LAND EDUCATION AND RECONCILIATION:
EXPLORING EDUCATORS’ PRACTICE

by

Christine Hillary Bridge

B.A., University of Victoria, 1988
B.Ed., University of Victoria, 1991
M.A., The University of British Columbia, 2001

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Abstract

This study explored ways to integrate processes of reconciliation into educators’ teaching practice. The focus of this narrative inquiry was to engage educators in a series of land-based activities that prompted them to consider how the notion of “land as first teacher” (Haig-Brown & Dannenmann, 2008) might contribute to interdisciplinary approaches to land education, ecological recovery, and reconciliation in their classroom praxis.

Research took place on the University of British Columbia (UBC) Vancouver campus, situated on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Musqueam people. The 4Rs of respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility described by Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) provided an ethical community protocol that directed the study.

Over the span of four months, a participant group consisting of four graduate students, three undergraduate students, and two course instructors from the UBC Faculty of Education, engaged in a series of land-based activities on various public sites on or near the UBC campus that acknowledge and re-inscribe Indigenous presence. Following each activity, participants were asked to reflect on a series of guiding questions. Data sources included pre-study questionnaires, reflective journals, semi-structured interviews, and my own field notes and observations.

Findings of the research suggested dominant discourses regarding the use of land and ethics towards the land were effectively challenged over the course of the study. Participants expressed how they might re-shape their instructional approaches to include processes of reconciliation in a multitude of ways, and expressed commitment to build their own personal and professional knowledge, and awareness of Indigenous perspectives to help further these processes.
The study builds on a body of research exploring the effectiveness of decolonizing teacher education programs. It advances land education as a pedagogical model, and thus addresses the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s (2015b) calls to action for increased Indigenous content for learners at all levels. Further, it attends to the urgent need for reconciliation that runs deep in our country, by promoting mutually respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples (TRC, 2015c).
Lay Summary

This study explored how educators might integrate processes of reconciliation into their teaching practice. Research took place on the University of British Columbia (UBC) campus, situated on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Musqueam people. A participant group from the UBC Faculty of Education engaged in land-based activities on public sites on or near campus that acknowledge and re-inscribe Indigenous presence. The purpose of the activities was to prompt educators to consider how the notion of “land as first teacher” (Haig-Brown & Dannenmann, 2008) might contribute to approaches to land education, ecological recovery, and reconciliation in their classroom praxis. Findings of the research suggested dominant discourses regarding the use of land and ethics towards the land were effectively challenged over the course of the study. Participants expressed how they might re-shape their instructional approaches and commitment towards building their own knowledge and awareness of Indigenous perspectives to help further these processes.
Preface

This dissertation is original work by the author, Christine Bridge. I designed, conducted, analyzed, and represented the program of research with guidance from my committee. The research received approval from the University of British Columbia Behavioural Research Ethics Board, Certificate number, H16-02153.
Table of Contents

Abstract.................................................................................................................................................. ii
Lay Summary .......................................................................................................................................... iv
Preface..................................................................................................................................................... v
Table of Contents................................................................................................................................... vi
List of Tables........................................................................................................................................... xii
Notes on Terminology........................................................................................................................... xiii
Acknowledgements ............................................................................................................................... xv

Chapter 1: Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 1
  1.1 About the researcher......................................................................................................................... 2
  1.2 About the research............................................................................................................................ 9
  1.3 Research questions .......................................................................................................................... 12
  1.4 Dissertation overview....................................................................................................................... 13

Chapter 2: Literature Review ................................................................................................................ 16
  2.1 Land education............................................................................................................................... 16
      2.1.1 “Land as first teacher” .......................................................................................................... 18
      2.1.2 “Land as first teacher” in educational contexts................................................................. 21
  2.2 Decolonizing teacher education and in-service professional development.............................. 23
      2.2.1 Teacher education................................................................................................................. 24
      2.2.2 In-service professional development for practicing teachers.......................................... 30
  2.3 Reconciliation ............................................................................................................................... 33
  2.4 Summary considerations .............................................................................................................. 37
### Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Providing an ethical frame

3.1.1 The 4Rs

3.1.1.1 Respect

3.1.1.2 Relevance

3.1.1.3 Reciprocity

3.1.1.4 Responsibility

3.2 Narrative inquiry

3.2.1 Epistemological underpinnings

3.2.2 Temporality, sociality, and place

3.2.3 Relationality

3.3 Bridging the epistemic divide

3.4 Limitations of narrative inquiry as a methodology

3.5 Chapter summary

### Chapter 4: The research design

4.1 Participants

4.2 Activities and data sources

4.3 Site locations

4.4 Study settings

4.4.1 Study setting 1: Graduate course

4.4.2 Study setting 2: Undergraduate course

4.5 Participant introductions

Elaine
Beta .................................................................................................................. 75
Evelyn .................................................................................................................. 75
Josephine ............................................................................................................. 76
Bonnie .................................................................................................................. 77
Lauren .................................................................................................................. 77
Elyse ...................................................................................................................... 77
Teresa ................................................................................................................... 78
Hanna .................................................................................................................... 78

4.6 Data sources and analysis .............................................................................. 79
  4.6.1 Reflective journals .................................................................................... 79
  4.6.2 Field notes and observations .................................................................... 79
  4.6.3 Semi-structured interviews ...................................................................... 80

4.7 Chapter summary ........................................................................................... 81

Chapter 5: Analysis ............................................................................................. 82
  5.1 Reflective journals ....................................................................................... 82
    5.1.1 Phase 1: The five prompts ....................................................................... 84
    5.1.2 Phase 2: The research questions ............................................................ 88
  5.2 Interviews ..................................................................................................... 89
    5.2.1 Student interview transcripts ................................................................. 90
    5.2.2 Instructor interview transcripts .............................................................. 91
  5.3 Chapter summary .......................................................................................... 92

Chapter 6: Lens of Cultivation ........................................................................... 94
  6.1 UBC Farm ..................................................................................................... 94
6.2 Victory Through Honour ................................................................................................................. 97

6.3 Findings ........................................................................................................................................... 98
  6.3.1 UBC Farm ..................................................................................................................................... 99
  6.3.2 Victory Through Honour ........................................................................................................... 105

6.4 Discussion ........................................................................................................................................ 112
  6.4.1 Land education through the lens of cultivation ........................................................................... 112
  6.4.2 Ecological recovery through the lens of cultivation ................................................................. 121
  6.4.3 Reconciliation through the lens of cultivation ........................................................................... 123

6.5 Conclusions ....................................................................................................................................... 126

Chapter 7: Lens of Narrative ................................................................................................................. 128

  7.1 Musqueam post ............................................................................................................................... 129
  7.2 xʷmən̓q̓ə:m ..................................................................................................................................... 130

  7.3 Findings ........................................................................................................................................... 132
    7.3.1 Musqueam post ......................................................................................................................... 133
    7.3.2 xʷmən̓q̓ə:m ................................................................................................................................ 135

  7.4 Discussion ........................................................................................................................................ 143
    7.4.1 Land education through the lens of narrative ........................................................................... 144
    7.4.2 Ecological recovery through the lens of narrative ................................................................. 146
    7.4.3 Reconciliation through the lens of narrative ........................................................................... 150

  7.5 Conclusions ....................................................................................................................................... 153

Chapter 8: Lens of Art ............................................................................................................................ 155

  8.1 Overview .......................................................................................................................................... 156
  8.2 Guided art walk .............................................................................................................................. 157
List of Tables

Table 4.1 Overview of the three lenses, activities, and data sources. ........................................... 66

Table 5.1 How journal reflections were organized during phase 1 of data analysis....................... 85
Notes on Terminology

1. The terms “Indigenous” and “Aboriginal” are used interchangeably throughout this dissertation. I acknowledge these terms are sensitive and their use is not intended to be disrespectful or cause offence. In this dissertation, the terms are used in their broadest sense to capture, honour, and respect the diversity of Aboriginal populations in Canada (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit), and Indigenous populations within a global context. The usage of terms is also influenced by the word choices of the authors referenced or quoted throughout the paper.

2. The term “settler” is used on occasion to describe non-Indigenous Canadians. Similar to the terms above, usage is correlated to the choice of wording used by an author in a quote or direct reference.

3. The term “reconciliation” suggests a past action where a wrongdoing has been committed and impacted a relationship. Simply put, it is reaching a state of common understanding (DeGagné, 2014). It also implies possibility of forgiveness through an act of coming together again (Walcott, 2011). For the purposes of this research, I defer to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2014), which describes reconciliation as bringing awareness to our (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) common history as a way to renew relationships based on mutual respect and understanding. This relationship recognizes an awareness of the past, acknowledgement of harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behavior (TRC, 2015c, p. 113).
4. “Place-based learning” is a term used to describe an interdisciplinary pedagogical approach that focuses on a students' local community as a primary source for learning.

5. “Land education” is differentiated from “place-based learning.” Calderon (2014) describes the term as a pedagogy that utilizes both Western and non-Western forms of knowledge to achieve decolonizing understandings of land or place. Whereas the focus of “place-based learning” is generally on problems arising in a community or neighborhood, “land education” focuses more deeply on the relationships Indigenous peoples have had to their lands since time immemorial, and takes into account Land as a living fundamental being (Styres, Haig-Brown, & Blimkie, 2013, p. 38).
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support, for providing the best advice, for listening and talking things through, and for always being there.
Chapter 1: Introduction

This study explores ways to integrate processes of reconciliation into educators’ ongoing teaching practice. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) (2015c) asserts that an urgent need for reconciliation runs deep in our country. In addressing the TRC’s findings and calls to action with respect to the human rights abuses and deaths of Indigenous children in the Indian Residential School system, Justice Murray Sinclair reminds Canadians of the importance of education in the process via video: “It was the educational system that has contributed to this problem in this country, and it’s the educational system, we believe, that's going to help us to get away from this” (Truth and Reconciliation, 2012).

The process of reconciliation, as described by the TRC (2015c), is to establish and maintain mutually respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. Realization of these goals requires an awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behavior (p. 113).

To date the TRC’s calls to action have had an impact on educational institutions across Canada. For example, recent changes in school-wide curricula in many provinces attend to recommendations for mandatory age-appropriate curriculum that addresses topics such as residential schools, Treaties, and Indigenous peoples’ historical and contemporary contributions to Canada (TRC, 2015b, p. 7). In British Columbia, Indigenous perspectives are now embedded into all parts of the curriculum (Ministry of Education, Province of British Columbia, 2015b). The TRC (2015b) also calls upon post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms (p. 7).

Although the Canadian Association of Deans of Education (2010) has committed to providing these programs, their long-term success remains uncertain. Recent studies have
focused on the challenges relating to the levels of skill, confidence, and comfort non-Indigenous educators feel when teaching Indigenous content (e.g. Battiste, 2002; Deer, 2013; den Heyer, 2009; Dion, 2007; Higgins, Madden, & Korteweg, 2015). This is a serious problem given teachers' proficiency is directly correlated to students' learning (Rowen, Correnti, & Miller, 2002).

It is a critical time for classroom teachers and teacher educators. As educators across Canada are being called on to address issues relating to reconciliation in their teaching practice, research that considers how educators might effectively engage learners in these topics, build levels of confidence with respect to incorporating Indigenous content into classrooms, and respectfully integrate topics relating to reconciliation into interdisciplinary content areas is needed. This study addressed these aims. This narrative inquiry focused on engaging educators in land-based pedagogies and activities that prompted them to consider how the notion of “land as first teacher” (Haig-Brown & Dannenmann, 2008) might contribute to interdisciplinary approaches to land education and reconciliation in their classroom praxis. The pedagogical frameworks shared in this research provide a model for educators in the field to consider for their own practice – one that challenges dominant discourses, addresses the pressing need for change in our educational system, and supports the building of respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in our country.

1.1 About the researcher

My name is Christine Bridge and I am a fourth-generation settler of European descent. I am a graduate researcher and educator in the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia (UBC) Vancouver campus. I grew up on Okanagan lands and currently reside on Coast Salish territory – on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded land of the Musqueam First
Nation. In acknowledging my presence on Musqueam territory, I recognize that I am here as a guest – a grateful and respectful one whose lack of depth of knowledge regarding Indigenous epistemologies limits my understanding of, and appreciation for, many concepts related to this research. This has been a learning journey marked by significant adjustments to the ways in which I had been accustomed to viewing the world throughout most of my professional and personal life. This research has challenged me to rethink my educational background and teaching practice, my worldview and ways of knowing, and my identity as a non-Indigenous Canadian.

Similar to what Lenape-Potawatomi scholar Susan Dion (2007) suggests about the majority of non-Indigenous Canadians, my education and upbringing have been marked by a limited understanding of Indigenous people, history, and culture. For many years of my professional career as a high school English and Social Studies teacher in the 1990s, I epitomized what Dion (2007; 2013) describes as the “perfect stranger” – a position wherein non-Indigenous Canadians unwittingly claim a deep ignorance, preferring to know little about Indigenous peoples in order to remain innocent and not cause harm – a position that perpetuates dominant discourses in our classrooms.

When I first began my doctoral journey, I was focused on exploring ecoliteracy, story, and ecological recovery in local waterways. I took courses on environmental education with the intent of conducting a research project centred on environment and experiential place-based education – a project that would be supported primarily by Western perspectives and ideologies. However, as I started to engage with the readings in my coursework, I came to understand and respect that Indigenous nature-centred epistemologies and land-based pedagogies are the oldest continuing expressions of environmental education in the world (Cajete, 1994; 2000). I started to
question why I was exploring ideologies and frameworks that had considerable overlap with Indigenous epistemologies, but were drawn from Western sources.

At around the same time, I had the honour of starting work as a graduate research and teaching assistant for Anishinaabe scholar Jan Hare. Through working as a teaching assistant for her course, Aboriginal Education in Canada (EDUC 440), and as a research assistant developing curriculum on the First Peoples Principles of Learning and the residential school system, I began to recognize, acknowledge, and question more honestly my social position and complicity in maintaining dominant discourses. I was also ashamed by my own ignorance in not knowing more throughout my past – particularly with respect to residential schools.

This recognition and questioning made me re-evaluate the research study I initially aimed to pursue – one focused on experiential place-based education grounded in Western frameworks. As I reflected on my work with Jan, in addition to the TRC’s calls to action and changes to the BC curriculum, I made the decision to pursue a research project focused on reconciliation and Indigenous land-based pedagogies – a project that would better address and challenge the dominant discourses in school systems, as well as attend to the TRC’s calls to action.

In her book, Price Paid: The Fight for First Nations Survival, former Chief of the Xat’sull First Nation Bev Sellars (2016) writes about a phone call she received in response to an earlier publication, a memoir focused on her families’ experiences at residential school, They Called Me Number One. Sellars recounts the conversation she had with a stranger:

She said that she knew nothing of residential schools and it really disturbed her that while I was going to the residential schools and being subject to laws under the Indian Act that she was enjoying everything that Canada has to offer. … She was very upset that in a country that
allowed her to have so much, the First Peoples of this land were denied. She apologized for all that I had been through because of her ancestors. I told her as I have told countless others who have apologized to me over the years, “I know you are not personally responsible for these laws and policies, but now that you are aware, you have a responsibility to help change the situation. You cannot turn a blind eye to this because, if you do, you will be doing the same thing as your ancestors.” That would be my message to all Canadians. (Sellars, 2016, pp. 8-9)

I took Sellars’ words to heart. My goal in this research has been to move beyond my own “blind eye” and look at ways educators can challenge dominant discourses in their teaching practice that are respectful to the First Peoples of our country. This study is by no means an attempt to educate teachers on how to teach Indigenous content in their classrooms. It is more humbly, the exploration of a framework that educators might consider as they look for ways to redress and rethink the mainstream discourses that have perpetuated our educational system – a framework that facilitates the process of decolonization in our classrooms, and therefore, addresses the aims of reconciliation.

Cree and Saulteaux scholar Margaret Kovach (2010) writes “in asking others to share their stories, it is necessary to share our own” (p. 98). As a non-Indigenous, white, middle-aged woman, I have been cognizant of my background and position throughout the course of this research project. In positioning myself to the research, there were four perspectives through which I approached the work: 1) from a personal perspective; 2) from a researcher perspective; 3) from the perspective of a K-12 teacher; and 4) from the perspective of an instructor in the UBC teacher education program. It was important that I was attuned to these four perspectives
and how they impacted the ways in which I related to the research, to participants, and to representation of results.

As Kirsti Malterud (2001) reminds us, "A researcher's background and position will affect what they choose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most appropriate, and the framing and communication of conclusions" (pp. 483-484). My four perspectives worked in tandem during this investigation, as my personal experiences and background significantly impacted my roles as researcher and educator.

I have embarked on a personal journey of decolonization since beginning my doctoral program. In reflecting on my past personal and professional experiences, I recognize the amount of privilege I have been afforded as someone who has grown up, been educated, and worked in Canada. I am also cognizant of my “perfect stranger” stance, and how much that has influenced the ways I have approached Indigenous history and culture in the past. Hence, my approach to this research topic was tentative at the beginning, as my lack of awareness and experience with respect to Indigenous theoretical frames was limited.

I was naïve in thinking the more knowledgeable I became with respect to Indigenous pedagogical frames, the more confident I would become. This was not the case. In fact, the more I learned, the more cautious and insecure I became about the appropriateness of me pursuing these lines of inquiry. The literature clearly stated that my ability to fully connect with Indigenous knowledge frameworks was problematic due to an upbringing and educational background steeped not only in Western perspectives, but also in the use of the English language. As Mi’kmaq scholar Marie Battiste (2008) notes, non-Indigenous researchers must learn Indigenous languages to understand Indigenous worldviews. I fell far short in that
department. Kovach (2010) writes, “Indigenous knowledges have a fluidity and motion that is manifested in the distinctive structure of tribal languages;” hence, they “resist the culturally imbued constructs of the English language” (p. 30). She notes that from this perspective “Western research and Indigenous inquiry can walk together only so far” (p. 30).

Aside from a language barrier that could only walk me so far, the literature suggests one’s ability to engage in research with Indigenous knowledges is also problematized by attempting to do so through a Western epistemological lens. As Opaskwayak Cree scholar Shawn Wilson (2008) notes, an Indigenous epistemology has systems of knowledge built upon relationships between things, rather than on the things themselves: “the epistemology includes entire systems of knowledge and relationships. These relationships are with the cosmos around us, as well as with the concepts” (p. 74). Although entirely open to this way of thinking, I was mindful that “researchers, no matter how objective they claim their methods and themselves to be, do bring with them their own set of biases” (p. 16). Part of my personal journey of decolonization required re-evaluating not only the way I had been educated, but also my own Western thought processes.

As Battiste (2008) notes, any attempt to decolonize education and actively resist colonial paradigms is a complex and daunting task (p. 508). My Western biases were problematic and complex. They had been shaped by the colonial paradigms in which I had been raised and educated. Kovach (2010) notes Indigenous ways of knowing are guided by tribal epistemologies, and tribal knowledge is not Western knowledge. She observes that presently “there is a desire to give voice to Indigenous epistemologies within qualitative research, yet those who attempt to fit tribal epistemology into Western cultural conceptual rubrics are destined to feel the squirm” (p. 31).
I recognize the context within which Kovach makes these observations is directed more towards scholars who are attempting to “fit” Indigenous epistemologies into Western methodological frames – something I will delve into later in the methodology chapter of this dissertation. However, her comment about “feeling the squirm” is an understated way of expressing how I have felt on more than one occasion during the course of this research.

Considering my limitations as a non-Indigenous researcher delving into this subject area, I was mindful of Nisga’a scholar Amy Parent’s (2014) observation that there may be limitations to applying Indigenous ways of knowing in Western academic contexts; however, attempts to do so are useful: “they are part of an incremental change that will ideally one day lead to significant structural reform within the education system and other social institutions” (p. 75).

My motivation throughout this research has been a commitment to supporting lines of inquiry that promote the integration of land-based activities into educational settings, and thus challenge dominant discourses. Justifications for moving beyond the “squirm” and moving forward were to facilitate the learning of educators, with backgrounds similar to my own, to push beyond their own “perfect stranger” stances and explore how these pedagogies, when introduced in respectful and meaningful ways, can benefit all learners in their classrooms.

I am aware, as Spivak (1988) suggests, that making my positioning transparent does not necessarily make it unproblematic (p. 6). As Van Maanen (1989) notes, “confessions, endlessly replayed, begin to lose their novelty and power to inform” (p. 99, note 12). Acknowledging my role in the design of the research, my background, and justifications for conducting the study highlight the importance of my conscious awareness of these factors, as well as their implications for the research (Pillow, 2003). In an effort to be “vigilant about [my] practices” (Spivak, 1984–85, p. 184), the intent of situating myself is not necessarily a confessional act. It
is, rather, akin to what Wanda Pillow (2003) describes as a critical response to expose the difficult and often uncomfortable task of leaving what is unfamiliar, unfamiliar (p. 177). This research put me on unfamiliar, “uncomfortable,” and “uncontainable” ground (p. 188). Pillow (2003) describes this as reflexivity that seeks to know while at the same time situates this knowing as tenuous (p. 188).

Jean Clandinin (2013) stresses that in narrative inquiry, the research methodology selected for this study, researchers should be clear as to the purpose and justification of their research. In other words, be attentive to answering the questions, “so what?” and “who cares?” In attending to these questions, she notes the researcher should be able to provide personal justifications, practical justifications, and social justifications for their work (pp. 36-37). Thus far, I have attended to personal justifications for the work. The more pressing practical and social justifications for this research are rooted in its main theoretic frames, which are discussed in the following section, along with an overview of the study and the research questions that guided the process.

1.2 About the research

As we look at ways to address the urgent need for reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in our country, this study provides insight into how educators’ practice might facilitate the process in respectful ways. Dion (2007) posits the majority of Canadians have a limited understanding of Indigenous people, history, and culture. Thus, many classrooms across the country are significant sites for the production and reproduction of dominant discourses. As such, the TRC’s (2015a) calls to action for post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms are essential steps towards addressing these serious issues.
Indigenous education courses in teacher education programs have the potential to help teacher candidates investigate and transform their understanding of Indigenous people and the history of the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. This, in turn, helps educators with their own personal journeys towards reconciliation, in addition to providing them with pedagogical models for their own practice.

Although the TRC (2015c) acknowledges progress has been made on this front, significant barriers remain (p. 114). For example, Mohawk scholar Gerald Taiaiake Alfred (2009) contends, “The complete ignorance of Canadian society about the facts of their relationship with Indigenous peoples and the willful denial of historical reality by Canadians detracts from the possibility of any meaningful discussion on true reconciliation” (p. 181). Dene First Nation scholar Glen Coulthard (2014) also argues the TRC’s approach to reconciliation is problematic, maintaining it was originally developed for political states undergoing a formal transition from a violent history of authoritarian regimes to more democratic forms of rule. He asserts this approach within a Canadian context is inappropriate as it implies an ideological transition situating the abuses of colonization in the past, leaving the present structure of colonial rule largely unscathed (p. 22).

Disrupting the present structures of colonial rule is a common theme in the discussion of decolonizing teacher education and reconciliation. However, for Alfred (2009) and others (e.g. Walcott, 2011), the real, deeper problem of colonialism and the greatest barrier to the possibility of reconciliation are associated with issues relating to the land – moreover, to the theft of land.

Land is central to any discussion regarding decolonization and reconciliation. It is a starting point, both geographically and epistemologically, from which educators can draw awareness to dominant discourses and challenge embedded issues of colonialism. Land also
provides a pedagogical frame and respectful space that presents the opportunity for educators to explore Indigenous epistemologies and look at ways in which they might be integrated into their teaching practice.

Land-based frameworks are described by Dolores Calderon (2014) as pedagogies that utilize both Western and non-Western forms of knowledge to achieve decolonizing understandings of land. They take into account Indigenous rights and sovereignty, and also address environmental and ecological sensibilities, something much needed given the immediacy of global crises we face with respect to climate change, global warming, and environmental degradation. As Tewa scholar Gregory Cajete (1994; 2000) reminds us, Indigenous nature-centered epistemologies are among the oldest continuing expression of environmental education in the world, emphasizing the relationship between one’s self with others and the natural world: “if our collective future is to be harmonious and whole…it is imperative that we actively envision and implement new ways of educating for ecological thinking and sustainability” (Cajete, 1994, p. 23).

Hare (2012) notes that Indigenous knowledge is inherently tied to land, where meaning and identity are constructed through landscapes, territory, and land formations. Land is considered a source of knowledge and authority, where meaning is constructed through relationships and experiences (p. 392). Ray Barnhardt and Yup'ik scholar Oscar Kawagley (2005) observe that the depth of knowledge rooted in long inhabitation of the land offers lessons that benefit everyone as we search for more sustainable ways to live. Our challenge is to devise a system of education that respects the epistemological and pedagogical foundations provided by both Indigenous ways of knowing and those associated with Western society and formal education.
The integration of land-based pedagogies into teachers’ practice is an area of educational research not well understood, and one that has the potential to address pressing needs in Canadian society both in respect to relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, as well as to harmonious ecological relationships with the natural world.

1.3 Research questions

Research for this narrative inquiry took place in public areas on Coast Salish/Musqueam territory now currently occupied by settler development. The Musqueam people have lived in this location for thousands of years, and their traditional territory occupies what is now Vancouver and surrounding areas. The study involved a participant group comprised of members of the University of British Columbia (UBC) Faculty of Education. It included four graduate students, three undergraduate students, and two course instructors. The group participated in a series of land-based activities at various public sites on or near the UBC Point Grey campus that acknowledge and re-inscribe Indigenous presence. The activities were grouped into three thematic lenses: cultivation, narrative, and art. These three lenses, and the series of activities that took place within each, provided an organizational structure to the study. Chapters 6, 7, and 8 are each devoted to a thematic lens: cultivation, narrative, and art. Each of these chapters provides a thorough description, detailed rationale, summary of events, findings, and discussion relative to the lens in question.

The study took place over the span of four months during the 2016 fall term. Following each of the activities, student participants were asked to reflect on a series of guiding questions. Data sources for the research included pre-study questionnaires, reflective journals, semi-structured interviews, and my own field notes and observations. The research questions that guided the inquiry were the following:
• How can “land as first teacher” become a framework through which educators can integrate land education into their practice?

• How can the process of storying Indigenous presence through cultivation, narrative, and art contribute to interdisciplinary approaches to ecological recovery and processes of reconciliation?

• How can the pedagogical approach, “land as first teacher,” help educators shape their practice to consider processes of reconciliation that emphasize a learner’s awareness of the past, acknowledgement of harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behavior (TRC, 2015c, p. 113)?

The study builds on a growing body of research exploring the effectiveness of decolonizing teacher education programs. It further advances the emergence of land education as a pedagogical model that embraces both Indigenous and non-Indigenous epistemologies, and thus addresses the TRC’s (2014; 2015a; 2015b; 2015c) calls to action for increased Indigenous content for learners at all levels of education. It provides ways for educators to introduce ecologically sound teaching practices by introducing knowledge systems that embrace sustainability at their core. Finally, it addresses the urgent need for reconciliation in our country by promoting mutually respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

1.4 Dissertation overview

The dissertation is organized into nine chapters. Chapter 2 provides a literature review that delves deep into the theoretical frames of this research. It explores land education, decolonization in teacher education and professional development programs, and the process of reconciliation. Chapters 3 and 4 are devoted to discussion of methodology. Chapter 3 explores theoretical considerations with respect to the methods, and Chapter 4 provides practical
application of the methods: that is, details regarding the order of events of the research, the activities involved, recruitment of participants, participant introductions, and sources of data collection. Chapter 5 details the methods of data analysis used to analyze the reflective journals and semi-structured interviews. Findings and discussion relating to this analysis are presented in Chapters 6, 7, and 8. Each of these chapters focuses on one of the three thematic lenses that provided organizational structure for the activities selected for the study.

Chapter 6 is devoted to the lens of cultivation and the activities that took place during this first phase. Included in this chapter is an explanation of why cultivation was selected as a guiding theme and how this theme relates to the activities selected. An overview of the events, findings, discussion, and summary perspectives is provided. Discussion and summary perspectives focus on how this first set of activities addressed each of the three research questions. Scholarly research germane to the findings is included in the discussion section of this chapter.

Similar in structure, Chapter 7 is focused on the thematic lens of narrative. This chapter explores this theme in relation to the activities selected during this second phase of the research and offers a summary of events, findings, discussion, and concluding perspectives. The discussion section within this chapter is shaped by how the findings within the lens of narrative addressed each of the research questions, in addition to how findings resonated with scholarly research in the field.

Chapter 8 is dedicated to the final set of activities organized under the lens of art. As this was the final phase of the research, this chapter is extended: in addition to the provision of a thorough description, detailed rationale, summary of events, findings, and discussion relative to the lens of art, it includes discussion relating to participants’ reflections regarding their levels of
comfort with respect to integrating Indigenous pedagogies into their educational practice.

Scholarly research with respect to discussion items is reviewed.

   Summary conclusions of the research are provided in Chapter 9. These conclusions are followed by discussion of the limitations of this study, and suggestions as to possible areas of further research that build upon the work presented.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter first describes the theoretical frame of land education and introduces the concept of “land as first teacher.” It then explores studies that have drawn on this concept and its principles as a pedagogical model. The second section focuses on Indigenous education and decolonization within the context of teacher education and in-service professional development. The rationale as to why these programs are essential is discussed, in addition to their effectiveness. A third section addresses the concept of reconciliation and explores what the concept means, as well as how it relates to the educational context of Canadian society.

2.1 Land education

Many educators are focusing on land and place in educational settings as a way to foster student awareness of global environmental and social justice issues. The pedagogical approach of learning from place, or place-based learning, is an interdisciplinary instructional strategy that uses the local community and environment as a starting point to teach various concepts and subjects across the curriculum (Sobel, 2005). Proponents, such as Kentucky farmer and author Wendell Berry (1987), see it as a logical step towards educating young people about ecological recovery: “We cannot immunize the continents and oceans against our contempt for small places and small streams. Small destructions add up and finally they are understood collectively as large destructions” (p. 7). Advocates argue that a locally-focused, developmentally-appropriate curriculum in schools can lead to improvements in the health, intellectual abilities, and motivation of students, in addition to helping them feel a stronger connection to the places where they live (Sobel, 1996; 2005).

The benefits of place-based approaches are reflected in recent changes to curricula across Canada. For example, new curriculum in British Columbia (Ministry of Education, Province of
British Columbia, 2015a) emphasizes the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in the classroom, with specific reference to pedagogical approaches that focus on engaging learners with the land and natural world (p. 24). As Walter (2013) notes, Indigenous peoples perfected complex educational systems and pedagogies in which learning took place in the outdoors centuries ago. Indigenous pedagogies engage learners in experiential learning, land-based experiences, and oral narrative (Brayboy & Castagno, 2009; Battiste, 2002). The new BC curriculum promotes approaches that respect the epistemological and pedagogical foundations provided by both Indigenous ways of knowing and those associated with Western educational models.

In academic circles, place-based learning has been criticized over the years as being a predominantly Western approach. In particular, critics suggest its rural and pastoral focus lacks the rigor of critical theory and post-colonial perspectives. David Gruenewald’s (2003b) critical pedagogy of place addresses some of these concerns. Gruenewald (2003b) focuses on the “spatial dimension of situationality and its attention to social transformation” (p. 4). He writes that by reflecting on one’s “situationality” within a place, individuals begin to change their relationship to it, and at the same time contemplate dominant oppressive forces acting upon them. The terms for these processes of realizing dominant forces and acting upon them are “decolonization” and “reinhabitation” (p. 4). Decolonization and reinhabitation are educational goals with the common task of linking “school and place-based experience to the larger landscape of cultural and ecological politics” (p. 9).

Although Gruenewald’s (2003b) theory has resonated with many theorists, it, too, has been subject to critique. Some suggest his writings do not go far enough to promote decolonizing goals that should be included in any learning model focused on cultural and ecological sustainability. Calderon (2014) views his theory as a step in the right direction, but argues issues
relating to sustainability cannot be understood if Indigenous communities are not central. In particular, the concept of territoriality must be a key component of such work, thus providing the basis for land education as a pedagogical model.

Land education is described by Tuck, McKenzie, and McCoy (2014) as a pedagogy that situates Indigenous epistemological and ontological accounts of land at the center of discussion. This includes Indigenous understandings of land, Indigenous language in relation to land, and Indigenous critiques of settler colonialism. Land-based learning is differentiated from place-based learning in a number of ways. Styres, Haig-Brown, and Blimkie (2013) point out that place-based learning has not been historically connected to Indigenous knowledge and, in particular, to the local Indigenous context within which the learning is taking place. Second, the focus of place-based learning is generally on problems in a community or neighborhood and these problems may or may not involve the natural environment. Third, place-based learning often does not recognize the relationships Indigenous peoples have had with their lands since time immemorial nor take into account “Land as a living sentient being” (p. 38).

2.1.1 “Land as first teacher”

Land-based pedagogies have the potential to create an educational space within which students can acknowledge and learn the foundational knowledge of the traditional territories on which they work and reside. They also re-enforce the concept of “land as first teacher” (Haig-Brown & Dannenmann, 2008), a perspective that “draws on very old pedagogies” (Haig-Brown, 2005, p. 89) within which land refers to more than physical geographic space to include embedded discourses, ideologies, and philosophies in the form of ancient knowledges and storying that informs pedagogy holistically (Chambers, 2006).
From this perspective, the notion of “land as first teacher” seeks to balance the physical, cognitive, emotive, and spiritual elements of human interactions with and within learning environments. In essence, “land becomes the first teacher, the primary relationship” (Haig-Brown & Hodson, 2009, p. 168) that includes ancestral, historical, and present knowledge, as well as knowledge yet to be “(re)cognized” (Haig-Brown & Dannenmann, 2008, p. 248).

The concept of “land as first teacher” is explored by Styres (2011), who posits land refers to more than physical geographic space. It opens up possibilities for learners to consider how they are grounded, shaped, and informed by pedagogies, as well as how those practices can be (re)membered, (re)claimed, (re)constructed, and (re)generated within diverse contexts (p. 722).

Land becomes the curriculum. As learners enter into an environment to explore and gain knowledge and understanding of how to be in relation to land, they strengthen their connection to it as primary caregiver with every storied (re)membering, journey, struggle, process, and transformation (Chambers, 2006).

Situating land first, as a pedagogical approach, creates opportunities for educators to guide learners through a process of “storying” places from long views of time and experience (Bang, Curley, Kessel, Marin, Suzukovich III, & Strack, 2014). This requires journeying through layers of “colonial fill” that exist not only in physical spaces, but also in teaching and learning environments (p. 44). As Richardson (2011) reminds us, contemporary learning theory is often “object focused,” and thus, runs counter to Indigenous theories of learning that focus on development and maintenance of respectful reciprocal subject-subject relations. For example, according to Bang, Medin, and Atran (2007), school curricula focused on ecosystems almost always excludes humans as part of any system – this absence, they believe, is emblematic of the nature/culture epistemic divide in Western ways of knowing (as cited in Bang et al., 2014, p. 44).
Exclusion of humans as part of any system is typical of mainstream contemporary Western approaches to science, place-based, and environmental education. For a more hopeful perspective, Bang et al. (2014) see “land as first teacher” as a possibility for potentially transforming a nexus between epistemologies and ontologies of land and Indigenous futurity (p. 37). Realization of this transformation requires engaging with land-based perspectives and “desettling” the settler colonialism that smolders below the surface of educational environments that engage learners in contemplating the land and all its dwellers (p. 39). Learning environments emerge from situating land first and having learners holistically capture stories of specific places. The process makes visible the history and change of the lands in which we live, as stories are unearthed and “colonial fill” is removed (p. 49).

As Laguna Pueblo writer Leslie Marmon Silko (1981) observes, places can explicitly inform teaching and learning grounded in the form of stories that cannot be separated from geographical locations and physical places on the land: “you cannot live in that land without asking or looking at or noticing a boulder or rock...there’s always a story” (p. 69). As Styres, Haig-Brown, and Blimkie (2013) explain:

When we speak of layers of stories and relationships, we often imagine an X-ray allowing us to peer down through the layers of earth to see the footprints of all those who preceded us on this land. Our footprints join those of the first Indigenous person who walked here and all those who followed. Our stories are layered on theirs just as the footprints are layered on one another. All our stories. (p. 45)

“Land as first teacher” provides the philosophical frame for this research study. Dominant discourses surrounding issues of land and land use have historically excluded
foundational Indigenous knowledge of the traditional territories of Indigenous peoples in Canada (Tuck, McKenzie, & McCoy, 2014). This research aims to situate “land as first teacher” at the center of the learning process for educators. As a pedagogical frame, it provides a starting point from which educators are able to learn Indigenous epistemologies, consider interdisciplinary approaches to ecological recovery, facilitate discussion regarding colonialism and dominant discourses surrounding land and land use, and, finally, address the goals of reconciliation as outlined by the TRC (2015c).

In the following section, a summary of studies that draw on the principle of “land as first teacher” is provided.

2.1.2 “Land as first teacher” in educational contexts

Land education and “land as first teacher” are pedagogical models that are increasingly being addressed in teacher education coursework focused on Indigenous epistemologies. For example, Cynthia Chambers (2006), a curriculum professor at the University of Lethbridge, co-developed a course with Blackfoot Elder Narcisse Blood focused on visiting various sites on the Blood reserve. As a form of pedagogy, students were brought into the proximity of suffering and trauma – both human and ecological – no longer visible or audible for most. Chambers (2006) writes their hope as instructors was that a pedagogy of the land would bring students in proximity to the past. She writes that standing where “thirty to sixty million bison once grazed and to know that only 1300 remain, is to face the precariousness of life and our responsibility to ensure it may go on” (p. 37).

A focus on “land as first teacher” was the basis for a study conducted by Bang et al. (2014) in Chicago. In this land-based education project, the researchers’ aim was to uncover the ways in which settler colonialism is quietly entrenched in teaching and learning environments.
Working with practicing teachers, the group began to story the waves of ecological restructuring that has occurred in Chicago: for example, the filling of wetlands, the reengineering of the direction of the Chicago River, the destruction of prairie lands for agriculture, and the importing of plants from other places. In story(ing) the land from an historical perspective, a key finding was the importance of creating learning environments for young people that challenge conceptual developments and experiences of land aligned with frameworks that reinforce settlers’ rationales for their rights to that land.

Styres, Haig-Brown, and Blimkie (2013) write about bringing land pedagogies into urban contexts for teacher candidate coursework in Ontario. They found that by infusing learning on and about Land in the curriculum, teacher candidates began to more fully understand their place both in nature and in city environments, thus deconstructing the dichotomy between rural and urban landscapes. The authors write this process helped students appreciate the Land, First Peoples, and their relationships with them, as well as to see connections between colonialism, capitalism, and sustainability in the Canadian context (p. 56). Through experiencing Land in a local context, students experienced the interconnected and storied relationships that are in a state of constant flux in urban landscapes: “Students saw that travel outside of the city was not necessary to experience Land” (p. 57).

The concept of “land as first teacher” draws attention to land as a pedagogical model and, also, to decolonization as a topic of teacher education coursework (Chambers, 2006; Haig-Brown & Dannenmann, 2008; Styres, 2011; Styres, Haig-Brown, & Blimkie, 2013). Teacher education coursework and in-service professional development for practicing educators focused on Indigenous epistemologies and decolonization are important considerations of this research, as
the effectiveness of these programs is essential to future generations of Canadian teachers and students.

2.2 Decolonizing teacher education and in-service professional development

A focus on “land as first teacher” as a pedagogical model requires educators to consider their own philosophical understandings towards place, territory, and settler-pedagogies. As Frank Deer (2013) posits, contemporary scholars and teaching professionals are advocating for the integration of Indigenous perspectives within existing curricula for K-12 education in Canada. However, as Battiste (2002) observes, few universities across Canada have made Indigenous education a priority, suggesting few teacher training institutions have developed any insight into the diversity of the legal, political, and cultural foundations of Indigenous peoples, often treating Indigenous knowledge as though it were a matter of multicultural and cross-cultural education. As a result, she cautions that when educators encounter cultural difference, they have very little theory, scholarship, research, or tested practice to draw on to engage in Indigenous education in a way that is not assimilative or racially defined, as opposed to being legally and politically shaped by constitutional principles of respect for Indigenous and treaty rights (p. 9).

The collective need for Canadian educators to address the paucity of Indigenous perspectives in formal school settings cannot be ignored. Hare (2012) observes there is a troubling disparity in academic achievement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in Canada (p. 390). With respect to university degrees in Canada, in 2011, approximately 48% of Indigenous people held a postsecondary qualification, as opposed to 65% of non-Indigenous people (Statistics Canada, 2016). Arguably, formal education is failing to provide Aboriginal students with the educational environment and experiences they require to achieve success (Dion, Johnston, & Rice, 2010, p. v). As Mohawk lawyer and social activist Roberta Jamieson
(2017) notes, universities must play a critical role in the way Indigenous knowledge, perspectives, and worldviews are integrated into curricula.

The Canadian Association of Deans of Education Accord on Indigenous Education (2010) urges Faculty of Education Deans to make a commitment to advance Indigenous identities, cultures, languages, values, and knowledge systems in Canadian learning settings. However, as Blimkie, Vetter, and Haig-Brown (2014) observe, education accords and policy documents can only go so far: it is classroom teachers, administrators, and trustees in schools, along with school board members, who are entrusted with seeing policy move through to practice (p. 62). As such, there are also efforts in school districts throughout the country to provide in-service professional development opportunities for practicing professionals to learn more about Indigenous education and principles of decolonization. The following sections provide an overview of a growing body of research that explores the effectiveness of both teacher education and in-service professional development programs with respect to these issues.

2.2.1 Teacher education

As teacher education departments across Canada are requiring coursework grounded in decolonization and Indigenous perspectives, the effectiveness of these courses is a growing field of scholarly research. The following section provides an overview. For the purposes of this section, learners engaged in Indigenous education in university settings include teacher candidates, practicing educators who are pursuing graduate studies, and teacher educators who are instructors in education departments. Studies that focused on one or more of these specified groups of learners are identified.

With respect to changes in K-12 curricula and teacher education departments, den Heyer (2009) observes any new program causes concern for most stakeholders. In his work with
teacher educators and teacher candidates in Alberta, he notes anxiety relating to teaching Indigenous perspectives, and attributes this to a lack of significant personal or formal educational background in the area. Moreover, issues regarding Indigenous perspectives have the potential to elicit difficult emotions – particularly those that address colonial legacy, land disputes, and material and symbolic divisions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples (den Heyer, 2009, p. 344).

In exploring the integration of Indigenous content and culture amongst mostly non-Indigenous teachers, Kanu (2005) presents a summary of perceived challenges: 1) teachers feel they lack knowledge about Indigenous cultures; 2) there is a lack of Indigenous classroom resources; 3) racist attitudes of non-Indigenous staff and students are problematic; 4) many school administrators express lukewarm support for integration; and 5) teachers perceive a lack of compatibility between school structures and some Indigenous cultural values (p. 57). Kanu (2005) observes that as a result of the cultural disconnect felt by many non-Indigenous teachers, a piecemeal approach is often the easier course of action – one that does not place the teacher in a vulnerable position in the classroom.

A piecemeal or tokenistic approach to Indigenous perspectives was acknowledged by many of the teachers in Kanu’s (2005) study; as well, there was unanimous agreement educators were unwittingly contributing to the process of assimilation by allowing curriculum topics, not Indigenous perspectives, to remain at the center of their teaching. Integration of Indigenous perspectives for many teachers was occasionally added to a largely Eurocentric curriculum when convenient. On average, each teacher had integrated Indigenous perspectives into the social studies curriculum a mere six times over the entire academic year (p. 56).
Deer (2013) suggests that in spite of encouraging policy and curricular developments in the area of Indigenous education over the years, there is evidence suggesting non-Indigenous teacher candidates also experience apprehension with the prospect of integrating Indigenous perspectives into their training practica and prospective careers. In a study focused on teacher candidates’ perceptions of, and attitudes towards, the blending of Indigenous perspectives into their emerging practice, Deer (2013) found that while some participants reported a great deal of comfort engaging learners with curricula that presents Indigenous perspectives, a significant number reported feeling apprehensive. This apprehension was expressed in many ways: fear of failure, discomfort with the subject matter, guilt, and worry about the fact they were not Indigenous and therefore their uptake of Indigenous perspectives would not be perceived as authentic. As Deer (2013) concludes, the apprehension may be the result of viewing one’s self as far removed culturally, ethnically, and linguistically from the Indigenous Canadian experience, and of feeling the exploration of Indigenous issues in education may be viewed as the task of Indigenous peoples (p. 205).

Non-Indigenous teacher candidates’ and practicing teachers’ feelings of apprehension towards teaching Indigenous content is a systemic problem – one that many suggest reinforces the status quo of privileging Eurocentric curriculum in Canadian schools. Dion (2007) suggests until educators have the opportunity to investigate and transform their understanding of Indigenous people and the history of the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, dominant discourses will continue to be reproduced, “maintaining the ‘imaginary Indian’ as ‘the Indian’ Canadians have in mind” (p. 330).

In her work with teacher candidates, Dion (2007) observes that many of her students assume the role of “perfect stranger” when it comes to addressing Indigenous content. At the
heart of this positioning is fear and silence. She writes: “The fear of offending, the fear of introducing controversial subject material, the fear of introducing content that challenges students’ understanding of the dominant stories of Canadian history” result in “the claim for the position of perfect stranger” (p. 331). Dion suggests dominant discourses structure teachers’ and students’ engagement with stories of post-contact history; these discourses become a way for students and teachers to protect themselves from having to recognize their own attachment to, and implication in, knowledge of the history of the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

To say this is a problem is an understatement – for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, teachers, and communities. As Deer (2013) suggests, faculties and colleges of education need to continue to reform to accommodate the growing need for development in this area, and educators’ confidence in their ability to deliver Indigenous content should become a priority. For non-Indigenous educators to move beyond the “perfect stranger” stance and become more confident and comfortable teaching Indigenous content is a step towards challenging dominant discourses in our classrooms. More importantly, it also provides opportunities for enriching education for Indigenous youth, thus helping them realize their potential (Jamieson, 2017). As Jamieson (2017) notes, the only way there will be consciousness raising and provision of relevant training for those teaching and interacting with Indigenous students is through decolonization of our universities and teacher education programs.

Decolonizing teacher education is a topic of much discussion. Graveline (1998) discusses two stages that must take place in order to begin the process of decolonization: the first is an examination of one’s history and how it has contributed to the history of the world; the second is a rewriting of colonial history to show how it truly unfolded, not how it unfolded from a
Eurocentric perspective (as cited in Clarke, 2015). As David Geoffrey Smith (2003) reminds us, “it is best to work backwards, tracing trajectories to the present moment, carefully working out the lineages that brought current conditions into being. Only then can thoughts of ‘what is to be done’ be meaningful” (p. 37).

Clark (2015) describes the process of decolonization as a deep and complex journey – one within which learners “struggle with recognizing the pervasiveness of Eurocentric colonial attitudes in contemporary social institutions and in their own, personal assumptions and practices” (p. 5). In an action research project designed to determine the effectiveness of a course focused on increasing teacher candidates’ understanding of Indigenous peoples and the impact of colonization on Indigenous communities, Kitchen and Rayor (2013) concluded Indigenous education needs to be based on more than factual information and intellectual understanding. For real change in the classroom to occur, there needs to be critical examination of accepted pedagogy – it is only at that fundamental level that indigenizing education is possible.

Sanford, Williams, Hopper, and McGregor (2012) draw on their collective experience as teacher educators taking a course taught by Lorna Williams based on “Lil’wat” principles, focused on Indigenous ways of knowing through “Lekwungen” and “Liekwelthout” pole carving. Although initially received with “trepidation and doubt,” the course changed the ways of thinking for many people, including students, faculty, and the community (Sanford, Williams, Hopper, & McGregor, 2012). A key reflection was the apprehension and tension involved in learning and realization of the importance of disruption in addressing the needs of teacher candidates and their ability to learn in complex environments. The cohort argues that changing conceptions of teacher education programming is critical: for the most part, there has been little challenge to the Eurocentric model of education that has existed for over one hundred years –
one in which schools and teacher education have long been tools for colonizing, suppressing, oppressing, or objectifying learners, particularly Indigenous peoples (Sanford, Williams, Hopper, & McGregor, 2012).

A teacher education program focused on offering teacher candidates an infusion of Aboriginal content and pedagogies was the focus of a case study by Blimkie, Vetter, and Haig-Brown (2014). They found that teacher candidates, after the program, felt prepared to teach Aboriginal content in culturally respectful and meaningful ways. Infusing content throughout the entire program, as opposed to including it in a few courses, provided a foundation to build on and helped teacher candidates develop teaching practices inclusive of diverse ways of knowing and being in the world. Regardless of the success of the study, they write, “If the teacher candidates have taught us anything … it is that what we are doing is an important step but not enough to counter the enduring attitudes instilled in Canadian citizens through our schooling” (p. 62). Recommendations for further research include a longitudinal study with teacher candidates as they move into teaching positions in their own classrooms.

Research regarding levels of comfort, awareness, and knowledge of Indigenous content of practicing teachers in their own classrooms is a critical piece of this puzzle. Teacher education courses that engage learners in the process of decolonization urge non-Indigenous learners to confront their real identity as settlers – a deeply unsettling task – requiring a paradigm shift from a culture of denial towards an ethics of recognition (Ragen, 2011). How this shift translates into practice is less understood. In the following section, attention is directed towards research focused on Indigenous education in teachers’ professional development.
2.2.2 In-service professional development for practicing teachers

According to Dion, Johnston, and Rice (2010), teachers feel they have a special responsibility to teach content relating to Aboriginal people, history, and culture; however, many feel underprepared to fully engage in the process given their existing training, experience, and access to resources (p. 36). They note in-service activities and resources that prepare school staff members to act in ways respectful of Aboriginal people must be introduced into schools, along with images and materials that emphasize respect for Aboriginal people (p. vii).

In-service professional learning experiences that provide teachers with the opportunity to learn how to integrate Indigenous education topics and issues into school classrooms is a small, yet growing, field of scholarly research. In a review of literature, Brooke Madden (2016) notes certain trends. In general, educators who participate in school-based professional development focused on Indigenous education cite an increase in awareness regarding Indigenous-non-Indigenous relationships and Indigenous education. Also noted are improvements for teaching and learning conditions for Indigenous students (p. 33). Madden (2016) observes that professional development opportunities are often informed and supported by school partnerships for Indigenous education initiatives and reform. The majority of studies she reviewed reported collaboration between school administrators, university researchers, Indigenous community members, and Ministries of Education in designing in-service training (p. 29).

Community engagement is key, according to Dion, Johnston, and Rice (2010), who conducted a research project with over 200 students, parents, teachers, community members, and administrators in the Toronto School District. The research study focused on evaluating and providing an analysis of the Urban Aboriginal Education Pilot Project (UAEPP), a project focused on meeting the needs of Aboriginal students in an urban context. The research team
(2010) reported four key findings: 1) Boards must recognize the importance of understanding and responding to Aboriginal students, youth, and their learning needs; 2) meaningful and appropriate incorporation of Indigenous issues across the curriculum must be supported by providing in-service professional development for teaching staff; 3) schools and learning environments must be transformed in order to decolonize and indigenize learning spaces; and 4) Aboriginal Education must be prioritized across the Board by maintaining internal and external partnerships (pp. vi-vii).

Recommendations of the report, although specific to the Toronto School Board, are germane to school settings across Canada, particularly with respect to in-service professional development for teachers. Of note, teachers interviewed during the study reported that the most significant source of professional development experiences was direct and ongoing contact with Aboriginal teachers, scholars, artists, and community members (Dion, Johnston, & Rice, 2010, p. 36).

Madden (2016) contends there is a need for ongoing, sustained processes to address the longer process of decolonizing our schools. Practicing teachers also need professional development to help them address their feelings of anxiety and discomfort when teaching Indigenous content. This harkens back to Dion’s (2007) concept of the “perfect stranger” – a position that is just as prevalent in schools among practicing teachers as it is with teacher candidates in university settings.

In a research project designed to explore how stakeholder groups that included Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, Elders, Indigenous families, Indigenous cultural support workers, school board administrators, teachers, and principals could engage to support Indigenous education reform in an Canadian urban school board, Higgins, Madden, and
Korteweg (2015) found that most practicing teachers articulated statements that reinforced the positioning of “perfect strangers” in relation to Indigenous students. The researchers concluded that the “perfect stranger” stance is a significant barrier to non-Indigenous teachers’ engagement in Indigenous education reform and, as such, professional development needs to intentionally destabilize this positioning (p. 252).

Tompkins’ (2002) findings reinforce this statement. In a self-study involving predominately non-Indigenous practicing teachers in rural Nova Scotia, Tompkins describes the process of her own and teachers’ struggle to clearly understand their social location and the implication of power and privilege for their work in classrooms. She notes that at the crux of the work of decolonizing non-Indigenous educators’ conceptions of race and inequity is their conception of knowledge:

Colonialist conceptions of knowledge equate knowledge with truth. It is ‘out there,’ it is largely uncontested and it happens to coincide with the beliefs of the dominant group. In the case of Nova Scotia schools, it has been about centering that which is Euro-Canadian and pushing that which is Indigenous off to the margins, if not totally off the landscape.

(Tompkins, 2002, p. 410)

The need for increased awareness of, and engagement in, Indigenous perspectives by practicing classroom teachers and educators in university settings is critical in meeting the needs of Aboriginal youth in our country. Styres, Haig-Brown, and Blimkie (2013) remind us, “well-informed teachers in Canadian schools require an understanding of Canada’s contemporary and historical relations with Aboriginal people. Such understanding is fundamental to creating respectful relations that may lead to enhanced student success” (p. 54). A focus on the
contemporary and historical relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples cuts to the quick of talk regarding reconciliation, the final topic of this literature review.

2.3 Reconciliation

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2014) describes reconciliation as the process of bringing awareness to the common history of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. It is a way forward with renewed relationships based on mutual respect and understanding. The Commission’s 2015 report, *What We Have Learned: Principles of Truth and Reconciliation*, outlines ten principles for establishing new and respectful relationships – principles the Commission believes “will work to restore what must be restored, repair what must be repaired, and return what must be returned” (TRC, 2015c, p. 1).

Coulthard (2014) observes discourse regarding reconciliation gained considerable attention in Canada following the publication of the 1996 Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. The Commission was established in the wake of the failed Meech Lake Accord and “Oka Crisis” – the armed standoff between the Mohawks of Kanesatake, Quebec, and the Canadian military. Its mandate was to investigate the troubled relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the state, and to issue a series of recommendations that might facilitate a process of genuine “reconciliation.”

According to Coulthard (2014), the Canadian approach to reconciliation is problematic in that its adoption is similar to other political states, such as South Africa, where there was a formal “transition” from a violent history to a more democratic form of rule. The application of such approaches to the “nontransitional” context of the Canadian settler state is problematic because it situates abuses of colonialism in the past, framed as a process of overcoming a harmful “legacy.” The effect is then to minimize the current structures of colonial rule (p. 22).
As Alfred (2009) contends, “Real change will happen only when settlers are forced into a reckoning of who they are, what they have done, and what they have inherited” (p. 184).

The reasons why many settler Canadians have failed to engage in the "reckoning" (Alfred, 2009, p. 184) and why Canadians persist in the present structure of colonial rule (Coulthard, 2014, p. 22) are subject to debate. Regan (2011) argues this willful denial is due to an unwillingness to go through the uncomfortable process of decolonization, whereas Harrison (2009) contends it is due to widespread ignorance about colonization and Indigenous histories. When it comes to non-Indigenous teacher candidates, Dion (2013) suggests it is a combination of both, with fear at the core. In a video interview she offers the following explanation: “It's because they don't know. It's because they were never taught about the history of the relationship. They don't know how to understand their relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.” As a result, fear and ignorance keep informing each other and continue to get reproduced, “they don't do the work of learning and then their ignorance continues, and then they continue to be afraid.”

Leanne Simpson (2011) argues against using the term “reconciliation” altogether. She believes reconciliation has become institutionalized and what may result through its usage is an asymmetrical change that allows settler-Canadians to free themselves of guilt “while neutralizing the legitimacy of Indigenous resistance” (p. 22). She writes: “For reconciliation to be meaningful to Indigenous Peoples and for it to be a decolonizing force, it must be interpreted broadly” (p. 22). Simpson (2011) reminds us that all settler-Canadians should enter this process of re-education with eyes, ears, and hearts wide open so as to not reproduce and perpetuate the power imbalances that have taken place throughout Canada’s history of colonization.
Alfred (2009) suggests if the goals of reconciliation are justice and peace, then in order to achieve these goals there must be a basic covenant on the part of both Indigenous peoples and settlers to honour each other’s existence. This cannot happen when one party in the relationship is asked to sacrifice their heritage and identity in exchange for peace: “…the only possibility of a just relationship between Indigenous peoples and the settler society is the conception of a nation-to-nation partnership between peoples” (p. 185). The theme of building of respectful relationships is key for Justice Murray Sinclair (Truth and Reconciliation, 2012), who is firm in his resolve about the importance of education in the process.

According to Australian scholar Ian McIntosh (2014), reconciliation is not an easy concept. There is much debate over what it means, how it can be carried out, and how it is measured and/or achieved. He observes, “The gap between theory and practice is considerable, and we know little about the impact of varied reconciliation initiatives” (p. 57). McIntosh (2014) envisions Malcolm Gladwell’s (2000) theory of the “tipping point” as an integral part of the movement in the process of reconciliation, suggesting it should be seen as a series of tipping points, reflecting the fact that events and people change the momentum of the movement (McIntosh, 2014, p. 68). Denise Rundle (ECA Learning Hub, 2014), an early childhood educator from Australia, maintains the process of reconciliation happens both individually and collectively. In a video interview she notes: “I would quote what Wurundjeri Elder, Colin Hunter, has said to us – ‘Small steps often.’ And that really sums it up – small steps often. Do it a lot. Do it slowly.”

Clarke (2015) recently conducted research with non-Indigenous teacher candidates exploring their journey towards reconciliation. Her study focused on how environmental education can help non-Indigenous teacher candidates widen their understanding of land so that
they are able to address the neo-colonialism that exists in the field. Work with non-Indigenous outdoor environmental educators was also central to Root’s (2010) study focused on the nature of "decolonizing moments" in educators’ lives. Clarke (2015), Root (2010), and others (e.g. Korteweg & Russell, 2012) focus on land education and its impact on the field of environmental education.

Clarke’s (2015) study is helpful to the aims of this inquiry, particularly with respect to how she describes the process of reconciliation. She summarizes three common and essential elements: awareness, relationship, and restitution (p. 26). Awareness is the starting point for all Canadians and, in particular, for non-Indigenous Canadians. Clarke (2015) suggests their responsibility is to become aware of Indigenous peoples’ existence, rights, diversity of history, cultures, and worldviews. In addition, awareness must also extend towards the role settler-Canadians have played in colonization – one that continues to be reproduced through our institutions, societal structures, and social interactions (p. 26).

The second element, relationship, is based on the belief that by building authentic meaningful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples we move closer towards Gladwell’s (2000) idea of a “tipping point;” that is, we move towards reconciliation (Clarke, 2015, p. 27). I am reminded here of Rundle’s (2014) suggestion of “small steps” to achieve this goal.

Restitution is Clarke’s (2015) third element. Citing Alfred (2009), she argues reconciliation without restitution will only perpetuate the injustices of colonialism (p. 28). Without major political reforms that include restitution for Indigenous people, peaceful relationships are not possible (Alfred, 2009; Walcott, 2011). For both Alfred (2009) and Walcott (2011), the real, deeper problem of colonialism is the theft of land, and for true reconciliation to
take place, these issues need to be addressed. The process of reconciliation for Canadians is a journey not clearly mapped. However, Clarke’s (2015) three essential elements provide signposts or markers that help characterize the progress made during the “small steps often” along the way.

Clarke’s three elements are reminiscent of the TRC’s four goals in reconciliation: awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behavior (TRC, 2015c). (I respectfully add the fourth action goal from the TRC as a clearly articulated part of the process.) As Jamieson (2017) insists, the word reconciliation is not a noun; rather, it’s a verb – one that requires constant action, daily maintenance, initiative, perseverance, and a state of mind for all occasions. The TRC’s call for action to change behavior implies not only an impetus to change one’s own behavior, but also to influence change in the behavior of others. This, in turn, reinforces Justice Murray Sinclair’s message relating to the significant role educators and education play in the process (TRC, 2012).

2.4 Summary considerations

A common theme traceable throughout this literature review chapter is the need for educators to challenge dominant discourses within Canadian educational institutions. With respect to place and land-based pedagogies, scholars suggest learning from the land needs to take into account Indigenous knowledges that are situated on the land on which the learning takes place. This includes Indigenous understandings of the local place, local Indigenous languages, and critiques of settler colonialism (Tuck, McKenzie, & McCoy, 2014). Inherent in the land-based pedagogical model, “land as first teacher,” is the understanding that land holds a depth of knowledge and storiied relationships “etched into the essence of every rock, tree, seed, animal, pathway, and waterway in relation to the Aboriginal people who have existed on the land since time immemorial” (Styres, 2011, p. 721). Having learners rethink their positioning with, and
relationships to, the land may lead them to a deeper understanding of whose land they are on. This pedagogical approach also has the potential to make them reconsider how the land is currently being used.

In light of the daunting environmental problems and ecological crises we currently face, conversations regarding re-visioning the land through an Indigenous lens have never been more critical. In a presentation, anthropologist Wade Davis (2003) highlights how our relationships to land impact our perceptions of how it should be valued and used:

… a young kid from the Andes who's raised to believe that a mountain is an Apu spirit that will direct his or her destiny will be a profoundly different human being and have a different relationship to that resource or that place than a young kid from Montana raised to believe that a mountain is a pile of rock ready to be mined. Whether it's the abode of a spirit or a pile of ore is irrelevant. What's interesting is the metaphor that defines the relationship between the individual and the natural world. (para. 16)

Davis’s reflections highlight how one’s view towards the land impacts one’s interactions with it. Land-based pedagogies teach learners to approach the natural world from a place of respect and interrelatedness. For many non-Indigenous learners, this requires the conscious act of rethinking, re-evaluating, and re-imagining their relationship with the land.

Cajete (1994) writes Indigenous people have preserved ways of ecologically sound living that have evolved over 40,000 years of continuous relationship with special environments. These understandings and applications of relating to the land represent models for the “art” of relationship that he feels should be taught through modern education (Cajete & Pueblo, 2010, p.
He contends, “Modern understanding and reapplication of Indigenous relationship to the land are keys to creating social and economic structures that may mean the survival of modern societies” (Cajete, 1994, p. 78). The integration of land-based pedagogies in our classrooms has the potential to challenge dominant discourses with respect to our relationship to the land and the ways in which it is used. Through imagining the art of the relationship, ecologically sound ways of living can be realized.

Decolonizing pedagogies and practices with respect to the land offer guidance in looking at ways to address environmental and ecological problems. They are also tangential to understanding the depth of the relationship Indigenous peoples have had with land since time immemorial – a depth of relationship that makes the theft of the land all the more shameful. Drawing awareness towards our disturbing colonial past is pivotal to decolonizing our universities and schools. Critiques of settler colonialism are necessary not only in teacher education programs, but also in professional development in-service training for teachers.

The research provided in this chapter with respect to Indigenous education in teacher education and in-service professional development clearly states that an ongoing and sustained infusion of Indigenous education coursework, resources, and engagement with Indigenous community members are invaluable to decolonizing processes. They are also essential to disrupting the “perfect stranger” stances of non-Indigenous educators, a positioning that is rampant in Canadian schools. This, in turn, helps address the ever-widening gap between the achievement levels of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in our schools, a problem confounded by the fact Aboriginal students may not see themselves represented in the curriculum or the teaching population, and “are not encouraged to attend school in spite of a
long, negative, and hurtful relationship between Aboriginal people and schooling” (Dion, Johnston, & Rice, p. v).

Our current education system is failing our children. As the population and proportion of Aboriginal people in urban places continues to grow, Richmond and Smith (2012) warn there is great need for our schools to become places that meet the “growing cultural demands, educational priorities, and social support needs of this shifting demographic” (p. 3). Meeting the needs of our children in educational settings is the way forward to address the larger issue facing our country: reconciliation.

In reviewing scholarly research with respect to the building of mutually respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples of Canada, despite a divergence in opinions, common themes emerge. These are primarily focused on the steps non-Indigenous Canadians need to make in addressing a general lack of awareness regarding Indigenous history, culture, and language. This includes confronting a colonial past where atrocities committed towards Indigenous peoples of this country were part of the legislative landscape. Ours is brutal, dark, and shameful past – one that has remained remarkably hidden in our school curriculum, and yet is clearly visible in the colonial structures of our institutions. Dominant discourses pervade and reinforce this insidiousness, and it is through challenging these discourses that educators must lead the way in looking at ways to achieve reconciliation. As the TRC (2015c) suggests, realization of this goal requires an awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behavior (p. 113). It is in the hearts, minds, and wills of Canadian educators that realization of these goals is possible.
In the following chapter, how this research attends to addressing these goals is discussed further. Specifically, an overview of the ethical framework that guided this research study is provided, along with a description of the methodology employed.
Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter first outlines the ethical framework that guided the research. The 4Rs of respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility described by Verna Kirkness and Ray Barnhardt (1991) were instrumental in providing an ethical community protocol that directed the study from start to finish. Second, the chapter provides an overview of narrative inquiry, the research methodology selected for this study. Included in this overview is exploration of the epistemological underpinnings of the methodology, the three commonplaces of temporality, sociality, and place, and the concept of relationality. As narrative inquiry is considered a Western methodological approach and the pedagogical model for this research is grounded in an Indigenous paradigm, there are inherent tensions that need to be addressed. This epistemic divide is explored in further detail, and is followed by discussion regarding limitations associated with narrative inquiry as methodological approach.

3.1 Providing an ethical frame

Research for this narrative inquiry took place in public areas on or near the University of British Columbia (UBC) Point Grey campus, which is situated on Musqueam occupied territory that has been appropriated by the settler city known as Vancouver, Canada. Although not working directly with an Indigenous community during the course of the project, I was mindful of the necessity to establish a respectful community protocol to guide the study. As Métis scholar Greg Lowan-Trudeau (2012) reminds us, community protocols are important:

not only for researchers who are conducting research within a specific Indigenous community or attempting to embody their own cultural traditions through methodology, but for all researchers, due to the
fundamental fact…that all…education work and research in Canada is conducted on the traditional territory of Indigenous people. (p. 118)

Lowan-Trudeau’s reminder to all researchers is consistent with the pedagogical frame of land education. Since land-based pedagogies situate Indigenous epistemological and ontological accounts of land at the center of discussion (Tuck, McKenzie, & McCoy, 2014), adopting an ethical framework helps maintain the integrity of the research and, more importantly, is respectful of the land, of traditional territories, and of Indigenous peoples.

From an Indigenous perspective, Moari scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) observes, “ethical codes of conduct serve partly the same purpose as the protocols which govern our relationships with each other and with the environment” (p. 125). What predominantly guides these perspectives and relationships is respect. Smith (2012) notes respect is a term used consistently by Indigenous peoples to emphasize the significance of our relationships: “Respect is a reciprocal, shared, constantly interchanging principle which is expressed through all aspects of social conduct” (p. 125).

Respect is one of the 4Rs Verna Kirkness and Ray Barnhardt (1991) discuss in their article, “First Nations and Higher Education.” In this article, Kirkness and Barnhardt provide a set of perspectives and initiatives designed to help transform the learning landscapes of higher educational institutions for First Nations students in Canada and the United States. They remind us that in re-evaluating the very nature and purpose of learning landscapes in higher education, “we will find that the entire institution, as well as society as a whole, will be strengthened and everyone will benefit” (p. 15).
3.1.1 The 4Rs

As the bulk of my research took place in a post-secondary setting and involved instructors, undergraduate and graduate students as participants, I have looked to the 4Rs for Indigenous post-secondary education originally posed by Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) for guidance in this study. These principles are echoed in the work of numerous scholars (e.g. Archibald, 2008; Kovach, 2010; Lowan-Trudeau, 2012; Parent, 2014; Pidgeon, 2008; Wilson, 2008). Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) emphasize the need for post-secondary systems to provide learning environments that respect First Nations cultural integrity, are relevant to First Nations perspectives and experience, offer reciprocity in relationships with others, and help students exercise responsibility through participation (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991, p. 1).

Throughout the course of this study, I endeavored to maintain the 4Rs of respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility in my role as researcher, educator, and member of the UBC community. The following section articulates the ways in which these principles have guided the work and relationships throughout the course of this study.

3.1.1.1 Respect

Respectful research is mindful of the participants in the research, as well as those who may be affected by the results (Kovach, 2010). It is also mindful of Indigenous cultures, communities, and worldviews (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991). In my role as researcher, I was respectful of the cultural information shared with participants during the research activities. During the course of the research study, participants embarked on a series of land-based activities on or near the UBC campus. The background information provided to participants regarding each land-based location was available online and was publicly accessible. In selecting what information was to be shared, I was cognizant of where it had been obtained, who had been
consulted in its documentation, and who had published it. I was also careful to ensure any information regarding Indigenous epistemologies had been respectful of cultural protocols. All written or video information provided to participants during the study included input from Indigenous community members and was respectful of proper protocols. It had also been published by reputable sources, such as UBC, Vancouver Parks Board, and the Suzuki Foundation.

Respect was also a guiding principle in the development of my relationships with participants over the course of the study. I was respectful of their reflections, time, and input. I was careful to member check with each of them to ensure information presented in this dissertation regarding their background and points of view was presented accurately and respectfully. I was also respectful of the participants’ time during implementation of the study and worked diligently with each of them to schedule activities around their other commitments.

3.1.1.2 Relevance

Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) observe that if universities are to respect the cultural integrity of Indigenous students and communities, a stance needs to be adopted that moves beyond typical modes of knowledge transfer, such as books, to include institutional legitimation of Indigenous knowledge and skills (p. 8). This requires respect for Indigenous knowledge, in addition to an ability to help students appreciate, build on, and expand customary forms of consciousness and representation.

This research was relevant to the support of institutional legitimation of Indigenous knowledge and skills in two key ways. First, many of the land-based activities involved in the project required participants to reconsider various artifacts on campus that were representative of the erasure and displacement of Indigenous people in the Vancouver area. Hence, this project
may be considered relevant to the priorities of Indigenous peoples who are reclaiming knowledge and histories previously erased through colonial occupation.

Second, the project introduced participants to a land-based pedagogical model, one they might consider for their own teaching practice. As the BC Ministry of Education (2015b) states, the inclusion of Aboriginal perspectives and content in provincial curriculum ensures it is a part of the learning journey for all students [emphasis in original] (p. 7). This research is relevant to all educators teaching in BC, or Canada for that matter, as it aims to expand Indigenous pedagogical perspectives within mainstream educational practices. During the course of the research project, it was not only relevant to the participants, but also to the teaching communities within which they were working.

Conversations regarding the new BC curriculum were very much at the forefront of my conversations with participants – both in my role as educator and researcher. During the UBC 2016 fall term, for example, the teacher candidates who participated in the research study were eager to share ideas and talk about ways in which Indigenous perspectives might be integrated into their upcoming practica. They also shared ideas with sponsor teachers (i.e., the in-service teachers in whose classes they would be teaching during their practica). The knowledge and learning that happened during the study were relevant to their development as educators, as well as to the educational communities in which they were teaching.

As Kovach (2010) notes, relevancy is part of giving back and questioning whether the research assists the community. This entails ensuring the research addresses community needs, as opposed to solely meeting the needs of the academy. Although the relevancy of this research was attentive to the needs of the academy, it extended well beyond to address to the needs of the larger educational community.
3.1.1.3 Reciprocity

Reciprocity is based on the notion that the research gives back to and benefits the community in some manner. Sto:lo scholar Jo-ann Archibald (2008) highlights the theme of reciprocity in her principles of Indigenous storywork, emphasizing the importance of giving back to the people with whom one is working and sharing learning. I attended to this concept throughout the duration of the study, as well as following the inquiry. Reciprocity came in many forms. First, I offered stipends and gifts to the tour guides, community members, and Elder who shared information and knowledge with the study group. Second, any curriculum created during the course of the activities was shared with the various UBC community departments and representatives with whom I was working. For example, when organizing a visit to the UBC Farm, I was unable to arrange for a tour guide due to various time constraints; as a result, I conducted the tour myself based on information shared by UBC Farm representatives. I created a set of instructional materials for this visit that was given back to the representatives along with gifts. The materials and activities were also shared with participants should they choose to use them at a later date.

Third, reciprocity was addressed in my relationships with other teacher candidates and UBC course instructors not involved in the research study. For example, I was able to share my work and resources with the teacher candidates I was teaching at the time of the investigation, and help them find ways to integrate Indigenous perspectives into their own lesson and unit plans. I was also able to share materials and resources with colleagues who were working on community presentations that addressed similar topics. Finally, I was a part of several workshops and delivered conference presentations to UBC faculty and BC community teachers that described the research activities and offered ways in which the activities could be used in their
own practice. In sum, I engaged in reciprocity by contributing to the UBC community as a researcher, educator, and presenter.

3.1.1.4 Responsibility

The fourth R is responsibility. Responsibility implies that knowledge and action are inseparable from respect and reciprocity throughout the research. This is fostered through active and rigorous engagement and participation (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991). Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) observe that universities are not neutral enterprises and, as such, they need to be active participants in changing power, authority, and control regarding Indigenous education.

Institutional responsibility relates to the relationships universities have with the local communities in which they are physically located: it extends beyond increasing access to Indigenous education to include working with Indigenous peoples in transforming policy, posture, and practice (Pidgeon, 2008, p. 23).

UBC’s Behavioral Research Ethics Board approval process provided the initial stepping-stone towards outlining the numerous ways in which responsibility would be integral to this research study. As the study progressed, my responsibilities as researcher and educator grew in a number of ways. First was with respect to the responsibility of the relationships developed with participants and community members involved in the research. This included the responsibility of ensuring information provided to participants during the project was respectful of Indigenous culture and proper protocol. Also, it encompassed the responsibility of sharing participant stories, while striving towards protecting the integrity and anonymity of the various points of view that were expressed.

Second, the concept of responsibility was addressed at an institutional level. As the intent of the research was to engage participants in land-based activities that drew attention to various
public sites on or near the UBC campus that acknowledge and re-inscribe Indigenous presence, part of the goal was to foster awareness of, and critical reflection about, the relationship between the university and the local community in which it is physically located. As such, attention was drawn towards how UBC positions itself with respect to working with Indigenous communities in policy, posture, and practice (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991, p. 15); critical analysis of this positioning ensued.

As Tierney (1993) suggests, critical analysis involves moving away from identifying strategies of those in power toward analysis of how power exists in an organization. It thus creates strategies that seek to reconstruct and transform an organization's culture. Participants questioned UBC’s positioning at times during the activities, and levels of awareness and appreciation regarding Indigenous presence on campus were magnified and transformed. Participation in the land-based activities encouraged student engagement, active involvement, and critical reflection with respect to institutional responsibilities towards First Nations communities. Participants were invited into a larger and collective conversation that prompted reflection of institutional responsibility and accountability – one that went beyond the scope of classroom praxis to include engagement with these concepts at a macro level. Thus, the principle of responsibility served as a cornerstone of the project both in terms of guiding my personal interactions with community members and participants, as well as in respect to the design of the research activities and the institutional context within which they took place.

Responsibility was also wholly interconnected to the other Rs of the research: respect, relevance, and reciprocity. The 4Rs helped to establish ethical principles and holistic values that guided the research process. They also worked to provide a framework that helped underscore the epistemologies of the theoretical frame of the research, which in turn helped support the
methodology, narrative inquiry. A fulsome discussion of narrative inquiry is the topic of the following section.

3.2 Narrative inquiry

In selecting a methodology for this research, it was essential the method be inclusive of ethical considerations consistent with, and supportive of, Indigenous perspectives. It also needed to align with the intent of the research questions. To address these issues, I looked to the field of narrative inquiry.

Making meaning from peoples’ lived experiences is central to narrative inquiry, a methodology that has grown out of an oral tradition that allows participants to explore the meaning of experience and life histories (Clark, 2015; Kovach, 2010; Lowan-Trudeau, 2012). Narrative researchers study stories solicited from others. Stories are invitations to a particular style of epistemology and, as such, may have as powerful an influence in shaping modes of thought as they have in creating the realities their plots depict (Heath, 1983).

According to Battiste (2015), narrative inquiry offers an important process that moves beyond researchers, research questions, proposals, and transcripts to provide rich stories that can be shared and appreciated (p. xvi). Kanaka Maoli scholar Maenette Benham (2007) observes these stories illuminate knowledge in a way that helps connect us to the roots of who we are as individuals and as a community (p. 512).

The selection of narrative inquiry for this research allowed me to chronicle and weave together participant experiences, my own observations, and scholarly research in the field. Since narrative inquiry is a way of understanding and inquiring into experience through “collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 20), it fit well for the purposes of this
research. Creswell (2008) suggests the new narrative that emerges through this collaboration is best structured around a chronology of events describing the participant’s past, present, and future experiences, as well as situated within a specific setting or context.

3.2.1 Epistemological underpinnings

Margaret Kovach (2010) writes that narrative inquiry has been a useful methodology for researchers who wish to make meaning from story. However, as Pillow (2003) reminds us, believing a methodology is solely comprised of method ignores the depth of knowing that is found within its epistemological foundations (p. 185). Kovach (2010) states that within any methodology there are two processes that work in tandem: a knowledge belief system that encompasses ontology and epistemology, and the actual methods (p. 25). As a researcher, it is critical to have a clear understanding of the epistemological underpinnings of the methodology to ensure it aligns with the theoretical frame of the research, as well as attends to the intent of the research questions.

Narrative inquiry is a way of thinking about and inquiring into experience. Although the methodology can “come in many forms and sizes” (Riessman, 2008, p. 23), the framework presented by Connelly and Clandinin (2006) in particular provided a general structure for this inquiry. Their framework is based on an ontology of experience informed by the work of John Dewey. According to Dewey (1934):

In an experience, things and events belonging to the world, physical and social, are transformed through the human context they enter, while the live creature is changed and developed through its inter-course with things previously external to it. (p. 257)
Within this perspective, experiences are viewed as transactional and never static; they are a “changing stream” involving “continuous interaction of human thought with our personal, social, and material environment” (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 39). Dewey (1938) emphasizes three main characteristics of human experience: interaction, continuity, and situation. Connelly and Clandinin (2006) attend to these ontological characteristics in their theoretical frame of narrative inquiry, stating experience is something that takes place within a three-dimensional space. The three dimensions are referred to as “commonplaces” and are further distinguished as temporality, sociality, and place. The following section provides a brief overview of the three commonplaces and discussion regarding their relevancy to the study.

3.2.2 Temporality, sociality, and place

Temporality, refers to the past, present, and future of people, places, things, and events under study (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 479). As such, research chronicles a “series of choices, inspired by purposes that are shaped by past experiences, and undertaken through time” (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 40). Experience is envisioned as a manifestation of past and present, but also something that extends into the future. Chronicled experiences become intertwined and interwoven into who we are and who we are becoming (Clandinin, 2013, p. 21).

The ontological view of experience as temporal and continuous aligns with the aims of the research in that I was asking participants to reflect upon their own past and present experiences with respect to land education and reconciliation. In addition, I was asking them to consider how they might integrate these ideas into their future teaching practice. As such, their responses were reflective of past and present experiences, as well as future considerations.

Not only did I ask participants to reflect upon their own past, present, and future lives, I was also asking them to engage in the temporality of time and place during our various land-
based excursions. Within a pedagogical model where land is situated first, learners are guided through the process of capturing stories of places from long views of time and experience (Bang, et al., 2014). As such, I asked participants to reflect upon the past, present, and future narratives of the places they were visiting. The view that a continuity of narratives and layers of multiple and contested stories are embedded in each place (Somerville, 2010) is a perspective that is supported epistemologically by the concept of temporality.

In addition to temporality, the commonplaces of sociality and place were equally important. Sociality refers to the personal and social conditions under which people’s experiences and events are unfolding (Clandinin, 2013, p. 40). Personal conditions are described as “the feelings, hopes, desires, aesthetic reactions and moral dispositions” of the inquirer and participants (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 480). Social conditions are generally understood in terms of cultural, social, institutional, and linguistic narratives. These narratives are embedded in people’s experiences and are highlighted in any given context, time, and place.

Personal and social conditions under which participants’ experiences and events were unfolding was something of which I was keenly aware during the research project. As I was trying to gauge levels of comfort and interest with respect to the core themes of land education and reconciliation during the study, the personal and social backgrounds of each of the participants played strongly into which themes resonated with them.

Social conditions were also instrumental. Assuredly, cultural, institutional, and linguistic narratives with respect to land education, colonialism, and reconciliation are hugely influential in shaping discussion relating to these topics. This was particularly salient given participants were interacting with artifacts on the UBC campus that spoke to institutional narratives regarding UBC’s relationships with Indigenous peoples in BC. Social conditions were also poignant given
that conversations regarding changes to the BC curriculum were at the forefront of many class discussions in participants’ coursework during the time of the study. Indeed, several participants wished to take part as a result of these changes: that is, they wanted to engage more fully in the themes of the research in light of the social conditions that prevailed during the time of this inquiry.

Place is the third commonplace, and is defined as “the specific concrete, physical and topological boundaries of place or sequences of places where the inquiry and events take place” (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 480). To illustrate the importance of place on lived and told experiences, Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) draw from the work of anthropologist Keith Basso (1996):

As places animate the ideas and feelings of persons who attend to these same ideas and feelings animate the places on which attention has been bestowed and the movements of this process – inward toward facets of the self, outward toward aspects of the external world, alternately both together – cannot be known in advance. When places are actively sensed, the physical landscape becomes wedded to the landscape of the mind, to the roving imagination, and where the latter may lead is anybody’s guess. (p. 107)

In this study, place, or more aptly, places, were central to the stories being shared, both inwardly and outwardly. Participants were asked to share their experiences of engaging in place during the land-based activities. At the same time, while engaged in place, they were asked to consider the multitude of narratives that were storied in each place they visited.
Place works in concert with the two other commonplaces: temporality and sociality. Within this three-dimensional framework, participants share experiences in relation to one another. The concept of relation, or relationality, is a central component of narrative inquiry. It is also an important component of Indigenous research and reconciliation.

3.2.3 Relationality

Clandinin (2013) stresses the importance of relationality in the research process. She outlines the many ways it can inform the study, such as the relational between the person and his or her world; between past, present, and future; between person and place; between events and feelings; and between cultural, institutional, linguistic, and familial narratives (p. 23). The role of researcher is to think about her own experiences, as well as those of participants. Researchers do not stand outside the inquiry but are integral to the phenomenon under study (p. 24). As such, this role requires highly ethical work, consideration, and responsibility; hence, relational ethics lie at the crux of work for narrative inquirers (p. 30).

Métis scholar Dwayne Donald addresses the ethics of relationality in his research work focused on decolonizing methodologies and reconciliation. Donald (2012) describes ethical relationality as “an ecological understanding of human relationality that does not deny difference, but rather seeks to understand more deeply how our different histories and experiences position us in relation to each other” (p. 535). He suggests relationality connects to historical, cultural, and social contexts from which a person or community understands and interprets the world. The key challenge in considering complex understandings of human relationality is to hold them “in tension without the need to resolve, assimilate, or incorporate” (p. 534). It is ethically imperative to act with reference to these relationships: “Any knowledge
we gain about the world interweaves us more complexly with these relationships and gives us life” (p. 536).

In her work focused on Aboriginal youth, Trudy Cardinal (2014) draws connections between descriptions of relational experience in narrative inquiry to Shawn Wilson’s (2008) description of knowledge as relational in Indigenous paradigms. Cram, Chilisa, and Mertens (2013) observe “the emphasis on relational constructs emanates from Indigenous value systems that recognize the connections between people, past, present, and future, and all living and non-living things” (p. 16). Cardinal (2011) highlights connections between the two paradigms of relationality in her work as a narrative inquirer in the field of Indigenous research:

Narrative inquiry and Indigenous research, and the relational aspects that both methodologies hold dear, create an “in between” place where together participants and researchers can begin to see possibilities of how to negotiate tensions between who they are in the past, who they are now, and who they are becoming while in the midst of research. (p. 85)

Thinking relationally is important to the work of reconciliation (Donald, 2012). The process of reconciliation focuses on the development of mutually respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada – a process that is fraught with tension. Narrative inquiry is based on an understanding that participant and researcher experiences are told in relation to one another. The process allows for illumination and acknowledgement of tensions as they arise. As Mark Freeman (2007) observes, the process of “Relational thinking seeks to shift the angle of vision and thereby open up new, more fully human ways of figuring human lives. This aim is its great challenge and its great promise” (p. 11).
The relational and highly ethical aspects of narrative inquiry support engagement in the relationship building process central to the promise of reconciliation. As Clandinin, Murphy, Huber, and Orr (2010) suggest, tensions that arise from relational thinking offer educational opportunities to acknowledge and create space for meaningful conversations and explorations, as opposed to keeping uncomfortable thoughts hidden.

In providing an overview of the methodology selected for this study, discussion thus far has focused on the epistemological underpinnings of narrative inquiry, the notions of temporality, sociality, and place, and the concept of relationality. As a qualitative research methodology, narrative inquiry is situated in a Western paradigm, and thus there are inherent tensions when it is paired with a pedagogical frame based on Indigenous perspectives. The following section discusses these tensions in further detail.

### 3.3 Bridging the epistemic divide

Lowan-Trudeau (2012) notes that during his doctoral study he sought to further clarify the “uneasy but promising relationship” between Indigenous and qualitative interpretive research methodologies (p. 118). He observes that interpretive methodologies have emerged within the field of qualitative research which are more convergent than divergent with Indigenous traditions for knowledge collection and transmission. Kovach (2010), whose writing focuses largely on Indigenous research methodologies within the context of Indigenous communities, explains that Indigenous research methodologies are linked to contemporary qualitative approaches, albeit tenuously. She writes:

> Indigenous methodologies can be situated within the qualitative landscape because they encompass characteristics congruent with other relational qualitative approaches that in the research design value both
process and content. This matters because it provides common ground for Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers to understand each other. (pp. 24-25)

Narrative inquiry is a qualitative interpretive research methodology used widely in Indigenous contexts and by Indigenous researchers (e.g. Benham, 2007; Cardinal, 2011, 2014; Lessard, Caine, & Clandinin, 2015; Redvers, 2016; Richardson, 2011; Young et al., 2015). As a non-Indigenous researcher, I am cognizant that my decision to employ it as a methodology in conjunction with an Indigenous pedagogical model may be perceived as problematic.

In selecting a research methodology for this study, I was cognizant of Wilson’s (2008) observation that dominant research paradigms in social sciences are generally rooted in a hierarchical structure of male-dominated Euroamerican ethnocentricity. As stated in the introduction, I knew when embarking on this research journey that my non-Indigenous background, education, and language – all firmly entrenched in Western paradigms – would hinder me in fully understanding and appreciating the pedagogical frame selected for this study. The selection of an Indigenous research methodology, given my background and positioning, also seemed a stretch given where I was in my decolonizing journey. As such, I selected a methodology with which I had a level of comfort, and also one that had potential areas of overlap with Indigenous knowledge systems: specifically, I focused on making meaning from story and paying close attention to the highly ethical act of relationality. A focus on relationality not only underscores respect and ethical conduct on the part of the researcher, but also challenges the hierarchical structure endemic to Western paradigms. My resolve to challenge dominant discourses had always been the main goal of this research. When I made this methodological
decision, I was hopeful it would continue to be in alignment with that goal throughout the research.

Lowan-Trudeau (2012) observes that one of the main distinctions between Indigenous and qualitative methodological approaches is the centrality of Indigenous knowledge and community protocols in Indigenous research (Smith, 2012). Although this research study has Indigenous knowledge central to its theoretical frame, community protocols associated with Indigenous research paradigms are notably absent from narrative inquiry as a methodology. My addition of an ethical axiology that supports the Indigenous epistemological perspectives of the study helped address this. The 4Rs of respect, relevance, relationship, and reciprocity outlined at the beginning of this chapter provided a framework that needed to be central to the entire research process (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991). As Wilson (2008) reminds us, an Indigenous axiology is built upon the concept of relational accountability. He notes that what is most important and meaningful in the research relationship is fulfilling a role and obligation: that is, being accountable to your relations (p. 77). Even though narrative inquiry has relational accountability at its core, the 4Rs provide an axiology to the entire research project that is more robust and, in turn, supports an Indigenous pedagogical frame.

In pairing an Indigenous pedagogical frame with a non-Indigenous methodology, I was mindful of Calderon’s (2014) comment that land-based frameworks are pedagogies that utilize both Western and non-Western forms of knowledge to achieve decolonizing understandings of land. Also, I was mindful of Barnhardt and Kawagley’s (2005) observation that we need education about the land that is respectful of the epistemological and pedagogical foundations provided by both Indigenous pedagogies and those associated with Western formal education. As I found myself in the middle between the binaries of Western and non-Western forms of
knowledge, this “in-between space” seemed a respectable way to move forward. Perhaps the tensions between land-based pedagogies and narrative inquiry, in some ways, were emblematic of the aims of research focused on challenging and bridging epistemic divides, thus promoting decolonization in education and furthering the process of reconciliation. At the very least, meta-cognitively, they were symbolic of a non-Indigenous researcher cautiously questioning every step of a decolonizing journey.

In her dissertation, *Following the song of k’aad ‘aww (dogfish mother): Adolescent perspectives on English 10 First Peoples, writing, and identity*, Haida scholar Sara Florence Davidson (2016) discusses the ways in which she employed both Indigenous and non-Indigenous research methodologies, as well as how they can be used together to strengthen a research study. She notes:

My decision to draw upon Indigenous and non-Indigenous methodologies was rooted in a desire to explore the strengths of both methodologies. This research became an illustration of how they can be used together synergistically to conduct research that is respectful and responsive. This is particularly useful for newer researchers wishing to learn more about how Indigenous methodologies and perspectives may be taken up in educational research. (pp. 214-215)

Although I was not combining Indigenous and non-Indigenous methodologies, as Davidson did in her study, I was working with Indigenous perspectives and thus, my aims were similar: I wanted to ensure the research was conducted respectfully and responsively.
Aside from discussion regarding the appropriateness of narrative inquiry for this research, there are inherent limitations to its use as a methodology. The following section explores these.

### 3.4 Limitations of narrative inquiry as a methodology

Donald Polkinghorne (2007) suggests limitations particular to narrative research relate to two areas: 1) the differences in people’s experienced meaning and the stories they tell about this meaning; and 2) the connections between storied texts and the interpretations of those texts. He stresses, “Researchers should not argue for a level of certainty for their claims beyond that which is possible to conclude from the type of evidence they gather and from the attributes of the realm about which they are inquiring” (p. 477).

Credibility and validity are issues leveled at narrative research due to the fact participants’ stories may leave out or obscure aspects of the meaning of experiences they describe. Polkinghorne (2007) observes:

> 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)

He further suggests that since these four limitations cannot be eliminated, it becomes the task of the researcher to convince readers the storied portrayals do not distort participants’ meanings. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) also suggest the researcher needs be cognizant of distinguishing
between “the events as lived and the events as told” and avoid the illusion of “causality.” In other words, a correlation between two variables does not necessarily mean one caused the other.

Researchers also need to justify their interpretations to readers (Polkinghorne, 2007). The general purpose of an interpretative analysis is to deepen the reader’s understanding of the meaning conveyed in a story; however, these interpretations can never be certain. In recognition of such uncertainties, researchers should help safeguard the integrity of their studies by clearly identifying and telling stories of their own backgrounds, intentions, and purposes throughout the process (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 93). This is something I have attempted to outline in the first chapter of this dissertation. It will also be the subject of further exploration in Chapters 6, 7, and 8 – all of which are focused on findings and discussion.

3.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has focused on providing theoretical considerations with respect to the methods of this research study. In selecting narrative inquiry as the methodology, I was mindful of its focus on making meaning from story and experience; its attendance to the fluidity of stories and experience marked by attention to temporality, sociality, and place; and its emphasis on the necessity for researchers to pay close attention to the highly ethical act of relationality. To underscore the ethical components of the research, ethical principles that helped guide the research process were discussed, based on the 4Rs of respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility as outlined by Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991). Tensions involved in the selection of narrative inquiry to work in conjunction with an Indigenous pedagogical frame were explored, in addition to some of the limitations scholars generally relay in regards to narrative research as a form of inquiry. The following chapter provides more discussion relating to the methodology of the study; specifically, it provides an overview of the research design, the activities in which the
participants engaged, the methods of participant recruitment, and the sources of data collection.
Chapter 4: The research design

As noted earlier, the purpose of this study was to explore how educators can integrate Indigenous epistemologies and pedagogies into their teaching practice. The following research questions guided the investigation:

• How can “land as first teacher” become a framework through which educators can integrate land education into their practice?

• How can the process of storying Indigenous presence through cultivation, narrative, and art contribute to interdisciplinary approaches to ecological recovery and processes of reconciliation?

• How can the pedagogical approach, “land as first teacher,” help educators shape their practice to consider processes of reconciliation that emphasize a learner’s awareness of the past, acknowledgement of harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behavior (TRC, 2015c, p. 113)?

To examine these questions, I designed a study that invited education graduate and undergraduate students to visit three pairs of learning sites on public areas on Coast Salish/Musqueam territory – what is now referred to as the UBC Point Grey campus and surrounding areas – during the 2016 fall term. During and after each site visit, participants were asked to reflect upon a series of guiding questions that addressed each of the research questions and themes. The guiding questions prompted participants to consider how they might integrate Indigenous epistemologies into their own teaching practice, with particular attention to the themes of land education, ecological recovery, and reconciliation. The activities are described in detail shortly.
4.1 Participants

To ensure the study activities would dovetail with my student-participants’ academic endeavors and interests, I sought instructor permission to recruit from two courses with a strong focus on Indigenous epistemologies and pedagogies, one undergraduate and one graduate. Approximately 80 students were invited to participate (68 undergraduate and 12 graduate). In addition to inviting students to participate, I also invited course instructors. Ultimately, the participant group was comprised of four graduate students, three undergraduate students, and two course instructors.

4.2 Activities and data sources

The land-based activities took place over four months during the 2016 fall term. They were organized with reference to three guiding thematic lenses: 1) cultivation, 2) narrative, and 3) art. Each lens provided the larger scope through which participants might envision “land as first teacher” as a guiding pedagogical frame. The purpose of arranging the land-based activities under three lenses was to provide organizational structure for the sets of activities and for presentation of the data. The terms, cultivation, narrative, and art were selected because each could be interpreted broadly in relation to the relevant set of activities. Each term could also be understood in relation to one or more of the core themes of the research: land education, ecological recovery, and reconciliation. Detailed discussion regarding the selection of the lenses, how they related to each set of activities, and a rationale for their selection are provided in Chapters 6, 7, and 8 respectively.

1 Chapters 6, 7, and 8 focus on these three lenses respectively. Included in these chapters is detailed explanation of the lens, the activities selected, and rationale as to why they were selected. Findings and discussion relative to each lens is provided within each designated chapter.
Activities within each of the thematic lenses included two components: a guided portion and a self-directed portion. Participants were asked to write in a reflective journal at the end of each set of activities; guiding prompts were provided for these entries. Semi-structured interviews were conducted at the end of the study. Guiding questions were provided to participants prior to the interviews.

Table 1 provides an overview of each of the three lenses, the activities that took place within each, and the data sources that were collected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lens</th>
<th>Land-based activities</th>
<th>Data sources</th>
</tr>
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| **Cultivation** | 1) Guided tour of the UBC Farm  
2) Self-directed visit to the Kwakwaka’wakw pole, *Victory Through Honour* by Ellen Neel | Pre-study questionnaires  
Reflective journals with guiding prompts  
Semi-structured interviews  
My field notes and observations |
| **Narrative** | 1) Guided walk to the Musqueam post by Brent Sparrow Jr.  
2) Self-directed visit to xʷməəqʷə:m or Camosun Bog | Pre-study questionnaires  
Reflective journals with guiding prompts  
Semi-structured interviews  
My field notes and observations |
| **Art** | 1) Guided art walk on the UBC campus  
2) Self-directed visit to the *Native Hosts* signs by Hock E Aye Vi Edgar Heap of Birds | Pre-study questionnaires  
Reflective journals with guiding prompts  
Semi-structured interviews  
My field notes and observations |

Table 4.1 Overview of the three lenses, activities, and data sources.

Prior to engaging in the research study, participants were provided with a set of electronic documents pertinent to the activities on a memory stick. The materials provided structure and consistency to the flow of activities, ensuring each component related to and supported the
research questions. Materials on the memory stick included an overview and directions to each land-based site, along with a set of guiding prompts to help participants formulate responses in reflective journals. Supplementary resources relating to each location were also provided, the purpose of which was to impart background information relevant to each site and set of activities. Each set of activities included two parts: a guided portion and a self-directed portion.

The decision to include a guided activity followed by a self-directed one within the scope of each activity set helped widen the range of experiences and topics being addressed throughout the course of the inquiry. The purpose of the guided portions was to provide participants with background information about each location they were visiting, as well as present the opportunity for them to ask questions and interact with others. The purpose of the self-directed portions, which participants were asked to complete within one to two weeks following the guided ones, was to provide private and reflective time. During the self-directed activities, participants could explore areas and concepts on their own time and at their own pace. Each pair of activities was related: the guided portions provided a contextual grounding for each thematic lens, whereas the self-directed portions were directed more towards application of, and reflection on, the concepts that were being addressed.

4.3 Site locations

Site locations and/or artifacts found at each location for the land-based activities were selected based on the following considerations. Given the pedagogical model of the research, “land as first teacher,” each location was reflective of Indigenous presence, and spoke to erasure and displacement of Indigenous people in the Vancouver area, as well re-inscription of that presence. Second, the sites and supplementary information that pertained to them were open to the public.
During the initial planning stages of the study, I was considering Musqueam Creek to be a greater focal point of exploration. As part of protocol, I engaged in a conversation with a Musqueam knowledge keeper and it was suggested that I focus on other spaces. Attending to this feedback helped me rethink the nature of my research questions and consider other spaces embedded with Indigenous history, memory, and story – many of which were sites on and surrounding the UBC Point Grey campus infused with educational and cultural values by the Musqueam people, to which the public are invited. Mindful of the 4Rs, I was grateful for this suggestion. A focus on spaces intended for public access for the activities, in conjunction with accompanying materials from public domains of information, would ensure participants were engaging with information regarding Indigenous epistemologies that was respectful of proper protocols. For example, the self-guided tour of xʷmə̓q̓ə:m or Camosun Bog included information provided on public signs that was the result of a community consultative process that included input from the Musqueam community. As such, the educational information regarding Musqueam and Indigenous epistemologies on the signs was accurate, was co-constructed, and was respectful of proper protocols. This was also the case for the signage surrounding the Musqueam post, the activity planned in relation to the visit to xʷmə̓q̓ə:m. An invitation was extended to Musqueam artist Brent Sparrow Jr. to come and speak with participants about the post; however, he was busy with other commitments at the time. Musqueam Elder Larry Grant was also invited to come and speak with the group. Further details regarding his visit and the activities mentioned above are provided in Chapter 7.

In addition to being respectful of First Nations cultural integrity, and exercising responsibility through participation (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991), the use of public spaces also provided an instructional model – one that participants could incorporate into their future
teaching practice. Modeling a “land as first teacher” pedagogical approach in public areas on the UBC campus was a purposeful way to draw attention to how participants might integrate similar activities into their own educational practice: the strategy employed is easily adaptable and has relevancy to any area or land.

The land-based activities were designed to align with the dates of the two fall courses in which participants were registered and through which they were recruited. A concern in relation to this design was that I was asking potential research participants – the majority of whom would be full time students – to commit a significant amount of time to the study in the midst of a busy university term. Hence, I was incredibly grateful when one of my supervisors graciously invited me to embed the guided portions of the research plan into her fall graduate course. The story of how this unfolded and evolved is described in the following section, focused on participant recruitment.

4.4 Study settings

4.4.1 Study setting 1: Graduate course

Graduate students were recruited from a graduate class taught by Teresa Dobson, Professor in the Department of Language and Literacy Education at the University of British Columbia, and one of my co-supervisors. The focus of the course was literacy and multimodality as social practices. Prior to the beginning of the fall term, Teresa and I collaborated on embedding the activities of the research study into her course outline. The three sets of activities were interspersed throughout the term with approximately two to three weeks elapsing between each set. The guided portions took place during class time and all students enrolled in the class participated. The self-directed portions were included in the course syllabus as optional follow-up activities to the guided events. Students were invited to engage in the optional self-directed
activities at their leisure on their own time; however, I hoped that those who had volunteered to participate in the research study would complete them within a designated time frame. To support and help theoretically ground the activities, suggested readings were also provided on the course syllabus. Indigenous methodologies and multimodalities were included as topics on the course syllabus, along with topics such as decolonization and place-based learning.

Prior to recruiting participants, I visited the class to conduct a guest lecture workshop focused on the First Peoples Principles of Learning and, as follow-up, arranged for the class to go on a guided tour of the UBC Museum of Anthropology (MOA). While at the MOA, students met for a guided tour, followed by a self-guided gallery walk of the Laurence Paul Yuxweluptun Unceded Territories art exhibit that was on display. Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun is a Vancouver artist of Coast Salish and Okanagan descent. His exhibit, Unceded Territories, showcased a provocative set of works that confront the colonialist suppression of First Nations peoples and the ongoing struggle for Indigenous rights to lands, resources, and sovereignty. The guest lecture workshop, coupled with the tour, provided students with an overview of the themes of the research.

One week following the guest lecture workshop, I returned to the class, introduced the study, provided an overview, and invited participants. Two class members volunteered, and two others who were sitting in on the course agreed to join – all were graduate students. Participants were provided with a memory stick that included information relating to the activities and the project.

2 A stipend and gift were presented to the tour guide for this event.
4.4.2 Study setting 2: Undergraduate course

Participant recruitment for the study also took place in a required course in the Bachelor of Education program, Aboriginal Education in Canada. The course, directed by Jan Hare, focuses on how Indigenous histories, perspectives, content, worldviews, and pedagogies can be respectfully and meaningfully integrated in the curriculum, teaching, and programming of classrooms, schools, and community contexts (Teacher Education Office, 2016).

I had been a teacher assistant for the course in the previous year and was familiar with course readings and assignments. I also knew teacher candidates enrolled in this course were an ideal population from which to recruit. The themes of the research project were central to much of the coursework they would be doing. Participation meant teacher candidates could explore these themes more fully and experientially. At the same time, I was also aware of how busy the timetables are for teacher candidates in the fall term. Hence, I was cautiously optimistic about how many students would have the time to invest in joining the study, given the scope of the project.

After visiting several sections of the Aboriginal Education in Canada course to invite participants, three teacher candidates agreed to join the study, in addition to one course instructor, Hanna Ray. I had not previously considered the value of including the perspectives of course instructors until Hanna graciously suggested she become a participant and share her observations at the end of the term. She was teaching several sections of the course, and although the three participants who were now part of the study were not in her sections, part of her coursework included various land-based activities similar to the ones I was conducting with

3 Hanna Ray is a pseudonym selected by the participant.
participants. As such, her reflections on the perceived impact of these activities would provide a unique perspective, as would the reflections of Teresa Dobson, considering her involvement in the activities as well. An amendment to UBC Behavioural Research Ethics was approved in December 2016 to include interviews with course instructors at the end of the fall term. Both Teresa and Hanna agreed to join the study.

I now had three participant groups: four graduate students, three undergraduate teacher candidates, and two course instructors. The graduate students would complete the majority of the land-based activities within their regularly scheduled class time in Teresa’s class. The teacher candidates would participate in the activities outside of their class time either individually or in pairs, along with me as a guide. Also, in light of their busy schedules, it became necessary to combine the guided and self-directed portions of the activities together. Although this was not my original intent as to how progression of the activities with the teacher candidates would unfold, this decision was made out of respect for their time and their willingness to be part of the study. The following section introduces the participants, as well as how the first source of data, the pre-study questionnaires, helped shape these introductions.

4.5 Participant introductions

Prior to the start of the first set of activities, student participants were asked to complete a pre-study questionnaire. The pre-study questionnaire asked where had they been born and raised, how they would describe their cultural heritage and identity, and whether they had had any prior experience or education relating to Indigenous content or Indigenous perspectives. The full set of questions posed in the pre-study questionnaires is provided in Appendix A.

Responses to the questionnaires were used as a data source to help formulate brief introductions of each student participant. Responses were also used to shape findings discussed
in Chapters 6, 7, and 8. As Connelly and Clandinin (1990) note, issues relating to educators’ professional knowledge and practice are deeply entwined with past experiences, future goals, and identities. As the pre-study questionnaires asked participants to state their identity in addition to their prior experience and/or education relating to Indigenous content or perspectives, this positioning helped inform the interpretation of findings and discussion presented in those chapters. For example, a section in Chapter 8 focuses on participants’ levels of comfort with respect to the possibility of integrating Indigenous perspectives into their own educational practice as a result of being in the study. Responses to the pre-study questionnaires were used to help shape findings and discussion in that section.

Although I was deliberately cautious about respectfully protecting identities when writing introductions based on the pre-study questionnaires, there were certain aspects of the participants’ backgrounds that were relevant to the study and that I wished to include. The first was cultural identity. Given that topics of Indigenous epistemologies and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada were central to the research questions, I felt it important to state how participants identified: Indigenous, non-Indigenous, or mixed ancestry. Further, three of the participants were born outside of Canada and, as such, I felt it worthwhile to clarify where they had been born and raised prior to moving to Canada and attending UBC. This information was relevant to participants’ cultural identity and, also, helped inform the interpretation of findings and discussion presented in later chapters.

The second aspect I chose to include was the participant’s affiliation with the UBC Faculty of Education during the time of the study. As the research questions were directed towards educators’ current and future teaching practice, participant roles as teacher candidates, practicing UBC course instructors, or graduate students were relevant to the research. A third
aspect I included was the level of knowledge and comfort participants expressed with respect to the central topics of the research: namely, their backgrounds and experience either teaching or studying Indigenous epistemologies. A fourth aspect I included was why participants elected to join the study – if, indeed, it was something they shared.

The following section introduces each of the student participants, along with the two course instructors who participated in the study. The introductions were member checked with each respective participant to ensure he or she was comfortable with the information being shared.

There were four graduate-student participants (Elaine, Beta, Evelyn, and Josephine), three undergraduate teacher candidates (Bonnie, Lauren, and Elyse), and two course instructors (Teresa and Hanna). All student participants had previous work experience in K-12 schools or within post-secondary educational settings, and two of the graduate students were UBC course instructors in the Faculty of Education at the time of the inquiry. All student participants planned to continue in the field of education (K-12 or higher education) once they completed their degrees. In terms of the demographics of the student-participant group, 6 were female, 1 was male, and the approximate age range of the student group spanned from early twenties to mid-forties. The group was culturally diverse. The following section introduces each of the participants who took part in the study.

**Elaine:** Elaine identified as a non-Indigenous Canadian. She grew up in Alberta and was a secondary school teacher before coming to UBC for graduate work. During the fall 2016 term, pseudonyms are used for all student participants. Participants were consulted as to what pseudonym they wanted me to use to represent them in the study.

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4 Pseudonyms are used for all student participants. Participants were consulted as to what pseudonym they wanted me to use to represent them in the study.
she was a doctoral student and course instructor in the teacher education program. She elected to join the study with Teresa’s graduate class, and participated in all of the scheduled land-based activities.

Prior to joining the study, Elaine had had minimal exposure to Indigenous epistemologies. She was interested in joining the study to learn more not only about Indigenous pedagogies, but also because the research topics of land, place, and ecological recovery were relevant to her own research interests.

**Beta**: Similar to Elaine, Beta joined the study in conjunction with the graduate group and was also a doctoral student and UBC course instructor at the time of the inquiry. Beta was originally born and raised in Latin America – an area, he notes, with a long history of colonization. Specific knowledge and awareness of Canadian First Nations peoples, culture, and languages were not something with which he was familiar prior to coming to Canada. However, given his familiarity with Latin American Indigenous peoples and languages, he stated that he understood the importance of the relationship between knowledge and land for Indigenous peoples – one that is grounded in place and is passed through generations, primarily through oral traditions:

> Although I don’t identify myself as an Indigenous person, I am familiar with the practices of the Indigenous peoples of my home country. The general mindsets in regards to the role of the land there and in the Canadian tradition seem to be similar. (Beta, personal communication [pre-study questionnaire], October 22, 2016)

**Evelyn**: Evelyn was born and raised in southern Africa and identified as ethnically mixed of four ethnic groups. She noted in her pre-study questionnaire that, having grown up in a
country where black people were not allowed to live in a majority of the nation, and where they were relegated to highly congested rural or peri-urban areas, “the concept of land was, and still is, important in locating us as a people. Not having free access to the land is still a highly contested topic” (Evelyn, personal communication [pre-study questionnaire], October 26, 2016).

Evelyn had lived a few years in Canada prior to becoming a doctoral student at UBC. Although she commented that her knowledge relating to specific Indigenous pedagogies in Canada at the time of the research was limited, she was able to speak to many of the central topics of the research, given the themes of colonization and reconciliation were very much at the forefront of conversations taking place in her home country.

Josephine: Josephine was the fourth member of the graduate student group and a citizen of both Canada and the European Union. She identified as a mixed Indigenous woman of North African descent, noting that Indigenous issues had always been a part of her family life growing up in Europe, and later, in Quebec, Canada. She notes, “Indigenous history, language, folktales, traditional dresses, racism, and assimilations were all issues discussed around the dinner table” (Josephine, personal communication [pre-study questionnaire], November 2, 2016).

Growing up in Canada, Josephine was interested in learning more about First Nations communities and took several courses during her undergraduate course work: “I chose to do this because the curriculum completely ignored their history past the first 100 years of colonization” (Josephine, personal communication [pre-study questionnaire], November 2, 2016). Prior to enrolling in graduate studies at UBC, Josephine had worked in various school settings. Although her graduate educational interests focused on literacy and story, with a focus on Indigenous literature, she noted that she regularly read novels and traditional stories penned by Indigenous authors, as well as kept up-to-date on Indigenous issues in the media.
**Bonnie:** During the time of the study, Bonnie was enrolled in the UBC teacher education program. She identified as a non-Indigenous Canadian, and was interested in joining the study to supplement what she was already learning in the Aboriginal Education in Canada course. She was interested in learning ways she could connect with her future students that were culturally appropriate and meaningful. Bonnie was also active in the outdoors: working with and connecting to the land were values that were important to her.

**Lauren:** Lauren was also enrolled in the teacher education program during the time of the study. Originally from Alberta, she identified as a third-generation settler. Prior to her involvement in the study, Lauren had been immersed in Indigenous pedagogies and coursework throughout her educational career for a variety of personal and professional reasons: “I knew that I would be working with First Nations at some point in my career… and I have a brother who is Indigenous. I have always wanted to learn more about various groups across Canada and learn more about other perspectives” (Lauren, personal communication [pre-study questionnaire], November 10, 2016).

**Elyse:** Elyse was a teacher candidate at the time of the study. Born and raised in BC, she had traveled and studied in various locations around the world – experiences that had encouraged her to question her identity and what it meant to be Canadian. Elyse identified as non-Indigenous. Her academic background was in the sciences, although she had taken courses in Aboriginal literature. She also had experience working for the National Park service in the Maritimes. In her role, she worked with an Aboriginal Elder who taught her much about Indigenous knowledge systems and introduced her to traditional medicinal plants.

Similar to Bonnie and Lauren, Elyse was interested in joining the study to supplement what she was learning in her teacher education coursework. All three of the teacher candidates
felt comfortable integrating Indigenous epistemologies in their teaching practice, but were eager to do so in ways that were culturally appropriate and respectful. The goals of the research corresponded to the work they wanted to pursue in their future classrooms, as well as connected to their personal lives and prior professional experiences. They wanted to engage in work that was relevant to, and respectful of, their local communities – engagement that supported the 4Rs of academic research that were central to the study (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991; Kovach, 2010).

**Teresa:** A professor in the Faculty of Education, Teresa was the instructor of the graduate course in which the land-based activities were embedded. She collaborated with me in planning activities so that they would integrate seamlessly into the course syllabus, and was keen that all students, irrespective of their status as research participant or non-participant, would benefit from engagement with the study materials. A non-Indigenous scholar and first-generation settler of dual nationality, Teresa’s graduate and undergraduate courses often focused on the topics of decolonization, land, and place, as well as her primary areas of research specialization: literary education, digital literacy, and digital humanities.

**Hanna:** An Indigenous scholar, literacy specialist, and instructor in the Faculty of Education at the time of the study, Hanna was an integral part of the research process. Hanna was an instructor of the Aboriginal Education in Canada course the teacher candidates were taking during the time of the research. Further, she had taught the course previously and could speak to some of trends she had perceived over the years. Hanna embedded components of the land-based activities of the study into her coursework; thus, she was able to speak to the impact she perceived with respect to these activities with her students.

Both Teresa and Hanna were experienced educators in secondary and post-secondary school settings.
4.6 Data sources and analysis

In addition to the pre-study questionnaires, there were other sources of data collection employed throughout the study that are briefly described in the following section. These included reflective journals, field notes and observations, and semi-structured interviews with students and instructors. Detailed information regarding how the data sources were analyzed is provided in the following chapter.

4.6.1 Reflective journals

As a follow-up to each of the activities, participants were asked to write in a reflective journal using a word processor. A set of guiding prompts was provided as a starting point. In addition to addressing the topics, themes, and research questions of the study, the prompts focused on what resonated and challenged participants while they were engaged in the activities.

Although prompts were purposefully broad, their intent was to prompt participants to explore topics addressed during the study from both personal and professional perspectives. As research suggests, educators are more likely to integrate Indigenous epistemologies and pedagogies into their teaching practice if they have a degree of personal comfort with material (e.g., Deer, 2013; Dion, 2007). Reflective journal prompts for each activity are provided in Appendices B, C, and D. The journals were submitted to me via memory stick at the end of the study.

4.6.2 Field notes and observations

During the activities in which I was engaged with participants, my personal field notes, observations, and experiences were documented. As Bogdan and Biklen (2007) remind us, field notes provide researchers with a personal log that helps keep track of the project: the log may chronicle how the research has been affected by the data collection, or how the researcher has
been influenced by it (p. 119). The purpose of my notes was to contextualize presentation of the data, in addition to chronologically record what had transpired during visits to activity locations.

The role of participant-observer is one Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (2001) describe as “establishing a place in some natural setting … in order to investigate, experience and represent the social life and social processes that occur in that setting” (p. 352). As such, presentation of the findings in the following chapters includes my own personal experiences in relation to the research questions, the learning events, and my positionality to the research. As is the case with narrative inquiry, the role of the researcher is conveyer of the experiences, and my presence within the study was an important element.

4.6.3 Semi-structured interviews

Following completion of the activities, semi-structured final interviews were scheduled with student participants and course instructors. My original intent was to have student participants discuss their experiences during the activities with other members of the research study; however, due to scheduling constraints, this was not possible. In total, four interviews were conducted with student participants. Three were done individually, and one involved two participants. Individual interviews were conducted with the two course instructors.

Prior to the interviews, student participants were provided with guiding questions that included summary prompts, such as what activities they thought had been most impactful on their thinking about Indigenous epistemologies and the land, and whether their feelings of comfort relating to the teaching of Indigenous perspectives in an educational setting had changed as a result of being part of the study. A complete list of the interview questions provided to student participants is available in Appendix E.
Interviews were also conducted at the end of the study with Teresa and Hanna. They were provided with guided questions prior to the interviews, which included items such as what observations they might make about the perceived impact of the land-based activities on student learning, as well as how comfortable and/or knowledgeable they thought their students were with the idea of integrating Indigenous epistemologies and pedagogies into their practice when the course started and when it ended. The entire list of questions posed to instructors is available in Appendix F.

All interviews conducted with students and instructors were audio-recorded and transcribed. Quotations used from the semi-structured interviews in the findings of this dissertation were member checked with all participants prior to publication.

4.7 Chapter summary

This chapter provided an overview of the research design. This included a snapshot of the land-based activities planned for the study, the methods and sources of data collection employed, an explanation of how participants were recruited, and an introduction to each of the participants. The methods of data collection summarized included pre-study questionnaires, reflective journals, researcher field notes and observations, and semi-structured interviews. The following chapter addresses how these sources of data were analyzed. In particular, detailed information regarding the methods and modes of analysis of the participant journal reflections and interview transcripts are the focus of discussion.

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5 Participants were provided with the option of having their full transcripts returned to them. Only one participant opted for this request and the full transcript was returned to that individual. Although the other participants did not request a full copy of the transcripts, I did specifically check with them to ensure they were comfortable with the quotations I selected from their pre-study questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and reflective journals prior to including them in this research.
Chapter 5: Analysis

This chapter provides an overview of the processes involved in the analysis of the research data. In particular, the reflective journals and interviews are the main focus of attention. The reflective journals written by the student participants underwent two stages of data analysis. An overview of what occurred during each phase is detailed below. The transcripts from semi-structured interviews conducted with students and course instructors went through a similar course of analysis. Once analysis was complete, data from the journals and interviews provided a comprehensive collective overview of the events that transpired during the research study, along with rich discussion and insight that shed light on the three research questions and complemented scholarly research in the field. My field notes and observations, in conjunction with these other data sources, would facilitate the unfolding of the collective narrative.

5.1 Reflective journals

In developing a strategy to analyze the data in the participant journal reflections, I needed to be mindful of how I would shape and present individual reflections in a way that respectfully presented individual points of view, while simultaneously attending to the research questions and central topics of the inquiry. I was also mindful that my positioning as a researcher would place limitations on my interpretations of participant responses. My perspectives were grounded in a Western epistemological lens and, therefore, my interpretation of events and the experiences of those engaged in land-based activities for the first time would be limited. I was aware that my Western biases would prevent me from fully exploring nuances and multiple interpretations of the data that might be recognized by others approaching the study through a different lens. I was also cognizant that participants were also approaching the activities through a Western lens and as such, their experiences and reflections regarding the activities would also be limited. With
these limitations in mind, I set out to shape participant narratives in ways that were supported by research in the field.

As Salmon (2008) reminds us, shaping narratives entails imposing a meaningful pattern on what would otherwise be random and disconnected. During preliminary analysis of the journal entries that related to the first set of activities, similar ideas and opinions readily emerged. I organized reflections and pieced them together under these emergent streams. This presented a clear frame and course of action; however, I was mindful of researcher bias and the likelihood that I would be drawn to and would therefore tend to highlight responses that privileged and reinforced my own opinions and conceptualizations of how the research would unfold. Cobley (2001) observes that “narrative selects some events and omits others” (p. 7). I was concerned about being too heavy-handed in shaping data in ways that reflected the responses I wanted to hear, thus confirming my own conceptual system (Clandinin, 2013) while dismissing other points of view that were equally important.

If I were to remain true to the intent of relationality in presenting responses, I needed to highlight the experiences and wonderings of participants as they evolved in relation to one another. At the same time, I needed to be mindful that these experiences would tend to be particular and incomplete rather than generalized (Clandinin, 2013, p. 52). I was reminded of an analogy posed by Carl Leggo (2008), who writes about the process of narrative inquiry. He observes: “I find very useful the whole notion of hypertext for representing the storied life. In a hypertext, there are numerous paths and links, numerous ways of moving along and amidst the possibilities” (pp. 15-16). The analogy of hypertext freed me of preconceived notions that reflections needed to be presented in smooth transitions flowing through a course of generalizations. The presentation of the responses could be disjointed and the data would speak
for itself without me having to meddle. These understandings guided my approach to data analysis.

5.1.1 Phase 1: The five prompts

Journal reflections tended to flow in a pattern that followed the guiding prompts provided to participants at the outset of the study. The guiding prompts for each set of land-based activities were similar, if not identical. They were based on four broad themes: 1) what resonated; 2) what challenged; 3) what stories emerged; and 4) how might the land-based experience be used as a primary source or “first teacher” in an educational context. Given this pattern in the journals, responses were categorized in relation to these four themes.

As to material that did not fit within the scope of this structure, I created a final placeholder that was open and robust enough to allow for inclusion of what ideas emerged for participants during the course of the activities. This fifth theme would provide space for ideas that were not elicited from the guiding prompts, but were noteworthy to participants. Table 5.1 provides an overview of how journal reflections were organized in accordance with this structure. The table outlines each thematic lens and the sets of related activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lens of Cultivation</th>
<th>Activity #1</th>
<th>Activity #2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guided tour of the UBC Farm</td>
<td>What resonated?</td>
<td>Self-directed visit to the Kwakwaka’wakw pole, <em>Victory Through Honour</em> by Ellen Neel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What resonated?</td>
<td>What resonated?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What challenged?</td>
<td>What challenged?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What stories?</td>
<td>What stories?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What educational contexts?</td>
<td>What educational contexts?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What emerging ideas?</td>
<td>What emerging ideas?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Lens of Narrative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity #1</th>
<th>Activity #2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guided walk to the Musqueam post by Brent Sparrow Jr</td>
<td>Self-directed visit to xʷməθkʷəy̓əm or Camosun Bog</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- What resonated?  
- What challenged?  
- What stories?  
- What educational contexts?  
- What emerging ideas?

### Lens of Art

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity #1</th>
<th>Activity #2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guided art walk on the UBC campus</td>
<td>Self-directed visit to the Native Hosts signs by Hock E Aye Vi Edgar Heap of Birds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- What resonated?  
- What challenged?  
- What stories?  
- What educational contexts?  
- What emerging ideas?

**Table 5.1 How journal reflections were organized during phase 1 of data analysis.**

By categorizing participant responses in accordance to these five broad themes, I could present ideas and reflections that emerged throughout the course of the study in relation to one another. I could also account for ideas that emerged that were not necessarily elicited from guiding prompts, thus attending to “the particularity and incompleteness” that is germane to narrative inquiry – one that opens doors to “wondering[s] about possibilities (Clandinin, 2013, p. 52).
There are many software applications that facilitate analysis of nonnumeric unstructured data such as journal entries and interview transcripts. I purposely chose not to use such software because I wanted to have a physical connection with data. I wanted to be able to dwell in it and see the physicality of the responses as they grew – both in relation to the specific activities and to the study as a whole. I also wanted a clear visual representation of how participant responses were situated in relation to one another. As such, I created three large charts for each set of activities and taped them to the wall. I then proceeded to read through each of the seven journals with the framework in mind.

Beginning with the first set of land-based activities organized under the lens of cultivation, I read through responses and organized the responses in relation to the five themes. As the journals were already organized in a similar linear fashion, this proved to be a relatively straightforward task. If I were unsure as to where a thought or reflection might fit, I relegated it to the “emerging idea” areas.

Mindful of the metaphor of hypertexts, my selection of responses consisted of strings of sentences or short paragraphs written by participants. Not all participants had responded to each of the prompts and activities, and some had written more than others. I paid little attention to the number of excerpts I was selecting from individual journals and focused primarily on content. After working my way through each of the seven journal reflections, they were now organized into a loose frame.

Once journal reflections within each lens were organized in accordance with the five themes, I printed them off and cut them into individual strips. Strips were then taped to their appropriate areas on the charts. Similar to Davidson (2016), I realized after placing the journal
excerpts on the wall and reading them together, the story of my research was beginning to unfold (p. 74).

The walled gallery of data was an approach that facilitated physical engagement with the data and patterns of responses were easily identifiable. For example, my first observation was that participants appeared to have focused attention towards the guiding prompts they felt were most significant in relation to their experiences during each activity. In some cases, this meant some of the prompts/themes were left void of commentary. In others, participants had much to say. I was reminded of Clandinin’s (2013) observation that during this phase of reading, rereading, looking at, and relooking at participant texts, the researcher should be mindful of the three commonplaces of temporality, sociality, and place at work in the retelling of the experiences. I was cognizant, during this initial phase of analysis, that the uniqueness of responses that emerged were representative of each participant’s individual experiences within a three dimensional-space. Clandinin (2013) observes that temporality (past, present, and future) is threaded into place, events, and emotions, and as researchers compose and co-compose during these stages of analysis, “we awaken to the interwovenness of life experience” (p. 50). Although journal responses had been loosely categorized, each reflection was still particular and unique to its author. I had begun the process of co-composing, connecting, and interweaving responses in relation to one another within an inquiry space.

A second observation after this initial phase of analysis was that the reflections that had been selected and categorized covered the breadth of all the land-based activities included in the project. As previously mentioned, not every participant had responded to each prompt; however, the responses on the wall charts covered the gamut of activities. I was ready to move forward to the next phase to see how the text selections would align with the research questions.
5.1.2 Phase 2: The research questions

The second phase of analysis involved aligning excerpts from the reflective journals with the three research questions that framed the study. As Josselson (2014) reminds us, the aim of narrative inquiry is to elicit stories around a theme and then analyze these stories within the framework of questions that the researcher brings to them (p. 228). During this second phase of analysis, I focused on how the journal excerpts relative to each set of activities could be organized in such a way that they would target the central questions of the research and address three topics: 1) land education; 2) ecological recovery; and 3) reconciliation.

Rationale for the second phase of analysis was three-fold. First, since the questions were the driving force behind the project, I wanted to see if the responses were in alignment with the purposes of the research. Second, in planning how I would present the findings and subsequent discussion of these findings, I aimed to devote one chapter to each of the three respective thematic lenses of cultivation, narrative, and art. I elected to do this even though there was bound to be significant overlap. Aligning the journal excerpts to the research questions they addressed would help bring a sense of coherence and organizational structure to the presentation of the data and would ensure alignment of the analysis with the main goals of the research. The third reason for a second round of analysis that aligned journal excerpts to research questions was to see how responses specific to each activity were connected to responses in other activities. By categorizing journal excerpts in relation to the three topics addressed in the research questions, I would produce a macro view of the research data – one that would provide insight as to which activities elicited the most feedback with respect to which question (or questions) it addressed. It would also allow me to make connections between the sets of activities – links that would be helpful in making a holistic evaluation of the data.
During this second phase of analysis, I re-categorized all excerpts in accordance with which research question or questions it addressed. Of all 65 journal excerpts, only two did not align with a research question. The rest aligned with one or more of the research questions, and roughly one-third addressed more than one question.

This second round of analysis produced a holistic overview of the data: I could see how the topics of land education, ecological recovery, and reconciliation were being addressed throughout the entire range of activities, in addition to how they were being addressed within the scope of each thematic lens.

Clandinin (2013) notes that initial work with data is a time marked by “tension and uncertainty” (p. 47). After this second phase of analysis, it was clear the journal data spoke to the research questions and represented an interesting and illuminating narration of experiences.

5.2 Interviews

Semi-structured interviews took place with five student participants and two course instructors after the final set of land-based activities. Conversations were guided by summary questions provided to interviewees prior to the meetings. Whereas the guiding prompts for the reflective journals were specific to each land-based activity, summary questions for the final interviews were designed to address the study as a whole.

There was a degree of overlap between the reflective journal guiding prompts and summary interview questions for student-participants. For example, the first interview question asked which activities had had the most impact on their thinking regarding Indigenous epistemologies and the land. In the journals, participants had written about what resonated with them during each set of activities. The purpose of this first interview question was to glean which activities had had the most impact overall during the four-month span of the study. I was
interested not only in summary thoughts, but in how these summaries would support data from the journal excerpts.

A second summary question focused on how participants might describe their feelings of comfort with respect to teaching Indigenous perspectives in an educational setting, and whether these feelings had changed as a result of being part of the study. The remainder of the interview questions specifically addressed the three research questions.

A third layer of data would be provided by the interview transcripts from the two course instructors. These transcripts would add insight into the land-based activities from another perspective. Instructors’ perspectives would be used to triangulate findings from the student data sources, as well as supplement summary conclusions and observations.

5.2.1 Student interview transcripts

Xu and Connelly (2010) advise that researchers need to build in a disciplined process of reading and rereading participant texts, and of writing reflective observations that will eventually give shape to the final research narrative (p. 363). As part of my “disciplined process,” I devised a strategy that would help frame how I examined the content of the interviews.

Josselson (2014) writes that analysis of narrative materials can be conducted along two major dimensions: holistic versus categorical and content versus form. With respect to the first dimension, my strategy with the interview data focused on categorical analysis – one that abstracts sections germane to a category and relates them to similar texts from other narratives (p. 226). With respect to the second dimension of content versus form, I was focused on content; that is, my attention was directed towards what was said during interviews rather than on how it was said [emphasis in original] (p. 226).
Analysis of the interview transcripts entailed identifying passages that pertained to the following:

1. Levels of comfort relating to teaching Indigenous perspectives in an educational setting and whether feelings had changed over the course of the study.
2. Statements that related to the five prompts used to analyze the journals, (i.e. statements relating to what resonated and challenged participants, as well as statements relating to stories, educational contexts, and emerging ideas.)
3. Statements that addressed any of the three research questions.
4. Statements that connected to scholarly literature and theoretical perspectives in the field.
5. Observations that either supported emerging ideas in the reflective journals or otherwise. I designated colour codes for each of the five categories and colour-coded the entries. As with the journals, I also categorized data according to its alignments with one or more of the questions. Material that did not speak directly to a research question was categorized separately.

Once again, I printed categorized excerpts off and cut them into strips. I then went back to the wall charts, already populated with data from the reflective journals, and taped the interview passages to the areas where they complemented and overlapped with commentary from the journals. The three wall charts grew quickly and would soon need their own respective walls, particularly since I still needed to add input from the two course instructors.

5.2.2 Instructor interview transcripts

The transcripts from my interviews with Teresa and Hanna offered a third layer of valuable data and a shift in perspective that complemented the student journal excerpts and final student interviews. My discussions with both course instructors were rich with insight and detail that related to each set of activities and to the study as a whole. To ensure consistency, I
implemented the same process used to analyze the student transcripts. The instructor transcripts were reviewed, categorized, and coded using the same five items employed when analyzing the student transcripts. Slight adjustments needed to be made to the wording of several of these items in order to accommodate for a shift in perspective.

The two transcripts were reviewed numerous times and passages that addressed any of the following topics were highlighted:

1. Perceptions of students’ levels of comfort relating to the teaching Indigenous perspectives in educational settings.
2. Statements that supported and/or elaborated on excerpts from the student reflective journals. Statements that supported and/or elaborated on passages from the student interviews.
3. Statements that addressed any of the three research questions.
4. Statements that connected to scholarly literature and theoretical perspectives in the field.
5. Ideas or observations that did not fit in any of the above categories.

Once these two transcripts had been categorized and colour-coded, they too, were printed off and cut into strips. These passages were then taped on the respective charts where they best fit and became part of the bricolage that would help shape the narrative of the entire study.

5.3 Chapter summary

This chapter has provided an overview of how data sources were analyzed: the student reflective journals, the semi-structured interviews with students, and the semi-structured interviews with instructors. The reflective journals were organized in relation to the guiding prompts provided to participants at the outset of the study. Five general prompts provided themes into which journal excerpts were structured. The prompts were purposefully broad, as the intent
was to be as inclusive as possible in selecting excerpts that expressed a host of individual viewpoints. As Josselson (2014) reminds us, “Analysis is aimed at discovering both the themes that unify the story and the disparate voices that carry, comment on, and disrupt the main themes” (p. 262). I wanted to ensure that participant “voices” would be heard in relation to one another, as the concept of relationality is integral to narrative inquiry, as well as to the purposes of reconciliation. During the second phase of journal analysis, categorized excerpts were re-categorized in accordance to which of the three research questions they addressed.

Analysis of interview transcripts (student and instructor) entailed a similar process. This method of analysis resulted in three layers of categorized data – each adding depth and dimension to the former. The findings of this analysis are embedded in discussion of the relevant research lenses discussed earlier. Each of the subsequent three chapters – dedicated to the lenses of cultivation, narrative, and art respectively – includes (i) an overview of the lens and why is was selected as a guiding theme, (ii) a description of the land-based activities selected for the lens, (iii) a rationale as to why the activities were selected, (iv) findings relating to the lens in conjunction with how both resonate with scholarly research in the field.
Chapter 6: Lens of Cultivation

The thematic lens for the first pair of activities was cultivation: and more specifically, the cultivation of relationships. The activities included under the scope of this lens were a guided tour of the Centre for Sustainable Food Systems at UBC Farm, and a subsequent visit to the Ellen Neel Kwakwaka’wakw pole, *Victory Through Honour*, located on the UBC campus. I selected the theme of cultivation because I felt the notion of cultivating relationships in its broadest sense lent itself to the aims of land-based pedagogies, ecological recovery, and the processes of reconciliation. In particular, it was expressed in the site locations of the activities in a number of ways: 1) the cultivation of deeper awareness regarding ecological relationships between plants, animals, and food systems; 2) the cultivation of relationships between individuals and the land; 3) the cultivation of relationships between members of local community groups; and 4) the cultivation of awareness regarding past colonial relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in our province, and the need to continue to build deeper and more respectful relationships in the future. The following section offers more information about the UBC Farm experience, the first of two activities organized under the lens of cultivation.

6.1 UBC Farm

The UBC Farm is an integral part of the Centre for Sustainable Food Systems (CSFS), a research and teaching facility within the Faculty of Land and Food Systems. It is a 24-hectare production farm – half of which is forested with 90-year-old hemlock. Approximately one third is in active food production. The UBC Farm grows over 200 varieties of fruits, vegetables, and herbs, and is home to honey bee hives and open pasture hens (Faculty of Land and Food Systems, 2016).
One of the reasons the farm was selected as a site location for this study was due to its importance as an educational setting, not only to learners participating in the research project, but also to learners in the local community. The CSFS at UBC Farm conducts research, teaching, and community outreach to explore and exemplify healthy, sustainable food and ecological support systems (Faculty of Land and Food Systems, 2016). As such, the farm is home to numerous community-based initiatives, academic research projects, and sustainability practices. As Green (2007) notes, food gardens are important educational settings that bring learners closer to nature and teach important messages about ecological relationships and patterns. They enable students to develop relationships with the land while learning about nature and systems that exist within given places, particularly with respect to food production and earth stewardship (p. 2).

UBC Farm was an ideal setting in which to learn about ecological relationships and, also, to learn about initiatives with respect to cultivating relationships between members of Vancouver communities, including local Indigenous groups. During the 2016 fall term, there were four Indigenous initiatives at farm. These included the Musqueam Garden, the Maya in Exile Garden, the Tu’wusht Project, and the Indigenous Health Research and Education Garden. The purpose of this first experiential excursion to UBC Farm was to introduce participants to the area, as well as provide them with the opportunity to contemplate how “land as first teacher,” as a pedagogical model, might be used in this setting, or a learning environment similar to it, to explore notions of land education, ecological awareness, and processes of reconciliation.

The visits to the UBC Farm took place in early October 2016. I went to the farm a number of times to take part in the regularly scheduled Saturday morning public tours prior to taking participants. I had intended for a UBC Farm representative to provide tours for
participants during the fall term; however, guide availability did not align with participant availability and so I conducted the tours myself.

Participating in the public tours helped shape my understanding of the area and of the various community and Indigenous initiatives. I was also able to learn the points of interest that the guide highlighted on tours, as well as the general route. I tried not to deviate from the main talking points and route provided to the general public. For example, the public tours focused on all four of the Indigenous initiatives at the farm, including traditional cultivation and harvest practices associated with the Maya in Exile Garden, and the layout and design of the Indigenous Health Garden. Both examples highlighted Indigenous peoples’ ecological relationships with the land, as well as UBC’s commitment towards the development of respectful relationships with local Indigenous community groups. The UBC Farm was an ideal place to highlight a learning environment that respects First Nations cultural integrity, that is relevant to First Nations perspectives and experience, that offers reciprocity in relationships with others, and that helps students exercise responsibility through participation (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991, p. 1).

I was also generously provided with a copy of the tour script and maps of the area. Drawing from these materials, I created laminated handouts that provided supplementary background knowledge for my tours. I am incredibly grateful for the help I received from the Farm representatives. After the excursions were complete, I happily gave them the laminated materials I had created for their future use, along with a gift. This act of reciprocity was a token of my deep respect and gratitude for all the work that they do, also for their generosity in sharing knowledge, materials, and in making accommodations for our group.
6.2 *Victory Through Honour*

As a follow-up to the UBC Farm guided tour, participants were asked to visit the Ellen Neel Kwakwaka’wakw pole, *Victory Through Honour*. The pole is situated in a busy pedestrian area on the UBC main campus located on Musqueam occupied territory. The bronze plaque describing its meaning and significance is difficult to read due to wear and tear. This is unfortunate, given the pole’s importance to UBC history, described below.

Although the UBC athletic nickname, “Thunderbirds,” was selected and used on campus in 1934, it did not become officially sanctioned by the Kwicksutaineuk people until 1948 (Lewis, 2004). According to the UBC Athletics website, the Thunderbird is a high-ranking, mythical, powerful creature indigenous to the West Coast and under whose protection come brotherhood, peace, and goodwill (Go Thunderbirds, 2016). In 1948, during a halftime ceremony at the annual homecoming football game, Kwicksutaineuk Chief William Scow officially sanctioned UBC’s use of the Thunderbird name for campus teams and facilities, and Kwakwaka’wakw artist Ellen Neel presented a pole to the University to signify the event (Hume, 1994). The pole stood in front of Brock Hall from 1948 until the 1970’s and was then moved to the north side of the Student Union Building where, through rot and vandalism, it was destroyed in 2000 (Go Thunderbirds, 2016).

The original pole was replaced with a replica carved by Calvin Hunt, Merv Child, and John Livingston, and a re-dedication ceremony was held at UBC to commemorate the occasion in 2004. During the ceremony, Kwakwaka’wakw Chief of the Heiltsuk Nation Edwin Newman extended gratitude to former Musqueam Chief Delbert Guerin and the community for granting him and other Kwakwaka’wakw people permission to visit traditional Musqueam territory (Lewis, 2004). In an interview for *First Nations Drum*, Musqueam Elder Larry Grant commented
on the tri-part interconnectedness established by the coming together of the Coast Salish culture, the Kwakwaka’wakw culture, and the university culture for the ceremony, stating that “[a] common goal,” focuses on the need “to learn about and respect each other’s protocols and cultures” (Lewis, 2004, para 16).

The symbolic significance of Victory Through Honour runs deep. The pole’s story and presence speak to the colonial roots of the university, in addition to naming rights and appropriation. At the same time, the pole is also one of the many examples of a public space on the UBC campus that acknowledges Indigenous presence and thus speaks to the cultivation of relationships and reconciliation. This includes relationships between UBC and the Kwakwaka’wakw people, in addition to relationships with the Musqueam First Nation. The pole is a reminder of past, present, and future relationships.

6.3 Findings

The following section presents the findings of participant experiences during this first round of activities organized under the thematic lens of cultivation. Data sources for these findings come from participant reflective journals and interview transcripts. Findings are also informed by my notes and observations and, on occasion, by participant background information provided in the pre-study questionnaires. As previously outlined in the data analysis section of this dissertation, when sifting through journal and interview data I was looking for what resonated with participants, what challenged them, what stories emerged, and how the activities might be used in an educational context. I was also curious as to how the data related to the three research questions that guided the study. That is, I was interested in how journal and interview responses spoke to the following: 1) how “land as first teacher” can become a framework through which educators can integrate land education into their practice; 2) how the process of
storying Indigenous presence through cultivation can contribute to interdisciplinary approaches to ecological recovery and processes of reconciliation; and 3) how the pedagogical approach known as “land as first teacher” can help educators shape their practice to consider processes of reconciliation that emphasize a learner’s awareness of the past, acknowledgement of harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behavior (TRC, 2015c, p. 113).

In surveying the data, two observations readily emerged: out of all the data for the three sets of activities, the first guided tour of UBC Farm was the experience that most resonated with participants, and the visit to Victory Through Honour was the experience that most challenged participants.

6.3.1 UBC Farm

With respect to the first activity organized in this initial phase of the research, a guided visit to UBC Farm, I was concerned that my lack of deep knowledge and expertise would negatively influence participants’ experiences. Certainly they could have asked more pointed and detailed questions to an experienced guide had there been one available. However, my concerns were mildly assuaged when all participants who participated in final interviews remarked that the holistic and experiential activity of visiting the UBC Farm was one of the highlights of the study.

When exploring the responses to the UBC Farm experience, clear themes emerged, particularly with respect to what resonated most with participants. Overwhelmingly, a focus on relationships was discussed – specifically how “land as first teacher,” as a pedagogical model, helped participants learn about the following: 1) ecological relationships between plants, animal life, and food systems; 2) human relationships with the land that take into account a land ethic focused on ecological principles; 3) relationships between community groups strengthened by
working together on the land; and 4) reconciliatory relationships between First Nations and UBC community groups. The following section provides more detailed information on these findings in conjunction with these themes.

Elaine wrote about the many symbiotic relationships she witnessed while on the tour:

Something I never really considered or thought to be important, but was evident all over the farm from the way in which the Musqueam garden was planted, to the truffle/oak trees, to the planting and harvesting of beans/corn/squash, to even moving the chicken pens throughout the farm land. This notion that one item affects another’s growth is indeed very interesting, intriguing, and pretty well amazing! Even the relationships between the senior farmers teaching young children about growing food is symbiotic – one’s teaching influences the other, and hopefully will have a continuous effect. (Elaine, personal communication [journal], October 11, 2016) 

Elaine’s comment regarding the planting and harvesting of beans, corn, and squash together is a reference to one of the farm’s Indigenous initiatives, the Maya in Exile Garden. Beans, corn, and squash are known as the Three Sisters because of the ways in which seeds are planted in a single mound and grow together synergistically. Josephine also spoke about them in her final interview:

They didn’t necessarily have [crops] growing in separate places. For example, the Three Sisters that were growing together? Why not? Why not? It’s works! They help each other, but we don’t do that. We

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6 Editorial changes have not been made to participant remarks.
always…. corn grows there. The pumpkins grow there. But here, no.

They work together so well, so why not do that? That was new to me to see such a small thing. (Josephine, personal communication [interview], December 2, 2016)

Participants commented on the farm’s ecological systems and plant interdependence, and at the same time discussed their own relationships to land. This was another relationship that resonated during the visit.

Having grown up in Quebec, Josephine commented on the UBC Farm experience in relation to her own educational background and understanding of farming practices. In her interview, she discussed the differences in human relationships to the land:

In Quebec, in history, we learned how land was divided. French people did it a certain way. They had rectangles… for me, land can be divided in two ways, the English way or the French way. I never thought that you don’t have to follow a square or a rectangle. Here [at the farm], they seem to be more in tune with the way the natural world works on its own instead of forcing it to be a certain way; they just adapt to the way that’s in accordance to nature. That way works better – which I never thought about. It seems silly, but for me that was kind of an “oh” moment when I realized you don’t need to force the land to work for you, you can work with it. (Josephine, personal communication [interview], December 2, 2016)

Cultivating relationships with the land is a theme Elyse also addressed in her journal when discussing the value of engaging children:
The UBC farm is an excellent way for children to make connections to the earth, to the land that they live on. Hands-on activities at the farm will help children understand and appreciate how the land, Musqueam territory, is so important in their daily lives, from the food that they eat to the air that they breathe. (Elyse, personal communication [journal], November 24, 2016)

Building human relationships and connections with the land and re-consideration of a land ethic focused on ecological principles was a strong theme throughout the farm experience – as was the idea of relationships between community groups being strengthened by working together on the land.

Bonnie wrote about the Musqueam “xʷc̓ic̓əsəm” garden, one of the Indigenous initiatives at UBC Farm. What resonated for her was how the farm helps foster pedagogical relationships with the land. “xʷc̓ic̓əsəm” means “place of growing” in the “həmodernməm” language. The focus of this garden is on education and research related to Indigenous food sovereignty as well as on increasing participants’ knowledge and access to both traditional and non-traditional plants, including specific ways to organize plants based on relationships among plants, harvesting, and soil (Faculty of Land and Food Systems, 2016). The design of the center of the garden is in the shape of a Spindle Whorl, an important tool in Musqueam weaving and culture. Bonnie noted:

Part of the Musqueam garden [design] is laid out in a labyrinth …

Providing this space to the Indigenous community helps bridge the generations from the traditional to the modern, and encourages their youth to participate in activities that emphasize medicinal plant knowledge and demonstrates the traditional foods that preceded contact.
The Musqueam gardens are used to train indigenous youths in agriculture, and truly exemplify “land as first teacher.” (Bonnie, personal communication [journal], December 2, 2016)

Beta highlighted the significance of an Indigenous epistemology with respect to the land: “Indigenous knowledge does not come from conquering and taming the land (something that many years ago was seen as a clear sign of the special place of humanity on the planet), but from learning from it” (Beta, personal communication [journal], January 23, 2017).

While commentary on how the farm experience allowed participants to consider pedagogical relationships with the land, as demonstrated by the “xʷc̓iʔc̓əməm” garden experience, other reflections focused on how the farm helps cultivate relationships between community groups in the area and, specifically, with local First Nations.

Josephine commented on the various projects taking place at the farm: “I loved to see how many different groups of people came together to take care of the place. From the young to the old and from different cultures. That was beautiful” (Josephine, personal communication [interview], December 2, 2016). Lauren wrote further about community engagement:

I loved the way that the UBC farm has incorporated Indigenous initiatives. The one that struck me was the farm to table program that involved First Nation downtown eastside residents in the caring for and harvesting of plants from the garden. To me, this seemed like a program that was meaningful and would help people who are living in an urban center, in typically rough conditions, to connect to their history and the land. There is room for spiritual healing through this program but also for building a closer sense of community because meals are prepared
from the food that is grown here. (Lauren, personal communication [journal], January 10, 2017)

Talk of community engagement also extended to reflections regarding reconciliatory relationships between First Nations and UBC community groups. Bonnie wrote about the importance of the programs at UBC Farm in working towards the building of respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the community:

UBC’s awareness of the unique qualities of Indigenous agriculture helps provide a bridge to the reconciliation process with the Musqueam nation. Acknowledging the rights and attachments experienced by First Nations to their traditional lands and how they used them, creates a framework that allows building bridges to redressing past wrongs. UBC demonstrates a clear commitment to the process by teaching us these principles while implementing programs that show the respect needed to complete the reconciliation process. (Bonnie, personal communication [journal], December 2, 2016)

Similarly, Elyse wrote:

The involvement of the Indigenous people at the UBC farm is powerful as they teach many people about the traditional and sacred use of the land, especially in the beautifully and artistically designed medicine garden. The medicine garden is also a symbol of healing from the hurt that the Indigenous people have felt since colonialism. (Elyse, personal communication [journal], November 24, 2016)

Lauren also commented on the UBC Farm’s initiatives with respect to reconciliation:
In the garden, the connection to land is key and I think that the First Nations initiatives are doing a great service to the people who participate in the program. These gardening programs are important pathways for reconciliation to take place because the land that is being used is the unceded and traditional territory of the Musqueam. By acknowledging this and working with First Nations, a new understanding and respect for traditional ways of living are developing and there is an opportunity to reconnect to the land. (Lauren, personal communication [journal], January 10, 2017)

The abundance of relationships that were reflected on during the UBC Farm experience ranged from interrelated ecological relationships between plants, animals, and human life, re-thinking human relationships with the land, community relationships strengthened by working on the land, and reconciliatory relationships between local First Nations and UBC community groups. What the farm experience did not illuminate for participants as directly, however, was the historical relationships between UBC and Indigenous communities. This is the reason why it was paired with a visit to the Victory Through Honour pole, carved by Ellen Neel of the Kwakwaka’wakw First Nation.

6.3.2 Victory Through Honour

Of all the activities included in the research project, this second activity organized under the lens of cultivation was the one that challenged participants the most. In many cases, participants wrote about the fact they had walked past the pole on numerous occasions, but were unaware of its history. Reactions to the pole focused on three main issues: 1) erasure of a colonial past; 2) cultural appropriation; and 3) respect for the Kwakwaka’wakw First Nation.
The visit to *Victory Through Honour* seemed to raise more questions than answers with participants, particularly with respect to past relationships between UBC and the Kwakwaka’wakw people, as well as to present relationships between the UBC student body and the symbolic significance of the pole. Bonnie wrote:

> Three days before my fieldtrip to see the Kwakwaka’wakw Totem Pole, I was walking along campus and found myself stopped in my tracks to look at, and appreciate a totem pole that looked like it had a story because the colour and character of the pole was different than I had seen on campus. I had no idea of the significance of its history. In the area where the replica is placed there is only a small plaque that misses the depth and meaning of the replica. I wondered, was this by chance or was it left to be reflected upon another day? (Bonnie, personal communication [journal], December 2, 2016)

Reactions to the pole focused on the erasure of Indigenous presence. Elaine wrote:

> When I arrived at the Ellen Neel pole, I was surprised and a little disappointed. Surprised because I had walked by this pole on so many occasions, and did not realize its connection to the UBC Thunderbirds mascot/logo. I could see the similarity of the thunderbird located at the top of the pole and how it connected to the animated/adapted logo we see on students’ uniforms, sweatshirts, etc. I was curious to learn more about the story of the thunderbird and of the pole itself, which I thought the plaque was going to offer. The plaque read more like a contract or
political document of who created the pole and who presented it to UBC as a form of permission for the institution to use the thunderbird as UBC’s logo. I had to move around the plaque to read the writing as it was so faded, and was disappointed that 1) it had faded so much and 2) that it did not provide information about the pole itself. I realized while I was at this site, that many people were walking by, not curious as to what I was doing, and I wondered how many students, staff, and faculty members have walked by this site without even knowing its connection to UBC Thunderbirds? How many have wondered why our logo is the thunderbird? Do the players on the teams representing this mighty creature on their chests as they parade into stadiums know why it’s there? Do they care? (Elaine, personal communication [journal], October 11, 2016)

Others commented on the condition of the plaque near the pole. Elyse wrote:

I felt like we need to show more respect for the contribution that the Aboriginal people have shown us, by remembering their gift and learning the story behind their gift. This will help us to better understand their traditions and respect the land that was originally a part of their heritage.

The Kwakwaka’wakw pole tells the story of misunderstandings and wrong-doings that took place (and that still take place) during colonialism. The newcomers didn’t understand the First Nations’ view of the land, they didn’t appreciate it and they used, without permission, the
name of the sacred Thunderbird. (Elyse, personal communication [journal], November 24, 2016)

Elaine and Elyse were not the only ones troubled by the pole. Josephine observed:

I had never noticed Kwakwaka’wakw pole. I have been walking in front of it for weeks now on my way to class without ever seeing it. That was eye opening. I must admit that its history troubles me. Simply because it became UBC’s symbol without first asking for permission of the people to which that symbol belongs. Like the land, it was stolen. That doesn’t sit right with me. But it makes this gift even more precious. It was not deserved. (Josephine, personal communication [journal], December 2, 2016)

The issue of Indigenous erasure and cultural appropriation were at the forefront of reflections regarding the visit to Victory through Honour. As Beta commented during his final interview, “My visit to the pole made me question the stance that UBC takes in regards of the First Nation’s heritage of their mascot. I mean, it is the mascot, and yet this very important document is practically hidden” (Beta, personal communication [interview], November 30, 2016). Lauren also wrote:

I was bothered by the fact that the pole was vandalized at some point. I was also challenged by the fact that the UBC sports teams never received the “ok” to use the Thunderbird as their mascot until many years after it was used. (Lauren, personal communication [journal], January 10, 2017)

Despite the challenges that were expressed in the reflections regarding the pole, and acknowledgement of wrongs that had been committed in the past, there were also responses that
discussed the possibility of using this artifact in an educational context to not only disrupt learners’ knowledge, but also to teach valuable lessons in reconciliation.

The gift of the pole, in light of the historical appropriation of the Thunderbird symbol, was meaningful to Elyse, who spoke about her deep respect for the Kwakwaka’wakw people:

Everything has a story. It was beautiful to learn about how the First Nations people were so generous, even gifting a totem pole, despite the fact that the UBC athletics team had “stolen” the sacred Thunderbird name without permission…. The kindness through that. That was quite impactful. (Elyse, personal communication [interview], December 2, 2016)

Lauren also observed the pole’s importance in helping educate others about building respectful reconciliatory relationships:

The pole reminds us of the importance of asking permission before taking something that is not ours. This is part of the reconciliation process because we are working to acknowledge that cultural appropriation is not ok and there are certain protocols that we should follow before we assume that we can use/share knowledge and ideas that are not ours. The pole could be used as an educational tool to teach students about the importance of asking permission before sharing First Nation’s knowledge and culture. We could talk about cultural appropriation and why some knowledge is sacred and belongs to the owner. (Lauren, personal communication [journal], January 10, 2017)
“Land as first teacher,” as a pedagogical model, had done much to highlight the importance and significance of cultivating relationships during these two activities. Data regarding the first activity focused on the myriad ecological and community relationships intrinsic to the farm, whereas data from the second activity focused more on a colonial past, erasure of Indigenous presence, cultural appropriation, and reconciliation. Another finding that emerged in relation to both activities was discussion about the positive impact of experiential learning.

Participation in the first two activities under this first lens of cultivation was highlighted by Bonnie, who underscored the impact of experiential learning in supporting her knowledge both as a teacher and as a student:

These field trips helped give substance to the lectures we have been taking for the last few months. Enhanced awareness of the lifestyles comes from concrete examples that stay with me better than the abstract knowledge that does not build the empathies I get from ‘hands on’ experiences. I will be better equipped to pass this knowledge to students as it has a life within me. (Bonnie, personal communication [journal], December 2, 2016)

Similarly, Elyse related how experiential learning prompts her to engage more meaningfully with the landscape:

There is so much history beneath our feet, so many stories in the artifacts that we walk by, so many traditional and medicinal properties in the plants, animals and landscape that we brush by every day. We need to stop, listen to the silence, breath the fresh air and appreciate the land that
we walk upon. Let the elders, and all those that came before us, teach us about the living landscape that is such an intimate, yet ignored, part of our lives. (Elyse, personal communication [journal], November 24, 2016)

Josephine also emphasized how the activities gave her pause to stop and appreciate what is around her:

The activities that we did made me realize how many stories can exist in a single object. I am grateful [for the activities] because I would have walked by the entire semester and not seen [Victory Through Honour]. And I would have missed something about the history of the place I am standing on. I could have spent my whole UBC semester or year and not known. (Josephine, personal communication [interview], December 2, 2016)

Intrinsic to a land-based approach was the value of experiential learning and taking the time to learn more about the history and stories that surround us on campus. This was a theme that emerged early and continued to gain momentum throughout the course of the research activities.

Whereas reactions to UBC Farm seemed to focus on the potential for understanding, creating, and building relationships, the visit to the Victory Through Honour pole was viewed through an historical lens: it was a disruptive reminder of colonial past wrongs. Situating land at the center of discussion – both in the context of a pastoral setting and a busy campus pedestrian area – elicited two distinctive sets of responses from participants. The bucolic setting of the UBC Farm and the focus on ecological relationships on the land, in addition to the cultivation of respectful relationship between people and the land, and between people and community groups,
resonated most with participants. Reactions to the *Victory Through Honour* pole were primarily focused on challenges brought to light by what was being learned: reflections ranged from surprise, disbelief, and anger, to respect for the Kwakwaka’wakw people for their gracious gifts. As well, responses included respect for UBC as an institution in acknowledging their mistake in appropriation and working towards furthering the processes of reconciliation. Reflections regarding both activities focused on the positive impact of experiential learning and the importance of taking time to reflect upon the storied landscapes that surround us. In the following section, further discussion regarding these findings is provided.

### 6.4 Discussion

During the two activities organized under the lens of cultivation, participants reflected on their learning experiences while situating the land first. “Land as first teacher” presented a pedagogical model most had not previously considered. Reflective journal prompts and semi-structured interview questions had been designed to guide responses towards attending to the three research questions that framed the study. These research questions, as noted earlier, were centered on how the pedagogical framework “land as first teacher,” might be integrated into educational practice to address three key areas: land education, ecological recovery, and reconciliation. The following section discusses the findings in relation to each of these three areas.

#### 6.4.1 Land education through the lens of cultivation

With respect to the integration of land education into educators’ practice, there were many salient reflections articulated in the findings worthy of commentary and discussion. As there was considerable overlap between which of the three research questions was being addressed in the reflections – and in some cases, all of them – sorting through which responses
would be discussed in relation to a specific question was a difficult task. When writing findings and discussion in narrative inquiry, Josselson (2014) observes the following:

I see that the categories are themselves intertwined, one affecting the other in complex ways, so much so that I can’t really discuss them separately without blurred boundaries. This reassures me that I have done my work reasonably well: Categories that are too separate are artificial. Human life is of a piece, multilayered, contradictory, and multivalent, to be sure, but the strands are always interconnected. (p. 232)

The summary discussion points introduced in this section have been organized into categories that are intertwined. The headings serve as a point of entry for themes and ideas that will continue to flow and evolve throughout the discussion section of this chapter and ones that follow.

Goals central to the research study were (i) to challenge dominant discourses surrounding land and place in our local area, and (ii) to see how land education as a framework might be integrated into educators’ practice. The visit to UBC Farm and to Victory Through Honour helped address these goals. Calderon (2014) argues that making explicit dominant discourses is essential to decolonizing work and central to the concept of land education. By “decolonization,” she means “uncovering how settler colonial projects are maintained and reproduced, with understandings of land being one of the primary ways such identities are formed” (p. 28). Also, she writes, “a land education model demands we decolonize the ‘local’ in order to understand how settler colonialism is currently enacted and taught” (p. 28).
The first research question of this study focused on how educators might integrate land education into their practice using the framework “land as first teacher.” In attending to the aims of this question, I was mindful I would not position myself as an expert in this pedagogical model, but rather provide participants with background knowledge and context that would prompt them to view their surroundings through a decolonized lens. In reviewing the findings with respect to the first research question, three observations emerged. First, “land as first teacher” as a pedagogical approach led participants to challenge dominant discourses with respect to a colonial land ethic and facilitated awareness of Indigenous understandings of land. Second, the pedagogical model illustrated the importance of “land as first teacher” in providing culturally responsive teaching: namely, education regarding Indigenous culture, language, history, and identity. Third, the approach unearthed the storied past of a local artifact that generated critiques of settler colonialism, thereby fostering a sense of awareness and recognition of a local place that had previously gone unnoticed. Fourth, the model emphasized the importance and value of engaging learners in experiential learning on land and in place.

While visiting the UBC Farm, Josephine observed that her understanding of how land is divided and farmed was being challenged. She noted that, when growing up in Quebec, she had been taught that land in Canada is divided in two ways: the English way or the French way. This observation regarding her formal education with respect to the land spoke to the ways in which dominant perspectives are perpetuated in our school systems and, in particular, our social studies curriculum. This was something to which I could relate.

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7 This observation regarding increased awareness of Indigenous understandings of land is discussed in greater detail in the following section focused on ecological recovery.
Similar to Josephine’s experiences in social studies, my own high school experiences regarding the history of Canada were steeped in what Calderon (2014) describes as a settler colonial land ethic. Josephine was rethinking the ways in which she had been led to understand how farms and farming practices work. She realized that, in effect, she had been taught to identify French and English colonial practices with respect to dividing and sowing tracts of land, and that others' practices had been silenced or ignored. Her history textbooks, which would have been far more recent than the ones I used in my high school days, were part of a dominant Canadian discourse that excluded other perspectives. Josephine’s reaction was indicative of how a local land-based activity can help spark questions about one’s own education and, also, teach alternate ways to work with and consider relationships with the land.

Josephine’s realization resonates with the findings of Bang (2015). In exploring how Indigenous conceptions of the natural world can shape an individual’s interactions with and perspectives towards it, Bang (2015) found that rapid shifts unfolded between cultural models and orientations to the natural world during activities she conducted with individuals. She noted that making visible a multiplicity of orientations towards the natural world has implications for how we might understand peoples’ conceptual and epistemic ecologies (p. 225). In the case of the UBC Farm experience, Josephine’s eyes were opened to her own orientations towards the use of land, thus prompting her to think critically about how her conceptualization had been inculcated throughout her formal education, in addition to what other epistemic ecologies had been silenced in the process.

In addition to considering how “land as first teacher” can help educators challenge dominant discourses with respect to a colonial land ethic, and make visible orientations towards the natural world, there was also discussion regarding the value of engaging children with the
land to help them foster relationships with it. Swan (1992) writes about the importance of introducing young children to nature, stating that the ultimate goal of learning is “to bring about greater sympathetic understanding of the natural world until we can enter into a knowing oneness of nature sympathy. For those who reach this state, nature becomes a teacher in return” (p. 119).

Elyse was an elementary teacher candidate at the time of the study. Working with young children on the land was something she was eager to explore in her future practice. Integrating a land education approach was relevant to her during the course of the research project; increasingly schools are seeing value in initiating school garden projects, particularly since scholars note learners experience profound and enriched pedagogical relationships between themselves and the natural world when engaged in such projects (Green, 2007).

According to Bowers (2008), educating children about local places has the potential to lead them to recognize and appreciate the human and natural environments closest to them – this includes knowledge drawn from traditional cultural practices that emphasize restraint in the use of natural resources and support for social practices informed by mutuality. A land-based pedagogical model not only enriches learners’ relationships with the natural world, it also situates Indigenous epistemological and ontological accounts of land at the center of discussion (Tuck, McKenzie, & McCoy, 2014). Hence, it was significant participants recognized the importance of “land as first teacher” working to teach culture, language, history, and identity during the visit to the UBC Farm.

The Maya in Exile Garden was one of the four Indigenous initiatives at the farm during the time of the study. The garden was established in 2000 by five Guatemalan families who came to Canada as refugees (Faculty of Land and Food Systems, 2016). The Guatemalan families, who worked collaboratively with UBC Farm representatives to initiate the project, wanted to ensure
their children would grow up learning about their Mayan traditions, culture, and identity (Faculty of Land and Food Systems, 2016).

Another initiative with a similar purpose was the Musqueam “xʷc̓iʔəsəm” garden, where over forty varieties of medicinal plants grow, and a group of Indigenous Elders and Knowledge-keepers conduct medicine-making workshops and walks with members of the community and local Indigenous youth on a regular basis (Faculty of Land and Food Systems, 2016). These initiatives were illustrative of the 4R principle of responsibility, in that they highlighted UBC’s active engagement and responsibility to the relationships it has with the local community in which it is physically situated. Participant attention was drawn towards how UBC positions itself with respect to working with Indigenous communities in policy, posture, and practice (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991, p. 15). As Bonnie, Elyse, and Lauren observed in their journals, initiatives that actively engage with local communities, such as the Maya in Exile garden and Musqueam “xʷc̓iʔəsəm” garden, allow for learning experiences for youth to flourish.

The importance of such initiatives must be underscored. The Alaska Native Knowledge Network (1998) maintains that inclusion of traditional and culturally responsive teaching practices is imperative for Indigenous youth in our educational systems. They describe culturally responsive schooling as education that provides a firm grounding in the heritage language and culture indigenous to a particular First Nation, maintaining this is a fundamental prerequisite for the development of culturally healthy students and communities associated with a local place. This is significant considering the impact such teaching practices can have. As Brayboy and Castagno (2008) write,

Scholars have found that efforts at culturally responsive schooling for Indigenous youth result in students who have enhanced self-esteem,
develop healthy identity formation, are more self-directed and politically active, give more respect to tribal elders, have a positive influence in their tribal communities, exhibit more positive classroom behavior and engagement, and achieve academically at higher rates. (p. 733)

As we look at ways for Indigenous youth to find success in our schools, Brayboy and Castagno (2008) insist there is a need and desire for them to become fluent in multiple ways of knowing and being, and schools and teachers play important roles in facilitating that process (p. 734). “Land as first teacher,” as a pedagogical model, provides opportunity for the inclusion of multiple ways of knowing, and at the same time facilitates culturally responsive learning experiences for local First Nations’ youth.

The third key finding with respect to land education was how challenging it was for participants to learn about the storied past of a local artifact on campus – one that disrupted not only their knowledge about a landmark they walk past daily, but also about their school mascot, the Thunderbird. Responses to the story of Victory Through Honour reflected the need for educators to heighten collective awareness of Indigenous presence in our local areas, in addition to the need to draw attention to historical erasure of this presence.

It was notable that many commented on the fact they had walked by Ellen Neel’s pole countless times without knowing its significance. Donald (2012) writes that revealing the quality and character of the historical and current relationships that link First Nations and non-Indigenous Canadians involves peeling back the many layers of artifact and place that have been concealed (p. 544). Victory Through Honour is an example of an artifact that gave pause for participants to “closely consider the contextual complexities of Aboriginal and Canadian relations,” because it is a conspicuous reminder of our shared society (p. 545). However, public
access to the background knowledge that provided the context for the pole was less than conspicuous. Although the artifact told a richly layered story, as participants observed, the signage near to *Victory Through Honour* was difficult to read. Thus, as Bonnie noted at the time, “the small plaque…misses the depth and meaning of the replica. I wondered, was this by chance or was it left to be reflected upon another day” (Bonnie, personal communication [journal], December 2, 2016)?

In describing their ethical framework, Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) discuss the principle of relevance. They maintain that if universities are respectful to the cultural integrity of Indigenous students and communities, a position needs to be taken that moves beyond typical modes of knowledge transfer to include institutional legitimation of Indigenous knowledge and skills (p. 8). They write that in addition to respecting Indigenous knowledge, this requires a resolve to help students appreciate, build on, and expand customary forms of consciousness and representation. The principle of relevancy was germane to this land-based activity. Participants reflected on the topics of erasure and cultural appropriation of Indigenous knowledge. These reflections could be observed as steps towards re-inscribing knowledge and histories of those previously erased through colonial occupation.

A fourth finding respecting this first round of activities was participants’ recognition of the benefits of engaging learners in land-based activities focused on local areas. Commentary regarding the importance of engaging learners outside of the classroom and taking the time to learn more about local places and artifacts began in this first phase of the research and continued throughout the course of the research project.

Research suggests that engagement in local experiential learning can positively impact learners in a number of ways. For example, developing a connection to and a sense of local place
during childhood have been linked to environmentally responsible behaviors and social action in later adolescents and adults (Sobel, 1996; Chawla, 1998). Locally-focused curriculum in schools can also lead to improvements in the health, intellectual abilities, and motivation of students (Sobel, 1996, 2005). It can also engage learners with ideologies of social justice and challenge taken-for-granted assumptions regarding our relationships with nature, notions of progress, and the purposes of education (Graham, 2007).

Josephine expressed gratitude for engagement in the experiential activities, as they provided her with knowledge about the areas she walked by daily, thus enriching her appreciation of the place in which she was living and studying during the time of the research. Bonnie was struck by how the activities represented ‘hands-on’ knowledge and reinforced what she was learning in her lectures. Elyse wrote about the importance of learning about the history beneath our feet, in addition to the stories of the artifacts, plants, animals, and landscape that we walk by on a daily basis. These responses reinforce the benefits of an experiential land-based pedagogical approach – an approach where connections to the natural world become a legitimate ‘text’ from which learning takes place (Hare, 2005).

During this first phase of the research, the integration of “land as first teacher” as a pedagogical model heightened participants’ awareness of dominant discourses with respect to land use, stressed the importance of culturally responsive teaching practices for Indigenous youth, drew attention to the necessity of increasing awareness of Indigenous erasure on campus, and highlighted the benefits of experiential learning. These ideas would continue to evolve throughout the course of the activities. They are also developed in the following section focused on the second research question, ecological recovery.
6.4.2 Ecological recovery through the lens of cultivation

As outlined in the previous section, there was strong emphasis on the various types of relationships participants experienced and commented upon during their tour of UBC Farm. These included reflections about the following: 1) ecological relationships between plants, animal life, and food systems; 2) human relationships with the land focused on ecological principles; 3) relationships between community groups working together on the land; and 4) reconciliatory relationships between First Nations and UBC community groups.

With respect to ecological relationships, Orr (1990) maintains that in learning about the role of humans in ecological systems, there is implicit an understanding that our health, well-being, and survival depend on working with natural forces, not against them. Seeing examples and benefits of working with the land rather than against it was an observation made by several participants during the visit. “Land as first teacher” provided an epistemological model that prompted participants to think about how humans interact with the land. This included learning about ecological relationships between plants, animals, and food systems, as well as developing an increased awareness about Indigenous understandings of land (Calderon, 2014).

Green (2007) writes that food gardens are exemplars of ecological systems in action. Learning how food gets from seed to table requires understanding of complex living systems, including fundamental natural processes such as energy flows and nutrient cycles, in addition to how one organism's waste becomes another's food. Both Elaine and Josephine commented on the interrelated ecological relationships they witnessed at the farm, particularly with respect to the planting and harvesting of beans, corn, and squash in the Maya in Exile Garden.

As noted earlier, one of the foundations of traditional Mayan farming practice is planting corn, beans, and squash together in one mound: the trio is known as the Three Sisters.
Cultivation of the Three Sisters is not only a tradition of Mayan culture, but also of Native American farming societies. For example, according to the Six Nations Farmers Market (2016), in Iroquois tradition, the method of planting corn, beans, and squash in the same area is a sophisticated, sustainable system that provided long-term soil fertility and a healthy diet to generations of people for thousands of years.

The story of the Three Sisters, which was relayed to participants, is that corn should not grow on its own, but rather in community with other crops (Six Nations Farmers Market, 2016). The corn stalks act as poles which bean vines are able to climb. Since nitrogen is fixed on beans’ roots, they improve the overall fertility of the soil and provide nutrients for the following years’ corn crop. Bean vines also strengthen the corn stalks, thus making them less vulnerable to damage by winds. Squash adds to the mix by serving as a living mulch that prevents soil from drying out. Its prickly spines also protect the Three Sisters from predators (Six Nations Farmers Market, 2016).

Learning about the Maya in Exile Garden was a prime example of how storying Indigenous presence through cultivation can contribute to interdisciplinary approaches to ecological education. In addition, the Three Sisters symbolized an ecologically sound agricultural practice that has evolved from thousands of years of continuous relationships with unique environments (Cajete, 1994). As Cajete (1994) reminds us, these relationships and understandings of the land present models that should be taught in contemporary educational settings. The integration of land-based pedagogies, such as the practices associated with the Three Sisters, is a step towards challenging dominant discourses with respect to our relationship to the land and the ways in which it is used. The notion of planting three vegetables together in
the Maya in Exile Garden ran counter to the ways in which most participants envisioned how crops are planted.

As Berry (1990) writes, the majority of people – particularly those who live in urban areas – know that food is grown on farms, but most do not know what kinds of farms, where they are, or what knowledge and skills are involved. He argues the industrial model, on which our food industry is based, disassociates people from making connections between what they eat and the land (Berry, 1990). Bringing learners to a setting similar to the UBC Farm allows them to explore ecological relationships and connections firsthand, and at the same time address the disconnect between food producers and food consumers. As participants learned about the farm’s ecological systems and plant interdependence, they also had the opportunity to reconsider their own relationships to land, another important observation that was reflected upon during the visit.

While the farm experience allowed participants to consider pedagogical relationships with the land, as demonstrated by the Maya in Exile and the “xʷčičəsəm” gardens, it also showcased how the farm helps cultivate relationships between community groups in the area, specifically those with local First Nations. The impact of these community initiatives also highlighted the steps UBC Farm has taken towards the building of respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the local area.

6.4.3 Reconciliation through the lens of cultivation

The first visit to UBC Farm presented a prime opportunity for exploring principles of land education and for seeing the process of cultivating respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous community groups in action. As noted earlier, the visit to the Victory Through Honour pole carved by Ellen Neel of the Kwakwaka’wakw First Nation elicited reflections of a different nature with respect to reconciliation.
Issues of Indigenous erasure and cultural appropriation were at the forefront of reflections regarding the visit to *Victory through Honour*. Spurrell (2017) writes that as European colonists stole Indigenous lands, they simultaneously appropriated the words, symbols, names, pronunciations, and spellings created by Native American cultures. The tensions surrounding this appropriation were reflected in the responses by participants. Knowing the story behind the pole challenged their understanding of the university’s history and made them reflect upon the institution’s colonial roots. This critical reflection was largely focused on institutional responsibilities towards First Nations communities and how UBC’s has positioned itself with respect to working with Indigenous communities in the past (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991, p. 15). Responses also suggested that participants’ understanding of the school’s mascot had been disrupted. Awareness of the story prompted them to question why the rest of the student body was similarly unaware of its significance.

Ziff and Rao (1997) define cultural appropriation as “the taking – from a culture that is not one’s own – of intellectual property, cultural expressions or artifacts, history and ways of knowledge” (p. 1). Scholarly discussion regarding appropriation is intrinsically tied to discourse regarding systems of power and oppression. Williams (2007) notes that appropriation of Indigenous culture by mainstream North America is pervasive; it is indicative of a dominant culture that not only robs and steals, but also objectifies, stereotypes, homogenizes, and treats Indigenous culture and peoples as commodities (p. 31).

Most Indigenous nicknames, logos, and mascots currently used by universities and sports organizations in North America, including the UBC mascot, were appropriated during the first half of the twentieth century without consideration of, or care for, input from Indigenous peoples. In recent years, this practice has been increasingly criticized. For example, in 2005, the
US National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) decreed such appropriation by eighteen US college sports teams was detrimental to learning and promoted harmful stereotypes of Indigenous peoples (NCAA, 2005).

Riley and Carpenter (2016) argue that the contemporary phenomenon of cultural appropriation is deeply grounded in a much longer and continuing phenomenon of Indigenous appropriation that has been facilitated by North American legal systems – one that facilitates profit-making by the taking of Indigenous lands, culture, and identity by non-Indigenous persons and entities for their own purposes. Williams (2007) concurs, suggesting that the practice of using racialized imagery for sports teams, in particular, is representative of the nexus of oppressions arrayed against Indigenous peoples: “In the nicknames, logos, mascots, and other anachronistic symbols we see the full breadth of authority, and dominating institutions that seek to subjugate, control, commodify, marginalize, and eliminate Native people and their culture” (p. 46).

Issues of power, oppression, and control are central to this conversation. Delving deep into robust consideration of these topics moves beyond the scope of this dissertation; however, as Dion (2009) reminds us, it is important for educators to prompt learners to question ways in which systems work to maintain the status quo (p. 81). In an interview with Tuck and Recollet (2016), Cherokee scholar Adrienne Keene notes that while many people have become more comfortable with recognizing and calling out cultural appropriation, attention needs to be given to “processes of reconciliation, moving forward in a productive way, [and] to the larger structural and power issues that set up the circumstances for cultural appropriation to become such a widespread phenomenon” (p. 56). These sentiments were echoed in participant responses.
Despite the challenges that were expressed in the reflections regarding the pole, and acknowledgement of wrongs that had been committed in the past, there were also responses that discussed the possibility of using this artifact in an educational context to not only disrupt learners’ knowledge, but also to teach valuable lessons in reconciliation.

The goals of reconciliation are to foster awareness of the past, acknowledge harm that has been inflicted, atone for the causes, and take action to change behavior (TRC, 2015c, p. 113). The visit to Victory Through Honour helped address these aims. The gift of the pole, in light of the historical appropriation of the Thunderbird symbol, was meaningful to Elyse who talked about her deep respect for the Kwakwaka’wakw people in presenting the pole as a gift. Lauren commented on how the post presents an educational opportunity to teach others about cultural appropriation and at the same time engage in reconciliatory practices that acknowledge protocol with the sharing of knowledge and ideas.

At both the UBC Farm and Victory Through Honour pole, there was recognition of the importance of cultivating reconciliatory relationships now and in the future. This recognition also extended to facilitating awareness regarding Indigenous presence on campus, as well as erasure of that presence. The visit to the pole, in particular, highlighted the need to cultivate awareness of past colonial relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in our province, and the need to continue to build deeper and more respectful relationships in the future.

6.5 Conclusions

Through the lens of cultivation, “land as first teacher,” as a pedagogical model, had done much to highlight the importance and significance of cultivating relationships during this first phase of activities. Framed by the foundational principles of the 4Rs, participants experienced “land as first teacher” in authentic ways, many of which they had not previously considered. This
included learning about ecological relationships that exist between plants, animals, and food systems at the UBC Farm. Seeing the natural processes involved with the cultivation and harvest of the Three Sisters and the rotation of crops, as well as the abundance of natural ecological systems, provided valuable lessons regarding connections both on and to the land. The various initiatives at the UBC Farm that involved cultivating relationships between individuals, community groups, and the land – not to mention the importance of these relationships in teaching culture, language, and identity – also provided significant learning moments for participants. Finally, at both the farm and Victory Through Honour pole, there was recognition of the importance of cultivating reconciliatory relationships now and in the future.

Participants’ responses suggested the first set of activities was successful in challenging the dominant discourses of their educational backgrounds and the dominant discourses that surrounded their own local university setting. The first lens provided the starting point for the next round of activities organized under the lens of narrative, which is the topic of the following chapter.
Chapter 7: Lens of Narrative

The next set of activities, organized under the thematic lens of narrative, focused on the culture and history of the Musqueam peoples - the local First Nation on whose land the UBC campus is situated. The two activities organized under this lens were a guided walk to the Musqueam post on the UBC campus, carved by Musqueam artist Brent Sparrow Jr., and a self-guided visit to a small wetland area near campus called xʷməθkʷə:m or by its settler name, Camosun Bog.

Data sources for the findings in this chapter are the same as the previous chapter. They include journals, interviews, field notes, and observations. Discussion regarding the findings remains focused on how the findings relate to the key themes of land education, ecological recovery, and reconciliation.

The first activity organized under the lens of narrative was a visit to another artifact on campus that spoke to Indigenous presence and re-inscription of that presence: the Musqueam post, also known as the Musqueam sʔi:lq̓əɬ qeqən (double-headed serpent post), carved by Musqueam artist Brent Sparrow Jr. The second activity was a self-guided visit to a small wetland area on the edge of Pacific Spirit Regional Park called xʷməθkʷə:m or by its settler name, Camosun Bog.

The theme of narrative was selected for these two activities given the stories intrinsic to both destinations are closely intertwined. To set the stage for these experiences, I invited Musqueam Elder Larry Grant to the graduate class in which the activities were embedded. For the teacher candidates who were not in the class, I provided a link to an online video posted by the David Suzuki Foundation (2012) that features Elder Grant talking about the history of the xʷməθkʷə:m, the location of the second activity.
Elder Grant’s stories about Musqueam culture, history, and traditional lands were much appreciated by students and it was an honour to host him. Narrative, as an overarching theme, is representative of the oral traditions and histories shared by Elder Grant. The concept was also selected as a guiding theme because it extends to the stories embedded in the Musqueam post, as well as to the multiple layers of stories unique to the local wetland bog. Finally, narrative is intrinsic to the pedagogical approach of “land as first teacher,” as the process of storying places from long views of time and experience is a central premise of this land-based pedagogical model (Bang, Curley, Kessel, Marin, Suzukovich III, & Strack 2014).

Through the lens of narrative, the visit to the Musqueam post and Camosun Bog provided opportunities for participants to reflect on how “land as first teacher” might be used in an educational context. The two interrelated places also provided a rich learning environment for participants to consider how the process of storying Indigenous presence might contribute to interdisciplinary approaches to ecological recovery and processes of reconciliation, thus attending to the research questions. The combination of the two activities addressed the objectives set for this stage of the research. The following sections provide an overview of the first and second activity.

7.1 Musqueam post

The story of the Musqueam sʔi:ɬqəɬəqeqən, carved by Musqueam artist Brent Sparrow Jr., as well as its connection to xʷməθkʷə:m or Camosun Bog, is detailed on signage that surrounds the 34-foot post. When it was first unveiled in April 2016, Brent Sparrow Jr. spoke of its meaning:

8 Honouring the principles of respect and reciprocity, a gift and stipend were offered in appreciation for the knowledge shared.
This qeqən (post) tells the story of the origin of our name xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam). The old people spoke of a small lake called xʷməθq̓əy̓əm (Camosun Bog) where the sʔi:lq̓əy (double-headed serpent) originated. They were warned as youth to be cautious and not go near or they would surely die. This sʔi:lq̓əy was so massive its winding path from the lake to the stal̓əw (river) became the creek flowing through Musqueam to this day. Everything the serpent passed over died and from its droppings bloomed a new plant, the məθkʷəy̓. For this reason the people of long ago named that place xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam – place of the məθkʷəy̓). (University of British Columbia, 2016)

The post’s size and magnificence do not go unnoticed in the busy pedestrian area where it is located just outside the campus bookstore and across the mall from the Student Union Building. The post is part of a larger installation that includes an elegantly tiered water flow to symbolically capture the image of a river. River grass grows in abundance along the route of the “river” and around the post. A gift to UBC from Brent Sparrow Jr., the post serves as a permanent welcome to all visitors to campus, and as a reminder of the relationship with the Musqueam people who were here long before UBC's history began (UBC Centennial, 2016).

7.2  xʷməθq̓əy̓əm

Following the walk to the Musqueam post, participants were asked to visit xʷməθq̓əy̓əm or Camosun Bog. The selection of this activity was a natural extension of the visit to the Musqueam post, as the bog is connected to the stories represented by the post. The wetland area is also steeped in rich and multi-layered narratives relating to numerous topics, including ecological recovery. Although the story relayed in Brent Sparrow Jr.’s post speaks of the bog as
once being a small lake, only a remnant of the wetland remains today. Within the past century, logging, fires and, more seriously, urban development and altered hydrology, have changed its landscape, causing severe detrimental impacts on the bog’s ecosystem (Camosun Blog, 2010).

According to Bang, et al. (2014), wetlands are places of continual birth, death, and rebirth. Scientists claim they are critical environmental niches “on the front lines” of globalization and climate change. Although they are correlated with significant human survival, a depraved view of land has led to their filling or drainage without regard. Bang et al. (2014) contend that after annihilation, manipulation, and removal of Indigenous peoples from particular lands, major cities were founded and expanded by filling wetlands. Such is the case with xʷməθkʷə:m.

Similar to many wetlands in urban areas, the bog and its surrounding area are nestled in a suburban neighborhood that has been filled and drained for housing expansion, indicative of what Bang et al. (2014) suggest is a move of settler colonialism to replace original lands with new land structures (p. 38). Thus, another reason why the bog was selected as a location for the research study is because it spoke to the erasure of Indigenous peoples in the City of Vancouver. This posed a significant challenge to participants, particularly in light of having learned about the bog’s historical significance to the Musqueam people after first visiting the post.

Concerted efforts to restore the bog have been in the works for the past twenty years. The Greater Vancouver Regional District and Vancouver Natural History Society have worked collaboratively to remove debris and re-establish the wetland. In 2009, a boardwalk was constructed around its perimeter that includes a self-guided nature walk providing cultural and natural information. The information provided on the signs of the tour is the result of a community consultative process that included input from Musqueam, as well as other
community groups. This was essential to the purposes of the research, as it suggests the educational information regarding Musqueam and Indigenous epistemologies on the signs is accurate, was gathered collaboratively, and was respectful of proper protocols. As previously mentioned, respect was an ethical principle that guided the research study.

The bog’s perimeter boardwalk and self-guided tour are rich with opportunities for interdisciplinary learning that potentially address a variety of subject areas, such as ecological succession, bog ecology, geography, urban planning, art, writing, literature, and local bird and animal wildlife. The bog is also steeped in multiple and contested stories (Somerville, 2010), including the stories of the Musqueam people, settler history, geographic formation, urban development, plant and animal life, soil, ecology, ecological recovery, and community engagement.

The two activities organized under the lens of narrative generated the most content from participants in their reflective journals, with a particular focus on envisioning the bog, or a wetland area, as a setting for teaching and learning. The findings for this second phase of the research are shared in the following section.

7.3 Findings

As the installation of the Musqueam post was rather new at the time of the research project, participants were eager to visit the location and read the signage that not only explains the story of the post, but also includes a visual map of other significant locations, including xʷmə̓m̓ə̓q̓e:m, the location of the next activity. As it turned out, reactions to the post were not as prolific as those focused on xʷmə̓m̓ə̓q̓e:m; however, visiting both places proved valuable in learning about Musqueam history, culture, and language. The bog, in particular, was the site of
much reflection with respect to its potential as a setting for rich interdisciplinary educational opportunities.

7.3.1 Musqueam post

Responses to the Musqueam post presented a mix of ideas. Some focused on the story, art, and identity of the Musqueam people; others commented on the lack and scarcity of proper acknowledgement of Musqueam presence on the UBC campus given the campus is situated on unceded territory. Lauren wrote:

While visiting this post, I was struck by the connectedness of the art of the post to the creation story of the Musqueam people. It acts as a physical piece of history that retells the story that was passed down from ancestors and reminds the people of their history through generations as we live in the present. (Lauren, personal communication [journal], January 10, 2017)

Elyse was also struck by the connection between art, expression, and identity represented by the post:

I really felt encouraged to see traditional ways of art and expression of identity coming back to life on the land. The Musqueam pole is a striking presence that reminds us daily of our decision to respect the First People that were here, to deepen our understanding of their way of life on the land, and to appreciate their distinct cultures. (Elyse, personal communication [journal], December 13, 2016)

Josephine had a similar reaction and reflected on her former university’s approach to acknowledging Indigenous presence:
I was touched by the Musqueam story behind the post. I do like that UBC honours that history. My former university tried to push it out; hoping it would disappear. It reminds us that the land we stand on is not ours. It was the home of so many people before we even came along and its history finds its root in myths of which we are often ignorant.

(Josephine, personal communication [journal], December 2, 2016)

Throughout the study, Josephine often made comparisons to her previous school, commending UBC for their more forward and open approach in acknowledging Indigenous territory. On the other hand, Evelyn, a newcomer to Canada, saw things differently: “I was struck by how little space is given to the Musqueam Nation. I know that a little is better than nothing, but these acts seem so tokenistic in actually incorporating the Musqueam Nation in UBC life – it’s appalling” (Evelyn, personal communication [journal], November 5, 2016).

Beta had a similar reaction:

There is this attempt to acknowledge the Musqueam people but at the same time, there is a huge disconnect as well and it’s almost like ‘we have to do it because we’re on their land … And it looks pretty, so let’s put it up here.’ It’s ornamental to me. Almost. Well if we’re saying we need to bridge this gap, and that we need to recognize Musqueam people, let’s do it properly. (Beta, personal communication [interview], November 30, 2016)

Although both respectful and appreciative of the story the post told, Beta and Evelyn questioned the lack of depth and sincerity in UBC’s acknowledgement of Musqueam presence in broader terms. During the final interview, Beta expressed his frustration:
This university is using these awesome artifacts – the storytelling artifact – just as tokens. Why? Because we didn’t know the story. We needed someone to tell us what the welcome pole was about. That pole is meaningless unless you know the story. And once you know it, you’re like – oh! There’s a story behind this! I don’t know how exactly this is welcoming me, or welcoming anyone, but there is a story behind it. Now I know the story. I feel some appeal towards it.

I think it’s all part of the UBC discourse. It’s full of tokenism. It’s full of ‘we have to do this because…whatever, but we don’t really mean it. We do it because we have to.’ I think it’s super problematic (Beta, personal communication [interview], November 30, 2016)

With respect to acknowledging Indigenous presence on campus – given the institution is situated on Musqueam traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory – Beta and Evelyn expressed the need for more robust and impactful measures in acknowledging land and territory. Comparatively, Josephine felt her prior school had taken very poor measures in acknowledging Indigenous presence; hence, she thought UBC was doing a laudable job.

There were relatively few reflections relating to Brent Sparrow Jr.’s post in relation to the amount of journal writing and interview time dedicated to discussing the second activity under the lens of narrative, the visit to xʷmə̓m̓əqʷe:m.

7.3.2 xʷmə̓m̓əqʷe:m

xʷmə̓m̓əqʷe:m is located several kilometers away from campus in Pacific Spirit Park. I provided transportation to participants to visit the area in October 2016. Although I did speak with participants during the trips to and from the campus, once there, I was mindful this activity
was meant to be self-directed. Hence, participants roamed the boardwalk walking path over the bog at their leisure, taking as much time as they needed to fully savour the experience.

Responses to the visit to the bog focused on the following topics: 1) the tranquil setting; 2) opportunities for interdisciplinary learning and ecology recovery; 3) erasure of Indigenous land; and 4) land, language, and reconciliation. The following section provides an overview of the findings in relation to these topics.

A half block away from the bustle of a busy street, xʷməθkwə:m is a world unto its own. As Elaine wrote:

> When I first walked into the bog I was hit instantly by the smell, it was obvious I was in a different environment. It smelled, for lack of a better word, ‘boggy’, not anything like you’d come into contact with in the urban city. The one thing I noticed the most was the silence. How this little oasis lives and breathes in the middle of a bustling city, but as soon as you walk in, you hear nothing. (Elaine, personal communication [journal], November 6, 2016)

Elyse noted:

> The joy of being in a natural space, recognizing a hidden ecosystem and the feeling of peace really resonated with me during the excursion to Camosun Bog. The importance of land in its natural wild state is so important for our well-being in this fast-paced world. (Elyse, personal communication [journal], December 13, 2016)

Bonnie also commented on the peacefulness of the area:
Walking the boardwalk around the perimeter of the bog induced another feeling of peacefulness, as the beauty and the serenity allowed for one to connect with the nature. I was able to walk along the path that connected to the forest and felt like this was a place I could easily spend an entire day. (Bonnie, personal communication [journal], December 2, 2016)

Experiencing the tranquility of the bog and how it speaks to the senses was something that clearly resonated with participants. After time and close observation, however, one starts to notice that xʷməθkwə:m is a hive of activity with rich opportunities for learning.

The unique interdisciplinary learning opportunities wetland areas have to offer did not go unnoticed by participants, both practicing teachers and teacher candidates. For example, Elaine wrote:

I had no idea there were so many varieties of moss or that carnivorous plants exist in this area. As such, and as a former high school teacher, I could see a wealth of opportunities of developing students’ (perhaps even teachers’) ecological awareness, to use the land as teacher and connect students to a local place, perhaps even leading some students to work towards helping to protect the bog or other similar areas close to them. (Elaine, personal communication [journal], November 6, 2016)

Lauren, a teacher candidate, observed some of the ways she might approach the bog as “first teacher:”

There are so many ways that I would love to use the bog (or other wetlands) as a primary source, or “First teacher” with my class. From a science perspective, students could identify the plants and animals that
are indigenous to the bog, and research the properties and uses for each species. It would also be interesting to look at the way that the bog has changed through time because of colonization and development. This would be an opportunity for students to come up with ways that we could conserve and help the wetland to thrive. This could spill over into other environments as well that are closer to home for them – for example, is there a plot of trees that is in their neighborhood that could use some help with cleanup? Are there any natural areas that are more local to the students or the school that they can help maintain? Can we create our own eco-tour (similar to the one at Camosun Bog) that has interpretive signs throughout to teach visitors of the uses and names of the plants? (Lauren, personal communication [journal], January 10, 2017)

Ecological recovery was a core topic that guided much of the participants’ discussion with respect to the bog. In conjunction with this topic was the idea of building connections with students to their own local places.

xʷməθkwə:m is in close proximity to several schools in the area. The natural setting provides an ideal way for educators to help students form bonds with the natural world, and facilitates a better understanding of ecological relationships. As Elyse noted:

The bog is a natural ecological wonder. When schools come to visit the bog, or when habitants of the area take walks there, they will grow to appreciate that place. As they learn more about the fragile ecosystems they will develop concern for that place. Appreciation and concern will
lead to movements in ecological awareness and will stimulate the steps to preservation and recovery of these areas. (Elyse, personal communication [journal], December 13, 2016)

During our final interview, Teresa discussed the importance of fostering ecological awareness by immersing learners in land and place:

You can’t really approach ecological recovery unless you take a land-based approach … We live as academics – our education system is rooted in a very much classroom-based approach and really, the question of ecological recovery, of looking at the environment, needs to be based in its places. So I think that any approach – obviously an approach that takes learners out of classrooms and into these environments, is the best approach…to essentially get out of books and look closely at the spaces in order to understand the impact. (Teresa, personal communication [interview], March 6, 2017)

Elaine wrote about the impact of learning in place and the various interdisciplinary ideas she had while visiting the bog:

As I was walking around the bog, not only was I fascinated by the place itself, but it really jogged my imagination, and as a former senior high English teacher, I could not help but think of activities that an educator could implement into the English classroom. As David Orr advocates “all education is environmental education” and others note how the English classroom is an ideal place of developing students’ global, perhaps even ecological consciousness/citizenship. Further, there are so
many interdisciplinary aspects one could include in such a lesson/unit such as learning about the ecology (Science), understanding the history of the area (History/Socials) and connecting it to the First Peoples Principles. There is so much richness that an educator could work with and include when taking classes to areas such as this bog. (Elaine, personal communication [journal], November 6, 2016)

A focus on learning in place was viewed as an ideal and relevant way to introduce learners to ecological education, in addition to the impacts of colonization. Evelyn wrote about the importance of involving local community members in the process:

I think having community members who have historical ancestry and have continued linkages with the wetlands and also connections with classroom education contexts would help in grounding learners in their wider community via wetlands as ‘first teacher’. Having an established community member working within an education context would bring ‘life’ to the concepts of the effects on colonialism and land that students are engaged in. (Evelyn, personal communication [journal], November 5, 2016)

Juxtaposed to reflections focused on the peace and tranquility of the area and the host of interdisciplinary activities that could be explored in this outdoor educational setting was a profound sense of sadness. In the stories told by the Musqueam post and by Musqueam Elder Grant, both spoke of xʷməməqʷe:m as once being a small lake that stretched over much of the land that is currently known as Vancouver’s west side. The erasure of Indigenous land was also a key topic reflected upon during this activity.
As was the case with the visit to *Victory Through Honour* in the previous set of activities, feelings of tension and discomfort were expressed during the visit to the bog. Bonnie wrote:

> The bog stirred mixed emotions. Upon arrival, the first part of my walk led to the new development that is encroaching upon land. Sadness came upon me as I reflected on the loss of the land, as long ago this bog was significant and covered most of Vancouver after the ice age. (Bonnie, personal communication [journal], December 2, 2016)

Lauren noted:

> During our visit to the bog, I was bothered by how much bog land has been lost to development. Also, despite the [Musqueam post] being in such a prominent place on campus, not many people seem to know the story behind it. This is so important that we learn about the culture and the stories of the people who were here long before us so that we develop respect and appreciation for being able to live and study where we do. (Lauren, personal communication [journal], January 10, 2017)

While envisioning the past and present of this area, ideas also emerged about its future and how it could help educators address the goals of reconciliation.

With respect to the processes of reconciliation, land and relationships with the land are never far from the center of discussion, nor are conversations about the land and its relationships with Indigenous languages. Lauren noted the importance of looking at both:

> In regards to reconciliation, I think that it is important for us as settlers to educate ourselves on the local history of where we live and learn more about the traditional uses of the land and the resources that came from
the land. At the bog, there are many plants that are used for food and medicine and they all have Musqueam names. We could try to learn the Musqueam names along with the English names if we are visiting the bog. (Lauren, personal communication [journal], January 10, 2017)

Lauren’s active consideration of how to look at ways to building better relationships in the future and of applying practical strategies that facilitate the processes of reconciliation in classroom settings were echoed by Elyse:

> These stories tell us of the importance of land to the building of identity. The land is what we’ve grown up on, lived on and always known. The land is our home. The land is their home. We need to respect that. (Elyse, personal communication [journal], December 13, 2016)

As Lauren wrote, small steps towards the processes of reconciliation can begin with the simple awareness of rethinking relationships to land and place. She noted:

> Another way to work towards reconciliation is by changing our language. Just two sentences ago, I wrote “…if we are using the bog” and then deleted that to say “if we are visiting the bog.” This is an example of how we can change our language – it is not ours to use but rather, we are visitors to that space and land. By recognizing that we are visitors, we are not taking ownership of something that is not ours and we can teach our students through example to change their language as well. (Lauren, personal communication [journal], January 10, 2017)

Musqueam oral history of the bog area recalls activity in the region that dates back 9000 years (Camosun Blog, 2010). The narrative told by Brent Sparrow Jr.’s post was illustrative of
the deep relationship Musqueam people have had to their lands since time immemorial – one that takes into account *Land* as a living, fundamental being (Styres, Haig-Brown, & Blimkie, 2013, p. 38). The excursion to the Musqueam post helped set the stage for the follow-up visit to xʷmə̓mə̓qʷə:m. Both locations spoke to this deep connection.

In reviewing the findings of the activities organized under the lens of narrative, the second visit to the wetland generated more discussion. It was clear that while enjoying Pacific Spirit Park and the xʷmə̓mə̓qʷə:m perimeter walk, there was, on the surface, the story of a delicate ecosystem that was once in peril due to the forces of urbanization and economic advancement. This is a tale reflective of hundreds of thousands of wetland areas across North America. However, by first visiting the Musqueam post and learning about the sacredness of the area to the Musqueam people, the story of the bog took on a deeper significance – it was a story that also needed to include awareness and acknowledgement of ongoing and systemic oppression of local First Nations. The following section provides discussion of these findings in relation to the three themes of land education, ecological recovery, and reconciliation.

### 7.4 Discussion

While engaged in the activities organized under the lens of narrative, participants considered how the pedagogical approach, “land as first teacher” was guiding their learning. Reflective journal entries and conversations that took place during the semi-structured interviews were rich with responses that addressed the three research areas of land education, ecological recovery, and reconciliation. In many ways, the reflections and experiences recorded became a continuation of ideas expressed in reflections under the lens of cultivation. They also reinforced engagement with the ethical principles that framed the research study. Themes were starting to build on each other; patterns of responses were emerging and gaining momentum.
7.4.1 Land education through the lens of narrative

Challenges and tensions expressed with respect to how participants felt when learning the story of the Victory Through Honour pole re-emerged during this second phase: in particular, in regards to another artifact on campus, the Musqueam post carved by Musqueam artist Brent Sparrow Jr. A deep sense of respect for the Musqueam people, appreciation for the post, the story, and generous gift it represented were at the forefront of reflections. However, this appreciation was tempered by questions surrounding the university’s responsibility and commitment to providing long-term systemic inclusion of Musqueam presence.

Both Evelyn and Beta felt the university’s gestures were “tokenistic” in acknowledging Musqueam presence on the UBC campus, expressing the need for more robust and impactful measures. Comparatively, Josephine felt her prior university had done very little to acknowledge Indigenous land and territory in the context of the institution’s local setting. She was thus impressed with the UBC approach.

Discussion relating to acknowledgement and territory have gained traction in recent years, specifically in relation to the acknowledgement of the role land can play in the processes of decolonization and reconciliation. Maddison (2012) notes that although there are many wrongs, including gross injustices that were a constitutive part of settler colonialism that can never be put right, past wrongs can effectively be acknowledged (p. 704).

Wiebe and Ho (2014), writers for The Talon: UBC’s Alternate Student Press, levy criticism at the university’s stance with respect to proper acknowledgement of Musqueam presence. They note that the university’s official website recognizes the traditional territory of the Musqueam people; however, it does not acknowledge that the land is unceded. Further, they report the official campus maps completely erase the Musqueam Nation from existence. In doing
so, the writers argue that the institution is situating the community of Musqueam in the past, and thus is legitimizing colonial occupation of Indigenous territory – an occupation, they argue, that is violent, often invisible, and one that continually re-invents itself.

Acknowledgement of land and territory is becoming an encouraged practice in university settings across Canada. For example, the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) recently published a document that lists the territorial acknowledgement appropriate for each local and provincial university institution across the country. The document encourages all academic staff to acknowledge the First Peoples on whose traditional territories they live and work, suggesting acknowledgement shows recognition of, and respect for, First Nations Peoples. CAUT (2016) contends recognition and respect are essential elements of establishing healthy, reciprocal relationships – both keys to the processes of reconciliation.

Wiebe and Ho (2014) maintain territory acknowledgements are essential; however, it is important that they do not become ‘another item’ to check off the list. For example, they note:

> Oftentimes, when non-Indigenous organizers make a territory acknowledgment, it is done hastily (we acknowledge that we are gathered on unceded coast Salish territory), and then discarded (now on with the show!). Rarely again is the question of land revisited. In these instances, the acknowledgment is superficial. What is missing is a deeply rooted understanding of the ways in which we (settlers) benefit from the land dispossession of Indigenous communities. What is missing on our part is a continuous and self-reflexive understanding of settler-accountability. (Wiebe & Ho, 2014, para. 8)
The concerns voiced by Wiebe and Ho (2014) were similar to the views expressed by Evelyn and Beta with respect to the Musqueam post, in that it made them question the university’s ongoing and continuous commitment to acknowledgment of land and territory.

Regardless of the mixed reactions to the post, the rich stories that were told through Sparrow Jr.’s work were made all the more poignant when participants engaged in the self-directed visit to xʷmə̓m̓ə:qʷe:m. The majority of reflections regarding this second activity focused on the possibilities of the setting as an ideal landscape to teach learners about ecological awareness and recovery.

### 7.4.2 Ecological recovery through the lens of narrative

Fostering student attachment to local places is a key strategy in education focused on environmental awareness and ecological recovery. Research suggests these local connections and caring relationships are best started in one’s own backyard: "what's important is that children have an opportunity to bond with the natural world, to learn to love it, before being asked to heal its wounds" (Sobel, 1996, p. 10).

The benefits of involving learners in local wetland areas was the topic of much reflection for participants, and underscored Kirkness and Barnhardt’s (1991) principle of relevancy in relation to participants’ perspective professional practice. A rich array of interdisciplinary opportunities for learning about ecological relationships were in abundance at the bog.

Participants’ responses to the myriad activities they could envision implementing in their own practice, and the impact these practices might have on their students’ future is supported by the research. As Somerville (2010) suggests, an attachment to one’s local place acts as a bridge to understanding environmental global concerns; hence, many educators are looking for ways to teach a generation of children who are ‘growing up global’ to be attached to their local places.
As Gruenewald (2003a) argues, “Place … foregrounds a narrative of local and regional politics that is attuned to the particularities of where people actually live, and that is connected to global development trends that impact local places” (p. 3). Without intimate knowledge of the local places we love, Somerville (2010) contends there is no beginning point: subsequent action to address global environmental issues is not possible without first building caring relationships at home.

Elaine wrote at length about the value of bringing learners to settings such as wetlands to learn about ecological systems. In one of her journal reflections, she cites David Orr (1990), who suggests that when fostering student awareness towards ecological recovery, connecting to one’s local environment can lead to an understanding of local ecological networks and nested systems, which in turn, may ultimately lead to an awareness or curiosity of larger systems. The ability to understand principles of ecological communities, and to incorporate these principles into creating sustainable human communities constitute what he describes as ecoliteracy (Orr, 1992). Orr’s (2005) concept of ecoliteracy builds on the notion of connections, relationships, and systems thinking.

Ecological systems and holistic, interdisciplinary approaches to education are hallmarks of an ecoliteracy approach. However, as Calderon (2014) reminds us, issues relating to ecological sustainability cannot be understood if Indigenous communities in the region are not central. In consideration of a land-based approach to x̱məm̓q̓ə:m, participants were mindful that Musqueam epistemological and ontological accounts of land were at the center of discussion (Tuck, McKenzie, & McCoy, 2014), and as such, so were critiques of settler colonialism.

Hermansen and Wynn (2005) note that Camosun Bog, as it is known to settlers, was left undisturbed by European newcomers until the twentieth century. Prior to logging and real estate
development in the area, it spanned roughly twenty hectares in forests of cedar, hemlock, and Douglas fir that covered most of the rest of the area (p. 12). As the population of Vancouver grew exponentially, the bog was subject to massive change and is currently only a shadow of its former self. Hermansen and Wynn (2005) note:

Situated where it is, on the Point Grey peninsula, where loggers wielded saws and axes to serve the beginnings of the provincial lumber industry, where a rapidly expanding city engrossed space, and where the provincial government and the University of British Columbia promoted a range of plans for development of land designated for the purposes of "university endowment," Camosun Bog [was] also "ecologically compromised” … and [was left] close to oblivion. (p. 9)

Bang et al. (2014) remind us that places produce and teach particular ways of thinking about and being in the world. The history of Camosun Bog provides ample evidence of a settler land ethic that valued the pursuit of human progress over the environmental consequences of urbanization. As Hermansen and Wynn (2005) note, a quarter century of destruction amounted to seconds in the ecological history of the bog. These “seconds” were devastating to the wetland.

During this time of rapid development, the bog was considered a backwater and a nuisance: an area too wet and unstable for housing development, in addition to one that blocked urban advancement and potential profit. In essence, “it was, in many minds, a wasteland – an area of little value, except as a source of firewood, as a site in which to dump garbage, and as a place for children to build tree forts” (p. 15).
Through the pedagogical lens of situating the land first, and capturing stories of places from long views of time (Bang, et al., 2014), the story of xʷməɬqʷe:m and its importance to the Musqueam people was both illuminating and disruptive to participants’ thinking.

As Lauren wrote, the stories of both the post and bog need to be understood in relation to one another in order to fully grasp the significance of the area. This is supported by Bang, et al. (2014), who remind us that capturing stories in urban areas requires journeying through layers of colonial fill and shining light on the dynamics of settler colonialism (p. 49). This involves making visible Indigenous presence while also recognizing absence of that presence. Likewise, it involves making visible the waves of land that have been restructured over time, and critiquing the dominant discourses and values that have dominated that restructuring. As McGinty and Bang (2016) remind us, a fundamental view of settler-colonial societies is “the acquisition of land as property and a logic of Indigenous elimination, followed by the establishment of settler life ways as the normative benchmark from which to measure development” (p. 473).

The gross degradation of the wetland area has been, and continuous to be, an object of concern for residents and environmental advocates nearby. Major ecological restoration efforts have been ongoing for decades with much success. However, as Tuck and McKenzie (2015) remind us, “environmental and Indigenous concerns are not mutually exclusive domains: on the contrary, they are necessarily entwined” (p. xvi); because of this, capturing stories about xʷməɬqʷe:m through the lens of a land-based model not only centers Indigenous epistemologies, it also highlights the need for sustainable ecological recovery, critique of settler colonialism, and steps towards reconciliation.

According to Blackfoot Elder Reg Crowshoe (TRC, 2015a), Indigenous peoples’ world views, oral history traditions, and practices have much to teach us about how to establish
respectful relationships among peoples, as well as with the land and all living things. As he explains,

Reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians, from an Aboriginal perspective, also requires reconciliation with the natural world. If human beings resolve problems between themselves but continue to destroy the natural world, then reconciliation remains incomplete. (TRC, 2015a, p. 18)

While envisioning the past and present of the xʷməq̓əm area, there were also ideas about its future and how it could help educators address the goals of reconciliation within their teaching practice.

7.4.3 Reconciliation through the lens of narrative

Hamm (2015) observes that focusing on specific places that hold specific Aboriginal knowledges is a helpful step in appreciating the diversity of First Nations peoples and understanding that each group has its own stories of place, belonging, and ceremony. She argues that seeing the land differently, with specific local Aboriginal knowledges at the center, is a step towards decolonization and reconciliation (p. 59).

Orchestration of the activities in this second lens of the research enabled participants to see the Musqueam post and the subsequent visit to the bog through new perspectives. As the reflections revealed, participants initially saw a small wetland area that the City of Vancouver and local community groups have worked hard to revitalize and preserve. They envisioned the many ways this living, breathing outdoor learning setting could be a location for rich teaching and learning opportunities. While experiencing the beauty and peacefulness of the area, they
were also aware that this local place was a mere fraction of its former self due to encroaching factors, such as altered hydration, urbanization, and housing development.

What proved disruptive and, at times, overwhelming to several participants during the visit to x̱̓məm̓q̓w̓eːm, was knowing about the sacredness of the area. This deepened the understanding of loss and impact to the Musqueam people and way of life. It was through knowing this information and seeing the multiple layers of story in a local place that they began to see the area represented more than just a park in the City of Vancouver: it symbolized a sacred place that had been stolen and subsequently devastated by the impacts of settler colonialism. Erasure of Indigenous presence had been brought to light and a self-reflexive understanding of settler-accountability had set in (Wiebe & Ho, 2014, para. 8). This prompted participants to consider how they might use this setting as a way integrate practical steps towards reconciliation into their teaching practice.

Steps towards reconciliation focused on the use of language. For example, Lauren made a cognitive shift when writing about the excursion: she indicated that instead of saying “using the bog” as a learning setting, she changed her sentence to read, “visiting the bog.” She noted that this shift is an example of how we can change our language in classrooms to remind ourselves and students that these areas are not ours to use, but rather, ours to visit. Her comment about being a visitor is reminiscent of previous discussion about official acknowledgement of land and territory. The suggestion that we should rethink our everyday language to promote these ideas in conjunction with formal acknowledgments of land and territory is a small step forward – one that in some ways helps address the concerns of Wiebe and Ho (2014), who express concern that territorial acknowledgements are often tokenistic and superficial.
Both Lauren and Elyse also wrote about the possibilities and importance of teaching Indigenous language with respect to local plants in the wetland. The TRC’s (2015a) final report recommends active promotion of the use of Aboriginal languages, as well as the need to educate non-Aboriginal Canadians about the richness and value of such languages (p. 157). As cited in the final report, the Assembly of First Nations noted in 1994 that language is necessary to define and maintain a world view. For this reason, some First Nation elders to this day will say that knowing or learning the native language is basic to any deep understanding of a First Nation way of life, to being a First Nation person. (1994, as cited in TRC, 2015a, p. 152)

The topic of Indigenous languages and their importance to understandings of land and place is an incredibly broad and rich field of scholarly discourse – one that has not been adequately addressed in the scope of this research project, yet is incredibly salient to the conversation, and an area that undoubtedly and respectfully warrants further investigation.

According to the Kwi Awt Stelmexw (2017) website, an online resource focused on the language, culture, heritage, and art of the Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Nation, the recognition of Indigenous language with respect to land and place can help learners understand the history and current issues of local Indigenous groups, as well as become an entry point for reconciliation. They observe that questions regarding names of places and the land open doors to conversations regarding colonial history, local geography, Indigenous culture and perspectives, and relationships to land and place.

As the Truth and Reconciliation’s (2015a) final report states, ”Reconciliation requires that a new vision, based on a commitment to mutual respect, be developed” (p. vi). Participants’
comments in regards to changing use of language and learning local Indigenous languages are examples of how a new vision of mutual respect can begin through a few simple steps. As Australian Wurundjeri Elder Colin Hunter reminds us, the process of reconciliation happens both individually and collectively by taking small steps often. Acknowledgement of positioning to the land, and learning Indigenous place names and names of plants, are small ways educators can integrate the process of reconciliation into their classroom practice.

7.5 Conclusions

During the second set of activities organized under the thematic lens of narrative, the pedagogical model, “land as first teacher,” helped facilitate the telling of stories from the land while also raising significant questions about acknowledgement of land and place. Key discussion items that unfolded during the course of this second phase of the research continued to build upon themes and ideas from the first round of activities. These included the following: 1) building awareness, knowledge, and understandings about the land upon which we live and work, as well as the importance of learning the multiple layered stories that lie beneath; 2) seeing the value of creating the time and space to learn, process, and appreciate this knowledge; 3) recognizing the power and relevancy of exploring local places and how impactful such measures can be in fostering student awareness of ecological issues and recovery; 4) attending to the ethical responsibility of maintaining consistent and sustained acknowledgement of land and territory, and moving beyond simple tokenistic gestures to include resolve and commitment; 5) recognizing the devastating impacts of colonialism and a colonial land ethic – both from ecological standpoint and from the perspective of cultural oppression of local First Nations; and 6) resolving to take small steps often to change our everyday language practices in classrooms,
which will impact the way we teach and express ideas to students regarding issues of land and further the processes of reconciliation.

In relation to the visit to the Musqueam pole, carved by Musqueam artist Brent Sparrow Jr., participants expressed profound respect for the beauty and magnificence of the artifact, as well as appreciation for the rich story that it told and what it represented. Similar to reactions to *Victory through Honour*, there were questions about the tokenism and erasure of Indigenous presence on campus. In particular, several participants commented on the nature of UBC’s sustained commitment to acknowledgement of the land and territory of the Musqueam people.

The theme of systemic oppression of local First Nations came into sharp focus during the trip to xʷməq̱w̓em. Although opportunities for place and land-based learning at the wetland, which highlight interdisciplinary approaches to teaching ecological recovery, were the topic of much reflection, so were acknowledgement of land and place, and reconciliation. Reconciliatory efforts with respect to the use of language were suggested as one way to help facilitate the processes of reconciliation within classrooms. Participants reported they were actively thinking of ways to change their actions with respect to reconciliatory processes. As such, through engagement in these two activities, the processes of reconciliation as outlined by the TRC (2015c) – awareness, acknowledgement, atonement, and action to change behavior – appeared to be unfolding. The richness of experiences and reflections that arose during activities focused on the lens of narrative helped set the stage for the final set of activities in the research study organized under the thematic lens of art.
Chapter 8: Lens of Art

The final set of activities focused on exploring land education, ecological recovery, and reconciliation through the lens of art. Both activities organized under this lens of art took place on the UBC campus and included a guided art walk and a self-directed visit to one of twelve Hock E Aye Vi Edgar Heap of Birds’ *Native Hosts* signs. The lens of art offered participants the opportunity to consider the ways in which “land as first teacher” might be explored through a variety of artifacts at various public locations situated on Musqueam occupied territory also known as the UBC Point Grey campus.

Included in this chapter is an overview of why art was selected as a theme for this final lens, a description of the activities that were involved, findings, and discussion. Data sources remain the same (journals, interviews, field notes, and observations). As this was the final phase of the inquiry, also included in the findings presented in this chapter is a section speaking to responses from final interviews that addressed one of the summary questions posed (e.g., questions about whether participants’ levels of comfort integrating Indigenous epistemologies into their teaching practice had changed as a result of participating in the study). In presenting these findings, I have also looked to the pre-study questionnaires as a source of data.

The decision to include this set of findings in this chapter was made for the following reasons. With respect to this final set of activities, participant responses in the reflective journals were becoming more summative in nature in comparison to responses to earlier events. While still focused on the two activities organized under the lens of art, participants tended to write about their experiences in more holistic terms. Themes and summative reflections written in the journals were similar in content to remarks made in the final interviews.
The presentation and discussion of data in this chapter deviates slightly from the organizational structure established in the previous two chapters, where discussion sections were organized in relation to the three research questions focused on land education, ecological recovery, and reconciliation. Although the boundaries between the topics had always been blurred in participant responses, the overlap in responses to the final pairing of activities became so great that it was not possible or productive to separate findings into three distinct but related topics. As such, I organized discussion under the single heading of reconciliation, given this was the main goal of the research.

8.1 Overview

In a recent article in the *Vancouver Courier*, a publication focused on issues and events in Vancouver, reporter Mike Howell (2016) posed the question: “Can reconciliation between indigenous and non-native Canadians be achieved through art?” (para. 1). Tsleil-Waututh First Nation artist Jordan Gallie answered the reporter without hesitation: “I one hundred per cent believe that, for sure. A lot of people may disagree with words and not get along. But with art, people can come to an understanding” (para. 3). The article goes on to describe how three local Indigenous artists won a city-led competition – a competition focused on creating a work of art that expressed the artist’s views on how reconciliation was tied to Vancouver. The winning artists included Jordan Gallie herself along with Jody Broomfield of the Squamish First Nation and Chrystal Sparrow of the Musqueam First Nation. Chrystal Sparrow was also interviewed for the article and suggested art lends itself to creating dialogue about the teachings of the First Peoples of the land: “Relationship building is very important to make sure the same mistakes aren’t made again” (as cited in Howell, 2016, para. 13).
Although the value of art in reconciliation work is not always clear and is highly subjective, Jonathan Dewar, director of the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre at Algoma University, believes that much of its appeal rests in its ability to say the unsayable: “Art gives us a way to access even the most difficult things – those things for which we can’t find the words” (Dewar as cited in Sandals, 2013, para. 9).

I selected art as a final theme for the last set of activities for these reasons: art challenges thinking and facilitates discussion about a wide range of topics; it is a means of fostering awareness and appreciation of visual aesthetics; it enables exploration of creative ideas and themes; it is easily accessible on the UBC campus. The artwork selected for this activity was available to the general public on campus; as well, the activity itself presented a model that participants could adapt for other learning settings and groups of learners.

“Land as first teacher” through the lens of art meant consideration of land-based perspectives while engaging with viewing selected visual art. There was less data collected in response to these last activities, partly due to the fact two participants were unable to complete the walk because of icy winter conditions, and possibly due to the timing of the events toward the end of term when participants had less time for journal writing. Regardless, reflections did reinforce many of the themes and topics previously noted in the study and the final lens was conducive to coalescing summary thoughts and perspectives about the study as a whole. The following section provides an overview of the first activity, the guided art walk.

8.2 Guided art walk

The first activity organized under the lens of art was an “art walk” during which participants visited four to six different works displayed on the UBC campus that had been pre-selected for the purposes of the study. A range of mediums was included, from carvings to prints.
The pieces were by Canadian and international artists, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. The specific pieces were selected because they specifically speak to questions of land education, ecological recovery, and reconciliation. By way of example, I discuss two of the works below; a list of the others is included in Appendix G.

One of the pieces selected was a large linocut print called *Hungeetuck Misereor*, by South African artist, Azaria Mbatha. Mbatha, born in rural Zululand, is an accomplished artist whose work speaks to the importance of cultural identity in the wake of colonialism. His artwork generally focuses on the reconciliation of Christian values with the myths and realities of his African, specifically Zulu, heritage (Campbell Smith Collection, 2015). The large linocut print on display in the UBC Neville Scarfe education building speaks to these ideas and tensions, and thus addresses the themes of reconciliation, colonialism, and decolonization.

A second work displayed in the same building was a yellow cedar panel entitled, *Teach Me To Fly*. As part of the Faculty of Education 50th Anniversary legacy project, the panel was carved by Joe Becker, a Musqueam artist and former Chief of Musqueam, and the Direction 7 Musqueam carving team (UBC Faculty of Education, 2014). *Teach Me To Fly* features a Thunderbird as the main figure, with representations of human beings, birds, and animals embedded in its body and wings. A quote from Joe Becker and the Direction 7 Musqueam carving team available on the Faculty of Education website explains the meaning of the panel:

The Thunderbird, symbolizes the great protector of life who helps those in need have a better life. It is in relationship to other creatures that add their own blessings: Eagle, represents spirit and courage to take opportunities; Wolf, is the teacher and pathfinder; Killer Whale, is the
warrior spirit and a leader; and Beaver, is the builder of dreams. (UBC Faculty of Education, 2014, para. 2).

The dedication plaque providing information about the panel normally hangs beside the panel. However, due to recent painting in the hallway, it had yet to be reinstalled prior to the time of the activity. Through online and personal inquiries, I was able to find out more about the work, read the dedication plaque, and provide information to participants.

These two pieces, in conjunction with others, formed a collection of artworks that participants visited in small groups during a scheduled time. To facilitate the walk, groups were provided with a handout that included directions to the locations, as well as information about each work they were visiting. Information about each location was made accessible online through links provided on the handout. Prior to the walk, I created web pages for each artwork and included items such as quotations by the artist, information relating to the artwork or artist, or videos featuring the artist’s work. This set of materials offered a variety of ways for participants to explore critical discussion, production histories, artists’ statements, and artist backgrounds – all while in presence of the art.

8.3 Native Hosts

After engaging in the art walk, participants were asked to visit one final location – an outdoor sign installation on the UBC Point Grey campus that is part of a larger twelve-piece sign series called Native Hosts by Hock E Aye Vi Edgar Heap of Birds. Heap of Birds is an internationally known artist and scholar of Cheyenne and Arapaho descent. The twelve white aluminum signs that are part of the Native Hosts series are situated around campus with the purpose of drawing attention to the ongoing presence of First Nations land claims, as well as to contested land that has never officially been ceded to the Canadian government (Falls, 2010).
Sponsored by the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, the *Native Hosts* signs challenge dominant Western ideology by positioning non-Indigenous viewers as guests on First Nations lands. Although reminiscent of typical road signs, the signs read, “British Columbia Today Your Host is…” followed by the name of one of twelve First Nations communities in the province. British Columbia is written backwards: “AIBMULOC HSITIRB.” The impact of seeing the name of the province written this way is disruptive. As the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery website states:

the artist asks viewers both to consider and to question its authoritative power. The importance of language in Heap of Birds’ work is evident here in the imaginative and challenging use of text to provoke responses to queries around history, public space, land claims as well as notions of generosity and sharing. (Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, 2017, para. 1).

As a culminating activity, engagement with the *Native Hosts* signs reinforced central ideas discussed in relation to other study activities. The disruptive nature of the *Native Hosts* signs evokes discussion about the past, present, and future of territory and land in British Columbia, and also addresses the themes of Indigenous resistance and reclamation. Significant is the artist’s inclusion of twelve First Nations communities from around BC, which served as a reminder that “land as first teacher” might be applied to educational settings beyond Vancouver.

### 8.4 Findings

The following section provides an overview of findings from the two activities organized under the lens of art. In addition, included are findings focused on a question posed during the semi-structured final interviews that invited participants to consider whether their levels of
comfort regarding the integration of Indigenous epistemologies into their classroom practice had changed as a result of being part of the study.

8.4.1 Art walk

Three main themes emerged in participant responses to the art walk activity. The first related to increased awareness and appreciation of the artworks that had been selected for the activity. Participants attended to art they had previously overlooked or paid little heed to, and pondered the lack of awareness of Indigenous art and artifacts on campus. The second was the importance of providing time, space, and background information for learner engagement with works of art. The third was recognition of the themes of resilience, reclamation, and reconciliation represented in the works themselves.

Elyse wrote extensively about her thoughts and reflections during the art walk activity:

This activity made me realize how much we miss out because we never take the time (or have the time) to learn. Many times I have walked right by First Nations works of art and yet I was almost completely unaware that Native work is displayed everywhere on campus. All the other distractions of studies, lectures, and homework have taken us away from the reality in front of our eyes. Instead of just hiding our heads in books, we need to take time to appreciate what is right before our eyes. (Elyse, personal communication [journal], December 13, 2016)

Taking time to appreciate what is around us, in addition to learning more about what is around us, were common sentiments expressed not only during the activities organized under the lens of art, but also throughout the entire study. Elyse’s comment resonated with me. When I was looking for artworks to include in this activity, which involved walking in and around education
buildings on the UBC campus, I was surprised to see a great deal of Indigenous art that I had previously never noticed. It made me question why. Was this symptomatic of my own general lack of awareness of Indigenous presence? Had I just been too wrapped up in my own business to notice? Or perhaps this was part of a larger conversation that needed to be addressed – a conversation regarding a sense of complicity that was being challenged and disrupted through recognition and interaction with these artifacts. Josephine noted:

I was struck in these activities by how much Indigenous art is part of UBC. On the other hand, I had a hard time finding [some of the] installations. I really had to look hard to see them. And in a way, I think this says a lot about the way we live with First Nations in North America (I count the US in this). They are all around us. They are a part of our society and they contribute to it; yet you could spend your whole life in North America and barely ever have to think about them. You have to look for information on First Nations, their culture, their political beliefs, their social struggle, their language, their beliefs, etc. It is there if you dig for it, but we make it easy to ignore. (Josephine, personal communication [journal], December 2, 2016)

Elaine echoed these sentiments:

This activity drew attention to pieces of art that I have walked by on numerous occasions and not really given any thought. Or pieces that I did not even know existed on our campus or in buildings that I have frequented often. As such, I wonder if people know about these pieces that are hidden away in stairwells or in the basement of Scarfe or in
Ponderosa Commons. I also wonder if teacher candidates are informed of some of the pieces, such as the carving outside of the Teacher Education Office. As part of their orientation, are new students introduced to the story and the symbolism behind this carving? Or is the carving simply considered to be a “decoration”? (Elaine, personal communication [journal], December 5, 2016)

In her reflection, Elaine refers to the yellow cedar panel, *Teach Me To Fly*. The depth of knowledge, significance, and symbolism embedded is likely lost on those who do not have access to the background information (as noted earlier, even I, with strong motive, had to dig to find it). I say this not as a criticism, but in light of Josephine and Elaine’s comments above. Elaine was questioning how effectively the information was being shared. Josephine was questioning whether, in the grand scheme, lack of information was a systemic and deliberate form of erasure. I was questioning my own complicity in maintaining dominant discourses by not having paid closer attention to these artifacts in the first place.

During our interview, Hanna talked about the importance of providing space for engagement with art. During the fall term in which the research study took place, she had her Aboriginal Education in Canada students engage in an art walk similar in scope to the one in which my participants engaged. Hanna noted:

[Students] said there were things that they walked by and never really engaged with before or thought about or wondered about. And so this activity, I think, increased their attention to what was around them. And I think that was really good. And I think you need to provide that
background knowledge first in order for them to be able to appreciate it.

(Hanna, personal communication [interview], December 12, 2016)

As Hanna suggests, having the background information with respect to each work of art was key to richer understanding. Deep learning from the land was predicated and enhanced by storying the various art and artifacts that were on the art walk. Creating space and opportunity for learners to stop and take notice of what was around them was essential to this process. For “land as first teacher” to be truly embraced within the research project, time and space needed to be allocated for engaging in the experiential process.

Elaine wrote more about the educational opportunities the art walk, or activities similar to it, can offer:

I think this [activity] would be an excellent teaching opportunity... to really delve deep into the history of the First Nations peoples, to consider land and territory, resistance, colonialism, and reconciliation. I do realize there is an apprehension by many educators, including myself, in teaching such lessons, but at the same time, what I am realizing is if we don’t do this, then our students are missing out – not just on the richness of the history, and learning about the stories and the ways of the Indigenous people, but also in learning about the horrific events that many Indigenous people had to endure: to ensure these horrific events never happen again; to develop an awareness, an understanding; to help remove stereotypes; and to develop a better connection with Indigenous communities. (Elaine, personal communication [journal], December 5, 2016)
For Elaine, engaging with art was a way to start to address deeper, more significant conversations with learners. Elyse concurred:

> Art teaches. There is a meaning behind everything. We just have to find that meaning. Teachers are not there to teach, but to give students the tools they need to fly. Through teaching and symbolic messages, Indigenous resistance is embedded in the art. The art itself is a form of reclamation – reclamation of the culture and heritage that was taken away from them… I don’t have to tell the story; the art tells the story. So by discovering those different pieces of art, and letting kids discover those pieces of art – that’s a way that they can learn. (Elyse, personal communication [journal], December 13, 2016)

For Elyse and Elaine, the lens of art was a powerful means to address themes with learners such as resilience, reclamation, and reconciliation, and to consider what the art itself was trying to convey.

In an interview with reporter Mike Howell from the *Vancouver Courier*, Squamish Chief Ian Campbell observed that “Art is a tremendous vehicle, or expression, of transformation, of storytelling, of depicting resilience and tenacity” (as cited in Howell, 2016, para. 15). The impact of visiting the artwork by Azaria Mbatha at UBC was particularly impactful for Evelyn. During our interview, she spoke about her reaction:

> I was surprised to see such detailed artwork that relates to my history and its relation to colonialism from the English and Afrikaans settlers. It reminded me of the importance of land in the ongoing reconciliation process between black people, the native Khoi and San people as well as
the European settlers in southern Africa. The particular stories about the importance of indigenous plants in African spirituality resonated with me the most. Most natural fauna and flora is not seen as having spiritual significance to native people and I loved the reclaiming of it in the artwork. (Evelyn, personal communication [interview], January 9, 2017)

The art walk, along with its paired activity, which is discussed later, facilitated discussion around the ideas of resistance, reclamation, and reconciliation more so than any other set of activities. The activity disrupted participants thinking – not only by challenging their views, but also by making them stop and breathe in their surroundings and question why they had never noticed the works before. The activity also stressed for participants the importance of taking the time to observe, appreciate, and ask questions.

A high level of engagement and learning took place within small groups by completing the art walk together. This was by no means a direct result of the information I had provided, but rather, a result of the interaction between participants engaging and learning from one another. Beta noted:

Because I visited these places as part of a group, I benefited from commenting with other people. Interestingly enough, it was not the art itself that I enjoyed the most, but the use of the art pieces as prompts for discussion with the rest of the group. (Beta, personal communication [interview], November 30, 2016)

Although it was an activity that took a great deal of time to orchestrate, I was hopeful the art walk was one that might be used by instructors in the Faculty of Education in the future, as it led to fruitful discussion and critical thought. In sharing this work with the participants (and
others), I was mindful of attending to the ethical principles of respect, relevancy, and reciprocity. The design and purpose of the activity were to build respect for Indigenous knowledge, in addition to help students appreciate, build on, and expand customary forms of consciousness and representation (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991, p. 9). As Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) remind us, “there are other kinds of knowledge in the world, and there are other ways of conveying knowledge than those embodied in the ‘Ivory Tower’” (p. 7). I also envisioned that the sharing of the design of the activity with participants and other UBC course instructors during and after the study activity would be an act of reciprocity – “a way of making teaching and learning two-way processes, in which the give-and-take between faculty and students opens up new levels of understanding for everyone” (p. 11).

8.4.2 Native Hosts

The final activity was a self-guided tour of the Native Hosts installation discussed earlier. The first theme that emerged in responses to this activity is articulated by Beta, who wrote, “I see the topics of land and territory and Indigenous resistance and reclamation as the ones being most clearly addressed by the Native Hosts installations. The notion of unceded land stands out by the use of the word Host” (Beta, personal communication [journal], January 23, 2017).

Josephine wrote about how she had difficulty locating the Native Hosts signs at first; however, once she noticed them, she identified with the bold message:

The way the art is arranged makes it part of the land. It puts back First Nations on their territory, but it is also a reminder that while it is their land, we continue to walk pass [the reminder] without a glance. We exploit what is theirs and destroy it and silence them. So the art feels like a form of resistance. It’s on us to make sure we do not forget. Don’t
forget the land you are standing on and the people that it belongs to.

Sometimes, it will feel easy to forget and a lot of people would very much prefer it if you did, but don’t. Resist and keep looking. That’s the only way reconciliation is possible. (Josephine, personal communication [journal], December 2, 2016)

In addition to the theme of resistance and reclamation, the combination of the art walk and the Native Hosts installations left lasting impressions with respect to prompting participants to think not only about their own positioning with respect to land, but also about how UBC positions itself. Evelyn noted:

This is my third time coming to Canada, but this is actually the first time that I’ve had such an in-depth understanding of indigeneity and I think it’s a combination of the third activity that we did and walking around [to look at art]. It was good to kind of see where UBC locates itself… So this activity was kind of like building UBC or building knowledge around the Indigenous – half-erased – Indigenous knowledge systems, people, and history already present at UBC. (Evelyn, personal communication [interview], January 9, 2017)

Notably, the experiential activities organized in this final phase drew Evelyn’s attention towards UBC’s re-inscribing of Indigenous presence on campus. Had she not been enrolled in Teresa’s graduate-level course at the time, Evelyn might not have had the opportunity to make these observations and participate in the activities that took place on campus where she lived and worked during the time of the research.
As previously mentioned, I was incredibly grateful to Teresa for allowing me to embed the land-based activities into her course. An advocate for creating time and space to learn about local places, she spoke in our interview about when she began to embed land-based activities in her own UBC courses. As an assignment in both undergraduate and graduate classes, she asked students to create place and land-based activities that would encourage engagement with what she terms “geographically dispersed narrative” and explore processes of place-based composition. In a personal communication written during the process of member checking this thesis, she explained:

I asked students to create multimodal narratives that would require readers to move from place to place as a basic act of reading, thereby emphasizing the importance of text (I use this term broadly) in context. How might the meaning of a particular utterance or artifact be modified by its positioning, its relationship to place? In response, student presenters regularly prepared maps (digital or otherwise) showing their multimodal narratives dispersed about campus, fragments embedded here and there (as paper or physical artifacts, or accessible via QR code). These texts at times drew attention to the interplay of Indigenous and settler discourses; for instance, one undergraduate student group engaged in a subversive reading of UBC by posting about campus QR codes linked to historical legal documents dealing with the treatment of Aboriginal and Japanese peoples in British Columbia by the Canadian Government. (Teresa, personal communication [interview], March 6, 2017)
Teresa observed that she learned more about campus through such student-led activities than ever she had before:

I had been teaching on campus for over 12 years when I started to introduce these activities. All of sudden I was going to places I had never been, and quite embarrassingly so. For instance, I had never been to the UBC Farm, even though I have raised children in the area. I had just never been to the UBC Farm until the students took me there and gave me their perspective of that site . . . It was really rich. It is always rich when students engage in these activities. (Teresa, personal communication [interview], March 6, 2017)

I had now experienced, as a researcher, what Teresa had already known: the richness of engaging learners on the land and in place, and the stories that can emerge from this process.

Many participant writings and statements reinforced the value of engaging learners in activities that explore local places. As Hanna commented,

I think it’s very important to be in the place and it goes back to the little artist walk that we did. I think that for those students, it transformed their thinking of being in place and having a guided way to look at their surroundings. And I think that can have a tremendous impact in terms of transforming thinking long-term because I think those skills are transferrable to different places. And I think having a guided practice to be able to do that can mean that they will go to different places and then also engage in those kinds of activities. (Hanna, personal communication [interview], December 2, 2016)
The participant stories that emerged while interacting with artifacts in local places prompted rich engagement, in addition to self-reflection regarding past experiences and future actions. For example, Josephine described her response to the Heap of Birds’ signs and the memories it evoked:

I walk by [the sign] three days a week and I didn’t see it until I did this activity. I just walked right past it – didn’t see it. … It speaks to me – maybe of something that is not directly related, but the goal of the art piece. It makes me think of how we live with Indigenous people, and we are on their land that we stole, and we walk right past without even noticing … When I was in high school I remember asking my parents, what happened to the Indigenous people? We talk about it in history at the beginning of colonization, but then, after that, they just drop out of history. They are not in the text. And I looked around me and they weren’t there. I mean where did they go? My parents explained to me about how they had a reserve, and Oka in Montreal – that they didn’t go away; they are still there. But, I had no idea what happened in between those periods of history, and those pieces of art reminded me of that. (Josephine, personal communication [interview], December 2, 2016)

Similarly, Evelyn spoke about how the individual artistic messages conveyed in the artworks impacted her thoughts about the future:

If anything, this just reminded me of a cultural and ecological deficit that is within me. If anything, these activities have reminded me that my existence is not crafted and therefore not solely identified through a
western thought system. I’m encouraged to reach into my history in relation to how my family and ancestors’ lives were/are connected to land and how I can take these lessons forward in my life. (Evelyn, personal communication [interview], January 9, 2017)

In sum, reactions to the art walk and the Heap of Birds’ Native Hosts signs surpassed my expectations in terms of the depth of emotion and self-reflection that was evident in individual responses. The art walk activity challenged participants’ perceptions by making them stop, contemplate their surroundings, and learn more about the individual pieces of artwork with which they were engaged. Further, it made them question why they had not noticed these pieces prior to engaging in this activity. Was this lack of attention due to the busy nature of campus life or was it symptomatic of something else: possibly, the erasure of Indigenous presence on campus and complicity with respect to this erasure? These “sites unseen” also elicited engagement and deep learning from discussions that transpired in small groups during the walk. Both activities prompted discussion around the ideas of resistance, reclamation, and reconciliation, more so than any other set of activities throughout the course of the research.

Summary thoughts articulated by participants about the final activity echoed earlier conversations regarding land and territory. It was also clear participants’ reflections had moved beyond the scope of each individual lens to reflect heightened awareness and self-reflexivity. I thus turned to the final question asked of participants: after participating in this series of six activities, under the scope of three lenses, how did they now feel about integrating land-based perspectives and epistemologies into their own practice?
8.4.3 Levels of comfort

I asked participants to share their background experiences and/or education related to Indigenous content or perspectives in the pre-study questionnaires. The three teacher candidates, Bonnie, Lauren, and Elyse, had some experience with such perspectives but were interested in learning more. They knew, given the new BC curriculum, they would be teaching this content in the future. They were eager to know how to do so in respectful authentic ways that would meaningfully meet the needs of their future students. I asked Hanna if this was something she was seeing in her experience teaching the required teacher candidate course, Aboriginal Education in Canada. Her response was as follows:

The change in the BC curriculum, I think, has really transformed what we are seeing in the course, and so I think at least people are coming in with kind of a fundamental awareness that we weren’t seeing before. And I think because of the new curriculum, there is this level of engagement that we weren’t seeing and so they are invested in learning because they know it’s going to be as asset as they are seeking employment and as they’re teaching. I suspect what they are hearing at the school level is how desperate people are so I think that the tone outside of UBC and in the classrooms is definitely where teachers are really wanting to engage. I think the students are coming in with a very different view than what I’ve seen in the past. I will just say that in the past, there was this need to say, “it wasn’t me; I didn’t do this; and so why am I paying the price?” or that
kind of thing. I didn’t see that as much [this year]. (Hanna, personal communication [interview], December 2, 2016)

Although the new BC curriculum seems to have changed conversations and encouraged students to be more open to learning about Indigenous perspectives, I was curious about Hanna’s perceived thoughts about her teacher candidates’ general levels of comfort regarding Indigenous issues over the years she had taught the course. She noted:

I would say that they [are] fairly uncomfortable overall and if I think back on one of the things that I do at the very beginning – like on the first day – is get a little sense of how comfortable they are and then have them look at the themes of the course and then rate them one to four based on how comfortable they are. I will say they that with the exception of the Indigenous students, most students were saying, I have no knowledge…I am not totally confident with these themes. (Hanna, personal communication [interview], December 2, 2016)

Participating in the research activities, and at the same time engaged in a course that delved into Indigenous culture, literature, and scholarly work at a rich and sustained level seemed to help raise the levels of confidence of the three teacher candidates with respect to integrating Indigenous perspectives and land-based pedagogies into their practice in the future. Lauren and Bonnie wrote in their journals about how they could envision using land-based perspectives in local places, such as farms or wetland areas, in their own teaching practice. Elyse spoke about the impact of being in the study during the final interview: “It definitely has made me feel a lot more comfortable because in the past I wasn’t really sure about what sort of
resources I could use, and what’s acceptable and what’s not (Elyse, personal communication [interview], December 2, 2016).

The graduate students who participated in the study were not part of the teacher education program or enrolled in academic coursework focused on classroom teaching at the time of the inquiry. As such, there was no expectation that they would be teaching Indigenous perspectives and the new BC curriculum in the future. However, I was curious to see if they felt their levels of comfort with respect to the possibility had changed as a result of being part of the study. Josephine, who had studied Canadian Indigenous history, anthropology, and literature in university settings in the past, spoke about how Indigenous issues were very much at the forefront of conversations in her household growing up. She responded as follows:

Yes and no. I would say I started off [feeling] a bit uncomfortable because I didn’t know much about Indigenous people, especially in British Columbia since I am not from here. So, if I had to teach anything about them, before, I would feel – well, I’d have no idea what I would be talking about and that I shouldn’t be teaching that topic. Now I still do feel a bit uncomfortable, but I guess that’s good. I don’t think I should ever feel comfortable about this topic, because if I feel comfortable, that means that I find the history behind it okay, which it isn’t. On that level, I think I still feel uncomfortable, but I think it’s because I know more, not because I don’t know. (Josephine, personal communication [interview], December 2, 2016)

Elaine’s response was similar. She acknowledged at the beginning of the study that her background knowledge regarding Indigenous perspectives was limited. During our final
interview, she spoke of her concerns about the teaching Indigenous content in a formal learning setting:

I always feel this: I don’t know what you want to call it - I guess tension, or basically I am scared to approach it because I am worried I am going to do it a disservice. And is it my place? How do I do it justice? What are some ways I can actually learn about this? I believe in what you say, that starting with the land is a way to bring in Indigenous understandings or epistemologies. It is a good way to start. It’s a good way to introduce everybody: children and adults of all ages – not to just teach about the land, but also about Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing.

(Elaine, personal communication [interview], November 30, 2016)

Similar to Josephine, Elaine articulated she had learned more, but did not feel any more comfortable about engaging Indigenous perspectives in an educational setting. Beta echoed these sentiments.

A final reflection came from Evelyn. As previously mentioned, Evelyn was born and raised in southern Africa. During our final interview, we spoke about whether she would stay in Canada after she finished her doctoral studies or whether she would return:

Whether I land back there or in Canada, I will incorporate Indigenous perspectives in my educational setting because you can’t divorce indigeneity away from the education context. So I’ll give you an example. In my home country, even though we have a population that is 70% black people, we really don’t have that kind of Indigenous knowledge within our education system. So whether I land back there or
stay in Canada, I will make a concerted effort to actually go and include that into my educational practices. By not doing that, it would be a kind of cultural violence against Indigenous people and I include myself as an Indigenous person in the African context. So erasing myself like that – it just doesn’t make sense. It would be perpetuating that sort of erasure by not including it into my educational practice going into the future, whether I am in [my country], or I am in Canada. (Evelyn, personal communication [interview], January 9, 2017)

Key themes that emerged from the collected data relating to the two activities organized under the lens of art included the following: 1) increased awareness and appreciation of the numerous pieces of art and artifacts located in public areas on the UBC campus and within two Faculty of Education buildings, as well as reflection as to why participants had not noticed the artworks prior to the study; 2) the importance of providing time, space, and background information to help facilitate this type of learning process; 3) an emphasis on the themes of resilience, reclamation, and reconciliation depicted in the artworks themselves; and 4) the deep learning and self-reflection inspired by these final activities.

With respect to whether participants felt more comfortable with the idea of integrating land-based epistemologies into their classroom praxis as a result of being part of the study, the teacher candidates enrolled in the Aboriginal Education in Canada course during the time of the research felt comfortable with integrating Indigenous epistemologies into their future practice. This was in alignment with Hanna’s perceived observations regarding teacher candidates’ feelings about teaching Indigenous content over the course of the term in which the study took place. Graduate student participants were not engaged in teacher education coursework focused
on Indigenous epistemologies at the time of the study. There was a sense of reluctance and hesitation on the part of three graduate students with respect to the possibility of integrating Indigenous content into their teaching practice. One graduate student participant articulated that integration of Indigenous perspectives would likely become a part of her practice moving forward.

8.5 Discussion

The lens of art was the final thematic lens in the research project, and one that generated much discussion regarding land, territory, and acknowledgement of Indigenous presence, along with re-inscription of that presence. The three research topics of land education, ecological recovery, and reconciliation were completely intertwined in participant responses to these activities. Because of this, discussion in this chapter is focused on the main goal of the research: that is, the processes of reconciliation.

8.5.1 Reconciliation through the lens of art

Hamm (2015) notes that thinking about land in different ways gives us opportunity to open up space to explore possibilities for generating new reconciliation pedagogies that respect and recognize local Aboriginal groups. Reconciliation was a recurrent theme in this study, but the final set of activities under the lens of art brought the topic into sharp focus. Engaging with art and artifacts that focused on the land prompted participants to rethink their positioning in relation to the land. This was facilitated by recognition of Indigenous presence that had been re-inscribed on the land and places where participants were living and working at the time of the research study.

The art walk alerted participants to Indigenous artwork on campus. Setting a scheduled time and agenda, as well as provision of background information to facilitate the process,
appeared to enrich the experience for participants. The art walk materials also provided an educational model participants could use in their own future practice.

Noy and Noy-Sharav (2013) posit that art helps people challenge themselves and work through the emotions they see presented. Rethinking relationships with the land was at the forefront of discussions in relation to the artworks. Appreciation of the various artistic renditions of relationships to land reinforced the values, relationships, and ways of knowing that had been cultivated in previous activities. As Hamm (2015) observes, raising curiosity about the places around us provides the opportunity to think about place in different ways. The final set of activities had raised curiosity and levels about, and awareness of, artifacts that participants had been walking by daily since the beginning of the semester without noticing. Dominant discourses with respect to land and territory had been challenged by the artworks themselves and, also, participants seemed more aware about the erasure of Indigenous presence on campus.

I was left wondering about the long-term impacts of drawing attention to these themes and issues. Specifically, I wondered whether participants would continue to think about them in the future. As Josephine rearticulated, the lack of general awareness towards Indigenous peoples in North America is purposeful and symptomatic of a larger colonial enterprise at work. Her reflections were reminiscent of Coulthard’s (2014) view that the concept of reconciliation within the Canadian context is problematic, as it implies an ideological transition situating the abuses of colonization in the past, leaving the present unscathed. As participants noted, the Heap of Birds’ Native Hosts signs were not only aesthetically disruptive, but also an ongoing stark reminder of the fact the UBC campus is currently situated on stolen land.

As Thomas King (2012) writes in *The Inconvenient Indian*: 

179
The issue that came ashore with the French and the English and the Spanish, the issue that was the *raison d’être* for each of the colonies, the issue that has made its way from coast to coast to coast and is with us today, the issue that has never changed, never varied, never faltered in its resolve, is the issue of land. The issue has always been land. It will always be land, until there isn’t a square foot of land left in North America that is controlled by Native people. (p. 217)

Echoing the sentiments of Alfred (2009) and Walcott (2011), King (2012) relates the real, deeper problem of colonialism, and the central idea behind Heap of Birds’ installations: the theft of land. Alfred (2009) argues that real reconciliation is not possible until the theft of land is addressed, and *Native Hosts* did much to create space for those conversations to evolve.

For both King (2012) and Alfred (2009), reconciliation without restitution of land will only perpetuate the injustices of colonialism. Tuck and Yang (2012) state that decolonization in the settler context should involve repatriation of land and, at the same time, recognition of how land and relations to land have traditionally been understood and enacted differently (p. 7).

Although restitution was not a topic specifically addressed during this research study, deeper recognition of issues relating to land, relationships, territory, and reconciliation were in abundance during this final set of activities. This included increased awareness and knowledge of, and multiple understandings about, the land upon which we lived, worked, and studied at the time of the research; also, the importance of maintaining a consistent and sustained acknowledgement of land and territory that moves beyond recognition to include resolve and commitment.
8.5.2 Levels of confidence

During the course of the study, engagement with the pedagogical model “land as first teacher” increased participants’ levels of awareness regarding Indigenous epistemologies. It also impacted levels of confidence with respect to integrating such epistemologies into classroom settings in the future.

Hanna spoke of her perceptions during our final interview, noting that she feels the new BC curriculum, now much richer in Indigenous content, has had an impact on teacher candidates’ openness and willingness to engage with the content. She also suggested that hurdles still remain. The BC Auditor General Report (2015) on the education of Aboriginal students in the BC public school systems states that there are challenges to delivering a new curriculum strong in Indigenous content given non-Aboriginal teachers may lack the confidence or knowledge to comfortably deliver a curriculum rich in Indigenous content (p. 36).

Hanna’s perspectives and the statements made in the BC Auditor General Report (2015) are supported by research in field that posits the majority of non-Indigenous Canadians have a limited understanding of Indigenous people, history, and culture (e.g. Battiste, 2002; Deer, 2013; den Heyer, 2009; Dion, 2007, Higgins, Madden, & Korteweg, 2015). Required teacher education courses, such as UBC’s Aboriginal Education in Canada, do much to address this paucity. By the end of the course, Hanna perceives that most students generally reach a level of confidence and comfort with the themes and content. She suggests it is helpful to have conversations with students about how to use Indigenous pedagogies for non-Indigenous content and talk about ways in which to accomplish that.

Although the teacher candidates expressed a sense of comfort with and openness to engaging in curriculum rich in Indigenous content, there was also a profound sense of wanting to
do so in ways that were respectful to the First Nations communities within which they would be working. The desire to move forward in respectful ways was coupled with the fear of offending. This was expressed on several occasions by both undergraduate and graduate participants. This was something I could relate to and something with which I had been wrestling throughout the research project.

As Battiste (2013) notes, Canadian educators need to “respectfully blend Indigenous epistemology and pedagogy with Euro-Canadian epistemology and pedagogy in order to create an innovative ethical, trans-systemic Canadian education system” (p. 168). However, in doing so, Battiste reminds us that blending Indigenous knowledge into curriculum involves “respecting the diversity of Indigenous knowledge protocols, preparations, and purposes; understanding the multi-levels of preparation and purpose in transmitting Indigenous knowledge; and developing constitutional and ethical responsibilities for those researching Indigenous knowledge” (p. 169).

For many educators, these responsibilities can seem overwhelming, particularly since most non-Indigenous teachers feel underprepared to fully engage in teaching content relating to Aboriginal people, history, and culture given their existing training, experience, and access to resources (Dion, Johnston, & Rice, 2010, p. 36).

8.6 Conclusions

The research project started with the cultivation of relationships at the UBC Farm, moved on to exploration of land-based narratives at xʷməθkwəy̓əm, and ended with appreciation, awareness, and acknowledgement of art and artifacts that reflected Indigenous presence and re-inscription of that presence on the occupied territory of the UBC campus.

“Land as first teacher,” as a pedagogical model, created opportunities for participants to focus on local places and see them in a new light. It helped them re-vision storied relationships
between Indigenous peoples and the land and, also, consider how land-based pedagogies could facilitate learning about ecological systems and ecological recovery. Much was accomplished over the course of the project. In sifting through reflective journals and interview transcripts, and in recounting the events that happened over the study time frame, it was time to collate summary thoughts regarding “land as first teacher” as a pedagogical model in an academic setting, as well as summarize the study in its entirety. The following final chapter offers a conclusion and speaks to possible ways forward.
Chapter 9: Conclusion

In the first chapter I wrote about my concerns regarding the appropriateness of my embarking on this research project. My goal was never to assume I could fully comprehend, or assume to comprehend, the breadth and depth of an ancient pedagogical framework, “land as first teacher.” As Celia Haig-Brown (2010) asks, “What are the possibilities that a person from outside of a complex discourse community can learn that discourse (p. 935)? She argues that doing so requires deep learning: “it is possible – never easy but possible – and the two words “deep learning” are my effort to make sense of learning what James Gee (1996) in his work in socioliteracy studies has called a secondary discourse” (p. 935).

For my own part, I began a journey of “deep learning” in a secondary discourse. Although I do not have the range and depth of research experience Haig-Brown has as a scholar in this field of study, her words resonated. She writes that if a student is hungry for understandings of the world and of life that “make sense” – no matter how difficult that knowledge may be; no matter how contradictory that sense-making becomes – one has the potential to take up and produce new interpretations of the world for oneself and perhaps for others. Learning happens. When one encounters increasingly larger roadblocks to understanding and is open, even anxious, to question fondly held assumptions; when one spends time paying particular attention to what people are saying to each other and to you, learning deepens. (Haig-Brown, 2010, p. 937)

When I began this research project, I was aware my Western ways of knowing would present roadblocks to understanding certain epistemological features of land-based pedagogies;
however, I was open and anxious to question my assumptions and, ideally, to engage other learners in a similar journey. As an educator, my initial goals were to find meaningful ways to challenge dominant discourses in our school systems by modeling a pedagogical framework – one that encouraged educators to find local places, local resources, community members, and background information that was respectful of proper protocols and open to the general public. I wanted to find ways that opened up spaces for Indigenous ways of knowing in formal learning settings that acknowledge, respect, and welcome alternative perspectives. I was eager to create awareness of, and possibilities for, the development of self-reflective practices that could further the processes of reconciliation. As a researcher, I needed to answer my research questions.

I will say that throughout this work I found it difficult to disentangle my role as researcher from my role as educator. Because I was collaborating with instructors in designing study activities that would be integrated into UBC courses, I viewed preparing the activities as both research and teaching practice. I wanted the activities to be “successful” according to my own sense of what would constitute success in teaching the concepts in question. In reading journals and interview transcripts, I acknowledge that, like a teacher, I looked for signs of the “success” of my own curriculum. I regularly had to remind myself of my role as researcher in reporting participant observations rather than evaluating the success of the activities I had planned in collaboration with instructors. My positioning in this respect was not unlike that of the Action Researcher as described by McKay and Marshall (2001). Drawing on early articulations of Action Research (AR), they note that one of its distinguishing features is the active and deliberate self-involvement of the researcher in the context of his/her investigation. Unlike the methods of objectivist
science where the researcher is argued to be an impartial spectator on the research context (Chalmers, 1982), the action researcher is viewed as a key participation in the research process, working collaboratively with other concerned and/or affected actors to bring about change in the problem context (Checkland, 1991; Hult and Lennung, 1980).

Collaboration between researcher and what may be described as the “problem owner” is essential to the success of the AR process. A mutual dependence exists in that both researcher and problem owner are reliant on the other’s skill, experiences, and competencies in order for the research process to achieve its dual aim of practical problem solving and the generation of new knowledge and understanding (Hult and Lennung, 1980). In particular, the researcher brings an intellectual framework and knowledge of process to the research context: by contrast, the problem owner brings knowledge of context (Burns, 1994). Thus AR evolves, in part at least, as a function of the needs and competencies of all involved (Susman and Evered, 1978), with a key feature of this research approach being a willingness to share and thus learn, a result of which is enhanced competencies of all concerned (Hult and Lennung, 1980). (p. 47)

Much of what McKay and Marshall articulate here describes the complexities of my own research context – although I would say that I, as much as any participant, “owned” the problem.”

The complexities of my research context could also be perceived as adding strength to the study. The entanglement of my roles as researcher and educator were helpful during various
phases. For example, my experience in planning curriculum, setting objectives, and grounding theory in practical application was helpful in making decisions regarding the structure and scaffolding of events during the preliminary planning stages of the project. During the course of the study, my teaching experience was also advantageous, particularly when discussing possible educational opportunities with participants. As previously mentioned, the teacher candidates involved in the study were eager to discuss what they were preparing for their practica. These discussions were enriched given my position as an instructor in the teacher education program and my experience as a former classroom teacher. I was able to offer support and guidance, as well as field numerous questions on a host of classroom-related topics for all student participants. I believe this helped establish a level of rapport and trust in my relationships throughout the duration of the study.

Further reflection regarding the extent to which my goals as researcher-educator were achieved is the focus of this final chapter. A summary of the study and results are first provided, followed by discussion of how these results relate to the three research questions. Next, the limitations of the study are detailed followed by suggested research directions that might build upon this work.

9.1 “Land as first teacher” as a pedagogical frame

Supporting the entire study with the 4Rs of respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility described by Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991), and using narrative inquiry as a research methodology, I modeled “land as first teacher” as a pedagogical framework for the research study. Working with seven student participants and two course instructors, the study encompassed a series of land-based activities organized under the thematic scope of three lenses: cultivation, narrative, and art. The activities chosen to support each lens were selected because
they addressed the larger topics of land education, ecological recovery, and reconciliation. Data sources consisted of pre-study questionnaires, reflective journals that student participants kept during the course of the four-month inquiry, and semi-structured interviews conducted with student participants and course instructors at the end of the inquiry. In addition to these data sources were my own notes and observations, along with scholarly research in the field.

Narrative inquiry, as a research methodology, provided the opportunity for me to present participant reflections in relation to one another and in relation to each of the activities. A focus on these narrative experiences aligned with the purposes of the research study: specifically, with the storying of landscape and the concept of relationality as it applies to the processes of reconciliation. Inherent in narrative inquiry is also consideration that experiences happen within the three commonplaces of temporality, sociality, and place.

The first activity organized under the lens of the cultivation – or more specifically, the cultivation of relationships – was a guided tour of the UBC Farm. This activity resonated most with participants, largely because of the depth and range of the meaningful connections and relationships that were in abundance at the farm. This stood in contrast to the second activity organized under the same lens, the visit to the Victory Through Honour pole originally carved by Kwakwaka’wakw artist Ellen Neel.

The visit to Victory Through Honour was the most challenging to participants. The reasons for this lay primarily in the fact that the pole represents a significant symbol in UBC culture: the Thunderbird, the mascot of UBC sports’ teams. Participants were challenged by how the mascot was originally obtained – or, more accurately, how it was disrespectfully obtained. They were also challenged by the general lack of awareness in regards to the pole despite its prominence in the school’s culture and branding. Frustration regarding the general lack of
awareness was fueled by the signage at the base of the pole, its current location, and the fact that it had been vandalized in the past. Others were also struck with the graciousness of the Kwakwaka’wakw people in presenting the pole as a gift to the school fourteen years after the university had been using it as a mascot without asking permission to do so.

Participant reflections regarding these first activities tended to speak to the healthy ecological relationships that exist between plants, animals, and humans, and respectful relationships between community groups and local First Nations communities. Participants also commented on the various initiatives at the farm that spoke to the importance of culturally responsive education, specifically to the teaching of culture, language, and identity. Their reactions to *Victory Through Honour*, in turn, highlighted their sense of colonial relationships of the past that continue to smolder in the foundation of UBC’s campus. Also noted were the ways in which respectful reconciliatory acts can help forge deeper and more respectful relationships in the future.

The second lens of narrative involved a pair of activities focused on local Musqueam culture, language, and history. Prior to engaging in the activities, participants had the opportunity to listen to a local Musqueam Elder share stories of the region. These oral histories were complemented by visiting the Musqueam post, carved by Musqueam artist Brent Sparrow Jr. The post tells the story of the origin of the Musqueam name, and focuses on the double-headed serpent that once lived in xʷməθkʷə:m – a small lake. The visit to the post was followed by a visit to xʷməθkʷə:m, which is no longer a small lake, but rather a tiny wetland that has been in ecological crisis throughout the last century due to housing expansion, fire, altered hydrology, and numerous other consequences of settler occupation. As a result of significant efforts by local
environmental groups and the Parks Board of Vancouver, the area has been revitalized and restored, albeit only a tiny shadow of its former self remains.

The opportunities to engage in place and land-based learning in the wetland and at the Musqueam post were the source of much reflection for participants. The themes of ecological recovery, acknowledgement of land and place, and reconciliation were central in many of their responses to these two activities. Emerging themes in their writings and musings, building on responses to the first activities, included the importance of building awareness of, and multiple understandings about, the local places within which we live, in addition to learning about the layers of stories that lie beneath. Also, the value of creating time and space for learners to process knowledge learned in local places was emphasized, as well as how these measures might foster learners’ sensitivities towards ecological awareness and recovery.

Another key item discussed was the need for consistent and sustained acknowledgement of land and territory – an acknowledgement that moves beyond tokenistic gestures to embrace commitment and self-reflection. Intrinsic to this commitment was recognition of the devastating impacts of colonialism and a colonial land ethic. A final theme across responses focused on the resolve to take small steps often (ECA Learning Hub, 2014) to purposefully change everyday language practices in classrooms when teaching learners issues related to land and our relationships with it, thus furthering the processes of reconciliation.

The third and final set of activities were orchestrated under the lens of art. During the first activity, participants were asked to engage in an art walk that engaged them in visiting pre-selected artworks in and around two education buildings on the UBC campus. The second activity asked participants to visit any one of the twelve sign series called *Native Hosts*, created by Hock E Aye Vi Edgar Heap of Birds, an artist and scholar of Cheyenne and Arapaho descent.
These two activities brought to the forefront discussion regarding land and territory, in addition to Indigenous presence on campus, as well as the question of how that presence is re-inscribed. What was remarkably clear after these two activities was the value of creating time and space for undertakings such as these in formal learning settings.

Reaction to the art walk and Native Hosts initially sparked realization of a collective and general lack of awareness of the various Indigenous artworks that surround us on campus. Prior to being asked to stop, contemplate, and learn more about the individual pieces, participants were astounded at how little attention they had paid to their surroundings. Questions arose as to why these pieces had previously gone unnoticed by participants prior to their involvement in this activity – was it due to busy lives, Indigenous erasure on campus, complicity in this erasure, and maintenance of a colonial status quo, or a combination thereof? The activities under the thematic lens of art also facilitated reflection around the themes of resistance, reclamation, and reconciliation that were represented in the works of art themselves.

From my perspective as an educator, reflections regarding the artwork and the depth of discussion that ensured surpassed my expectations in terms of their power and depth. In retrospect, this was not only a nod to the complexity of the works, but also perhaps due to the combined effect of repeated visits to Indigenous sites and art on campus. Small steps often appeared to work as an approach to the processes of reconciliation. It is my belief the culmination of the series of activities fostered participants’ recognition of relationships with and to the land, as well as helped them understand other ways of knowing the land. As Hamm (2015) argues, seeing the land differently, with specific local Indigenous knowledges as the central frame, is a step towards the decolonizing process.
Participant responses from the first activity through the last suggested dominant discourses regarding the use of land and ethics towards the land had been challenged. Participants reported that the breadth of activities organized under the lenses of cultivation, narrative, and art had made them more aware of the scope of reconciliatory practices. Those preparing to teach also reported that they felt more comfortable with the possibility of integrating such practices into their future teaching. “Land as first teacher,” although an ancient frame, had opened windows to new ways of seeing the world.

The research suggested engagement with this pedagogical model increased levels of awareness regarding Indigenous epistemologies and, for those preparing to teach, impacted levels of confidence with respect to integrating such epistemologies into classroom settings. It was clear that required coursework in teacher education was already doing much to prepare teacher candidates for teaching a new curriculum rich in Indigenous content; notwithstanding, this responsibility can be overwhelming, particularly if educators feel underprepared (Dion, Johnston, & Rice, 2010).

Dominant discourses with respect to land and the use of land had been challenged effectively by engaging in a land-based pedagogical model, but I was left wondering about the degree to which these discourses had been disrupted. How long would the impacts of the activities influence participants’ thinking, inspiring them to build recognition of the erasure of Indigenous presence in their own local places? Would there be continued resolve to make visible the injustices of colonialism, while questioning one’s own complicity in the process? Future research would be helpful in addressing questions relating to long-term impact and whether this framework would be used in the future, as well as in determining what resources, support, and continuation of professional development would be necessary to facilitate the process.
9.1.1 Addressing the research questions

The first research question focused on how “land as first teacher” might become a framework through which educators can integrate land education into their practice. Throughout the study, participants took part in experiential land-based activities that engaged them with this pedagogical model. The activities were generic enough that I was hopeful participants would see the value in modeling activities similar to these in their own practice and in their own local areas. The model included seeking assistance from local community members, learning the stories of local places, and gathering local resources – all the while, being respectful of proper ethical protocols. Integral to the pedagogical model was situating local First Nations communities at the center of discussion. As has been emphasized throughout the study, land-based approaches move beyond place-based pedagogies to include issues of land and territory. This includes relationships that Indigenous peoples have had to land since time immemorial.

Relationships to land were integral to discussion relating to the second research question, which focused on how the process of storying Indigenous presence through the three lenses of cultivation, narrative, and art might contribute to interdisciplinary approaches to ecological recovery and processes of reconciliation. This question was addressed in responses to all three sets of activities. Excursions to UBC Farm and xʷməθq̓əməɬ, in particular, generated much reflection with respect to how these local places were ideal locations to explore relationships on and with the land that promote ecological awareness. As Battiste (2013) reminds us, “Indigenous knowledge with respect to the land requires the protection of the land, the water, the forests, and the ecological environment for these generations and those generations to come” (p. 171).

The farm and the wetland activities drew attention to the depth of learning about ecological relationships that can happen in these rich outdoor learning settings. More
importantly, these activities drew attention to Indigenous knowledges with respect to land: for example, the culturally sustainable practice of the Three Sisters was new to student participants. In reflecting on the culturally responsive practices of teaching Indigenous youth about language, culture, and identity, the importance of initiatives, such as the Maya in Exile and “xʷc̓ic̓̓asəm” gardens, underscored participant awareness of the importance of respectful relationships in the land, with the land, and on the land. This was a recurring theme, and one that spoke to the topic of reconciliation.

The third research question focused on how the pedagogical approach, “land as first teacher,” can help educators shape their practice to consider processes of reconciliation that emphasize a learner’s awareness of the past, acknowledgement of harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes of harm, and action to change behavior (TRC, 2015c, p. 113). Participants expressed how they might re-shape their teaching practice to include processes of reconciliation in a multitude of ways. First, there was emphasis on increasing learner awareness with respect to Indigenous presence in our local areas and drawing attention to erasure of that presence. Increased awareness entailed learning more about the stories that are tied to land and territory, as well as learning Indigenous languages and place names, in addition to changing everyday language practices to reflect one’s positioning to land. These suggestions were indicative of all participants’ (including myself) willingness to change the way they approached issues related to land and to land use. As Bang and Medin (2010) remind us, it is important for all learners to understand that different orientations towards land will lead to its different uses (p. 1021).

Second, shaping teaching practice to include the processes of acknowledging harm and atoning for its causes were at the forefront of how participants envisioned using the Victory
*Through Honour* pole in an educational context. Reflections focused on issues relating to cultural appropriation, colonial erasure, and systemic oppression of Indigenous groups. The artifact was also seen as a powerful teaching tool to show how reconciliation was still possible in light of these historical abuses. Repeatedly reinforced in reflections on the activities was the need to bring these stories to light and to move beyond tokenistic gestures in our acknowledgement of First Nations communities with a view to embracing sustained commitment to decolonizing our local places.

Educators’ role in the building of mutually respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada is a serious long-term commitment, one that the new BC curriculum hopes to address. Research participants who were preparing to be practicing teachers expressed commitment to building their own personal and professional knowledge and awareness of Indigenous perspectives to help further these processes. “Land as first teacher” was more than a pedagogical model; it proved to be a way forward as a model of reconciliation.

### 9.2 Limitations

A limitation of this research is the lack of engagement with the Musqueam community, the local First Nation on whose land the UBC Vancouver campus is situated. As previously noted, I did engage with Musqueam knowledge keepers during the course of the study; however, further and more sustained involvement with community members, in addition to the inclusion of Musqueam language, would have enriched the experience immensely. This engagement also would have modeled a land-based approach for participants focused on partnerships with local First Nations communities.

Another limitation of the research is the amount of time we had available for activities. The land-based activities needed to be organized in consideration of participants’ schedules;
hence, the constraints of a busy fall term, regularly scheduled class times, and the amount of
daylight available as the term progressed had an impact on the amount of time of participant
engagement. Participation in the art walk was also hampered by weather conditions. Two
participants were unable to complete the walk in mid-December due to unexpected wintery
conditions and treacherous walkways.

Another limitation associated with conducting the research during the fall term was the
impact of weather and daylight on the types of activities selected for the project. For example, if
the study had been organized during the spring or summer term, there would have been more
time available for experiential hands-on activities at the UBC Farm. Also, a wide range of
activities was selected for the study, and this breadth came possibly at the expense of deep
engagement with any one single activity.

The decision to model a range of activities, as opposed to focus on a select few, might
also be considered a limitation. The purpose was to provide participants with a sense of the
myriad possibilities in which land-based pedagogies might be used in educational settings. I
hoped the exploration of a range of possibilities would prompt participants to consider what they
found to be the most meaningful. If they decided to explore similar activities in their own
practice, they could make the decision to delve deeper into one or another with their own
students. Also, since the research questions that guided the study were inherently broad,
providing an assortment of activities and venues was purposeful, as it helped address these
questions from a variety of perspectives, experiences, and places.

The number of participants involved could be perceived as a limitation. Although in
narrative research it is common to have few participants (the emphasis being on deep analysis of
a phenomenon rather than, say, generalizability [e.g., Dworkin, 2012]) I hoped to have more than
seven participants when beginning the study, and also to have an equal mix of teacher candidates and practicing in-service teachers. I recruited from the graduate class in part because several practicing in-service teachers were enrolled; as it happened, however, no practicing in-service teachers volunteered to participate, possibly because those individuals were already stretched with fulltime teaching and graduate studies, as well as by the challenge of commuting between their workplaces and UBC. This meant I could not speak to the question of how in-service teachers might integrate the activities offered; however, I could speak to the question of how engagement with those activities proved illuminating for those participants.

Another limitation of this research, and a topic that has been touched on previously, is the lack of emphasis on Indigenous languages and their connection to the land and land-based pedagogies. As previously mentioned, this is a rich and broad field of scholarly discourse deserving of further research and investigation. Given the scope and number of activities selected for this study, adding the rich layer of Indigenous languages would have been challenging for me to include. In light of the range of topics and issues the research questions of this study addressed, I felt that I would not have been able to effectively address the topic in the meaningful ways it deserves. Furthermore, I did not have the resources to do so.

9.3 Suggestions for further research

In consideration of possible future research directions that would extend the work of the dissertation, I offer the following potential research questions:

1) How might learning local Indigenous languages within the context of land-based activities help facilitate processes of reconciliation? Particularly in conjunction with the land-based activities that took place at xʷməθkʷəx̓əm and UBC Farm, there is little doubt learning
about plant life and processes in local First Nations languages would have enriched learner experiences significantly.

2) After being introduced to land-based activities, will preparing and practicing teachers integrate them in their teaching, and for how long? A future longitudinal study might explore the ways in which teachers integrate the pedagogies, as well as the opportunities and challenges that present themselves during the integration and the overall effectiveness of the process on learning outcomes for students.

3) What is the long-term impact of ongoing professional development introducing land-based pedagogies to in-service educators? If one effect is more integration of those activities in grade-school classrooms, what then is the broader effect of that integration in terms of influencing the attitudes and behaviours of young learners?

9.4 Final thoughts

One of the goals of the research was to model a pedagogical framework that focused on taking participants to public places that spoke to Indigenous presence, and to provide community resources that were respectful of ethical protocols. Steps were taken to bring in Elders, community members, and learning resources that could provide background information for participants. As noted earlier, I was learning alongside of the participants and facilitating what I hoped would be a decolonizing process focused on interdisciplinary approaches to ecological recovery and reconciliation – one that focused on helping educators shape their practice to consider processes of reconciliation in their classrooms and in their lives more generally.

In reflecting upon my own journey of decolonization, I had come far in addressing my own personal challenges and “perfect stranger” positioning. However, recognition of this personal and professional growth was coupled with knowing the small steps I had started to take
were just the beginning: there was still much to learn. My levels of skill, comfort, and confidence with respect to engaging with Indigenous perspectives in educational settings increased through this work, and my commitment towards furthering the processes of reconciliation was firm. However, once the project was over, there was more I wanted to accomplish. For example, whether I continued to reside on Coast Salish territory or moved elsewhere, I was committed to engagement with the local First Nations communities on whose land I resided: to learning about the language, culture, and history. I was also committed to seeking ways to continuously infuse Indigenous content into my own teaching practice – not only to help teacher candidates find ways to integrate these perspectives into their own practice, but also to model ways in which this can be achieved. On a more personal and self-reflective note, I was committed to recognizing and questioning the power structures and dominant discourses by which I had always been surrounded, but to which I had paid little regard in the past. I needed to remain vigilant in disrupting my own complicity in maintaining these discourses.

One of the central features of the study was to challenge dominant discourses surrounding land and place in our local area. Calderon (2014) argues that making explicit this dominant discourse is essential to decolonizing work, and also central to the concept of land education. She writes:

students must be first guided through a process of decolonization. By decolonization I mean uncovering how settler colonial projects are maintained and reproduced, with understandings of land being one of the primary ways such identities are formed… a land education model demands we decolonize the ‘local’ in order to understand how settler colonialism is currently enacted and taught. (p. 28)
The strengths of this study were its focus on local settings and on awareness of place. Taking the time to learn and foster awareness of the stories that are embedded in local places was made possible by situating the land first. Through decolonizing the local, contemporary notions of time and space dissolved, and acknowledgement of land and territory became central to discussion. Inherent in these discussions was talk of relationships: the importance of supporting healthy ecological relationships, maintaining relationships between community groups, building relationships between local communities and local First Nations, and re-cognizing our relationships with the land. In acknowledging the land we are on, Haig-Brown (2010) maintains, we make sense of how our feet, “layered on those footprints of the First Nations peoples of the past, bring us to our places of work and the places we call home” (p. 926).

The UBC Point Grey campus, situated on the tradition, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Musqueam people, was the educational “home” of this research; looking at sustainable ways to integrate reconciliation into educators’ ongoing teaching practice was the research goal. Although this dissertation was written during the year Canada marked 150 years of a deleterious colonial past, the focus of the work was on a decolonized future – one within which educators are called to action to consider ways to shape their practice towards building strong and mutually respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples of Canada. By taking small steps often, educators can lead the way in achieving this vision.
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Appendices

Appendix A Pre-study questionnaires

Study title:

Land education and reconciliation: Exploring educators’ practice

Purpose:

The following questions are designed to provide background information for the purposes of the research study. Your responses will be kept confidential and your confidentiality will be protected both during and after data collection.

Directions:

Please respond to the following questions below with as much detail as you wish to provide.

Once you have completed your questionnaire, please transfer it to a memory stick provided for this purpose.

Name:

1. Please provide a brief summary of your personal background; for example, where you were born and raised, how would you describe your cultural heritage and identity, and where you have lived prior to coming to Vancouver?

2. In what ways have the notions of “place” or “the land” been important to you either growing up or in the present?

3. Briefly describe your professional background with respect to your education and any other past career information you would like to share that might be relevant to the study.
4. Prior to this course, have you had any experience with or education that relates to Indigenous content or Indigenous perspectives? (For example, books you may have read, courses you might have taken at university or in high school, visits to museums, etc.)
Appendix B  Guiding questions: Cultivation

The following guiding questions were provided to participants prior to the activities. They were asked to reflect on them after participating in both events in their reflective journals:

1. What resonated with you during these activities?
2. Did you feel challenged by anything you observed or learned during the visits to the UBC Farm or the Kwakwaka’wakw pole?
3. What stories (past, present, and future) do the UBC Farm and the Kwakwaka’wakw pole speak to with respect to
   - Land and territory;
   - Colonialism;
   - Ecological awareness and recovery;
   - Indigenous resistance and reclamation; and/or
   - Reconciliation
4. In what ways could the places visited in this activity be used as a primary source, or “first teacher” in an educational context?
Appendix C  Guiding questions: Narrative

The following questions were provided to participants prior the activities for them to use as a
guide in their reflective journals:

1. What resonated with you during these activities?

2. Did you feel challenged by anything you observed or learned during the visit to the
   Musqueam pole or the bog?

3. What stories (past, present and future) do the Musqueam pole and the bog speak to with
   respect to
   o Land and territory;
   o Ecological awareness and recovery;
   o Indigenous resistance and reclamation; and/or
   o Reconciliation

4. In what ways could the bog (or other wetlands) be used as a primary source, or “first
   teacher” in an educational context (or curriculum area) in a way that addresses
   o Ecological awareness and recovery;
   o Colonialism;
   o Indigenous resistance and reclamation / territorial rights; and/or
   o Reconciliation
Appendix D Guiding questions: Art

The guiding questions for reflective journals provided for the activities were the following:

1. What resonated with you personally during these visits?

2. Did you feel challenged by anything you observed or learned during the art walk or when visiting the Native Hosts installations?

3. What stories are embedded in the art you saw and the Native Hosts installations that speak to the following issues:
   - Land and territory;
   - Ecological awareness and recovery;
   - Indigenous resistance and reclamation; and/or
   - Reconciliation

4. During the art walk and the Native Hosts installations, in what ways was “the land” at the center of your learning experiences?

5. How might an art walk and the Native Hosts installations be used in an education context to teach students about the following issues relating to the land:
   - Ecological awareness and recovery;
   - Colonialism;
   - Indigenous resistance and reclamation / territorial rights; and/or
   - Reconciliation
Appendix E Interview questions and final reflections (students)

The following questions are designed to summarize your perspectives after participating in the study. Please note these prompts are provided to stimulate reflections. You do not need to answer each of the questions.

After participating in this study, what are your reflections with respect to the following questions:

1. What activity or activities were most impactful on your thinking relating to Indigenous epistemologies and the land?

2. How would you describe your feelings of comfort relating to the teaching of Indigenous perspectives in an educational setting? Have they changed as a result of being part of the study?

3. How might the philosophy of “land as first teacher” be used in educational settings with respect to the topic of ecological recovery? Explain.

4. How might the philosophy of “land as first teacher” be used in educational settings to address the topic of reconciliation — that is, the process of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada? Explain.
Appendix F Interview questions (instructors)

Study title:
Land education and reconciliation: Exploring educators’ practice

Guiding questions:

1. In your experience teaching this course, what are some of the challenges you see when it comes to introducing concepts such as colonialism, land education, and reconciliation?

2. What are some of the highlights you have experienced in relation to teaching these concepts in the past or this term?

3. What observations can you make about the impact of the land-based activities on your students’ learning this term? Did any of the land-based activities stand out as being particularly impactful?

4. How comfortable and/or knowledgeable were your students with the idea of integrating Indigenous epistemologies and pedagogies into their practice when the course started?

5. How comfortable and/or knowledgeable do you think the students are now that the course has ended?

6. In what ways do you think the framework of “land as first teacher” might be an impactful way for educators to address the issues of ecological recovery in their teaching practice?

7. In what ways do you think the framework of “land as first teacher” might be an impactful way for educators to address the issues of reconciliation in their teaching practice?

8. Are there any other comments, observations, or reflections you would like to make?
Appendix G Art Walk

The following list provides an overview of the artwork selected for the art walk activity.

1. *The Whaler’s Pole*, a totem pole that represents the whaling tradition of the Nuu-Chah-Nulth First Nation carved by Art Thompson, a Coast Salish and Nuu-chah-nulth carver.

2. *Hungeetuck Misereor*, a large linocut print created by Azaria Mbatha, a South African artist of Zulu heritage.

3. *Teach Me To Fly*, a yellow cedar panel carved by Joe Becker, a Musqueam artist and former Chief of Musqueam, and the Direction 7 Musqueam carving team.

4. *Photos and Fables*, a multicultural photo essay by Grade 7 students from a local elementary school depicting their family relationship and values through family portraits.

5. *In Both Worlds*, a print created by Musqueam artist Susan Point.