus on the good quality academic work...

I really think it’s about differentiation—making the choices available and expecting them to do their very best, which is what Donald Udlualuak says as an Elder. Expect them to do their best and don’t settle for less from Kindergarten on, and that’s high quality. It may be academic and some of it isn’t. If it’s quality you want, which to me is what standards is about, we want that to be the essence of our system. But it’s just that what you have that quality about has to be differentiated for the purpose that that person has for their life.

In the quotations above Cathy asserts her own high expectations, and invokes what she has learned from an Elder. She claims that Nunavut schools must extend their responsibilities outside teaching and learning academic subjects towards linking academics with holistic, locally-relevant and culturally-responsive indicators of school success that are predicated on criteria for quality that facilitate a high degree of differentiation.

3.11 Limitations of Cathy’s View

As I have discussed elsewhere, Cathy holds and shares a wealth of stories from her career in northern education, and offers a notable ability to explain, contextualize and connect them to factors and variables beyond her individual experience. She is also extremely well read, maintaining a commitment to professional reading over her career (in addition to her graduate studies) in the areas of bilingual education, Indigenous education, educational leadership, educational change, educational sociology and history. Cathy’s descriptions of education—

particularly those that follow in the upcoming chapters—invite a sense of trustworthiness and confidence that can lead into generalizations.

Cathy is also implicated in the system she comments on (as am I), notwithstanding her views of how it should change and her attempts to enact that change. The institution of schooling in the Arctic has roots in colonizing intentions, and its history includes harmful outcomes for Indigenous peoples. It continues to perpetuate Eurocentrism into the present. Cathy has not only participated in this institution, but she has held a position of privilege and responsibility for decision-making within the school system for many years. She has been able to initiate projects, make staffing decisions, inform policy and set priorities. I offer evidence of the ways Cathy has learned from Inuit Elders and knowledge holders, and has carried out her responsibilities in consultation with, or taking direction from, Inuit educators and leaders. However, she carries with her a Qallunaaq identity, works within the legacies of colonization, and is prone—as we all are—to perpetuating Eurocentric ways of knowing, being and doing. She narrates the progress and successes of the Nunavut school system, but also the problems with it, and she has been part of it all. Her awareness of this implicatedness becomes clear in many of her comments throughout the dissertation, and I view it as a strength of her perspective. On the other hand, there are undoubtedly places where she (and I, for that matter) cannot see her own role in the perpetuation of colonizing relations.

Therefore, Cathy's narrative contributions must be used and applied carefully, as is the case with the stories of any one person. Recognizing that her narratives are not meant to offer a comprehensive or objective representation of schools or educational change, her singular experience is intended to provide a significant path into inquiry on this topic. In addition to this broad disclaimer, I wish to note a few specific things I found in collecting and using Cathy's narratives that I understand as limitations in the subsequent claims that can be made.

Cathy tends to focus on projects she has been involved in, teaching and learning resources that have been developed, and the potential, opportunities or purposes of the educational approaches she has worked to create. She does not always have, or give, evidence as to the extent to which these things are advanced, sustained, or formalized in the work of schools and daily lives of teachers. This is not to say she ignores such implementation issues, but her energy has been more significantly focused on creating and planning than on following up, evaluating, and holding educators accountable for expectations and innovations. Likewise, her descriptions are sometimes predicated on the assumption that because a resource has been developed, it is being used. Or, that because a project has been initiated, it will be completed.

She insists on the need for teachers to make best use of existing made-in-Nunavut resources and Inuit language resources, even if they are a few years old or need some adaptation. Or, teachers might create their own resources following the models provided by the NDE, while the department mobilizes towards development of more, and better, resources. However, teachers do not necessarily feel they have the time, capacities, training or supports required to do their work effectively, and calls for more resources are common. In the slippery working conditions of Nunavut schools characterized by high educator turnover, these assumptions must be given more attention; particularly to whether, and how, continuity or consistency is desired and actually being achieved.

Secondly, Cathy tends to oscillate between two sets of needs and directions in the school system: those of the centralized decision-making body (i.e. territorial department) on the one hand, and those of each school or group of schools in each community, on the other. The need for better quality program resources and administrative systems can only be met with capacity available at the territorial level. This necessitates some degree of consistency in the communities and regions outside of Yellowknife (for the former NWT) and now Iqaluit. The imposition of consistency can come into conflict with the high value placed on local ownership of northern schools since the 1980s, as well as flexibility and responsiveness to linguistic, cultural and other forms of local diversity. This has always been a tough middle ground to strike in the North and constantly presents governing bodies and organizations with challenges. The balance between achieving territorial consistency and supporting local flexibility is implicit in the ways Cathy talks about the northern school system, but she sometimes does not acknowledge this tension as a complex paradox for which few compromises seem to work. While it is clear from this chapter that Cathy has community-based experience and supports community decision-making, she has most recently been expected to prioritize territorial level approaches. For this reason, some might view her perspective as limited in not acknowledging regional and community variation on the issues of policy, Elders, curriculum and leadership across the territory.

3.12 Conclusion

I opened this chapter by sharing a story that Cathy often tells to help people understand what has driven her work in northern education over 40 years. When her superintendent suggested there was more she could have done as a first year educator to address the needs of her Inuit students and create programs that reflect who they are, she was not deterred. Rather, it

spurned her motivation and curiosity: “Well I think it gave me a goal. Even though I didn’t know what he meant, and he didn’t seem to know what he meant, it gave me a goal.”

Reflections on how Cathy took up that goal can also be seen in honours she has received from the Inuit education community over the years, which have gone largely unmentioned here. I do wish to share some evidence of memories held by others of working with Cathy. Eva Aariak is a former educator who served as Nunavut’s first Inuk female Premier and Minister of Education from 2008-2013. In her remarks at Cathy’s retirement celebration on 13 November 2013 (which I video-recorded), Premier Aariak spoke about Cathy’s dedication to incorporating Inuit culture and language into school programs, resources and materials, developing and implementing the IQ foundation documents, contributing to Inuit leadership development, developing materials based on research with Elders in Arviat, and always supporting more culturally appropriate ways of being together in schools.

On a more personal note, Aariak told a story about how she remembered working with Cathy during the BDBE years, when Aariak was employed as an educator in the TLC. She said:

I’ve known Cathy for many years. She had us, as a bunch of educators in a room—I think it was in the original Joamie school. And she told us to close our eyes and imagine what you would like your school to be like, in your own home community. And to this day I can picture the kind of school I wanted to see in my home community. Culturally relevant, but embracing the best of both worlds. We still need to do a lot more of that Cathy, thank you for introducing that.

Later, she told another anecdote about the mentorship Cathy had shown her:

I was Inuktitut book publishing coordinator and Cathy was our principal. And not once, not twice, Cathy had approached me at that time—this is how much she wanted the leadership to continue within the Inuit population in the schools. She approached me, ‘I want you to think about taking over my place as the principal of the Teaching and Learning Centre.’ I will never forget that Cathy, for you believing in me, even in those young days when I was with education. I felt that I was not quite ready to take on this honour at that time, but I will always treasure your belief. Such inspiration you gave me, believing in what I do.

I have intended to invite readers into a relationship with the person, and her expertise, that I have engaged in the following chapters. While this chapter remains only a partial accounting of Cathy’s experiences and her views on education, which are further elaborated later in the dissertation, it is also an exemplar of practice. I have worked towards showing how what Cathy says about what she knows has been accumulated over time, in relation to specific places and groups of people, and continuously revised as she has shape-shifted in differing roles and contexts as an educator and leader. It is not a history of Cathy but rather a collection of traces I

have constructed to help me—and the readers of this work—understand how Cathy’s expert knowledge is informed by her own past.

Through Cathy’s experiences, the reader can also discern more about the context of education in the Arctic, including some of the twists and turns that have contributed to making schools as they are today: staffing up the system with consultants and administrative supports, made-in-the-North curriculum development projects, legislative changes, governance by boards of education, the creation of Nunavut, dissolution of those governing boards, and the work of envisioning a new school system after the split. This provides the background against which changes that have occurred since 2000, and that I will frame as decolonizing projects in the following chapters, can be understood. The ways Cathy views educational change in the Arctic, illustrated above, will shape the way decolonizing is defined throughout the rest of the dissertation. That is, when it comes to decolonizing she does not have all the answers, answers that can necessarily “travel” elsewhere, flawless techniques, or a set of best practices. What she has is a commitment to envisioning, revising and rebuilding relational and situated approaches to running a school system that account for the past and accommodate difference.

In hearing some of Cathy’s stories, mixed with my interpretive interventions, the reader may begin to see how she excavates her memories (knowledge from the past) as well as her awareness of how things have unfolded in the territories (knowledge of the past) to inform her views and values in the present. This sense of time establishes some continuity that is comforting, giving Cathy a sense of expertise and experience that is relevant, and frustrating, when it represents recurring problems and failure to learn from the past. Perhaps seeing how Cathy has navigated this complexity, and stuck with it—returning after short periods of time away in Saskatoon, Gibsons, and Fairbanks—will be evocative for other long-term educators who have maintained a commitment to the Arctic. Perhaps it will be illuminating for new educators who are not sure they can, or will, stay longer than a few years. Perhaps it demonstrates the process of learning that teachers may need to undergo—not in a prescriptive sense but in the sense of being a story that resonates with their own possible futures. It could be that seeing education in accordance with the (more familiar) story “Nunavut schools are intractable, in crisis, disorganized and draining” could be heard anew through Cathy’s story that “Nunavut schools make a difference to kids, offer a challenging and rewarding place to take up responsibility and leadership, and can be successful when supported by deep partnerships.” As Cathy has been a teacher to me, and many others, perhaps her story—or some part of it—has been a teacher to the reader here and now.

Figure 8 Cathy Receiving Service Plaque at Retirement from Hon. Eva Aariak, Minister of Education and Premier of Nunavut, Iqaluit, 2013

McGregor Collection



Chapter 4: Looking for Sources of Inuit Knowledge: The Role of Elders

Elders: are accepting of time and change; have certain roles with everyone; deserve respect, by young or old; have good humour; are strong—mentally and spiritually; take great delight in receiving gifts and are great collectors; are appreciative of gestures of love, attention and kindness; deserve to be responded to quickly when they ask for help; are strong-willed on certain issues; are respectful of others regardless of age.

~Inuuqatigiit: the Curriculum from the Inuit Perspective
(NWTDE, 1996, p. 47)

Heather: Tell me about an accomplishment or success in education that has been particularly significant in your opinion since Nunavut was created?

Cathy: Well I think it has to be the work with the Elders.

In this chapter the story streams flow around the site, or ice pan, of the role of Elders. Elders have been educators and experts in the Arctic for as long as people have inhabited the region. The involvement of Elders with and for schools—not necessarily in schools—has a relatively shorter history, but more significant than has been documented to date. Elder instruction, particularly to facilitate cultural content or “culture class” began as early as the 1970s in some Nunavut communities. By the year 2000 four Inuit Elder Advisors were working full time for the NDE developing educational philosophy and other materials for schools, in collaboration with a pan-territorial Elders Advisory Committee (EAC) and curriculum staff.

While I am not aware of any empirical research specifically on the role of Elders in Nunavut schools, drawing on interviews with Cathy and documentary sources, I can begin to answer questions such as: How has Elder involvement with schools changed over time? What was the rationale for hiring Elders on staff full-time at the NDE when Nunavut was created? What have Elders’ roles been in Nunavut schools or in relation to curriculum and program development? How does the role of Elders or Elder knowledge show up in NDE policy? What do Elders—keepers of knowledge from the past—bring to education in the present in a cross-cultural, multi-lingual and quickly changing context? What should present education staff know about the history of Elder involvement, and why should they know it? How could the work of Elders in the school system be considered part of decolonizing practices?

Cathy spoke about the role of Elders in relation to NWT and Nunavut schools in all but one of our interviews. Noted in the second epigraph above, she also identified the work of the Elders as the most significant accomplishment of education since Nunavut was created. Exploring the site of Elders is relevant to addressing all of my research questions for the

following reasons. Employing Elders on staff at the department level was a new initiative of the NDE, therefore something that changed from the previous administration. It is an initiative reflected in Nunavut legislation, policy, curriculum and leadership. Elders are experts in knowledge from and about the past, and are cited as sources in new departmental materials. Therefore understanding their role is relevant to understanding how such knowledge is being brought forward in changes to the education system. Relying on Elders as educators and experts is consistent with Inuit culture and tradition. Whereas it is not as commonly pursued by school systems in other jurisdictions, the active role of Elders is part of Nunavut's decolonizing aspiration. Lastly, it is a component of schooling consistently centered by long-term educators, but that new educators may need supports to understand and participate in. Providing for the involvement of Indigenous Elders in schools and school systems raises questions and challenges that must be negotiated.

Near the end of the chapter the streams flow over rocks, as they circulate around this site. I engage with literature from other Indigenous education contexts, concerning the purposes and practices of Elder involvement in schooling. I find that identifying effective and respectful ways of working with Elders, rather than simply advocating for their participation, is an area deserving of greater research. The type of involvement and contributions Elders can make to schooling have changed over time, and therefore must remain flexible to changing conditions in future as well. However, based on this story stream I argue that Nunavut educators have potential contributions to make in supporting other educators in intergenerational learning with Elders.

4.1 Defining Elders in Nunavut

As *Inuuqatigiit: the Curriculum from the Inuit Perspective* was developed with the input of no fewer than 55 Elders, it is a reliable source in learning about the role of Elders in Inuit society traditionally, as well as in Nunavut today. In addition to defining Elders, as demonstrated in the epigraph to this chapter, *Inuuqatigiit* says that students should learn the following:

Elders are highly respected for their mental abilities, knowledge and wisdom. Inuit revere anyone who has lived a long life and has gained knowledge in practically every aspect of life and is willing to share the knowledge. Traditionally, the elders made decisions for the whole camp. Their advice on every situation was consulted before decisions that might affect the camp were made. Today, elders are almost the only ones who have the knowledge of traditional skills and language and have much they can contribute towards the education of the young. (NWTDE, 1996, p. 47)

An articulate and detailed Masters thesis by Naullaq Arnaquq (2008), a long-term Inuk educational leader from Iqaluit, also describes the traditional role of Elders. She goes on to

mention changes to their roles, as difficult experiences with settlement and colonization occurred in the Arctic:

Elders who told stories and legends in their homes helped to pass on a rich legacy of language and storytelling. [...] Songs, mores, values and chants are woven through many of these epics. Children were told shortened versions appropriate to their age and as time went on, learned the adult versions which had all the sex, violence and graphic scenes. Many families lost their storytellers during the flu and TB epidemics from the 1930's to the 1950s, and tragically, the biggest loss happened when schools and communities were established breaking the age old tradition. (Arnaquq, 2008, p. 163)

Arnaquq goes on to describe how Elders develop and offer *uqaujjuusiat*, “gifts of words of advice” through their own life experiences, through discussion with other Elders, and through validation in the repetition of their observations:

Older people who lived to see the trials and patterns of life, saw the truths of the *uqaujjuusiat* (gifts of words of advice) they had received being validated over time in their long lives so they passed them on with gentle conviction. Talking to other Elders and people in the context of daily life situations and events also confirmed their thoughts and experiences. There would be events they had pondered and theorized about which would eventually be validated so these would then become part of their advice. (2008, p. 162)

Likewise, according to a qualitative study of perspectives on aging in one Inuit community, “part of the determination as to whether an elder is recognized as particularly knowledgeable necessarily involves his or her ability to communicate with younger people” (Collings, 2001, p. 149). If it still seems vague who “counts” as an Elder in Nunavut—such as the age at which one can become an Elder—that is because it is not a fixed status, but a situated one, for which firm criteria are not appropriate or necessary.

In Inuit society, Elders have been the holders and teachers of knowledge from the past, providing continuity in good ways of knowing, being and doing. They also offer knowledge about the past, carrying stories about events in the lives of their ancestors. Their advice was, and still is, applied and mobilized by them and those who learn from them in the present. Despite the long history of exploration in the Arctic that preceded settlement, the relatively recent history of sustained contact between Inuit and outsiders and recent introduction of schooling has given Elders a particularly important role in Nunavut. Their influence in terms of maintaining access to cultural practices, traditional knowledge, and language has been an advantage in the resurgence and self-determination for Inuit in this unique context. That advantage is also slipping away rapidly with the passing of the generation that were, at least in some communities, unilingual-Inuktitut speakers born and raised “on the land” or before permanent settlement. With the spectre of that change having arrived, no longer on the horizon but very close at hand, comes the

necessity of reflection on what Elders have given, and how knowledge from and about the past will be transmitted in future.

4.2 A Story About Learning From Elders

Nearing the end of our eighth interview, I told Cathy that I had asked all the questions I had planned for that day. The interview had been about her graduate studies in Alaska, and returning to work for the NDE in Arviat between 2003 and 2007. I asked if there was anything else from that time period we had not covered, that she wanted to note or discuss. These openings or invitations at the end of an interview were often when I heard the most creative or unpredictable trains of thought and memory from Cathy. She went on to talk for several minutes, during which time she told me the following:

The Elders [Rhoda, Mark, Louis and Donald] were philosophers. They had practical experience doing work with kids, they were very steeped in traditional knowledge, three of them were artists. So they were able to contribute images to reflect a lot of the concepts that they contributed, and I think that's been significant. The images really help non-Inuit as a gateway into the concepts and the ideas.

The afternoon that I spent with Louis Angalik—when we were trying to develop the dog team analogy for leadership—I will never forget. He went into every single detail about the way the sled is constructed and loaded, and the way the dog team is hitched and treated, you know? That detail is necessary to take it and apply it to the modern world as a metaphor. When we've tried to do that, you can take every aspect of what he talked about and connect it to something [in the analogy].

In some of the early workshops we did that as an activity—like the principal meeting where we had every principal in Nunavut in Cambridge Bay. We physically actually made the team—the school team that you would have—and people came up and represented the dogs, but represented the dogs through every role that there would be in the school. And then the driver. And we actually had a physical qamutiq there, like a real qamutiq. It was very, very powerful. A lot of people refer back to that experience. And we had kids on the qamutiq actually, there were high school students there so they were on the qamutiq.

Anyway... I can't say enough about the power of that potential for change, created by having the Elders [in the office]. And that's why we insisted that there be money in the Education Act to promote Elders being in schools, because you need that direct experience [with Elders]. The teachers need that direct experience to see the power of it. If you don't experience it directly it's just in your head, you don't get that heart connection, that emotional connection. And I'm sure that the school experience isn't always as powerful as what having them there everyday all day is like.

That's why in the BDBE we'd actually taken teaching positions and made them into cultural instructors, because we felt having Elders there every day would make a difference to kids. We don't know if it did, but that was the theory. Which we're not doing now. We're not really allowed to do that now, so we don't have as many Elders in schools but at least we have the money that came through the Education Act.

In 2004 we had one of the first regional [Qikiqtani] workshops on implementing IQ, and what is IQ? We had a great big binder on that as a department. We held a regional

session in the Navigator Inn, and so there were people from each community there. It was the first regional-wide activity they'd had since Nunavut was created, where there were people from every school together—other than the principals who went for principal meetings. Some of our long-term experienced Inuit and non-Inuit educators were there, and it was almost like being back in the days before Nunavut.

We were talking about IQ, and you know, one of the Inuit educators put up their hand and said: 'The only way we're gonna create IQ schools is if there's Elders in the schools and we need money.' And she sat down. And that was in enough time that I took that and said to the Deputy Minister and the people doing the Ed Act. I said, 'We have to put money in here for Elders because otherwise we're not going to achieve what it says at the beginning'—what we were putting in the beginning [of the Act], which is to make IQ the foundation of the education system.

This story offers an introduction to some of the content in relation to Elders that will be explored in more detail in this chapter, but it also offers a revealing example of the way Cathy remembers and shares her stories. First, it shows how she can explain, provide context for, and attach meaning to events that might not otherwise be viewed as connected in Nunavut's educational past. Here she connects her memory of a conversation with an Elder, to the design of a professional development activity, to the ways in which Nunavut educational leaders have advocated for the importance of securing funding and policy to facilitate Elder involvement in schools. Second, it is a story that came from a flow of consciousness that she offered to me, rather than an answer directly to a question I asked, which further demonstrates the importance she places on the role of Elders in her own career, and in the Nunavut school system at multiple levels, beyond direct instruction with students.

4.3 From Classroom to Curriculum: Early Elder Involvement

Since at least the early 1970s Elder instruction has occurred intermittently and variably in territorial schools, usually on the initiative of motivated teachers or principals, through guest visits or separate classes. Made-in-the-NWT program policy at the time, the "Red Book" (NWTDE, 1972), does not refer to Elders specifically, which may be because the term "Elders" was less common then (Arnaquq, 2008, p. 106). It does, in several instances, recommend reliance on "local expertise" to infuse instruction with cultural content, and in practice this would have often meant involvement by Elders. This was almost exclusively achieved through an "add-on" approach called cultural inclusion, like Wednesday afternoon story-telling or country food preparation. In Cathy's observations as an educator and educational leader, my experience as a student in the 1990s, and anecdotal conversations with other teachers, this cultural inclusion approach had little impact on other classrooms or school programs.

It is difficult to generalize how Elder involvement began and has developed given the range of circumstances in different communities at different times. This aspect of schooling is always negotiated between the school principal, classroom teachers, DEAs (who provide honoraria), and the interest or skills of Elders themselves. Over time, many schools implemented guest instruction by Elders as a regular occurrence. This is often referred to across the North as “cultural class,” and sometimes occurs outside the school through land-based programs. Elder involvement through separate classes—that were not attended by Qallunaat teachers and took place exclusively in Inuktitut—was my experience as a student attending Joamie school in Iqaluit in the early 1990s, noted briefly in Chapter 1. As I will attempt to show below, however, Elder involvement in some school communities, and at the regional or territorial level, has taken on much more comprehensive dimensions.

In addition to the culture and language add-on model there have been a range of efforts to integrate Indigenous content into the common subject areas of social studies, language arts or science. It was with the intent to provide engaging and relevant learning materials that, in the late 1970s in Fort Simpson, Cathy and local teachers created curriculum kits on the topics of Moose and Beaver, with Elder participation. As part of this project she developed filmstrips of the moose hide tanning process. She remembers:

...it was always Elders who were doing it, it was always grandmothers. Sometimes I couldn't speak to them, so I had to have somebody with me who could speak to them and explain why I was taking the pictures. But of course they were generally quite excited about that. They thought that was good.

The practice of drawing on Elder expertise for development of locally and culturally relevant teaching and learning materials increased in the 1980s with the establishment of the TLCs. This was a result of *Learning: Tradition and Change*, particularly the provision that allowed for instruction in Indigenous languages (Special Committee on Education, 1982). A major goal of the TLCs was to publish books in Indigenous languages. As the manager responsible for setting up the TLCs and training the staff in the western Arctic, Cathy collaborated with Inuit and Dene staff to establish effective ways of working with Elders on materials development (although determining what “effective” means in this context has always been complicated, as will be discussed below). They would record Elders' stories, conduct interviews, and make books or units based on the knowledge collected.

This effort to include northern and Indigenous content across the curriculum and based on Indigenous languages was progressive. However, the role of Elders at this time was primarily a function of the need to source this knowledge, and the lack of documentation of such information

elsewhere. In other words, Elders were the only place to turn for seeking knowledge that could meet this need. It was not until later in the development of school policy that Elders were increasingly viewed as important to schools not only as conduits of traditional knowledge, but also to guide school improvement towards working in ways more responsive to Inuit families, and to nurture intergenerational learning.

4.4 Elder Involvement During the BDBE: Going Deeper

In terms of Cathy's work during the 1990s at the BDBE, we discussed Elder involvement in classroom instruction, curriculum development, and school-community consultations. Elders have been, and continue to be, particularly important when Inuit or Qallunaat teachers do not have direct experience with Inuit traditional practices or language. Or for example, Inuit teachers may not know vocabulary for certain topics, particularly if topics or skills are traditionally associated with the opposite gender. Also, transmission of Inuit knowledge was interrupted by attending residential schools, day schools, and other assimilative interventions in the lives of Inuit, such that opportunities to learn IQ may have been limited for the generation of Inuit working as teachers during this era (Aylward, 2009b). Elder instruction has formed a central part of increasing the extent to which schools integrate Inuit ways of knowing, being and doing.

Cathy told me about some of the roles Elders were taking in schools beyond class instruction per se. Leading up to the creation of the Nunavut government, special additional funds were made available to the public service for increasing human resource and professional development opportunities. Spearheaded by Cathy, the BDBE proposed that having more Elders in schools would contribute to developing student and staff capacity. Successful in their proposal, this funding substantially increased that which was already allocated by the BDBE for Elder instruction (C. McGregor, 2001). Cathy views the outcomes as follows:

It made a huge difference in our schools in ways we never anticipated. Of course we did it for kids, thinking Elders can teach Inuktitut, they can teach in Inuktitut, they can teach cultural things. That's why we did it—but what we found is, it made a difference to the whole atmosphere in the school because their presence just calmed people down. I can remember walking into a room when there would be Elders, and there might be 15 kids but they would be quiet. And they'd be working on their sewing, and there was just this feeling of calm. When you walked into a school where there were Elders the hallways would be quieter, there was just something about the effect that they had on everybody. And the second thing that we didn't anticipate is it made a huge difference to staff. When we had tragedies they were there to help people. It doesn't mean that Elders are perfect or all-knowing, but it's just their life experience. And of course we tried to pick the best ones available. Now maybe sometimes it was particular Elders, as opposed to Elders in general. But, you know, the fact that we have Elders in schools now is only coming back to what we had been trying to do before.

Cathy remembers thinking about the benefit of Elders in schools in terms of nurturing positive relationships with parents and community members—a need that was voiced strongly by Inuit educators (Nunavut Education Councils, 2000). The presence of Elders was expected to make schools into places community members would feel more welcome and comfortable visiting, and Elders could model for school staff the values that reflected the local community. Likewise, Inuit staff in the school were often important liaisons with the Elders, particularly for communicating in Inuktitut. According to Cathy, this was part of “building bridges” or “building a school system that enables you to have a better chance of positive relationships.” These positive impacts of Elders, beyond direct instruction, are corroborated by Arnaquq’s memories (2008, p. 141), and stories shared about the role of Elders in school decision-making by Inuit educational leaders in Tompkins’ dissertation (Tompkins, 2006, p. 246). O’Donoghue et. al. (2005) state that the role of Elders was mentioned many times by Inuit educators reflecting on the strengths of education during the BDBE administration, calling it a “key factor in promoting best practices in Inuit education” (p. 8). But, the involvement of Elders in school instruction may not universally have been viewed as positive, and because there has been little research on their impact, the outcomes remain unclear.⁴¹

In terms of Elder involvement in curriculum development, *Inuuqatigiit: The Curriculum from the Inuit Perspective* (NWTDE, 1996) was ground-breaking. The development of *Inuuqatigiit* forms a major milestone because it arranges aspects of Inuit knowledge into learning topics and outcomes for students from K-12. Crucial for the goals of supporting Inuit staff, Inuit language instruction, and cultural responsiveness, it is a rich resource representing a significant investment on the parts of the four Inuit divisional boards and Department of Education during the 1990s, as I have described in more detail elsewhere (H. E. McGregor, 2010; 2012a). The intent of *Inuuqatigiit* was that it should make content accessible for integration into any coursework or subject areas; not that culture would be taught in a separate class. The role of Elders in delivering this curriculum was highlighted by Cathy in a *Sharing Our Pathways* article

⁴¹ Cathy had planned to investigate the impact of Elders and perspectives on their contributions for her PhD research with the University of Alaska Fairbanks, asking: What was the effect of Elders on the school system and particularly on staff and students, just prior to Nunavut being established? This topic was identified through consultations she conducted with Inuit educators, inspired by three distinct views: 1) a long-term Inuit educator who had a lot of Elder participation in her classrooms; 2) a government administrator who saw the challenges of Elder involvement because she had to translate/mediate all conversations between her daughter (who spoke only English) and her mother (who spoke only Inuktitut); and, 3) an Inuit educator who had never had or seen the value of Elder involvement in her classroom because she felt equipped to teach Inuktitut and culture herself. As this project was not pursued for several reasons, it remains an outstanding area worthy of substantial inquiry.

with the ANKN (C. McGregor, 2001). What I will focus on here is the role of Elders in *Inuuqatigiit* development as described by Cathy, as well as by Inuit authors involved in the work, as reported in Lynn Aylward's research (2009b).

Inuuqatigiit was developed by a committee of Inuit educators from across the NWT, all women, most of whom worked for the TLCs (Aylward, 2009b). To identify content students should learn, the committee members—representing their respective regions—conducted different initiatives to collect Elder knowledge. Some topics for learning were easy to identify, such as plants, animals, or responsibilities of men and women, whereas the organization and sequence of the content was harder to decide on. Cathy says: “That was where a lot of the Elder work took place to say, ‘Well what would you expect little children to know about that topic, what would you expect teenage children to know about that topic?’”

The Inuit authors of *Inuuqatigiit* told Aylward (2009b) that the guidance of Elders allowed them to come to consensus with greater ease, that Elder guidance offered a “turning point of the whole project,” helping them grow as educators, adults and knowledge holders (p. 146). One participant declared, “It really made us wealthy in a way” (quoted in Aylward, 2009b, p. 146). Committee members would return to discuss items with Elders more than once throughout the drafting process. Identification of content, including recommending “key experiences” that students should have to learn particular content, and assigning learning outcomes to age levels (or divisions), were the primary topics of consultation held with Elders in the *Inuuqatigiit* project.

Naullaq Arnaquq (2008) has also written about the deep impact an Elder consultation event for *Inuuqatigiit* work had on her:

They had brought in several Elders, men and women, to talk about their knowledge about children. As the workshop started the Inuit teachers asked the Elders questions about behaviours in children. The more they talked, the deeper the level of the discussions went, including their vocabulary and use of terminology. I was shaking inside from hunger, excitement and awe at the level of discussion. In all my years of education I had not heard any experts talking about child psychology based on their first-hand experience the way these individuals were doing in Inuktitut. I have met professors and worked with colleagues who considered themselves to be of that caliber, who could talk about theory and applied research in language, child psychology and sociology. The Elders we sat and listened to were talking about issues and topics they had not read about but knew from experience and heard from their Elders who heard it from their own Elders! It was the deepest legacy of oral knowledge being shared and recalled as these Elders spoke together. (p. 178)

The affirmation expressed by Arnaquq was accompanied, for some Inuit educators involved in the writing, by concurrent feelings that were less positive. Aylward reports that several

participants in her research remember the process as painful, producing “self-turmoil” because of the need to face their own loss, and the process of recovery, of language and knowledge. This was difficult for the authors and produced many conversations about the interventions of colonization on their ability to learn Inuit knowledge, including attendance at residential and day schools (Aylward, 2009b). And yet, Aylward (2009b) concludes, “In acknowledging the expertise of the elders through interviews, conversations and visits, the authors began to believe they could be taken seriously and be successful within the world of curriculum and policymaking” (p. 148).

Cathy describes some of the members of the *Inuuqatigiit* committee as having been older, like Elders themselves, but the committee did not include a person appointed specifically as an Elder. Especially because the committee work largely took place in English, recognizing the dialectic differences and diminishing use of Inuit language in the western regions, the consultation with Elders was largely occurring outside the organizing committee itself. This procedure—working with Elders separately from designing the overall approach to curriculum—may not sound unusual, but it is mentioned here because of the contrast it provides with two other examples. The first is an Inuit participant in Aylward’s research who remembers the *Inuuqatigiit* experience in stark juxtaposition from her experience working on other projects, in which a model was followed where Euro-Canadian knowledge is simply translated into Inuktitut. It was explained that “elders were used as translators to ‘get correct vocabulary for science,’” whereas no consideration was given to how elders might have “meaningfully contributed to the conceptual foundation of the program or to scientific knowledge” (Aylward, 2009b, p. 143). Aylward (2009b) states: “The power and dominance of the unquestioned content of the southern Canadian curriculum became much more obvious to the author through her concurrent involvement with the *Inuuqatigiit* group, which also enabled her to clearly see and fundamentally question more of what was going on” (p. 143).

The second example is that Cathy viewed the *Inuuqatigiit* approach as contrasting with the way curriculum developers have tried to work in Nunavut more recently, as will be described below. This is because, in Cathy’s view, not having Elders highly involved in the overall framework development at the committee level, some foundational considerations (i.e. values and how to apply them) that are part of more recent work with Elders may have been missed. The Inuit values mentioned are related to specific topics, rather than Inuit ways of knowing, being and doing broadly speaking (see also H. E. McGregor, 2012a). This shows that assessing

the quantity and quality of Elder involvement must occur within a spectrum that is more complex than simply naming whether or not conversations with Elders occurred.

Another way Elders were involved in schools during the BDBE years was in school-community consultations and visioning. They were focused on identifying goals for the school based on community views of the purpose(s) of education. According to Cathy, Elders were always invited to these workshops and often contributed by describing education as it occurred before there were schools, or in early encounters with schools. Such stories could also involve difficult memories including children being forcibly taken to residential schools, and were partially intended to establish a shared understanding amongst school staff and the community that schools had caused harms in the past. In Cathy's words, the sharing of stories was about: "what their experience was like, what kind of materials they used, the repudiation of language and culture, and why it was so important for us to try to work towards regaining [language and culture], and building a school system that supported those things."

Elder views also had influence in activities where the community was making choices about what was important for children and youth to learn. Cathy says one of the most interesting learning moments she had occurred while working in a group with a unilingual Elder in a small community. The Elder explained that she wanted her children to have survival and land skills, but at the same time she said, "I want kids to be able to write in Inuktitut on computers." Cathy remembers:

She knew that kids were going to need computers but her point was, 'I want it to be Inuktitut, not just English.' And I remember thinking—this was like in 1994 maybe—'Wow how fabulous is that, that she can see already that that's where kids are going with their interests, but she wants it to have a cultural and linguistic—well, at least linguistic base.'

4.5 Elder Advisors at the Nunavut Department of Education

The nature and depth of Elder involvement with the school system changed substantially when four individuals were hired as full time Elder Advisors by C&SS in 2000. These positions were located in the decentralized departmental headquarters office in Arviat, where all of the curriculum work was being done at that time. In terms of the creation of the Nunavut government and new ways of doing business at the NDE, Cathy describes hiring Elders as the: "most exciting, creative, applicable and relevant" initiative that "really sent a signal that we're doing things differently." This was also noted by Naullaq Arnaquq (2008), who was the director of that division at the time: "It had to be different from Yellowknife and reflect Nunavut's needs, goals, language and culture so I made sure there were Elder Advisors' positions in place. The

curriculum and program had to be based on Inuit values, philosophy and knowledge while taking into consideration contemporary ways” (p. 155). The visionary understanding that more comprehensive Elder knowledge and advice would be needed for Nunavut schools came from the long-term education staff like Arnaquq, and the staff working in the Arviat office. Cathy also connects the justification and support for these positions to the mandate of the Nunavut land claim: “When you think that there were 17 positions [in C&SS at that time] and 4 of them were Elders, that’s a pretty amazing commitment to building that foundation. Which links, of course, to the requirements from the land claim to have an education system that serves Inuit.”

The impact of the Elder Advisors in Arviat on the work done there, and on the entire NDE, is connected to the characteristics of the individual Elders that took up the work. Louis Angalik, the late Donald Uluadluak, Rhoda Karetak and the late Mark Kalluak are recognized across Nunavut as unique individuals with extraordinary capabilities. All were born on the land, that is, before their families had settled in communities, and three out of four of them were (for the most part) unilingual Inuktitut speakers. Donald, Rhoda and Mark were artists and capable of communicating complicated or nuanced ideas effectively across languages using drawings. Mark had worked for the Inuit Cultural Institute and was acknowledged to be an authority on language. All had taken a program, offered over two years in the mid-1990s called the “Language & Culture Certificate,” intended to prepare adults who are not trained teachers to instruct students in language and culture. Mark and Louie have been honoured with the Order of Nunavut, and Rhoda and Donald received honorary doctorates from the University of Prince Edward Island.

Although he was not employed in the same way by the NDE, I would be remiss not to also specifically mention the late Mariano Aupilaarjuk who contributed significantly to the Elders’ work. He was one of the most noted Elders and thinkers in Nunavut, and also received an honorary doctorate from the University of Prince Edward Island. Aspects of his traditional knowledge have been brilliantly documented by Janet Tamalik McGrath (2011; see also 2002), in which she mentions his contributions with the NDE.

Cathy thinks of these individuals as “pretty keen observers about life,” bringing a unique combination of wisdom and common sense. She describes them as dignified, respectful and humble. As is true of most Elders, they would not claim to be experts and yet were highly generous in sharing their own experience and knowledge. While they all had many skills, Cathy remarked specifically on her admiration for Angalik’s knowledge of the land, Mark’s knowledge of language, Uluadluak’s artistic skill, and Rhoda’s skill as a seamstress.

Cathy listened to stories shared by the Elders about their life experiences during the colonizing process, when Inuit became obliged to settle in Arctic communities. Reflecting on what she heard, she says the Elders were, “very conscious of not criticizing Qallunaat too strongly even when they had personal life experiences that would have warranted being very critical of the ways Qallunaat have treated Inuit.” She says, “it’s so generous on their part to look beyond their anger with us.”

The Elder Advisors’ responsibilities were to share their lived experience. As Cathy says, “to generate the information about Inuit culture that would form the foundation, or the epistemology, of a school system that reflected Inuit culture.” She also described it as providing the “link between traditional lifestyle, in which they grew up, with the modern world.” As noted above, information on specific topics like animals and plants had been collected to certain degrees through previous Elder consultations, but the work with these Elders was intended to reach a deeper level of knowledge mobilization. How collection of such knowledge would happen was something that came about organically and has developed over time; not necessarily specifically determined when the Elders were hired.

In Cathy’s view the way in which the work proceeded with these Elders differed substantially from previous work. It was much more open-ended, and Elder-driven, but also regularly involved processes of consultation, leaving more room for honouring “how integrated life was, and how complicated it is to talk about that.” An example Cathy gives of the kinds of “esoteric questions” they might be grappling with is: How did people relate to each other, what were the laws that underlay the way people related to each other, and the values that underlay that? In some cases the same topics have been revisited through Elder conversations that have taken them deeper and deeper into thinking about Inuit knowledge.⁴² In other words, it has not always been a linear process but also a recursive one.

The impacts of Elders in the government office echo the impact of Elders in schools. They contributed specific cultural and language expertise; affected the way business is conducted in the office itself (communication, human relations); and, raised awareness of Elder perspectives on the purpose and goals of schooling. While Cathy was in Arviat she interacted with the Elders on a daily basis, observing that it made a difference to everyday operations and interactions. She remarks:

⁴² A rich description of the process of working with the Mariano Aupilaarjuk and the Elders in Arviat is provided by Janet Tamalik McGrath (2011) in her dissertation on Inuit knowledge renewal, discussed further below.

It forces you to use Inuktitut. They have a huge impact on the context, the feeling, the atmosphere and the culture of the office, just like they do in a school. They're good to go to for advice when you have problems. They have lots of life experience, which is relevant to running the office and problems with staff and things like that. They bring a different way of being and living that is more 'Inuit' to the way the office operates.

For their advisory roles, the Elders had learned to use computers to produce word documents in Inuktitut. All four Elders had been involved in the schools in Arviat previously. However, they were not teachers and did not presume to know how ideas should be applied in the school context. Therefore, collaboration of the Elders and the staff in Arviat who supported them to do work that bridges the two worlds of traditional Inuit knowledge and the contemporary school system was unprecedented, and Cathy says, "I'm not sure if any other individuals could have walked in those two shoes in quite the same way." This collaboration, and its challenges, is discussed further below.

4.6 Elders Advisory Committee

The EAC was created in 2000 to augment and extend discussions about Inuit language and culture. Partly because the four Elders working at the NDE all were living in Arviat, it was necessary to create a larger and more geographically representative group with whom to consult. The committee has met 2 or 3 times per year every year since it was created, with differing membership, but always including both men and women from a variety of communities. The group dynamic and opportunity for Elders to build on and respond to each other's knowledge is important as well as the variety of perspectives. Cathy describes the work, and its challenges, as follows:

I think it's really hard for us to imagine how difficult it would be to create the framework of a culture from nothing [documented], really. From lived experience. And then analyze that lived experience to come up with the beliefs, laws, principles, values, and the stages of learning, the lifelong continuum. And then to talk about child rearing and all the elements of how important child rearing is, or was, or still is. I think they had to experiment quite a bit with trying to find people who could think in that metacognitive way, but also think in the kind of practical way—because that was the only way they could actually figure out what were the steps or stages, or the views about any of those deep, kind of amorphous topics.

Sometimes the committee is approached with specific questions or requests for approval on policy ideas, whereas other times they follow their own direction. All conversations occur in Inuktitut. Joe Karetak, the coordinator in Arviat who works closely with the Elder Advisors and EAC, provides the crucial bridge between them and the department. According to Cathy he facilitates in many ways such as: connecting the Elders' previous conversations with the next

topic they will work on, providing a summary or synthesis of what they said to work from in future, identifying further questions in relation to the previous meeting, or liaising with the department about issues others would like discussed.

All of the EAC meetings are audio recorded to be available for future use. The audio tapes are intended to be digitized, archived by topic, transcribed and translated into English.

Cathy points out:

People can go back over time and maybe even see things in it that we don't see now because we're too close to it. And it's a very rich bank of information for forever, to have, because those people who have that lived experience kind of prior to such great impact of outsiders are dying. And they're not going to be available much longer to tell us that. So the bank of information is key for future interpretation.

Indeed, as a historical researcher interested in childrearing and education prior to the introduction of Arctic schools, I have used transcripts from early EAC meetings to characterize Inuit education (H. E. McGregor, 2010).

Figure 9 Elders Advisory Committee Meeting, Arviat, ca. 2002

Reprinted with NDE permission. Elders pictured from left to right, as identified by NDE: Uqsuralik Uttuqi (Cape Dorset), Gideon Qitsualik (Gjoa Haven), Mariano Aupilarjuk (Rankin Inlet), George Kapianak (Igloolik), Annie Kapianak (Igloolik), Nunia Qanatsiaq (Arviat - staff), Rhoda Karetak (Arviat), Louie Angalik (Arviat), Martina Anoe (Arviat), Donald Uluadluak (Arviat), Mark Kalluak (Arviat), 2 participants unidentified by NDE.



4.7 Working with Elders

Apart from the work they did together in the Arviat office, the Elder Advisors were frequently called on to contribute to workshops and presentations for the NDE and other government department working groups/committees, usually by opening the dialogue and

contributing stories or ideas relevant to the meeting purpose. They were also available to C&SS staff for smaller consultations, to provide guidance at the time of initiating a new learning program or curriculum development project. The C&SS “Project Outline” template (August 2012) and “Curriculum/Program Actualization Process” (November 2013) call for coordinators to outline how their project will align with IQ as well as a separate section where they must describe the steps to complete “cultural research” or “Elder involvement.” Cathy provides the example of designing a training program for school community counsellors. Before the program was even outlined, the coordinator responsible for it asked the Elders questions around the kinds of things counsellors should know—about the relationship between adults and children, how children were seen and expected to behave, or how conflict was dealt with in the past. Such meetings would be simultaneously translated for the benefit of the staff who did not speak Inuktitut and would also be audio recorded for future potential transcription, although such processes are, of course, time consuming and there have been challenges with keeping the tapes organized and accessible for staff to put them to use.

In brief terms, the process C&SS staff follow in working with Elders is comparable to an Inuit knowledge/cultural research project. A topic is identified by the staff member responsible for the project they are working on (the researcher), and some draft questions are created. These initial questions will drive the identification of Elders (participants) who may have expertise in the areas of interest. If one of the Elder Advisors at the department is not the best person to ask about that topic, or if it is important to consult with Elders in a particular community, then others are considered. Conversations with the Elders are more open-ended than a typical question-and-answer based interview, but staff are encouraged to prepare some topics and questions. When it comes to analysis and application of the knowledge, similar to a research project, there are few guidelines that can assist to shape the fluid nature of these processes—depending largely on the product into which the knowledge is being incorporated (teaching resource, training program outline, or policy document). Figuring out how to mobilize the knowledge, especially when combined with best practices from mainstream educational theory also called for in curriculum/project expectations (C&SS, August 2012; November 2013), can present coordinators with conflicts, contradictory expectations and numerous challenges. Sometimes knowledge is attributed to “Elders” generally in the documents (with specific acknowledgements to the participating Elders in the front matter), and other times, such as if a story is being used, it will be attributed directly to the individual Elder who shared it. Further complexities of the

process, particularly the cross-cultural aspects of it, are explored in the next section, and examples of curriculum that have resulted from Elder consultation will be explored in Chapter 5.

4.7.1 Expectations of Qallunaat Staff

The C&SS practice of doing focused and specific Elder consultation at the outset of a project is intended to build Inuit content into products from the beginning, not as an “add-on.” There are some published or document-based sources of generalized Elder knowledge now in Nunavut (collected by the department and other organizations including Nunavut Arctic College). Rather than gleaning ideas from discussions carried out for other purposes, Cathy expected staff to hold meetings with the Elders “to get some perspective on how that project would be seen from their point of view.” The purpose of taking this approach is intended to show respect in the context of Nunavut, to honour Elders as knowledge holders and ensure Inuit perspectives deeply inform materials. It also reflects the fact that many C&SS staff members are non-Inuit. When I asked Cathy why it was important to consult with Elders at the beginning of starting a new project, she explained:

Most of our coordinators are non-Inuit, and even though they’re long-term Northerners, most of them, they still see things from a largely Qallunaat perspective. So even the way they organize the topics tends to be more segmented and sequential and—from a Euro-Canadian perspective of ‘here’s all these bits and pieces that are kind of strung together.’

She went on to explain that when the coordinators consult with the Elders first, it makes them think differently from the outset about the process, organization, themes and specific content. Long-term educators in Nunavut are well aware of the unconscious assumptions and cross-cultural miscommunication that continue to occur when Qallunaat teachers deliver programs with Inuit students. Building IQ in from the beginning provides additional supports in addressing this challenge.

I asked Cathy how staff typically reacted to being expected to consult with Elders in designing their projects. Asking this question risks putting Cathy in a position of speaking “for” other educators, and offering views that I cannot corroborate. However, she was the educational leader responsible for assigning such duties and supporting staff in carrying them out, therefore her view can shed light on that specific angle. She explained that from her perspective most of the individuals involved in curriculum development already understood and believed in the philosophy of education that incorporates IQ with contemporary educational theory. She says of the staff she has supervised:

They believe that we should be serving Nunavummiut; we must have an Inuit perspective in what we do. So, they see it as an opportunity to get that from the horse’s mouth, so to

speaking. And they see it as a privilege. Of course there's people like me who talk about it—the privilege it was to work along side the Elders. I mean no matter what we were talking about, you always learned something from them when they spoke up. And it kind of blew your socks off, generally. I think people have that understanding, so they look forward to it.

I was interested when Cathy said “you always learned something” and “it blew your socks off,” so I asked her to describe the experience in more detail. Cathy's answer demonstrated that she was thinking specifically about Mark, Donald, Louis and Rhoda as unique individuals, outlined in the section above. She remarked on the amazing dreams that some of them had, shared, interpreted, and analyzed for significance in the context of education. This led into a more general discussion about the experience of learning from an older person in a cross-cultural context. We speculated that many individuals are disconnected from their own elderly family members or typically view learning in more formal/institution-based contexts. They may be surprised to discover that they can genuinely learn from the older generation. In Cathy's words, they might have a realization like: “Ok I can see that this person [Elder] knows something that's about the human condition that actually informs me, that's useful to me even in my own life, never mind in whatever I'm doing [for work].” Cathy values the combination of deep wisdom and common sense shared by Elders, and how it helps staff see things they may not see for themselves. She says:

...for Qallunaat that's kind of mind-blowing because of course everybody thinks that [the Elders] are going to have such different knowledge about everything because they grew up as Inuit on the land. But in some ways it isn't different, it's just the human condition that they're sharing. And yes, the way it was lived may be different, but the essence of the human condition isn't that different.

Despite this claim to commonality, differing languages as well as differing styles of making meaning can certainly affect communication in these consultations. Working through an interpreter and across Qallunaat and Inuit perspectives, there are “several levels and opportunities for miscommunication.” Cathy explained:

The Qallunaat tendency is to ask a very specific question, and the Elder tendency is probably to talk more generally. Sometimes I think Qallunaat don't think their question has been answered, and they have to figure out another way to ask it. Working through the interpreter, for whom English is not their first language, usually, their interpretation sometimes is really hard to understand. Are they translating it literally or are they translating the meaning of what the Elders are saying? And also what the Qallunaat are saying? And then... you can have the arrows of communication going in opposite directions without much overlap.

Another challenge is that Elders often do not have a lot of information about the ways schools function, or the rationale for those ways. The Qallunaat staff member may immediately be trying

to understand the Elder knowledge in the context of the school environment, but the Elder is not thinking about it that way. The lived experience is different, and that can be hard to bridge.

The curriculum development context is also shaped by collaboration with partner organizations or staff from other government departments. When individuals from outside NDE are involved in a project—who are often Qallunaat and may not be accustomed to drawing on Inuit knowledge in their work—it can be even more important to begin with Elder knowledge. In Cathy’s view, other departments do not have the same commitment to Inuit input or the same institutional expectation that Elders be substantially involved. This makes it important when mobilizing knowledge for schools, according to Cathy, to: “counter-balance [staff] expertise in their very narrow subject area with the need to have that Inuit perspective well documented from the beginning.”

4.7.2 Elder Certification and School Roles

Since 2009, the *Education Act* requires IQ to be the foundation of the school system and has, by extension, provided for Elders to be specially certified to participate in schools as master teachers (section 102, 1-4).⁴³ Specific funding for this purpose accompanied implementation of the Act, which is transferred annually to DEAs for use at their discretion, depending on each school’s programming needs. This provision gives responsibility for hiring Elders according to a somewhat more structured process, whereas in the past it had been more ad hoc. Certification, in this sense, means community members identify and nominate Elders for recognition based on their special expertise (i.e. caribou hunting, seal skin sewing, language, etc.) and then request a certificate from the minister of education, which in effect registers them with the NDE. A criminal record check is also legally required for each Elder, although implementation of this provision is always delayed due to the RCMP’s lengthy process.

To facilitate this new certification and employment provision, the *Innait Inuksiutilirijiit (Elder) Handbook* (NDE, August 2010) was issued to schools outlining the considerations warranted in Elder employment. I drafted and issued the handbook, based on wide consultation with other department staff, during my employment as Education Act implementation coordinator. The handbook offers tips regarding the identification of Elders in the community,

⁴³ The Act also recommends Elder involvement to assist with encouragement of student registration and attendance at school (section 37(5)), and that Elders should act as appointed non-voting members of each district education authority (section 122.1). These provisions have been left to the discretion of district education authorities, so implementation of them is difficult to ascertain.

determining their expertise and availability, matching Elders with school needs, remunerating Elders and supporting them appropriately (including that Elders are not to be used as substitute teachers or left to instruct students independently). The certification process has been used by Nunavut communities, resulting in some news-worthy events or celebrations recognizing noted Elders (George, 2013; Nunatsiaq News, 2012).

One of the most significant provisions in the Act that could impact directly on school operations is that a committee of Elders from around Nunavut (likely the EAC) is supposed to conduct an annual assessment of how successfully any legislated duties with regard to IQ are accomplished by the Minister, school principals and education staff (section 122.1(2)). In my role as Education Act implementation coordinator I held several brainstorming meetings about how this requirement might be met and what kinds of reporting supports would be necessary to allow a committee of Elders to conduct such an evaluation. However, at the time I left, no formal steps had been taken.

The most distinct feature of the Act is its repeated reference to actively recognizing and working towards implementation of IQ. In practice, the delivery of all such requirements arguably necessitates the substantial involvement of Inuit educators and Elders, because they are the source of information about IQ. There is ample evidence of Elder instruction going on in Nunavut schools and through land programs, often noted and celebrated in local news articles (McKechnie, 2011; Ridlington, 2011a; 2011b; Walton, 2011). Indeed, some new schools in Nunavut are being built with rooms specifically designed for Elder programs, such as “skin rooms” for drying and preparing seal or caribou skins. The balance of this chapter and the following chapters illustrate the depth of this requirement to integrate IQ, and the complexity involved in meeting it.

4.7.3 School Issues in Working Well with Elders

There are several issues that consistently arise in discussions about collaborating with Elders in schools or at the department level. Cathy outlined several of them in an article on working with Elders (C. McGregor, 2001); they were evident in our interviews, and arose frequently in my own work at the NDE. While documenting these issues may seem overly detailed and peripheral to questions of knowledge from and about the past, they illustrate the barriers to decolonizing projects within institutions. When community members, parents, and even teachers become impatient with school systems to change, some of these particulars become extremely important to address.

The first is the issue of translation. As noted above, work with Elders up until now has occurred primarily in Inuktitut, with simultaneous interpretation into English and/or translation of meeting transcripts into English for the benefit of curriculum staff and other audiences. Translation issues include, at the very least, investments of time and money, accuracy, epistemological and paradigmatic distinctions or incommensurabilities, and differing dialects, including use of syllabics and roman orthography differences. The objective of moving Inuit knowledge into English in order to use it, is problematic from many perspectives, not the least of which is that it inevitably results in re-translation into Inuktitut when educational materials come out the other end of a curriculum development process.

Janet Tamalik McGrath (2011), who speaks Inuktitut fluently and has worked as an interpreter/translator, argues that translation issues in research (which would likewise apply in curriculum development) remain under-acknowledged (p. 105). She also points out that a precious aspect of Elder knowledge is the Inuktitut epistemology and vocabulary that only Elders carry. McGrath is alarmed at the lack of funding and human resources allocated for Inuktitut preservation and transmission. The preservation of language is not only the right of Inuit in Nunavut (T. R. Berger, 2006) but also crucial for their self-determination because, as McGrath (2011) puts it “language skill and ability give access to Inuktitut ontology-methodology-epistemology-axiology” (p. 266).

The second issue is payment. Whereas the Elder Advisor positions were full time salaried staff, most Elders work on a more casual basis, and usually prefer to be paid in cash. There are several reasons for this preference including ease and immediacy of payment, lack of banking options in small communities, and controlling how additional income affects their income support cheques. Government financial regulations, which are applicable to schools, do not permit petty cash, so identifying appropriate payment methods has perpetually challenged the system for many years. Another related aspect of this is the level of payment. In the past DEAs paid whatever was expected, which could vary considerably by community. This was addressed through recommendations of a minimum rate made in the *Innait Inuksiutilirijiit Handbook* (NDE, August 2010), but remains a community-based decision. Even with the establishment of a minimum rate by the department, some feel that the payment offered Elders is hardly commensurate with their knowledge and expertise.

The third issue that must be taken into consideration is that Elders require accommodations and supports, including logistical supports like rides from home to school. Or they may require assistance ordering food when travelling to attend meetings, and they may

request that a younger relative accompany them during travel. The NDE started to organize charter flights specifically to pick up Elders in various communities to attend the EAC, recognizing the strain on them caused by additional overnight stays to catch connecting flights. There are any number of special health and mobility considerations necessary to making it easier for Elders to participate, and relieving any associated burdens. If these considerations are not addressed, they will be less likely to participate.

Lastly, many educators voice an interest in spending more time with Elders themselves, rather than only being conduits for student learning, to benefit from their knowledge and skills. While it is clear that most non-Inuit educators could benefit from learning with Elders, especially to facilitate culturally responsive programs (P. Berger & Epp, 2007), even many Inuit educators do not feel they have been trained in Inuit knowledge to the extent they wish or require to offer instruction (Aylward, 2009). Graduates of the first Master of Education program delivered in Nunavut (2006-2009)—a group of the most experienced Inuit educators in Nunavut—repeatedly referenced the importance of Elder instruction in their own program and their ongoing desire for more time with Elders (Walton et al., June 2010).

4.8 Lasting Elder Legacies in the Nunavut School System

This chapter has featured the work of the late Mark Kalluak, the late Donald Uluadluak, and Louis Angalik and Rhoda Karetak who have both retired. In other words, there are presently no Elders working full time in Arviat, although the EAC continues to meet. Before considering the possible implications of that change, it is important to recognize the profound and lasting legacies of the Elder Advisors who were on staff in Arviat for more than a decade. I have tried to give a sense of these impacts and legacies throughout this chapter and will not repeat those I have already featured. It is also worth noting what can now be found in published materials accessible to educators in the Nunavut school system—as well as individuals beyond the school system—and hopefully will remain accessible into the future.

The Elders' participation in developing reference materials for Inuit knowledge renewal includes the identification and elaboration of the eight IQ principles,⁴⁴ and specifically how they can be applied in the context of childrearing and schooling. These principles were espoused by

⁴⁴ Appendix A shows the 8 principles as they are printed in the IQ foundation document (NDE, 2007). Six of the eight IQ principles were identified by the Nunavut Social Development Council with Elders in early consultative work by the Nunavut government (Arnakak, 2000, Henderson, 2007, Nunavut Social Development Council, 1998, Tester & Irniq, 2008), and two more principles (Inuuqatigiitsiarniq, Tunnganarniq) were later added.

the Government of Nunavut and throughout Nunavut society (GN, 1999; 2004; 2009; Henderson, 2007; Timpson, 2008). The government asked all departments to incorporate IQ and creation of a government-wide IQ advisory council called Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Katimajiit has supported this expectation (Timpson, 2008, p. 212). I argue the NDE has done this with more commitment than other departments. The Elder Advisors and EAC worked consistently on describing and elaborating on these principles in terms of their use with children and youth, such as developing cross-curricular competencies that can be used to assess learning them. They also identified laws of relationships, natural laws, values, attitudes, stages of learning/a learning continuum, and foundations of instruction according to Inuit knowledge, culture, language and tradition.

Much of this knowledge is documented in the landmark NDE “foundation documents.” These are *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: Education Framework for Nunavut Curriculum* (referred to hereafter as the “IQ foundation document”) (NDE, 2007); *Inuglugijaittuq: Foundation for Inclusive Education in Nunavut Schools* (NDE, 2008b); *Ilitaunnikuliriniq: Foundation for Dynamic Assessment as Learning in Nunavut Schools* (NDE, 2008a); the yet unpublished *Inunnguiniq: Critical Pedagogy for Nunavut Schools* (2010a) and one more document in draft on bilingual education. As I have written elsewhere (H. E. McGregor, 2012a), the IQ foundation documents articulate the most detailed vision of education from Inuit perspectives to date. Under development by the Elders and curriculum development staff since 2000, they provide direction for policy, curriculum and programming. Indeed, as noted, the *Nunavut Education Act* calls on the education system to account for IQ in all of its programs: “It is the responsibility of the Minister, the district education authorities and the education staff to ensure that Inuit societal values and the principles and concepts of *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* are incorporated throughout, and fostered by, the public education system” (section 1(3), emphasis in original). Without the work of the Elders there would be little way in which this requirement could be envisioned or on which the implementation of it could be based.

The way in which Elder knowledge is shared through the foundation documents is varied. The first is in the acknowledgements, which lists more than 55 Elders, along with many Inuit educators, community experts and curriculum staff. Another way in which Elder knowledge is presented is through the many metaphors of and for schooling, such as the “iglu metaphor for child development and learning” and purpose of schooling as “creating an able human being” through the traditional story Puinaiqsiaq Nikanaiqisiaq (NDE, 2007, p. 17 and 57). The next way is through direct quotations attributed to individual Elders in sections of the document devoted to

defining key Inuktitut terms. Another is through generalizations attributed to Elders as a result of Inuit knowledge research, such as “Elders describe *maligait* (natural laws) as the most fundamental laws entrenched in Inuit society that respect one’s place in the universe, the environment and in society” (NDE, 2007, p. 25). The contribution of Donald Uluadluak in terms of drawings is pervasive throughout the foundation documents, in which nearly all key concepts are accompanied by his colour illustrations. Elder knowledge is evident in the use of Inuktitut terms throughout the foundation documents, including syllabics and roman orthography to support readers learning how to pronounce and use terminology. For example, each stage of learning is listed in terms of a morpheme breakdown. Stage 1, *qaujilisaaqtuq* is said to mean “becoming aware,” the emergent learner, and is broken down as “*qauji*” (aware), “*lisaq*” (immediate and recent past, just now became), “*tuq*” (3rd person singular).

When it comes to describing the IQ principles, Elder knowledge is evident in terms of the key features of the competency—that is, how they conceptualize demonstration of each principle. For example, for *pilimmaksarniq*—to be empowered and build capacity through knowledge and skills acquisition—there are six features of the competency defined by Elders. Distinctive in the *Inuglugijaittuq* and *Ilitaunnikuliriniq* documents is the inclusion of short stories or memories attributed to each Elder Advisor or members of the EAC, in sidebar columns that relate to the main text. Photos of the Elders appear as well, pictured in their cubicles in the Arviat office, on the land, or in historical photos. Also distinctive about these two documents is the way in which claims are sourced. For example, in terms of the assessment principle *Ilitaunnikuliriniq* “continuous learning for all students,” there is a description of what this means for Nunavut assessment (a bulleted list), followed by quotes from Elders and other more typical educational research sources, providing the rationale for this claim.

Knowledge of Elders has often been used in metaphors to provide ways of understanding philosophies and values that guide the education system, such as the metaphor of the *qamutiq* to represent leadership that Cathy described earlier in this chapter. Or the drawing by Rhoda Karetak, found below in Figure 10, of a hand with many beautiful fingers, each of which has a different purpose, as a metaphor to represent inclusive education. In other cases what they gave was stories, from their own life experience, such as I have used in my own research into Inuit education and childrearing prior to schooling. They have also given dreams and legends, such as the story of Niki that is used in the IQ foundation document to illustrate what it means to be educated successfully as an able human being. They have also demonstrated specific skills, specific places, and specific practices, such as the knowledge held by Elders in the Arviat region

of the treeline area to the south of them, where they would visit for various purposes intermittently.

Figure 10 Elder's Story by Rhoda Karetak about Hand Image and Inclusive Education

Reprinted with permission (NDE, 2005, p. 61).

ELDER'S STORY by Rhoda Karetak

Though you have five fingers on your hand, the thumb is considered to be the strongest. It has a different purpose compared to the index finger. The interesting thing about the thumb is that it's the most useful and used finger. Your index finger is the second most useful; it has more sensitive and precise capability than the thumb. The middle finger is a very strong finger. What it does is complement the fingers on either side of it. The interesting thing about it, though it's the longest and biggest, it helps and supports all the rest of the fingers to do what they do. The fourth finger also has a sense that is different. It doesn't operate the same way as the others, but still it helps the others. It's like the quiet one and you would only realize how useful it is, if it were missing. The little finger, though it seems to be somewhat less, has a really important purpose; it is extremely useful when you try to separate thread. It operates as a separate mechanism to support the rest of the hand, but it can work individually. It is the smallest, but it bleeds the most when it is cut. The little finger can reach places the others can't. Our children are as different from each other as our fingers.



Throughout this chapter I have tried to show that in terms of Cathy's experiences, memories, and the stories she shares as a long-term educator, as well as what she knows and believes about schooling in Nunavut, the Elders' teachings have great significance. What she learned from Mark, Uluadluak, Angalik and Rhoda, as she would refer to them, arise often in her stories and are accompanied by deep emotions—what I interpret as gratitude, loyalty, responsibility and honour. Cathy often says, as she remembers it voiced by Elder Donald Uluadluak, that students should be expected by teachers to do their best. He phrased this teaching as a question about the school system, “How could teachers ever accept 50% as a passing grade? You'd die on the land, if you don't succeed 50% of the time when you're hunting.” Cathy interprets this question to have a deeper commentary contained within it: “So the Elders don't want it to be a second-class teaching situation or school system. They expected everyone to do their very best because their survival depended on it. Well it does today, but just in a different way.” Secondly, Cathy speaks about the goal of education with reference to what Elders say about becoming an “able human being”:

The Elders of course say the whole purpose for being an able human being is to figure out what your gifts are so that you could use those gifts to serve your family and your extended family—which is as big as the community got traditionally—so that they will survive. And be successful in surviving.

It is fitting and revealing of the way in which Cathy has found resonance with the Elders that these two anecdotes, the stories I most often hear her share, are about what it means for a student to do their best, and what it means to be best educated. These are the things she has always been curious about.

Cathy and I discussed the challenges of continuing the Elder work that was done in the first 13 years of Nunavut. She explained that the generation of Elders they have been drawing on are now in their mid-70s or more, and are facing health or mobility limitations, or passing away. Cathy expressed concern that the prospect is unlikely that the Elder Advisor roles can be filled by people with the same kinds of abilities, and that the “deeper level of the iceberg” may not be as accessible to Elders from younger generations. Her grief about the passing of these individuals and their contributions to the school system was palpable. It persists now, when we talk about them. Although it is difficult for her, Cathy tried to reframe it optimistically: “I guess I'm saying we may be near the end of an era, and the work will be different going forward to some extent. And maybe that's good; maybe we need to spend the time now making the material that we've gathered accessible. So maybe that's the next stage.”

Another challenge to the work moving forward that Cathy identified is the institutional commitment to Elder input. I asked if the practice of consulting with Elders had been institutionalized across the department, or whether it had been the result of a group of individuals who advocated strongly for the deep involvement of Elders. Cathy responded: “I think it has a lot to do with the individuals.” While the practice is listed in the standing operating procedures of C&SS, staff members need encouragement and support to make it a priority. Cathy says, “As institutionalized as I feel it is compared to any other previous time, in the last 40 years, I think it wouldn’t be that hard for it to disappear or at least to be diminished. And I think that would be a loss.” She attributes this to the recent focus on standards and efficiency, including the Auditor General’s (2013) call for materials to be borrowed or adapted from other jurisdictions because they cannot be produced quickly enough by the NDE.

4.9 Indigenous Elder Involvement with Schools Elsewhere in Canada

Indigenous Elder involvement has increased in educational institutions across Canada over the last 40 years, as well as in other jurisdictions where importance is placed on Indigenous knowledge. Here I summarize literature from outside Nunavut on the role of Elders as educators, so as to bring it in conversation with the description of Elder involvement for and with Nunavut schools. To draw generalizations about the ways Elders are being invited into, and taking up roles in, K-12 schools and post-secondary institutions will undoubtedly fail to fully account for the successes and challenges of Elder participation. It is also nearly impossible to accurately represent the different ways Elders are understood and positioned in different Indigenous (and non-Indigenous) societies across Canada. Nevertheless, I argue that the initiative to employ Elder Advisors and hold the EAC at the territorial level in Nunavut is a distinct approach to integrating Inuit knowledge and Elder knowledge in public school system materials and practices. Likewise, there are few sources that demonstrate the complexity of attending to the needs of Elders participating in school systems, as well as those who learn from them. This is why I view the experiences and stories of those from Nunavut who have participated in such work, like Cathy, have something to offer.

I recognize differences between Elder instruction that takes place within institutions—usually adapted in both content and pedagogy to fit the contextual constraints—and Elder instruction or mentorship that occurs outside schools. I draw on literature that describes Elder-led teaching and learning in or for schools, rather than more broadly in family and community life. Understanding both is important for educators in order to be ready to collaborate with Elders and

think creatively about how to provide the conditions for a successful Elder-led event or program. It is the responsibility of those inviting Elder participation to consider how they may adapt to the needs and wishes of Elders, instead of exclusively expecting them to fit institutional conventions. However, understanding how Elders take up mentorship and teaching roles in families and communities is not my primary focus. The issue of how Indigenous Elders are involved in school systems—like other policy and operational questions—warrants more broad and comparative inquiry.

Elders are defined in the literature on (primarily) First Nations education as: those who hold and teach situated Indigenous knowledges in ways that are relevant to their communities, following substantial life experience. Jo-ann Archibald (2008) defines Elders as those who hold wisdom:

One cannot be said to have wisdom until others acknowledge an individual's respectful and responsible use and teaching of knowledge to others. Usually, wisdom is attributed only to Elders, but this is not because they have lived a long time. What one does with knowledge and the insight gained from knowledge are the criteria for being called an "Elder." (p. 3)

Archibald (2008) points out that age is not necessarily or exclusively a factor in being viewed as an Elder, but rather, holding knowledges or gifts as a result of life experience, cultural training and education, and reflection (p. 42). These gifts are then passed on to others. Elders are often storytellers whose oral practices are characterized by using humour, being able to hold the attention of listeners for a long period of time, and telling stories that are remembered (Archibald, 2008, p. 61). Elders are "culturally trustworthy" according to Archibald (2008), and what is expected of those who learn from Elders in return is respect (p. 42).⁴⁵

Many Indigenous scholars commenting on the role of Elders in Indigenous societies emphasize teaching by example and teaching through life experience, both positive and negative. As Vine Deloria (1991) describes, "The elder exemplifies both the good and the bad experiences of life and in witnessing their failures as much as their successes we are cushioned in our despair of disappointment and bolstered in our exuberance of success" (p. 23). Deloria (1991) also distinguishes Elder knowledge as transmitting the sense of responsibility that each person carries to their family, community, and more broadly within the march of history. Therefore they learn

⁴⁵ But, Archibald (2008) points out, this should not be "blind trust" as there have been cases of individuals misidentified as Elders who misused their position to enact harm (p. 42). This has been the case in Nunavut as well.

who they are, which is in contrast to the kind of knowledge usually privileged in professions that focuses almost exclusively on how things work (Deloria, 1991).

Jeannie Kerr (2013) has synthesized the work of Indigenous scholars who describe and draw on Indigenous knowledge from the British Columbia and Washington State region for the purposes of public education. Amongst these scholars and the knowledges on which they draw, she found similarities in ontological foundations and the role of Elders in mobilizing Indigenous knowledge. She describes this similarity as:

...knowledge originates from the land, yet is in an ongoing cycle of being sourced and expressed through the people in a variety of ways, mainly arbitrated through the embodied wisdom of the Elders and Knowledge Holders. Importantly, the knowledge is held differently according to the roles and relationships of the knower in the community. (Kerr, 2013, p. 171)

Elders are consistently, but usually briefly, mentioned in literature on improving educational experiences for Indigenous learners, such as by noting the importance of instilling respect for Elders in students or inviting Elders to act as guest speakers (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Kanu, 2011). In documenting the interruption of cultural, linguistic and traditional knowledge transmission caused by residential schools and other assimilative educational policies, researchers and educators have recognized intergenerational learning from Elders as crucial to Indigenous self-determination. Battiste & Henderson (2009) argue: “Elders, knowledge holders, and cultural workers are indispensable to the process of appropriately naturalizing [Indigenous Knowledge] and Aboriginal language education in schools and teacher-training institutions” (p. 15). The literature also emphasizes their role as bridges between cultural domains (Medicine, 1987). Particularly for Indigenous students who do not have grandparents, or whose grandparents do not carry Indigenous knowledge, Elders are said to be an important source of intergenerational experience as well as cultural and linguistic references and modeling (Kaomea, 2001). Verna J. Kirkness (1998) has argued:

Not properly acknowledging the Elders is probably the most serious mistake we make as we attempt to create a quality education for our people... How can we learn about our traditions on which to base our education if we don't ask the Elders? Little is written by our people that we can turn to for this information. (p. 13)

Examples of the ways Elders are involved in educational institutions typically include public school culture and language instruction (Kaomea, 2003), undergraduate Native Studies/Indigenous Studies programs (Newhouse, 2008), professional development for teacher candidates or practicing teachers (Grant, 1995), and cultural orientation programs (Kawagley & Barnhardt, 1998).

Few works provide much detail as to how relationships and initiatives with Elders are undertaken and sustained, and the role of Elders in educational institutions is usually represented as being unproblematic (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005). There are many important questions surrounding the roles of Elders: How do educators, administrators or curriculum developers relate to Elders, what works well and what does not? What are the specific impacts of Elders on learners and other teachers? What impact is there on Elders by participating in educational institutions? How can educators effectively plan for Elder involvement, what challenges arise to prevent or diminish Elder involvement? What epistemological questions are raised in Elder instruction and how to educators mediate those differences? And perhaps most importantly, what is the full range of ways Elders can contribute at multiple levels in educational contexts—rather than being limited to occasional guest appearances?

Castagno & Brayboy (2008) suggest that Elders, among other community members, should be involved in program and policy development and decisions, or school governance. But no suggestions are made as to whether or how to facilitate this differently for Elders given their special status and potentially differing needs. Amy Parent (2011) also found that it is not uncommon for schools serving a primarily Indigenous population to have Elders sitting on their advisory or governance committees, and in terms of parent and community involvement in schools, Elders are often at the top of the list. But again, the characterization of their involvement is brief:

Elders were seen as pivotal sources of wisdom and knowledge to be shared with school leaders, teachers, and students alike. As such, their expertise and opinion were sought on almost all matters from a school's inception to the creation of culturally based forms of assessment. (Parent, 2011, p. 12)

Madden, Higgins & Kortweg (2013) found that barriers exist to the implementation of Indigenous education in public schools, even where institutional commitments have been made to such goals through structures like Elder committee oversight.

Exceptions to those who gloss over challenges in providing for the involvement of Elders include Julie Kaomea (2001), who argues that insufficient care and planning is offered to Elders in the Hawaiian context. Elders have a demanding schedule and work under conditions most trained teachers would find frustrating:

Such is the fate of these kupuna, who are hired under the guise of Hawaiian studies experts but upon entering our schools are treated as little more than hired hands. Virtually homeless in our schools, with no classroom or even office space to speak of, these itinerant seniors scurry back and forth through the halls on an efficiency maximizing teaching schedule that has them running from room to room at a hectic and even dizzying pace. (Kaomea, 2001, p. 80)

In another example, Agnes Grant (1995) illustrates the tension that comes from institutional student evaluation tools in contrast to Indigenous assessment strategies, in the context of an Elder-led program. She argues: “It becomes imperative that university evaluation be reexamined to identify ways in which student teachers can be evaluated in conformity with university standards while also allowing acceptable community and elder involvement” (Grant, 1995, p. 216). Grant goes on to outline the distinctions between student-teacher supervisors’ approaches to evaluation and those that Elders would prefer with some suggestions for compromise.

Jo-ann Archibald (2008) provides the most comprehensive and nuanced description of the involvement of Elders in Indigenous knowledge mobilization for school curriculum and programs. She addresses how and why Elder involvement ought to be pursued, and identifies some of the missteps and complexities that can occur along the way. She describes in detail both how she has learned from Elders one-on-one, as well as how a committee of Elders has worked together to mobilize Indigenous knowledge.

Archibald describes the development of curriculum based on First Nations perspectives on law and justice in British Columbia, and the process of collecting stories from Elders. Archibald (2008) notes considerations such as: time constraints of institutional projects that are inconsistent with time necessary to build appropriate relationships with Elders (p. 107-108, 125-126); following appropriate and situated expectations of respect and responsibility in relationships, as well as establishing the terms under which permission will be offered to use Elder knowledge (p. 110, 125-126); and, creating teacher training resources to support the use of Elder-generated stories through appropriate pedagogy (p. 111-112, 122-123). In the final chapter of her book, Archibald applies her understanding of Indigenous storywork, gained through learning from Elders, to practice. She notes ethical principles, permissions, cultural protocols, verification processes, reciprocity, publication, and use of Indigenous knowledge by non-Indigenous educators as ongoing issues in work with Elders (Archibald, 2008, p. 143-153).

When considering the role of Elders and Elder instruction in education settings like schools, government working groups, or universities, one must attend carefully to the negotiation that necessarily occurs between enacting traditional ways of transmitting knowledge, and doing so within the conditions of institutional and programmatic structures. Rather than representing the “what” and “how” of Elders teaching in schools as a replication of the approaches they might take elsewhere, I view it as important for school staff to acknowledge the ways in which their context contributes to determining what is possible and what is limited in learning, just as it does with any other form of pedagogy. Usually, class times are pre-determined, class sizes are large,

and classrooms are not conducive to practice-oriented learning. These are all constraints that Elders, along with the class instructor or school staff, typically accommodate in facilitating learning. Planning the budget, equipment, activities and organization of land programs and outdoor education—where Elders are almost always more knowledgeable—can involve the same difficulties. Even for talented and experienced Elders it can be difficult to know how to proceed with teaching in the ways to which they are accustomed within these spaces.

Ideally this negotiation would be predicated on offering respect and responsiveness to the Elder or Elders involved, such that what they are invited to do and what is asked of them is not unreasonable, and certainly not harmful. Expectations of Elders and expectations of those who learn from them can neither be idealized nor neglected, but should be established through collaboration and on shared terms. To offer such collaboration may demand extensive preparation, flexibility and openness on the part of schools. This kind of effort or negotiation, and the expectations for long-term relationship building that frequently accompany Elder instruction can be intimidating for teachers. Even more so when Elders are unilingual Indigenous language-speakers, as was usually the case in Nunavut.

Scholars who have written about Nunavut schools or youth have argued that more space should be made for Elder instruction, including traditional forms that take place outside of schools or that warrant adaptations by schools rather than by Elders (Laugrand & Oosten, 2009). Frank Tester and Peter Irniq⁴⁶ (2008) have emphasized that learning IQ from Elders should not be viewed as a form of documenting “traditional” (as in old, static, unchanging) and discrete items of knowledge, nor should it be seen according to conventions attributed to knowledge by outsiders with different cultural backgrounds:

Rediscovering and rearticulating that worldview is a task best undertaken by Inuit, and it contains the possibility of rejuvenating and invigorating Inuit culture and relations between youth and elders. Such an exercise involves an important exploration of Inuit social history, which includes a history of resistance to, as well as compliance with, the edicts of a colonizing culture. (p. 58)

Where can we turn for more nuanced descriptions of what culturally responsive intergenerational learning in Nunavut might look like from Inuit perspectives? I view Janet

⁴⁶ Peter (also spelled Piita) Irniq is an Inuit politician and public figure; Commissioner of Nunavut from 2000-2005; a speaker and advocate for Nunavut in a number of realms including the history of residential schooling and the promotion of Inuit culture and language.

Tamalik McGrath's Inuit knowledge⁴⁷ research as the most formative and insightful academic contribution to research with Inuit to date. McGrath (2011) describes herself as having "qablunaaq [non-Inuk] heritage and Inuk culture" (p. 173). She grew up in Taloyoak, speaks fluent Inuktitut, and as a result of her childhood, language skills and employment as an interpreter-translator, she has been educated by Inuit Elders throughout her life. Her doctoral research was conducted in Inuit language and describes a theory of Inuit knowledge renewal, based on interviews with the late Mariano Aupilaarjuk. Her research questions ask: "Is there an Inuktitut framework to support Inuktitut knowledge renewal? And What is the Inuktitut methodology used to answer the question?" (McGrath, 2011, p. 102). They lead McGrath to conclusions regarding intercultural dialogue around knowledge production in Inuit contexts.

McGrath's conversations with Aupilaarjuk cover themes including: Inuit educational approaches; principles of Inuit education; applying Inuit knowledge from the past to contemporary challenges; cross-cultural relations between Inuit, First Nations and non-Inuit; social and economic issues in Nunavut; and, reflections on how to support Inuit ontology, epistemology, methodology and axiology (2011, p. 229). McGrath synthesizes Aupilaarjuk's thoughts using her own insights as well as drawing from Indigenous scholarship, to advance what she calls the Qaggiq Model for Inuit knowledge renewal. McGrath lists four methodological principles in Inuit knowledge renewal. While these simplified translations do not do justice to her explanations, these principles include: listening; ethics of accuracy; observation; and, truthfulness. These insights offer important reference points and potential ways forward, but further work is necessary to make the Qaggiq model more accessible to educators, and support them in practicing these culturally responsive principles.

More attention should be given to how the kind of engagement called for by many scholars might be made possible in schools, and how the needs of all involved can be negotiated respectfully, so as to ensure that the knowledge held by Elders is shared on terms that account for the histories of appropriation, misunderstanding, and disrespect in the use of Indigenous knowledge and relationships with Indigenous people by institutions (L. T. Smith, 1999/2012). I suggest that the NDE has been working on and practicing these protocols, from the school level

⁴⁷ McGrath refers to her inquiry as in relation to "Inuktitut knowledge" reflecting the Inuktitut [Inuit language] meaning of Inuktitut, which is not limited to language but rather "in the ways, manner of speech, and value system of Inuit" (2011, p. 108). To keep my terminology relatively consistent within this dissertation, and avoid confusion with terms that refer specifically to language (including different dialects of Inuit language) I will refer to her research as in relation to Inuit knowledge.

to the territorial level, and more research with Nunavut educators and schools could be conducted to determine how Elder involvement has been facilitated well.

4.10 Conclusion

Elders are conduits for knowledge from the past. For example they offer wisdom about the ways Inuit lived traditionally and how those ways might be applied today. They are conduits for knowledge about the past, things that happened in families and communities, history with a small “h.” My description of the changing role of Elders speaks to many dimensions of my research questions as well as the questions on the first page of this chapter, which I intend to address in this conclusion.

The employment of four Elder Advisors on staff in the C&SS office is a change that significantly affected policy, curriculum and leadership in the NDE. This constitutes an unprecedented role for Elders in developing source material on which to base directions and decisions in creating teaching and learning resources, and other supports, for a public school system in Canada. Their role was not just with an “Inuit studies” module or course, but intended to be pervasive. Specifically, this is seen in the development of the foundation documents and conceptual material associated with them, and the comprehensive referencing of IQ in the *Nunavut Education Act*. These provisions include certification of Elders as Master teachers for school-based instruction, and creation of a committee of Elders responsible for evaluating implementation of the IQ duties in the Act by school leaders. All of these mechanisms were conceived after the creation of a new school system for Nunavut.

These initiatives reflect the perspectives and experiences of long-term northern educators who participated in running schools before Nunavut became a legal and administrative reality, and who were in positions to advocate for Elder involvement at multiple levels. The role of Elders had previously been much more casually pursued for consultation and program instruction. In Nunavut they became institutionally-supported knowledge holders tasked with collaboratively generating and synthesizing new ways of understanding and applying Inuit knowledge from and about the past. The purpose of this work was to reconceptualize the assumptions, philosophies and organizing principles that shape schools, based on alternatives put forth by Inuit to assert their own knowledge, language and culture as the foundations for formal schooling.

I view the many actions associated with providing for this Elder involvement—from necessitating simultaneous interpretation at departmental meetings, to the financial commitment

of assembling the Elders Advisory Committee from around the territory, to the expectation that teachers and principals be evaluated on their implementation of IQ in schools—as decolonizing practices. That is, accounting for the history and ongoing impacts of colonization in the Arctic, new ways of operating and relating in the public domain are being envisioned and pursued to give primacy to Indigenous imperatives. These are actions intended to make space for different understandings of what knowledge is of most worth in schools, how students should be expected to demonstrate learning, and what those involved in education should do to create successful schools. The ultimate rationale for this comes not only from what individuals in the Arctic hold to be good and right, but from the legal requirements and responsibilities agreed to under the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement*, the *Nunavut Act*, and the legislation subsequently created by the Nunavut government. The advocacy of Inuit politicians, the hard work of Inuit educators, the creative thinking of curriculum developers, and the generosity of time and energy of the Elders made this possible.

According to Cathy, as well as other sources I have included here, the role of Elders was emphasized and advanced by long-term Nunavut educators who saw the need to create sustained practices to access Inuit knowledge and wisdom. These were practices intended to reach beyond the disruption of knowledge transmission and culture that occurred with the process of intensified colonization and settlement in communities, toward some understanding of what Inuit experience was like before. History—the conditions that emerged from the way human experience has unfolded over time in this unique space—has also made it possible, through the ways in which the Arctic was insulated and then brutally exposed to colonizing intentions. This sets Arctic schools apart from those elsewhere in Canada, and distinguishes Inuit histories from other Indigenous histories with education elsewhere as well.

According to the Elders themselves, such efforts do not signify a desire to “go back” or change time, but rather to see how the knowledge of Inuit can be integrated into a contemporary school system:

Elders are articulating how and why *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*—beliefs, laws, principles, values, skills, knowledge and attitudes—are so well suited to Inuit today. In doing so, the Elders are not advocating a return to the past, but a grounding of education in the strengths of the Inuit so that their children will survive and successfully negotiate the world in which they find themselves today. By entrenching *IQ* beliefs and principles within the system and curricula, the aim is to provide a learning environment where *silaturniq* (becoming wise) is fostered, and within which the strength of *inummarik* (a capable person) can develop. (NDE, 2007, p. 21, emphasis in original)

This suggests Elders know where we are now and take the position that where we are now could be made better with the input of those who constitute and shape our communities—largely, Inuit who wish to protect and promote their language, culture and heritage, and have a desire to see it made more accessible for youth and for future generations. This knowledge from and about the past was in some measure brought forward by educators, recognizing the opportunity that existed to make changes in the Nunavut system with the advantage of first-hand involvement of Elders. Using the government system to create Elder positions, making Elder consultation a responsibility, and providing the time and funding necessary to pursue consultation, allowed for sustained and recursive collaborative working relationships. As a result, deeper access to Inuit knowledge was made possible. In these initiatives a sense of quality was associated with authenticity, a sense of something being “Inuit enough,” made possible by the input of Elders.

On the other hand, recognizing that no Elders work at the NDE now (though Elders continue to be involved in schools),⁴⁸ and that the very special individuals who worked in curriculum for more than 10 years are leaving, is very difficult. It is a reminder that relationships, knowledge, practices and values must be made and remade as things change, as time passes.

Long-term educators such as Cathy seem to understand and appreciate something inherently valuable about the experience of intergenerational learning in the Nunavut context. This goes beyond identifying Elders as the only source of such specific knowledge. It goes beyond being an Inuk or not being an Inuk, although that identification can never be discounted completely. As Cathy and I discussed, for many people there is something different about learning in the presence of Elders—watching them with learners and seeing the expertise and wisdom they contribute—that produces a sense of oneself in the flow of time. It provides a reminder that the ways schools position knowledge and the demonstration of mastering it are not the only ways people expect and desire to know, and that there is always someone who knows something more and something different. Perhaps one is reminded that there are questions that must be put to someone more experienced. There are challenges that warrant patience beyond one’s stores. There are situations that call for precision that one might not fulfill, except under

⁴⁸ On November 28, 2014 I provided the NDE with an update on the status of my research and requested some additional, updated information on topics associated with the role of Elders, curriculum development and leadership training since the time I had collected documents for analysis (2013). This included asking about the status of Elder employment at the department. As of March 2015 when this dissertation was finalized, I was provided with permission to reprint the figures found herein, and the names of the Elders in Figure 9, but no further information in response to my requests.

the watchful eye of someone who expects the best, and someone highly respected. In meeting the expectations of a respected Elder, one models what is possible for the learners coming up behind, and one is given the opportunity to pass knowledge along as well, to become the teacher.

Eventually, one will be expected to act as an Elder, because Elders do pass away and new ones are needed. Outside the sense most educators hold of being a professional, a union member, an authority, a skilled pedagogue in control of the classroom, one is reminded of being a community member. The Elder working alongside the educator, or mentoring the educator, denotes this status and this opportunity: to be a lifelong learner. When change is upon us, when time slips away, when children are born and start school, we may think of an Elder we knew who withstood stranger times, more demanding changes, and more time to know what it means to be an able human being. And we are strengthened by that.

Chapter 5: Looking for a Nunavut Mandate in Curriculum Materials

Heather: When you set up the [made-in-Nunavut] curriculum materials display tables, which are always impressive and excessive in a sense of overflowing colour and stuff, what do you hope people will see in the materials found there? What do the materials provide evidence of, in your view?

Cathy: First of all, to acquaint people with the existence of the materials. Because we find that they often don't seem to be available in schools—they're lost in schools, they're buried in boxes, or they're buried in a staff room—and nobody knows what to look for. Even though we have a list, that says: "Here's all the items, here's what they look like" and everything, it still seems to be hard for people to find them; they're not well organized often in schools. So we want them to know that they even exist.

And then we want them to see the range of material: that we do have things that are audio/visual, and there are different components to the materials. They get a sense of: What is it that those people [curriculum staff] do? And particularly when there may not be much developed [by Nunavut] for grades 4-6, at least they can see that there's a whole lot of stuff for 7-12, and beginning to be things for K-3. So they know that something is happening.

We want them to see the philosophy in action. We want them to see evidence of the foundation documents, the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, the inclusion, and the assessment, which—particularly if we're talking about teaching resources—are incorporated into every teaching resource. One of the things we want them to see is that there are cultural components, there is material from the Elders that's incorporated into everything—I think every document.

We also want them to see that they reveal, they include, contemporary knowledge, skills, and attitudes or competencies, so it isn't just "cultural stuff." Because I think sometimes people think "Oh, you're just doing old stuff and it's not relevant." And that's not true. We want them to see the metacognitive critical thinking skills that are in every document, so that they understand that's key for the 21st century and that's in there.

We want them to get some idea of the pedagogy that's involved, so what kinds of activities are there and how do they involve students? How do they build on students' experience? That kind of thing.

Another thing that we sometimes point out is for them to look at the acknowledgements, so they see that Elders, and teachers, and experts sometimes, or other organizations, are involved in the development of the materials. So, I guess to sum it up, what we're looking for is that they will see evidence that we practice what we preach. The stuff we produce implements what we say is important in the classroom. And, only by really looking at it would you see that.

Figure 11 Curriculum Display Tables, Rankin Inlet, 2014

McGregor Collection



5.1 Introduction and Justification for Analysis of Curriculum

Recognizing that implementation of curriculum in the delivery of schooling is inevitably uneven across schools, and difficult to represent in research, curriculum requirements and provision of materials are areas in which governments can have the most impact on student learning. Curriculum is broadly conceived here, following customary use of the term in the Nunavut school system. Almost any tool identified as required or recommended for school programs falls under curriculum, including: policy documents such as directives, prescribed learning competencies, approved teaching resources and student learning materials, required or recommended assessment tools, and program support tools such as teacher's manuals that outline roles, responsibilities and pedagogies. This may seem like a large swath to consider at one time and I do not provide a systematic or equivalent amount of detail on each component in this chapter. I take all into consideration in my definition because it corresponds with the responsibilities of Nunavut curriculum staff from 2000-2013, and because all components can have an impact on what and how students learn.

This definition places emphasis on the “available curriculum” (Clements, 2007) rather than the “lived curriculum” (Teitlebaum, 2008).⁴⁹ I am interested in what educators have been expected to do differently since Nunavut was created. I am also interested in how, when advancing new mandates, the NDE has provided and developed new materials intended to achieve them. Nunavut has by no means developed all materials used in schools at this time. I use the words “provide” or “provision of” curriculum to indicate that the NDE pursues a combination of developing, adapting, and adopting (with no changes) curriculum from other jurisdictions, as will be outlined below. I am unable to address through my methods and sources whether or not teachers have demonstrated any fidelity to those mandates, although I view that as another important question worth greater research. Another reason to consider the available curriculum is that generally it—rather than the lived curriculum—informs decisions related to setting new curriculum policy and adopting new materials, notwithstanding some effort to consider teacher experience and input as will be discussed below.

Curriculum has historically been a node of contestation in schools everywhere (Teitlebaum, 2008). It provides the primary texts and media through which policy makers, parents, and the public can “see” (or believe they can see) what knowledge and values are being transmitted to children in school.⁵⁰ Herbert Spencer’s famous question “What knowledge is of most worth?” is of course a deeply political question, and one that has often been met with tension and controversy. Curriculum is contested in Nunavut as well, both inside and outside the education community,⁵¹ even though it has not usually produced the kind of vitriolic public dialogue characteristic of other contexts (see for example: Cabrera, Meza, & Rodriguez, 2011).

With my interest in understanding the decolonizing aims of the school system since political power was reorganized in the creation of Nunavut, curriculum is a generative site from which to work. C&SS has been adamant—even radical—about pursuing change since 2000, as evidenced by hiring Elders on staff full time, leading discussions on made-in-Nunavut educational philosophies, and proceeding with integrating Inuit knowledge into dozens of

⁴⁹ The lived curriculum would attempt to account for everything that students actually learn or experience in school, such as through local programs, between classes, and as a result of teacher/student/community variation.

⁵⁰ Of course, determining the values transmitted to students is more complicated than this sentence suggests and there are undoubtedly many variations and great slippage between what is prescribed and what is carried out in classrooms. Nevertheless, school systems are held accountable—and should be held accountable—for what parents, taxpayers, and the public perceive to be taught based on the approved curriculum materials.

⁵¹ Examples of headlines on this topic over time include: (D’Souza, February 15 2002; D’Souza, October 4 2002; Minogue, June 11 2004; Thompson, May 2 2008).

projects. Elsewhere I have written about some aspects of the history of curriculum change in the NWT and Nunavut (H. E. McGregor, 2010; 2012a; 2012b).

How might we understand curriculum development in relation to decolonizing practices, and look for such practices in curriculum? Research by Lynn Aylward, a former teacher educator in Nunavut, helps to identify the possibilities associated with curriculum change from this perspective. Aylward has conducted research regarding curriculum development, bilingual education, and cultural relevance in Nunavut education (2007; 2009a; 2009b; 2010; 2012). She suggests that to “reconceptualize and decolonize” educational practices necessitates that the school system “...open everything up for negotiation [with communities], including the common understandings of cultural relevance” (Aylward, 2007, p. 6). She takes this position in response to ongoing concern that despite rhetoric about change, only those aspects of culturally relevant education that are consistent (enough) with—or equivalent to—southern school models, may actually be adopted. She asks: “Immediately, one has to wonder how different or culturally relevant the Nunavut education experience can be while intertwined with these discursive formations of standardization and homogenization” (Aylward, 2007, p. 4). Following interviews with 10 experienced Nunavut educators (Inuit and non-Inuit) on the topic of bilingual education, Aylward (2010) concludes: “Nunavut teachers appeared to be making efforts to engage with community to enact educational policy [relating to bilingualism and cultural relevance] but historical assimilationist discourses of schooling were also strongly present in the Nunavut context” (p. 319).

Ascertaining and representing the views and values of educators on key topics within the Nunavut school system is important to ensuring the process of educational change starts where educators are—addressing their questions and needs. On the other hand, many of the challenges identified by Aylward were and are already known to NDE staff, as Cathy’s stories demonstrate throughout this dissertation. Remaining mindful of the concerns educators articulate about education, this chapter contributes evidence about departmental processes and intentions in pursuing change (including involving teachers in those processes), hopefully adding nuance to balance the views of educators available through Aylward’s (and other) work.

In another discourse analysis study Aylward (2009b) interviewed the curriculum authors who worked on *Inuuqatigiit* (NWTDE, 1996), offering retrospective accounts of the development experience approximately 10 years after the work was completed. Using anticolonial and intercultural theoretical lenses she found discourse models of critique, activism and hope. She identifies implications for policy based on the reflections of her participants, such

as “how vital it is that Inuit language and culture be sanctioned within official policy and curriculum discourses of Nunavut schooling” (Aylward, 2009b, p. 156). She also identifies “the role that curriculum plays in students’ constructions of self-knowledge also was influential in the authors’ dialogue and situated schooling as a possible site for Inuit linguistic and cultural revitalization and reclamation” (p. 156).

The strength of Aylward’s work is in its breadth of participants and multi-vocality. A weakness, in terms of understanding curriculum change in Nunavut, is that she does not effectively historicize her findings. For example, the preceding point regarding sanctioning Inuit culture and language in curriculum was articulated by the participants well into the period when Nunavut had committed to doing so, but before the new *Education Act* and *Inuit Language Protection Act* were passed. Whether these observations have to do with the participants’ memories of *Inuuqatigiit*, or the contemporary concerns regarding legislation in Nunavut, is unclear. Without this context, advancing policy ideas on the basis of interviews is confusing and ineffective to those who are deeply involved in such decision making, as well as to those from outside who are attempting to understand the Nunavut school system.

More recently, Aylward (2012) has argued that there is a unique “*Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* Conversation” in Nunavut that centres place and consistently negotiates intercultural communication (p. 222). She concludes that community and place must be considered as part of theorizing cultural and social difference, rather than getting stuck in theorizations that attribute deficit to cultural difference. According to Aylward (2012), Nunavut educators have begun to tackle the kinds of challenges inherent in this work, and must continue to advance “culturally negotiated pedagogy that promotes the construction of schooling as a community-based initiative” (p. 227). Again, while I agree with this analysis, I see little description and detail in Aylward’s work concerning the ways in which the NDE was already working towards such goals from within, through the responsibilities and projects undertaken by C&SS staff.

Building on existing research, I explain why it was deemed necessary to develop curriculum from scratch, what knowledge, values, and goals were being pursued in that endeavour, and the processes associated with content development to support made-in-Nunavut curriculum. It is a significant challenge to fill the need for high quality materials that not only demonstrate responsiveness to Inuit culture and language, but that are founded on Inuit knowledge, hold up in comparison to other Canadian jurisdictions (such that courses facilitate the option of university entrance for Nunavut students), and are comprehensive enough to

replace commercially available materials. This challenge raises questions such as: How can competencies that originate with southern/Euro-Canadian sources be appropriately blended with IQ within teaching resources and learning materials? How should teachers combine Nunavut-developed materials, as they become ready, with those materials that for various reasons must still be sourced from other jurisdictions? Likewise, how should teachers integrate Inuktitut first language programs with English second language programs, or vice versa, depending on the language status of the student population?

C&SS is responsible for identifying and providing curricular goals and materials, and did so under Cathy's leadership from 2003-2013. The time, financial, and human resource investments necessary for curriculum development and educator development activities have never met the need to address curriculum at all levels and across all subject areas in Nunavut. This has left a patchwork said by some scholars to pull teachers and students in too many, sometimes opposing, directions (Aylward, 2009a; 2010; P. Berger & Epp, 2007). Despite these growing pains, there have been notable accomplishments and precedents that are worth careful study. In some cases, goals and approaches are brought to consultation with a selection of community representatives, through workshops, focus groups or special interest groups. Likewise, as will be discussed below, the process of developing curriculum during this period incorporated substantial input from educators across Nunavut.

In this chapter I provide a snapshot of the combination of curriculum used in Nunavut in 2011-12. I describe curriculum development and implementation processes, including the intentions behind them, based on Cathy's explanations as well as referring to NDE documents. I go on to analyze an example of teaching materials from the *Aulajaaqtut*⁵² program at the grade 10 level, a made-in-Nunavut curriculum strand focused on wellness and related topics. I feature this program in my work because it was the first project conceived, developed and implemented from scratch by Nunavut curriculum developers in collaboration with Elders and other Inuit knowledge holders. I analyze content from this example using an approach informed by curriculum evaluation literature. I look for the sources of knowledge on which the curriculum

⁵² According to the Teacher's handbook (C&SS, August 2013, p. 19-20), the late Elder Elva Pigalak gave this name to the course: "Aulajaaqtut is an Inuinnaqtun word from the Kitikmeot Region which means a V formation of geese." This represents, among other things, that: geese in the formation alternate in the leadership position; if one goose falls from the formation, another will follow to provide support; being in flight provides an ability to see the big picture from a new perspective; and, the geese are in flight for a long time and do not rest until they reach their destination (representing life-long learning).

draws, and how respect for Inuit cultural identity—a requirement of the *Education Act*—is facilitated through the materials. I conclude by discussing the ongoing opportunities and challenges of developing made-in-Nunavut materials. This chapter is an attempt to get closer to the potential impact on students of changes to the school system since Nunavut was created, including how decolonizing is or is not made possible when it comes to providing curricular materials, as well as whether and how those materials draw on knowledge from and about the past.

5.2 Consistent and Different Features of Curriculum

The way Nunavut provided curriculum during this period of analysis has some consistent features with the procedures used in the NWT at the territorial level, as well as when compared with the Inuit regions or boards level prior to the creation of Nunavut. Cathy identified these consistent territorial features as: participating in the Western and Northern Canadian Protocol (WNCP)⁵³; conducting research into contemporary approaches to curriculum in other jurisdictions (i.e. 21st century skills); developing or selecting curriculum with the involvement of geographically representative teacher committees; and, using a progressive feedback-loop process (research, needs assessment, development, implementation, review, revision).

There are also consistent features with regional curriculum projects prior to Nunavut. *Inuuqatigiit* is worth noting as an antecedent because Nunavut curriculum development processes have been similar in terms of (in addition to the items mentioned above): establishing a philosophical base or framework for the content that draws on Inuit knowledge; consulting with Elders to collect Inuit knowledge on various aspects of the curriculum; and, producing materials in English and Inuktitut.

Why, during the period 2000-2013, was Nunavut committed to developing its own curriculum, setting the goal of replacing programs from Alberta (or other jurisdictions) entirely? A widespread community and school consultation effort by the NDE in the early years of Nunavut demonstrated that stakeholders desired moving away from curricular materials from other jurisdictions, and rather that IQ, Inuit language, and cultural relevance should have primacy

⁵³ WNCP is a consortium made up of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Yukon, NWT and Nunavut (with British Columbia having also participated in the past). See: <https://www.wncp.ca/english/wncphome/protocol.aspx> (Retrieved 25 January 2015). Since 1993 (with Nunavut joining in 2000) the jurisdictions have worked together on particular projects to develop curriculum frameworks, and accompanying learning materials such as textbooks that meet their collective jurisdictional interests. Collaboration means that they have a sufficiently high student population to make it worthwhile for textbook publishers, for example, to meet their needs.

in Nunavut schools (Aylward, October 2004). Cathy explained that replacing Alberta programs in high school has been warranted not only for what is not in them (Inuit language and IQ), but because their content has been—and continues to be—a poor fit for Nunavut students. First, Alberta programs (or programs from other southern jurisdictions) tend to have too much content that is unfamiliar geographically, socially, culturally and in other ways. Cathy is careful to point out that she does not believe a teacher should only teach familiar content to students, but that is where they should begin, extend from and relate back to. Recognizing there are degrees of familiarity, the stretch is too far for most Nunavut students. Secondly, the programs do not account for bilingualism or bilingual education approaches. While Nunavut schools are not yet offering bilingual instruction at all grades, there is usually too much English vocabulary in provincial programs for English-language-learners. Even Inuit students who may speak English as a first language are not usually exposed at home or in the community to the range of concepts and vocabulary found in southern programs. Cathy also identifies persistent Eurocentrism as hidden in southern curriculum, which is not in keeping with the mandate for Nunavut schools. Lastly, Nunavut students have historically performed relatively poorly on standardized summative assessments at any grade level, partly for the same reasons listed above, and Alberta programs rely on them at grades 10-12. Assessment is perpetually a challenge in Nunavut schools but it is particularly discouraging when early school leaving is already a common occurrence in grades 10-12. The significant disjuncture between Alberta courses designed around assessment schemes that are not consistent with the philosophy of teaching and learning upheld in other course levels/areas is of great concern to stakeholders, whether they believe exams should be eliminated or students should be better prepared for them (Aylward, October 2004; 2009a). The departmental approach during this period of analysis was to move away from Alberta-based standardized exams at the grades 10-12 level as alternatives could be successfully developed, such as in the area of social studies, replacing the exam with a capstone project assessment (NDE, 2013b, p. 20).

The aspects of made-in-Nunavut curriculum that differ most substantially from other jurisdictions are laid out in the IQ foundation document, and for the most part are drawn from Elder consultation. While I will not outline all of them in detail, the most important include strands, competencies and continuous progress.

5.2.1 Strands

Rather than numerous subject areas, the NDE frames new curriculum work within four integrated curriculum strands, facilitating closer approximation of the holistic nature of Inuit knowledge. This tends to work well with K-6 level program design, whereas at the secondary level competencies associated with the same strand are more likely to be facilitated in separate courses. The strands are:

- Nunavusiutit: Heritage & Culture; History; Geography; Environmental Science; Civics & Economics.
- Iqqaqqaukkaringniq: Mathematics; Innovation & Technology; Analytical & Critical Thinking; Solution-Seeking.
- Aulajaaqtut: Wellness & Safety; Physical, Social, Emotional & Cultural Wellness; Goal Setting; Volunteerism; Survival.
- Uqausiliriniq: Communication; Language; Creative & Artistic; Expression; Reflective & Critical Thinking.

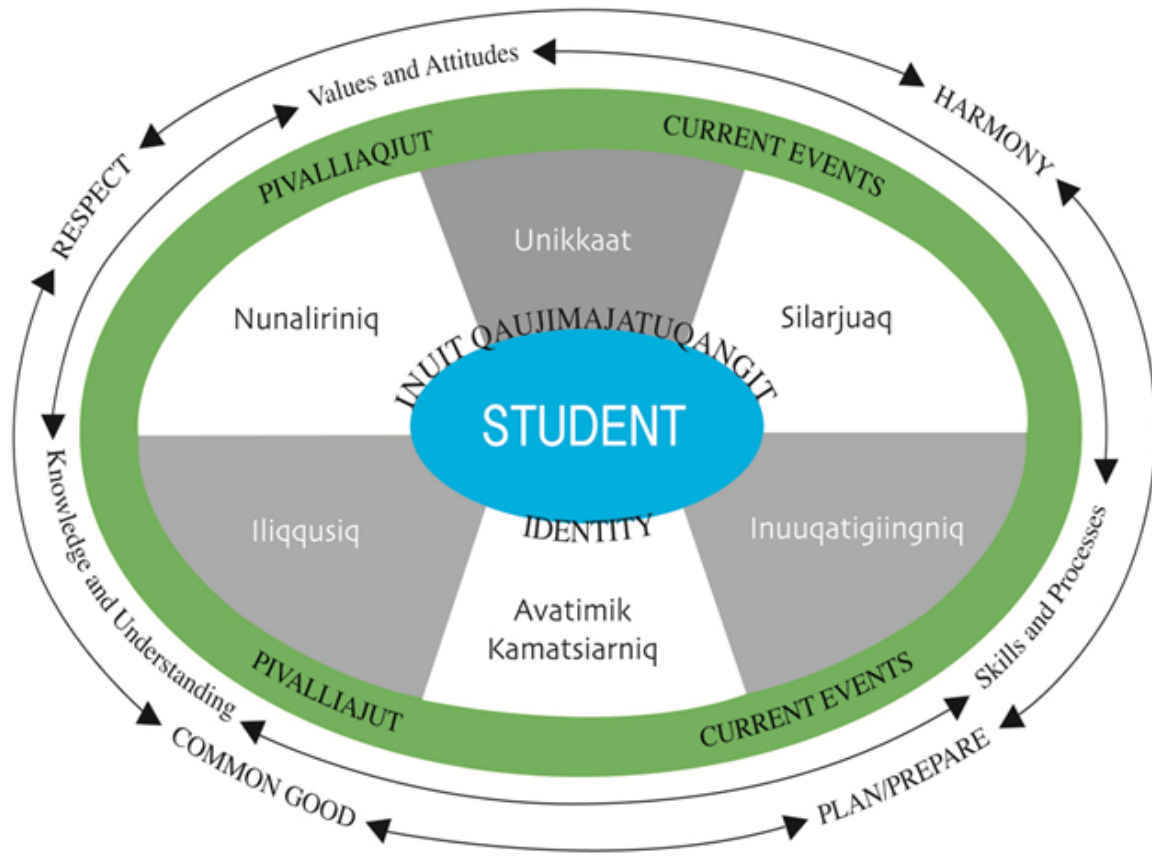
The IQ foundation document states that this approach to learning,

is designed to focus on the development of complex intellectual (metacognitive) skills and lead students to transformational ways of thinking and processing... help[ing] students to understand the connections between various learnings and the strategies that lead to successful application of learning in new contexts. (NDE, 2007, p. 47)

Each strand is accompanied by a list of between four and seven principles developed with Elders such as Qaujimaqumaniq (Curiosity) and Ilittiniq tammaqtarnikkut (Learning from Mistakes) for Iqqaqqaukkaringniq (math and technology). Nunavusiutit (social studies and environment) also has a curriculum framework graphic organizer developed with Elder input that designates the approved themes and principles, as seen in Figure 12. What the organizer shows is that this approach is not simply a “mash-up” of subjects but a distinctively conceived approach drawing on Inuit knowledge and terminology.

Figure 12 Nunavusiutit Curriculum Framework Graphic Organizer

Reprinted with permission. Handout provided by NDE, September 2013.



Student is at the centre. Surrounding the student are **2 core concepts**: Identity and Inuit Qaujimajaqtuqangit (IQ). Students are learning who they are as well as the greater expectations of them from society (IQ). These two concepts are interrelated and should be involved in throughout the Nunavusiutit curriculum.

Six Content areas provide a structure for Social Studies exploration and are the basis for the Learning Competencies in each grade. These are listed under the following headings:

Unikkaat - *Stories*: This is the study of history. History is all about stories. This replaces *Time, Continuity and Change* from the Western and Northern Canadian Protocol (WNCP) Framework. The reason for this change is because such concepts have always been understood in terms of stories. This is inclusive of Inuit oral tradition.

Silarjuaq - *The World*: We live in Nunavut but we are also part of a larger world in which everything is connected. This replaces *Global Connections* from the WNCP framework. The reason for the change is simply to ensure that the term is an established Inuktitut concept. The connections aspect complicates the term in Inuktitut because it is assumed that there are connections as in everything.

Inuuqatigiingniq - *Social Interaction*: This broad heading includes, among many areas of study, those involving governance, laws, leadership and demographics. It replaces *Power and Authority* because these terms seem to reflect a sense that people need to be controlled and in Inuit way, cooperation was perhaps the assumed norm.

Avatimik Kamattiarniq - *Looking after the Environment*. This replaces *Economics and Resources* from the WNCP framework. The point is that everything that becomes a resource,

including ourselves, is the economy, and it originates from the environment. This makes an assumption of sustainability as Inuit always have in the past.

Iliqqusiq - *Culture*: Involves studies of Inuit culture but also the culture of others. Replaces *Culture and Community* from the WNCP. The community aspect is of course part of *iliquusiq* but community is also a major aspect of *Inuuqatigiingniq* and it complicates the title in Inuktitut.

Nunaliriniq - *Physical Geography*: Studying the physical environment (What's where? Why there? Why Care?) This replaces *The Land: Places and People* from the WNCP framework because understanding the land is such an important aspect of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit.

Pivalliajut - *Current Events*: Elders have said that students should be learning about what is happening now. It is very important to link any studies with events that are happening at the time. Current events are found in all types of media and often in Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun. Current events should find a place in every lesson. Current events should be examined from diverse perspectives as is called for in the WNCP framework.

5.2.2 Competencies

Whereas most jurisdictions use prescribed learning outcomes for curriculum, Nunavut uses competencies, and WNCP (January 2011) has endorsed competencies for future curriculum projects. According to Cathy the distinction is understood as follows:

Outcomes have always been separated into knowledge outcomes, skills outcomes, and attitude outcomes (or value outcomes). And it's the result that you're looking for: "the student will..." is how every outcome starts. Competencies are integrated, so you have the knowledge, skill and attitude that are related to something all together, not as three silos. This is a more natural way of learning, because you don't separate values from skills and knowledge really, in life.

The *Ilitaunnikuliriniq* foundation document for assessment defines competencies as follows:

These are a set of behaviours based on the effective mobilization and use of a range of personal skills and abilities. Competencies enable students to use the learning they have acquired to understand the world around them and guide the actions. Competencies are developed over time and focus on demonstrating knowledge and ability. (NDE, 2008a, p. 55)

For example, competencies in the Grade 1 *My Family/Ilatka* theme unit fall under Nunavusiutit (social studies & environment), Uqausiliriniq (communication & language), and IQ cross-curricular competencies, such as: identify family members with whom students live in their home; identify the importance of the family; show respect to the family members by using correct family kinship terms; use new theme related vocabulary in oral language (C&SS, 2012, p. 32).

5.2.3 Continuous Progress

The *Ilitaunnikuliriniq* foundation document outlines Nunavut's assessment philosophy, supported by a more detailed draft student assessment strategy under development. Nunavut's philosophy is founded on the concepts of continuous and differentiated progress. A feature of the assessment philosophy includes "dynamic assessment,"

...an ongoing process that involves teacher, learner and others in both setting goals and assessing progress using a range of school-based assessment tools [formative, summative, diagnostic as per pp. 30-31]. It is an integral part of the learning process—the dynamics is the interaction between learning, teaching and assessment. (NDE, 2008a, p. 55)

Another feature is "stages of learning":

In each learning situation, learners will be working at several different stages depending on the topic or project and their personal knowledge, experience, skills, strengths, and interests. The five transitions points/stages [emergent; transitional; communicative; confident; proficient] are like snapshots of the profile of the learner's path along the learning continuum. (NDE, 2008a, p. 25)

Implemented in practice, the stages of learning approach means students are not advanced through discrete grade levels in discrete school years, but are expected to progress with their peers through the five stages of learning for each competency whenever that may occur for them (one teacher picks up where the other left off). This is intended to prevent repetition of content or grade retention when some students are faster or slower than others (NDE, 2008a, p. 27). The stages of learning were developed in consultation with Elders about effective teaching and learning as well as contemporary assessment research/best practices originating elsewhere in North America and the world.

Assessment is complicated, difficult and controversial in nearly every educational context. Mainstream approaches to assessment have been identified as particularly ill-fitting for assessing Indigenous students (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009). Making the shift in Nunavut from assessment styles teachers are familiar with from southern curriculum, to the new framework, is equally if not more difficult with high teacher rates of itinerancy, and certainly not fully implemented in Nunavut schools at this time. On this point Cathy remarks:

Right now [continuous progress] is very controversial because people don't think teachers are ready to use stages. Which is true, you need to have certain supports for teachers so they understand that learning is continuous and they have a way of assessing where each child is. But I don't think there's anything wrong with the concept of having it that way, it's just you have to work to develop what's needed to implement it properly.

It seems likely that made-in-Nunavut teaching resources should help make assessment according to the Nunavut philosophy possible, especially if the philosophy is embedded within the materials and accompanied by procedures for transitioning student groups between teachers. While teaching resources from other jurisdictions might not facilitate Nunavut approaches as easily, Cathy explained that the NDE proceeded with describing and in-servicing their assessment strategy and intentions to encourage school staff in this direction.

5.3 Curriculum in Nunavut 2011-2012

To demonstrate how Nunavut's innovative approach is evolving in the transition from borrowing to developing their own curriculum, I created a table (Table 1) based on the approved curriculum list from 2011-2012. In the left column is the strand, the centre column shows available made-in-Nunavut materials (with corresponding grade levels appearing in brackets), and the right column shows the borrowed materials from WNCP, NWT, or the provinces. The table is not exhaustive (the approved list from which it is drawn is more than 50 pages long), focusing more on teaching resources and often excluding information regarding student learning

materials. When made-in-Nunavut resources appear in the middle column, it is nearly always the case (except with *Inuuqatigiit*) that student learning materials accompany them.

Table 1 Curriculum and Teaching Resources Snapshot from 2011-12

Strand	Developed in NU	Borrowed
<i>Iqqaqqaukkaringniq</i> Mathematics; Innovation & Technology; Analytical & Critical Thinking; Solution-Seeking	Nothing from K-9 Nunavut Early Apprenticeship Training (10-12) Five supplemental science Modules based on IQ (10-12)	WNCP Common Curriculum Framework for Mathematics (K-9) NWT materials for elementary and junior high science (1-9) Alberta curriculum for mathematics and sciences (10-12)
<i>Nunavusiutit</i> Heritage & Culture; History; Geography; Environmental Science; Civics & Economics	<i>Inuuqatigiit: the Curriculum from the Inuit Perspective</i> (K-12) <i>Diversity Environmental Science</i> Module with 15 units (7-9) <i>Nuulluni Qaujisarniq “Learning Science Away from the Classroom”</i> 4 Modules (7-9) <i>Staking the Claim</i> Social Studies Module with 10 units (10) <i>Rights Responsibilities and Justice</i> Social Studies Module with 10 units (10) Several interactive CDs and websites accompanied by units developed by Nunavut on Archaeology; First Contact & Colonization; Land Skills & Wayfinding	WNCP Common Curriculum Framework for Social Studies (K-9) NWT Elementary Social Studies Curriculum (1-6) NWT Junior Secondary Social Studies Curriculum (7-9) Alberta Social Studies (10-12)
<i>Uqausiliriniq</i> Communication Language; Creative & Artistic;	<i>Inuktitut Language Arts</i> (K-6) <i>English as a second language Junior Secondary Handbook</i> (1-9)	WNCP Common Curriculum for English Language Arts (K-12) Saskatchewan Arts Education Curriculum Guides (K-7)

Strand	Developed in NU	Borrowed
Expression; Reflective & Critical Thinking	<p><i>English as a second language Modules 12 kits with novels (7-9)</i></p> <p><i>English as a second language Modules 3 kits with novels (10-12)</i></p> <p><i>Inuktitut First Language 13 Modules (10-12)</i></p> <p>Several interactive language CDs (1-3) Inuktitut first language) and many Inuktitut books/reading materials (K-9)</p>	Alberta English Language Arts; Reading; English as a second language; Music; Drama; French Language Arts; Communications (10-12)
<p><i>Aulajaaqtut</i></p> <p>Wellness & Safety; Physical, Social, Emotional & Cultural Wellness; Goal Setting; Volunteerism; Survival</p>	<p>Nothing from K-5</p> <p><i>Aulaaruhikut: Career and Program Planning: Preparing for the Journey (6-12)</i></p> <p><i>Aulajaaqtut School Health Program adaptations (9)</i></p> <p><i>Aulajaaqtut 10-11-12 16 Modules with 10 units each (10-12)</i></p> <p>Work Experience Courses with Work Safety Prerequisites</p> <p>Several Inuit Games and Arctic Sports Resources</p>	<p>NWT School Health Program (K-6)</p> <p>Manitoba Fitness Management & Movement Curriculum (K-6)</p> <p>Alberta Daily Physical Activity (1-9)</p> <p>NWT Junior Senior Physical Education (7-9)</p> <p>Alberta Physical Education (10-12)</p>

Table 1 shows that there are WNCP or southern provincial curricula to reference or provide a “fall back” resource at all levels. It is important to note that in all cases Nunavut (and/or the NWT before) had input into the WNCP framework curriculum documents and choices. Also, Cathy explained that the NDE maintained processes of assessing new programs of any origin before adoption based on their own criteria, attempting to choose those that fit best with their philosophy (C&SS, n.d.a) This helps to explain why some come from Manitoba or Saskatchewan, rather than Alberta or the NWT. Secondly, the table shows that Nunavut has

focused on what we would call language arts, social studies, environmental studies and wellness, in developing their own materials. In my view this reflects the areas in which Inuit knowledge has been most accessible, and in which content may be more easily adapted from southern programs. Inuit knowledge may also have important applications in math, technology, or senior secondary science courses, but there have been fewer Inuit teachers trained in those subject areas and higher grade levels. Without staff who can draw on Inuit knowledge in those areas to lead curriculum development, it remains difficult to produce materials for alternative courses that would be accepted as equivalent to Alberta high school programs. This equivalency becomes important when students seek university entrance.

Another development factor made clear in Table 1 is that Nunavut has taken a theme-based approach to developing teaching resources in modules, and slotted them in with supplementary southern materials. This is in contrast to taking the approach of developing all curriculum competencies through an outline document, and leaving the teaching materials to be developed after. While this creates a patchwork that teachers and students must negotiate, it means that teachers have some fulsome models with which to work. It is also a function of capitalizing on curriculum development opportunities that arise and the staff available to complete the work with their varying expertise, rather than being able to follow a development plan based on an ideal scenario.⁵⁴

Figure 13 shows the list of other reference materials developed for school staff in the period between 2000 and 2011, as it appeared in the approved curriculum list for 2011-12. This demonstrates that the NDE was developing handbooks and support materials to help staff understand and adapt to the recommended school program approaches. The list's length and variety of materials demonstrates comprehensive demands on the school system and the NDE responsibility to address those demands.⁵⁵ Some of the documents may seem unrelated to curriculum, and that is an important point: if they represent concerns relevant to principals and teachers, then they are issues impacting on the ability of school staff to implement curriculum. With NDE's goal that departmental staff contribute to shaping all programming (not just

⁵⁴ An example of an opportunity arising was the residential schools history curriculum launched in 2012 (NDE & NWTDE, 2013), which came about as the result of the production assistance provided by the Legacy of Hope Foundation, the commitment and provision of human resources by the NWT government to developing a module along with Nunavut, and drawing on the momentum of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Interim report that recommended all jurisdictions teach this history.

⁵⁵ The RSOs are extensions of the department rather than separate school boards or districts, and it was deemed more efficient to create territory-wide protocols, procedures, etc.

curriculum competencies), there was very little going on in schools that curriculum staff—or Cathy—could write off as “not my concern.” Nunavut schools operate under inclusive education,⁵⁶ and are constantly impacted by social issues in the community as well as the school itself (as evidenced by the materials related to sudden deaths, suicides). Also, Nunavut was planning for, and transitioning through, almost entirely new education legislation during this time; legislation that required implementation of bilingual education by 2020 (as well as many other requirements). This list is intended to illustrate the matrix of supports required to pursue all of these goals.

Following that, Figures 14 and 15 give a sense of the development projects underway in the same time period, as reported in the NDE *Annual Report* for 2010-2012. What can be seen from the list is that curriculum work was underway at nearly every grade level, covering all four strands, and not only in curriculum/teaching resources but also, for example, large scale initiatives in assessment and student information/records.

⁵⁶ Students with varying learning strengths and needs are supported within classrooms with their peers, rather than in pull-out or external programs (NDE, 2008b)

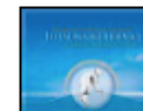
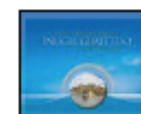
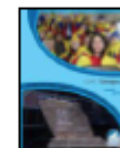
Figure 13 Nunavut Created Resources for Principals and Teachers

Reprinted with permission. Nunavut Approved Curriculum 2011-12, p. 4-5.



Nunavut Created Resources for Principals and Teachers:

- ❖ Tamapta – Building Our Future Together (Government of Nunavut Direction and Strategies, 2009)
- ❖ Foundation Documents for Schooling in Nunavut (NU, 2008):
 - Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Education Framework for Nunavut Curriculum
 - Inuglugijaittuq Foundation for Inclusive Education in Nunavut Schools
 - Ilitaunnikuliriniq Foundation for Dynamic Assessment as Learning in Nunavut Schools
- ❖ Operations Manual for Nunavut Schools
- ❖ 2009-10 Secondary School Administrator's Handbook
- ❖ 2011-12 Junior and Senior Secondary Curriculum Updates Brochure
- ❖ Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit in Nunavut Schools CD
- ❖ School Team CD: Version 4 (NU, 2004)
- ❖ Work Experience Guidelines for Nunavut Secondary Schools (NU, 2010)
- ❖ Nunavut Early Apprenticeship Training (NEAT) Handbook (NU, 2007)
- ❖ Handbook of Opportunities for Nunavut Secondary School Students (NU, 2007)
- ❖ Ilitaunnikuliriniq Student Assessment in Nunavut Schools DRAFT Paper (NU, 2003)
- ❖ Rethinking Classroom Assessment with Purpose in Mind (WNCP, 2006)
- ❖ Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Resources CD (NU, 2003)
- ❖ Pull-down Map of Nunavut














- ❖ Map of Nunavut CD
- ❖ IQ Values Poster
- ❖ Common Plants of Nunavut (NU, 2004) 
- ❖ Marine Mammals of Nunavut (NU, 2001) 
- ❖ Terrestrial Mammals of Nunavut (NU, 2002) 
- ❖ Birds of Nunavut (NT/NU 1997) 
- ❖ Guidelines for Teaching in a Bilingual Setting, Flip Book (NU, 2001) 
- ❖ Nunavut School Crises Response Guidelines, Flip Book (NU, 2002) 
- ❖ Response to Sudden Death Manuals for Schools: A Handbook for School Personnel (NU, 2010) 
- ❖ The Nunavut Department of Education Response to Sudden Death Protocol for Schools (NU, 2010) 
- ❖ Dealing with Child Abuse: A Handbook for School Personnel (GNWT, 1996)
- ❖ Sivuniksamut Ilinniarniq "Learning for the Future" Student Consultation Report (NU, 2004)
- ❖ Suicide Prevention: Inuit Traditional Practices that Encouraged Resilience and Coping (Ajunnginiq Centre, National Aboriginal Health Organization, 2006)
- ❖ Nunavut Teacher Evaluation Tool (NU, 2008) 
- ❖ Nunavut Principal Evaluation Tool (NU, 2008-2009, Draft) 
- ❖ Bill 21, Education Act (NU, 2008)
- ❖ Nunavut Education Act 2008 – A Reference Guide For District Education Authorities and School Principals (NU, 2009) 
- ❖ Summary of Changes to the New Education Act for Nunavut (NU, 2009) 

Figure 14 Curriculum Projects in Implementation 2010-2012

Reprinted with permission (NDE, 2013b, p. 14).

2010-11

Curriculum and Resource Projects

- Work with Greenland on a partnership agreement to share resources and effective practices;
- Implementation of the Kindergarten Screening Tool
- Implementation of Grade 7-9 Strange Happenings Unit in Inuktitut;
- Implementation of the Picturing Writing and Picture Word Induction Methods of art and literacy development;
- Implementation of the 20 minutes daily physical activity requirement under the *Education Act*;
- Work with schools and DEAs on their Positive School Environment policies and programs;
- Work with schools on the roles and responsibilities of the School Team;

- Implementation of the Social Studies Grade 12 assessment project; and
- Consultations with a variety of partners on new graduation and high school program options.

2011-12

Curriculum and Resource Projects

- Implementation of the bilingual Family unit for Grade 1 and the Grade 7-9 Survival unit in Inuktitut;
- On-going implementation of the Picturing Writing and Picture Word Induction Methods of art and literacy development;
- On-going consultations with a variety of partners on new graduation and high school program options; and
- Implementation of the new Social Studies Grade 12 assessment project.

Figure 15 Curriculum Projects in Development 2010-2012

Reprinted with permission (NDE, 2013b, p.15).

In 2010-11 & 2011-12, resource development for kindergarten to Grade 6 included:

- the Teacher Planning Guide, which explains how to integrate IQ, complete year and theme plans, set up a positive classroom environment and meet the expectations of the Nunavut Foundation documents;
- a revised Inuit Language Arts curriculum guide;
- formative assessment strategies, student portfolios with samples of their best work and Student/Parent/Teacher conference procedures;
- Grade 2 and 3 units on the Family in the Community and the Family in Nunavut and work on the next three units on Water, Sila and Tundra; and
- a new Integrated Learning Technologies curriculum.

In 2010-11 & 2011-12, resource development for Grades 7-12 included:

- the new Student Information System;
- Communications English courses, Grades 10-12;
- Applied Physics courses, Grades 11-12;
- Entrepreneurship courses, Grades 11-12;
- Nuna, Sila and Tariaq courses, Grades 10-12; and
- Aulajaaqtut (health and wellness) courses, Grades 7-9.

5.4 Cathy's Role in Curriculum

Cathy describes her role in curriculum provision as one of leadership. Most directions were in place when she took the job as director in 2003, including the goal of “re-writing of the K-12 school curriculum, to emphasize cultural relevance and academic excellence” and that the education system would “be built in the context of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit” (GN, 1999, p. 6-7). For the ten years she was with C&SS she sought to implement and enhance those directions by increasing staff and contractor positions, establishing working procedures, initiating new projects, seeking new funding and responding to changing priorities. This bridged the period before and after the passage of the *Nunavut Education Act* and *Inuit Language Protection Act*, which were accompanied by new expectations and budgets for curriculum so as to meet the commitment to deliver bilingual education by 2020 (section 23). While all school programs must be offered in 1) an Inuit language and 2) English or French, this technically requires that all school materials be available in the two officially recognized Inuit languages as well as English and French: that is *four* languages. Also, according to the *Nunavut Education Act* (stipulated in numerous sections), IQ must be the foundation of all school programs, a requirement that Cathy took very seriously.⁵⁷ Juggling these language and culture mandates, as well as the enlarged portfolio of responsibility in comparison to ministries in other jurisdictions (that typically do not try to develop all their own materials for all subjects and grade levels), amongst the many other expectations of government staff, was a huge amount of work to say the least.

Cathy's role was to offer planning, coordination, partnership building, staffing, contract management, training, problem solving, editing and senior management briefing, on all curriculum projects. She thinks of herself as being an innovator and pursuing creative projects as they arose, based on availability of staff and resources, rather than always sticking to “the plan.” Sometimes deviations in priorities were also imposed by outside influences such as other government departments or organizations that put pressure on education to deliver particular outcomes, as is the case in any jurisdiction. Cathy recruited experienced and committed long-term educators, both Inuit and Qallunaat, from schools to coordinate and write new curriculum.

⁵⁷ On this note, it is important to consider that much of the content of the Act was the result of widespread efforts at consultation (which is partly why it took 8 years to develop), when many long-term educators would have had some opportunity to contribute to the ideas in the Act (H. E. McGregor, 2012b). The integration of IQ was also a goal that pre-dated the Act itself—meaning that this intention, and the way it manifested in various sections of the Act, came, at least in part, from educators and decision-makers at the highest level of the NDE (including Cathy).

Many of these individuals had more than 10 years—some upwards of 20 years—experience teaching or in leadership positions in Nunavut schools. Generally, however, they did not have department-level experience. She offered orientation, training, professional development, team building and mentorship to these individuals.

Cathy advocated that English and Inuit language materials be written at the same time, to better reflect the two “thought worlds” of each language, rather than simply translating English into Inuit language later. This was a slow process, but in her view it bore high-quality fruit.⁵⁸ There were myriad challenges in human resource processes, securing staff housing, and ongoing decentralization requirements of the Government of Nunavut. Curriculum positions—like other government positions—were often slow to be staffed or went vacant (North Sky Consulting Group, 2009a, p. 42; Varga, 2014b). Nevertheless, Cathy supervised staff in Iqaluit, Pangnirtung, Pond Inlet, Rankin Inlet, Arviat and Kugluktuk. She also had to supplement staff positions with contractors located in Nunavut, NWT and in southern Canada (usually former Northern educators who had relocated) to meet the demands of the work. At times, she was managing upwards of 30 sole-source contracts to fill in the gaps or complete highly specialized work not practical within the public service. Her job came without any administrative assistance for the first seven years, another capacity problem that is typical in the Nunavut government.

Cathy coordinated activities with the three RSO executive directors and their staff—who are responsible for school implementation of programs—in terms of reporting, in-servicing new materials (which she sometimes participated in directly), and receiving feedback or communicating with school principals. She also consistently participated in developing legislation, regulations, and other policy to appropriately reflect Nunavut schools and curricular goals. She represented the department in meetings outside Nunavut, travelling to participate in Western and Northern Canadian Protocol, Canadian Ministers of Education Council, National Committee on Inuit Education (facilitated by ITK) and other conferences. Cathy was relied upon for a range of problem solving efforts amongst stakeholders as well as within the department. She was responsible for hundreds of briefing materials, minister’s statements, results-based planning submissions, progress reports, and other administrative functions. She reviewed and edited every document produced by C&SS during her tenure, often at the level of copyediting for grammar and consistency, as well as content. Lastly, Cathy thought of herself as the “resident

⁵⁸ Examples resulting from this approach include *My Family/Ilatka* (C&SS, 2012) and *The Residential School System in Canada* (NDE and NWTDE, 2013).

historian” within the NDE, providing insight into what had been tried before, the rationale for projects based on past efforts, and helping to clarify approaches and positions in the midst of a frequently itinerant staff within the department, RSOs and schools.

This may sound like a lot, and it is. This list, which is not entirely exhaustive, is not intended to venerate Cathy’s accomplishments—though that is warranted as well. It is to provide an outline of the expectations she and her staff negotiated in school system change. The criticism that Nunavut could not develop materials fast enough (Auditor General of Canada, 2013) might be explained by the fact that so much was going on at once. The implementation timelines set by the NDE for itself with regard to curricular change were ambitious. And yet, how they could know the time necessary for such work when it was unprecedented? How could they estimate the human resources required in a context where most people were new to their jobs, and to the projects at hand? In my view, the NDE approach during these years demonstrates a particular approach to change: that transformation of the system to meet Nunavut-based desires and needs necessarily involves tackling many components at one time. It is not a matter of simply or superficially “tweaking” components here and there. To represent this multifaceted change process and how it required ongoing partnership, staff working on planning in-service for the new *Nunavut Education Act* in September 2009 came up with the metaphor of raising a canvas tent (the kind commonly used for camping on the land in Nunavut). Cathy had the metaphor further developed into an image for use in other contexts, found in Figure 16. It is intended to show how each “piece” of the tent, and its environment, was both necessary and interconnected to the other pieces in the work of reshaping Nunavut school programs. Without some pieces or supports, the tent would falter. A strong tent would provide a good shelter for education to proceed inside.

Figure 16 The Tent Metaphor for the Development of a Nunavut School System

Reprinted with permission (NDE, 2013c, section 1).



5.5 Process of Curriculum Development

The context and goals for curriculum development described above should convey the breadth of projects undertaken by Nunavut, particularly considering that new materials would ideally offer teachers “everything they need” by way of direction, competencies, teaching resources, learning materials, assessments and differentiation supports. In other words, teacher’s guides in Nunavut include lesson plans with scripts and activities outlined in a huge amount of detail. Teachers are expected to adapt what is there for their students, but part of the rationale for such detail is to make it less likely that teachers would revert to using southern Canadian or Eurocentric approaches. Cathy stated:

...if they follow the curriculum and the program of studies through the [Nunavut] teaching materials, then they’re more likely to have the outcomes we want them to have, than if they don’t—and they create their own—which will just be from a southern point of view.

It is also to attend to the frustration that teachers have expressed in the past: that they are not provided with enough relevant materials and are not trained well enough to fulfill the mandate of working differently in Nunavut (Aylward, October 2004; 2009a; P. Berger & Epp, 2007).

This section will illustrate how work was carried out in C&SS. In addition to Cathy’s explanations and my own observation of these processes, I am basing this description on the Project Outline template document (C&SS, August 2012) used by curriculum coordinators, and accompanied by guidelines regarding: Consultation/Piloting; Curriculum/Program Actualization Process; Standard Formats; and In-Service. Cathy explained that the template/guidelines documents were organic, updated several times over the period of her leadership to reflect these processes as they were refined. For the sake of brevity I have focused as much as possible on the high-level steps and expectations involved. Scrutinizing the details of these procedures offers greater insight into the unique and detailed recommendations tailored for Nunavut.

The Project Outline begins, predictably, by asking for a project description, set of goals, and anticipated measurable outcomes for the project. Then comes a section entitled “Relationship to Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit/Foundation documents.” This is the first prompt, as discussed in Chapter 4, that all projects should relate to IQ from the outset. Indeed, depending on the topic a coordinator might need to consult with Inuit educators and Elders in order to complete this section of the project outline. According to Cathy and the curriculum actualization guidelines

(C&SS, Updated Nov 2013), this step would likely be accompanied by further Elder consultation in later stages for cultural content research and review of draft materials.

The next section of the Project Outline asks for the implications of the project for bilingual education, how it affects language of instruction models, language pedagogy, staffing or resources (C&SS, August 2012, p. 2). Next, the coordinator must indicate if the project affects graduation requirements and what anticipated improvements it will offer for student learning in Nunavut in general. Coordinators must also connect the project goals to current educational practice in other jurisdictions, and it is specified to seek information from other places that prioritize bilingual education and cultural considerations.

The second section of the Project Outline deals with the steps and supports necessary to secure the following: needs assessment; literature search; cultural research; development; piloting; editing; publication preparation; in-service and training; ongoing implementation after the training; and communications. The Project Outline then requires the coordinator to organize the development steps chronologically in a multi-year timeline, estimate the associated costs for those budget years, and identify who is responsible for the costs. The curriculum coordinator or coordination team (sometimes two coordinators were assigned, one for English and one for Inuktitut), with support from Cathy, was expected to work with colleagues and partners to oversee each of these stages—requiring a breadth of knowledge and skills.

5.5.1 Curriculum Research and Consultation

Nunavut's consultative style of development relied on the practice of establishing a committee of educators as a working group to inform each curriculum project, as standard procedure between the years 2003 and 2013. Some such committees were struck temporarily for specific projects, whereas others were standing committees, such as on the topic of inclusive education. In projects where public engagement was seen to be particularly relevant,⁵⁹ curriculum coordinators have supplemented the input gained through the committee work by holding focus groups, kitchen table consultations (on this form of consultation, see: Price, 2007), public meetings or expert interviews. For example, widespread consultation was done on

⁵⁹ It is worth noting that curriculum development is not the only initiative through which public and parent engagement is sought through focus groups or public meetings such as this. While I have chosen not to deal with it in detail, the practices and legal responsibilities of consultation held by the NDE are substantial.

establishing high school program pathways and graduation requirements, given the extent to which such outcomes would affect students and be of concern to parents.

Engaging classroom teachers in territorial curriculum or program projects is important in Cathy's view, even for those who do not necessarily see themselves spending their career in program development. This involvement from "the front line" benefits the production of high quality materials that are more realistic for classroom use. It also gives educators opportunities to meet colleagues, as well as learn about and discuss the purpose of education espoused by the department. Cathy explains:

...it's an opportunity for the teachers to begin to learn about 'What is the vision?' and 'Why are we talking about cultural education, and what are the IQ principles?' And 'Wow, I never thought about it that way.' It's part of their orientation: building commitment, ownership and empowerment of those teachers to do whatever the vision is, and implement the units in their classrooms with understanding about why the units are created the way they are.

Cathy identifies other ways the involvement of teachers can be beneficial to the system overall as: nurturing shared ownership in the school system, and collaborating in the development of materials in order to overcome a sense of isolation.

The hard work then begins whereby the coordinators make use of Elder perspectives in creating teaching resources, as discussed in the previous chapter. Cathy describes an example of developing units for *Aulajaaqtut* at the grades 7-9 level, which were being worked on in 2013:

[The coordinators] would take the information about the expectations of the child at the ages corresponding to grades 7-8-9, which traditionally were a bit different than perhaps our [expectations are] given the modern child today. They show those both and try to integrate them or describe them. Because they could even be a bit contradictory. And make the teachers aware that they have to keep in mind both of these, and maybe even make the kids aware of how those expectations are the same or different. So they take the information and they have to figure out how to implement it, both in the structure of the program, but also in the content. And sometimes also in the skills as well. And I'm not suggesting it's easy. I think it's a little bit different for each project because sometimes they get more content information, sometimes they get more skill information. It's not always the same type of information.

Sometimes comparisons between Qallunaat or mainstream perspectives on a topic with Inuit perspectives show up explicitly in the materials produced for teachers or students by including both types of information. In other cases it is less direct. Cathy often notes that made-in-Nunavut curriculum should demonstrate both traditional Inuit and contemporary Qallunaat ways of doing things, as well as assigning students work that engages them in choosing how to apply those differing approaches and knowledges. Even when experienced Northern educators are working on these curriculum projects, extensive efforts need to be made to ensure Inuit perspectives are

gathered, heard, and implemented in each curricular topic—and not overruled or subsumed by Qallunaat views. As will be demonstrated below in my analysis of one example, this blending of Inuit sources with Qallunaat sources may be an area deserving of greater critical review and evaluation within C&SS.

5.5.2 Curriculum Layout

Materials developed by NDE during this time period were increasingly laid out in a consistent format and logic. Using the *My Family/Ilatka* grade 1 module (C&SS, 2012) as an example, the layout includes the following components:

- Teacher background material (purpose; integrated classroom teaching; guiding ideas/essential question/enduring understandings⁶⁰; curriculum strands; learning competencies; template letter to parents);
- Theme units (each unit lays out its corresponding competencies; materials; teacher background; opener activity; connector activity; core activities; assessments; reflection questions/activity; follow up activity; classroom reinforcement);
- English second language learning supports;
- Accommodating diversity or differentiation supports;
- Black line masters; and,
- Appendices (mostly additional resources and suggestions for pedagogy, centres, books, terminology, etc.).

The *My Family/Ilatka* theme module for grade one totals 230 colour pages in English (Inuktitut is a separate document), expected to be taught over approximately 25 hours. It is accompanied by a kit that includes: bilingual flash cards, sorting cards, matching card games, magnets, sequence pictures, two puzzles, four mini student books in Inuktitut (12 copies each), music CD, an National Film Board of Canada DVD, set of wooden traditional dolls and tools (hand-made by Elders), an expedition play set, three posters and another set of 12 books in Inuktitut. All of these materials were developed and produced in Nunavut. While this is an exceptional example of the NDE capacity to develop culturally responsive and multifaceted, exciting materials, not all materials are developed with as many components. It illustrates why a

⁶⁰ Using key guiding ideas, essential questions, and enduring understandings is intended by the NDE, especially in the context of bilingual education, to ensure that students retain significant concepts associated with each module or unit, amidst the range of content introduced to them.

few models are being produced at different grade levels/strands, and teachers continue to have to fill in around them for the remaining instructional hours. Cathy explained, however, that a feature of most of the made-in-Nunavut materials is that they are somewhat “over produced,” with a great deal of information in the teacher background section that can also be found in the foundation documents, or other handbooks. This is because of the problem of teacher itinerancy, materials going missing in schools, and teachers not being familiar with Nunavut philosophy and direction. In Cathy’s words:

It’s expensive to do that, because you’re reproducing the same thing over and over again. But because the communication is so iffy—teachers changing, principals changing, program support iffy, student support teachers changing, materials hard to find—we felt it was important to overdo it rather than underdo it. [...]. It was trying to combine some of the theory behind why we’re doing what we’re doing, with the practical. So that if they didn’t get any other chance to get the theory they’d get it in relation to the practical. Which may make more sense to them anyway, because then they can see how it’s actually applied in relation to something they’re teaching.

5.5.3 Curriculum Approvals

Completed materials are sent to Cathy for review and approval. Review criteria include several questions regarding appropriateness of the content for Nunavut students as well as questions of quality in more general terms, and evidence-based research concerning current educational practice (C&SS, n.d.a). During this period the deputy minister position was (and still is) filled by Kathy Okpik, an Inuk educator and former TLC staff member, who is fluent in Inuktitut. She reviews and edits documents not only for policy and content, but also providing line edits in Inuktitut grammar and orthography. In cases where the materials propose changes to graduation requirements, approval must also come from the minister of education.⁶¹ Any projects that affect other departments are taken to cabinet of the legislative assembly, and require review by executive and intergovernmental affairs as well as the justice department. As noted, while some made-in-Nunavut materials such as *Aulajaaqtut* for grades 10-12 have been updated since they were first implemented—based on consultations with and feedback from teachers—comprehensive and systematic curriculum evaluation has not been a regular practice to date by the NDE.

⁶¹ Graduation requirements (as of 2010-11, which likely did not change substantively in 2011-12) include: 15 credits in English; 15 credits in *Aulajaaqtut* (Wellness and Leadership); 3 credits in Physical Education; 3 credits in Fine Arts; 10 credits in Social Studies; 10 credits in Math; 10 credits in Science; 5 credits in Career and Technology Studies; 10 credits in courses of their choice at the grade 12 level and 19 other credits of their choice for a total of 100 credits (H.E. McGregor, 2011).

5.6 Curriculum Implementation and In-service

School-level implementation of new made-in-Nunavut curriculum, or resources from elsewhere, is generally the responsibility of the RSO offices in Pond Inlet (Qikiqtani), Baker Lake (Kivalliq), and Kugluktuk (Kitikmeot), but the responsibility for in-service was shared with NDE headquarters (C&SS, n.d.b). In addition to superintendents, the regions employ a team of program consultant staff, usually former Nunavut teachers, at the elementary and secondary levels, as well as Inuktitut language consultants. With new made-in-Nunavut materials, however, the curriculum staff at headquarters who coordinated the development of the materials generally take the lead in developing the corresponding in-service outline and supports or “kits.”⁶² The curriculum coordinator provides the model and facilitates in-service for the regional staff, who then fan out to schools to deliver the same in-service to the relevant school staff—or in some cases *all* school staff. This arrangement varies based on the topic being implemented, the staff available and the number of affected staff.

According to Cathy, the logic of NDE in-services is that they introduce educators to the content and the recommended pedagogy of the new materials, making use of the new materials to design the in-service workshop. They also aim to (re)familiarize participants with Nunavut foundations and philosophies of education. As noted throughout this chapter, the NDE strategy was to take every opportunity possible to connect with new educators, or remind experienced educators of the reasons why particular approaches to program development were being pursued—according to legislated mandate, or consultations with Elders, for example (C&SS, n.d.b, p. 4). Having regional or school staff participate in facilitating in-service was seen as a capacity-building initiative by the department (C&SS, n.d.b, p. 2-3). The in-services also consistently modeled the integration of IQ, Elder participation or other community-based activities, including informing parents of the new materials, with this same goal in mind.

Cathy facilitated many in-services at the regional level and helped out with some at the school level as well. She remembers them fondly, saying: “They were a lot of fun, and... you know, people were actively involved. They were good PD. We made people think, and we made

⁶² Recognizing pressures on regional staff to conduct these workshops (some might be responsible for seven community visits), curriculum coordinators were expected to develop the in-service kits with detailed scripts and checklists. This was partly intended to achieve some consistency, with room to adapt for each particular school. I participated in developing the materials for such in-services and was surprised at the amount of work involved.

people work.” I asked Cathy to identify some features of in-service in Nunavut that were distinct from other jurisdictions. She noted that in several years between 2003 and 2013 there were in-service topics that were mandated for all school staff across the territory, things the “whole system needed.” These included orientation to each of the three foundation documents, bilingual education requirements, student assessment, IQ, the *Nunavut Education Act*, but also two special initiatives: one-day workshops for all school staff (including para-professionals) on both *Staking the Claim: Dreams, Democracy and the Canadian Inuit* (NDE, 2009) and *The Residential School System in Canada: Understanding the past - Seeking reconciliation - Building hope for tomorrow* (NDE & NWTDE, 2013). These are mandatory social studies modules at the grade 10 level. Cathy explains the rationale for this as:

We were trying to say ‘We’re trying to change our system,’ everybody needs to understand certain things, and it’s those things. With respect to *Staking the Claim*, because it was mostly about the Nunavut land claim (rather than the other Inuit land claims)—if you don’t understand the importance of the Nunavut land claim you can’t be an effective teacher in Nunavut. You need to understand how that impacts on life in Nunavut today, as well as education in Nunavut today. Although that was only a 1-day in-service that every teacher in Nunavut had to take. And then the same for the residential school topic: you can’t be a teacher in Nunavut, effectively, if you don’t understand it.

Cathy volunteered that there were some substantial in-service challenges experienced in Nunavut. It was always hard to deliver in-service on everything new that needed to be implemented. Staff could only deliver or participate in one or two training initiatives per year and there were often more than that to be completed. The scheduling involved could be burdensome, as anyone who has travelled in the Arctic can imagine. It was frustrating when new materials were ready for schools but could not be used until an in-service timeslot could be identified the following year. Secondly, providing ongoing orientation, training and in-service for teachers who arrive after materials have been implemented, or for those that require more supports, was nearly impossible given the demands on staff. This problem was something the NDE was keenly aware of and working on developing strategies to address, such as leaving the in-service kit at the school (C&SS, n.d.b, p. 3). Lastly, conducting the in-services bilingually and ensuring materials were ready both in English and Inuktitut at the time of implementation was always difficult, regularly caused delays, or meant that Inuktitut materials had to be piloted and provided after English. Having discussed curriculum broadly, in the following section I provide a more detailed and specific study of one example.

5.7 *Aulajaaqtut* Curriculum Analysis

Aulajaaqtut was developed from scratch in Nunavut and became a required course at grade 10 in 2004, later implemented at grades 11 (2010) and 12 (2011).⁶³ The unique combination of subjects, themes and goals that makes up *Aulajaaqtut* (Wellness & Safety; Physical, Social, Emotional & Cultural Wellness; Goal Setting; Volunteerism; and, Survival)—most easily summarized in the English word “wellness”—is different from health or life skills programs elsewhere in Canada.⁶⁴ There are five modules in *Aulajaaqtut* at grade 10: Valuing Values; Communicating and Helping; Exploring Opportunities; Community Values, Community Strengths; and, Youth-to-Child Practicum.⁶⁵ Each module consists of 10 units totaling 25 hours of instruction. Additional materials include the student journals, CDs with learning materials and the *Aulajaaqtut 10-11-12 Teacher’s Handbook* (C&SS, August 2013). This analysis will offer a close, but brief, reading of the *Valuing Values* unit as an example. This is intended to facilitate consideration of how the NDE has pursued the requirement to reflect IQ in curricular materials, and how the NDE might defend its curricular choices through evaluation of its own curriculum in relation to this requirement.

Aulajaaqtut was developed partially with concern for the statistically high rate of suicide (as well as addictions, poverty, stress, abuse) amongst Inuit youth, and the objective that school programs support Inuit students in developing self-esteem, coping skills, a strong sense of identity and leadership capability (C&SS, August 2013, p. 9). Cathy explains the goals of *Aulajaaqtut* as providing:

...strategies to deal with the things that sometimes cause suicide, for example. It’s based on responsiveness to being Inuit, and what does that mean in the 21st century? But it also teaches critical thinking skills and literacy skills which are needed for any purpose in the 21st century. In fact it deliberately is very metacognitive. And when students don’t have any other chance to talk about the social, emotional stuff in any other place in the school—or didn’t when it was created anyway—then it needs to be done somewhere.

⁶³ The antecedent for this aspect of the curriculum strand was the combination of Physical Education and Career and Life Management (CALM) 10, Alberta curriculum. Nunavut continues to use Alberta curriculum for high school physical education, with some additional Inuit games components.

⁶⁴ In a review of wellness curriculum options for the province of Alberta that is contemporary to *Aulajaaqtut* use in Nunavut, I found no comparable approaches to the combination of health, social-emotional skills, and survival skills noted, and the authors argue that there is no universally agreed upon definition of wellness or how it is attained in curriculum (Bates & Eccles, 2008). Social and emotional learning (SEL) programs might be considered comparable, but according to an American review of SEL programs they are not usually integrated into the curriculum, rather implemented as an add-on (Weissberg, Resnik, Payton, & O’Brien, 2003).

⁶⁵ Some modules of *Aulajaaqtut* 10 (Teacher’s Guides and Student Journals) are available in Inuit Language as well as French. I do not know whether the Inuit Language documents were a direct translation or approximate translation.

The grade 10 units were developed concurrently with the NDE foundation documents and establishment of consistent curricular frameworks described above, so they do not completely reflect the most recent departmental expectations. Departure from precedent in the NWT and other jurisdictions makes *Aulajaaqtut* a particularly interesting example.

Aulajaaqtut at grade 10 has been fully implemented across Nunavut schools for almost a decade with some updating involving teacher feedback in the 2009-10 year, but according to Cathy it has not been systematically evaluated since its implementation. Between the years 2011 and 2013, Nunavut students needed 5 credits at each grade level to graduate, totaling 15 credits. C&SS recommends that students achieve 85% attendance in *Aulajaaqtut* in order to receive credit, with the rationale that many of the activities are intentionally sequenced, and require participatory trust-building amongst the class that might be disturbed by irregular attendees (C&SS, August 2013, p. 67). Teachers must be offering accommodations or equivalencies because my review of attendance statistics in other research suggests that this level of attendance was unlikely to be achieved by students at the grades 10 and 11 levels (H. E. McGregor, 2011; 2013a; 2013b).

As of the year 2014, *Aulajaaqtut* became required in grades 10 and 11 only, removed from grade 12. Without a comprehensive evaluation it appears to me that there would have been little evidence on which to base any value judgments associated with teaching it (or not) in all senior grades.⁶⁶ To my knowledge there are no alternative or comparison curricula that exist for use in the subject strand to meet the same combination of learning outcomes. Ideally, the curriculum should be comprehensively measured against criteria derived from legislation, policy, research in education, Elder knowledge and stakeholder interests. Indeed, *Aulajaaqtut* warrants a careful review to (re)consider whether it has been designed, and is being implemented, to: meet the expectations for Nunavut curriculum; reflect credible sources of knowledge in terms of purpose, content and pedagogy; and to achieve the outcomes it identifies in the context of Nunavut schools. As I cannot undertake that detailed evaluation here, I will focus on one criterion that I view as related to both the integration of knowledge from and about the past, as well as decolonizing curricular content.

⁶⁶ I am aware that Nunavut Department of Education involves many teachers and stakeholders in developing curriculum, updating curriculum and producing teacher support resources like the *Aulajaaqtut* Handbook. This is an important approach to engaging those involved in delivering *Aulajaaqtut* and also potentially improving it based on anecdotal evidence. However, it is not equivalent to a systematic evaluation of the existing content or a consideration for what might be happening with teachers and students during implementation.

The *Nunavut Education Act* requires that school programs reflect Inuit knowledge, and therefore systems of evaluation (in some form) for Inuit knowledge content must be developed. Otherwise the Government of Nunavut exposes itself to vulnerability in demonstrating how to meet its own law. Complexity arises because Inuit knowledge cannot necessarily be appropriately or logically compared to key ideas from other curricula, other jurisdictions, or an external codified body of knowledge (such as an academic discipline). These sources largely do not exist for Inuit knowledge. Even if they did, there would still be many considerations involved in evaluating how the interpretation and application of Inuit knowledge occurs in the context of a wellness curriculum for schools developed in English by a cross-cultural team of educators and community members. Ideally, Inuit knowledge content in *Aulajaaqtut* should be measured against Inuit knowledge documented or held by Inuit—or approached on its own terms—as a component of the evaluation so as to reduce the impact of Eurocentrism perpetually saturating school systems (whether overtly or not) (P. Berger, 2009a). “Peer review” or knowledge claim verification processes in Inuit society may look substantially different from approaches in academic or institutional contexts (indeed, I expect this already occurs *orally* amongst groups of Elders who can “peer review” in dialogue, but the extent to which this can be documented by the school system is potentially low). This is an additional level of complexity and challenge warranting careful consideration and investment by the NDE in conducting curriculum evaluation. Until such time as a formal, documented or cumulative knowledge gathering/validating process is developed for Inuit knowledge (if it ever is), educators must proceed with making judgments about what represents quality in terms of Inuit curriculum content.

5.7.1 Assumptions and Limitations

I began this analysis by asking: How well does the *Aulajaaqtut Valuing Values* Teacher’s Manual (NDE, 2004) incorporate and facilitate content that meets Nunavut-specific criteria for curriculum found in the *Nunavut Education Act*?

This question is somewhat problematic in that the curriculum developers (working before 2004) were not using the 2008 Act requirements specifically. However, the tenets of the Act (such as the IQ principles) were in development since creation of the Nunavut school system in 2000 and were, in practice, discussed amongst educators long before that. The purpose of this evaluative analysis is not to hold curriculum developers to account retroactively, but to

experiment with assessing curriculum content using contemporary criteria established through legislation.

Criteria from the Act include the following (preceded by the legislation section references):

- 1(1) Inuit societal values and the principles and concepts of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (see section 1(2) for a list);
- 7(4) respect for Inuit cultural identity;
- 8(4) promote fluency in the Inuit Language;
- 8(4) knowledge of Inuit culture and of the society, economy and environmental characteristics of Nunavut; and,
- 76 assessments of students are culturally appropriate for Nunavut.

Evaluating *Valuing Values* on the basis of these criteria proved to be too large a project for this chapter. I chose to focus on how one might evaluate whether content is in accordance with “respect for Inuit cultural identity.” My question became: How well does the content in the *Valuing Values* Teacher’s Manual prepare and support teachers to ensure respect for Inuit cultural identity?

This approach gives primacy to the direct, explicit content for teachers (instructions, recommendations, guidance), and/or what teachers can learn from the content they are asked to use with students.⁶⁷ The rationale for this choice is, recognizing the recent introduction of this curriculum, none of the teachers (even Inuit teachers) would have taken *Aulajaaqtut* in their own schooling or teacher training.⁶⁸ Looking at what teachers can learn also provides insight into what students can learn (they are not mutually exclusive). The handbook recommends to school principals that an experienced northern educator, “preferably an Inuk,” be assigned to teach *Aulajaaqtut* (C&SS, August 2013). However, few Inuit educators work at the grades 10-12 level and if they do, they are usually needed for Inuit language instruction. For those non-Inuit instructors with experience teaching in Nunavut, unless they have taught the course over several years, it is likely that teachers are learning the content, instructional approaches, and assessments alongside students. This area of emphasis—identity—seems to be one in which the curriculum

⁶⁷ Not all components of the curriculum are included in this evaluation (such as the *Handbook* and CD), and choosing not to evaluate the *Handbook* could certainly be viewed as a limitation based on my concern here with teacher preparation and support. On the other hand, as noted earlier in the chapter, teachers do not always have access to all NDE materials in their schools (such as handbooks) when they take up instruction.

⁶⁸ Nunavut Arctic College offers its own teacher education program but it does not currently train teachers to specialize at the grades 10, 11 and 12 level.

may ask teachers to stretch their modes of knowing, being and doing to the greatest extent and conversely, where there is great potential for the curriculum to be inflected by unconscious (or conscious) Eurocentrism on the part of teachers (P. Berger, 2009a).

A table demonstrating my specific findings can be found in Appendix C, whereas here I describe my findings more generally. The table offers more detail with regard to the criteria I developed based on the key idea “respect for Inuit cultural identity,” as well as indicators I used to determine the presence of the criteria, and whether or not the Teacher’s Manual met the standard accordingly.

This exploratory analysis is for the purpose of illustrating how Nunavut staff might determine the quality of school materials based on Inuit knowledge and combined with contemporary educational best practice. It also demonstrates how one might go about assessing how knowledge from and about the past (Elder knowledge, anthropology, etc.) is made explicit and used in instruction with students. I do not present it here as a final judgment on the quality of *Aulajaaqtut* or as uncontested and summative evaluation, but rather as an exploration that exemplifies how complex such questions of curriculum transformation can become.

This evaluation is limited because it is being conducted by only one person, and because I am not an Inuk, do not speak an Inuit language, and was not raised or educated directly in traditional Inuit culture. With my position comes limitations in my ability to understand or judge what constitutes “trustworthiness,” “accuracy,” and “respect” towards Inuit cultural identity in the context of Nunavut. However, this may also be a useful limitation, based on similarities between my perspective and the perspectives of most people working in the NDE on curriculum policy. A comprehensive evaluation of *Aulajaaqtut* would ideally be carried out in ways that respond to cultural complexity and local conditions in Nunavut, develop criteria for curriculum relationally, take into consideration degrees and types of stakeholder involvement, as well as the importance of moving towards decolonizing public institutions with the intent to better address the needs and desires of the Inuit majority population. Lastly, I recognize that a careful balance must always be struck between 1) offering curriculum or teaching materials that provide guidance, account for local variability or responsiveness to changing contexts, and respect teacher autonomy, with 2) the need for Nunavut teachers to be well prepared to instruct curriculum that they themselves may not have learned or been trained in, and that may ask them to work outside their own views, comfort zones or values.

5.7.2 Findings

Valuing Values makes substantial efforts to base assigned student readings and classroom activities on Inuit knowledge, IQ principles and Inuit stories. In general, *Valuing Values* assigns student readings about Inuit identity from two sources: observations of Inuit by non-Inuit anthropologists in the past, or oral history/oral stories/traditional knowledge collected from Inuit Elders. While I view these sources as distinct from each other and warranting different considerations in how they are used, they are not necessarily indicated as such in the teaching materials, but rather run together. Teachers and students are not explicitly asked to think critically about the sources of knowledge they encounter, the author/researcher's point of view, what types of knowledge are produced by differing sources, or how they relate to each other.

In the case of the anthropological excerpts, the name of the individual researcher/author appears with the reading, but it is unclear that the person *is* an anthropologist. In other words, it is not clear that what is defined as “Inuit” in the reading is being interpreted by a non-Inuit person, using a particular methodological, disciplinary or cultural relationship to knowledge. Materials do not indicate on what basis the anthropologist might be considered trustworthy to Inuit communities and students.

With Inuit stories or Elder knowledge an author/individual attribution is less consistent, often missing, and again the trustworthiness of the source (according to any criteria—local, situated, disciplinary, or otherwise) is not specified. In the list of acknowledgements for sources used in the curriculum (preceding the teaching materials) no Elders names appear, only published non-Inuit authors or editors. This potentially diminishes the profile of respected Inuit Elders and knowledge holders who contributed to the materials, and privileges authors who have published academically over those who contribute knowledge in other ways. In one case I know the Elder who contributed knowledge used, and yet her name is not included.⁶⁹ Whether knowledge is held and attributed individually or collectively, without authorship of some sort consistently indicated the accuracy, utility, or terms upon which knowledge is judged credible cannot be assessed. Nor can students learn how to follow knowledge attribution protocols that account for Inuit knowledge in ways that are meaningful to Inuit communities.

⁶⁹ This refers to the “rock” or “egg” personality types described by Rhoda Karetak from Arviat as shown extensively in Unit 4.

In terms of both anthropological and Inuit sources, the content largely represents knowledge about Inuit identity in the past, whereas no sources engage students in contemporary commentary by Inuit, or from other sources, on what presently constitutes Inuit cultural identity (except where constructed by the students themselves). This has the potential to reinforce a view that Inuit culture and identity are tied to the past, only derived from the past, or no longer relevant, even if it is being taught in schools presently.

There is no discussion of how definitions of identity change over time (both collectively in history and in the course of individual's lives). There is no discussion of how cultural identity traits or one's "Inuk-ness" can be experienced on a spectrum: sometimes thought of as fixed based on a particular trait/composition of ancestry, other times a fluid experience in different contexts, sometimes self-identified, other times projected.

Lastly, regarding sources that respectfully represent Inuit identity to Nunavut students, one of the main touchstone stories used throughout various units in *Valuing Values* is the Epic of Qayaq, sourced from Alaska. It is accompanied by only brief and limited commentary to educate teachers/students about what differences and similarities there may be between Inuit in Alaska and Nunavut, making it hard to assess for relevance.⁷⁰

Notwithstanding the issue identified above regarding inconsistent attribution for Inuit knowledge, community-based views of Inuit identity are frequently advanced in the curriculum content through the use of knowledge contributed by Elders. However, the processes by which Elders construct knowledge are not documented for the teacher or students. This might include discussion of repeated observation of phenomenon over time, the interpretation of dreams, the relational process of oral tradition and other approaches. By extension, the process of making new claims about Inuit cultural identity that are likely to be respectful using Inuit approaches to knowledge—skills arguably useful to teachers and students in Nunavut—is not advanced. Such discussion, carefully pursued, could contribute to decolonizing knowledge construction and centering Inuit ways of knowing in schools.

I did not find content that was specifically, in my view, disrespectful towards Inuit cultural identity in *Valuing Values*. However, several examples of content derived from non-Inuit sources

⁷⁰ The black line master in Unit 5 (5-1) copies content from the source book in this regard as follows: "The word 'Eskimo' has been used throughout this book to refer to the Arctic people of Alaska. From 1947, when the epic was written down, to the present time in Alaska, 'Eskimo' has been used by the people to designate themselves. Lela's people, who speak Inupiaq and live on mainland Alaska, are called 'Inupiat.' Yupik-speaking people living on St. Lawrence Island and on the Kuskokwim Delta are called 'Yupik.'"

can be viewed as potentially inconsistent with, easily misinterpreted in relation to, or projected onto, Inuit identity. These examples are used without explicit commentary to teachers/students about the approach to constructing knowledge, or reasons for using this knowledge, and extent to which it may or may not conflict with Inuit cultural identity. These include:

- “Inuitization” of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (black line master Unit 2, 2-1);
- A banking metaphor for the maintenance of relationships (Unit 4);
- Use of quotes by non-Inuit authors (ie. Stephen Covey) working in mainstream Contexts as if they validate Inuit views (Units 5 and 9);
- Expecting students to use a prescribed “Steps to good decision making” that may not be valid for Inuit (Units 7 and 10); and
- Use of adjectives or qualities in describing desirable Inuit characteristics that imply Anglicization or a Eurocentric emphasis (Unit 4 black line masters 4-3, 4-5 through 4-8).

I will provide one illustrative example, Figure 17. In the case of Maslow’s hierarchy it appears to be taken as representative of Inuit society without explicit consideration for whether Maslow’s categories reflect Inuit worldview. Secondly, the notion of a hierarchy, from my understanding, is not consistent with the holistic and interconnected Inuit worldview. Third, who Maslow is, the time period/society in which Maslow was theorizing, research that has shown the limitations of Maslow’s theory, and the degree to which this is a theory, rather than a material reality, are not explicitly discussed with teachers/students. Fourth, Maslow’s hierarchy is represented in a diagram not as a pyramid or hierarchy but as progressive left-to-right steps, which is inconsistent with the original representation. Lastly, there are drawings of Inuit doing various cultural tasks superimposed on the steps. I view this as an “Inuitization” of the hierarchy, suggesting to students that Maslow was talking about Inuit society and lifeways, which is not the case.

Figure 17 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Reprinted with permission (NDE, 2004, black line master 2-1).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Physical Needs

- food and drink
- sleep
- health
- body needs
- exercise and rest
- sex



Safety Needs

- security
- protection
- comfort and peace
- no threats or danger
- orderly and neat surroundings



Attachment Needs

- acceptance
- belonging
- membership
- affection
- group participation



Self-Esteem Needs

- recognition
- confidence
- competence and success
- strength and intelligence



Self Actualization Needs

- fulfillment of potential
- acting for challenge of accomplishment
- intellectual fulfillment
- aesthetic appreciation
- acceptance of reality

This illustration raises questions that deserve greater attention in considering how curriculum can reflect IQ, how it can advance decolonizing goals, and what risks are inherent in adapting knowledge for the context of Nunavut. For example, if a theory of social development was desirable in the curriculum, why could it not be advanced using exclusively Inuit sources, without reference to Maslow? Under what conditions—if ever—is it desirable to retain European or Euro-American/Canadian theories while adapting them to the context of Nunavut? How are those adaptations assessed, both from Euro-Canadian or academic viewpoints, as well as from Inuit viewpoints? There are undoubtedly more questions such as these raised by this example and relevant to other examples.

This short analysis, informed by curriculum evaluation techniques, has been conducted by deriving one criterion from the Act (respect for Inuit cultural identity), designing plausible indicators to meet such a criterion, and looking for whether or not the materials meet the standards. There would be many more criteria necessary for consideration in a comprehensive analysis. Likewise, the indicators used have not been derived from any external or independent research or source into what makes programs respectful of cultural identity (Inuit or otherwise), but rather my own suggestions. Using local suggestions for evaluation criteria and indicators are important (particularly for locally-developed curriculum), but would not likely be the only basis to consider. Another—perhaps the next—crucial step in determining the value of *Valuing Values* would be to bring it in conversation with recommendations from other sources, such as best practices in other cross-cultural jurisdictions. These steps would still only offer information about the available curriculum, whereas the best evaluation would necessarily involve review of the lived curriculum, or how the materials have been implemented with students.

It should be noted that my analysis of the characterization of Inuit cultural identity does not necessarily or consistently apply to other teaching resources and student learning materials developed by the NDE. In my view, modules such as *My Family/Ilatka*, *Staking the Claim*, and *The Residential School System in Canada* also offer rich and contemporary views of Inuit cultural identity, engendering respect. On the other hand, those materials may present other questions when it comes to Inuit cultural identity. What I intend to show with this example is that beyond bringing Inuit perspectives and sources “to the table” of curriculum development, there are complexities and complications involved in sourcing, framing, contextualizing, interpreting, and teaching this content on its own, and always in relation to Eurocentric epistemological and ontological influences. As shown in the introduction to this chapter, scholars concerned with Indigenous curriculum continue to illustrate the numerous overlapping ways in which curriculum

change must be approached to respond to local and national Indigenous concerns, and the persistence of Eurocentrism throughout such efforts.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has looked for and at the principles, procedures, and products of curriculum provision in Nunavut since 2000. It is a generative context to study because Nunavut is the only public school jurisdiction in Canada where all school programs are intended to be delivered in the context of an Indigenous knowledge system, and bilingually with Indigenous languages. Despite this unique, clear, and radical direction for curriculum, research on the topic—especially stories of behind-the-scenes development processes—remains scant (ITK, 2011). How might what I found here connect to literature on Indigenous contexts elsewhere in Canada?

In my view, commentary on public school curriculum by scholars concerned with the needs and interests of Indigenous students in Canada has critiqued curriculum, and called for changes to it, primarily from four angles (Anuik, 2010; Archibald, 1995; 2008; Battiste, 1998; 2000; 2013; Battiste & Henderson, 2000; 2009; Castellano et al., 2000; Clark, 2007; Dei et al., 2000; den Heyer, 2009; Dion, 2004; 2007; 2009; Donald, 2012; Haig-Brown, 2008; Higgins et al., 2013; Iseke-Barnes, 2005; Kanu, 2011; Kerr, 2013; Kirkness, 1999; Madden et al., 2013; Marker, 2009; 2011; Nicol et al., 2013; Orlowski, 2008; Schick & St. Denis, 2005; B. Smith et al., 2011; St. Denis, 2011; Vick-Westgate, 2002; Weenie, 2008). These angles are not discrete levels, progressive stages, nor necessarily even theoretically consistent. Most scholars take more than one angle within their work, and the occurrence and depth of each angle varies in time, place and curricular subject area. They all remain important and interdependent, even when small improvements or recognitions in certain areas are advanced.

The first angle is revisiting and reflecting on the past, in order to demonstrate that—and sometimes how—Indigenous peoples, their rights, lands, knowledges, languages, and relationships have been marginalized in existing curriculum and school programs. This work often provides the rationale for changes to curriculum in the present and future (along with statistics regarding Indigenous “under-achievement” in schools). Historical study and analyses of textbooks or curricular documents exemplifies this angle (Anuik, 2010; Clark, 2007).

The second angle is recognizing and describing Indigenous knowledges, often with an attempt to do so on Indigenous terms rather than by measure against Eurocentric terms. This angle tends to call for such knowledges to be integrated into the curriculum in ways that surpass

a superficial nod to “culture” and/or multiculturalism. Jo-ann Archibald’s research in general, and particularly her contribution through *Indigenous Storywork* (2008) epitomizes this approach.

The third angle is illuminating and critiquing the clash between Indigenous and Eurocentric knowledges in classrooms, particularly with concern for the effects of such clashes on students. That is, even when individuals with the best of intentions bring Indigenous knowledge into classrooms, there remains a likelihood of misrepresenting, appropriating and disrespecting—as Marker (2011) and Dion (2009) demonstrate in their analyses of history education, for example.

The fourth angle is closely connected to the third, but offers something worth distinguishing: tracking and deconstructing how clashes occur in the first place—the terms upon which Indigenous and Eurocentric ways of knowing, being, and doing encounter each other in institutions, systems and classrooms. These scholarly approaches often provide analysis of how “what counts” in particular moments of learning “comes to count,” and likewise how such discursive matrices for knowledge and power are sustained, by extension offering clues to how they may be dismantled (Battiste & Henderson, 2009; Donald, 2012; Higgins et al., 2013; Orlowski, 2008). This is the angle that best extends decolonizing from naming problems with education, towards working in the uncomfortable and incommensurable spaces that must be negotiated, and thinking with different possibilities for curriculum informed by Indigenous imperatives.

What we see in Nunavut is work addressing primarily the first and second angles outlined above. Nunavut curriculum developers have experience working towards reconceptualizing a school system, with the support of their electorate, to better facilitate Indigenous self-determination. And yet, many of the same challenges faced in other regions remain in Nunavut: justifying the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge, documenting Indigenous knowledge and integrating it with European-derived content in institutions with assimilative legacies, and mediating the inevitable conflicts inherent in this work, not the least of which is teacher training and support. Jo-ann Archibald (1995; 2008) and Yatta Kanu (2011) outline comparable processes and demands for Indigenous curriculum development and implementation. Otherwise, there are few Canadian researchers illustrating from beginning to end how curriculum is sourced, designed and actualized. In addition to offering a model for that kind of inquiry, I have constructed this chapter with concern in mind for the possible loss of institutional memory at the NDE as long-term staff leave or retire, as Cathy did in 2013.

In summary, Cathy listed the opportunities associated with Nunavut developing its own curriculum as follows (this list is not in order of importance but rather the order Cathy shared it with me):

- Providing tools to change the system from within;
- Establishing greater consistency between communities;
- Ensuring high expectations for 21st century and IQ competencies;
- Allowing parents and students to “see” themselves in the school system—in content, images and pedagogies;
- Building on the strengths, learning styles and characteristics of Inuit students;
- Integrating Nunavut beliefs, values, culture, and history;
- Meeting legal mandates in the *Nunavut Education Act*, *Inuit Language Protection Act* and *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement*;
- Influencing pedagogy based on what works in Nunavut, from experience;
- Involving parents, DEAs, Elders, and community members;
- Innovating; and,
- Creating different relationships between school partners in the delivery of education.

I view all of Cathy’s opportunity factors as potentially realistic outcomes from made-in-Nunavut curriculum, some of which can already be seen—at least as available curriculum—in the materials developed since 2000. What goes on in classrooms, school hallways, and the diverse activities of schooling across Nunavut, and whether that has anything to do with recommended curriculum, is another question to investigate. Complaints that teachers cannot find resources is a hint that there is more work to be done with regard to implementation of curriculum, follow up, accountability and supports for schools. And this says nothing of how the materials are actually used by teachers when they are available, an issue that other researchers have found to be problematic (Dion, 2009). Detailing in-service procedures here was intended to demonstrate some of the ways the NDE was attempting to address this well-known capacity challenge.

Cathy and I discussed her view of the difficulties in developing curriculum in Nunavut. Challenges partially came from the necessity of providing teaching resources before all the curriculum competencies had been completed at each grade level, in each strand or subject area. Developers sometimes had to work with learning outcomes identified in the NWT or other western provinces because the process of confirming the scope and sequence of curriculum

competences in Nunavut was not yet complete. Also, so much energy was devoted to development and in-servicing, very little program evaluation has occurred. This means efforts at determining the worth of new materials, and revising them, were not occurring on the basis of systematically collected evidence. Less attention was given to taking a critical second look at materials produced by Nunavut in evaluative terms, to consider whether they were facilitating the outcomes to which they have committed (whether this occurs on the basis of their own criteria, external criteria, or a combination of both). Lastly, there is challenge in how to determine an appropriate combination of made-in-Nunavut units or modules with the other materials borrowed from the NWT or Alberta in a way that works for students, until such time as all materials are more consistent.

Turning to the third and fourth angles of approaches to decolonizing curriculum as outlined above—illuminating the clash between Indigenous and Euro-Western/Eurocentric knowledges, and how such clashes have come to be—what does Nunavut have to offer? Less work has been done in this area, but some evidence is visible in this chapter because of the extent to which made-in-Nunavut curriculum is being designed to rely on both sources of knowledge. Cathy identified five barriers to bringing knowledge from and about the past, and IQ, into the school system:

- The small number of educators with Inuit language skills available to do this work becomes a barrier to creating high quality materials in Inuktitut as the first language, rather than as a direct translation of other materials;
- The potentially limited ability of teachers to teach Inuit content without resource-intensive training, because either they are Qallunaat, or they are Inuit whose opportunities to learn Inuit knowledge was interrupted by being required to attend the Eurocentric school system;
- Education staff (at all levels) who resist made-in-Nunavut curriculum because they believe that what is important for students to learn is the knowledge and skills that students learn elsewhere in Canada, and/or do not see it as worthwhile taking the time to develop curriculum content in alignment with Inuit philosophies of knowledge and learning;

- Financial limitations (allocation of dollars for salary vs. operations), and limited access to adequate housing prevents the hiring of staff in communities where curriculum development positions are available in the government;⁷¹ and,
- Teacher turnover, because, according to Cathy:

You have to start all over again with every new person and you know, the kind of understanding and the gut commitment that there is of those long-term staff to some of this work, only comes through probably a number of years of working through the issues, of working with Inuit in the school system, of working closely with Inuit in the school system. You know, it doesn't come from one or two in-service sessions only. Yes one or two sessions can help, it can start the process, but it's not enough.

To consider how new educators can be brought into these differing ways of operating in schools as desired by long-term educators working for the NDE and built into new materials, I provided an overview of the curriculum in-servicing procedures used under Cathy's leadership. This showed some of the ways new educators are supported to understand what is asked of them, including: providing handbooks and guidelines; "overproducing" teaching resources with information about Nunavut foundations of education; offering 3-day in-service workshops with IQ components; and, insisting on some system-wide in-services based on important topics such as the land claim and residential schools history. Cathy explained why these system-wide initiatives felt so important to her, and why she wished more time could have been allocated for such training:

It's part of that whole process of bringing the new people across the chasm of ignorance. It may be totally unconscious ignorance. Totally unintentional ignorance. But if we ever hope to bring Inuit and Qallunaat together in new relationships, so that they can help kids figure out how to relate to themselves, their families, as well as their society in a different and new way... given the modern world, but with that strength of their ancestors... We're not going to do it, if teachers don't understand. So, when you're only allowed one day to teach such fundamental understandings, which don't begin to get at the power and privilege issues, and the Eurocentrism, and whiteness, and... fear. Fear of each other. And the silencing, intentional and unintentional, that goes on when you have two cultures coming together in a—I was going to say volatile—hugely important context such as schooling. Well it is volatile, because there's violence if not against other people, sometimes against other people, certainly internal violence. Even if it's not physical violence, it's emotional violence, and mental violence... because of the anomie that's created, the insecurity that's created, the second-guessing that's created. The victimization. I don't know. It's very emotional because it's so difficult to move past the

⁷¹ Because the government was hiring teachers to do curriculum development work there is a short window of time each spring when they can reasonably be recruited without interrupting the allocation of teaching responsibilities, and if the housing and other logistics are not in place during that time it can mean waiting another year to begin a project.

ways that aren't working. And, [a one day workshop] seems like such a little bit, you know, such a minimal effort. And I guess maybe behind all that is fearing that even that minimal effort is going to be cut off. And then what? So when you see with all these tools that have been created, the potential for making change happen, and wondering if it ever will happen. It's... discouraging...

Several of the themes noted by Cathy here are further taken up in Chapters 6 and 7.

There were significant accomplishments in terms of curriculum development and reform during this period. Not only have classroom-ready materials been under development, Nunavut has been working on advancing and practicing its layered philosophy of education through those materials. One of the first projects taken up by curriculum staff in Nunavut was establishing required *Aulajaaqtut*, or wellness, courses at the high school level, for which there are few comparable precedents in Canada. Despite curriculum policy changes in 2014 (Varga, 2014a), which I introduced in Chapter 2, the work of moving towards curriculum that is founded on an IQ framework was ground-breaking in terms of Indigenous knowledge mobilization in a public school system. Cathy's explanations for the rationale and approaches taken by curriculum staff show these initiatives can be considered decolonizing as a result of their: basis and foundations with Elder knowledge (as also described in Chapter 4), incorporation of long-term educators' experience, and, advancing a critique of, and alternative to, the materials used under the NWT and by other jurisdictions. Nunavut's critiques and alternatives are informed by imperatives for student competencies established between curriculum and school staff, some broader consultations, as well as the legal commitments to advancing IQ and Inuit languages in schools.

Observers of the Nunavut school system have asked why curriculum change has taken so long. For example, the 2013 Auditor General's report found that:

When the Education Act was passed in 2008, the Department had already been working for almost a decade to develop made-in-Nunavut teaching resources. We found that the Department has developed 50 percent of its sets of teaching resources to date. In our view, the Department will need to reassess its approach to developing the remainder of the teaching resources. (Auditor General of Canada, p. 16)

In 2006 Justice Tom Berger notably recommended a high investment of funding from the territorial and federal governments in order to achieve Nunavut's bilingual education goals, and as a central pillar to conciliation in the stalled implementation of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (this call was never addressed by the Conservative government) (T. R. Berger, 2006). I have tried to demonstrate through this chapter that money would not solve all of Nunavut's curriculum problems, although it could not hurt. What was desired—and arguably necessary—to enact the NDE mandate was a larger cadre of staff with experience and knowledge (especially Inuit knowledge and Inuit language) about Nunavut, not more staff from southern Canada who

require significant orientation. There is a limited pool of people on which to draw for this type of work; every teacher who is seconded to, or hired by, C&SS is a teacher not in the classroom with students. In the case of Inuit teachers with strong Inuktitut skills, this is an important trade-off to be considered by the department.

With these factors in mind, Nunavut's greatest curriculum difficulty originated with making ambitious commitments that could not be realistically met in the suggested timelines by any organization, even while I wholeheartedly support the vision and goals they hoped to pursue. Secondly, based on my review of *Valuing Values*, the curriculum development step that could benefit from the most careful (re)consideration is, in Cathy's words, "integrating Nunavut beliefs, values, culture and history." This integration is happening and there are models now on which to base analysis, as evidenced by the curriculum materials display table story that is the epigraph to this chapter, and the list of materials in Figures 13-15. However, based on the evidence presented here there may not be enough intentional evaluation of how this knowledge integration is occurring, so as to appropriately distinguish or blend ways of knowing without subsuming one within the other, without appropriating, without perpetuating a science/culture binary, without dismissing Inuit language as out-dated, without essentializing Inuit identity, and the other missteps that have been made in the past. In other words, there are more "sticky points" between Inuit knowledge and Qallunaat knowledge, than tend to be overtly identified as such. How do Nunavut curriculum developers and the educators they work with theorize how to blend IQ content and pedagogy with other sources? How do they measure the quality of their blended materials? How do they support educators to negotiate the incommensurabilities that arise when cross-cultural education brings two worlds with differing epistemological and ontological relationships into the same classroom? How do educators use and adapt the example of Maslow's hierarchy of needs effectively, without "Inuitizing" it inaccurately or inappropriately? These are the questions that deserve more research.

Curriculum development staff and educators are drawing on a range of sources to inform the procedures, principles, and products of curriculum. They refer to Inuit sources of knowledge such as Elders, anthropologists calling on Inuit knowledge, and published works with Inuit authorship. They continue to participate in WNCP, they conduct literature searches into educational research, and they survey work being conducted in other jurisdictions. Cathy recruited long-term Inuit and Qallunaat educators into curriculum positions and required that they establish teacher consultation committees for their projects. Many decisions about materials at every stage of development were being made by people who carry deep knowledge of the

Nunavut context, Nunavut schools, what has worked in the past, and what is envisioned for the future. Cathy often supported this thread of thinking—between the past, present and future—amongst the partners contributing to curriculum. This is how knowledge of the past concerning the ways schools have worked has found its way into to new Nunavut initiatives.

Chapter 6: Looking for Educational Leadership: History Education in “Roots Day”

Heather: If you had to prioritize the following areas of change in the education system, what order would you put them in so as to meet the goals that come from Nunavut? Policy—Curriculum—Leadership—or something else?

Cathy: I think leadership. Leadership is the key. You need the legislation, and you need the curriculum, and you need the training, mentoring, program support. But if you don’t have the leadership that understands, has the vision and believes in it, has some concept of how to achieve it, and tries to achieve it system-wide... it’s not going to happen with the teachers.

For the past 10 years the last week of June and first two weeks of July have been the busiest time of the year in Cathy’s work schedule. My father and I knew we would not see her for several weeks while she was fully consumed in the annual Nunavut Educational Leadership Program (ELP). If ELP was being held in Rankin Inlet, which it often was, Dad or I were recruited into helping Cathy and ELP instructional team members load boxes of resources onto the plane in Iqaluit, before they rushed off in a whirlwind of last minute preparations. Several days later we might receive a phone call asking for a forgotten camera or important resource to be sent on the next plane with a colleague. Cathy would call us from the school where the program was being held, or the college residence where participants were accommodated. She might only have 5 minutes between events. We knew she stood at the phone holding a post-it note with a list of 7 things to be accomplished in those 5 minutes. She would rush through her most urgent request, and then Dad or I might ask: Well, how are things going otherwise? Cathy might provide a brief report on who had arrived for the program, if the internet or printers were working at the school, what the weather was like, and which days she was scheduled to teach. Cathy’s commitment to the program was partly a function of being responsible for it in the portfolio associated with her job. More accurately and importantly, she has demonstrated a significant commitment to leading the program each year because of her individual experience, skills, values, and philosophy of education.

ELP is a venue for professional development, educational change, and made-in-Nunavut leadership practices. Running the program is demanding because it is designed and delivered fully by NDE staff and experienced principals from across Nunavut, with busy jobs and responsibilities coming off of a full school year, without much administrative or logistical

support. Participants also find the 10-day, full-time program expectations demanding, although it is delivered at no financial cost to them.

ELP pre-dates Nunavut as a form of made-in-the-North principal certification. It was started in the early 1980s in association with the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education; one of the only required principal certification programs in Canada at the time. Caroline Thompson (2008) describes her experience attending the program, remembering discussions with new northern colleagues as having more impact on her than the academic readings and assignments. The program location later moved North, and an on-the-land experience component was added. In 2003, Nunavut delivery of the program separated from the NWT. While some foundational program components continued, Nunavut added for example: specific content to each theme, eligibility extended to include vice principals, and an action research requirement. Nunavut also pursued accreditation for 500-level coursework through the University of Prince Edward Island (n.d.). Cathy was involved in various ways since the beginning of ELP, including completing the program herself. She took over responsibility for actively shaping and delivering the Nunavut program as Executive Director of C&SS.

In this chapter ELP is described in the past tense, because I have heard that as of 2014 the NDE is planning significant revisions to the program. While the program still exists, and principal certification is still legally required, I cannot say how much continuity there will be with the previous program design. As discussed with regard to the Elder Advisor position vacancies and new curriculum development directions, the longevity of government-supported programs—even those initiatives created specifically for the Nunavut school system—is not guaranteed. Time passes, priorities change, staff members move on, and projects are shelved as new objectives take precedence. We must bear this in mind in understanding the story of educational change, informed by the initiatives featured here. Returning to the melting river metaphor: the shape of the ice pans is always changing, and the story streams follow these changes in shape. On the other hand, as the focus of this dissertation is up until the year 2013, and ELP was run with a high degree of continuity over the preceding 10 years, this site fits well with the boundaries I set out for the research.

I have featured ELP here for several reasons that align with my research questions. Primarily ELP is important because it formed one of the most consistent and direct ways that Nunavut-based educational policy, philosophy, and ways of being together in schools were shared and discussed amongst NDE headquarters staff and school leaders. As noted above, the program was separated from the NWT in the early years of Nunavut, to reflect the territory's

new, more specific imperatives. This is evidence not only of a new initiative, but also of decolonizing purposes, as I will explain. Leadership was conceptualized in the program to reflect the expansive definition of leadership specific to Nunavut schools: demonstrating responsibility for program, instruction, and school-community support—far beyond administrative definitions of the role of principal.⁷² ELP includes one day of instruction with an emphasis on history (including various forms of knowledge from and about the past), called “Roots: Transforming Education in Nunavut” or for short, “Roots Day.” Cathy has taken the lead in facilitating Roots Day in most years during the period of analysis, and having been director of ELP she is well positioned to speak in-depth about the development and delivery of it. Lastly, ELP provided a venue for long-term, experienced Nunavut leaders to come together specifically to orient and mentor newer leaders.

I have not participated in ELP as a candidate, but I attended Roots Day in 2009, 2011 and 2012.⁷³ My first hand experience has informed my view of its significance. And, because of our shared interest in history, Cathy and I have often discussed the planning and debriefing of Roots Day over several years.

This chapter illustrates relationships among professional development, leadership roles, use of knowledge from and about the past, and educational change towards decolonizing in Nunavut. I describe Cathy’s views on the professional development needs of leaders in Nunavut, including what and how she has learned about nurturing leadership. I introduce “The Bridge Metaphor” that Cathy uses to demonstrate the logic of Nunavut professional development. I provide a brief introduction to ELP generally. The greatest share of emphasis is on Roots Day, as a site of transmitting knowledge and participating in transformative pedagogies in relation to the past. I describe how Roots Day got its name from the “Poppy Metaphor” of schooling developed

⁷² Joanne Tompkins’ monograph describes her experience as a principal in the Qikiqtani region in the late 1980s/early 1990s in ways that resonate with this instructional leadership model (vs. administrator) (Tompkins, 1998, p. 112-126).

⁷³ In July 2009 I was hired by the NDE to plan the first *Nunavut Education Act* in-service for school principals and DEA chairpersons, scheduled for September 2009. In order to complete the work over the summer, I was sent to consult with senior managers who were in Rankin Inlet to instruct ELP. I was able to attend Roots Day that year and watch as participants experienced the kind of facilitation I had so often heard about from Cathy, as well as reflecting on the kinds of considerations it raised for me. I also visited ELP in 2011 because I was in Rankin Inlet to conduct other research, again coinciding with the program in order to find time with several individuals who were hard to reach during the busy school year. I was able to attend Roots Day that year as well. In 2012 ELP was held in Iqaluit and the theme of Roots Day was residential schools, to raise awareness amongst principals about the implementation of the new history curriculum. Because of my involvement in writing and in-servicing the residential schools curriculum, I assisted Cathy in planning and carrying out facilitation that year.

in the 1990s, which emphasizes the role of the community in improving school programs. Roots Day typically incorporates a presentation on educational history (i.e. local or regional oral history projects), a guest speaker, a documentary film about a particular aspect or event in Nunavut history, and activities related to how participants' individual identities affect their leadership roles. To illustrate these activities I outline Cathy's facilitation of Roots Day in 2013. I present the purposes and approaches of this facilitation, including how Cathy's experiences listening to Inuit educational leaders in the past have informed her design. I describe what some of the outcomes of Roots Day are from Cathy's perspective. I analyze other documents and research relevant to understanding how knowledge from and about the past is used in Nunavut educational leadership practices. ELP provides a site of activities that link the histories of Nunavut with educational change, and as such, it is a significant site from which to consider my research questions. In this chapter, the second story stream—Cathy's stories—runs closer to, and takes us farther towards, the fourth story stream—decolonizing and historical consciousness.

6.1 Literature on Nunavut Leadership and Educational Change

Defining and developing culturally responsive educational leadership has been the focus of a notable share of Nunavut-based education research, both directly and indirectly (i.e. research on other topics that concludes by commenting on leadership needs). For that reason I feature Nunavut-based literature in this chapter, rather than taking a broader view of Indigenous leadership in education. Contrary to the pattern in other chapters, I begin by reviewing that research here, because it is based in Nunavut and because some of the same people have been involved in ELP as in the research from which I draw. This review helps to establish some of the context and shared understandings within which the goals and practices of ELP have been shaped. However, as the water runs over the rocks below, before proceeding around the ice pan of ELP, it is important to note that this combination or formation of streams has not occurred before. This is not only because of Cathy's stories, but in that ELP itself has not been studied in much depth through research (academic, or independent of the NDE). More significantly, the emphasis on knowledge from and about the past—and featuring Roots Day, focused on historical study for decolonizing purposes—may bring a new story to that which has been said before about Nunavut educational leadership.

Analyses of Inuit leadership in Nunavut schools are about women educational leaders because few Inuit men have become certified teachers, let alone leaders. While Qallunaat men more often take up leadership positions, Cathy could think of only eight Inuit men who had been

principals at some time over the period of her 40-year career. O'Donoghue (1998), Tompkins (2006), and Thompson (2008) provide commentaries on gender dynamics experienced by, and influencing conceptions of, Inuit educational leaders. I have chosen not to feature gender to any greater extent here.

What does existing literature suggest with regard to leadership, educational change, and the role of knowledge from and about the past? Firstly, researchers have demonstrated that Eurocentric views of education or “historical assimilationist discourses of schooling” (Aylward, 2010, p. 319) continue to affect Nunavut schools (Aylward, 2010; P. Berger et al., 2006; P. Berger & Epp, 2007; P. Berger, 2009a; 2014; O'Donoghue, 1998; O'Donoghue et al., 2005; Tompkins, 2006). Examples of Eurocentric views include that proficiency in Inuit language is a deficit to students learning English, or that teaching Inuktitut is a “waste” (Aylward, 2010; P. Berger, 2009a). Also with regard to language, the view that instructors should be professional and credentialed as opposed to drawn from community members, as is sometimes necessarily practiced for language instruction (Aylward, 2010, p. 316). Or, that Elders should act as volunteer instructors, rather than receiving payment for their expertise (P. Berger, 2014). Berger found Eurocentric views amongst teachers concerning attendance policies, the assumed desirability of high school graduation and wage employment (i.e. the purpose of schooling), and what parental support for students should look like—even while those same views may discourage parents from visiting or participating in school activities (P. Berger, 2009b; 2014). Pedagogy, student behavioural expectations, and discipline have also been noted as sites of Eurocentrism, for example when students who help each other or speak out of turn are reprimanded (P. Berger, 2014; see also Lewthwaite & McMillan, 2010; Tompkins, 2006). Management styles, supervisory practices, and school decision-making on the part of principals is said to be a site of persistent Eurocentrism (O'Donoghue, 1998; Thompson, 2008; Tompkins, 2006). At the same time, Inuit educators, parents and community members continue to strongly advocate for Inuit language, identity, and culture in school programs, as echoed over and over in research (Aylward, 2012; P. Berger, 2009b; ITK, 2011; Lewthwaite, McMillan, Renaud, Hainnu, & MacDonald, 2010; Lewthwaite & McMillan, 2010; O'Donoghue, 1998; O'Donoghue et al., 2005; Sandiford & Walton, 2011; Tompkins, 2006).

Secondly, according to research, Inuit and non-Inuit educators have long expressed that they do not receive enough Nunavut-specific orientation and in-servicing (P. Berger & Epp, 2007; Lee, 1996; O'Donoghue, 1998; Thompson, 2008). This broad issue interrelates with the challenges of cultural responsiveness, pedagogical knowledge, teacher itinerancy, professional

networking and problem-solving supports. Research into the effectiveness of educators who attempt to deliver curriculum in accordance with IQ, identified cultural pedagogical capability as a significant factor in educational success from the perspective of school stakeholders as well as educators (Lewthwaite & McMillan, 2010). Staff turnover—particularly in the position of principal but also in teaching positions—is reported to be a significant factor in the delivery of programs in accordance with IQ and Nunavut philosophies (Lewthwaite & Renaud, 2009, p. 167; O'Donoghue, 1998). Educators report experiences of professional isolation and lack of orientation, support and resources (Aylward, 2009a, p. 84; P. Berger & Epp, 2007; O'Donoghue, 1998). This relates to the geography of the Arctic and issues of access to professional learning. Distance discourages Inuit educators who do not want to leave their community, or Nunavut, to access further training or graduate level education (O'Donoghue, 1998; Thompson, 2008; Tompkins, McAuley, & Walton, 2009).^{74, 75} This summary does not exhaust the expressed needs of educators and educational leaders, but aligns with some of the most frequently mentioned challenges.

So what is to be done to mitigate Eurocentrism, enhance training, and address the barriers to change in Nunavut schools? Researchers frequently identify leadership—usually school principals—as the most significant nexus of change (P. Berger, 2009a; ITK, 2011; Lewthwaite et al., 2010; O'Donoghue, 1998; Thompson, 2008; Tompkins, 2006). Research aimed at developing a long-term agenda for Inuit education on the basis of consultations with experienced Inuit educators and with support from the NDE, recommended the following: 1) revitalizing education through Inuit collaboration; 2) developing Inuit leadership; 3) providing Inuit educators with graduate education; 4) writing a history of Inuit education; 5) offering Qallunaat educators professional learning; 6) mentoring and supporting Inuit educators; and 7) generating hope (O'Donoghue et al., 2005).

O'Donoghue (1998), Tompkins (2006) and Berger (2014) all express the view, undoubtedly held by others in Nunavut, that transferring leadership positions to Inuit educators is the only way to achieve the outcomes desired by Nunavut educational philosophies. Tompkins describes the rationale most convincingly:

⁷⁴ Fiona Walton changed her name from Fiona O'Donoghue in 2006.

⁷⁵ This challenge is what led to the implementation of the first Masters program for Inuit educators, the *Masters of Education - Leadership in Learning* delivered between 2006-2009 and 2010-2013 by the University of Prince Edward Island in collaboration with the Nunavut Department of Education (Tompkins, McAuley, & Walton, 2009, Walton et al., June 2010).

These voices can work *against* the historical forces that took away Inuit presence in schooling and advocate *for* full representation of Inuit in all aspects of the school. Without relationships to these stakeholders in the communities, it is unlikely that real transformation towards culture-based schooling will be able to take place. (Tompkins, 2006, p. 247)

The supply of Inuit educators, let alone those ready for principal roles, is simply too slim for this to be a realistic option right now, although of course it is an important goal towards which to work (T. R. Berger, 2006). And, it is crucial to acknowledge the demands involved in taking on the role of principal or superintendent—a difficult challenge for anyone—and not the right fit for all Inuit educators (O'Donoghue, 1998; Tompkins, 2006). For example, Naullaq Arnaquq (2008) describes her view of the demands on Inuit women who become educational leaders as follows:

Inuit teachers did not want to take on school leadership positions in their communities because of the demands of the job, relationships, community dynamics, lack of training and or education, and lack of opportunity for individuals to learn and be mentored and often because of family responsibilities. Any of these issues by themselves or any combination created an uphill battle. To be a school leader, one needed to almost, or actually be, better than a Southerner or Qallunaaq because you were going to be unsupported or criticized just because you were an Inuk by all people alike, other Inuit as well as the Qallunaat. This type of position required a mental paradigm shift because it was and always had been held by Southerners, many of whom were men. One did not just develop into a school leader overnight.⁷⁶ (p. 150)

I am interested in how to work better with the individuals we have in the school system now—whether Inuit or non-Inuit—so as to increase continuity and sustainability in the work of pursuing change. Professional development towards decolonizing with Inuit and Qallunaat together in schools is addressed in research by Fiona Walton (O'Donoghue, 1998) and Joanne Tompkins (2006). In a deep and theoretically thick analysis of leadership development potential, dated just prior to the creation of the new territory, Walton advances a vision for “ethically based professional practice which draws on Foucault’s notion of care of self and integrates it with Inuit values and conceptions of respect and relationship with community and the land” (O'Donoghue, 1998, p. 358). Her framework is predominantly driven by reflective practice—identifying,

⁷⁶ See also: *Arnait Nipingit: Voices of Inuit Women in Leadership and Governance* (McComber & Partridge, 2012), a publication in the series entitled Inuit Leadership and Governance, published by Nunavut Arctic College and several partner organizations. 12 Inuit women participated in separate interviews with the book’s editors, and each chapter in the book presents a narrative in the voice of the woman being interviewed. Many of the women featured refer to their early school experiences, many of them also trained as teachers, and many refer to their hopes for improved education for their children and grandchildren.

questioning, and resisting prevailing beliefs as we filter through our own experience, resulting in self-conscious choices about how to relate in schools. Walton's dissertation exceeds 500 pages and draws extensively on feminist and post-structural theory, among many other areas of literature. It also offers a close and realistic dialectic with the Nunavut context and Inuit knowledge, featuring Walton's own career history with the BDBE, Nunavut schools, and Nunavut Arctic College. The wide-ranging issues she examines related to professional and leadership development are beyond the scope of how the NDE has been pursuing decolonizing with school leaders recently. However, it is useful to summarize her emergent framework as necessarily taking up questions of implementing schooling in accordance with Inuit values, and encompassing the following components:

...an awareness of the hegemonic influences of mainstream approaches in professional education, an understanding of the culture of schools and the culture of Nunavut, a consideration of the post-colonial social context, a good grasp of the application of critical reflection and problem-posing, a thorough grounding in the issues addressed by post-humanism, and careful attention to freedom, space, voice, and community in all professional learning. (O'Donoghue, 1998, p. 414)

This is indeed a tall order. History—the sharing of individual and community stories—is present and implicated throughout Walton's work. She argues for the time to think and talk about these issues, but it is not the primary focus. She does not describe in detail what kinds of histories/stories from the past to use with educators, and how to mobilize them towards the goals she identifies. This is not a critique of her work but rather a signal for how this chapter adds to it.

Tompkins (2006) pursues several methods in her dissertation research, beginning with identifying and describing (based on her own experience) what she calls “decolonizing practices” carried out with Inuit educational leaders under the BDBE administration. These include the creation of the Board itself; curriculum projects *Piniaqtavut* and *Inuuqatigiit*; publication of Inuit language books; and professional development projects and initiatives also described by Cathy throughout this dissertation. As part of Tompkins' research methodology she conducted life history interviews with two experienced Inuit educational leaders, and points out that a crucial part of their role is enhancing community participation in schooling. Tompkins emphasizes the collective and collaborative nature of Inuit conceptions of leadership based on interdependence between the self, community and land, as well as the importance of Inuit educators drawing on both Inuit and Qallunaat cultural knowledges and skills in order to work effectively in schools (2006, p. 257). She centres bringing Inuit culture and language “in from the margins,” and emphasizes Inuit voice and decision-making: “Inuit educational leaders who are critically conscious, by virtue of their relationships to their communities and their access to their culture

stand the best chance of being able to hear *all* the voices in their communities (Tompkins, 2006, p. 273). For Qallunaat educators, she prescribes a learning journey to understand,

their own privilege and then come to better understand the worldview and lived experiences of their Inuit colleagues. Qallunaat educators enter a sociopolitical, sociocultural, and sociohistorical context in Nunavut which positions them in ways that given them an inordinate sense of power, of which they are often largely unaware. (p. 258)

Like Walton, however, Tompkins does not address specific examples of bringing history into the conversation about Eurocentrism, Euro-Canadian/Qallunaat privilege, or how this is or is not being pursued with educational leaders in Nunavut more recently.

Few Nunavut researchers describe how to transform leadership with specific and sustainable professional development activities (i.e. not one-time projects) that relate to the commonly held goals of decolonizing. Illustrating how the NDE has engaged with school leaders in principal (and other supervisory) positions, that is, working from within the system, is one purpose of this chapter. I do not use existing literature as a yardstick against which to measure whether or not ELP is meeting the needs of Nunavut schools. Rather, taking it into consideration at the outset and conclusion of this chapter is intended to show how ideas about educational change are circulating amongst educators in the system, as well as the researchers who are doing relevant work. It is worth noting that many of Cathy's ideas have developed in relationship with the researchers mentioned here (particularly those who have long histories in Nunavut: Fiona Walton, Joanne Tompkins, Lynn Aylward, and Lena Metuq), and vice versa, their ideas in response to her, given her level of responsibility—and support for research—both with the BDBE and the NDE.

6.2 Supporting Nunavut Educators: The Bridge Metaphor

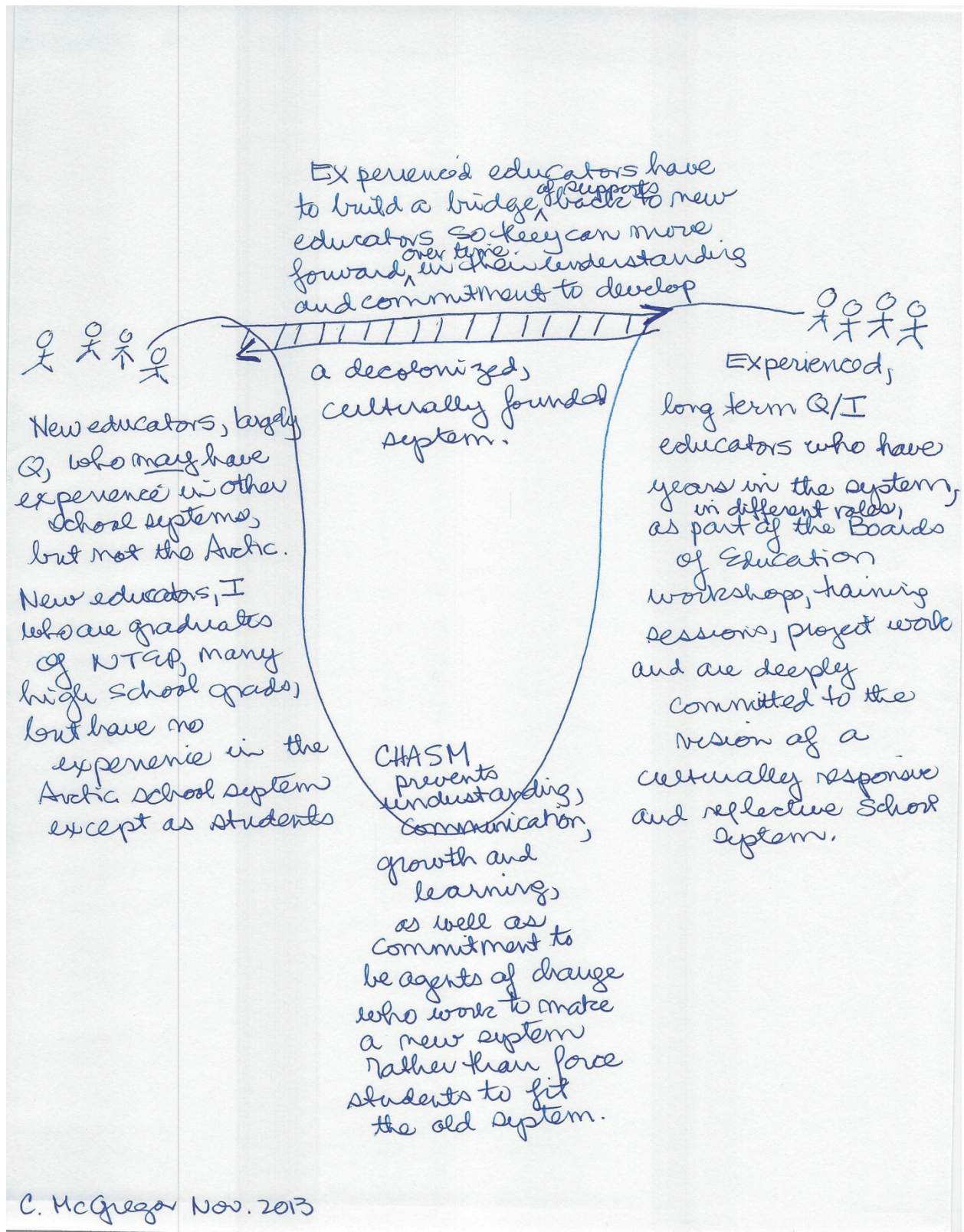
In our interviews Cathy frequently referred to a metaphor that helps represent what she sees as a central challenge in Nunavut schools—or a challenge that encompasses and stands in for many other issues—as well as what needs to be done to address that challenge. Her drawing of the metaphor can be found in Figure 18. The metaphor consists of a large gap or chasm in the ground, which constitutes the “problem,” with people standing on each side facing the problem of connecting themselves across the chasm. A bridge, which constitutes the “solution,” is in

construction between them.⁷⁷ In order to place emphasis on the action that can address the problem, we agreed to refer to her image as The Bridge Metaphor. The first time Cathy noted it, even though I have heard her use it many times, I asked her to slow down and explain what she meant by the metaphor. After that it would often arise—mentioned briefly—in the flow of describing a variety of events or experiences. Cathy referred to the metaphor in six interviews, and multiple times within some of them. When mentioning it, she would usually quickly draw a little picture of a chasm with a bridge over it on her ever-present note pad, in a casual way—not necessarily for my benefit but rather as a kind of habit or cue to herself. Close to the end of our interviews I asked Cathy to draw the metaphor more intentionally with detail so that I could record it.

⁷⁷ I was interested to note that Archibald (2008) uses the same phrase, “bridging a chasm” (p. 165). I point this out not to suggest that Cathy got this phrase from Archibald (as she was using it long before the publication of *Indigenous Storywork*), but that Cathy’s understanding of the needs of educators in cross-cultural contexts, and the way she expresses it is informed by long and deep exposure to common discourse in Indigenous education through her own professional reading and development.

Figure 18 Cathy's Bridge Metaphor Drawing

Cathy McGregor, November, 2013.



On the left side of the gap are people who are new to working in Nunavut schools. They are generally Qallunaat who may have experience from other school systems. They are also Inuit teachers who are graduates of the Nunavut Teacher Education Program and have attended Nunavut schools as students, but are mostly new as school staff. The chasm, according to Cathy, “prevents understanding, communication, growth and learning, as well as commitment to be agents of change who work to make a new system rather than force students to fit the old system.” In other words, new teachers may fall into the chasm if they do not receive supports.

On the right hand side of the gap are people Cathy labels experienced, long-term Qallunaat or Inuit educators. Not all long-term educators necessarily get to the right hand side. The ones Cathy refers to worked in Nunavut schools for years in different roles, participated in workshops, training sessions, project work, or even worked under the boards of education, and are, “deeply committed to the vision of a culturally responsive and reflective school system.” In another conversation she described the right-hand side commitments as “creating a system that is different, that meets the needs of Nunavummiut, that integrates culture and language, and involves Inuit in decisions of what that looks like.” Across the gap is a bridge with arrows going in both directions, and Cathy labels this as, “Experienced educators have to build a bridge of supports back to new educators so they can move forward over time in their understanding and commitment to develop a decolonized, culturally founded system.” Or, evidently, so those on the left side do not fall into the chasm.

Cathy explained that problems can arise when long-term Nunavut staff try to advance unique aspects of the Nunavut vision or philosophy of education without bringing the new staff along with them. Even if high quality products such as teaching and learning materials are developed to be responsive to Nunavut students, they will not be used successfully if new teachers are not educated as to how and why to use them. In some cases long-term staff have not pursued opportunities to connect with new staff, have not been given the chance to do this through enough ongoing institutionally-supported activities, or are just plain tired of doing so (O'Donoghue et al., 2005, p. 11). Cathy says that taking the approach of, “Well we know what’s good and we’re going to go ahead and do it, and if you don’t understand then that’s your problem” does nothing to build the bridge across the chasm. According to Cathy, the people on the right hand side of the bridge have to “open up that philosophy, that belief system, that worldview, that perspective that’s different” to the people on the left side, and “then you have to open up the pedagogical implications that are different.” Neglecting new education staff results in them going ahead and working on things in their own way, without benefit of knowing what

has worked or not worked already—in other words, reinventing the wheel and potentially reinscribing previous harms.

There is a strong emphasis here on staff members drawing on knowledge from and about the past. Cathy mentioned that even educators who are relatively new to the North—perhaps with only a few years experience—need to help others who are new. Not all new educators are equally open to learning, and some need different types of assistance in order to become open to what long-term Qallunaat or Inuit educators have to share. Cathy admits some never become open to such learning. But continuing to try to provide orientation, ongoing coaching, mentoring and support is an important system-wide responsibility, more so than in most other systems in Canada.

Cathy's view is consistent with a great deal of the research outlined above. For example, the experience of a chasm and rationale for a bridge described by Cathy is further reinforced by Aylward's (2012) discourse analysis on teacher perspectives (with five Inuit and five non-Inuit). In her findings the chasm emerges particularly between Inuit and non-Inuit, rather than only according to degree of experience in Nunavut: "Teachers spoke of 'disconnections,' 'gaps,' 'divides,' and 'deep rivers' in terms of intercultural relationships and levels of understanding among and between some Inuit and non-Inuit teachers. They viewed working across difference as 'uncomfortable,' 'intimidating,' and 'threatening'" (Aylward, 2012, p. 221).

This begins to show the objectives Cathy brings to ELP, as well as the other venues in which she has led professional development. This chapter is focused on featuring some of the ways Cathy has worked towards building the bridge, and asking other leaders to participate in supporting sustainability and responsiveness in the Nunavut school system.

6.3 Inuit Leadership Retreat

The outcomes of a professional retreat on Inuit leadership in 1999 are described by Cathy as an important turning point in her understanding of cross-cultural education, and we discussed it specifically at her request.

Cathy explained that around 1996, a committee of Inuit educators was created to strategize approaches to nurturing Inuit leadership, recognizing how few had taken up such roles by that point. The committee called this project Tuqqatarviunirmut Katimajit [that through

which things pass].⁷⁸ It included representatives from across the regions of the NWT that would later become Nunavut, and was facilitated by long-term educational leader Joanne Tompkins who refers to the project throughout her dissertation (2006). Among the objectives of the committee were to define what successful leadership in an *Inuuqatigiit* school ought to look like, borrowing the name of the new Inuit curriculum, and referencing it as a goal. Inuit educators identified relationship building and nurturing shared leadership as the key responsibility of school leaders, referring to relationships amongst teachers, between teachers and parents, teachers and the district education authority, school staff and students, or amongst students (Nunavut Education Councils, 2000; see also: Lee, 1996). The committee was tasked with identifying from an Inuit perspective how a leader might support relationship building, and how to incorporate such notions into professional development opportunities.⁷⁹ Cathy initiated the project and supported it by collaborating with Tompkins in planning, debriefing and reporting on the meetings. She usually was not personally in attendance at the meetings, except during the retreat outlined below. It was thought that few Qallunaat should be involved, to give more space for Inuit educators to speak candidly (Tompkins, 2006, p. 160).

The committee held a small professional retreat on the topic of relationship building, and Cathy says: “We must have started with some activity like: ‘Lets talk about some of the challenges that you’ve encountered’. We asked the Inuit to talk first. We just got a flood. And the depth of their emotions... I can’t even... I don’t have words to describe what came out of people.” The comments were recorded on chart paper and later typed up with permission from participants, several of which appear in a paper by Cathy (C. McGregor, April 2001, p. 39-40). These were quotes by Inuit participants in the retreat regarding the challenges they had encountered as educators and leaders:

‘I hate that Qallunaaq!... I’m so tired of working with Qallunaat!’

‘They always tell me ‘you have to do this’, they don’t listen to me.’

‘They ask me: why is Inuktitut important? And when they do that they are questioning who I am because Inuktitut is who I am!’

⁷⁸ Cathy offered the translation of this term as “that through which things pass” whereas Joanne Tompkins described it as “a ‘conduit’ facilitating change and growth.” While the difference is slight and neither of them are Inuktitut speakers so both could be partially correct (or incorrect), it illustrates the challenge of providing and passing on accurate Inuktitut translations, as highlighted so strongly by McGrath (2011).

⁷⁹ In a paper Cathy wrote for the American Education Research Association (AERA) on the same topic (C. McGregor, April 2001), she recalls that the committee intentionally did not use southern models, or theories of educational leadership as the basis for discussion. Rather, they chose to “start from scratch” in exploring Inuit conceptions of leadership, beginning with their own stories about becoming leaders.

‘Qallunaat are so bossy and they don’t know when to stop parenting us. They don’t know how to let go of control.’

‘They blow you up like a balloon and then they bust you with a pin prick!’

‘We see people come up and take important jobs after they come up to Nunavut after only a couple of years and they don’t understand anything. We understand everything and we can’t get those jobs.’

‘Why should I have to prove I am an Inuk?’

Cathy interpreted the expression of these feelings and interactions as follows:

I think what stunned us, as Qallunaat, and made us ashamed, was that we had no concept of the intensity of that emotion that had been bottled up in them for so long—that they’d never felt they had a way to express. The issues of Qallunaat and Inuit working together in schools... The people who were there, who were long-term Northerners, who were Qallunaat, were stunned by the vehemence of this. And we couldn’t figure out how it was that we didn’t know, having worked for together for years. It had never come out. It still stuns me, and I’m thinking how few people know that today? Because it’s all stuffed down inside.

In a later part of our interview Cathy summarized her learning from this experience:

When I heard that I thought: ‘We are not doing enough to make it clear how white people are, you know, usually unintentionally and inadvertently, walking all over Inuit day after day after day. In every way. In every context, whether it’s an office or a school or whatever. Not listening, not paying attention, not hearing, not involving in decision making, not honouring.

This singular realization has stayed with Cathy, as evidenced by her account here as well as the paper she wrote and presented about it, facilitating a deep moment of insight as an individual, Qallunaaq, colleague, supervisor and school system leader. This moment was transformative in Cathy’s own learning journey, and it is reinforced by other research demonstrating the depth of frustration on the part of Inuit educators towards power relationships with Qallunaat in Nunavut schools (O’Donoghue, 1998; Tompkins, 2006). The outcomes of the retreat led to a sense of responsibility in Cathy for addressing the ongoing hurt experienced by Inuit educators. She interpreted this as a call to take up work with new school leaders—with Qallunaat, to orient them and clarify expectations of them—and with Inuit to help support them:

We coined this term at the meeting ‘Qallunaat fatigue.’ That was a sense of: a new person arriving almost every year, and having to re-explain yourself, re-explain everything about yourself, and re-explain everything about the community and everything about the kids. And just being sick of it. Again, this sense of having to prove what it means to be Inuit. They should be the ones who have to prove who they are, because they’re coming from the outside.

What it led to eventually was a discussion about how we work together differently. How do we dance together? That was actually said... How do we dance together in a way that

works in schools, if this is the kind of underlying emotion and feelings that have been there? And people haven't been acknowledging it, recognizing it, and doing something about it. (see also Tompkins, 2006, p. 147, 166)

Cathy references the retreat frequently in establishing the rationale for, and content of, educational leadership development initiatives in Nunavut, particularly in supporting Inuit to take leadership positions while also reducing the turnover in principal positions held by Qallunaat.

6.4 Educational Leadership Program as Principal Certification

Before Nunavut was created, principal certification was required of NWT principals by the *Education Act* (GNWT, 1995) and *Principal Certification Regulations* (GNWT, 1996). The regulations stipulate that the deputy minister must establish a principal certification program for the territory with 240 hours of instruction and two practicum projects (section 3(2)). In practice this requires attendance at the program over two summers or “phases.” The NWT regulations were carried over to Nunavut and have yet to be amended or repealed, except that Nunavut requires vice-principal candidates also be certified (GN, 2008, section 112(1)). Therefore, individuals applying for leadership jobs in Nunavut up to 2014 could not use prior credit, experience, other academic accomplishments, or anything else as substitutes for completing ELP certification. Section 112(3) of the *Nunavut Education Act* states that those who do not have a certificate of eligibility as a principal may hold a position for up to three years, as long as steps towards certification have been taken. Without those steps (i.e. partial completion that may allow for an extension), an individual may be dismissed. As ELP takes at least two years to complete, there is a fairly limited window in which each new principal must attend, evidently by design. The program is free to candidates and travel expenses are fully covered by the NDE with some contributions from the Nunavut Teachers' Association professional development fund. This is substantially different from other jurisdictions in which candidates for leadership positions must assume all costs associated with completing certification requirements. This may sound attractive, but in practice there is no underestimating the challenges for program instructors in managing many different dispositions towards mandatory attendance—especially in July!

Phase 1 candidates may be transitioning into the vice-principal or principal role, from the position of: an experienced principal from elsewhere in Canada, new to working in Nunavut; teachers experienced in Nunavut but new to, or interested in, the vice-principal or principal role; or, principals who have been working in Nunavut but had not yet completed their certification. Individuals taking up senior management roles such as superintendents or executive directors

were also encouraged, and later expected, to attend ELP. RSO staff such as program consultants were encouraged to attend. Between the year 2000 and 2009, 114 educators attended ELP, 46 educators fully completed the program, and of those 46 educators, 28.2% or 13 educators were Inuit (H. E. McGregor, 2011).

In June 2010, ELP was accredited at the 500-level for five courses from the University of Prince Edward Island. The instructional team, however, was always drawn from within the NDE—curriculum division staff, experienced school principals, or RSO staff.⁸⁰ All team members had to have completed ELP themselves. As director of ELP, working closely with a full-time coordinator for Nunavut school leadership development, Cathy worked towards including a breadth of expertise on the instructional team. This meant looking for Inuit instructors, male instructors, non-teaching staff instructors, instructors drawn from across the geographic reach of the territory, and in some cases special guests from outside Nunavut (but with experience working in the territory). According to Cathy, each year the entire team played a significant role in reviewing and revising the program based on participant evaluations, and new developments in the school system—partly designed to keep the program up to date, and also to model the type of team work and improvement processes expected of leaders. While this chapter features Cathy’s instructional role primarily because I focus exclusively on Roots Day, she expressed emphatically how important the entire team was to making ELP run effectively each year.

ELP centres a different theme each day over 10 days. This includes prominent placement of IQ in the program, and a day and a half of camping time on the land with Elders.⁸¹ The program is largely focused on supporting principals to oversee the reconceptualization of schooling and the system-wide reforms underway.⁸² The breadth of topics they take up links with a broad view of what it means to decolonize, much as Aylward articulates it: “to question all of the present familiar schooling structures and open everything up for negotiation, including the common understandings of cultural relevance” (Aylward, 2007, p. 6). ELP is intended to nurture

⁸⁰ O’Donoghue’s dissertation, based on a 1994 professional learning needs assessment across Nunavut, showed that educators prefer learning with and from their colleagues over other forms and sources of training/support (1998, p. 62).

⁸¹ Both phases 1 and 2 study the following themes: IQ—culturally reflective and responsive schools (Roots Day and camping constitute this topic); b) Images of Leadership in Nunavut education; and, c) Building a foundation of healthy relationships.

⁸² Other topics include: leadership of positive school environments; bilingual education; inclusive education; instruction; student assessment; community partnerships; accountability; staff supervision; and, school improvement.

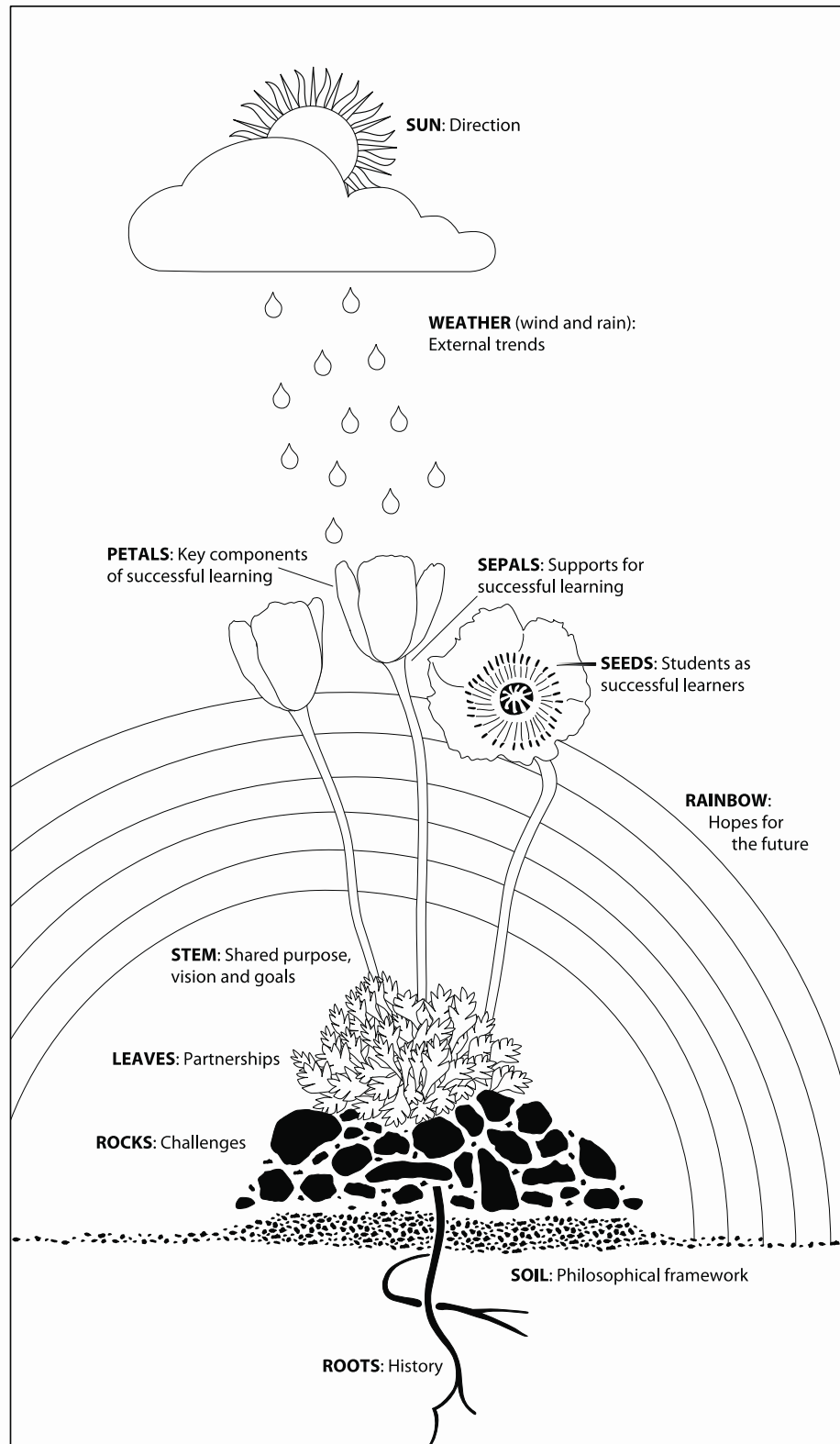
the growth of educational leaders from within Nunavut communities, especially Inuit, to orient new leaders to the ways of working in Nunavut schools that are unique to the region and system, and to offer individuals what Cathy calls a “transformative experience” in their understanding of themselves as a leader.

6.5 Poppy Metaphor and the Origin of Roots

The poppy metaphor for schooling, which is where the term Roots Day originates, has been used as an organizing metaphor in ELP. The idea for it dates back to when the BDBE administered schools. The board staff began using the poppy with stakeholders, to help them understand all the interrelated parts of a school to take into consideration in school improvement activities. Yellow poppies grow in every community of the Baffin (Qikiqtani) region, so it seemed an appropriate choice. Here I will focus on the roots and soil parts of the metaphor, which can be seen in Figure 19.

Figure 19 Poppy Metaphor for Schooling

Reprinted with permission (NDE, 2005, p. 17).



Cathy always begins describing the poppy metaphor at the bottom—the “roots.” She explains: “The roots of the poppy are the history of the school in that community, and where that school has come from, and why people have the view of school that they do in that community based on that history.” The soil that the roots grow in is said to represent the “philosophical framework” or beliefs about learning and the values held by educators, parents and community members. Learning about local beliefs or philosophies of education is particularly important in Nunavut, where the history of schooling is short, schooling was imposed on families by the Canadian state, and traditional Inuit childrearing practices have not necessarily been present in the school system. According to Cathy:

Up until recently, we didn’t really know what beliefs about learning were from an Inuit perspective. I mean [Inuit educators] might have known it sort of by osmosis because people experienced it to some extent as they were raised. But because of the break in parenting experienced by people who went to residential school, some of the child rearing that might have normally taken place hasn’t taken place. There’s been a bit of a disconnect there. Without having worked with the Elders to identify how children were reared traditionally, a lot of that stuff was lost in the soil and had never been articulated. (see also: Arnaquq, 2008; Aylward, 2009b)

Understanding experiences with schooling in the past (roots) is thought to help account for the interpretations or meanings crystalized in people’s ways of engaging with schooling in the present (soil). The assumption is built into this model that each poppy is different, just as each school in each community is different. The conception of leadership described by Cathy and connected to the metaphor of an indigenous Arctic wildflower reverberates with Marker’s (in press) analysis of Indigenous leadership in the Coast Salish context when he says:

The concepts of Indigenous leadership are drawn from understandings of how the people have lived in relationship to the natural world as well as the narratives of colonization’s devastation of that world. This understanding of place and relationship propels an approach to leadership that is focused on local knowledge and prioritizes a sense of collective, rather than individual, identity. This *leading from the land*, so to speak, is in contradistinction to modernist ideas of progress enacted by universal and transportable forms of knowledge that have evolved to scaffold the goals of western educational institutions. (p. 3, emphasis in original)

These ideas will be further explored as I outline the Roots Day facilitation.

6.5.1 Roots and History vs. the Past

Cathy views relevant histories in this context as the local community history, the history of education, and Nunavut histories more broadly. For me, this raised many questions: Did the facilitators working with the concept of “roots” have in mind a particular version of what should be known about the past? Or, was it acknowledged that anything from the past could be relevant?

Is there a great deal we have not yet uncovered, and perhaps never can uncover, about the past? How can those undocumented aspects of the past be taken into account in understanding how schools operate today? I was trying to determine whether Cathy and her staff assume that we can really know the history of education, and that we can reach a place of knowing the right history, and knowing enough of the history. I broached this with Cathy by introducing the idea that there may be a difference between “the past” and “history,” or our accounts of the past: which of these is represented by the concept ‘roots’? Our conversation follows:

Heather: Are the roots everything that actually happened in the past, or are the roots what people say and know about what happened?

Cathy: Well I think they’re both because many people can’t separate—I don’t know if you can separate what people say happened from what *actually* happened because that is their perception of what happened. So they may only know what their perception is. But, our job is to try to make that understanding as accurate as possible. An incoming southern educator’s view of those roots is probably very ignorant. It doesn’t represent the full picture of what actually happened. But it’s also possible that people in the community have only a limited view from their experience of what the history is. The roots should be telling and educating people as much as we can about what happened. What actually happened.

Heather: So there could be roots there that people can’t see. You have to uncover them to make them visible?

Cathy: As best we can. Because when there is no written history of what actually happened at the residential schools, all you have are the memories of people who went there. And you have maybe some written records from the federal government that are from a white perspective and an administrative perspective, but they don’t necessarily represent the experience that Inuit children had there. So how do we actually uncover the truth? I think it’s difficult to uncover the truth. The real truth—because the real truth is many different components. But I think it is our job to try to do that as much as we can. Of course most of the history record does not represent what Inuit experienced. It represents what was written down—southern history. It is a challenge, I think, to find—‘What is the history?’ But as much as we can we need to do that, because right now it’s probably very one-sided. It doesn’t tell the story from the Inuit perspective.

In Cathy’s description I hear a distinct tension between exposing learners to an accurate and complete history that reflects a multiplicity of perspectives, and the practical reality that school histories in the North are largely generated by the memories of individuals. Those individuals generally offer views that are limited to their own experience. It is important to note that my question was not intended to distinguish between the accuracy of individual memories and what “actually” happened; I did not mean to suggest to Cathy that individuals’ perceptions were inherently less credible or valuable. Rather, I was trying to identify some examples of what stories count in achieving the learning intended for activities associated with “roots.”

Cathy suggests that most people begin understanding the past from their own stories. She asserts that most people cannot separate what is said about the past from what actually happened (in other words they see stories as facsimiles of the past rather than interpretations). In her view, many of these stories are not varied enough, and the role of a facilitator is to expose individuals to more stories that may help expand their understanding. She acknowledges that there is no comprehensive written history “out there” on which to draw, because the historical work has not been done yet and more work to that effect is needed. Cathy acknowledges that from her perspective memories held by individuals have an inherent finitude. Nevertheless, it is worth educating people involved in schools using more stories, particularly Inuit stories, because of their inherent value and because they have previously gone undocumented and unheard.

Later I returned to the connection between the “roots” and the “soil.” I asked Cathy how she thought people made meaning from learning about histories of education, connecting those histories to the beliefs about schooling that circulate in the community, and establishing the relevance of that to contemporary school relationships and programs. Cathy answered my question by explaining the steps she has taken in school visioning activities, what she calls “the timeline activity” to help participants see connections between understanding the past and contemporary school goal setting. I have excerpted several quotes from the long conversation this question produced:

When we started doing that work in every Baffin community, we started with a timeline of education in the community, which went back as far as people wanted to go back. And generally we would start with ‘How did you educate children before there were schools of any kind?’ And we would invite community members into that discussion. And they would tell stories.

We would get out the actual learning materials that were used from the federal school days, to the early territorial days, to the Board days, and show the difference. It was mostly English from the South, then trying to start adapting to the North under the territorial schools with a little more Inuktitut, and then lots more Inuktitut under the Board. We would show that development—how the schools slowly began to better reflect the people from the community, in that community.

So people were making the connection between the history where [culturally responsive education] didn’t happen, because they could see the resources where there was no Inuktitut or there was no cultural experience, whereas the new curriculum showed that, and had a belief that that was important. That connected with the activity where we would say: ‘Ok so what are the goals that you have for your child?’ And no matter whether it was teachers, or Elders, or community people, there seemed to be a very strong consensus that people needed a bit of both worlds. So I think people were making those connections.

These are strategies Cathy uses to connect the past with the present, and to involve community in school goal setting. With that information, more relevant goals for schooling can be identified, implemented, and should improve community (including student) participation in the school.

According to Cathy the purpose of studying the roots of the poppy—the histories of schooling in Nunavut communities—is to develop insight into the local manifestations of relationships in schools, between schools and community members, and the antecedents from the past that have shaped relationships thus. Beyond listening to Inuit stories from the past from which all participants—especially Qallunaat educators—can learn, the intended historical study may change according to the content shared by participants in the activities. If there is a particular version of the past desired from such activities, it is that relationships were characterized by an imbalance of power between Inuit and Qallunaat in the past (i.e. in designing and running schools), and that present action should work to address that imbalance. For example, in another conversation about the timeline activity mentioned above, Cathy tied the purpose of it to supporting new teachers:

What we wanted was for people from the community to tell their stories so that teachers from the south, and younger Inuit teachers who might not have heard about those stories, could hear what happened, what their experience was like, what kind of materials they used, the repudiation of language and culture, and why it was so important for us to try to work towards regaining those, and building a school system that supported Inuit language and culture.

6.6 Facilitation of Roots Day, 2013

Cathy has participated in facilitating Roots Day every year since 2004, and each time it is designed and taught slightly differently.⁸³ Roots Day typically falls as the first day of instruction in ELP, either right before or after the camping trip. What follows is a summary of the Roots Day activities Cathy facilitated in July 2013—her last year instructing in the program, and events that occurred only shortly before our interviews for this research took place. It provides an example of how Cathy approaches instruction, as well as her reflections on the purposes and outcomes. This not only illustrates in specific terms what participants do to learn about histories

⁸³ Other activities that have been the focus of ELP Roots Day in past years include: using the documentary films *Kikkik* (Kreelak, 2001, see also: Laugrand, Oosten, & Serkoak, 2010); *Between Two Worlds* (Greenwald, 1990); reading and re-enacting the Australian children's book about colonization entitled *The Rabbits* (Marsden, (1998/2008)); a presentation by Madeleine Redfern about the process and outcomes of the Qikiqtani Truth Commission (2010, 2013); learning about residential schools when the federal apology was made, and again on another year when the new residential school history curriculum was implemented (NDE & NWTDE, 2013).

of education, but also the content of some of the overarching narratives of Nunavut history—both the “what” and “how” of using knowledge about the past to facilitate educational leadership development. In addition to Cathy’s explanation of how she designed the day, four central components to the facilitation are outlined: 1) Learning about contact histories between Inuit and outsiders; 2) Watching a video of an Inuit political leader narrating a history of relations between Inuit and Qallunaat, reaching from oral histories into the present moment; 3) Individual reflections by participants on their own cross-cultural experiences; and 4) Group discussions concerning how to apply this learning to school leadership responsibilities.

Within Roots Day, candidates in Phase 1 and Phase 2 are assigned some shared learning outcomes as well as some different goals (ELP, 2013a; 2013b). Phase 1 and 2 are both asked to reflect on their individual background, to understand that how they perceive the world is conditioned by their identity, experience and differing or fluctuating access to what Cathy calls “power and privilege.” Both groups are asked to reflect on the historical, cultural and social environment of Nunavut, and the implications of that environment for education and the role of schools today. Phase 1 does so by considering the characteristics of a contemporary school that reflects IQ and meets the needs of Nunavummiut. Phase 2 considers how decision-making in the school can involve students, staff, parents and more stakeholders to achieve a shared vision about how schools should operate in the community. In addition to these four goals, Cathy explained that all ELP instructors are expected to be “transparent about the facilitation strategies we use,” modeling practical or concrete strategies for advancing the goals identified during the day. Candidates have advance readings, mostly by Inuit authors, and engage in pre- and post-plenary “home group” discussions.⁸⁴ I asked about the challenge of balancing so many purposes and activities for a one-day workshop, and Cathy says, smiling: “It’s a lot.”

Cathy used her Inuit Leadership Retreat experience, described above, as a catalyst for instructional design. Referencing the goal of building positive relationships in schools, she told me:

I wanted to represent this view that the Inuit leaders had shared. And look at: What were the origins of relationships between Inuit and Qallunaat? How have those relationships developed over time, what are they like in schools now? What are people doing today to try to build more positive relationships? But in order to understand how to do that today they had to understand where relationships have come from, what those were like, and

⁸⁴ In 2013 these readings were as follows. Phase 1: (Nunavut Education Councils, 2000, p. 12-19; Nungak, 2005a, 2005b). Phase 2: (Angus & Hanson, 2011; Ipellie, 1992; Nungak, 1999).

how that still colours—in many cases—relationships today. Especially how many parents and grandparents viewed the school, which is very hard for Qallunaat to understand.

Cathy also explained that she and the ELP instruction team have explicitly discussed the importance of trying to begin the program generally, and specifically the Roots Day activities, with the voices of Inuit. This is to demonstrate that Qallunaat staff need to be ready to listen to Inuit, and their voices should be predominant in this context.⁸⁵ It is not for the purpose of silencing Qallunaat, but rather modeling a practice of listening first, and acknowledging that Inuit have a great deal of first hand experience on which to draw in running effective schools.

Cathy began the workshop by asking ELP participants to individually reflect on their own understanding of relationships between Inuit and non-Inuit, and share in small groups. She asked them: What kind of relationships between Inuit and non-Inuit were illustrated in your own education – textbooks, activities or experiences? Then: What significance did these relationships between peoples have for you? And: Did myths, stereotypes, ignorance or distance define the relationships? Most Qallunaat reported not encountering Inuit at all in their schooling. For them, relationships between Inuit and non-Inuit had not been “a factor,” let alone significant, until they came to Nunavut. Conversely, Inuit participants explained that from their first encounters with school they were facing Qallunaat, and expectations that they learn about and emulate Qallunaat. Cathy remembers:

One person said that the question made her feel very emotional because it was a very difficult experience, because it was basically a Qallunaat world [in school]. And the other Inuit in the group were all nodding. What they were illustrating is that the relationship was very difficult for them and the content was difficult for them because they only learned non-Inuit content. One of the other participants said it wasn't until she was in grade 9 when they had an Elder come in to teach them cultural material that she felt she was learning anything that was relevant to herself. That's pretty stunning.

Following this activity Cathy asked participants to form different groups and read excerpts from a magazine article entitled “Meetings Strange and Dangerous” (Hopper, 2013) about accounts of contact between Inuit and early explorers to the Arctic. The excerpts emphasize the fear and ignorance that often characterized these encounters. Cathy asked participants to discuss the following questions: Whose perspectives are shared in the story? What was the nature of the relationships between Inuit and Qallunaat in the story? What words

⁸⁵ This practice is also recommended by Wihak (2005) with regard to Nunavut-based management training in other areas of the GN: “an oral curriculum for Nunavut could be developed by inviting respected Elders, senior Inuit public servants, and Inuit business people to participate in the program as co-instructors or guest speakers” (p. 338), thereby increasing the “cultural reciprocity” of the program.

described the relationships? How did you feel reading the story? The purpose of this discussion, according to Cathy, was to identify “assumptions that they made based on their own culture.” “So they were all operating from their own cultural assumptions, very clearly, in these stories. Which I really wanted people to get. That’s often what happens when you encounter someone you don’t know.” Cathy asked participants to consider whether, looking to more recent times, this kind of cross-cultural misunderstanding based on differing assumptions and projections still happens in schools.

During the conversation about cultural assumptions, Cathy and the participants discussed an Inuktitut term that is frequently used in describing relationships between Inuit and Qallunaat in the early contact and colonization periods. *Ilira* describes the feeling frequently demonstrated by Inuit in response to the authoritarian behaviours of Qallunaat in the North (Kuptana, 1993; QTC, 2010). In Cathy’s discussion of the meaning with ELP participants it was understood in two ways. One definition is to show deference and respect towards those who have knowledge, such as Elders. Another variation on the definition is to demonstrate awe in response to power and authority, such as that which seemed to be held by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. One does not question that which is asserted by those holding power and authority. Developing an understanding for the cultural roots of this term and the behaviours it shaped on the part of Inuit in response to Qallunaat helps to explain the common perception that Inuit were cooperative or passive with outsiders, sometimes to the extreme. Such responses cannot be taken to mean that Inuit actually were in agreement with what Qallunaat asked of them, but rather that it was less acceptable in their social context to contradict authority.

To bring a contemporary Inuit political voice into the workshop Cathy showed a 20-min video recording of an address by a member of the legislative assembly and long-time Inuit leader Tagak Curley. Curley begins by talking about early contact histories between Inuit in the Kivalliq region, discussing how Inuit often ensured the survival of early European visitors. Cathy says: “...mainly at the beginning he was talking about what a proud people [Inuit] were; they had confidence.” He goes on to narrate the depth of social change that accompanied increasing contact with federal representatives in the mid-20th century during the settlement of communities. Cathy paraphrases Curley’s words:

The outsiders started coming in more and [Inuit] started suffering social issues like alcohol. Some started feeling victimized, their pride declined, and their language wasn’t recognized by the early government schools. They had ‘a feeling that their culture was not good enough in Canada.’ That was the direct quote that he said. This was from the administrators and the RCMP, who ignored the wisdom of the community and said, ‘Well that’s not the way we do things.’

One of Curley's first jobs was with the federal government on a project establishing social housing across the Arctic, and his role was to instruct Inuit (in Inuktitut) how to care for their new houses. This paternalistic dynamic between the government and Inuit did not seem right to him, and he soon became involved in spearheading the Inuit political movement to create the representative organization Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (the antecedent of ITK). He was then elected to the NWT legislative assembly and participated actively in Indigenous mobilization. One of Curley's most significant projects was spearheading a survey of parents and community members across the NWT on their wishes and concerns about schooling, resulting in the report *Learning, Tradition and Change* (Special Committee on Education, 1982).

Cathy describes the significance of showing the Tagak Curley video as linking the problems of relationships in early contact encounters to more recent relationships that are also "very negative and mostly one-sided." She asked participants to write down some key words and phrases they learned from Curley's description. Much of what they recorded, in Cathy's words, related to inequities associated with colonization in the Arctic:

It was things like 'Inuit were feeling second best in their own home.' 'Children need to see themselves reflected in what they learn about.' Again I don't know if I heard that exact phrase but that kind of idea. Or 'Children need to use their own language.' People said [Inuit] need to learn about their own history.

Cathy then overtly connected relationships between Inuit and Qallunaat in the past with (re)interpreting relationships in schools in the present. This is where it becomes clear that participants are being asked to learn about themselves, as well as people in the past. She asked participants to think about their own schools and the kinds of relationships they have observed within them, asking: "Whose voices are being heard in schools, in staff meetings, in hallways? Do myths, stereotypes, ignorance or distance continue to be perpetuated in Nunavut, and what significance do the relationships have in the work of a school leader?"

The closing activity of ELP Roots Day 2013 asked participants to identify things that are going well in their schools, particularly to build positive relationships amongst groups in the school as implored by the Inuit Leadership Retreat report. Cathy asked the ELP candidates to form small groups and use the IQ principles as an organizing framework for discussing promising practices and successes they have seen in terms of accounting for cultural difference. Cathy wrapped up her instruction by referring to an image that is increasingly being used to represent and summarize Nunavut's history, sometimes referred to as the "devolution timeline," the "arc of decision-making," or "power curve." A version of it has also been used in social studies learning materials for Nunavut schools (NDE, 2009) as well as printed in a brochure by

the Nunavut Department of Executive & Intergovernmental Affairs Devolution Division, which is the version that appears in Figure 20. The purpose of this interpretation of Inuit history is to demonstrate how self-determination and decision-making was interrupted during the time of intense colonization, and how steps have been taken since then to devolve power to Inuit.

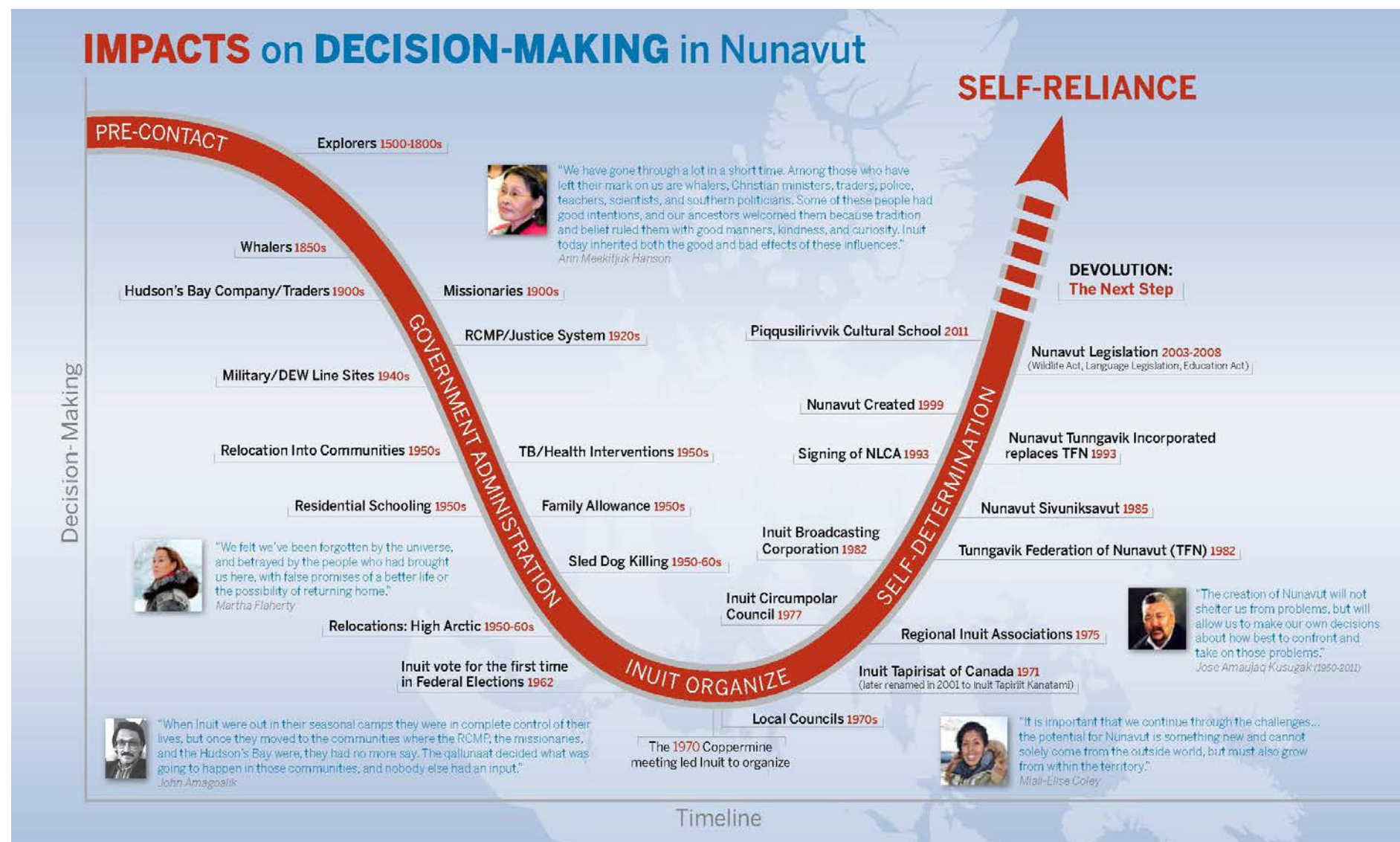
Cathy explained to me that she summarized the relationship between the arc of decision-making and educational leadership for ELP participants as follows:

...this is why we're making all these changes [to educational policy and practices]—because we still have aspects of this history that are alive today. We're trying to change schools so that we can improve in terms of relationships, in terms of decision-making, in terms of involvement, in terms of voices, in terms of perspectives being heard. To build a positive future so that we can diminish the social issues and the challenges.

Using the devolution timeline is perhaps the most active way in which Cathy forms an overarching historical narrative through the Roots Day facilitation, melding individual voices/evidence into a version of events—one that highlights processes of decolonizing.

Figure 20 The Impacts on Decision-Making in Nunavut Timeline or “Power Curve”

Reprinted with permission from Devolution Division, Government of Nunavut based on a concept originating from Nunavut Sivuniksavut.



6.7 Challenges of Roots Day

I asked Cathy about her views on the outcomes of Roots Day. What tends to be the most challenging aspect of it for ELP candidates, what does she expect will happen during instruction, and what responses are produced from participants? Roots Day, Cathy told me the day does not always go as planned; people often react negatively. There is an inherent unpredictability about reflecting on the past. Even more so when learning about difficult histories in contexts of colonization/decolonization, and finding oneself connected to and implicated in such relationships. Addressing relationships in schools in the present or past does not necessarily follow a smooth, straight line of learning taking individuals from “ignorant” to “enlightened.”⁸⁶ There can be many emotions, disagreements, and misunderstandings elicited in the work of talking about emotions, disagreements and misunderstandings experienced in the past. Noting the tension or clash that can occur in the work of illuminating issues of social justice and colonization, Cathy answered:

I don't really mind if people get brought up short, get caused cognitive dissonance, because that's really part of what needs to happen in order for them to see things differently. To not be so monochromatic in their perspective. But it's important to process that so that they understand it.⁸⁷

Cathy refers to the importance of “processing it” because she has had difficulties when individuals do not speak up during instructional time about their reactions to the facilitation, rather voicing their frustrations with colleagues after hours who are less prepared or able to respond.

In terms of what is most challenging about the day for participants, she said it is usually facing the work of actually changing things in schools now. People may show a commitment to change without the “know how” to facilitate change: securing the support, time, and tools to address these issues with staff on an ongoing basis. An example of what Cathy hopes might change in the practice of running schools as a result of Roots Day is staff meetings. According to Cathy, relationships come into stark relief in staff meetings. They are usually held in English, with no accommodation for Inuktitut speakers. Or, meetings are not chaired in a way that allows Inuit to get a word in edgewise because it is: “snap, snap, snap, snap, there's no silences

⁸⁶ I have written elsewhere about the unpredictability of pedagogies for decolonizing, particularly the fallacy and constrictions imposed by anticipating consistency from a pedagogical formula (Madden & McGregor, 2013).

⁸⁷ For more on working productively with resistance in Indigenous-non-Indigenous pedagogical encounters see (Kerr, 2014).

allowed.” Without facilitation approaches such as group work where, “Inuit can go off and collectively come up with views to share without having to own it individually,” communication will continue to be strained. In another example Cathy talked about the inaccurate and damaging perceptions that can be sustained by educators about Inuit parents if they do not learn about the history of education in Nunavut communities (see also: P. Berger, 2009a):

A common comment from southern teachers is: ‘Parents are not engaged in their children’s education either in the school or outside the school.’ And if you don’t know the history of education you may not understand why they *appear* not to be engaged in southern terms. Because there’s a whole set of assumptions about what that engagement should look like from a southern perspective. You know: ‘They would do literacy with their kids at home, they would come in and observe in the child’s classroom, they would volunteer, they would come to all the assemblies, they would come to all the school celebrations, and they would come to parent teacher night.’ And if they don’t do some of those things: ‘Why don’t they? That means they don’t care.’ That’s not a fair representation of what the reality is, but that’s how some southerners see it. If you don’t understand the history you don’t understand why those manifestations that you think you should see, don’t actually happen.

We went on to talk about how Inuit might experience Roots Day differently from Qallunaat, and how the learning outcomes might be distinct depending on the position from which a participant approaches the history. Cathy outlined that, in her view, Inuit may have experienced the history she is interested in drawing attention to, but that opening a space to talk about it is intended to be helpful for them in different ways:

I think it’s really important for them to get that historical context to understand that [the difficult legacies of colonization] isn’t anything about them personally. But they don’t need to be shaken up about their kinds of relationships, I don’t think, as much as Qallunaat do.

Tompkins (2006) and O’Donoghue (1998) also assert that learning journeys for Inuit and Qallunaat are necessarily different and may even need to occur separately. In explaining how she knows that Qallunaat need to be “shaken up,” Cathy returns to what she learned from her Inuit colleagues in the Inuit Leadership Retreat, and also what she has observed herself in schools, offices and communities over her many years working and living in the North. This is reinforced through O’Donoghue et. al.’s (2005) research with Inuit educators in which Qallunaat were said to have sometimes promoted Inuit leadership development, but on the other hand:

...participants also mentioned that Qallunaat have acted, and continue to act, in invasive, colonizing ways by transporting their ideas from the South and consciously or unconsciously imposing ‘better’ ways and ‘superior’ knowledge on students, parents, and Inuit educators. After many years of encounters with these ways of behaving, a participant expressed a loss of faith in working with Qallunaat. (p. 10)

When participants face how they are implicated in transformation, different responses can arise, including resistance. I asked Cathy whether teaching about the past can fail to produce change in the present, and she told me about a comment made by a participant on a feedback form from Roots Day 2013:

One of the comments was: ‘I think that speaker doesn’t like white people.’ So I would say that the speaker, who was me, failed to make the point to that person that what I was talking about is not that I don’t like white people, but that white people have more power and privilege and exercise it on a daily basis. To the point where Inuit are disenfranchised in terms of decision-making about their own lives. And that person didn’t get it at all. They didn’t get Tagak Curley talking about why the land claim was important, because he made all those points in the video that we showed of him. They didn’t get it from the readings. They just didn’t get it. So yes, I think it can fail.

This possibility of just “not getting it” raises the question of what variables contribute to whether or not ELP candidates begin journeys of transformation, and can act as agents of transformation. Cathy identified several things: previous cross-cultural experience in life as well as working in schools, years of experience working with various concepts in schools, as well as individual education philosophies. This has an impact beyond Roots Day, and throughout ELP; some participants arrive at ELP not wanting to be there, but leave feeling positive about it and able to identify the benefits they received from participation. On the other hand, “There are some people who go there and dislike it from the beginning to the end, and afterwards, and do not see the value of it at all. And that has to be something about them and their attitudes; their unwillingness to be a lifelong learner.”

Part of the problem I see in the scenario described by Cathy is the difference between attributing problems to individuals and to the structural, systemic, or societal level.⁸⁸ When resistance arises, when disagreements emerge, it is common for people to take the strategy of attributing difference to individuals: “that *speaker* doesn’t like white people.” Cathy recognizes this and says she should have made the structural dynamics more evident, “white people have more power and privilege and exercise it on a daily basis.” On the other hand, she expresses her disappointment with the learner who did not accept her teachings—attributing the problem to the individual (and to herself as an individual teacher who “failed”): “They just didn’t get it.” Of course, both individuals are shaped by their own perspectives, but they also participate in ways of knowing that exceed them, that shape what seems true and acceptable to them, based on

⁸⁸ I acknowledge Brooke Madden for exploring ideas about pedagogy for decolonizing with me.

relations and conditions in the past that are brought forward into present cross-cultural encounters.

I asked Cathy if there was anything she would do differently in facilitating a similar workshop again. She reflected:

I'm always somewhat challenged in deciding how much to make overt, and how much is my opinion and... am I laying too much of my opinion on them? Versus them coming up with their own opinion? I mean if anything maybe this particular day didn't cause them enough cognitive dissonance, because maybe it was too removed. [They might think:] 'Ok, historical: that was somebody else. Tagak Curley: that's somebody else.' And even thinking about their own experience with Inuit, or lack of experience with Inuit, maybe wasn't enough to really bring it home. But I think the comments by Inuit maybe were what were most helpful in them seeing that there is something that needs to change. And why it's important to change.

These challenges likely sound familiar to those who have pursued pedagogies for decolonizing or other critical goals (see for example: Haig-Brown, 2008; Iseke-Barnes, 2008; Kerr, 2014). Recognizing the fluidity of such learning may help, including that decolonizing and critical perspectives can become “regimes of truth by our slavish dedication to what we believe and hope are the ‘right’ rather than the evolving answers to our questions at various times in our lives” (O’Donoghue, 1998, p. 383). O’Donoghue (1998) suggests we could instead continuously attempt to “understand where we are consciously situating ourselves ideologically at any particular moment and examine that position with some rigor, particularly with respect to its impact on our community” (p. 384). The discomfort inherent in decolonizing work is also identified by Aylward (2009a), who describes how it implicates individuals, demands reflexivity on the part of educators, but how such a challenge might also be viewed as an opportunity:

... we must remember that Nunavut schooling is a deeply intercultural process for all. The cultural crossings are unique to each participant's perspective. Inuit and non-Inuit educators and students must stretch their approaches in ways unfamiliar to themselves, and in ways that cause great discomfort and, in some cases, tremendous stress. In order for a public school system to meet both its territorial and national learning goals, educators will need consistent and comprehensive professional support. This has implications for teacher recruiting and learning on the job, as the opportunities for unique professional and personal growth can be an attractive aspect of teaching in Nunavut. (p. 88-89)

Such discomfort also has implications for the roles of school leaders in understanding the need for, and providing, those unique opportunities and supports.

6.8 Opportunities of Roots Day

I asked Cathy to describe the type of educational leader she hoped would be nurtured as a result of participating in Roots Day and comparable professional development activities in which

educators learn about the past. I asked if there was a word or phrase she would use to describe the learning and transformation she is looking for. She told me:

Opening eyes and hearts. I know I've talked a lot about brain work but there's a lot of heart work involved in this as well. So I think getting people to stop long enough to think about the context that they're working in, and what are the causes for that context being the way it is now? And how that means that they have to act differently, because they understand something now that they didn't understand before. I mean you could say historical consciousness⁸⁹ is involved. Being, just being more aware of their surroundings and what the significance is of what they see.

I asked for more detail about what kinds of characteristics a person who is "open" would demonstrate in the school, asking her to think about people she knows who are effective educational leaders that have gone through ELP, and the learning associated with it. Cathy elaborated:

They listen more instead of talk, talk, talk, talk, and always have the answer themselves. They ask more questions of people. They include people. They work with all the staff including Inuit and non-teaching staff. They make the effort to get resources that exist, that are in Inuktitut or culturally relevant. They reach out to the community and involve the community in teaching, something like small engine repair or seal skin sewing. They involve Elders in the school. They don't just act on what *they* think, but they sort of suspend opinion and decision-making until they find out what other people think and want. They have principles that say: 'You need to be consultative, you need to find out what other people say, you need to start with the community perspective not with your outside perspective.' And it's very hard. I'm thinking of one person in particular. It's very hard to hold those principles in the actions. And to hold other people accountable when they don't.

It is clear that Cathy has developed these views of educational leaders in conversation with Inuit educators (and perhaps that what is said about Nunavut educational leaders has been influenced by Cathy), when one compares her description to one by long-term Inuk educator Lena Metuq, who has been a teacher, school principal, ELP instructor and NDE staff member:

(An educational leader for Nunavut is) a person who is willing to learn, relearn, unlearn what they have learned because it is not relevant to where they are now, be willing to relearn new things and be open to all learning. Be an instructional leader. Be able to listen. Be able to empower other people. Be able to build relationships whether they are with staff, students, parents or community members. Be open-minded. Be human. Be a role model. Have a vision and when you have a vision convey it to others so that your vision is shared by all. Not only you having a vision but your vision needs to go to everyone to be agreed upon. It's not useful to have a vision and nobody agrees with it. Know your limits and take care of yourself. (quoted in NDE, 2010c, p. 1)

⁸⁹ Cathy's references to historical consciousness will be further explored in the next chapter.

The desired qualities of educational leaders in Nunavut are also described in several other sources (Lee, 1996; NDE, 2010c; Nunavut Education Councils, 2000; O'Donoghue, 1998; Thompson, 2008; Tompkins, 1998; 2006; Walton et al., June 2010), and there is particular resonance here with Tompkins (2006) based on interviews with Inuit women educational leaders. Cathy instructed in ELP for many years with this vision in mind, also following her understanding of the responsibility and opportunity associated with teaching about the past, in order to better support appropriate and effective leadership in the present.

6.9 ELP Review Survey

What more can we find out about the experiences and outcomes of Roots Day, from existing sources? ELP is reviewed on an annual basis through a variety of processes by individuals, the instructional team, or by committees of participating candidates (intended to model evaluation processes in schools). In addition to taking these reviews into consideration during the planning process, the NDE (2010c) conducted an internal survey of past ELP participants, *The Nunavut Educational Leadership Reflective Survey Report*. The survey was conducted by a former employee of the department, and presents several significant limitations.⁹⁰ For these reasons I draw from it with caution, but see value in it as one of the only other sources of evidence with regard to Roots Day or the use of knowledge from and about the past in ELP.

The surveyor recruited participation from all individuals who had completed at least one phase of ELP since 2003 (and for whom contact information was available), receiving responses from 48 individuals. Participants were asked to reflect extensively on their experience of many components of the program, as well as their views of the available supports for developing educational leadership in Nunavut more generally. A majority of the respondents had between 5

⁹⁰ Noted in the report itself, limitations include lower than anticipated response rates and lack of participation by educators who left leadership positions or never chose to take them up (NDE, 2010c, p. 6). In my view there are other limitations: the survey was conducted by the NDE and the surveyor was a former employee, hired on a contract for this particular project. That basis of familiarity with the context and people involved may have assisted in collecting and interpreting some of the data, but little is said in the report about anonymity, confidentiality and the terms upon which participants were engaged (i.e. to what extent they may have felt pressure to participate and/or to give particular answers). The presentation and interpretation of the data is inconsistent, frequently characterized by quantitative tables that are not well described by the surveyor, and then lengthy sections of direct quotes from participants along with lengthy lists of recommendations. The researcher notes, "Great effort has been put into ensuring that all suggestions, concerns and ideas that were contributed have been included" (NDE, 2010c, p. 5) which results in a high volume of information, but with less synthesis to support the reader in making meaning from it.

and 11 (or more) years teaching in Nunavut, so the views collected correspond with a group of the most experienced educators in the territory.

The overall strengths of ELP were reported as: the opportunity to meet, learn from and create lasting connections with other Nunavut educators; a deeper understanding of IQ as it relates to educational leadership; and, a clearer understanding of the expectations from the NDE regarding the vision, goals and practices of education in Nunavut (NDE, 2010c, p. 25). The suggestions for “overall changes” to ELP are numerous and specific, so only the top four (listed in order of highest frequency) will be noted here. They are: taking more time for discussion of the nuts and bolts of being an educational leader; reconsidering the time frame of the program (many dislike attending it in the summer); reducing the amount of homework and evening obligations associated with completing the program; and, providing more information on and exposure to curriculum documents (NDE, 2010c, p. 63-65).

Survey respondents were asked to rate each theme of the ELP program on a scale from 0 “not meaningful at all” to 10 “extremely meaningful.” Regarding Roots Day, if we assume that achieving 7 out of 10 indicates a reasonable level of meaningfulness, 80% of the respondents reported feeling the theme was meaningful to them.⁹¹ This does not differ significantly, however, from the results of meaningfulness attributed to other themes. The report, serving as an overview of the entire program, offers no additional detail of the kind of meaning attributed to this theme by participants or exactly how they connect Nunavut histories with their role as an educational leader.

More useful in understanding the connection between history and present leadership concerns are some of the comments shared by respondents. I draw here from quotations in the report that address learning about histories of Nunavut or schooling. In response to the question, “In what ways has your ELP experience assisted you in your role as educational leader?” the following are quotes from individuals who likely originated from outside of Nunavut:

Number one, the history of Nunavut itself is absolutely essential to being a leader in Nunavut. Knowing and working with IQ principles is just an invaluable experience. The overall education system in Nunavut... being very aware of community connections and family situations. I think a leader must know the community he or she is working in outside of the school. (NDE, 2010c, p. 26)

⁹¹ With a total of 45 respondents: 9 respondents rated the theme a 6 or less out of 10; 14 rated it at a 7; 8 rated it at an 8; 6 rated it at a 9; and, 8 responded at a 10 out of 10. Using 7/10 as a benchmark, the lowest percentage any theme during the program received was 77%, and the highest achieved was 91%.

Another said:

The ELP experience, if started before you actually arrive in your new northern community, is a fantastic orientation for your upcoming administrative position. I started the program during the summer after I completed my first year as an administrator and I can see if I had started the summer before coming up, I would have had a better grasp of the cultural and political landscape in which I was now placed. (NDE, 2010c, p. 28)

Respondents highlight the tendency for administrators to lack knowledge of place, community, history, IQ, and cultural influences, and how all of those factors continue to shape Nunavut families both inside and outside of schools. They view ELP as primarily offering that kind of contextual orientation—tying the role of a principal with the “landscape”—beyond the admin skills of being a principal (that might be seen as replicable anywhere).

In terms of Inuit perspectives on the experience of ELP, the following two quotes relate to the importance of building an awareness of the historical, political and cultural context of Nunavut, even for those who have grown up in and identify closely with the territory. In response to the question, “In what ways did your experience of ELP change your views of what is important for being an educational leader in Nunavut?” the first respondent below references a panel discussion in which an Elder, a youth, a community member, and an Inuit educator talked about their perspectives on school leadership. The respondent points to a realization they had about history, educational change, and their own sense of themselves in the flow of time:

Remember when they did the panel discussion and the building foundations in education. Those two items made me think. There was one area where it really struck me and I had to go out and go into tears. I finally realized that the Inuit tradition and the Inuit people would play a major role in the education of the Nunavut children. It was pointing to that sort of direction and it made me stop and I had to take a breather and make tears for us. In the past I just thought that the whites were the leaders and the Inuit had to follow and when the discussion turned to the direction where the Nunavut residents should lead the road in education of the Nunavut children that really blew my mind... In the past I thought we had to follow the white world. I know living in two different worlds that the better education for Inuit children is the way that our ancestors have lived it and taught it and make a man or a woman from their point of educating their child, with values and hardship and survival skills and all that. That’s the main education in our Nunavut. Even though I have been to residential school and Western schools I still believe that Inuit children should be taught their way of life on the land. They’ll get their education to take a career that they would like to work in. That really blew my mind. (NDE, 2010c, p. 43-44)

Another respondent used her understanding of history in Nunavut schools to answer the question: “What are the specific challenges you face as an Inuit educational leader?”:

I’ll give you a history. Parents had never seen Inuit leaders before so I had to prove to our community and our Elders that I can be a leader in the school because there have never been any Inuit leaders in the school. We have proven that even ‘mere Inuit’ in the eyes of

some people, can get their Masters. There have been hurdles because you are Inuk. Even with parents, even with community members, to be the principal of a school when the last 40 or 50 years it has always been qallunat [sic] male principals. When you are a woman, Inuk leader you have to prove that you can do it. When you go over the hurdle then you are able to make change happen and you are able to let the people see that Inuit are as good as anybody else. Some hurdles have been fighting for Inuit culture and language to be at par with the other language. Even activities, even programs such as that learning is still going out on the land, learning is still learning how to hunt seals, learning how to get fish, learning how to make an igloo. Those kinds of things are as important as reading and writing English. Those are the hurdles. These kinds of things are blocks. I need the support of DEA, staff, family, RSO's, department, colleagues to be able to continue. (NDE, 2010c, p. 152)

In these quotes we see that Inuit educators involved in ELP reflect on the flow of time, consider their roles in such processes of change, and remain significantly affected by emotion in (re)telling how colonization has affected themselves, their families, their communities, and the schools in which they work. In my experience in Nunavut, there are few other venues in which this kind of expression is invited.

One of the final points made by the report, significant to my research, is the recommendation that the department develop two new face-to-face or online courses. The first would be for new teachers or educational leaders on “Inuit culture (historical and current) and language” completion of which would be a requirement of their contract (NDE, 2010c, p. 163). The second would be a required orientation course for ELP participants before attending the program, focusing on what it means to be a leader in Nunavut. These recommendations demonstrate the limitations of ELP in facilitating sustainable change across the system: it does not necessarily reach new educators or school staff unless they are already in a leadership position, and sometimes new leaders do not attend until their second or third summer in Nunavut. Lastly, ELP is hampered, like the entire Nunavut education system, by staff who are overwhelmed with their work and its challenges.

6.10 Conclusion

This chapter has centered on how the past is used during Roots Day; facilitation designed to bring new leaders into relationship with the past in order to help them shape their leadership practices in contemporary Nunavut. In addition to providing insight into the desired characteristics of a leader advanced by the NDE during the period between 2004 and 2013, implications can be seen for the learning all new educators may benefit from in meeting Nunavut expectations. As Roots Day content features strained and inequitable relationships between Inuit and non-Inuit in the past, new leaders are invited to consider whether such a pattern of

relationships persists today. In this invitation it is clear that Eurocentrism is of concern to Cathy, the ELP instructional team, Inuit leaders quoted in other sources, and those wishing to make schools more culturally responsive.

The goals of ELP largely align with the recommendations of researchers commenting on Nunavut educational change and how leadership is implicated in such processes. Berger's research calls for comprehensive questioning and change: improved culturally relevant curriculum and pedagogy; increased numbers of Inuit teachers; increased community consultations; increased structural flexibility; and, increased awareness of the cultural nature of school expectations and structures (P. Berger et al., 2006; P. Berger, 2009a; 2014). Yet within these myriad recommendations, only briefly does Berger suggest teachers need to understand the history and social relations of where they teach, the colonial past, and to explore their own prejudices, and learning to see their culture as one of many (P. Berger, 2009a, p. 65).

How should Nunavut educational leaders conduct this work? Other researchers have provided only hints of pedagogy that combines decolonizing with historical study, despite commonly insisting on the importance of leaders learning about Inuit knowledge, values, culture and language. As noted above, both Walton and Tompkins repeatedly emphasize the need to address power and privilege with Qallunaat educators, but how to bring a study of the past into that conversation remains unclear. Wihak (2005), who published on management training across the GN, suggests cultural reciprocity on the part of non-Indigenous management instructors can be demonstrated by, "an interest in and respect for cultural diversity, being highly sensitive to students' expressions of friction about valued beliefs and behaviour, articulating his or her own experience of cultural conflicts, and examining the roots of such conflict in underlying differences in world view" (p. 338). Cathy's facilitation of Roots Day attends to these very issues.

Revisiting my research questions through this concluding section, I use the foregoing evidence to comment on why Roots Day can be considered a decolonizing practice, what sources of knowledge informed Roots Day, how and why knowledge from and about the past is brought forward to facilitate change, and how long-term educators are helping to orient new educators to Nunavut expectations.

ELP began before the creation of Nunavut, but the program content delivered between 2004 and 2013 indicate priorities associated with the needs and contexts of Nunavut schools. By running its own Nunavut-focused leadership development course annually, the NDE facilitated a community of practice in which school change is a focus. Making certification through ELP a

requirement for holding a leadership position in Nunavut schools—and expanding the application of that requirement to additional positions such as vice principals—demonstrates that specific, locally-relevant and culturally-responsive expectations were held for what it means to lead. The learning outcomes embedded in the program outline concepts such as culturally appropriate facilitation strategies, reciprocal and transparent accountability measures in relation to the community, and involving parents in culturally responsive school policy implementation (NDE, 2013a). I would characterize all of these as constituting decolonizing initiatives. The program brought school system leaders together, providing an opportunity for an ongoing conversation about Nunavut school priorities. The ELP instructor team (themselves leaders working in the system) met three times a year, facilitating continuity. These events make it possible to sustainably frame a shared understanding of what communities desire from their schools, and how to move beyond barriers to achieving those goals. Participants who would otherwise not likely have access to visiting many other schools or building a professional network due to distance between communities, can draw on the relationships they make at ELP in future.

Roots Day has been a mainstay of the program, bringing participants face to face with the history of colonization in the Arctic, and engaging them in activities to consider how present actions are related to relationships between Inuit and Qallunaat in the past. Cathy explained to me that ELP has held the goal of making access to leadership positions easier for Inuit educators by orienting, training and supporting them in a context that explicitly works towards attending to Inuit ways of being together in schools. ELP therefore has been a site Nunavut educators have worked to decolonize as well as a site of decolonizing. The role of school leaders—principals, vice principals, instructional leaders, superintendents and administrators—is crucial in pursuing school goals, particularly when staff are unlikely to have been trained for such goals. Without ways and opportunities to build relationships with leaders across the territory and support them in accessing the theory behind the new expectations, efforts towards creating new approaches to education would undoubtedly be even more greatly challenged.

The sources of metaphors, concepts, and assumptions of ELP are derived from the same complex influences that operate on Nunavut conversations about education generally: Elder knowledge; IQ held by community members or as communicated through books/documents; experience and knowledge held by long-term educators; common knowledge of how schools operate in mainstream Canada held by educators from southern Canada; and, scholarly sources on school leadership and administration, for example, in books or articles.

ELP does not ignore contemporary educational leadership theory. The assigned readings on other days of the program, the ELP resource library, the action research project, and the shared conversations amongst the instructional team regarding androgogy, for example, draw on scholarship. However, those sources did not have prominence in my study of Roots Day or in Cathy's description of it with me, demonstrating that the day remained a made-in-Nunavut component of the program emphasizing local concerns and solutions. And yet, Roots Day aligns closely with Nunavut-based research. I would suggest that the strongest ideas in circulation are those that come from the experience, vision and facilitation offered by long-term educators—both Inuit and Qallunaat. The sources of knowledge on which Cathy based her emphasis on building positive relationships in schools through Roots Day, were discussions amongst long-term educators about the principal's role in relationship building. Terminology, pedagogical approaches, anecdotes and expectations are largely derived from the culture of long-term educators. ELP is a site where educational leaders hear Inuit language terminology being used to refer to school programs and practices. Perhaps most importantly, they hear about new expectations being implemented in Nunavut schools, from new legislation, regulations and practices associated with made-in-Nunavut policy. Examining several other themes in the ELP program would be relevant to showing how ELP engages with knowledge from and about the past, but within the confines of a close look at Roots Day, what is made evident is the emphasis on sources that originate in Nunavut.

This chapter has closely examined how and why knowledge from and about the past is brought forward in ELP to educate candidates about the history of colonization, the impact that has had on the ability of Inuit in Nunavut to be self-determining, and the warrants for awareness of this context in the business of running schools. Candidates engage in a dialogue about what has happened in the past, as well as why what has happened matters in schools today. Each year, regardless of programming differences, the activities expose participants to Inuit sources of knowledge or voices on what has occurred in the past such as residential schools, the slaughter of Inuit sled dogs, and the resurgence of Inuit self-determination associated with the land claims negotiations. The workshop consistently expects participants to listen to the voices of Inuit who have been through a fast and dramatic transition supervised by agents of the welfare state and supposedly benevolent intentions that turned out to be assimilative and disempowering (Tester & Kulchyski, 1994). It asks them specifically to consider how the knowledge they encounter from the past shapes the context in which they now work. Cathy's facilitation has been intended to

raise consciousness of the past, unsettle cultural assumptions, and demonstrate ways of working differently.

Rather than sending candidates to post-secondary institutions for course work in educational administration, requiring that candidates select and pursue their own advanced studies in the area of school leadership, or contracting external “experts” to come North, ELP intentionally involved NDE staff in designing, teaching and leading. Evidently in this model there is a commitment to local expertise in running schools. The central opportunity for candidates in meeting the ELP instructor team is to find out about the reasons for approaches to education that might otherwise seem opaque, unnecessary, or simply foreign. ELP provides a chance to discuss the antecedents and reasoning behind new policies. With the expectation that candidates demonstrate an understanding of this through participation in the program, ELP facilitates transfer of knowledge from long-term educators to those who are newly entering leadership roles. This is an opportunity to build a bridge across the chasm. Without these opportunities the terminology of Nunavut schools might alone send new principals into a tailspin. The goals of ELP explicitly address the expectations for participation in educational change towards decolonizing, and the intent of ELP programming is to make those expectations concrete, to encounter them in a community of practice before applying them when the stakes are high for students and communities.

As with the work of the Elders, and the work of developing made-in-Nunavut curriculum, the future of ELP is uncertain at this unpredictable time in the history of education in Nunavut. What I hope to convey here is the way knowledge from and about the past shows up in ELP, the importance attributed to it by the program and instructors, and how it is utilized—beyond simply understanding the events that have occurred through time—for changing relationships in the present and envisioning the future.

Chapter 7: Looking for Decolonizing and Historical Consciousness in the Nunavut School System

Stories are good when they are rich in details about when and where to act. [...] These stories do not direct action directly but conduct it by indirection. Characters in good stories do not exemplify what anyone anywhere must do; they are doing what they have to do, where and when they find themselves. Their doing does reflect virtues that are good, but how anyone else applies those virtues will be another story. (Frank, 2010, p. 160)

The story stream of my research journey has worked, up to this point, primarily at intersections with recent educational history and Cathy's stories. I began with an interest in documenting how knowledge from and about the past is put to use by educators and leaders in the present—particularly when and as informed by Inuit imperatives for schooling. In Chapter 1, I introduced my understandings of key theoretical concepts that I brought to the research journey. In Chapter 2, I showed how my commitments to those concepts, and ethical considerations I associate with them, shaped my methodology. In Chapters 3 through 6, I used the phrase “knowledge from and about the past” to refer to the past, memory, history, and historical consciousness practices, as they arise in the sites I study. I also used the language of cultural responsiveness and Inuit knowledge or IQ, as such terms are commonly used in Nunavut. The process of the water moving around the ice pans—the movement of this inquiry—has produced many small bits of ice. Some bob on the surface of this dissertation at the end of each chapter, whereas others flow into this last intersection with the fourth story stream.

In this chapter, I engage with the key theoretical concepts of decolonizing and historical consciousness. I explore them further to offer ways of thinking about what has occurred in the Nunavut school system recently, as well as what may need to continue occurring in the future. I develop these conceptualizations using the evidence and stories I have collected and shared up to this point, as well as by adding new conversations with Cathy. As introduced in Chapter 2, I asked for Cathy's understandings of decolonizing and historical consciousness explicitly in our interviews, so as to work with them in developing my conceptualizations. I did so for several reasons, including that she uses this language herself in activities such as Roots Day, and is capable of and motivated to inform such conceptualizations. It is also to move towards drawing intersubjective conclusions in relationship with Cathy as a participant, and in relationship with the Nunavut school system as a place. I go on to engage with an expanded selection of literature on both concepts, to connect the conceptualizations I develop to scholarly and educational

conversations elsewhere. Following the final intersection of the story streams, which forms the greatest share of this chapter, I revisit my research questions and provide concluding thoughts.

Before proceeding, some further reflection on my research journey through the river is warranted, to frame the conditions of my perspective now. I set out in 2013 to look for knowledge from and about the past in decolonizing practices. During the time I was looking, the spaces and practices I was looking at began to slip away, like the river breaking up, like ice changing shape and melting.

Cathy retired from her position with the NDE close to the time when several other long-term senior management staff departed. The Elders retired or passed away and their positions went vacant. Public announcements signalled that curriculum policy and directions were changing, with commitments to standardized instruction and assessments, emphases on numeracy and English literacy, and a \$1 million purchase of materials from NWT and Alberta (Varga, 2014a). The education minister Paul Quassa explained: “‘This gives us the ability to update, standardize and strengthen our curriculum without being held up by limited capacity,’ he said, pointing out that his department doesn’t have enough people to build a Nunavut curriculum from scratch” (Varga, 2014a). The Auditor General of Canada critiqued the pace of legislative implementation in Nunavut, with *Nunatsiaq News* reporting “the magnitude of the task was underestimated,” and bilingual education outcomes “will get worse in the future” (Bell, 2014). Few stories of the achievements Nunavut had attained in education counterbalanced this crisis narrative. This news arrived just in time to inform the prescribed formal review of the *Nunavut Education Act* by the legislative assembly in 2014-15, during which time any changes to the Act will be considered. I heard, informally, that ELP is being re-envisioned and numerous long-term staff had left C&SS jobs to return to classroom teaching as made-in-Nunavut projects were stalled or cancelled by the department. These changes raise many questions about how decolonizing intentions will be pursued in future, if they continue to be held.

As discussed in Chapter 2, these developments changed my research journey, and my methodological choices. This disorienting sense that the river was melting in ways, and at a pace, I did not expect created both a sense of urgency to continue the work, as well as a sense of inevitability about change associated with the passage of time. The part of me that has worked in the Nunavut school system was grieving, along with Cathy, as we watched these events with disappointment. At the same time, the part of me that writes about the system—particularly as an historian—saw resonance with change in the past, and anticipation of change to come in the future.

New policy decisions and the march of time pushed the focus of my work into the past, turning my methodology into something closer to educational history, than a study of the way the NDE works in the present. What implications does this have for the application of knowledge from and about the past? Is this inevitable change? Is this change that should not be lamented or grieved? Is it progress? Does it relegate the study of the past to irrelevance? What knowledge and practices led to historically-informed ways of working in the school system, and what knowledge or practices push them, again, into hibernation? Is this where the story ends?

These questions show how I link changes in the NDE directly to my fourth story stream—theorizing decolonizing and historical consciousness—and my fourth research question: How might an understanding of knowledge held by long-term educators in Nunavut by extension help new educators understand what is asked of them in participating in educational change towards decolonizing?

I maintain a strong commitment to decolonizing schools, and to honour those who have worked towards such goals in the past. I hope for such initiatives to occur with more support, so that they can happen faster and better to benefit Nunavut students. However, I understand—and have tried to show here—why such work takes so much time. When I hear words such as those of the education minister quoted above—“update,” “standardize,” and seeking “clear learning outcomes that reflect a national level of expectation” (Varga, 2014a), I become concerned about the risk of Eurocentric knowledge replacing or marginalizing the knowledge collected from Elders and Inuit knowledge holders, as has been the case in schools in the past. I cannot be resigned in the face of what might be reversion to educational policy and practice that risks Eurocentrism for short-term goals of supposed efficiency. Nor am I willing to stand behind unrealistic suggestions such as replacing all Qallunaat educators with Inuit, abandoning Inuktitut language instruction, or that fixing the system is simply a matter of educators working harder, and the government spending more money on commercial textbooks and resources.

In this concluding chapter I draw on the picture I have begun developing of the Nunavut school system, educational change therein, and the credibility and deep perspective offered by Cathy to illuminate the role of knowing with historical consciousness in decolonizing work. I ask Cathy what these terms mean to her, what Nunavut practices may constitute these terms, and how useful it is to continue exploring them. I bring Cathy’s views in conversation with theoretical literature, so as to push further with answers to my research questions.

I move forward hoping this theorizing makes a contribution to the educational goals called for by Nunavut communities. At the same time, I remain aware that knowledge

construction practices, like a river, have no fixed beginning or end—they are contingent, they must be recursive, they are disruptive and get disrupted. They slip away as time slips away. Knowing with historical consciousness and holding decolonizing goals, one may be more likely to discover questions than answers, and to become a lifelong learner concurrent with becoming a knowledge holder. I use theoretical influences from Frank (2010), Gadamer (1975/2013), Marker (2011), Seixas (2000; 2004; 2006; 2012; 2013), Simon (2004), and Trouillot (1995) to make these points. This returns the inquiry to the lingering methodological question asked by this work, closely related to my fourth research question, which is: How might Cathy's stories and memories have a role in the work of educational change in the present?

7.1 Decolonizing in Conversation with Cathy

Heather: Is it a useful term: decolonizing education?

Cathy: Well I think it's the goal we need to achieve, and it's a term we need to use maybe a lot more. So that people do—are forced to—think about it, talk about it, explore it, understand it, try to work towards it. But it's not a large part, I would say, of the education department's conversation.

Towards the end of our series of interviews I hoped to take up with Cathy the topics of significant accomplishments and failures in Nunavut schools, decolonizing as a term and theme, and continuity and change. As will become clear in the quotations from Cathy that I share below, this conversation demonstrates her ability to meld examples and observations from multiple venues, time periods, and levels of governance. Her description impulsively—but not without purpose—navigates from discussing the contributions of Elders, to curriculum development, leadership training needs, democracy, political mandates and policy, historical contingency, metaphors for the present, and dreams for the future. Cathy oscillates from passionately asserting accomplishments that have proven crucial to the project of creating schools that reflect the people they serve, to expressing excruciating frustration with slow progress, and cycles of backward movement or slippage she has seen and experienced in the same work over many years. Much like the work of decolonizing schools itself, Cathy manifests the tension of operating within the paradox of focusing on forward movement, and finding oneself treading water or being unable to resist the current created by dominant Eurocentric, modernist structures, knowledge and values.

And yet, even with forty years of experience, wisdom and vivid memories, Cathy actively resists the refuge of ambivalence or complacency or defeat. She wants to name that which is working, name that which is not working, and explain how those outcomes have come about.

She wants to use that explanation in creating a story about what has been possible, what is possible now, and what should be possible. This is why her voice is valuable in making sense of where Nunavut schools have come from, and perhaps where they should be going.

We began by speaking about the goal towards which decolonizing in Nunavut is oriented. What is the dream of Nunavut? Cathy turns, predictably, to that which she has learned from the Elders in Arviat—Rhoda, Mark, Donald and Louis—and how she has interpreted what they shared:

They were having such intense conversations, you know, the Elders were dreaming about these things and interpreting their dreams and then telling us the stories.⁹² And that helped us understand their feelings, and the feelings that created Nunavut. Because, the Nunavut dream was about getting back to being self-reliant and independent, and making life decisions by the people themselves.

But it was also about—or maybe it was never stated that it was about ‘What does it mean to be Inuit?’ Maybe that was kind of an assumption that was underneath it. The Elders were trying to articulate that and make that part of the dream as well.

Of course because education was not part of the land claim for either the reason that the feds didn’t allow it, which we’ve heard, or the reason that it was bargained off the table in exchange for something else, which we’ve also heard. And we don’t know if both of those are true, or either one of those are true. So [education] wasn’t talked about very much within the land claim itself. But, I think the dream to have that self-reliance and that independence... I don’t know if Inuit really dreamt what that meant. I think the leaders were dreaming more about the environmental decision-making and the political decision-making and maybe even economic decision-making. But not so much cultural and identity decision-making, although that may have been one of their assumptions.

So I think the work with the Elders to document Inuit knowledge is pivotal, because even if it isn’t nearly implemented yet, it’s available. There are thousands of tapes available to plumb in the future for more and more and more material. And for use by researchers—hopefully Inuit researchers in the future—in Inuktitut. I think that articulation of epistemology, of philosophy, of identity... I’m not sure people really appreciate how valuable that could be on an ongoing basis.

Cathy provides historical context to her view that the goal of Nunavut was originally, and has remained, clearly connected to Inuit self-reliance and decision-making. However, the preservation and advancement of identity, epistemology, and cultural knowledge have received less formal attention in the processes of political change. The *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement* included no provisions pertaining directly to Inuit education on an ongoing basis, likely because

⁹² C&SS developed a short film based on dreams shared by Elder Rhoda Karetak concerning the incorporation of IQ in Nunavut schools. One dream features a crying infant that Rhoda feels strongly compelled to bury, but she does not cover the infant’s face and the infant cries very loudly for a long time until Rhoda returns to pick it up, learning: IQ has been buried alive, it is still living but we must pick it up. In another dream a bull caribou is trying to climb a mountain, but it is very difficult and the weather makes it more challenging. The caribou may slip back while climbing the hill, but just like the dream of Nunavut, he keeps trying (NDE, n.d.).

the federal government refused to negotiate on social provisions (H. E. McGregor, 2012b; Rasmussen, 2009; Redfern, 2014).⁹³ The role of schools in the dream of Nunavut was unclear in the early years, only formally articulated by the *Nunavut Education Act* in 2008. Cathy suggests that education—attending to questions of identity, language and culture—supports and feeds into many of the other goals. Implementation of Nunavut’s official and unofficial prerogatives might have been strengthened with earlier and more substantive recognition for schools, particularly the potential for mobilization of IQ by Elders and community members within them.

I went on to ask Cathy, “When I say ‘decolonizing Nunavut education’ what do you think of?” She responds matter-of-factly, but verging on a tone as close to resignation as she ever comes:

I think that we haven’t accomplished very much. Ah, that’s my first reaction. What I think of is... making both Inuit and Qallunaat aware of what the relationships are like, and why they are the way they are between Qallunaat and Inuit, which really is the essence of society. It’s how people are interacting, and the institutions and structures of decision-making that come out of that. And how those institutions and structures for decision-making, I mean whether we’re talking about religion or economics or government or pretty much any institution, are built on that colonizing relationship that we still have. So if all your institutions are based on a colonizing framework or a colonizing relationship it’s very difficult to achieve the Nunavut dream of having people be self-reliant, independent and responsible for their own decision-making. Because much of it is still being done by people from outside. The dream was that the Nunavut government would be different, and that it would reflect more of an Inuit culture, whatever that means in modern day government, which nobody has figured out, much. But that really hasn’t happened.

This passage raises a question: If there are elected Inuit representatives running the Government of Nunavut with a mandate for Inuit self-determination, and many top public servants (deputy ministers or assistant deputy ministers) are Inuit, why is there still difficulty decolonizing government services and departments—including education? Many Nunavummiut have asked this question (North Sky Consulting Group, 2009a; 2009b). Why are the services being delivered nearly identical (according to some people) to what was delivered by the NWT? Why has there not been more progress? Cathy speculates:

I think that’s partly because as a young government you’re still figuring out how to deliver services. And it’s too much to redesign and figure out how to deliver all at the same time. So it may be that we need to get to some kind of a plateau of competence,

⁹³ Justice Berger (2006) has argued that Article 23 of the agreement—requiring that Inuit form a representative proportion of the Government of Nunavut workforce (85%)—should be broadly interpreted to warrant support for responsive and bilingual education programs from early childhood through post-secondary. Berger attributes financial responsibility for such supports to the federal government; this has so far fallen on deaf ears (Pelly, 2014).

which we're certainly not at right now, with the delivery of services. Then people will be able to step back and say: 'Ok, we're basically able to pay people and get people medical services and deliver social services to families in need. Now we can have the luxury of thinking about how do we change that so it actually is more Nunavut, more Inuit oriented.'

Cathy poses a choice here, between “getting things running” and “changing how things run.” In my experience, this comes up again and again in discussions about change in Nunavut. Can people take on everything at once or does that leave them treading water, not getting anywhere? The danger of getting to “some kind of a plateau of competence” is, of course, that change may become even more difficult—the more established the system, the harder it is to change. What sacrifices will be made in the interim, what means will be justified? What priorities will be established and what losses will go unnamed? No one holds easy answers to these questions, but it is hard to ignore the recalcitrant and entrenched nature of Eurocentric precedents in the past. This illustrates why decision-making based on comprehensively developed options, accompanied by robust consultation, implementation and evaluation resources, is important in a context where there are more needs than capacity to meet the needs. The least we can hope for is that choices about where to focus government resources and staff time or energy are made transparently and with more input from Nunavummiut, rather than passively, by default, or without input.

Cathy repeatedly identifies the need for educational leaders to hold a “shared vision” or “common goal” that is made clear, and that explicitly incorporates decolonizing, with staff across the school system. She repeatedly emphasizes that without referencing what a school system should look like, and how to achieve those goals appropriately, all of the smaller decisions, actions and priorities will be fractured, and decolonizing will be disregarded. Staff will make decisions that are in accordance with their previous experience from other places, in accordance with expediency, or reflecting priorities that are not consistent with the Nunavut vision, and there will be no accountability for this inconsistency. In Cathy's words:

If you don't have decolonizing as a clear goal, and look at every way you can do that within the system, if you don't make that intentional, if it's so ad-hoc or not happening at all, then you're not going to achieve decolonizing because it's not a goal. As we train all the different roles in the school system we're going to get more and more Inuit with more and more knowledge who can have the confidence and the voice to speak up in all the decision-making in all the levels, whether it's school, regional or territorial government/department. So it has to be deliberate in every aspect.

In explaining why the Nunavut government does not seem to be achieving decolonizing now, Cathy describes an experience from the past that she would consider decolonizing educational administration. This was partially introduced in Chapter 3, in relation to Cathy's role

at the BDBE, while preparing for the creation of the new territorial government in 1999/2000. The three divisional school boards that would become part of Nunavut aimed to establish common operating procedures on the basis of an Inuit vision for schooling, prior to their formal integration. This project was not mandated by the NWT government, nor the interim Nunavut government, but rather was pursued on the initiative of the boards of education themselves. The dissolution of the school boards and the strained and chaotic transition of responsibility to the NDE was then punctuated by an insistence on “everything being different.” Even when efforts to prepare for that difference had already been planned, a great deal of excellent work was disregarded and “thrown out” in Cathy’s view. She conveyed significant frustration with the needless waste of work that had been done with decolonizing goals in mind:

Everything that we did for those six years was wasted. Because it was never picked up. And that really is shocking to me. And that, to me, relates to decolonizing, because a lot of it was towards having a consensus that came from the *people* about what they wanted for the system. Rather than just the government saying ‘This is what the system is going to be.’ Because it was the boards coming together, who represented the communities, and agreeing—although they’d done things very differently for 10 years, maybe 15 years in some cases—they were agreeing to do things the same way. And that was an amazing consensus building project which actually reflects decolonization because it was the Inuit boards. I think the directors may have all been white but the Board members were almost 100% Inuit. So that in itself was decolonizing, and it’s been totally lost by the government.

Cathy extends her memory of the lost work preparing for Nunavut with the context of governance and advocacy that is being seen in Nunavut now, adding more detail to her analysis in the contrast:

In some ways I feel like we’ve really moved backwards in terms of decolonizing the system, the way the system operates, without the parent voice on a more collective basis, such as the boards that lobbied and advocated. Because the three boards were working together, it was quite a strong, strong voice. So, we’ve lost that strong voice for education and that determination to achieve things. To a lesser or greater extent depending on the board, and depending on the time, there was commitment to language and culture work, to long-term planning work with the communities, to cultural curriculum, to teacher generated curriculum, which is another aspect of decolonizing as long as you’re involving Inuit. So, in some ways I feel like we’ve actually gone backwards rather than forwards.⁹⁴

While decision-making may be the crux of decolonizing, there are a great number of other actions, programs and follow-through required to implement the kinds of decisions that

⁹⁴ Cathy also notes that a Coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities was formed in 2006 and funded by the GN following the *Nunavut Education Act*, but that it is still mobilizing to communicate and promote common views across the territory.

might be made by Nunavummiut about their schools. While these actions might flow from appropriate decision-making structures, they cannot be taken for granted. It is such actions that shore up the possibility of developing schools responsive to the communities they serve. Throughout this interview Cathy was leaving ideas, like small pieces of ice floating around us, about what kinds of actions might better lead to decolonizing within the Nunavut school system. Most are things she has tried and experienced along with colleagues over the years, not things she fantasizes about idealistically. Many of these suggestions were articulated more than once in the course of this single, and singular, conversation.

The examples Cathy identifies as likely to help contribute to decolonizing ways of working together in the education system include:

- Using Inuit language in the workplace;
- Increasing the number of Inuit staff;
- Providing a venue or mechanism for parent and community input into educational governance, that carries with it accountability measures to respond to those stakeholders;
- Including Inuit Elders on school and departmental staffs, particularly to make IQ more accessible and concrete;
- Developing, maintaining and regularly revisiting a detailed, nuanced, and shared vision for schools in order to implement it intentionally;
- Discussing decolonizing explicitly, and the implications of decolonizing in terms of relationships between Inuit and Qallunaat in the everyday processes of working together in schools, as well as structural processes, to prevent Qallunaat from making decisions on behalf of Inuit without their input;
- Establishing system supports so that staff in senior management positions are freed up to be proactive and focused on strategic planning, rather than consumed by reacting to, and micro-managing, operational issues;
- Engaging education staff and the public in a dialogue about “What does it mean to be Inuit in the 21st century?”;
- Expecting school staff, and especially educational leaders at the school and departmental/regional operational levels, to be aware that they need to learn about the context of working in Nunavut, particularly the history of education and how that impacts on their positions and work in the present and future;

- Holding all levels of staff accountable for radically exploring what schools, and governments, could be like if they were redesigned completely to reflect Nunavummiut; and
- Informing the public about what educational options are out there and why they should be taken seriously instead of reverting to running schools the ways they have always been run.

These suggestions illustrate the complexity and interconnectedness of considerations involved in efforts towards decolonizing; work must be done at multiple sites at the same time in order to create educational change.

Even if it is unrealistic to attribute importance to one factor over another at any point in time, I wondered, where does the work most often falter? With limited capability to do everything that needs to be done, where should the focus lie? Cathy responded that a crucial failure is when materials that are developed for Nunavut schools do not become part of everyday practice. Moving from “words on paper,” or policy and expectations set by the department, towards new ways of being together in schools is necessary to make a difference to students and families. Change has happened, but not enough.

Can Cathy’s sense that decolonizing remains vulnerable to moving backwards, as time moves forwards, be better understood by drawing on literature about the nature of decolonizing and how it is theorized?

7.2 Theorizing Decolonizing in Relation to Literature

I follow those who assert that decolonizing is not interchangeable with other social justice concerns, but rather conveys a particular commitment to Indigenous political and cultural resurgence, on lands that were and are theirs, as well as an accounting of that which was taken from Indigenous peoples in the process of colonization (Corntassel, 2012; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Decolonizing takes different forms in different places and times, depending largely on the circumstances of colonization and the imperatives of the local Indigenous people. It is necessary to acknowledge this variability (Sium, Desai & Ritskes, 2012). Access to lands (with sub-surface, surface, wildlife, and water rights) and decision-making about economic development within those lands, are the topics on which conversations about decolonizing often begin and return. In the case of Nunavut, the decolonizing project was first predicated on pursuit of a land claim and powers of decision-making over land for Inuit beneficiaries. The creation of a new

public territorial government and other structures associated with formal decolonization in Nunavut followed from that central pursuit (Dahl, Hicks, & Jull, 2000).

Decolonizing is, however, about more than control over lands (Corntassel, 2012), and more than the politics of recognition (Coulthard, 2007). Decolonizing necessarily involves epistemic and ontological clashes in confronting the universalization of European thought steeped in modernity (Ahenakew, Andreotti, Cooper, & Hireme, 2014; Kerr, 2014), cognitive imperialism and Eurocentrism (Battiste, 1998; 2013; Battiste & Henderson, 2009), and Settler colonialism (Snelgrove, Dahmoon, & Corntassel, 2014). These material-discursive influences are not separate from control of lands, particularly because they constrict interpretations of sovereignty, and by extension, how decolonization can be understood and implemented (Christie, 2011). Decolonizing conveys an ongoing responsibility on the part of the Crown, as well as Settlers (Regan, 2010) who entered into treaties with Indigenous peoples, as well as different roles on the part of groups such as new Canadians (Dua, 2008; Snelgrove et al., 2014), for actions that have happened on Indigenous homelands. Among other things, sometimes that responsibility is configured as listening and learning (Ermine, 2007), and in other cases it is material restitution (Corntassel, 2012). This confrontation has been seen in Nunavut through the numerous calls for recognition and compensation associated with harms enacted during the period of colonization, the move towards language protection, and the *Nunavut Education Act* stipulations that education be founded on IQ.

Neither colonization nor decolonization is intended to signify total loss or total recovery of language, identity, culture or lifeways. I respect the position taken by some Indigenous people, as I have heard it articulated through personal communications, that assimilation attempts notwithstanding, they survived, are still Indigenous, use their language, and practice their traditions. They do not appreciate the insinuation sometimes attached to the term decolonization, that everything in their lives has been determined by the experiences of colonization/decolonization. Likewise, they assert the right and responsibility to participate in contemporary Canadian economic, political and social structures, as well as those associated with their status as Indigenous peoples (M. Simon, 2011). Dwayne Donald (2012) articulates this clearly in his concept of an “ethic of connectivity” that comes from “living together in a particular place for a long time” (p. 93).

Drawing from this complex spectrum of issues associated with decolonizing, it is not surprising that Nunavut struggles to advance Inuit self-determination and different ways of operating socially, economically, and politically within the Canadian nation-state, even when the

formal institutions of land claims and Inuit representative organizations are in place. It is clear that there is much to be done, and that work requires constant practice, constant renegotiation. There is little hope of arriving at decolonization. What more can we glean from theory in understanding how to relate this difficulty to making change in the present?

Linda Smith, the most prominent scholar associated with the language of decolonizing, (1999/2012) invokes history in terms of the history of research practices, and as a vehicle for Indigenous and decolonizing projects. Smith points out that governments, states, societies and institutions have disregarded the historical formations that have led to present social and political conditions amongst Indigenous peoples. To counter this, decolonization “is about centring [Indigenous] concerns and world views and then coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes” (L. T. Smith, 1999/2012, p. 41).⁹⁵ To arrive at such a place, Smith says, is to participate in the critical pedagogy of “*coming to know the past*” (1999/2012, p. 32, emphasis in original). In the Canadian context, similar ideas have been expressed by Battiste. New processes for education must include, “exposing the injustices in our colonial history, deconstructing the past by critically examining the social, political, economic and emotional reasons for silencing Aboriginal voices in Canadian history” (Battiste, 2013, p. 167). Smith’s call to researchers whose work affects Indigenous communities⁹⁶ is “to hold alternative histories [which] is to hold alternative knowledges” and “requires us to revisit, site by site, our history under Western eyes. This in turn requires a theory or approach which helps us engage with, understand and then act upon history” (1999/2012, p. 36). This may involve reshaping or working outside the conventions of history as a discipline to account for Indigenous knowledges (H. E. McGregor, 2014a).

To transform what is important in the eyes of dominant or Settler society, “alternative” histories advanced by Indigenous peoples must be made accessible and brought into conversation with existing histories, rendering them no longer *only* alternative. This is particularly important in the case of ongoing questions of appropriate and effective implementation of Indigenous rights with the Government of Canada in Nunavut as well as elsewhere (Fenge, 2013). The rewriting of

⁹⁵ In the second edition of her book Linda Smith outlines five conditions or dimensions of decolonization that can advance or limit the struggle: critical consciousness; developing an alternative vision for the world and the people in it by drawing on different epistemologies and creative spirit; coalescing of ideas, processes and events in a historical moment; competing or destabilizing movements; and, structures that reproduce material realities (and often, inequalities) (1999/2012, p. 201).

⁹⁶ Smith’s audience is primarily Indigenous researchers but I suggest any researcher working with Indigenous communities can take some guidance from her work, and many non-Indigenous researchers have.

Canada's history to better reflect Indigenous experience is not a new idea—it is something Indigenous peoples in Canada have been working on for a long time (Brownlie, 2009), but still has not gained much purchase (Ralston Saul, 2008).

As noted in Chapter 2, Paulette Regan (2010) levels significant challenges towards Settler Canadians to participate in decolonizing, as they encounter the discourse and activities of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. Among many uncomfortable considerations Settlers must face, Regan (2010) argues, include: our relationship with Indigenous people has never been predominantly peaceful or reconciliatory (p. 5); colonial violence is woven into the fabric of Canadian history in an unbroken thread from past to present, which we must now unravel (p. 6); subtle forms of violence permeate everyday Indigenous-Settler relations—racism, poverty, cultural domination, power, and privilege (p. 10); and, Settler history, myth and identity have shaped and continue to shape [Canadian] attitudes in highly problematic ways (p. 11). Many of Regan's assertions about Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations in Canada can be justifiably extended to Qallunaat-Inuit relations in the Canadian Arctic, as became clear in Chapter 6 and has been documented through research (Tester & Kulchyski, 1994) and media (Gjerstad & Sanguya, 2010). There are also many interesting stories of flexibility, adaptation, respect, integrity and partnership on the part of both Inuit and Qallunaat who have come into relationship. Such histories of survival, resistance, self-determination and mobilization amongst Inuit, First Nations and Métis peoples, and in relation to Settlers, are just as important for non-Indigenous Canadians to learn.

Echoing scholars noted here, Canadians have been inexcusably ignorant, or accepting of mythic, singular, Eurocentric interpretations of the past. Following from the evidence in this dissertation and interviews with Cathy, I view this public ignorance and uncertainty as continuing to operate in Nunavut, as well as across Canada. The challenge is not simply about more information, however. This inquiry has shown that engaging with the past raises challenges in language, interpretation, values, relationships and other tensions in a cross-cultural context; challenges that may discourage and dissuade participation. As Jeannie Kerr (2014) has argued with reference to teacher education:

requiring teacher candidates to engage with Indigenous perspectives is a request to understand the material and discursive aspects of the context in which they desire to teach in [sic]—a Settler nation-state—and it should be an essential ethical requirement for any teacher in this context, not something separate. (p. 97)

Not only are Aboriginal issues not separate, but as Donald (2012) suggests, they may lead us toward benefit for all Canadians:

Sustained attentiveness to Aboriginal-Canadian relations and willingness to hold differing philosophies and worldviews in tension creates the possibility for more meaningful talk on shared educational interests and initiatives. This organic tension provides potential apertures of creativity that can be simultaneously life-giving and life-sustaining for us all. (p. 107)

The next section discusses how to expand ideas about the role of the past in the present, to better account for these issues.

Before moving on, I will summarize with a conceptualization of decolonizing for Nunavut schools. It is intended to respond to what I have learned from Cathy about the context and history—both of the institution and of the place—along with what I understand from theoretical literature. Decolonizing in Nunavut schools may be understood as: *deliberately, inclusively and continuously reflecting on stories that have shaped education and schools in Nunavut; and, using such stories in envisioning and acting on decisions about schools that are sourced from Nunavut communities, with particular attention to Indigenous self-determination.*

7.3 Historical Consciousness in Conversation with Cathy

From the narrative evidence offered in this dissertation it should be clear that Cathy constantly thinks historically about education. Now I explore the way Cathy conceptualizes learning from and about the past in more general and explicit terms, and with an eye to the experiences and purposes associated with such learning.

7.3.1 Systems of Interpreting the Past and History Education

Our conversation began with me asking what Cathy associates with the phrase “knowledge from and about the past.” She articulates the differences, in her understanding, between the way Inuit and Qallunaat have traditionally made meaning. Primarily she views this as the distinction between practices of oral tradition (Inuit) and written or disciplinary history (Qallunaat). Cathy views Inuit oral tradition as a practice that is capable of maintaining a high level of detail and accuracy, but that the topics they are most interested in are not the same as the kinds of things Qallunaat histories have privileged. Qallunaat histories feature specific events and a great deal of detail, whereas Inuit seem more interested in how people lived successfully in the past, and do not necessarily need stories to be associated with specific dates. She said: “When we look at what the Elders have shared with us from the Elders Advisory Committee, it’s more about how they lived, how they related to the environment, how they related to each other, how they reared their children. It’s about their values and principles and beliefs. It’s not about specific events.” While this is a generalization, it signals the differences that have long been remarked

upon by others who have engaged with Indigenous histories (Brownlie, 2009; Cruikshank, 2002; Dion, 2009; Fixico, 2003; Marker, 2011).

Cathy elaborated on how these differences in constituting the stories we tell about the past may affect instruction in schools. Qallunaat-style history lessons—at least up until recently—focus primarily on establishing and remembering what happened, rather than understanding the relative significance of events or knowledge to people in Nunavut. Recent history education reform initiatives such as use of the Historical Thinking Concepts (Seixas & Morton, 2013) are positive in Cathy’s view, because they could help to better bridge differing perspectives between Qallunaat and Inuit on why it is important to study the past.⁹⁷ By this she means improving the way we teach history to actively involve Nunavut students, should increase the likelihood of them being able to utilize history for their own purposes:

I think that metacognitive looking at what [the past] meant is something newer for the way we’ve been teaching history. At least for students in K-12. And really, that’s what’s important: what difference did it make? What’s the consequence of it? What are the future implications of it? How can we make life different in the future than it was in the past to prevent those things from happening again? What does it mean about the way we live as human beings? Those kinds of big picture questions are really what are more important.

I went on to ask Cathy: is it important for educators to explicitly discuss with students that there are Inuit and Qallunaat (and other) “systems” for engaging with the past? (I use “systems” here to refer to collectively endorsed conventions, procedures or criteria for validity, associated with knowledge production that is recognizable by that collective as “history”). While it may not always be necessary or desirable to produce one accepted account of the past, there are instances when two particularly different versions, produced by different systems, come into conflict in ways that significantly affect Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations. For example when contemporary redress is called for, such as in the dispute about whether sled dogs were intentionally slaughtered by the RCMP to force Inuit into settlements during colonization (QTC, 2010). It can be difficult for the public, and students, to determine which interpretation is most true and most acceptable. What do teachers do in these cases? Cathy responded with a move to

⁹⁷ I think it worth noting that Seixas’ Historical Thinking Concepts do not overtly attempt to bridge Indigenous-non-Indigenous perspectives, and it is yet to be seen whether the concepts address or exacerbate some of the conflicts between disciplinary and Indigenous historical practices. There is a need to better document Inuit historical consciousness in order to make this assessment. I state this not to detract from Cathy’s claim but to clarify that the potential of the concepts to bridge Inuit and Qallunaat systems of history-making is her view, and not the intention of the history education reform project itself.

plurality, asserting that one system is not any less legitimate than the other, and both are important. However, from her understanding the engagement with differing systems has been problematic as a result of Eurocentrism: because Indigenous groups, such as Inuit, always bear the burden of proof for their claims in Canada—to history, to the land, and to their lifeways. She says, “The issue to me is that it’s always the non-written culture that has to bear the brunt of trying to prove their case against the other culture that has such narrow views of what evidence is.”

According to Cathy, students need to learn the value of both approaches. They need to practice Inuit oral traditions and they need to practice Qallunaat written/disciplinary traditions. When engaging students in disciplinary ways of writing history, she feels it is crucial to move towards what she calls the “metacognitive” approaches—using concepts and establishing significance, rather than belabouring the model whereby students memorize dates and names.

Coming to understand the past in Nunavut then, involves an important awareness that there are different ways of constructing histories—what evidence counts, how it is used, and what claims or stories it supports. It involves learning to listen differently. With this awareness one can remain more open and responsive to Inuit stories and oral histories shared by Nunavummiut. One may exercise critical thinking when encountering stories, remaining cognizant of the relative weight, power, and circulation that Qallunaat versions of the past and disciplinary history have carried. With more knowledge about the differing systems that come into play when histories are constructed and then contested, more people can participate in understanding and, when called for, evaluating those histories for degrees of integrity. How this position is echoed in literature about history and historical consciousness will be explored further below.

7.3.2 Application in Educational and Social Change

Cathy frequently remembers and refers to histories of colonization. In the face of direct and indirect intergenerational traumas that accompany histories of colonization, she prescribes consciousness-raising, social action, and a shared practice of decolonizing. She asserts that students and teachers need to learn about the past, so that interactions and relationships mediated by power and privilege in the present can be better understood, disrupted, and renegotiated.

In Cathy’s view the application of historical knowledge requires work at the individual level, for the benefit of improved quality of life and quality of relationships, as well as in a larger social context. I asked her whether she thinks the changes she envisions could be achieved

effectively by regulating ways of being together in schools. Is it effective and sufficient to establish legislation that requires drawing on IQ—as Nunavut has established—for decolonizing? This was intentionally a provocative question but one that I view as relevant in societies undertaking social reconstruction, where formal mechanisms like changes in the law are held to be necessary ingredients in shaping a different future. Cathy responded by saying those mechanisms are important to establish expectations and legitimize Indigenous knowledge, but that “heart work” is necessary for some of the types of changes warranted. Beyond offering moments of learning about what happened in the past, Cathy holds that exposing people to such stories can produce change in the ways they act as educators in school, or as community members.

In terms of recognizing histories of colonization at the societal level, Cathy and I discussed that public history initiatives to date have been largely confined to documentary films (Gjerstad & Sanguya, 2010; Greenwald, 1990; Greenwald, 2009; Kreealak, 2001). Until the events of the Qikiqtani Truth Commission (2010; 2013) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2012) on residential schools, the difficult experiences of the colonial period in Nunavut were rarely publicly discussed. Only recently has more attention been placed on heritage in general. Nunavut does not have a territorial museum, or other sustained venue for learning about or addressing historical wrongs, as well as the positive stories of resilience and vitality from the past. Recently a two-part monument was erected by Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated in Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay, to mark the coerced relocation of Inuit families by the federal government (Wakeham, 2014). There are few other such sites.

I asked Cathy what she envisions more public education about the past to be capable of producing, in terms of societal level recognition and action. She drew a parallel with the book *Yuuyaraq: The Way of the Human Being* by Harold Napoleon (1996), who is Yup’ik from Alaska. He describes individual and intergenerational experiences of posttraumatic stress in Alaska Native communities, following epidemic deaths in the post-WWI period, and high numbers of orphaned children who were subsequently raised in boarding schools. He connects this collective historical trauma with individual and social suffering such as high rates of alcoholism, as well as the need for public policy and programs that promote self-determination and social reconstruction. Building on these ideas, Cathy named the following potential outcomes of increased awareness of the past: helping families and communities make sense of what has produced the matrix of social and economic struggles experienced in Nunavut today; identifying symptoms and needs resulting from histories of colonization that could be addressed

with targeted social or educational programs; and, demonstrating connections between social issues such as residential schools, poor parenting skills and suicide, rather than viewing them in isolation and addressing them in silos. She imagines a future where:

Institutions are collectively taking action together, based on the shared knowledge learned about the history and connecting it to good practices that are happening ad hoc, and turning them into the “way we do business.” The way the government does what it does... it has to learn from the history, has to learn from the public discussion of that history, has to learn from the good examples [of programs that support people in healing and resilience].

Lastly, Cathy explained to me that learning from stories about the past should help students gain the motivation and passion to work hard towards social changes that relate to the needs of their families and communities. For example, she suggests that learning about the history of the Nunavut land claim negotiations could be an inspiration for youth to become more involved in improving the conditions of communities today. Understanding what their parents and grandparents did in the effort to envision and create the territory of Nunavut, and the passion they brought to it could help them, “to have the courage to stand up and say whatever needs to be said today.” These assertions about the link between the past and present, as well as imagining a different future, brought me to explore the potential meaning and use of the term historical consciousness with Cathy.

7.3.3 Cathy’s Definition of Historical Consciousness

Cathy’s definition of historical consciousness is bound up with her views on the nature of cross-cultural, social and political experience in Nunavut, and the changes necessary in that context to recover from a colonizing history. It is the place and people of Nunavut—where and with whom she has created her home and directed her focus as an educator for so many years—that brings a theory of historical consciousness into relief for Cathy. The following is her definition:

I think it is awareness of what the history is—what actually happened—from both Inuit and Qallunaat perspectives, about anything and everything. And then, how does that history, how do those events, concepts, values and principles that were demonstrated through that history, impact on life today? The way they feel about themselves, their efficacy, independence, self-reliance and responsibility for their own lives? And then, if you have that understanding of the history, and how it impacts, then you can be conscious about how you want to make things different for the future. You can be aware, intentional, deliberate, focused, consistent. To me it has an element of action. Consciousness sometimes just implies awareness, but then I think it has that implication that if you have that awareness, then you’re going to take action to do something differently, whatever it might be. And for each person that might be very different depending on their gifts and interests, and the meaning that they want to take from that

historical consciousness.

I asked her whether the term is useful in her work in Nunavut education, and if so, how? Cathy shares with me some examples of questions she has used in workshops to attempt to engage participants in historical consciousness: “What is the impact of this information on students today? Why is it important for students to know this?” And “What is the impact of this history on you as a staff member and your work? What difference does this make to you and your work?”

I went on to ask if Cathy finds that people in her workshops understand what she means by the term historical consciousness. She said usually the meaning becomes self-evident in her use of the term, “just by the questions that we’re discussing and the activities that we’re going through.” She could not put her finger on another term that would convey the same implications. That is, the utility of information or knowledge, rather than knowing it for its own sake: “There’s a purpose for being aware of it, not just an end point.”

There are several elements of Cathy’s conception of historical consciousness to which I will draw attention, and will be revisited below. These include: connections between the past, present and future; inclusivity of Inuit and Qallunaat perspectives; what happened in the past is about more than information but also conveys values, and should be connected to consideration of values in the present; knowledge is not an end point but facilitates action in the present; and, historical consciousness is different, and must respond, to each individual depending on the conditions of their self and life.

7.3.4 The Trouble with Ascertaining Historical Truths

In order to explore the reasoning behind bringing forward questions and practices of historical consciousness, I asked Cathy what happens if we do not bring such knowledge into the school system? What are the stakes? For Cathy that relevance is deeply tied to her social justice commitments. In responding to me she mentioned the influence of thinkers from American and South African civil rights movements (Martin Luther King Jr., Nelson Mandela), postcolonial and critical theory (Franz Fanon, Paulo Friere), on her view of the social reconstruction imperative that implicates educators. In Cathy’s view, human failings will return to produce mistakes again and again if we do not learn from and about the past:

I think human beings are somehow configured to repeat the mistakes of the past. I don’t know why that is, why we don’t learn from the past. So I think if we don’t bring the past into the present, the future will repeat those mistakes. And we may repeat them anyway because we are human and we’re so vulnerable and so inexplicably prone to committing stupid and thoughtless and valueless acts.

The interpersonal and social change made possible by historical consciousness is not guaranteed in Cathy's view. As discussed in Chapter 6, teaching individual educators about colonizing relations can fail to produce different views in the present. Even with exposure to history education, individuals may not act in accordance with the knowledge they gain. Returning to Cathy's Bridge Metaphor, the chasm remains ever-present even as educational leaders attempt to build a bridge. Cathy feels her facilitations have sometimes failed to produce the responsiveness she hopes for in and among all participants in Nunavut school-communities.

We also discussed whether historical consciousness practices allow for differing interpretations of the past, and different truths. I asked whether the new stories that Cathy wants people to learn and accept about the past are just different from what has been said before (i.e. Eurocentric interpretations), but risk carrying the same hegemony of a single interpretation? Or does the vision she holds invite proliferation and contestation in the construction of history? How is the truth determined? While this is a long excerpt, I see it as seminal to the movement of the conclusion, and it is revealing of Cathy's engagement with historical consciousness:

Cathy: I think when you're in a cross-cultural context it's harder to accept any narrative as *the* truth. Because—especially if you spend any time in that context—you know that there can be more than one truth. Or you find out that there can be more than one truth if you don't know it when you first arrive. Coming from somewhere apparently more homogenous in Canada, you're more likely to say, 'Well there's just one history and it's this Euro-Canadian history, this British history,' this tradition of domination, except you didn't think of it as domination.

Heather: So how does it feel in that moment where you're saying 'In a cross-cultural context, it's different because there's more than one truth, or there's more frequently more than one truth.' What does that produce in people? How does that feel?

Cathy: Well initially it can feel very challenging, upsetting, disturbing and dissonant. It catches people up,... it's startling... You don't actually maybe want to accept it initially. But I've seen the light bulb go on. I have seen long-term northern educators who have watched the film *Kikkik*, and come away from it and said: 'Now I understand what Nunavut is about, because those federal bureaucrats made those decisions on such limited knowledge—that so much affected those people's lives. I understand it now because I've heard that story and seen, *seen*... and *felt* the power of that experience for that family and those people who were moved arbitrarily, etc. etc. Again, with the best intentions in mind, people were doing what they thought was right.' So it's jarring initially, but I think when people get past that jarring sensation of first coming to grips with it, then they begin to see that it makes sense. And it's really hard for me to relate to that because I had cross-cultural experiences beginning when I was young.

Heather: So what do you hold onto then? I mean if somebody—using yourself as an example if you want—is jarred into seeing there are so many truths, that maybe none of them are true. I mean, what do you hold onto?

Cathy: I don't think it's disturbed me. I mean honestly I don't know what to say. I mean I

think it's been so much a part of the way I've been raised that I can't see anything else. Maybe there was a point where I did get jarred. Actually one of the jarring times was when I went to a university where the students were in many ways oblivious to the Vietnam War, the civil rights movement, and all the chaos that was happening in the United States at the time. And I couldn't understand that, and I couldn't accept it. Those people wanted to just party and drink beer and not be influenced. That was jarring, that there was a world that didn't see the need to be—that didn't need to be doing something about this difficult situation that the United States was in.

Heather: So how has that felt? The idea that there are large groups of people who accept an interpretation of reality that you have difficulty relating to?

Cathy: Well I guess it's difficult, it's my own equivalent, and it's just the opposite side of it maybe.

Cathy begins by noting the oversimplified and persistent myth of Canadian history that leaves out Indigenous peoples, and masks Settler colonialism along with the implications of it for non-Indigenous Canadians. Having this myth dispelled, coming face to face with multiple stories and by extension the possibility of multiple truths, can be difficult for new educators in Nunavut. On the other hand, by the end of the exchange we see that this encounter with multiple truths also presents challenges for Cathy, and people like her, who have experienced deeply cross-cultural realities. It is difficult to face those who do not recognize the diversity of human experience, and accept that individuals are implicated in supporting ethical and equitable relations in society, even as the actions necessary to achieve such ends remain hard to define, or elusive.

In my discussion with Cathy it has become clear that engaging with knowledge from and about the past in spaces of cross-cultural relations, and colonization/decolonization, is difficult. One may be asked to understand and navigate differing systems of making meaning from the past between European-derived academic conventions—upon which school history education is increasingly based—on one hand, and Indigenous nations or communities, on the other. As Arthur Frank puts it: “Things go badly most often when people who are caught up in their stories run up against other people living in companionship with other stories, and neither can hear the other” (2010, p. 147). Clashing stories are challenging, particularly when one party does not see their story as a “story,” but rather as an objective truth. Recognizing there can be diversity and overlap within each system, these differing systems have presented epistemological and ethical conflicts in the past, and such conflicts are likely to continue.

Learning about the past is complicated by the extent to which we entertain multiple interpretations, and by extension, the slipperiness of truth at the very least, or multiple truths at the most. This is not an abstract sense of history or truth. In the small communities of Nunavut, educators are often navigating the truths of their colleagues, students, and community members.

How this uncertainty about truth affects different individuals varies considerably, depending on what they bring to the learning experience. Cathy shows awareness that people are on different learning journeys when it comes to the dissonance of cross-cultural experience. Lastly, it is challenging because use of knowledge from and about the past in the contemporary school context is often tied to a call to action. Difficult histories of colonization implicate those who receive the stories, and they may not know how to integrate such complicity with their life experience, positionalities, and roles as teachers. Unfortunately, good rationale for change does not always make change easier. Added to the difficulty of historical consciousness practices is knowing how to go about acting in accordance with such knowledge. Throughout this dissertation we have seen that change based on knowledge from and about the past is not necessarily more sustainable than other government initiatives.

To the elements of historical consciousness identified with Cathy above, I now add several aspects. How might this inherent difficulty, multiplicity of truths, dissonance, sense of complicity, and uncertainty about ethical action be integrated into an understanding of historical consciousness? How might openness to dissonance—to acceptance of something that is different and unexpected—help? How might historical consciousness be understood differently so as to continue mobilizing it towards decolonizing ends, without being paralyzed by the implications of it—or cynical about its potential? The next section offers my answer to these questions, at this time, and in this place.

7.4 Theorizing Historical Consciousness in Relation to Literature

I begin with Peter Seixas' conceptualization of historical consciousness for reasons of geographic, temporal and relational proximity; because it was with Seixas that my study of historical consciousness began, and because of his influence on Canadian (and international) scholarship. Seixas (2004) has defined historical consciousness as including: "individual and collective understandings of the past, the cognitive and cultural factors that shape those understandings, as well as the relations of historical understanding to those of the present and the future" (p. 10). He identifies the context for the rise of historical consciousness, mediations between postmodernity and the role history plays in contemporary societies (Seixas, 2000), and provides questions that aim towards historical consciousness (Seixas, 2006, p. 15). Theorizing historical consciousness, according to Seixas, involves five principles: the relationship between academic and popular history; the relationship among theory, empirical research, and practice; the comparative imperative; the need for value commitments; and, historicizing the study of

historical consciousness (2004, p. 10-11). Seixas points out that it is problematic to characterize historical consciousness as an achievement arrived at through some kind of progressive civilizational development that non-Western societies are yet to experience, and that his definition attempts to be inclusive of fundamentally different types of historical consciousness within any one culture or individual (2004, p. 9). Seixas' interest in, and definition of, historical consciousness has been intertwined with his scholarship in the area of history education, in which he advocates for teaching approaches that emphasize how history is constructed, derived from the academic discipline (Seixas & Morton, 2013). Thus in Seixas' scholarship, historical consciousness has primarily provided both a backdrop and rationale in advocating for educational reform in the teaching and learning of history. As will be seen below, this is only one of the purposes towards which the language and scholarship of historical consciousness has been used.

I extend Seixas' theorization by drawing on the work of German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer (1975/2013). Gadamer's life spanned the 20th century and his major work *Truth and Method* (first published in German in 1960) contested the movement to position social/human methods of inquiry *as scientific*, and contingent on the pursuit of absolute reason or fixed meanings. Drawing on Gadamer may seem like an odd choice considering the distance in time, space and cultural context between my research and him, as well as my concerns about reification of Eurocentrism. In a dissertation with decolonizing theories and ethical relations at its centre, how can I justify utilizing scholarship by a European man of the mid-20th century?⁹⁸

There are several reasons I turn to Gadamer as a source. My supervisor Seixas (2004; 2012) and other Canadian scholars (McLean et al., 2014) cite Gadamer for their understandings of historical consciousness, therefore establishing a scholarly genealogy from myself back to Gadamer warrants comment to demonstrate whether I continue or diverge from this genealogy. Secondly, during my doctorate Seixas and I re-read Gadamer together. I have also learned alongside a colleague interested in philosophical hermeneutics, who applies Gadamer in generative ways to challenge the dominance of Western modernist theories in education (Kerr, 2013). I came to see how deep study is necessary for engaging with Gadamer's ideas. Lastly, several of Gadamer's points about historical consciousness are unique, significant, useful and well defended. I ask the indulgence of readers so as to carefully build insights about the paradox

⁹⁸ It is particularly regrettable to me that Gadamer always refers to "man" rather than "person," but recognizing the time and context of his work I attempt to look past such sexist discursive conventions.

identified by Cathy: between the potential of historical consciousness and its apparent failures, between the relativity of historical interpretation and necessity of ethical conduct. While it feels deeply ironic that Gadamer led me to new insights about the possibilities for historical consciousness practices in Nunavut, I also remain open to the teachings that find me—even those from far away and long ago. Given the complexity of Gadamer’s ideas and use of language, I put words and phrases in italics in this section to support clarity.

Gadamer works at the nexus of a scholarly dialogue about philosophy, history, aesthetics, language, truth, and methodology. To summarize portions of his argument is challenging because of the breadth and complexity of ideas through which he works, in a very long book. Generally speaking, he describes and advances a non-Cartesian hermeneutic pursuit to clarify the conditions under which *all* understanding is likely to emerge. While Gadamer outlines in detail the intellectual roots of disciplinary history, romantic hermeneutics, and conceptions of historical consciousness in European scholarship—a broad topic indeed—it is important to note that his project is *not essentially historiographic*. He critiques the historical method as it was conceived when he wrote, which is of course substantially different from now, but he is not positioning himself as a historian writing a new method for history or historical consciousness. He is using history as an example for his hermeneutic project.

Gadamer moves away from a scientific or quasi-scientific method that relies on a naïve presupposition that knowledge (for example, knowledge of the past) can be known and mastered through sufficient study of it. He focuses on how an individual’s understanding comes about through experience (*Erfahrung*) that is *always conditioned by the past*. He refers to this as “historically effected consciousness.” This is confusing because most people who draw from his work—including me—drop the word “effected.” It is important to emphasize here because Gadamer distinguishes his view from other versions of historical consciousness that he sets out to critique. Quoting Gadamer at length is worthwhile in establishing this point:

My thesis is that the element of effective history affects all understanding of tradition, even despite the adoption of the methodology of the modern historical sciences, which makes what has grown historically and has been transmitted historically an object to be established like an experimental finding—as if tradition were as alien, and from the human point of view as unintelligible, as an object of physics.

Hence there is a certain legitimate ambiguity in the concept of historically effected consciousness (*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein*), as I have employed it. This ambiguity is that it is used to mean at once the consciousness effected in the course of history and determined by history, and the very consciousness of being thus effected and determined. Obviously the burden of my argument is that effective history still determines modern historical and scientific consciousness; and it does so beyond any

possible knowledge of this domination. (1975/2013, p. xxxi)

According to Gadamer, disciplinary methodologies do not make human understanding objective. The important concepts here include “historically effected consciousness” and “tradition” which feature in Gadamer’s conception of the dialectic between the inquirer, or subject, and the object of inquiry. To make sense of this I will begin by suggesting that we replace the word “tradition” with the phrase *that which has been handed down*.⁹⁹ Our ways of thinking about the past are shaped and situated by culture, language, as well as other influences—that which has been handed down. Contrary to the presupposition perpetuated by positivist natural science and Enlightenment methodologies, Gadamer argues that one cannot think outside of that which has been handed down or “tradition.” This is the case even when one is working within a supposedly anti-dogmatic epistemology or discipline (i.e. science). And, according to Gadamer, being part of tradition is not negative or limiting. If tradition implies preservation, continuity and inertia, it is not exclusively *passive* but also active—continuity that is potentially the result of reason, freedom and agency (Gadamer, 1975/2013, p. 294).¹⁰⁰ Another way to say this is that we build stories within traditions, but that the tradition within which we build is a story too.

“Historically effected consciousness” then, represents *an event of understanding*. That such events are located in time produces a paradox, which is what I am particularly interested in. Knowing within tradition, with how the past has conditioned us and what has been handed down, helps us understand *what* and *how* we know now. And yet, as soon as we understand, the time and experience of knowing has passed and we must *re-make our understanding again*. Gadamer says: “Real historical thinking must take account of its own historicity” (1975/2013, p. 310). This acknowledges a claim to know as *only* what I know, in this time, from here, accepting that the “I”, “now”, and “here” are *historically situated*. It is to know within a sense of flux, and the awareness of *inevitable* flux, amongst knowing the past, what we say about knowing the past, who we are by knowing it, and how what we say changes with time, again and again.

Gadamer emphasizes the necessity of remaining open through such a situated event of knowing, in order to give rise to understanding; this is what hermeneutics is predicated upon. There is no omnipotent or objective place to build knowledge—no discipline can offer that to

⁹⁹ I acknowledge Tyson Retz for helping me to think about Gadamer’s use of tradition with this technique.

¹⁰⁰ Incidentally, Gadamer’s view of tradition, I would argue, aligns with Indigenous views that elements of tradition are actively and progressively preserved rather than automatically backward.

human beings—because we are always conditioned by tradition and the past. Thus Gadamer’s theorization hinges on taking a fundamentally reflexive stance. It is impossible to signify the subject as separate from an object, and it is impossible to completely transcend the space—such as distance in time—between the subject and object. For Gadamer it is an illusion to think one can be free of prejudices¹⁰¹ (or what he calls “fore-meanings” or pre-conceptions) and know something absolutely. His recommendation is that someone who seeks to know must think *with* her own historical situatedness—or else she destroys the reality of her historical situatedness, and that which she tries to know (Gadamer, 1975/2013, p. 369).

By extension, a person who seeks to know must remain open to the address of the other. The relationship between a subject and object is a reciprocal one, like a conversation. The person who seeks to understand must be ready to experience that which they have not before experienced, and the possible truth claims inherent in that relationship. They must expect to be changed—perhaps beyond their own expectations or preconceptions: “Openness to the other, then, involves recognizing that I myself must accept some things that are against me, even though no one forces me to do so” (Gadamer, 1975/2013, p. 369).

Therefore, informed by Gadamer, I view historical consciousness not as a fixed thing or body of knowledge that is acquired, but as an event of coming to understand. In other words, one cannot “have” historical consciousness, but rather one can think with it when one enters a conversation with another person or object. To signal this, I move away from referring to historical consciousness as if it were static, and towards using the phrases *historical consciousness practices* and *knowing with historical consciousness*.¹⁰² In another event, another time and place, things may turn out differently. Historical consciousness practices acknowledge that “new” ideas are always referencing ideas that have come before, or that which has been handed down. In this theorization of coming to understand the present with reference to the past, there is a high degree of self-reflexivity (i.e. awareness of one’s preconceptions, the tradition within which one understands, and limitations of truly knowing the other). However, understanding with historical consciousness does not mean that we are stuck because of, or

¹⁰¹ Gadamer argues that Enlightenment thinking produced the negative connotation now frequently associated with prejudice, thereby discrediting it. He defines prejudice as “a judgment that is rendered before all the elements that determine a situation have been fully examined” (1975/2013, p. 283), which can be positive or negative. Gadamer goes on to say: “The overcoming of all prejudices, this global demand of the Enlightenment, will itself prove to be a prejudice, and removing it opens the way to an appropriate understanding of the finitude which dominates not only our humanity but also our historical consciousness” (1975/2013, p. 288).

¹⁰² I acknowledge Jeannie Kerr for reminding me of the importance of such signals in language choices.

absolutely defined by, the past. This is the paradox of historicity—that we belong to time, and time always moves. The present is always slipping into the past, as the water continuously moves through the river.

Bringing this learning from Gadamer and the experience offered by Cathy forward, knowing with historical consciousness may be understood as: *drawing on knowledge from or about the past in an encounter that changes the self in the present; recognizing that understanding is historically conditioned; and, knowing understanding is limited by conditions that will pass away with time, or may not be valid in another place.*

I view these aspects of historical consciousness as less evident in Canadian scholarship to date, and potentially generative in relation to theories dealing with decolonizing schools. As I will try to illustrate below, this expanded concept of historical consciousness is particularly significant because of the space it makes for listening to stories in a way that invites ethical relations, but also because it may better account for the apparent limits of studying the past, as identified with Cathy.

7.4.1 Applying Historical Consciousness for Educational Purposes

Research suggests that educators' understandings of Indigenous-non-Indigenous relations in the present, and how those relations are differently experienced based on factors of identity, are predicated on and shaped by historical narratives (den Heyer, 2009; Donald, 2012; Haig-Brown, 2009; Orlowski, 2008; Strong-Wilson, 2007). By extension this informs educators' ability to connect understandings of the past to challenges in the present, and warrants for action in the future. The implications of this relate to how we teach history and also extend beyond, into the nature of relationships in schools, as well as in communities and political jurisdictions, as should be clear from my inquiry. I will outline three central approaches to historical consciousness in Canadian literature related to education: discipline oriented historical thinking; Indigenous historical consciousness; and, testimony, witnessing and remembrance.

Historical consciousness has been linked to sites and practices of public memory, school-based history education, citizenship, and democratic participation in addressing hard questions about the past, present and future (McLean et al., 2014; Sandwell, 2006; Seixas, 2004). Seixas (2006) advocates most strongly for the discipline-oriented historical thinking approach, offering a clear rationale for it in socio-political terms:

...we need to acknowledge that contention over the meanings of the past is an ongoing feature of contemporary culture, and that it might even be constructive, if citizens had ways to participate knowledgeably and thoughtfully. This conception of public

participation in the critical interpretation of the past requires quite a different vision of history education... (p. 14)

Learners should be taught to “formulate good answers to these questions of historical consciousness” (Seixas, 2006, p. 16)—questions that link the past, present, and future; that are relevant and naturally occurring in our culture today; and, that are, because of complex cultural conditions in society, inherently difficult to answer. Seixas (2006) sums up the challenge and significant opportunity of history education when he says learning about historical tools, processes and ways of thinking:

help [learners] make sense of who they are, where they stand, and what they can do—as individuals, as members of multiple, intersecting groups, and as citizens with roles and responsibilities in relation to nations and states in a complex, conflict-ridden, and rapidly changing world. (p. 21)

Therefore, Seixas (2000) argues, history education should teach learners to use “standards for inquiry, investigation, and debate” (p. 34) that prevent them from “uncritically accepting any particular version” (p. 33). Primarily this approach has been advanced through Seixas’ six Historical Thinking Concepts (Seixas & Morton, 2013), although there is undoubtedly variation and adaptation in the application of the concepts both “officially” at the curriculum level and “unofficially” at the classroom level. School jurisdictions across Canada have adopted his model, so it is an important one to consider.

Differences in how some Indigenous societies understand historical consciousness are being identified (Carlson, 2010; Marker, 2011). According to Marker (2011):

Indigenous historical consciousness is a holistic and interdisciplinary way of understanding reality. The four themes in this endeavour—(1) circular time, (2) relationships with land and animals, (3) local knowledge, and (4) the complexities of colonization and decolonization—have been core concerns for Aboriginal communities and scholars. Including these considerations in Canadian history texts and courses will require a shift in the goals and purposes of studying history. (p. 111)

Marker (2011) explains that what is at stake in schools is the ability of Indigenous peoples to assert self-determination and realize decolonization in their own homelands, in the face of what Battiste has called cognitive imperialism: “When Aboriginal students are told that their cultural interpretation of history is not the correct one, the hegemony of this moment is often internalized. This deteriorates the ability of [I]ndigenous communities to organize around their own epistemologies” (p. 100). This position calls out the history of colonization and how it continues to be enacted through schools. Marker (2011) calls on teachers to “acquire the time-space” for this way of understanding history, which will “necessarily entail sacrificing some conventional ways of teaching Canadian history” (p. 111). This is intended both to be more

inclusive towards Indigenous perspectives and in order for all students to “imagine alternative ways to structure the societies of the future” (Marker, 2011, p. 111).

Marker emphasizes the importance of injecting research and education with an appreciation for localized knowledge, the strengths, needs and perspectives of Indigenous communities, and an appreciation of the spiritual relationship between humans and the land (and its other beings). He offers some of the content areas that require further study, but how do we go about it, and how do we reconcile it with Seixas’ model, for example? Susan Dion has shown some of the major challenges implementing Indigenous-authored histories into Canadian classrooms with non-Indigenous teachers (Dion, 2004; 2007; 2009). How does this relate to the larger discipline of history, if at all? It is clear from Marker’s work that the differences between Eurocentric and Indigenous ways of engaging with the past are experienced intensely by Indigenous people across Canada, just as Cathy has said for Nunavut. The differences and associated clashes present issues for students and teachers that warrant greater attention.

Other education researchers have found that Seixas’ Historical Thinking Concepts do not facilitate the kind of engagement in historical consciousness that serves the interests of Indigenous peoples, and other groups traditionally marginalized in disciplinary history. Samantha Cutrara (2009) argues that what she refers to as the “disciplinary cognitive citizenship” approach (p. 88) does not recognize that learners are differently implicated by what they encounter in the history classroom depending on their identities. It does not offer the potential to engage with the imperial legacy of racism that continues to shape Canada in the present, and the experience of emotion and uncertainty that raises both rational and irrational questions and conflicts in the history classroom (p. 98). Cutrara ties these implications to an over-emphasis on rational, disciplinary, skill-oriented pedagogies and the homogenizing forces of neoliberal power and privilege associated with them. I am particularly interested in drawing attention to the consideration of how learners are differently implicated by what they encounter from the past depending on their identities, which does not figure in Seixas’ Historical Thinking Concepts, and to my understanding is rarely discussed with students in history education. Cutrara also refers to a position taken by Lisa Farley (2009), with which I agree, that historical consciousness in education is to practice encountering the conflicts, anxieties, uncertainties and ultimately, disillusionment, that may characterize our relationship to the world (p. 551).

While Seixas’ model includes the concept of “the ethical dimension,” connections between historical consciousness and injustice, testimony, and remembrance are given primacy in the approach of Roger Simon. Simon (2004) explains that testimony, texts or traces from the

past can be “transitive,” demanding some form of response or accountability, and by extension implicating “what it means to live relationally, to live justly and publicly, with others, both living and dead” (p. 187). Simon (2004) asks: “how might remembrance be understood as a praxis creating the possibilities of new histories and altered subjectivities?” (p. 187). He examines the question of what it means to listen ethically and attentively in these contexts, and in some cases to confront our own ignorance and the structures that foster resistance to certain knowledge. In expanding on this notion of praxis, Simon uses an example from northern Manitoba of a small population of Dene who were forcibly relocated to Churchill by the Canadian government. Providing examples of the sometimes “obscene” questions that emerge from learning about events such as this, Simon (2004) argues that a responsiveness is required both to the testimony and to the self—our own questions—“we must pose questions to ourselves about our questions, interrogating why the information and explanations we seek are important and necessary to us” (p. 195). This kind of learning could lead people who may see themselves as different towards acknowledgement of a shared history, and “reassess the terms on which we are prepared to hear stories that might trouble the social arrangements on which we presume a collective future” (Simon, 2004, p. 197). It is the social and democratic possibilities of society, and the ongoing need to renew practices and institutions in the public sphere, that Simon is aiming towards with this critical pedagogy of remembrance. Others have taken up Simon’s work in relation to teaching Indigenous histories (Dion, 2007; Regan, 2010).

All of the aforementioned views of historical consciousness practices connect inquiry into the meaning of the past with contemporary identities, communities, political participation, and changing conditions. It is my work to sort through the approaches, identifying opportunities and limitations in relation to the application of historical consciousness for decolonizing Nunavut schools, building on what I learned from Cathy and my expanded definition of knowing with historical consciousness from Gadamer.

7.5 My Thoughts on Decolonizing and Historical Consciousness in Nunavut Schools

7.5.1 Extending from Simon

Roger Simon’s transitive approach is not far, theoretically and methodologically, from the purposes and approaches I am exploring, and Cathy’s purposes for historical consciousness during Roots Day. The resonance I see is in two ways: Illustrating that we are part of the flow of time and that we “inherit” the conditions of the past, which in some cases warrant deep and uncomfortable reflection on who we are and how our societies have been shaped. And, explicitly

identifying and seeking the conditions under which coming to understand the past calls on us individually and collectively. Simon (2004) is strident in how the past posits a “reckoning” for “accountability” and “altered subjectivities.” For those hoping to create venues that envision and support social change (such as using pedagogy for decolonizing with adults), historical consciousness practices can be pursued with these particular outcomes in mind. As seen in Chapter 6, this approach is warranted for certain Nunavut contexts, such as leadership development.

It is not only in encountering testimony that the considerations Simon brings out may be relevant—other sources may produce the same kind of learning. Indeed, a pedagogue cannot predict how different evidence will impact on each individual learner, as learning is always shaped by that which the learner brings, and the particular moment and conditions in which learning occurs. Chinnery (2010) argues that the study of historical government policy documents, such as those associated with residential schools, might have as much transitive claim on learners as testimony. Kerr (2013) also points out the potential of such policy documents in unlearning narratives of the Canadian government as benevolent towards Indigenous peoples, which may by extension provide preparation for learning from Indigenous testimony. Another limitation of Simon’s approach is emphasized by Chinnery (2010)—that his work carries purposes that may constrict the encounter with knowledge from and about the past in particular ways because of the primacy he gives to responsibility. Chinnery explains:

critical historical consciousness is not primarily about historical knowledge, but about acknowledging our responsibility to and for the past, regardless of what part we may or may not have played in that history and regardless of our ability to know or understand it. (p. 401)

It is my hope that historical consciousness practices advance knowledge from and about the past, as well as allowing people to be touched by it. This is not only for the purpose of unsettling and renegotiating their relationships ethically, but for participating in ongoing historical meaning-making.

While I appreciate positioning the past as a teacher to which we must be open, a point made clearly by Gadamer as well, it is not only within difficult histories of colonization, war, or other conflicts that this is important. Tim Stanley (2009) for example, has convincingly argued that even the most banal surroundings may contain histories that warrant reconsideration of responsibility for colonialism, genocide and white supremacy. Likewise, not everything we ought to learn, or may wish to learn, about the past involves injustice. Canadians must also look for alliances, partnership, and flexibility in cross-cultural relations. We must give space for

Indigenous stories and oral tradition to breathe on their own terms. We must listen to Elders in ways that do not circumscribe or subsume everything they share in discourses of colonization/decolonization.

Lastly, Simon's approach does not offer easy solutions for our own historicity and the possibility that history is not consistently transitive, or as Cathy pointed out, that it sometimes seems to fail to create change. Those who have participated in testimonial initiatives such as the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples or the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada are disappointed that they must repeat painful stories for those who seem to disbelieve or forget them—seemingly, a majority of Canadians. Gadamer's point about our historicity is important because we must constantly remake our understandings from what the past teaches us. It is not a matter of hearing or reading a difficult story once.

I view experiences of coming to understand the past as inextricably linked with listening to stories, but also with knowledge, language, documents, artifacts, programs and processes, and with how the past affects each individual differently, in highly unpredictable and varied ways. Each time such an encounter occurs depends on the conditions of the encounter, which are always changing. I am not convinced that Simon's work is the sole solution for these goals.

7.5.2 Extending from Seixas

Seixas acknowledges that we are historical beings caught in the flow of time; this is where he draws from Gadamer. Historicity applies both to the stories we know about the past and how we construct such stories: "To historicize history is to understand that today's methods for establishing truth are no more than today's methods" (Seixas, 2000, p. 35). Why is this important to understand? In my view, acknowledging the historicity of knowledge construction makes space for talking about Eurocentrism. Seixas (2000) says that postmodernism draws attention to the "forces that have shaped the archive itself, its gaps and its silences" (p. 30). Along these lines, Trouillot (1995) reminds us: "Historical narratives are premised on previous understandings, which are themselves premised on the distribution of archival power" (p. 55). Indigenous peoples have had much less opportunity to determine the sources we access to write history, and the way those sources are used. This connects with Cathy's view that Inuit perspectives have not (sufficiently) made it into the historical record. The discipline of history may operate on the pretence that it invites contestation and is open to improvement. However, as I have learned from Indigenous scholars, to bring Indigenous contributions in we must first

acknowledge that the conditions of history have excluded persons and knowledges from disciplinary development for a very long time (H. E. McGregor, 2014b).

Seixas describes how contemporary societies are subject to the instability of interpretation, flowing from postmodern insights into the construction of knowledge, in his academic theoretical work (Seixas, 2000; 2012, p. 865). The problem this poses for history education, Seixas (2012) warns, is the difficulty in constructing a meaningful narrative from which people can understand the present and inform the future: “We are faced instead with an unlimited multiplicity of individual and collective memories. All of this unsettles the modernist vision of history education as a tool for social progress” (p. 865). While I remain wary of the language of progress, Seixas’ point that the trouble with ascertaining historical truths affects a community’s efficacy in shaping social change, connects with Cathy’s perspective. Cathy explained to me that desired changes—towards decolonizing goals—in educational leaders during Roots Day, can be supported by listening to more stories. That is, changes flow from encountering new texts, objects, and people who unsettle narratives about Canadian and Nunavut history. She provides these stories to produce a change in self-knowledge, and by extension a change in one’s ability to relate to others. Cathy calls for more histories to be written or otherwise documented that incorporate and advance Inuit ways of making meaning from the past. She says we need to make such stories more accessible to educators, not only for their own history education, but to facilitate deep and broad change to the school system. Arthur Frank (2010) makes this same argument: “...a good life requires telling any story from as many alternative perspectives as possible and recognizing how *all* the characters are trying to hold their own” (p. 146). But, Cathy admits, her efforts at practicing historical consciousness with educational leaders does not necessarily produce any change in everyone. It does not necessarily support a particular desired change. And, it does not necessarily result in consistent or sustained change.

How does knowing with historical consciousness help with the depth of epistemological difference and conditions of knowledge production that we must negotiate, which Seixas outlines? How can the perceived limitations and failures described by Cathy be built into our model of historical consciousness, instead of ignoring them, subsuming them, or even foreclosing them as failure? Seixas (2012) recommends that teaching learners disciplinary tools to participate in construction of historical narratives is the way forward:

Students will grapple with multiple narratives, and if there is not *one* grand narrative that they memorise uncritically, they should still understand the necessity of the quest for larger stories in order to make sense of their lives, and the importance of the search for

good ones. The education of students as historical agents operating in their own historical moment means this: that they understand the impossibility of knowing once and for all *the* story of which they might be a part, and yet have the tools to steer between mindless pie-in-the-sky utopianism *and* deadly despair as they shape themselves into historical agents in their own futures. (p. 871, emphasis in original)

The tools Seixas teaches have become the six Historical Thinking Concepts (Seixas & Morton, 2013). As tends to be the case with institutionalization of knowledge, and notwithstanding Seixas' invitation to an ongoing dialogue about the concepts, they are increasingly—unquestioningly—reified amongst teachers as the singular avenue towards historical thinking and conflated with historical consciousness (McLean et al., 2014).

Seixas' approach is undoubtedly part of the solution. However, returning to my expanded view of knowing with historical consciousness drawing from Gadamer, I do not see engagement with the following considerations in Seixas' Historical Thinking Concepts: the historian's positionality, changing identity/ies and their own historicity; the historicity of the discipline; other contextual conditions (i.e. the role of place) for making and remaking our stories; and, the practices of suspending opinion, showing humility, and asking self-reflexive questions in the encounter with epistemological (and other forms of) difference.

My concern is that the disciplinary oriented model closely aligns Seixas' Historical Thinking Concepts with historical consciousness. This at best obscures, and at worst undermines, the ability to see the discipline itself as a tradition, subject to history. It interferes with opportunities to practice historical consciousness through other traditions such as called for by Marker (2011). I am doubtful that it will bring a breadth of Indigenous stories into historical interpretations—because they may easily be discounted according to Eurocentric criteria for validity, drawn from the discipline. Frank (2010) warns: “Stories make dangerous companions when they reduce too much complexity and are too good at concealing what they reduce” (p. 149). And Trouillot (1995) asserts that “any historical narrative is a particular bundle of silences, the result of a unique process, and the operation required to deconstruct these silences will vary accordingly” (p. 27). The Historical Thinking Concepts are important, but I hope for more distinction between them and ways of practicing historical consciousness. I hope that historians would ask ourselves, educators and students to search for the complexity, concealments, silences and other moves necessary to support knowing with historical consciousness, especially with decolonizing goals in mind.

7.5.3 Extending from the Stories of Long-term Educators and Elders

As I quoted early in this dissertation, Frank (2010) says the following about the problem of multiple and finite truths:

The best response to the recognition that stories represent the world from one particular and often restricted perspective is not to dream of a perspective outside stories; that would be a view from nowhere. The response should be to bring in more stories. (p. 153).

Like Gadamer, he reminds us that there is no place to stand outside human history, language, culture, and tradition. I do not take the position that every tradition of engaging with the past and every resulting interpretation deserves equal attention all the time, but that knowing with historical consciousness should be responsive, addressing both the content and means of interpretation proximate to the majority of learners in a place, to the extent possible. These different practices of historical consciousness may come into conflict with one another or result in incommensurability, as has been experienced by Indigenous learners in classrooms in Canada. More work must be done on a local basis to become aware of, and mediate, differences in historical consciousness practices. As Trouillot (1995) says:

at some point, historically specific groups of humans must decide if a particular narrative belongs to history or to fiction. In other words, the epistemological break between history and fiction is always expressed concretely through the historically situated evaluation of specific narratives. (p. 8)

He also suggests, “The value of a historical product cannot be debated without taking into account the context of its production and the context of its consumption” (Trouillot, 1995, p. 146). Historians and educators must talk about how narratives are imposed on the past, and the past becomes stories, on a case-by-case basis. What is needed is not only more evidence, and more critical techniques for learning about the past. What is needed is a different approach to explicitly discussing the terms under which history is made and historical consciousness may be practiced, to shape and reshape the stories particular people know in particular places and times.

To whom can educators turn as role models in this difficult work, and learn how to take it up realistically in schools? Looking to Elders—be they Inuit or Qallunaat—is the move advanced by this dissertation. Elders and long-term educators have stories to share that can provide guidance. Elders and long-term educators have demonstrated the commitment to, and reward of, collecting and mobilizing knowledge from and about the past. Cathy’s stories show this clearly.

Younger people are taught in schools to constantly shore up their opinions with evidence, rather than to constantly ask questions of themselves. They have encountered fewer situations where multiple truths seem to exist, or access to the truth seems so slippery, or the truth is

overwhelmed by power. Older, wiser people with more experience and openness enact decolonizing on the basis of their more frequent experience with the contingency of their own knowledge. Older people have seen more often that access to rational, evidence-based claims is not sufficient, because those claims may be circumscribed by experience, structures, language, epistemological and ontological criteria for validity that perpetuate Eurocentrism. This is not intended to be a conservative move or abandonment of change, but a move to wisdom based on experience and stories about it.

Experience presents another paradox, according to Gadamer (1975/2013), whereby a person: “becomes aware of his [or her] finiteness” and, “to have the insight that all the expectation and planning of finite beings is finite and limited. Genuine experience is experience of one’s own historicity” (p. 366). What experience does then, is nurture openness to lifelong learning. According to Gadamer (1975/2013):

The truth of experience always implies an orientation toward new experience. [...] The consummation of his experience, the perfection that we call ‘being experienced,’ does not consist in the fact that someone already knows everything and knows better than anyone else. Rather, the experienced person proves to be, on the contrary, someone who is radically undogmatic; who, because of the many experiences he has had and the knowledge he has drawn from them, is particularly well equipped to have new experiences and to learn from them. (p. 364)

Moving in towards the stories of Elders and long-term educators, particularly stories that feature the dissonances they have faced and their moments of greatest learning—those things I find Cathy highly capable of remembering and articulating—offers us somewhere to begin. Michael Marker says this too; that he learned from Elders about the integral role of local stories from the past in leadership, “maintaining a spiritual vision while bonding one’s thoughts to the history of the people’s experience on the land” (in press, p. 33). He goes on to suggest that educational leaders, “will know or be learning the local, place based epistemologies, the effects of colonization, and how to work respectfully with Elders” (Marker, in press, p. 34).

As Cathy turned to the Elders Rhoda, Mark, Louis and Donald in Arviat for experiences and stories that address difficult questions, and required that her staff do the same, I turn to her throughout this dissertation. It is time to hear one more story from Cathy, in parting from her. It is time to consider where she has landed now (or recently), in her thinking about educational change in Nunavut, and the role of knowledge from and about the past in decolonizing. It is time to take what she has offered and make our own meaning, tell our own stories. In Chapter 3 I introduced the educational questions that have driven Cathy’s career and also changed over time. Below are the questions she grapples with now:

I think that the questions I'm left with are much bigger questions. And they're really societal level questions. What is the role of education, in the sense of being a change agent—sort of the way Freire would think about education—as a social change movement? What's the role of education in... in getting the society of Nunavut to address the social challenges that they have, in the same way that they addressed the political challenges to create the territory and the government, and the land claim? So that [political] part has been established, but people don't seem to get that the need to deal with the social challenges is every bit as important right now as the political challenge was when people started working on that. Nobody's saying: 'What's the underlying challenge or history that created this situation, and how do we, as a society, work together collaboratively to change it, with as much attention as was given to the political work that was done?'

I think that education does have a big role in that, I just don't know how to make that happen so that it becomes a collective, collaborative process. And an integrated process instead of a bunch of isolated initiatives that nobody is connecting. And I don't think they're really connecting [the problems] to the history. So they don't really understand why those social issues are the way they are. And therefore, they don't understand the need to act differently to create a different future.

And related to that question, or maybe it's the outcome of that initiative, is: How do we define and create the able human being that has the best of the principles and values of both Qallunaat and Inuit worlds, perspectives, epistemologies?—or whatever word you want to use. A person who has both the traditional cultural foundation to give them a place to stand, a place to work from, but works in the modern world of the 21st century? So if we address the social challenges we might better be able to create that person. And I think of it as the 'New Man' that Franz Fanon spoke about. Although, it hasn't been achieved in the same way as his, through violent revolution. So to me those are the outstanding big picture questions that education has for the future. And some people would say that that's really nothing to do with education, but I think it's everything to do with education.

There is a clearly enlarged aperture in Cathy's questions here, as she has said, moving from viewing schools in their cookie-cutter, factory-model, assimilative, and Eurocentric roots, towards becoming more in tune with their communities. Now, Cathy is not only placing schools in their communities, but potentially impacting those communities; as the location of social change, and an integral, potentially positive, part of social movements in Nunavut.

7.6 Conclusion

Educational change was occurring in multiple sites and complex ways across the Nunavut education system between the years 2000 and 2013. In Chapter 3 I featured Cathy's career biography, how and what she learned as a long-term educational leader in the NWT and Nunavut. Through her stories change is evident, and constant. Chapter 4 outlined the changing role of Elders working in and for schools, the rationale for their contributions to educational philosophy and policy, and the complexities of collecting and drawing on Elder knowledge to inform present ways of knowing, being and doing in schools. New processes of providing

Nunavut curriculum were the subject of Chapter 5, with an emphasis on that which has been developed and implemented specifically with Nunavut students in mind. I noted the length of time, specific expertise, and many considerations involved in facilitating curricular change. And, Chapter 6 offered a description of how educational leadership has become increasingly Nunavut-centered, such as through the design, content and facilitation of pedagogy for decolonizing using Nunavut and Inuit histories. In response to my first research question: What are some policy, curriculum and leadership initiatives in the Nunavut school system since 2000 that can be considered new decolonizing efforts? I argue that these three sites—the role of Elders, recent Nunavut curriculum, and leadership development—can be considered new, decolonizing efforts on the part of the NDE.

My second research question drove me to look for knowledge from and about the past: What sources and kinds of knowledge led to, and informed, recent decolonizing initiatives in the Nunavut school system? I found it in the form of Cathy's memories, experiences, and exposure over a long period of time to Indigenous and cross-cultural education contexts and scholarship. As a long-term Qallunaaq educational leader, she weaves such knowledge into stories that inform the rationales she provides for school system projects, and how they are carried out. I found knowledge from and about the past in the traditional, historical, linguistic and experiential knowledge, skills, and attitudes shared by Inuit Elders. Life experience and intergenerational learning shared by Elders has been used by the NDE in development of foundational philosophy documents, policy, classroom resources, and other curriculum projects. In *Aulajaaqtut* curriculum developed for Nunavut schools, I found knowledge from and about the past sourced from anthropological research, European or Euro-descended theorists, Inuit Elders, Inuit leaders and experienced educators. These sources could also be seen in the approaches to developing and implementing new curriculum across the system. Knowledge from and about the past is in the content of Roots Day, in several forms: Inuit oral histories from public reports and documentary films on histories of colonization/decolonization; Inuit political leaders' stories; open invitations for Inuit educators and community members to share their memories from the past; non-Indigenous educator reflections on their positionality and role in schools, in response to histories of colonization/decolonization; and, reports regarding what Inuit educational leaders have said about leadership challenges in the past. With Cathy, I identified experiences, procedures, challenges, and opportunities in researching and implementing knowledge from and about the past with NDE staff. The challenges were often found in the translation, interpretation and cross-

cultural bridging between Elder knowledge, IQ, histories of colonization, and contemporary school contexts informed by Eurocentric knowledges and structures.

I did not look thoroughly at the whole school system, and I did not look intentionally for sites where knowledge from and about the past was not being used (but neither did I intentionally ignore such possibilities). Another project with that emphasis might provide a generative dialectic. However, documenting spaces where the knowledge and histories of Nunavummiut are found is important because they have not been substantially documented to date. The examples I featured in this dissertation attempt to make ways of working for change more accessible when: institutional memory may be tenuous; change is constantly subject to influence from Eurocentric and assimilative assumptions in colonizing/decolonizing relations; and, institutional policy and practice is perpetually interfered with by contextual factors such as distance. More work could also be done in showing how these decolonizing initiatives have been taken up or “lived” by Nunavut educators.

My third research question was: How and why is knowledge from and about the past brought forward by Nunavut educators in initiatives intended to facilitate change to the school system? I have offered evidence of how educators have participated in such initiatives through Cathy’s memories, and the expectations and invitations she advanced as an educational leader in consultation with her colleagues. I have shown what has been expected of educators through documents: legislation, standing procedures, curriculum examples, handbooks, program objectives and reports. I have also shared what can be gleaned about teacher and leader experience from other published sources such as educational research.

I worked towards telling stories of the Nunavut school system, with an emphasis on what long-term educators have centred and promoted within the institution. The purpose of including a high level of detail about these examples is to be more specific about what is involved in commitments to Inuit education: why such commitments are warranted; why the work takes a long time; what it asks of staff; what supports are necessary; what challenges will be encountered; and, what some of the outcomes may be for teachers, students, communities, and school systems. Being more specific may better inform what is otherwise often polemical, polarizing and unrealistic dialogue about what constitutes quality schooling in Nunavut (and Indigenous contexts more broadly), to what extent such schooling should draw or diverge from southern Canadian approaches, and how to achieve decolonizing educational goals. Each chapter, then, has brought us to consider the kinds of knowledge, the ways of being, and the actions that constructively implement Indigenous-sourced goals for schooling in Nunavut.

Although transferability and generalizability may be possible with care, flexibility, and cultural responsiveness, this has not largely informed my approach.

Educators in the Nunavut public school system during the period of this analysis, primarily between 2000 and 2013 have been expected to transition away from an institution, curriculum, and programs that delivered Eurocentric schooling as part of the Canadian Arctic colonization process. They were asked to do this work with one eye towards questioning and re-examining aspects of that system that have not worked for Nunavut communities, and another eye towards envisioning and changing schools to better reflect the interests of Nunavummiut. This was occurring in an era following the settlement of land claims, as well as the uncertain implementation of those claims.

Knowledge from and about the past helps to explain individual and collective intergenerational historical trauma, resulting from the imposition of colonization and settlement on Inuit. Such actions by government representatives and other outsiders have left wounds, residues and legacies on the social fabric of Nunavut. But there are also deep wells of IQ and Inuit language to which Nunavut educators and students require access. This can be offered by educational initiatives in schools and in the public realm. The NDE has worked towards doing this through Elder instruction, new curriculum, educational leadership development, school improvement processes, and advocating for the inclusion of history education in other venues where questions of decision-making and educational philosophy are being discussed.

The decolonizing space of engagement is deeply related to issues of history and knowing with historical consciousness. It involves analysis of the past in relation to the present and future. Current conditions of inequity for Indigenous peoples and the privilege accessible to non-Indigenous peoples are embedded with past politics, policies and structures that have ongoing effects on present and future relations. Indigenous peoples generally view the intersection of histories, memories, and decolonizing as a process to account for that which has been taken, that which has been silenced, the counter-narratives that exist, as well as the possibilities they illuminate. Decolonizing by learning about the past has recently been supported in Nunavut through initiatives such as the Qikiqtani Truth Commission and Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, however these efforts are not structured for the long term, and the extent to which they involve non-Inuit participants is limited. How decolonizing is being pursued, how learning about the past is involved in this process, and how to continue change in the present and future in culturally responsive ways, are open, complex and challenging questions that have not been thoroughly explored in Nunavut. Therefore, this research attempts to contribute to

theorizing decolonizing in schools, a venue that has potential for long-term influence on the public. Decolonizing in Nunavut schools may be understood as: *deliberately, inclusively and continuously reflecting on stories that have shaped education and schools in Nunavut; and, using such stories in envisioning and acting on decisions about schools that are sourced from Nunavut communities, with particular attention to Indigenous self-determination.*

Through this inquiry I found that the sustainability of change in a cross-cultural, decolonizing context is elusive and challenging. Educational leaders, educators and schools are unlikely to reach a stable moment of fulfillment wherein they hold *sufficient* historical consciousness, or the present reality *is* decolonized. Even when the river is frozen in winter, it responds to changes in weather, temperature, sunlight, and other conditions. It is unsettling to acknowledge that time constantly slips away, and that what was done before may no longer be relevant or possible. However, knowing with historical consciousness may serve educators by illustrating that knowledge is always conditioned by place, time, identity, and relationships; therefore, it can, and must, be remade. I argue that this warrants practices of continuously and recursively revisiting knowledge about what is ethical and desirable in schools, to support culturally responsive educational change.

Elders and long-term educators offer us stories and can act as mentors in this regard. This is the potential utility of one person's stories in understanding educational change. This is the source of hopefulness and potential I attach to sharing stories about accomplishments and struggles in Nunavut schools in the past. Sometimes it only takes a relationship with one Elder or one educator who is more experienced, to see the purpose and work of schools differently; to hear the needs and wishes of Nunavut communities differently; to make space for working differently in schools on the basis of renewed relationships between Inuit and Qallunaat; or, to move away from reverting to expectations for schools sourced from southern Canada or Eurocentric knowledge systems.

However, even when older people recognize the warrants for openness and actions that can be taken in response to what they encounter, they may struggle to bridge the chasm with new learners. We do not often talk about the conditions under which understanding arises in every day school encounters. Silences about the exclusion of Indigenous peoples and incommensurability between their knowledges in disciplinary practices, such as history-making, do not help. Without the ability to explain the unevenness and inequity of the Indigenous-non-Indigenous encounter, and how that affects views of knowledge, legacies of colonization are difficult—perhaps impossible—to mediate. Maintaining awareness that the terms of knowledge

production have been uneven, and that the traditions held by each “other” may be distant from our own: this may lead to greater understanding.

A disciplinary oriented model of historical consciousness is problematic because it tends not to engage learners in acknowledging the silences in history and historiography, the contingency of a historian’s views, the historicity of ourselves, and our stories. Historiography tends not to encourage us to acknowledge the conditions under which we—as individuals shaped by that which has been handed down and by our own preconceptions—come to know. When models of historical consciousness ignore such factors they increase the gulf between marginalized peoples—who attempt to advance alternative histories—and those who perpetuate Eurocentric narratives with claims to objectivity. Those that say, “this is history and what you do is culture” do not account for the histories of power that have made such a view possible.

Knowing with historical consciousness means consciousness of being located in time and space—in events of understanding. Therefore knowing is understood to have limitations, and is constantly under construction, alongside our understanding of ourselves, our subjectivity. Educators have a responsibility to teach learners these limitations in understanding the past, and knowing with the past in the present. This is not to engender deep insecurity or paralysis, but to practice openness to, and engagement with, other perspectives. It is to continuously, reflexively situate our own perspective in relation to time, place, and the objects or persons at hand. It is to be open to what we cannot anticipate, but to which we must respond.

Following Gadamer, the changed self depends on what the knower or subject brings with them—the tradition within which they have been educated and cultured—and the time and place they engage with the object or person. Time and place, like the conditions of the river, create the conditions of stories and learning. The kind of understanding produced in historical consciousness practices may be reproduced, or lost, over and over as other experiences are accumulated. The nature of this knowledge is contextual and responsive, not objective or fixed.

Knowing with historical consciousness is to look for the ways a person or society understands the present, and projects expectations for the future with reference to the past—while remembering that their knowledge is contingent. When a person encounters a teacher, a question, an unusual situation, an ethical decision, or knowledge that makes them unsettled, for example, we may encourage them to practice historical consciousness. Knowing with historical consciousness in the Nunavut school system may be understood as: *drawing on knowledge from or about the past in an encounter that changes the self in the present; recognizing that understanding is historically conditioned; and, knowing understanding is limited by conditions*

that will pass away with time, or may not be valid in another place. Who the person is that is trying to understand, where they come from, and the extent to which they are open, matters in this historical consciousness practice. Listening carefully to the stories of those who have come before us should help account for this complexity.

Decolonizing work is hard, and usually it feels like there are few models to provide guidance. At times it feels cold, unpredictable, and isolating—as one might feel in navigating an Arctic river. I have felt this in my work for the NDE, as well as this academic project, and I see it in those with whom I work. It seems that progress is lost over time, as Eurocentric ways of knowing and schooling, return again and again. The recent changes in the Nunavut school system only follow from previous changes that have happened extremely quickly, relative to other Indigenous societies in Canada. As noted in Chapter 2, Inuit in Nunavut have gone from having virtually no schools in the mid-20th century, to having the formal mechanisms in place to establish their own school system only 50 years later. This aligns with the metaphor of a melting river as well; a sudden break-up can result in a flood for which those who live nearby are not prepared. Did the Nunavut school system take on too much change at once? In my view, the answer is yes. It is hard to say that. Does it mean the school system should change direction and return to delivering programs sourced from elsewhere? The answer is certainly no. No, the river will not start flowing from the ocean towards the hills, or stay melted forever. Educators must keep working towards the goals articulated by Nunavummiut, and they can—and will—find solidarity in navigating the struggles together, as they look towards the next season. But there has been no simple map, and there is no simple map here. As the melting river is different everyday—indeed, every minute—ways of working must always be adapted to one's particular time and relationships.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Inuit Qaujimajatuqangiq Guiding Laws and Principles

The definitions of these laws and principles are excerpted from *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: Education framework for Nunavut curriculum* (NDE, 2007). They were agreed upon through consensus decision making by a group of respected Inuit Elders. The explanation of the principles has been interpreted by Elders in the context of curriculum development for Nunavut's Department of Education.

Inuit Maligait: Natural Laws

Elders describe maligait (natural laws) as the most fundamental laws entrenched in Inuit society that respect one's place in the universe, the environment and in society. These laws speak to the interconnectedness in the world and the spiritual supports available to aid in survival.

- Working for the common good
- Being respectful of all living things
- Maintaining harmony
- Continually planning/preparing for a better future

Inuit Piqujanguit: Communal Laws / IQ Principles

Pijitsirarniq:

The concept of serving is central to the Inuit style of leadership and as such is the measure of the maturity and wisdom of an Inuk. Key here is the understanding that each person has a contribution to make and is a valued contributor to his/her community. Students will be expected to demonstrate this kind of leadership and commitment to serving the common good.

Aajiqatigiingniq:

The concept of consensus decision-making relies on strong communication skills and a strong belief in shared goals. All students are expected to become contributing members of their community and to participate actively in building the strength of Inuit in Nunavut. Being able to think and act collaboratively, to assist with the development of shared understandings, to resolve conflict in consensus-building ways, and to consult respecting various perspectives and worldviews, are expectations that cross all curriculum areas.

Pilimmaksarniq:

The concept of skills and knowledge acquisition and capacity building is central to the success of Inuit in a harsh environment. Building personal capacity in Inuit ways of knowing and doing are key expectations for students. Demonstrating empowerment to lead a successful and productive life, that is respectful of all, is a powerful end goal of our educational system.

Qanuqtuurungnarniq:

The concept of being resourceful to solve problems, using innovative and creative use of resources and demonstrating adaptability and flexibility in response to a rapidly changing world, are strengths all our students should develop. Resourcefulness should be demonstrated in all learning and also thinking that seeks to improve the context in which Inuit live.

Piliriqatigiingniq:

The concept of developing collaborative relationships and working together for common purpose. The essential Inuit belief that stresses the importance of the group over the individual

should pervade all our teaching. Expectations for students will reflect working for the common good, collaboration, shared leadership and volunteerism. Piliriqatigiingniq also sets expectations for supportive behaviour development, strong relationship-building and consensus-building.

Avatimik Kamattiarniq:

The concept of environmental stewardship stresses the key relationship Inuit have with their environment and with the world in which they live. Students will be expected to articulate respect for this mutually interdependent relationship and to demonstrate responsible behaviours that seek to improve and protect the relationship in ways that meet global challenges to environmental wellness.

Inuuqatigiitsiarniq:

Showing respect and a caring attitude for others. When people consider their relationship to people and behave in ways that build this relationship, they build strength both in themselves and in others and together as a community. This is foundational to Inuit ways of being.

Tunnganarniq

Being welcoming to others, being open in communications and inclusive in ways of interacting. Demonstrating this attitude is essential in building positive relationships with others.

Appendix B - Cathy's Educational Questions

Early teaching years:

- How can schools better reflect the people they serve (the students and their community)?
- How can instruction better accommodate English language learners, and the language structures of Inuktitut that influence Inuit children's use of English?
- How can more, and more relevant, curricula and assessment materials be made available for teachers in the North?
- How do Inuit children learn?
- How can parents be more involved in the school?

Consultant and program coordinator jobs:

- How can parents be better invited to express concerns and desires about their children's education?
- How can the ongoing and cyclical in-service needs of teachers be met?
- How can greater consistency in program quality and access to resources be made available to schools across the jurisdiction?
- How can language skills/literacy be developed across the curriculum, that is, in all subject areas?

BDBE years and time studying in Alaska:

- What do parents want their children to be able to know, be and do?
- How can Inuit leadership development be better supported?
- How can schools support youth to develop cultural? identity?
- How can the school work better with the community?
- What is Inuit pedagogy and learning style?
- How can teaching resources be developed that are culturally relevant and can also be delivered by distance or using technology?
- How do teachers make judgments about differentiation to meet the needs and strengths of each student (or as expressed by parents), balanced with the needs of the student body more generally?
- What difference did it make to schools to have a school board decision-making model with a majority of Inuit parent representatives?
- What is the impact of Elders as instructors on students and staff, and what are the challenges to bringing them into schools?

Questions raised throughout:

- How can curriculum based on Inuit knowledge be developed from scratch for schools?
- What do positive relationships between Inuit and Qallunaat staff members look like in schools? How can such positive relationships be built?
- How do we support principals to better implement northern goals of schooling?
- What is a high quality consultation, or communication with parents, and how do we know if it has been 'good'?
- How have youth that seem 'successful' become successful and what can schools learn from that?

- How does the school system engage the public in a discussion about history, including the impact of history on schools and communities?
- How do we know when the seeds of educational change have been planted well enough that they will live and be sustainable?

Appendix C - Selected Key Ideas, Criteria, Indicators and Measurement of Standards in *Valuing Values*

Explanatory Note

Following the selection of a key idea (respect for cultural identity) and development of criteria that in my view flow logically from the key ideas, I developed indicators for the criteria. These indicators provide more specific ideas that should/should not be present in relation to the criteria. The indicators have not been measured in a rigidly quantifiable way (ie. If the idea appears more than X times it meets the criteria), rather as follows: “Yes”—it appears in the content, “No”—it does not, or “Partially”—it appears, but with some limitations. These indicators were developed with consideration for how teachers may engage with the content assuming they are new to it, but are not limited to that perspective. After developing the indicators, but before determining if each indicator is present, I reviewed the entire Teacher’s Manual making notes on what seemed significant, interesting or notable (informed somewhat by the criteria I would be using). I returned to the Table, and in the process of completing the “Meets Standard” column I referenced the curriculum itself as well as my notes. When making a judgment about meeting the standard, I kept specific additional notes on each section that is marked “Partially” or “Yes.” I chose the sections that I judged as most important to provide additional detail/commentary in this report (usually sections marked “Partially”) to enhance clarity, to provide examples, or given the relative importance of that criterion in my view. Lastly, I returned to my notes to look for any significant points that were not captured when proceeding through the Table, to potentially add them. I recognize that this approach may be difficult to trace in that I do not consistently provide direct references to sections in the curriculum that inform my judgments, but this is balanced with the knowledge that some readers may be unconcerned with that level of detail.

Key Idea School programs should:	Criteria The curriculum includes:	Indicator The teacher is prepared/supported to learn:	Meets Standard ¹⁰³ Yes/Partially/No
A. be in accordance with respect for Inuit cultural identity (Ed Act section 7(4))	A. 1. Accurate characterizations of Inuit cultural identity	A.1-1 How Inuit describe and define themselves in terms of fixed traits and fluid practices	Partially* ¹⁰⁴
		A.1-2 Identity traits (if any) that are “compensatory criteria” (deal-breakers) for Inuit	Partially*
		A.1-3 How Inuit respond to stereotypes about them or outside definitions of them	No
		A.1-4 Description of the degree of homogeneity/consensus about Inuit identity	No
	A. 2. Examples of evidence, processes for how characterizations of identity can be justifiably claimed	A.2-1 Legal sources of identity definition (such as land claim beneficiary status)	No
		A.2-2 Community-based, cultural sources of identity definition (Elders’ ways of identifying individuals)	Partially*
		A.2-3 Academic sources of identity definition (such as anthropological approaches)	Partially*
	A. 3. Identification of actions that constitute respect towards Inuit cultural identity	A.3-1 How respect is generally understood by Inuit in the context of identity	Partially
		A.3-2 Actions that show respect for Inuit cultural identity are described	Partially

¹⁰³ Degree of presence or absence of the indicator/criterion. This differs from common (and often incorrect) use of the word standard.

¹⁰⁴ Where the chart includes a star after the outcome (ie. ‘Partially*’) it indicates that I comment further in the analysis below. Where there is no star, I do not comment further at this time.

Key Idea School programs should:	Criteria The curriculum includes:	Indicator The teacher is prepared/supported to learn:	Meets Standard¹⁰³ Yes/Partially/No
		A.3-3 Actions that show disrespect for Inuit cultural identity are described	No
		A.3-4 How people identified as non-Inuit may be expected to show respect differently is described	No
	A. 4. Content that is not in accordance with respect for Inuit cultural identity is identified as such	A.4-1 Presence of content that conflicts with respect for Inuit cultural identity	Yes*
		A.4-2 Content that conflicts with respect for Inuit cultural identity is identified as such	No*
		A.4-3 Reasons for including content that conflicts are provided (necessity of students knowing it)	No
		A.4-4 Suggested ways of explaining, negotiating or reconciling content that is not in accordance with Inuit cultural identity	No
	A. 5. Rationale for demonstrating respect towards Inuit cultural identity	A.5-1 Benefits of showing respect for Inuit cultural identity	Partially
		A.5-2 Risks/costs of not showing respect for Inuit cultural identity	Partially
		A.5-3 Sources of obligation for respect towards Inuit cultural identity	No