

**PERSPECTIVES AND PRACTICES OF ASIAN CANADIAN TEACHERS IN
DECOLONIZING MATHEMATICS AND MUSIC EDUCATION**

by

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Abstract

This thesis is a research study of the practices and perspectives of six Asian Canadian teachers as non-Indigenous settlers of colour in decolonizing education in the learning areas of mathematics and music. With a growing population of migrant communities, I raise the importance of understanding how people of colour construct their racial, national, cultural and settler identities as Canadians including their relationships with Indigenous peoples, lands, and knowledge systems. With the background of my own experience as an Asian New Zealander, I explore how Asian Canadian teachers have been practicing Indigenization and decolonization in their pedagogy. Drawing upon scholars in Indigenous, settler, and Asian Critical Studies, I investigate how participants' constructs of identity affect their sense of responsibilities to participate in Indigenizing and decolonizing their teaching practice.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with six Asian Canadian teachers—three mathematics teachers and three music teachers. The interviews explored participants' life stories and experiences that contributed to their identity construction as Asian Canadians and their experiences in learning and teaching Indigenous knowledge and worldviews. The findings suggest that the participants face experiences of being perpetual foreigners/denizens which I theorize is a barrier to Asian teachers realising responsibilities to decolonize. I offer my suggestions for stakeholders in education – i.e., policymakers, administrations, and educators – in the form of various approaches to decolonize education that centre goals of Indigenous self-determination.

Lay Summary

This thesis is an exploration into the ways that Asian Canadian teachers in mathematics and music construct their racial and cultural identities and their relationships to Indigenous peoples, lands, and knowledge. By interviewing three mathematics teachers and three music teachers, I gathered life stories that have shaped their racial and cultural identities, as well as their understandings of Indigenous peoples and issues. I inquire into their approaches in locating and incorporating Indigenous knowledge and ways of learning into their classrooms. The findings suggest that Asian Canadian teachers continue to perceive of themselves as foreigners, even having lived in Canada for several decades. I theorize that such identity constructs distract them from assuming responsibility towards injustices that continue to be suffered by Indigenous peoples. I propose future directions in Indigenizing education, with considerations of a reimagined Canadian cultural identity, Indigenous and heritage language use, and the disciplines of mathematics and music.

Preface

This thesis is an original, unpublished, and independent work by author, Arthur Tien-Li Chen.

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List of Abbreviations

B.C.	British Columbia
B.Ed.	Bachelor of Education
FNESC	First Nations Education Steering Committee
FPPL	First Peoples Principles of Learning
IK	Indigenous Knowledge
K-12	Kindergarten to Grade 12 education
TOC	Teacher on Call/Substitute Teacher

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Tagaloa Peter John Su'a (1956 - 2014)

Chapter 1: Introduction

Following after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Canada, which sought to reconcile intergenerational trauma inflicted upon generations of Indigenous peoples and to repair the relationships between settler and Indigenous peoples, provincial Ministries of Education and post-secondary institutes have introduced policies that aim to Indigenize education. These initiatives are part of a larger movement in settler colonial states, such as the United States, Australia, and New Zealand, that intends to reduce the ongoing harm of cognitive imperialism (Battiste, 2011) toward Indigenous peoples and their knowledge systems. While changes in institutional and curricular policies reflect an effort towards anti-colonial education in Canada, a great challenge is faced by educational practitioners in supporting and implementing anti-colonial curriculum policy, that is, enacting of practices that will decolonize education at the teacher-student level. Implementing real change in curriculum can only occur “when the perceptions and experiences of teachers are taken into account” (Cortazzi, 1993, p. 5). Thus, I highlight the importance of learning the perspectives and experiences of teaching practitioners and their conceptions of decolonizing education. The work of decolonizing education begins with decolonizing oneself; thus, this research examines teachers’ perceptions of their approaches in decolonizing themselves and their teaching practices. This study will explore the factors that impact their work, including their personal and family backgrounds, their conceptions of epistemologies, and their relationships to the spaces where they live and work (Asher, 2010).

I chose to focus my study on the narratives of Asian educators in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia (B.C.)/Greater Vancouver area, due to the increasing population of Asians in the Lower Mainland (Statistics Canada, 2016) and the lack of literature on Asian Canadians, particularly as educators. While the term *Asian* in Canadian government usage refers to those of

East Asian descent (largely Chinese, Japanese, Korean) and excludes South and South-East Asians (largely Vietnamese, Cambodian, Indian, Pakistani), I use the term *Asian* in a broader manner to include those of the East, Southeast, and South Asian diaspora. In this study, *Asian* will also be interpreted as both race and ethnicity, dependent on the personal choice of participants. (Race, which is a social construct, generally refers to external/physical features identified by oneself and others, whereas ethnicity generally refers to the sharing of a common language, culture, or homeland, and is self-identified (Helms & Talleyrand, 1997; Phinney, 1996).)

Potawatomi-Lenapé scholar Susan Dion (2007) theorises a *perfect stranger*: a settler complicit in ongoing colonization who lacks a sense of responsibility towards decolonization. I use the concept of the perfect stranger to frame people of colour in Canada, who, in their fight against racial oppression, may overlook Indigenous peoples as the original human inhabitants of Turtle Island. I postulate that Asians, as people of colour (POC) living in settler-state nations, develop *double-consciousness*, a term coined by Du Bois (2007) in describing a Black lived experience of holding a self-constructed identity against a hyperawareness of how they are viewed by whiteness (Bruce, 1992; Merryfield & Subedi, 2001). I follow the work of Lawrence and Dua (2005), who discuss how anti-racism between white and (non-Indigenous) POC in settler-state spaces often exclude Indigenous peoples, and Tuck and Yang (2012), who assert that settlers cannot simply claim the role of a perfect stranger with respect to ongoing colonization and dispossession of Indigenous land. In recognition of these scholars' insights, I argue that the development of a third consciousness, that of a settler, is a crucial step of decolonizing oneself as a non-Indigenous person of colour. While Asian peoples have faced and continue to face racism in Canada, they have benefited from structures of colonization and have contributed to the

displacement of Indigenous peoples and the dispossession of Indigenous land while also maintaining privileges above Indigenous peoples (Lawrence & Dua, 2005; Snelgrove, Dhamoon, & Cornthassel, 2014). In light of this history, I put forward a priority for decolonizing educational practices that centre Indigenous peoples, perspectives and epistemologies in education and work towards a larger scale of decolonizing Canada for all who make their residence here (Hare & Davidson, 2015).

1.1 My Narrative and Positionality as Researcher

During my first year in Vancouver, British Columbia, in 2017-2018, I observed ways in which Indigeneity was acknowledged, particularly through territorial acknowledgements, in public art, and in government and curriculum documents. I was taken aback by the acknowledgements of “unceded, ancestral, and traditional land” at the beginning of courses, seminars, and workshops. (I had not encountered similar recognitions of Indigenous territory during my time in New Zealand and the United States.) I began my own personal research into the history of territorial acknowledgements in Canada, settler-colonial history, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and I became curious about how people come to a recognition of Indigeneity and sense of responsibility to decolonize. I reflected upon my prior experiences in New Zealand where I was born and raised, and the United States where I studied and taught for 4 years, as spaces that have been colonized and continue to operate under dominant structures of colonization, as well as the way each nation recognizes (and fails to recognize) Indigeneity. More significantly, I became interested in the factors, particularly in K-12 education, that affect people’s perceptions of rights and responsibilities as inhabitants, Indigenous or settler, in settler-state nations.

My primary source of constructing an understanding of Indigeneity and colonization in New Zealand was through public education. In my experience, Maori language, culture, and history constituted some but rather little of curriculum content, and these constructs tended to disappear in the upper grades, suggesting that Indigenous ways of knowing are deemed irrelevant, unimportant, or incompatible with colonial knowledge systems by curriculum policymakers there. At the university level, my undergraduate studies in mathematics and music neglected Indigenous knowledge altogether. After I moved to Boston, Massachusetts, conversations around Indigeneity were almost entirely absent from my life, which now seems rather concerning given that I had completed an education degree and taught as a K-12 teacher. My teaching experience in Boston held no consideration for settler-colonialism or decolonization. Now, after two years studying on unceded x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), S^kwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), and səlilwətaʔl (Tsleil-Waututh) territories, I have come to recognize the importance of centring Indigenous language, epistemologies, and ontologies in the curriculum to engage students in framing their own positionalities. Thus, this thesis arises out of an urge to do what I feel is my duty towards reconciliation and decolonization as a settler researcher and educator.

I identify as a non-Indigenous New Zealander born to Taiwanese immigrant parents, and I recognize that my parents are not Indigenous to Taiwan. As a person of colour who has lived in New Zealand, United States, and now Canada, I continue to struggle with understanding and creating my own identity in spaces that are predominantly white. While I received all my schooling (up to and including tertiary level) through the New Zealand public education system and associated myself with “being a Kiwi,” assimilating to white New Zealand culture, I always found myself being and feeling othered. My awareness of my racial identity further intensified

during my time in the United States, where race seemed to dominate conversations, particularly in socio-politics and racial systemic injustices against Black Americans. What I failed to recognize during this process was that my fixation on my own experiences as an Asian person distracted me from other issues stemming from settler colonialism. My first year of living in Canada and studying at UBC as a graduate student marked my first year in deep consideration of who I am, as a non-Indigenous person, and where I am, on ancestral and unceded Coast Salish territory, and how these two factors impact my perspectives of curriculum and pedagogy. While attending workshops, seminars, and conferences on decolonizing education, I saw that non-Indigenous scholars of colour were not represented, and I wondered why the proportion of visible minorities in decolonizing education events did not reflect the proportion of scholars of visible minorities I found in other areas of educational research.

What I am primarily concerned with in this thesis is the dominance of a Eurocentric lens in education, particularly in my teaching subject areas—mathematics and music, and how teachers of colour learn to balance this lens with Indigenous epistemologies in their teaching practice. How do teachers of colour, particularly those of the Asian diaspora, approach decolonization in these two subject areas? How do educators of colour arrive at an understanding of their own racial/ethnic identity and place, and how do these understandings affect their teaching practice?

1.2 Research Questions

My research questions for this thesis are these:

1. How do Asian teachers draw upon their identities as non-Indigenous people of colour in their practices of decolonizing education in the disciplines of mathematics and music?
2. What methods are taken by Asian educators in their practice to decolonize education in the disciplines of mathematics and music, and what challenges do they face in these pursuits?

1.3 Brief Description of Method

I completed this study by engaging in semi-structured conversation-interviews with six Asian K-12 mathematics and music educators in the greater Vancouver area. Through these interviews, we explored our conceptions of racial, cultural, and national identity and how we position ourselves in our geographical spaces of life and work. I explored how these educators' constructs of their identities influence their conceptions of and engagement with decolonizing education—what they centre as the aims, and what practices they have implemented.

I took the stance of social constructivism and drew upon Indigenous storywork and narrative inquiry to develop a research method that inquired into the life experiences of these educators that have shaped their understanding of their identities, and how these understandings shape their teaching practices of incorporating Indigenous content and perspectives. I re-presented these conversations as re-storied narratives and analysed across the transcripts and narratives to highlight similarities, differences, and important issues.

1.4 Organization of this thesis

This thesis is presented in seven chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the reasons for and purposes of this study and presents my own narrative and positionality as the researcher. Chapter 2 is a review of literature by prominent scholars in the areas of decolonizing education, traditions of colonialism in mathematics and music, Canadian and B.C. Asian history, and critical race studies. Chapter 3 covers the methodology of this study, in which I highlight Indigenous storytelling as an approach of decolonizing research. Chapter 4 presents the re-storying of the conversation-interviews with participants through my perspective with selected quotes from the interview transcripts. Chapter 5 presents the results of a cross-narrative analysis that examined the interviews for recurring themes, similarities, and differences across the dialogues. Chapter 6 examines deeper issues that unfolded in the interviews and analysis, as well as limitations of this study. Chapter 7 provides suggestions for the future for the multiple stakeholders in decolonizing education.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

In this chapter, I present a review of scholarship on decolonization in Canada and outline a framework for approaching decolonization in education. Decolonizing education requires an inquiry into the colonial structures and conceptions inherent in current curricula; therefore, I present a review of colonial concepts in the fields of mathematics and music that have shaped those respective curricula and consider how to challenge these systems of knowledge. I then provide a history of Asian peoples in British Columbia as well as Critical Race Theory and Critical Asian Theory, which I use to understand the perspectives of Asian Canadians and their relationships to both Indigenous people and land, and to white Canadians.

2.1 Decolonization

Decolonization is a much-disputed term, with some writers conceptualizing it as a reshaping of attitudes towards Indigenous self-determination and the inclusion of Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies in a predominantly settler-colonial society (Kerr, 2014; Smith, 2012; Waldorf, 2014), while others advance the goals of decolonizing as a complete return of land and sovereignty to Indigenous peoples (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Many activists and scholars engaged in the work of decolonization have found themselves challenged to strike a balance between these two perspectives in creating pragmatic approaches for practicing decolonization (Sium, Desai, & Ritskes, 2012).

For the purpose of this thesis, I frame *decolonizing education* as a continuous decentring of Eurocentric knowledge systems within educational policies and practices and the centring of Indigenous knowledge systems (Smith, 2012).

A constructive approach to decolonization is to view colonization as a structure, and not merely a historical event (Wolfe, 1999). Hence, colonization describes not only a history of European settlers violently exerting supremacy over Indigenous peoples and forcibly removing them from their lands, but colonization continues to exist in present-day structures and ideologies that govern how Canada—as well as other settler-state nations—operates. More specifically, educational ministries, curriculum policy, public school systems, and teacher pedagogy in Canadian public and private educational systems are derivatives of colonial systems. Colonization of education and knowledge not only includes the “epistemicide” (Hall & Tandon, 2017, p. 6) of Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies, but also the exclusivity of Eurocentric epistemologies towards Indigenous epistemologies (Battiste, 2011; Cannon, 2009). Cognitive imperialism is perpetually invasive of Indigenous knowledge and it continues to marginalize Indigenous epistemology. Decolonization occurs with the realization, criticism, and decentring of the imperial colonial lens often used to frame the “other”—i.e., people and knowledge not represented in the Western historical canon.

2.2 Frameworks Towards Decolonizing Education

Informed by Chambers’ (1999) determination to position curriculum within locality, the process of decolonizing education looks to imbue students—and by extension, the larger Canadian society—with the wealth and diversity of knowledge and cultures that have existed on Turtle Island for millennia and continue to resist against and adapt to colonization. A place-based education considers the diversity of peoples of its physical space, including the diversity represented amongst teacher and student populations within classrooms and community. Chambers advocates for a curriculum that includes the “sociopolitical ... and imaginative

landscapes in which Canadians live now, as well as landscapes of the past and the future,” which can be only be achieved by “turn[ing] to... Indigenous languages and traditions” (p. 137). Thus, the goal of decolonizing education prioritizes teaching students about the histories and cultures of Turtle Island, the richness of Indigenous ways of knowledge and being, and Canada’s potential future as land and peoples reconciled.

Marie Battiste, a leading Mi’kmaw scholar in decolonizing education, emphasises the cognitive imperialism that has been present in Canada since the beginning of settler-colonialism. She reflects on her own experiences of oppression through the “politics of knowledge production, [and the] intersections with power, race, ... and the process of colonization” (Battiste, 2011, p. 13). Asserting that a Eurocentric education system has been used in Canada’s history as a “manipulative agent of change” (p. 14), she argues that Indigenous peoples are taught to become cynical of their own knowledge systems. Battiste defines “cognitive imperialism” (p. 26) as the omission and ignorance of Indigenous knowledges within a Eurocentric education system that advances only its own ideas, leading to major losses of Indigenous language and knowledge. Thus, she prioritizes the importance of becoming aware of the systemic challenges in decolonizing a Eurocentric education, its attitudes of racism, intolerance, and lack of respect for pluralities. While Battiste speaks largely to the effects of a Eurocentric education upon Indigenous peoples and their knowledge systems, I argue that a Eurocentric education is also damaging to non-Indigenous students of colour when they are subjected only to Eurocentric models of knowledge.

Any attempt to decolonize education requires reflection on behalf of each individual involved and the role each plays in perpetuating colonization. Potawatomi-Lenapé scholar, Susan Dion (2007), looks to disrupt what she locates as *perfect strangers*, non-Indigenous teachers who

distance themselves from Indigenous issues. Non-Indigenous educators must decolonize themselves first by reminding themselves of their presence and positionalities on unceded territory or treaty lands (Haig-Brown, 2012; Tuck & Yang, 2012).

For principles for introducing and using Indigenous content in education, Cree elder, Dr. Verna Kirkness, and Alaskan native education scholar, Dr. Ray Barnhardt formulate the “Four Rs” as principles of Indigenous education—respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility—as guidelines for teachers in Indigenizing their work (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001). Sto:lo scholar Jo-Ann Archibald (Q’um Q’um Xiim) discusses the importance of understanding the nature of Indigenous knowledge, such as sources of ways of knowing and ways of passing on Indigenous knowledge (Educational Studies, 2012). Ojibway judge and Truth and Reconciliation Commissioner, Murray Sinclair, cautions that “we cannot look for quick and easy solutions” and that educators must envision relationships between Indigenous and settler peoples for future generations and agree on what that relationship needs (IndEdu 200x, 2015).

In partnership with the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC), the British Columbia Ministry of Education developed the First Peoples Principles of Learning (FPPL), as a guide to some of the more commonly held principles shared by many First Nations communities (Chrona, 2014). Some of these principles include, “Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors,” “Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities,” and, “Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations.” Jo Chrona, curriculum advisor for FNESC, acknowledges that some of these principles may reflect what teachers already consider about student learning, but emphasizes that the document poses as

resistance to Eurocentric educational ideas and asserts Indigenous self-determination through learning and teaching. I discuss the with several participants in this study.

2.3 Colonial Conceptions of Music and Music Education in North America

In the 1600s, colonists brought their music traditions to Canada in the form of religious music, implemented by Roman Catholic missionaries, and taught to both settler and Indigenous children (J. P. Green & Vogan, 1991). English Protestants entered into the Montreal area in the late 1700s, including trained musicians who taught Western notation to advance Christian choral traditions. Early music education in Canada, thus, was oriented as a tool for assimilating Indigenous peoples into Christianity right from the beginning. In the latter half of the 19th century, European traditions of art music gained popularity among the settler population, which led to the construction of music conservatories dedicated to the study and performance of Western Classical art music. Music in colonial North America, which began as worship, evolved into a product of aestheticism (Goble, 2010). The aesthetic approach to music and music education taken by 20th century music philosophers educators Reimer (1970), Leonhard and House (1959), in which music is treated as an artistic creation, assigns importance to the concepts of composers, performers, and audience. Although the tenets of his philosophy have been challenged over the last 25 years, Reimer remains highly influential on present-day music education across North America.

Although music in Canadian public school education has evolved to include music outside the Western art tradition, including jazz, cultural/world, and popular music, it remains largely conceived through the lens of aestheticism as an artistic product for entertainment. Contemporary music programs in North America, at both the elementary and secondary school

levels, are largely positioned in performance culture; choral, wind band, and orchestral programs (and their term-end showcases) are central to music education (Mantie & Tucker, 2012). Many music departments have also adopted audio engineering and production technologies into the curriculum, giving students the knowledge and skills they need to create recorded musical products (Tobias, 2013). Although the concepts of rehearsal, performance, and recording are noteworthy for learners, the focus on an aesthetics approach to music education leaves little room for the learning of musical practices that find significance outside of aestheticism. In conceiving music as a sonic product, rather than a cultural human practice, music education has become reductionist. Consequently, Indigenous musics (and other musics outside of the Western Art traditions) have been marginalized and tokenized. Moreover, cultural musics (often termed world musics) are often learned through Western art music traditions of systematic analysis through a dominant Western lens (Elliott, 1989; Hess, 2015).

Ethnopedagogy, developed by Peter Dunbar-Hall (2009), is an educational methodology that prioritises teaching cultural music in alignment with the cultural practices from which particular forms of music derive. To combat cultural appropriation in music pedagogies that result from complacent attitudes towards multiculturalism, ethnopedagogy examines culture as concept, process, continual development, identity marker, and site of negotiation. By removing the elitist lens of the Western art traditions, students are able to authentically engage with different musics and the cultural traditions from which they stem. Ethnopedagogy offers a refreshing way to approach music pedagogy, particularly in addressing multiculturalism and decolonising music education. While it is admirable in “reflect[ing] the music it transmits” (p. 62), challenges arise in discussing authenticity, particularly in teachers developing skills to teach authenticity in music and culture.

2.4 Challenging “Universal” Conceptions of Mathematics

Mathematics is often assumed to be universal; mathematical statements “ $2+2=4$ ” and “turn 180 degrees” are widely understood and internationally accepted. Due to its universality, mathematics is also often assumed to be “the least culturally loaded” discipline (Bishop, 1990, p. 51), thus a somewhat standardized curriculum has been adopted globally, with very little variation in content (Barton, 2009; Cai & Howson, 2013; Kilpatrick, 2012; Schmidt, Houang, & Cogan, 2002). However, the present-day universality of mathematics should not be taken as an indicator of its status as a discipline devoid of culture and history.

In considering mathematics as a human practice, ethnomathematics arose as a study of various mathematical knowledge systems and cultural practices. It challenges the universality of mathematics and its rather uniform curriculum worldwide. In ethnomathematics, mathematics is conceived as a “pan-cultural phenomenon” and a “symbolic technology” (Bishop, 1990, p. 59). Through ethnomathematical lens, the current internationalised mathematics curriculum can be seen as a product of Western culture, whose conceptions of mathematics are rather exclusive of other cultural systems of mathematics. Bishop (1990) notes the unease associated with referring to this body of mathematics as Western mathematics, since mathematical concepts of numerous cultures have been fundamental to the construction of this “Western mathematics.” The term “Western mathematics” also imposes an inappropriate label upon the work of many scholars across various cultures and places who work in the field of such mathematics (Sternberg, 2013). Barton (2009) terms this body of work as *nearly universal, conventional (NUC) mathematics*.

Bishop asserts that particular mathematics should always be referenced with specificity to cultural and historical origin and that the term *mathematics* encompasses the general human

process of utilising logical, spatial, and numerical ways of thinking and knowing. Six universal mathematical activities have been documented in anthropological research across myriad cultures: counting, locating, measuring, designing, playing, and explaining (Bishop, 1990; Iseke-Barnes, 2000; Sterenberg, 2013), with differences lying in the specificity of processes and procedures. Different cultures demonstrate the same activities with varying use of language and association with other domains; for example, strong connections are documented between mathematics and religious/spiritual values in Hindu culture (Bishop, 1990, p. 62).

Bishop (1990) theorizes that three “mediating agents” have served to advance Western mathematics as “cultural imperialism” (p. 53): trade, administration, and education. In order to execute their economic and political systems in foreign lands, European colonists imposed their own mathematical conceptions where different (and often undocumented) mathematical systems already existed. However, the foremost agent in the process of mathematical cultural invasion was education, “which played ... a critical role in promoting Western mathematical ideas ... and culture” (p. 54). Bishop explains that the push for Western mathematical conceptions in Indigenous spaces was fuelled by colonists’ need to educate and assimilate Indigenous peoples to function adequately in a colonized culture. Mathematics thereby became a marker of cultural inferiority when mathematics of one culture was deemed to be incompatible with dominant Western mathematics (Iseke-Barnes, 2000). Barton (2009) identifies “isolating mechanisms” in NUC-mathematics (p. 113), in which mathematical ideas are rejected (by those in power such as curriculum designers, journal editors, and appointment committees) until those ideas can be proven through the format of existing NUC-mathematics.

2.5 Decolonizing Mathematics and Music Education

Herbert Spencer's (1884/1960) question: "What knowledge is of most worth?" is often evoked during curriculum reform initiatives. Chambers (1999) supplements two critical questions in consideration reimagining curriculum: "Who are we?" and "Where is here?". By incorporating place-based education into decolonizing education, educators can connect the curricula of their disciplines to the geography of the spaces in which they teach. A place-based education in Canada prioritizes the implications of settler-colonialism upon multiple knowledge systems and aims to create space to examine the cultural genocide and epistemicide that took place across Turtle Island. Situating curriculum in locality provides a platform to scrutinize the colonial system that continues to neglect Indigenous knowledge in the education system. Decolonizers of math and music education must engage with mathematical and musical epistemologies and practices that are currently present in local communities.

In order to decolonize contemporary music education, educators must wrestle with conceptions of music in Western art traditions that hinder the ability to embody "other" ways of making, doing, and *being* music (Elliott, 1989). The Western art music lens, with its aesthetic gaze and systematic analysis, entails an imperialistic orientation that inappropriately subsumes and dissects musics outside of its own canon. It prohibits an authentic engagement with musical practices and cultures outside of Western traditions that have been present here in Turtle Island for millennia. Music educators must turn to local communities if they wish to explore non-Western musical practices that are appropriate for their classrooms.

Similarly, for mathematics educators, it is important to consider how the present mathematical knowledge system in our schools became an internationally unified episteme. Public mathematics education was originally developed after the Industrial revolution to educate

“a predominantly white, male, middle class elite” (Iseke-Barnes, 2000, p. 139). Current school mathematics focuses on Western mathematical practices and is often assumed to be grounded in Greek traditions. Yet a closer examination reveals that concepts in Greek mathematics were adapted from mathematical practices of Asia, Anatolia, Mesopotamia, and Africa (Barton, 2009; Cimen, 2014). Radford (2014) advocates for mathematics (and the sciences) to be approached as a cultural discipline, and maintains that it “should not be dissociated from the history of modern science, industry and philosophy” (p. 92). He further adds that cultural mathematics education is not a recent phenomenon, but instead, mathematics has often been unrecognised as a cultural subject, evident of a repositioning of mathematics curricula content towards industrial, economic, political, and thus, cultural motives.

While new curriculum policies in various Canadian provinces mandate the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives, there are numerous barriers to implementing them at the classroom level. As curriculum makers, educators are tasked with the responsibility of ensuring that students develop critical attitudes towards ways of knowing both within and outside imperial Western traditions. In order to centre Indigenous knowledge in education, teachers must find effective and authentic ways of incorporating non-Western knowledge systems into curricula that prioritize settler knowledge systems. Such an undertaking is much more easily conceptualized than put into practice. De Souza (2012) raises important questions concerning different ways of knowing in curriculum, asking: “Do we lament the loss of previous, ‘authentic’ literacy practices and decry the ‘disorderly’ appearance of new ‘hybrid’ practices?” (p. 80). Such a question pertains to mathematics and music education, where Western bodies and systems of knowledge are considered (and often assumed) by most educators to be essential to their disciplines in public education. De Souza examines other scholars’ work in examining competing approaches

and agrees that it is crucial to not fall into the trap of assuming universality of knowledge or to overlook the past and present existence of dominant perspectives. In order to decolonize mathematics and music education, I turn to Hall and Tandon (2017), who prioritise the recognition that there are multiple ways of knowing and that “knowledge is created and represented in multiple forms” (p. 13).

2.6 Asian History and Presence in Metro Vancouver and British Columbia

Henry Yu (2009), historian in Asian-Canadian studies, indicates the importance of understanding the future of Canada through a perspective informed by the large population of “Asian, non-white Canada of visible minorities” (p. 1013). Metro Vancouver has one of the largest populations of Asian peoples in a metropolitan area outside the continent of Asia. Asians (inclusive of East, South-east, and South Asians) constitute 41% of the 2.4 million people dwelling in metro Vancouver, with the highest proportion being Chinese people, who constitute 22% of the metro Vancouver population (Statistics Canada, 2016).

Asian immigration to British Columbia was first documented with the arrival of 29 Chinese with Captain John Meares to trade and build forts on Nuu-chah-nulth territory, the west coast region of Vancouver Island (Yu, 2009). In the 1870s, large numbers of Chinese railway construction workers migrated to B.C. from both China and California (Government of Canada, 2017a; Yu, 2009). Less than a decade later, Japanese migrants arrived to work in Coast Salish and Nuu-chah-nulth territory fishing villages (Government of Canada, 2017b). Sikhs from the Punjab region were the first South Asian populace to migrate to Canada in the early 1900s, first working in the Lower Mainland and on Vancouver Island, and later in the Skeena region (Khalsa Diwan Society Abbotsford, n.d.; Nayar, 2012). The first South-east Asian group to migrate was

Vietnamese who migrated to British Columbia in the 1970s following the Vietnam War (Hoang, 2017). With the large population and long history of Asian peoples in the lower Mainland of British Columbia, an understanding of the effects that race and ethnicity have upon anti-colonial education will provide a deeper grasp of decolonizing education.

Since arriving in Canada and British Columbia, Asian peoples have faced racial discrimination in the form of racist legislations that have sought to maintain political power among white settlers and to reduce and prevent Asian migration into Canada in order maintain a largely white population. Its policies include the “Head Tax” imposed on Chinese immigrants, which was conveniently passed at the same time the transcontinental railroads were completed, a “Gentleman’s Agreement” on Japanese immigrants, the internment of Japanese Canadian citizens in during WWII, “Continuous Voyage” on South Asian immigrants, and the Chinese Immigrant Act of 1923 (often referred to as the Chinese Exclusion Act), which denied voting rights based on surnames (Miki, 2000). Asian Canadians continued to be treated as second-class citizens well into the 1960s due to long-term practices of racial discrimination (Yu, 2009). In 2010, an article published by Canadian news magazine *Maclean’s*, entitled “Too Asian: Some frosh don't want to study at an Asian university,” came under criticism for anti-Asian racism and xenophobic views. *Maclean’s* has since changed the title of the article but not offered any form of apology to date (Findlay & Köhler, 2010; Museus, 2013).

Few sources document the early interactions between Asian and First Nations peoples in Canada. Chinese migrants from British Captain John Meares’s first expedition in 1788 likely intermarried with First Nations peoples (Yu, 2009). Nayar (2012) explored intercultural tensions between Punjab and Nisga’a people in Prince Rupert due to “limited awareness and lack of acknowledgement for the other’s ‘story’” (p. 189). Documentaries such “All Our Father’s

Relations” (Yoshizawa, 2016) and “Cedar and Bamboo” (Leung & Todd, 2010) have followed the stories of people in Vancouver with both Chinese and Indigenous roots. Later literature has pointed to the alliance formed between Asian Canadian and First Nations artists in supporting writers and artists of colour (Li, 2007). Asian-Canadian writers SKY Lee and Fred Wah have contributed to Canadian literature, depicting oft-marginalised complicated relationships between Asian and First Nations people (Cho, 2008; Miki, 2000). Such literature has been studied for “complex relations between migration, settlement, and Indigenous sovereignty” (Lo, 2008, para. 28). In considering the colonial separatist policies of Immigration Act and the Indian act, Wong (2008) raised the question of how to “assess the ways in which Chinese people have been implicated in the ... violent imposition of Indigenous land” (p. 163-164).

Currently, there exists very little research on Asian-Canadian educators. Moreover, the elementary and secondary teaching force in B.C. and Vancouver is currently not representative of the province’s population of visible minorities, with percentage differences as high as 28.8% between the percentage of visible minority teachers and percentage of total visible minorities (Ryan, Pollock, & Antonelli, 2009, p. 589). This difference has been attributed to racial hierarchies and institutional barriers in the education system (Resplandor, 2010). A similar study in the United States around the invisibility of Asian American educators commented on factors including cultural expectations of Asian parents and the lack of Asian American representation in the curriculum (Han, 2019).

2.7 Critical Race Theory and Asian Critical Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a social constructionist theoretical framework used to examine race, racism, and power. CRT refutes biological constructs of race and theorizes that

race is an “ongoing, contradictory, self-reinforcing, plastic process subject to the macro forces of social and political struggle and the micro effects of daily decisions” (Haney-Lopez, 1995, p. 93). Delgado & Stefancic (2012), argue that racism is not an abnormality (in the United States) and is a complex factor in the day-to-day decision-making processes of all Americans. I draw upon the work Black scholar, W. E. B. Du Bois (2007) who theorised Black American *double-consciousness* (as mentioned in the introduction of this thesis), a “sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others” and wishing to be “both American and Negro” (pp. 8-9). Du Bois’ theory of double-consciousness has been extended to view the experiences and perceptions of women, people of colour, and queer persons. As proposed in the introduction, I view Asian Canadians with a similar lens but I argue that an important third-consciousness as settler needs to be developed by Asian Canadians for aims of decolonizing. Due to CRT’s focus primarily on the experience of Black people and not all people of colour, Asian Critical Studies (AsianCrit) grew as a specialised scholarship within CRT that highlights experiences of Asian peoples. Other fields that also arose highlight specific racial groups, including Tribal Critical race theory (TribalCrit) and Latinx Critical Theory (LatCrit).

AsianCrit brings together tenets of CRT and Asian North American perspectives to explore the essentialization and stereotyping of Asian North Americans. While most scholarship in AsianCrit has developed around the experiences and struggles of Asian Americans, several Asian Canadian writers have extended theories of Asian Americans to include Asian Canadians, naming the similarities between their experiences and perspective, hence the term Asian North American has been adapted (Davis, 2007; Ty & Goellnicht, 2004; Verduyn, 2008). Scholars in AsianCrit focus on the ways that the diversity of Asian North Americans are conflated into a “monolithic group” (Museus, 2013, p. 23) as well as stereotypes about Asian genders and sex.

Lisa Lowe (1991) writes to the diversity of experiences among early Japanese migrants who experienced WWII internment, recently educated middle-class immigrants from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the People's Republic, and experiences of asylum seekers from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, and how these are often composited as a single group of Asian Americans. AsianCrit explores the ways that Asian North Americans are constructed at polar extremes as “honorary whites” or “yellow peril,” and how they tend to experience life as perpetual foreigners/denizens (Coloma & Pon, 2017; Iftikar & Museus, 2018; Museus, 2013).

I particularly highlight the work of Jo-Anne Lee (2016) who speaks to the centrality of “Eurocentric, heterosexist, and masculinist” (p.16) discourses in decolonization and social justice. She writes,

I often feel ill at ease in white-dominated spaces and discourse because I am not fully present in my whole self. I am continually negotiating which part of me is included or excluded in the conversation. This isn't because I lack understanding, but what is said and how it is said negates the complex histories of my community's arrival on this land. There is no space to tell different stories of relations with Indigenous peoples. When all conversations centre on white settlers' experiences, non-white settlers' realities in the colonizing process —equally important for critical unpacking— are pushed to the margins. (p. 16)

Referring to the histories of anti-Indigenous anti-Asian racism against Asians in B.C., Lee argues that “denying spaces of connection to marginalized groups is also a white settler move stemming from fears that any collaboration outside of their direct surveillance and involvement might be a threat” (p. 17). In response, she calls for the centring of Indigenous and marginalized minority voices and the multitudes of alternative approaches to decolonization. This thesis is in support of

her work that calls for critical dialogues that include the voices of non-white, non-Indigenous peoples in presenting an alternative approach towards decolonization, specifically in educational discourse.

Given the reviewed literature on decolonizing education, colonial concepts of mathematics and music education, and critical race studies, I find importance in exploring the narratives of Asian Canadian teachers to understand their identity constructs and their sense of responsibility to decolonize their teaching practices.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this study was to explore the narratives of Asian K-12 educators in the Lower Mainland, BC, in decolonizing their practices. In conducting it, I took the stance of social constructivism and employed a qualitative multiple-case research approach. I drew upon Indigenous storytelling as research method and as a form of resistance against colonial constructs of research methodology (Smith, 2012). Stories were collected through semi-structured conversation-interviews with participants and were analyzed through narrative and thematic inquiry methods.

The questions that guided this research are:

1. How are Asian teachers informed by their identities as non-Indigenous people of colour in their practices of decolonizing education in the disciplines of mathematics and music?
2. What methods are taken by Asian educators in their practice to decolonize education in the disciplines of mathematics and music, and what challenges do they face in these pursuits?

3.1 Context of Study

The study was conducted in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia (B.C.), also referred to as greater Vancouver or Metro Vancouver, and focused on the experiences and perspectives of K-12 (primary and secondary school) math and music teachers who identify as Asian and are working to decolonize their teaching practices.

Schools and teachers in B.C. are guided by the new B.C. curriculum, which was transitioned into effect in the 2016/17 school year, beginning with the primary grades. A full transition is expected to be complete during the 2019/20 school year with Grades 11-12 operating under the new curriculum. The redesigned curriculum mandates the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives and knowledge across all content areas, including mathematics and music (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2015). This is not to suggest that inclusion of Indigenous perspectives and knowledge were not included in previous B.C. curriculums for either discipline (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2010; Western and Northern Canadian Protocol, 2008). But, notably, the new curriculum guide also features an inclusion of “historical wrongs,” including the history of “Asian and South Asian communities and their contributions to the development of our province—as well as the injustices they experienced” (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2015, p. 1).

3.2 Research Design

For the framework of this study, I drew upon scholarship in social constructivism as a perspective on how people of colour develop their racial identity. I looked to the work of Indigenous scholars in story-telling/storywork (as a research methodology) to develop an approach towards the relationships I established with my participants and for the semi-structured conversation-interviews. I paralleled storywork with narrative inquiry as a method for crafting the interview as well as analysing the interview transcripts as data. The interview transcripts were crafted into narratives, as presented in Chapter 4. I then performed thematic cross-narrative analysis with coding using qualitative data analysis software, nVivo, with the results presented in Chapter 5.

3.2.1 Social Constructivism

In this research, I take the philosophical stance of social constructivism, which assumes that individuals “seek understanding of the world they live and work in” (Cresswell, 2009, p. 8) and form meanings of their experiences with certain objects or concepts, particularly through interacting with other persons. Social constructivism places emphasis on the individual’s meaning making with particular objects or concepts within socio-cultural contexts and is the most common approach in research seeking to understand race and racism, particularly in Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Museus, 2013). My research framed participants as persons who develop their cultural/racial identity and perceptions of decolonization education through interactions with other individuals of both similar different backgrounds (Lincoln & Guba, 2013), as well as their physical and sociocultural location in unceded Indigenous territories in the Lower Mainland B.C., in the settler-state nation of Canada.

3.2.2 Employing Indigenous Storytelling as a Research Methodology

I drew upon Indigenous storytelling as a form of anti-colonial resistance against Western constructs of research and methodology (Battiste, 2017; Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008; Smith, 2012). Indigenous cultures around the world focus on the importance of oral traditions and storywork (Archibald, 2008) and storytelling/storywork is increasingly employed and recognized as research methodology (Bessarab & Ng’andu, 2010; Geia, Hayes, & Usher, 2013; Hapeta, Palmer, & Kuroda, 2019). Jeffrey Corntassel (2009), Cherokee scholar, offers his insights into *haa-huu-pa*, Nuu-chah-nulth storytelling [described as “what we do when we get up every day to make the world good” (p. 137)], which serves as “a starting point for renewing Indigenous family and community responsibilities in the ongoing struggle for Indigenous justice and

freedom” (p. 139). In line with Cornthassel, I position storytelling as a tool of renewing community responsibilities amongst non-Indigenous teachers of colour, particularly Asian teachers, towards decolonizing education for Indigenous self-determination.

Storytelling is an important tradition for Indigenous peoples and is valued for the ways it “sustains communities, validates experiences and epistemologies, expresses experiences of Indigenous peoples, and nurtures relationships and the sharing of knowledge” (Iseke, 2013, p. 559). In designing this study, I proposed storytelling as a methodology of sharing Asian teacher narratives to draw out their experiences and worldviews towards decolonizing education. By employing Indigenous storytelling methodology with Asian teacher participants in this study, I aimed to exemplify the potentiality for a narrative that represents relationships between Indigenous and Asian Canadian peoples in settler state nations (Archibald, 2008). Bessarab and & Ng’andu (2010) view Australian Indigenous storytelling, *yarning*, as methodology where the “researcher and participant journey together visiting places and topics of interest relevant to the research study” (p. 38) in a dynamic and purposeful conversation. Metis Indigenous Knowledge (IK) researcher, Judy Iseke (2013) writes about Indigenous storytelling as events of witnessing and remembering for the storyteller as a bringing forth of what is assumed to be forgotten or lost (p. 570). I adapted these perspectives of Indigenous storytelling to journey with my participants to revisit their memories that have shaped their understandings of their identities. I highlighted the principles of respect and reciprocity of the Four R’s of Indigenous education as put forward by Kirkness and Barnhardt (2001) in the way I curated these conversations, by offering my own vulnerability with my own stories to my participants as a way of showing my respect to them, in gratitude of their participation and offered vulnerability. My participants were given the authority to adjust their story for accuracy and interpretation as captured in the interview

transcripts and re-presented narratives (Archibald, 2008). I view my participants as knowledgeable and wise experts of their own practices and perspectives, and I sought their consent to hear and re-tell their stories. The purpose of capturing their story and retelling it was not only for producing this thesis, but it was my hope that the re-telling of their story would empower them to continue to develop their work.

3.2.3 Multiple Case Study with Narrative Inquiry Approach

I chose to undertake this research using a multiple-case approach, recognizing that identity construction and decolonizing education are complex topics and would be difficult, if not impossible, to investigate through the tools of surveys or experimental design (Yin, 2013). Rather, the themes of this study were best approached by conversing with participants and learning their perspective in the context of their life experiences. Case studies allow for the investigation of “a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context may not be clearly evident” (Yin, 2013, p. 16). For this research, I deemed a case study method to be appropriate, due to the entanglement between the phenomenon, decolonization of education, and its context, that of Asian K-12 teachers in the Lower Mainland. Suter (2012) has affirmed that case studies, while disadvantageous for making generalizations, provide opportunities to present “rich narrative detail and ... offer insights about complex processes” that surveys are unable to provide. Although data and results of case studies can be challenging to interpret, they provide a platform to examine “real-life contexts in a causal chain, illustrate specific constructs, and illuminate a situation when outcomes are not clear” (p. 366). Thus, I chose to employ a multiple-

case approach to examine the complex stories of Asian teachers in the field of mathematics and music and their approaches to decolonizing their practice.

A narrative inquiry approach provided a platform for me this research to examine the constructions of identity, and the perspectives and practices of decolonization through and participants' stories. Narrative inquiry as a research methodology examines human experience through stories and thus uses narratives to examine the relationship between an individual and the phenomenon (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). Suter (2012) proposes that narrative inquiry provides a framework to “relate events in a process or describe traits and abilities within a structural framework” (p. 366), while Bruner (1996) speaks to the importance of narrative analysis in “constructing our lives and a ‘place’ for ourselves in the possible world we will encounter” (p. 40) as well as for cohesiveness between various cultures. The use of a narrative approach is important as storytelling is an essential component in constructing understandings in Critical Race Theory and Asian Critical Studies (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Museus, 2013). Trahar (2009) and Elbaz-Luwisch (2012) support narrative inquiry as a method to explore the “embeddedness of the teacher in a school and school system and its mandated curricula, ideologies, pedagogical trends, and reform processes” (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2012, p. 360).

In taking a narrative inquiry approach, Bresler (2006) notes the importance of having “awareness of one’s story and the ability to reflect on how it impacts one’s choices of issues and lenses, and the ways in which one hears participants’ narratives” (p. 28). For this reason, I explicated my own narrative and motivations within the introduction chapter of this thesis proposal and I have provided further details of my experiences in Chapters 5 to 7. I further employ a *critical events approach* to narrative inquiry and analysis (Webster & Mertova, 2007),

which examines a narrative for key events and surrounding details that are associated with a change in a participant's understanding or worldview. By observing the details of a story that the mind chooses to remember and associate with an phenomenon, the critical event approach inspects narrative elements, such as time, characters, and linked events, that “[inform] their future behavior” (p. 74). Webster and Mertova (2007) identify several qualities of critical events for the purpose of identification, including impact on the storyteller, particularity of context, extemporaneity, emotional involvement, that have life-changing consequences, and identifiability.

3.2.4 Data Collection: Semi-structured Interviews

The interviews explored two overarching themes with participants. The first theme involved a discussion about the participant's background: how they construct their racial/ethnic identity; their awareness of their lens as a racialized person; and how they perceive their positionality in Canada—i.e., how they identify with the terms such as immigrant or settler. The second theme was an inquiry into the participants' perceptions and practices of decolonization; their aims in decolonizing their practice, their methods and experiences of adapting Indigenous knowledge and worldviews, and the challenges they face in decolonizing their practice.

Prior to the interviews, the question script (Appendix A) was shared with the participants and they were invited to bring stories from their personal and teaching experiences that relate to the research areas. As suggestions, I asked for childhood stories that would present an instance of hyperawareness of racial/ethnic identity, stories that triggered them to reflect upon their presence as non-Indigenous persons in Canada, or stories of teaching students or interacting with other teachers around the topic of decolonization.

Data were collected in semi-structured interviews where I invited the participants to share stories of events that have shaped their self-conceptions of race, ethnicity, and positionality in decolonization. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) and Etherington (2009) attest to conversation-interview as a method that provides the most ideal setting for inquiry into the participant's "understandings of the meanings in their lived world, ... their experiences and self-understanding, and ... their own perspective in their lived world" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 119). The method of semi-structured interviews enabled data collection to pinpoint certain concepts which might be unclear to the researcher or participant. For this research, I invited participants into conversations in which I, as the researcher, also shared my own personal experiences and perspectives on the topics in discussion. An excerpt of one of the interview transcripts is provided in Appendix B as an example. Through this professional yet personal dialogue, I explored the participants' conceptions of their own identities and learned where they place themselves in the work of decolonizing.

Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. Interview transcripts and data analysis, in the form of narrative and chapter drafts of this thesis, were shared with respective participant throughout the research process.

3.2.5 Data Interpretation and Analysis

I drew upon the work of Ezzy (2002) and Webster and Mertova (2007) in thematic narrative analysis. While narrative and thematic analysis are procedural methods for analyzing data in this research, analysis in qualitative research is dynamic and begins before intensive analysis. Merriam (1988) asserts that data analysis occurs at the first instance of data collection,

as researchers need to make decisions during the data collection in order to focus conversations on the topics of interest.

During and while transcribing the interviews, I made notes of any reactions and responses to familiarize myself with data. I then constructed my own re-presentations of the narratives, presented in Chapter 4, by selecting quotes from the transcripts which I identified, which were part of participants' critical events, and expanding on the quote through my understanding of their story. Draft and final versions of the narratives were shared with participants to cross-check for accuracy and consistency. In addition to a critical events approach to the narratives, I also performed a thematic analysis using NVivo as a qualitative data analysis tool to code recurring themes and examine the interviews transcripts to search for topics which were not so obviously apparent through a narrative analysis. The themes/codes were generated from re-reading the narratives and identifying elements of each research question and are reflected in the naming of sections in Chapter 5.

3.3 Research Participants

The participants selected for this study were practicing mathematics and/or music teachers in K-12 schools in the Lower Mainland B.C., who are non-Indigenous to Canada and identify as Asian, including South Asian and South-East Asian. The research participants were teachers who have given thought to decolonizing their teaching practice and/or are currently undergoing a process of decolonizing themselves and their educational practice. Due to the complexity of the term “decolonizing education,” teachers who have developed and/or are developing their practice to incorporate Indigenous perspectives and knowledge—as

Indigenization—were considered eligible participants. Six teachers were selected in total for this study; three who teach mathematics, and three who teach music.

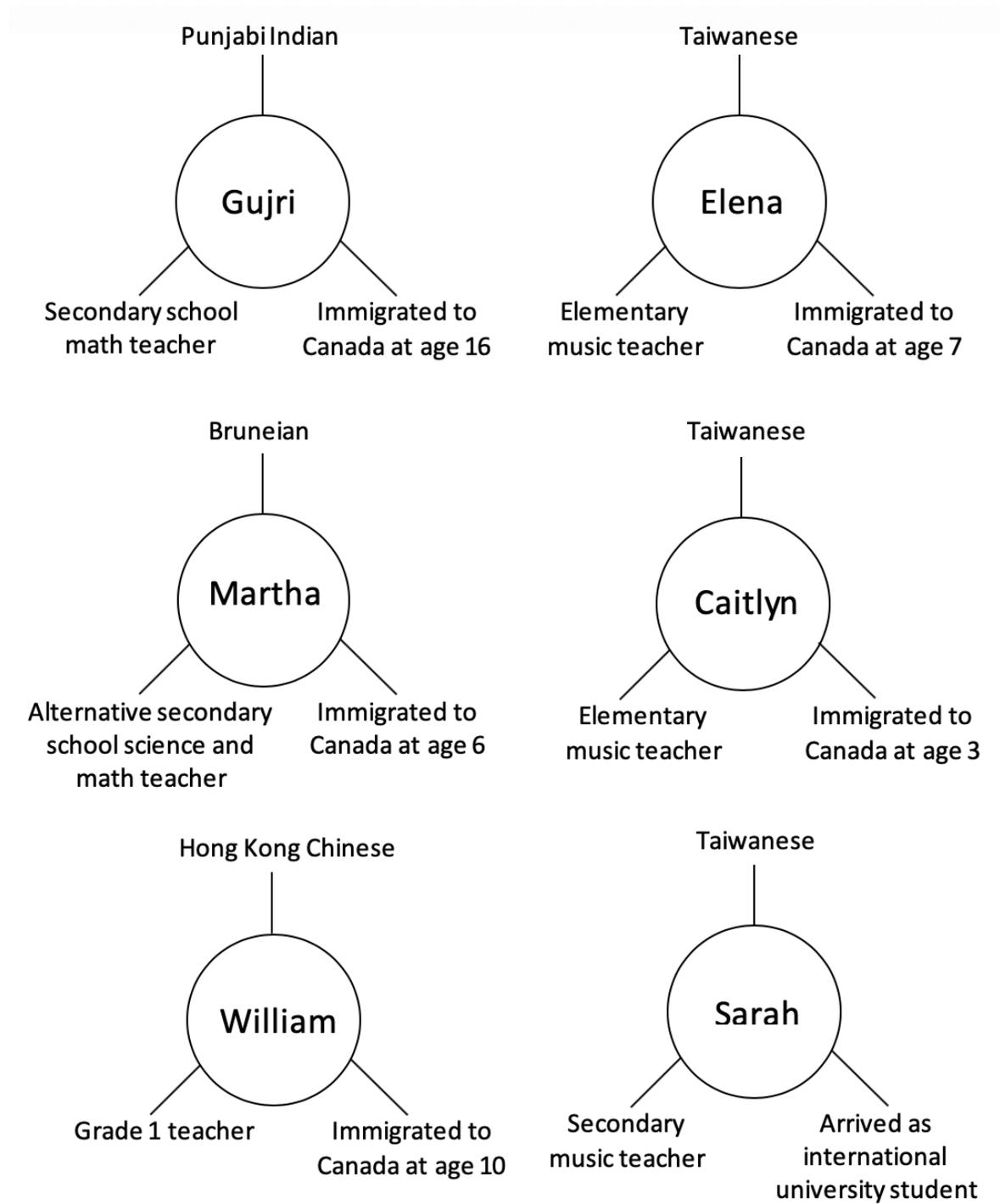


Figure 3.3 Summative display of participants

A non-probability sampling was employed, as the goal of this research was not to make generalizations about all Asian teachers in Lower Mainland B.C. working in decolonizing education, but to broaden the understanding of the diversity of perspectives and experiences of Asian teachers in decolonizing education. Due to the multifaceted criteria required of participants, potential research participants were located using snowball network selection starting with my own network, including professors and graduate students in the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia, as well as their networks and the networks of participants. (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). Recruitment emails were sent to potential research participants within my own network. Five participants were recruited through this first round of emails. One further participant was recruited through the network of an already recruited participant.

3.4 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity in the social sciences are “problematic ... simply because human behavior is never static” (Merriam, 1988, p. 170). Qualitative case studies seek to describe and explain a multitude of experiences, thus a positivistic approach to reliability and validity, which assumes a single reality and looks for generalizability, is extraneous. As a framework for this study, I drew upon the work of Lincoln and Guba (1985) who define reliability and validity in qualitative research as dependability and consistency. Since the study aim was to understand the participants’ interpretations, validity was established in a method that included participants in data collection and analysis: each participant was provided with the transcript and multiple reworkings of their narratives to ensure that the interview was accurately captured and

interpreted by the researcher (Merriam, 1988; Yin, 2013) and to “alleviate power differentials” (Ezzy, 2002, p. 94) in the researcher-participant relationship. Participants had the opportunity to make adjustments to clarify the transcript and the re-written narratives, so their ideas were clearly communicated to the researcher. Reliability in qualitative studies is strengthened through audit-trails (Borman, LeCompte, & Goetz, 1986; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Merriam, 1988). Reliability is thus found in a clear presentation of methodology in which the study could be replicated (with necessary adjustments) for different contexts and is further established through reflexivity: the presentation of the researcher’s background and motivation for study (found in section 1.0). The presentation of the researcher’s background invited participants and readers of this study to scrutinize any potential researcher bias in the data collection, analysis, and interpretation processes (Bresler, 2006; Cortazzi, 1993; Etherington, 2009; Merriam, 1988).

3.5 Limitations

This research has been limited to focus on Asian teachers although aspects of findings may be applicable to the experiences and perspectives of other educators of colour. This research has been limited to focus on the subject areas of mathematics and music as opposed to all disciplines offered in K-12 education. This research has been limited to educators in the Lower Mainland B.C.

Chapter 4: Participant Narratives

This chapter presents my re-telling of the stories that the six participants shared with me in our one-to-one conversation-interviews. The individual narratives are summaries of the various aspects of the participants' lives that I found significant in relations to this thesis topic and for the sake of presenting a rich, yet succinct, version of their stories and our conversation. It is important to note that the following re-presentations do not cover all topics that were discussed in the interviews. The interviews were semi-structured interviews that were extensive in topics and length (1.5 to 2.5 hours of duration). Thus, this chapter presents what I found, through a critical event narrative analysis, to be the most important fragments of each interview that distinctly illustrate each participant's background, perspective, and teaching practice, and particular moments that demonstrate shifts in perspectives and practices.

In this chapter, all quotes in each narrative are from their respective interview transcripts. Pseudonyms are used for the names of participants and other mentioned people unless otherwise noted. As described in the methodology, each narrative has been read by its respective participant to ensure an accurate re-presentation of their stories and perspectives. The order of the narratives in this chapter is of no significance other than to reflect the participants' availability, which determined the order in which they were interviewed. It is my honor to have had the opportunity to conduct the conversations with the participants and to re-tell their stories here in this chapter. In Chapter 5, where I present cross-analysis of the interviews, I present further topics from the conversation interviews that are not presented in this chapter.

4.1 Gujri: A Case of Being the “Most Canadian” in the Family

It started when I was around eight years old. My father is a religious hymn singer and he came here back in 1998—somewhere there. He would just come here and stay for 6 months, then go back to his family, but that was just too much traveling for him, so we decided that he's going to try to get his PR [permanent residence status] here and get us to come here as well.

Gujri is a secondary school mathematics teacher who identifies as an Indo-Canadian. Her family story of immigrating to Canada begins with her father travelling to the Surrey area (the traditional territories of Semiahmoo, Katzie, Kwikwetlem, Kwantlen, Qayqayt, and Tsawwassen First Nations) to work alongside the Sikh community, performing and teaching traditional hymn singing. After travelling back and forth between Canada and India for a few years, his family decided that it would be best for him to apply for Permanent Resident status. Five years later, the family immigrated to Canada when Gujri was 16 years old.

It was my family—my mom and dad that inspired me [to teach] to begin with, because my dad was a hymn singer. Back in India, he used to teach kids for free—hymn singing. My mom did too. It used to be every evening. We would have 20-30 students in our backyard learning to do hymn singing, and my dad continued that when he moved here. They've both been into teaching since my birth. Teaching was always around, and I always liked it.

Raised by parents who were both educators—her mother also a Sikh religious teacher - Gujri aspired to the teaching profession. She recalls her five-year-old self assuming the responsibility of taking attendance of her father’s students. Her family home in Punjab, India, would be filled with students every evening, who came to learn about Sikhism free-of-charge, and Gujri would

make attendance records and interrogate late-arrivals. “You came late today; can’t be late tomorrow!”

When we moved here—in Grade 10—I had this math teacher who really inspired me, and I wouldn't be here today if it weren't for him. I remember he would teach, and I would just sit there and just look at him and just be in awe of how well he taught—the way he explained.

Gujri was deeply inspired by Mr. Chauhan, her Grade 10 math teacher, who later became an avid supporter of her decision to enter the teaching profession. After she completed her undergraduate degree in mathematics and her Bachelor of Education, Mr. Chauhan encouraged her to pursue graduate studies in education. After winning a battle against her mother’s adamant demands for grandchildren, she pursued a Master of Education in Math Education. Unfortunately, Mr. Chauhan passed away while Gujri was finishing the project for her master’s degree. Gujri strives to honor his memory by continuously developing her teaching practice.

I've spent literally half my life in Canada—just as much as I did in India as I have here in Canada. For [my parents], they've spent most of their life in India - they still refer to themselves as Indians even though they're not. It's just the Indian politics - it's always been not so good with Sikhs in India Me and my brother, we both moved here together with our family. He's two years older than me: he was in Grade 11 and I was in Grade 10, even though he's two years older, just one grade ahead he still has the accent. I never did. I don't know what the reason is. We pretty much had a similar amount of schooling here. He still considers himself more of an Indian than a Canadian. It's very strange. He would come over and he would always talk in Punjabi and I can't seem to speak fully in Punjabi.

In discussing her racial/national identities, Gujri compared herself to her older brother, Ajit. While they immigrated to Canada at the same time and are only two years apart, Gujri articulated that Ajit views her as the “Canadian” of the family. She accounts for the difference between her brother and herself in their use of Punjabi and English languages, specifying that she has a better grasp of English and speaks without a strong Indian accent. Gujri also asserted that she is much more direct when she speaks than is expected of women in Indian cultures. She believes her parents affirm their identities more strongly as Indians, commenting that their identities are strongly influenced by the continuous discrimination faced by Sikhs in India. “They're Indian.. their background is Indian ... They haven't fully grasped the whole Canadian cultural aspect.”

I remember when I moved here, I was enrolled in Socials 10 in the second semester. Me moving here and everything. I remember studying about Indigenous people and everything, and I still [didn't] have a clear idea of who they were, not until I got into University and I did research on my own. I was in high school for over two years and we had assemblies where there would be Indigenous people doing their prayer, doing their ceremonies in the beginning to start the Remembrance Day, or other ceremonies. And I would have no idea who they were. I mean I was better than an average student in high school, I might have gotten a B+ or an A- in socials, even in English and rest of my courses, and I had no idea.

While Gujri performed well in school and had learned about Indigenous peoples of Canada, She described her conception of Indigenous peoples as “something that happened in the past but they don't really exist anymore.” In her conversations with her parents, Indigenous issues were rarely mentioned—her parents read Punjabi newspapers which she says lacked a perspective on

Indigenous issues. It wasn't until she began her undergraduate studies that she began to develop a better understanding of Indigenous peoples and issues.

I would go on the SkyTrain and see these people who looked a bit different. Me and my friend were talking ... I used the word "Indian" as in "us-Indian" and it was this Indigenous person sitting there. And [my friend] was saying, "You shouldn't say this word out loud." I felt quite embarrassed that I didn't know, so I went home and did my research and that's how I got to know it a bit better.

Gujri shared one particular incident that sparked her to learn about Indigenous people and issues for herself that took place one day when she commuted to and from university on the SkyTrain. One particular day while she was commuting with a friend, she decided to ask her friend about who these people were that "looked a bit different." In that conversation, Gujri used the word "Indian" in reference to people from the country, India, but she was quickly hushed by her friend, who perhaps misinterpreted her use of the term "Indian." In that moment, Gujri felt deeply embarrassed, and decided to begin researching on her own to learn about why her friend had shushed her.

In the beginning, it was just like an eye-opener for me that, "Oh wow there's that much to learn about these people that I don't know." More so, I think the fact that the background I come from in India—that Sikhs have been marginalized against by the Indian government. I think it was always.. there's this—I don't know if I should say this—but I always felt like I could relate to the Indigenous people here—what they have gone through and what my ancestors had gone through in India. I could always draw parallels there and that's what was interesting. I felt more compassionate towards the Indigenous people because I could draw parallels there.

It wasn't until Gujri's time in a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) program that she encountered learning experiences that shaped her understanding of Indigenous issues. She described the courses as eye-opening, perhaps due to how different Indigenous peoples and issues were portrayed between her high school and university education experience. To personalize the issue, she drew parallels between the injustices suffered by Indigenous peoples and the experiences of systemic oppression that she and her family had faced as Sikhs and speakers of Punjabi in India. She shared a particular memory of when her family moved from a rural area to an urban setting: Her teachers had teased her for speaking Punjabi, calling her a "villager." (Hindi is the more commonly spoken language in larger cities in India.) Because of her experience of being discrimination for being a speaker of Punjabi, she wonders about the potential of Indigenous language education being more prevalent.

Especially during my practicum, this was part of the requirements, that you had to incorporate Indigenous studies into your curriculum and your teaching. I definitely tried them but I'm going to be honest, there wasn't much of a push from the administration - the school that I worked at. It was a very good school—it was a high-end school that I worked at. We were never told by our head of department or anyone that you have to incorporate this. It was all just about get the curriculum done, get this done, get this done.

It was never - no room, no time for any creativity.

Gujri was a Teacher-On-Call (TOC)/substitute teacher in the Surrey School District for several years after graduating—before she found a permanent position as a high school mathematics teacher. When I asked her about her experiences of learning to teach for Indigeneity, she noted that she had little experience, and even that experience was only during her practicum. She had tried to incorporate Indigenous content in her teaching because it was a requirement of the

teacher preparation program. However, in her recent years of teaching, she has not attempted to include Indigenous knowledge or perspectives. She attributes this to a lack of prioritization from her school administration and mathematics department, as well as a lack of quality resources. She describes the priorities of administration on academic achievement and university entrance, and thus, Indigenizing the curriculum is not of precedence. She shared that she doesn't feel adequately prepared to confidently incorporate Indigenous knowledge into her teaching when she returns to teach; our interview took place while she was on maternity leave. She expressed that there is a lack of training, support, and resources that would help her implement such concepts. While there have been professional development workshops on incorporating Indigenous perspectives in teaching, Gujri hasn't found them useful for developing her practice.

I tried [history of mathematics] with my Grade 8s, a little bit. Some found it boring because they think, "We're here to learn math, not to learn history." Even though it's math history, they think this is math class, not socials class. I mean, I don't think I did a very good job because I just started and then students didn't really like it much. Just the basics, just who Pythagoras was. Before the chapter begins and just how he developed the theorem. Basics like that like. I would do the history before each chapter. If there is something to be talked about.

Since Gujri is not currently implementing Indigenous concepts or perspectives in her mathematics pedagogy, I was curious about her perspectives and practices in decentring Eurocentric practices in mathematics education. I asked her about her experience in learning and teaching mathematics history, and what perspectives have been present. She commented that during her undergraduate program, there was heavy focus on Greek history of mathematics, with scattered ethnomathematics topics, such as Indian mathematics—the manipulation of the number

0. While she has attempted to teach some history of mathematics to her Grade 8 mathematics students, she had found it challenging. Her students seemed unresponsive and she felt unconfident in making it more appealing to her students.

I think we owe it to them. It's like you were invited by a person into their home and now, let's say, they passed away and they have left you this big house behind. What you do is that you put your name plate at the door, and you say that this is my house. This has always belonged to me ... My ancestors built this house, which is completely letting the person who let you in fade away and just completely forget about them. That's cheating and that's not honest. I feel like that's what we've done, and this is why decolonizing is very important. We can't really forget that person who gave us shelter that one night we needed to have a roof over our head. They fed us and now we need to keep the name plate, at least in name plates at the door. And tell everybody I live at this house; I didn't really build this house. It was a nice person who gave one night and that's the goal.

When I asked Gujri what she saw as the aims of decolonizing, she presented me with an analogy. She described colonization as a process of people removing the histories of the original dwellers of a house and claiming rights to the house, and that decolonization requires an acknowledgement of a history that was erased.

4.2 Elena: A Case of Transformative Practicum Experience

My mom actually told me that for them growing up as kids in Taiwan as the first generation of Outsiders (Wai-Sheng) ... she got bullied a lot at school [by] local Taiwanese kids. She always felt that division. That's how politics is in the country. Even

in the workforce, she felt that way. As an adult, she didn't like that constant argument and she found it toxic, so they thought about immigrating.

Elena is a Taiwanese-Canadian elementary music teacher who has taught across various districts in Vancouver. Her story in Canada begins with her family immigrating from Taiwan to Vancouver when she was seven years old, due to the discrimination her parents had experienced as Wai-sheng Taiwanese, even into adulthood. (Wai-Sheng refers to Chinese people who migrated to Taiwan after World War II, during and after the establishment of the Republic of China government in Taiwan.) While her parents had visited several countries they considered migrating to, including the United States and New Zealand, they ultimately decided to migrate to Canada, a country none of them had ever set foot in before. “It was all our first time in the country and then we didn't leave, so we're staying!”

As a kid growing up in New West, there weren't a lot of immigrants back then. I remember my Elementary school; there was probably under ten Asians, including my brother and I - so that kind of shows you like the picture of the diversity in my school back then.

Elena grew up in New Westminster (ancestral and unceded territories of Qayqayt First Nation), a member municipality of Metro Vancouver commonly referred to as New West, which had a smaller immigrant and Asian population in the mid 1990s than it has now. During her school years, she recalls being strongly aware of being perceived as different by her white peers. “[My friend] was always saying things like, ‘Oh yeah, you always had a secret life outside of school.’” Elena knew that her cultural background, which she calls her “home culture,” seemed extremely foreign to her peers. She also recalls having to research references to Anglo-pop culture, which she felt created another degree of separation between her and her peers at school. She finally

found comfort in connecting with the Taiwanese homestay students that her family accepted. Her home became a space where she was able to speak her mother tongue and connect with peers about the pop culture in Taiwan. Elena revealed that she finally was able to “be herself” when she began her studies at the School of Music at UBC, which had a much larger population of Asian students.

And I sort of remember that, either my Korean friend or me—I can't remember—one of us actually brought kimchi to school. We were just having our own lunch and enjoying—loving it and introducing our class to kimchi! Thinking back, it's like, oh my, that takes some courage right there!

Elena and I shared with each other our many experiences of bringing lunch to school, a phenomenon that is now referenced by Asian-American comedians. We both recall the size, weight, and types of thermoses that our parents brought back from their trips to Taiwan. The thermoses would be packed with Asian-style lunches, such as rice, dumplings, or stir-fried noodles. We laughed over the reactions that we were given when we opened our lunch boxes at school. I shared my own story of how my parents had tried to accommodate for my embarrassment by making sandwiches, except that these were bacon and egg sandwiches with mesclun greens—not quite the sandwiches that my 10-year-old-self enjoyed eating

Right now, in Vancouver, I can't say that I'm fully Canadian. I always feel like I'm half-half. But if I'm in Taiwan, I feel more Canadian than Taiwanese. But when I'm here, I'd definitely say I'm Canadian, but I have Chinese background - that's my heritage. I would never say I'm just Canadian. It's never like that for me.

Elena recalls the numerous times that she has been asked about her Canadian identity. She expresses that her ethnic identity as Chinese/Taiwanese cannot be separated from her national

identity, and that her answer changes depending on where she is. I probed whether she developed a “half-half” identity because she spent time growing up in Taiwan, and that she herself is an immigrant. While she was open to that idea, she first referred to her *strong home culture*—the sense of Chinese cultural identity established in her family.

We learned a little bit of it in social studies, but it never made a big impact. There was always some stigma about the topic of First Nations ... Everyone was required to take Aboriginal Ed., and that was when I realised there were a lot of issues going on. I really do appreciate the program making everyone take Aboriginal Ed. so that everyone can become more aware of it.

When I asked Elena about her earliest memories of learning about Indigeneity, she spoke of social studies classes in elementary and high school but describes them as not being positive or impactful experiences. “The textbooks all portrayed them as very tribal communities. Maybe that's not true but that's what I remember.” It wasn't until she entered the Bachelor of Education program in 2012—the same year that Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada report was published—that she learned more deeply about the issues faced by Indigenous peoples. She recalls feelings of shock when she learned about residential schooling and that those schools were still operating around the same time her family migrated to Canada. In her Indigenous education classes, she remembers classmates who questioned the relevance and “rolled their eyes” at incorporating Indigenous perspectives in specialist subjects such as science or music. It was then that Elena became inspired to connect with Indigenous communities and to recreate negative images that have been portrayed about Indigenous peoples.

I think [my practicum school] has a good number of Aboriginal student population in the school. I remember there was an assembly, [where] they were talking about Truth and

Reconciliation with a speaker coming in to talk about it, and everything was just really well done. It was very powerful, so it made people think differently. That's when I realized it has to start in the school and [with] little kids. It doesn't matter how young they are, but it has to start in the school for everyone to start understanding what has happened—the history.

Elena has had transformative experiences in learning to teach for Indigenous Education during her practicum. She commended the North Vancouver school district, where she completed her teaching practicum, on having strong priorities for including First Nation perspectives. During her practicum, Elena witnessed an assembly in which First Nations leaders were invited to speak about their experiences in relation to truth and reconciliation in Canada. This event sparked a change in Elena. She decided to become more pro-active about including Indigenous content and perspectives in her teaching. When she began her first teaching position in West Vancouver, she found that they also had made large efforts in Indigenous Education. She observed the ways in which the history of colonization was presented to students as young as Kindergarten. She commented on the need for all learners to find ways to make personal connections to the knowledge of residential schooling.

I went to an Orff workshop, with Sherryl, the lady from Alberta. She gave this package of music that she either collected or she wrote herself. She went through them with us for teaching to the kids. It was a wonderful package of resources to use. A lot of the music in there is all very connected to nature - songs about water, traditional circle games that they played, like pass the travelling stick games, and love songs for parents or for loved ones. Just very simple and beautiful melodies - and there's Orff instruments involved as well. That was my very first step. I really took her resource and brought it into my classroom,

feeling confident saying I can introduce this, and [that] I learned this from Sherryl, who is a First Nations teacher.

It wasn't until her third year of teaching that she began incorporating Indigenous content in her pedagogy. Elena uses material that was presented at a B.C. Orff workshop by Sherryl Sewepagahm (real name, not pseudonym), a Cree-Dene music educator. (Orff is one of the primary methodologies in North American music education and was developed by Carl Orff, a German composer.) In that particular workshop, Elena was introduced to a repertoire of Indigenous songs to use in the music classroom along with appropriate pedagogical techniques for the repertoire. Elena expressed the discomfort that first came with trying to incorporate Indigenous content into her classes; she was worried that there might be some negative reactions to the Indigenous music and culture—that students might question why the content being taught or find the music weird. She noted that the fear may have been residual from what she experienced in elementary school herself.

Because I feel like when I was in school - I feel like if there's some sort of First Nation that's brought up, or people hear about First Nation music, they make fun of it, or they don't understand why they are moving around in an opening ceremony. They don't take it seriously and they don't respect it.

On the contrary, Elena found that her students were very open to learning about First Nations music and she attributed that openness to the presence of Indigenous education in the school overall. In that same year, her school hired a First Nations musician from Horseshoe Bay who worked with students to create hand-made drums from animal hides. For her end-of-year concert that year, themed on Canada's 150th anniversary, Elena's students performed the repertoire she learned from Sherryl for part of the concert, using the animal-hide drums that the students had

made. While she teaches most of this repertoire by rote, she uses printouts of musical notation when teaching instrumental recorder unit.

For one of the Pro-D [professional development] days, I actually set it up—for [a First Nations musician] to come in and teach the music teachers about some of the First Nations songs. She would teach the languages that she used. There's a lot of songs about the legends, [and] about the animals. That was an afternoon workshop, and I have to say *that* one, because it's just songs, singing the songs, or with drums, shakers, rattles. I have not used anything from that workshop because the songs that she was singing were all very “throatal” - very, very low for kids to be singing. So, I don't feel comfortable using that to teach the kids. Pedagogically, I don't want the kids to be singing in that range.

While she has tried to locate other resources in Indigenous music, she hasn't found the same success. In one instance, she reached out to a local First Nations community to have a musician come into the district to present a workshop for the music teachers. Although she enjoyed the experience of learning more Indigenous languages and music, she found that the material was not so easy to implement into her teaching. She described to the singing style as “throatal”, which referred using the voice in a way that, to her, seemed unhealthy or inappropriate to be teaching to her students, as well as being very hard for herself to learn. Elena and I wondered how we might re-conceive appropriate vocal technique (in Western music education standards) and how it might need to shift in decolonizing music education.

Kids just pick up the languages so well. Maybe it's my own childhood experience, but I find that kids these days are so open to learning new languages and new cultures. They have no judgments or criticism for anything. I can teach them any language. Sometimes I

don't even tell them what it is, I just sing it to them, And I ask them, “What language do you think I'm singing in?” And they love to take guesses about it.

Elena shared with me that she aims for her repertoire and curriculum to be diverse in ethnic/racial cultures. She named Spanish, Chinese, Japanese, Mexican, and African songs as examples of some of the music cultures she explores with her students. Elena has had multiple positive experiences when teaching Gongxi Gongxi, a Chinese New Year song, to her students. She described in detail how surprised she was that her students were highly motivated to learn the pronunciation accurately. This is contrasted greatly with her own experience in elementary school; she remembers her classmates being much less receptive to learning about other cultures and languages. She also recalls the curriculum lacking diversity and being quite “Anglo-Saxon” and “white.”

When I was doing my Aboriginal ed course for the B.Ed., I did look into a lot more about how to hand make drums. I think I even wrote a little unit on it, saying how it would be really cool to get the woodwork teacher working with math, and do the measurements and actually make the frame in woodwork and put it all together, and use that drum to perform a piece or something like that. So, I was really thinking with all the subject areas—I was thinking specifically in high school. To get all the teachers to working together to learn more about Aboriginal education.

In ending our conversation, she shared with me an idea that arose in response to taking the Indigenous education course. She developed an idea for a teaching unit that would collaborate with and utilise expertise of First Nations communities and various departments, including mathematics and trade skills, within a school to work on a project focused on Indigenous knowledge and perspectives.

4.3 Martha: A Case of Alternative Education

My family is from Brunei. My parents were born in Brunei. But on my dad's side, maybe several generations ago, they migrated from China to Brunei. My mom's side, they were there for quite a bit, so my mom is actually not completely Chinese. My mom is actually not completely Chinese, but she's actually a mix of - I guess the equivalent is Metis.

Martha is a secondary science and math teacher at an alternative school whose family immigrated to Canada when she was six years old. Both her parents were born in Brunei, although her father's family traces his ancestry to China a few generations back. Martha's mother is Brunakan, mixed-race Chinese and "Brunei Indigenous". When I asked Martha whether she identifies as Bruneian, she explained that it was hard for her to answer that as a yes/no question. She often replies to similar questions by saying, "I'm from Brunei. Chinese, but now I live in Canada," since "I am Canadian" usually doesn't seem to suffice for the asker.

[My mom] never wants people to know. She doesn't want people to know that she's Indigenous. I think it's super cool. I think I ... understand [how] Indigenous people have been treated similarly throughout the world, and so this idea of—she has this idea, even though she doesn't necessarily have this idea of Indigenous people in Canada being this way, she has this idea of Indigenous people from Brunei being tribal, being uncivilized, being savages and she's like, "I'm not like that. I'm not part of that."

In curiosity about her mother's Indigenous identity, I asked if she had ever had conversations with her mother about Indigeneity. It was interesting to learn that her mother shies away from speaking about her Indigenous identity due to negative conceptions about Indigenous people of Brunei and points out that her Indigenous heritage traces to only one of her great

grandparents. On the other hand, Martha says that her mother shares stories with her in private about Bruneian Indigenous culture, such as stories of elders practicing *black magic* and eating foods to hallucinate. Martha admits that she still struggles to understand the Indigenous people and culture of Brunei. She understands her Brunakan roots through the meals her family cooks at home, foods that are not specifically Chinese or Malay, but an amalgam of both.

In [elementary school] social studies, we look[ed] at Indigenous peoples of Canada This was in East Vancouver. And the majority of us were Asians—Southeast Asians, Vietnamese, Filipino, Chinese. It seemed so foreign to us and it didn't help that the textbooks portrayed Indigenous people as sort of in the past. Like, this is what happened in the past. So my first thought of Indigenous people was that they had such a colourful culture but it wasn't something that was present. It was something that happened a long time ago.

Martha remembers one of her elementary teachers making substantive efforts to introduce topics of Indigeneity in social studies lessons, but she says that Indigeneity at that time seemed foreign. She says her perception might have been as such because her school had a low number of Indigenous students or perhaps even none at all. In high school, Martha encountered more lessons around Indigeneity in her classes, but it wasn't until her university experience that she realised that Indigenous people aren't "just a thing of the past." Martha's experience in her B.Ed. program at Simon Fraser University helped to reframe her understanding of Indigenous issues. Through assigned readings and class discussions, she became more familiar with Canada's history and the issues faced by Indigenous people—she realised that she had a responsibility to make a difference. She also shared the story of a close friend, Carolyn, who grew up in North Vancouver near the Tsleil-Waututh Nation reserve, and how Carolyn's parents worried about her

hanging out with Indigenous individuals. Through her experience of learning about racist attitudes towards Indigenous people from Carolyn, Martha began to realise that Indigenous people face discrimination in ways she previously was unaware of.

I think in the sciences, it's very easy [to incorporate Indigenous content and perspectives] Actually, one of the first assignments is for them to choose a culture that—it can be their own—and in every culture, religion, belief, there is a story of how the world comes about, so I find that in science it's a lot easier to bring that part ... It's the first time some of [my Indigenous students] feel like they are seen because I don't just focus on the Indigenous, I bring up their culture.

Martha currently teaches Science, Biology and Math in alternative education, where students who have not succeeded in traditional school settings are given another opportunity to complete high school. She estimates that 30-40% of students identify as Indigenous. When I asked Martha how she manages to teach Indigenous worldviews and perspectives, she says it's very easy in the sciences. She begins with Indigenous storytelling—by asking her students to choose and research a cultural story of creation; she draws upon the First Nations Principles of learning in her pedagogy by employing methods of storytelling and oral teaching. In her experience, incorporating Indigenous perspectives in her classroom has been a powerful experience for both her and her students. “I find when students are given a chance to present who they are, where they come from, they are much more engaged in conversations and with the material.” In lessons such as these, Martha challenges her students to question concepts of validity in the Western sciences, and why Indigenous sciences, such as methods of healing, are dismissed in science education and discussions.

And maybe I'm not able to think outside the box here. I'm having trouble building [Indigenous perspectives] into radical expressions/algebra. I don't know how to do that. I think a lot of resources that are available are [for] lower grades. For example, Math 10 polynomials: you multiply $9xy(10xy+4b)$. There's a whole chapter where they have to do polynomials. I don't know how to do that through an Indigenous lens.

Martha has found it much more difficult to incorporate Indigenous perspectives into mathematics. She attributes this to mathematical concepts being very Eurocentric. She has tried activities that incorporate an Indigenous perspective, such as going on walks to explore a topic on "Seeing Math in Nature." She tries her best to move away from textbooks and traditional math pedagogy. For Martha, strong resources that support teaching mathematics for Indigeneity are rarer than those available for the sciences. While she has attended professional development such as Indigenous Math Symposium at UBC, she finds that the activities presented at such workshops are hard to incorporate into the curriculum she teaches. She acknowledges the importance of mathematical concepts present in Indigenous practices such as weaving and carving, but she struggles to find a way to incorporate it into upper secondary mathematics.

And maybe it's also the fact that I'm not a math teacher, I'm a science teacher, and so I don't have, maybe, a deep understanding of math to blend together with other concepts. I just know that I don't have the resources, and unless I have the resources, and unless I have someone to guide me, especially in senior Math. I don't know how to do that within the time frame of the year that I have, and also, I want to do it as true and organic. I don't want it to be like, where the students are like, "What the fuck is this?" I'm also dealing with quite vulnerable students.

Martha completed her undergraduate degree in science and her teacher preparation in science education. In her current position, she works as a science teacher and teaches a few mathematics courses. She expressed that has not had enough training and lacks confidence in teaching mathematics creatively, particularly in incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing. Martha is one of two math teachers in her school, where the other is also a science teacher who teaches a few mathematics courses. Altogether, it is challenging for Martha to focus on developing her pedagogy in mathematics to include more Indigenous knowledge and perspectives. The lack of a mathematics department and mathematics co-teachers means she has fewer resources for strategizing. Furthermore, given that a large proportion of her students identify as Indigenous, she wants to ensure that she presents Indigenous perspectives with utmost authenticity. Martha is highly aware of what students might be sensitive to, particularly because her students have already had negative experiences in traditional school systems, including inaccurate and inauthentic interpretations of Indigenous culture, knowledge, and perspectives.

You might deal with someone who has been traumatized by, maybe not Canada's past, but the past from where they've been. I need the curriculum to see them. I want the curriculum to recognize that ... We're all just sort of ... I need them to recognize that we're all in the same room; what I teach and what I say and what I give them recognizes them and sees them.

The statement above was Martha's response when I asked her why it is important to decolonize the curriculum. Martha emphasizes the importance of recognizing diversity, particularly perspectives and narratives of those who are less privileged in seeing their own identities reflected in curriculum content.

Decolonizing the curriculum is not only important for Indigenous students, to help build and reconcile the past the present and the future. But it's also important for the other students that look like me. I didn't see myself in the curriculum... and as a result it took a long time for me to... come to terms with a lot of things: identity being one. I know what racism looks like. I know what it feels like. I know what it looks like when it's towards me. I know those feelings. But if someone says, "Is it racist?" and this, this, and this, I have to be neutral.

Drawing from her own negative experiences, Martha makes sure to highlight her own identity in teaching; she is aware of her non-Indigenous identity when teaching Indigenous content and worldviews, and she recognizes both challenges and advantages of approaching these themes as a teacher of colour. Overall, she finds that her students are open to talking to her about race and racism.

When we do things through the Indigenous lens, I find that when they are resistant to it, and when they make comments, it's hard not to take it personally. Not as a teacher, but as a person who understands - not understands, [but] acknowledges issues that surround Indigenous people, but also as a person of colour who knows what racism looks like. And that's really hard to navigate.

Martha made this comment in reference to particular scenarios when she found it challenging to teach for Indigeneity, particularly when it comes to her male students and Asian students. She describes it as a lack of empathy, possibly due to a lack of exposure or meaningful education around issues faced by Indigenous peoples. Martha and I discussed having the privilege of not experiencing white guilt—we both agreed that as Asians, we feel less responsible for injustices imposed upon Indigenous peoples through settler colonialism in our respective countries, yet we

still are required to journey through empathy and responsibility to be a part of the path going forward. For both of us, not feeling white guilt meant that we had one less emotional obstacle in working to decolonizing education.

4.4 Caitlyn: A Case of Learning Indigenous Literature

My understanding is that in the 80s and 90s there was a wave of immigrants, like a wave of immigrants from Taiwan, and I think Hong Kong people were here already. But there was a wave in the 80s and so my parents caught the end of that wave.

Caitlyn is a music educator whose family immigrated to Canada from Taiwan when she was three years old. Her family had chosen to immigrate due to her father's health condition and in order to look for "a fresh start." Vancouver was chosen as the goal for immigration. Her parents had enjoyed their visit a few years earlier as part of their honeymoon, and the immigration process to Canada was easier than that of the United States.

As a kid I always felt pretty stuck. Like I felt... See, at home, I was losing my Chinese, because my English became much more fluent. I was able to express myself in English, not so much in Mandarin, so at home I felt like I wasn't Taiwanese enough, or that I was losing that. And there was pressure from my parents to not lose that - to not lose your ability to read and write and speak. But then at school, especially in elementary school, I always felt a little bit not white enough.

Growing up in Surrey, Caitlyn found herself feeling stuck in between two cultures, describing her experience as not being *fully in either world*. She felt this in the shift of her language abilities; while her English language skills were improving, she lost effortless in expressing herself in Mandarin. As a child, she felt that maintaining and continuing to learn Mandarin

Chinese was a chore, particularly being sent to Mandarin school on Saturdays. While Caitlyn didn't have trouble identifying herself with the term Canadian, she describes a feeling of not being either one completely. While she didn't have the terminology at that age, she recalls feelings of not being white enough and being aware that she was a minority amongst her peers at school. Caitlyn expressed that she didn't know if she felt that she didn't fit in because of her race or because she enjoyed listening to classical music and was "a quirky kid who watched the Discovery Channel." (The Simpsons was banned in her family's household.)

I always thought my parents were still pretty adamant about - my dad especially - about keeping our Chinese heritage, Taiwanese heritage.... We still keep a lot of our traditions, but at the same time we're also Canadian - so that was my happy medium I find that my relatives sometimes are very much focused on how much you're making at work, how much time you're putting in at work to make that money because that's what gets you more things.

Caitlyn and I shared with each other our experiences relating to our Taiwanese and immigrant family identities. While her parents had been quite insistent about maintaining their culture through language and values, she noticed, on subsequent trips to visit Taiwan, she noticed subtle differences in cultural values that showed her family had adopted (what she considered) Canadian/Western values. In turn, I expressed to Caitlyn that I have a hard time saying in Mandarin Chinese, "I am Taiwanese," because it feels like I am making a larger claim to identity than I am entitled to. We both shared that we could never just say we were "Canadian" or "New Zealander," respectively.

Early on in elementary school, [concepts of Indigeneity] have always been taught in our curriculum here. As to how successful we are—how correctly—that's a whole other

debate. I didn't really start to understand... I didn't really start to understand, like, what it meant and what it meant in terms of all of the rest of us being here, until much later like... [In] university, I started to question that and ask more questions about it.

Caitlyn recalled learning about Indigenous people, culture, and history since early elementary school, but she commented that her teachers didn't present Indigenous issues as contemporary and ongoing. She referred to topics around Indigeneity in high school history as very being very factual. "This is the past; this is old news." While certain events – such as former Prime Minister Stephen Harper's apology in 2008 on behalf of the Canadian government for the effects of residential schooling – highlighted existing issues faced by Canadian Indigenous people, it was during university that Caitlyn began to develop a greater understanding to empathize with Indigenous peoples. Caitlyn completed a Bachelor of Music with a minor in English literature. Many of her courses included selected writings that presented First Nations' narratives and offered opportunities for conversations around Indigenous issues. This differed a lot from her K-12 experiences of learning about Indigeneity which she later understood as having a dominant Eurocentric lens on Indigeneity. Her former romantic partner, a consultant in Indigenous cultural competency, also provided her with a wealth of knowledge about Indigenous issues through an Indigenous perspective. Through their conversations, she learned to deconstruct her assumptions about Indigenous peoples and issues.

On the music side? Not so much. I feel like when you talk about decolonizing education, I feel like music, music ed here has maybe not done a great job of doing that. Because the new curriculum mandates [the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives], a lot of us [music teachers] try to seek out pro-D around how you incorporate Aboriginal content or ways of

knowing within a music context. I haven't felt like the Pro-D that's offered around it has been very helpful.

Caitlyn continued onto the Bachelor of Education program, specialising in English and music education. As part of her teaching practicum, she taught English 12, where she created and taught a unit on First Nations literature. On the music side of her studies, she didn't come across much content around Indigenous knowledge and worldviews. During her teacher preparation program, there was only one course on incorporating Indigenous content and perspectives, and it was taught to teacher candidates across all subjects. Hence, it did not offer any practical advice specifically towards teaching music for Indigeneity. During her practicum, she used a song where a poem written by a First Nations chief was set to music, but since the music itself was not Indigenous, she felt inauthentic in that teaching experience.

It's also because a lot of [Indigenous music] is so sacred that is not really meant to be shared. So that, to me, begs to question: we're pushing to incorporate stuff but I wonder if like a lot of it is ours to be sharing or disseminating. I don't know that the ministry—I think they're trying to do something good. They have good intentions - but I don't know that ... 'Cause even when you ask Indigenous people, people sort of have different opinions on how this should be done, and whether or not; what can be shared and what can't be shared. So I just feel like there's a lot out there that isn't figured out, and so it's hard as a teacher to navigate that and be like, “What can I do? What should I do?” amongst everything else you're doing.

Caitlyn has primarily taught elementary music since finishing her teacher training.

In reflecting on the recent change to the B.C. curriculum, she feels that she and her colleagues have become more motivated to seek out professional development on the incorporation of

Indigenous content. However, she has yet to come across workshops or materials that are practical. Through professional development, Caitlyn has learned that much of Indigenous music is held privately within Indigenous communities. Due to discord among Indigenous communities around what can and cannot be shared, she and her fellow music teacher peers struggle in finding music they can bring into the classroom. During our conversation, I shared with Caitlyn my experiences of Maori language and culture in public education in New Zealand and the differences that I have perceived so far between Indigenous education in our respective countries.

All the Pro-Ds that I've ever gone to—everything is about getting permission because so much of it is sacred and even a lot of the things that I learned in the songs that they teach you in those Pro-D workshops, you're not actually able to use. They will tell you, "This has to stay within this room, this time, this place," so you can't actually share it out.

Some things they'll say you can share but a lot of things I've been to, many where we do something hands-on, where we do it, we learn a song. We learned something for that day, but we aren't - you don't have the permission to use it.

Obtaining permission is the most important takeaway from Caitlyn's experiences in Indigenous Education professional development workshops. While this was often a direct learning objective in the workshop, it was often learned because participants were not allowed to use presented materials for their own classrooms. While Caitlyn understands the importance and significance of songs being used for particular times and places, she expressed her frustration in attending educational workshops only to learn that the materials presented were not permitted to be used outside of those workshops. The best resources she has encountered have been the work of other teachers—being able to discuss with other teachers what they have attempted and how those

experiences were. It has only been recently that Caitlyn has been more motivated to collaborate with local First Nations elders and communities. She has reached out in the past but was unable to coordinate dates.

I worked at a school a few years ago that had a larger population [of Indigenous students]. It was in the Fraser Heights area, right close to the river, and across the river is Barneston Island, and there's a reserve. And so, a lot of their kids who attended our school would have ferried over and then bussed over to get to school every day. So that was a school where I did the choir thing because a lot of those students were Indigenous.

Caitlyn shared a recent experience of incorporating Indigenous content in music. She worked with the Aboriginal Education worker in her school to obtain permission to use materials – a song and music video – that were created through a collaboration between local First Nations artists in Surrey and Indigenous kids in the Surrey district schools. She was motivated to do this in conjunction with Indigenous week at her school, where teachers had been discussing residential schools. She found that her Indigenous students became more open in sharing their perspectives and experiences when their narratives were presented in the classroom. However, she held mixed feelings about the experience and its success. For Caitlyn, there remained substantial fear in misrepresenting Indigenous peoples—“because it's not my story to tell.”

I think probably the most you can do is incorporating [First People's] principles of learning and ways to... Not just Indigenous content - you were talking about decolonizing education, right? How do you make it so that it's not a Eurocentric view... kind of system, where the teacher is imparting information to the students. And I think sometimes music classes, some teachers still very much run their choirs like that, it's a rehearsal. And so, this is what we're doing, and you're the one dictating that.

Caitlyn has spent the majority of her teaching career in elementary education, with experience in teaching high school both in her practicum and for one year after graduating from her Bachelor of Education. She had thought she would be focusing on secondary music education after graduating, but with the opportunities that came, she learned to enjoy working with younger students. When I asked her how she might approach Indigenous worldviews and music on the secondary level, she acknowledged that it would be a greater challenge than with elementary music, due to the repertoire and the structure of music education. We discussed the difficulties of teaching Indigenous music in “outdated” choral programs due to their Eurocentric roots. In her view, the goal would be to rethink the structure of the traditional music program and pedagogy. Her ideas include making the classroom more student-centric and democratic, and she has been inspired through music teacher groups on Facebook for developing such practices. For Caitlyn, decolonizing education involves diversifying educating by including and representing racial, cultural, and sexual orientation/gender diversity. In her choral curriculum, her first step has been to decentre Eurocentric, religious/catholic, and heteronormative repertoire, which is predominant in classical choral traditions.

I got really excited about it—to hear everybody learning the Taiwanese [lyrics/text] ‘cause I had to teach the pronunciation. But to hear people trying it out and that they were like “Oh this is catchy!” They were enjoying the experience. Like that was very validating for sure.

During her studies at UBC School of Music, a Taiwanese piece of music arranged by a Taiwanese choral arranger was chosen as concert repertoire—a concert that I had the opportunity to attend. Caitlyn and I discussed the significance of hearing Taiwanese music in that context. Even as adults, we find the importance in seeing ourselves represented—something that is

definitely rare at a choir concert. Caitlyn was ecstatic that her heritage and culture was being recognized and appreciated by her music peers. We discussed the importance of having student cultures represented in the classroom and her teaching experience in Surrey, a which has a strong Punjabi community. Caitlyn has worked with her students to find out what her students were passionate about and what they wanted to see in the curriculum, and she has used African drums in her classroom to relate to concepts of drumming in South Asian music, since South Asian drums were no available to her classroom.

4.5 William: A Case of Teaching a High Proportion of Asian Students

... I wouldn't say it was definitely because [my parents] felt like the traditional Hong Kong education system was not good and they wanted to get us out of there as soon as possible—whereas some of the parents that I talk to, they think of it that way; they think of the North American education as being more superior.

William is an early elementary classroom teacher in Richmond whose family migrated from Hong Kong to Richmond, BC (unceded Musqueam and Tsleil-Waututh territory) in the 1980s, when he was ten years old. Prior to their immigration, William's father worked for a welding company which often had him travelling to various parts of Canada. Eventually, William's father approached his company to ask if he could be based in Canada. His employer approved his request and sponsored his family's immigration. Ironically, William's father left that company shortly after immigrating to pursue other work in Canada. When William asked his parents for the reason why they immigrated, they never gave him a definite answer. Sometimes the response was, "We thought this might be a good change for you," but sometimes it came back, "We don't

know, we just thought we'd try and see what happens." William doubts that it was to do with educational opportunities or seeing the North American education system as superior .

I kind of also remember when I was young, I would feel a bit embarrassed when my parents would go out with us, and they would be speaking Cantonese with us. And obviously at that time [in the 80s], if you go out, you're going to see a lot of Caucasians, and I remember feeling kind of embarrassed to respond to them in Cantonese. Or I would just [give a] one-word answer and that's it. And hoping in the back of my mind, that they could just stop talking. I kind of remember that. I guess at that point you want to belong, and you don't want to stick out and look too different.

William's family continued to speak Cantonese in the house even after moving to Canada. This was never enforced, but rather done out of habit. Despite the embarrassment of growing up and speaking Cantonese in public with his parents, William is rather proud of his Hong Kong ancestry. William attributed his ties to Hong Kong culture through entertainment more so than through his family. William and I discussed how Hong Kong and Taiwan were the powerhouses of Mandarin and Cantonese entertainment industries in the '80s and '90s, during a time when media in Mainland China were more censored and limited by communist policies. He recalls visiting a movie theatre with his brother on 9th street in Chinatown near downtown Vancouver that played Cantonese movies.

I think I was diligent enough and I had a reasonably good short-term memory that I [was] able to retain some information and able to regurgitate them on quizzes and tests. It worked for me because I felt like that was - I think going to high school—that was when I thought I [could] actually do okay in school. I think I started getting As and Bs. Some As

I'm thinking, how did I get an A in this subject 'cause I don't really know much about it, yet the report card says [my] name.

Since English was not William's first language when his family immigrated, he was initially placed in an English as a Second Language (ESL) program. This meant that while his regular class was doing English or language work, William was sent to an ESL teacher's room where emerging bilingual students developed English language skills. William fared well in school and re-entered "regular stream" when he entered Grade 8. In fact, he shared with me the surprise he felt when he received his report card; he hadn't expected himself to do so well, perhaps due to his lack of confidence in his English abilities. After high school, William went on to complete a four-year bachelor's degree in pharmacology but had little interest in further graduate studies or research in medicine. He was beginning to consider a career in education. However, his parents had felt that a career in public school teaching was not a male occupation, not even physical education, which William had suggested. He ended up in pharmacy school, completing his doctoral degree in three years by completing elective courses in the summer. His wife also graduated at the same time with a Bachelor of Education.

It took [my wife] a year before she—she was working as a [bank] teller for a whole year, and for a whole year she couldn't find any TOC (Teacher On Call/substitute teacher) positions. We just thought, "We'll give Hong Kong a try, even though we don't really know the place as much." A lot of our ideas about Hong Kong were from TV shows and movies and what sometimes our parents tell us. I mean we have this idea and conception about Hong Kong, but it probably wasn't necessarily realistic or correct. We thought, "We'll give it a go," and since she was going to have a job anyway, we thought it would be okay.

William and his wife decided to move to Hong Kong because she had trouble in securing a teaching position in B.C. (B.C. education policies in the early 2000s on teacher-student ratios limited the number of job openings). William worked in Hong Kong as a pharmacist. Although they made the effort to move back to Vancouver several times, they ended up spending more time living in Hong Kong. After around 10 years of living in Hong Kong, William began working as a TOC in the school where his wife was teaching and got a taste of what it was like to work with students from Kindergarten through Grade 12. After that experience, William decided that he wanted to earn his teaching qualifications. He returned to Vancouver to complete a B.Ed. program before returning to Hong Kong to teach in Canadian international schools. After two decades of living in Hong Kong, William and his wife finally moved back to Canada in order to take care of their parents.

I guess growing up, from when we immigrated all the way until finishing my schooling, up to my university years, I would still say I'm from Canada, because at that time, for the majority of my life, I had lived in Canada. It wasn't really until we immigrated back to working in Hong Kong, that we started to live in Hong Kong more, to really identify ourselves as being from Hong Kong, not just through the entertainment industry, but really being part of the community.

William has lived equal amounts of time in Hong Kong and in Canada and has only just returned to live in Canada four years ago. For most of his life, ever since his family immigrated, he has identified as Canadian. Similar to other participants, he said his responses to questions about nationality and race depend on the context—where the question is asked and who the inquirer is. William described joy in cheering for both Hong Kong and Canada during international sporting events.

Because the student population that we have is so Asian, it's really hard to bring in—especially with Grade 1 kids—the idea of Indigenous studies and content. And just because [my students] don't see—living in Richmond, their exposure is very limited. We felt like there wasn't really much for them to grab onto, so I think for the last couple of years, we haven't done very much. And again, there wasn't really much of a push from—we never felt like there was a push from the administrators or other colleagues to say we gotta do more.

Oddly, William teaches a higher proportion of Asian students in Richmond than he taught in Hong Kong. He finds that, because of the high proportion of Asian students, it's harder for him to incorporate Indigenous perspectives and worldviews in his pedagogy. The low exposure of his students to Indigenous communities and culture makes it hard for his students to relate to the Indigenous content. He also finds that at Grade 1, students are more self-centred in exploring their world. A third factor is that his school demonstrates low priority for including Indigenous perspectives in the curriculum. His philosophy, instead, revolves around learning to understand and respect diversity and to be kind to other people.

In some ways, I feel like I really didn't do this to the First Nations people - it wasn't me. I don't feel like I'm responsible for this reconciliation, and so I'm not going to push that. I have too many other things to worry about. Like you say, we benefited, obviously, from the systems that the colonizers had put in place and there was a cost, but I still don't feel like I'm responsible for this. And so I think [my wife and I] probably didn't really look into resources and things like that—and incorporating it into our teaching.

I steered our conversation into how he relates to being here in Canada as an immigrant and to Indigenous issues. He expressed that his actions and those of his ancestors were not the ones that

attempted to displace and eradicate the Indigenous peoples. William noted that his first encounter with learning about Indigenous communities and Indigenous issues was during an online course that provided prerequisites for entering into a teacher preparation program. During his teacher training program, there were no requirements for Indigenous Education. In discussion of reconciliation, I shared with William my interpretation of immigration as a colonial structure and mentioned that we benefit from a system that displaced Indigenous peoples. William seemed inspired by being shown a different way of viewing what it means to have a right to live here in Vancouver.

I try, when I read books to the class, I always try to make sure that there will be an Asian writer that I talk about. And I think one year, one girl picked it up and was like, “Oh, she’s Asian!” And she was in Grade 1. So I thought that was kind of interesting, but I think for most of the kids, [they think]: “Okay, whatever, I look around school, they’re all Asians anyway.” This group growing up in Richmond is really interesting.

I asked William if and how he presents Asian narratives in his classroom. He mentioned that he has tried to include Asian authors when presenting literature. While there have been a few occasions where students have expressed surprise in hearing from an Asian author, he said that most students seem unfazed, possibly because they live in an area with dense Asian population, and they don’t wrestle with feeling underrepresented. He shared that he was curious how the white students in his class felt—he sees that the white students in the school tend to stick together during activities and recess. In wrestling with concepts of race, William also mentioned that his school administrators, who are mostly white, seem to generalize/essentialize Asians and don’t acknowledge the diversity within the Asian staff and student population.

I think sometimes when I speak to some of the [students'] grandparents in Chinese, they kind of giggle. It seems like they're a little bit uncomfortable when they see I'm using a different language, but I think I just want to normalize it as much as possible. It's just one way to communicate with people. Language is just used to help us to talk to people, get to know people.

In discussion of culture and mathematics education, I asked William if he ever uses Mandarin or Cantonese in the classroom to encompass diversity in mathematics. William responded that he occasionally uses Mandarin or Cantonese to explain concepts of number sense with his students who get confused with 1s, and 10s, particularly because numbers 11 to 19 in the English can be slightly confusing to young learners. This, however, only occurs when he works one-to-one with students who are having such issues. William also shared that sometimes he uses Mandarin or Cantonese when speaking to the student's guardians/caretakers, in order to communicate more clearly. He said that many guardians are surprised or become embarrassed in that scenario. We both wondered why those feelings arise—possibly similar to how we felt using Asian languages with our parents in public when we were younger.

I think it comes from the kind of school culture that the administrators create. If you feel like something is important to them, we are likely to move in that direction—and again, just being able to have a little bit of release time to speak to or talk to colleagues and see what they do and how they do it.

In terms of Indigenizing the curriculum, William said he and his colleagues would be more motivated to incorporate Indigenous content and worldviews if his school administrators placed a priority on such issues. He said he would also greatly benefit from having more discussions and observations of other teachers attempting to include Indigenous perspectives. For William,

professional development around Indigenous knowledge has been very conceptual and impractical. He commented that the opportunity to observe students engage with Indigenous content would help him to develop his own practices.

4.6 Sarah: A Case of an International Student

And there was an idea of—when we were in Taiwan ... I don't want to say misconception, just an American Dream thing. All around us, there are kids who go to international schools and they will go on to the States to study. It's like a thing.

Sarah is a high school choral educator in Vancouver who initially came to Canada as an international university student. She spent most of her childhood in Taiwan and then went abroad for her high school years. Her parents, both of whom are opera singers and professors, wanted her to study abroad to have better opportunities, so her mother accompanied her to live in San Antonio, Texas. After a year in San Antonio, her mother decided to return to Taiwan to work, so she transferred Sarah to a small private boarding school in New York state to finish her high school education. It was in high school that Sarah found refuge in the choir classroom. During her time in New York, her family applied for immigration to Canada and received approval during her senior year.

I just remember living in the dorms in New York, sitting on the toilet trying to memorize all these SAT words - and nothing is sticking. It was hard—I was still ESL. It was my second or third year in the States. I didn't remember anything. I remember I went to cram school in Taiwan because my parents know how hard it is. I was like, “This is not going to happen.”

During her time in the States, Sarah often found herself facing model minority stereotypes. Her peers expected her to do well in mathematics and the SAT (the American standardized test for university admissions). It was fortunate for Sarah that she didn't struggle too much in fitting the stereotype. She achieved good grades in school and applied to ten universities for music and arts programs in both the United States and in Canada. She ultimately decided to come to Vancouver for a program in piano and voice. At first, Sarah was against the idea of a career in education, but decided to give it a try since she didn't see herself pursuing a profession in performance. (She had a rather discouraging piano teacher in high school who doubted her ability to become a professional pianist.) In the end, she completed a Bachelor of Education in music education.

There's Eric Hamber [high school], there's Magee [high school], there's Killarney [high school]—a lot of good choirs in Vancouver and I was like, "I want to be in this district," without knowing all the reality that would be bestowed upon me before I applied to the job.

During her time in the education program, she learned of strong choral programs in the Vancouver School Board (as listed in the quote above). She became determined to find a choral teaching position in the same district. However, her graduation coincided with teacher strikes. Hence, hiring was a slow process. While she was hired to the district as a TOC in the summer that she finished her program, she didn't receive her first call until October. It was a month-long substitute position for an elementary classroom teacher at a Mandarin/English bilingual school. Sarah recalls feeling extremely stressed out while learning to navigate the Canadian elementary curriculum in her first teaching position, without having experienced North American public education before. Sarah described herself as suffering a lot in this position, particularly because she was teaching almost every subject but music. It was a few years before Sarah finally got the

call for a music TOC position for high school choir—the same time she was finally offered contracted part-time position at the school where she was teaching Mandarin. She decided to go with her passion, which, fortunately, turned from a maternity cover into a contracted full-time position.

At that time [when I got my citizenship], I didn't feel like, “Oh I'm Canadian now”—that kind of glorious feeling, like, “I'm Canadian! I have the Canadian spirit!” It's not really like that yet. I feel like it's a slow, gradual process for me. I'm still learning what it means to be a Canadian right now ... this is almost my ninth/tenth year here in Canada.

While both her parents decided to give up their opportunities for Canadian citizenship. Sarah eventually attained her citizenship status in 2015. I asked Sarah about what it meant to her to have attained citizenship in Canada. She explained that she first felt an enormous sense of accomplishment to have completed the process all on her own. It was a daunting task of figuring out complicated paperwork to complete the naturalization process, on top of a stressful final year in her undergraduate degree. After gaining Canadian citizen status, she noted that she is still in the process of learning what it means to be Canadian, even after 10 years of living in Vancouver. She provided examples of many Canadian cultural references that she has had to learn in the past decade, including rodeos in Alberta and stereotypes about New Brunswick. When I asked Sarah about her motivations for gaining Canadian citizenship, she begun with her frustrations of travelling with a Taiwanese passport and of living as a foreigner in North America for almost a decade. She described the relief that came with legal entitlement to live and work in Canada, to have stability and not think about being temporary, and to finally have a sense of belonging. I asked Sarah if she had considered moving back to Taiwan, but she said she knew she would not have the same level of respect for her career in music and music education there.

And for me, it's weird because I'm moving from places to places to places, and I'm here now, and I'm like, "Oh, I need to feel apologetic to them." and to me, I haven't really bonded those feelings to me yet. But I get the reconciliation—that part of it—why that needs to happen, because it's the same in Taiwan too—that reconciliation is important—that you need to recognize the Indigenous people that's on the land, who you took the land from.

In a discussion about her education in and experiences with Indigeneity in Canada, she said she first began learning about the Indigenous peoples of Canada in her Bachelor of Education program but that she has very blurry memories of that experience. She also studied history of Indigenous peoples of Canada as part of the citizenship requirements, but she remarked that she developed factual understanding rather than a deep empathy. Canadian identity is perplexing for her, because she is trying to learn to be "kind of apologetic to Indigenous because you're on their land." Sarah approaches reconciliation from her perspective of being Taiwanese, relating her experiences of the reconciliation that has taken place with the Indigenous communities in Taiwan. Because we both had experiences of education in the United States, I asked her whether she had encountered any similar themes there. Other than brief mentions of Native Americans around Thanksgiving, she hadn't learned much about Native American history/issues from her experiences of American education.

Learning is not the same as recognizing it, adapting it. But yeah, I mean we're still learning, and I was talking about how I've been to a few Pro-D workshops already with Indigenous singers, musicians, or people who just talked about the idea of the circle, the idea of listening, and passing on ideas, and learning, and being in the environment—it's very private.

Sarah has attended many professional development workshops around Indigenous culture and music throughout her teaching career; Some were geared specifically towards teaching for Indigeneity, others were workshops where Indigenous communities shared their music and narratives as part of a broader Indigenous Education workshop. Her sense is that Indigenous peoples of Canada are much more “private” than the Indigenous peoples of Taiwan, commenting that fewer cultural elements are shared with the non-Indigenous public. During her childhood in Taiwan, she experienced a larger presence of Taiwanese Indigenous culture, particularly in media. Indigenous music and dance were widely celebrated across the country, and Indigenous communities often invited non-Indigenous people to participate. Sarah remembers learning Indigenous music in elementary school and singing songs in school performances. I shared that I had similar experiences of Maori culture and music in New Zealand—while particular types of Maori music are reserved for specific communities and occasions, a lot of culture and elements were still shared with the non-Indigenous population. We both experienced the opposite here in Canada: Music of Indigenous peoples in Canada seem to be more specific to location, people, and time, and she acknowledged this as creating a barrier for moving music education forward for Indigenization.

I would say almost everything, because I was just looking through the Principles of Indigenous Learning. Creating a choir community, you’re establishing that, so my choirs, they’re a big family. Within, that family is all about mentorship: having the leaders, having the seniors to teach the younger kids how to be in this community. What does it mean to be in this community? What do you do? You share.

I asked Sarah how she approaches the inclusion of Indigenous content and worldviews in her teaching. She referred to the way she creates community in the classroom. She finds importance

in teaching students, particularly adolescents, to develop empathy and respect for each other's identity, voices, and feelings. I shared with her that I also find this to be an important aspect of music education and that I hold the same philosophies for the choral classroom. When I asked her whether she specifically highlighted these principles as First Peoples Principles of Learning, she noted that she currently doesn't explicitly teach these as First Peoples Principles, although she wonders if she should.

At this point, I do want to do some stuff that's related to [Indigenous] music, but at the same time, everyone is kind of too scared to do that because you don't want to offend anyone. You don't want to come across as that person who's like, "Oh I don't care where it's from, I'm just gonna use it anyway."

Sarah shared a few of the negative experiences she had in trying to incorporate Indigenous content into her teaching practice. In particular, there's a popular choral arrangement based on an Indigenous melody that she had performed and taught in various choirs. It was only later, when she researched the background of the piece, that she found out that it was arranged by a non-Indigenous composer who had obtained the melody from the Canadian Music Centre. She was shocked that there was no mention of any Indigenous individuals or communities having been approached for permission of use, given the amount of training she had received around protocols of permissions when using Indigenous content. She interpreted the lack of information as reflecting cultural appropriation.

No, you can't do that. You can't just ... It's not even anywhere on the music that they allowed you to perform this Aboriginal music of theirs and make it into an arrangement, sell it for money, publish it, and get recognition for it.

In discussion of cultural appropriation, we each shared our experiences of being in various choirs where we felt that the origins of the music had not been properly addressed. For each of us, this happened often with African American Spirituals, which are often programmed as concert starters or finales for their powerful rhythmic and harmonic structures. For Sarah, it also occurred with a piece in Andalusian Spanish, in which the meaning was revealed to her choir by an audience member after a performance in Spain.

[I've been] working with a few specialists, like Kokopelli, Scott Leithead, and Carrie Tennant as well. They talk about where the music is coming from: Should you perform it? Should you not? And if you perform it, how do you serve it justice? We have this thing called BCCMP, BC Choral Mentorship Project. [We spent] a whole week together just talking about all these things—about music and getting special people coming in and [having] guest speakers talk about things and work on conducting as well as music literature.

Sarah has been collaborating with several professional choral directors and professional working groups in the Vancouver area who work towards developing better practices of choosing repertoire and teaching music with cultural appropriateness, particularly when it lies outside a teacher's own experiences and culture. She referred to other music educators she had observed, including Carrie Tennant of Vancouver Youth Choir, Scott Leithead of Kokopelli Choirs, and Elise Bradley of Toronto Children's Chorus, who she felt had ethical and articulate practices of teaching non-Western musics. Conversations with such choral specialists around the use of Indigenous, African, and African American music have led her to approach choral repertoire with extreme care—researching stakeholders and protocols behind choral publications—as well as fostering respectful ways of teaching the music to her students. Sarah acknowledges her

privilege as a non-Indigenous, non-Black musician and educator, as well as the responsibilities that come with teaching music of oppressed peoples from her position of privilege.

I do wish that there was more First Nations music. There are a few compositions that I've heard that I thought, "I want to do that." I think taking text, spoken or written, from Indigenous people and [using] that as part of the music, but... obviously [obtaining] agreement from the person/whoever wrote the text. It could be from a residential school, like maybe their diary or something like that, and arrange that, with agreement of sharing and recognizing that.

Sarah expressed the challenges she faces at the intersection of being a teacher and a recent immigrant. She finds that there is still a lot for her to learn about Canadian culture and identity. She pointed out one of the most prominent choral publishers in Canada, Cypress Music, and suggested it as a resource for supporting Canadian choral music. We both expressed frustration that Indigenous music isn't well-represented in published Canadian choral music. Sarah is inspired to work with Indigenous poets, artists, and musicians to find ways of co-creating music and raising the profile of Indigenous narratives in choral music.

I think we're still on the state of recognizing Canadian music, we haven't gotten that far to start thinking, "Let's include some Canadian Asian in here." I feel like we haven't gotten that far yet. And if anything, there are Canadian Asian composers, I've come across a few. I'm sure later on we can establish that after we have more established identity of what it means to have Canadian music

I was curious if Sarah had experienced Asian narratives when it came to Canadian choral music. She noted that there are Canadian-Asian composers, but they don't definitively express narratives about Asian ancestry or heritage. Hence, she doesn't file their works under "Asian

music.” She expressed that the priority is to establish a clearer sense of Canadian identity within Canadian music in differentiation to American music.

Chapter 5: Cross-Narrative Analysis Results

While each of the preceding narratives is rich and detailed in individual experience, a close cross-analysis of the interviews, done by exploring the different participants dialogues with overlapping topics, reveals how these participants present aspects of individuality within similar or differing viewpoints. This chapter is a presentation of the themes have emerged through a thematic analysis across conversations.

This chapter is structured into sections that address the two research questions of this research. The first research question, “How are Asian teachers informed by their identities as non-Indigenous people of colour in their practices of decolonizing education in the disciplines of mathematics and music?” is addressed in the sections that explore experiences of being Asian Canadian, constructions of Canadian identity and culture, and settler-migrant identities. The second research question, “What methods are taken by Asian educators in their practice to decolonize education in the disciplines of mathematics and music, and what challenges do they face in these pursuits?” is addressed in the sections that explore their experiences of learning about Indigeneity and learning to teach for Indigeneity, interpretations of decolonization, and methods and challenges in decolonizing mathematics and music education.

5.1 Experiences of being Asian Canadian in Vancouver

The experiences of the participants through the lens of being Asian Canadian in Vancouver follow many of the traits described in Critical Asian Theory (AsianCrit) as presented in the literature review. Participants described outlooks that exemplify experiences of facing racial stereotypes of the Model Minority, being a perpetual foreigner, and issues that arise due to a conflation of racial, cultural and national identities.

A few of the participants in this study who came to Canada during their own elementary school years shared their experiences of feeling marginalized due to their race early on. Elena always noticed the number of Asian and immigrant classmates and expressed that her level of comfort was proportional to the number of Asian peers. This was possibly due to a hyperawareness of how she and her culture were perceived by her white peers. Perhaps her friend was only making a joke in referring to her Asian culture as a “secret life;” however, experiences as such informed Elena that her culture was not understood by her peers and was not normal for her peers. Caitlyn shared that she never felt that she fully belonged to either world of being Canadian or Taiwanese, and that she felt that she wasn’t “white enough.” She recollects that her peers never took the time to understand her culture. She also recalls comparing herself to her Asian peers, describing a childhood friend that immigrated at a similar time to her and “had embraced white culture way more than [she] had.” Caitlyn described a cognizance of her status as a member of a racial/cultural minority, even though she noticed the diversity present in her school: a mix of Punjab, white, and Chinese.

Martha described her high awareness of her identity as an Asian female educator, particularly in teaching in an alternative school setting and working with a high proportion of Indigenous students. Martha expressed her sensitivity to being a member of a racial minority as an Asian teacher in the education sector. She articulated her journey in learning to embrace her identity as an Asian female teacher, noting that as “a person of colour—the [students] that are of minority already feel safe ... There's sort of a credibility in that sense.” She continued by explaining that she and her students often share challenging and charged conversations about race, and that she has to consciously maintain a distance and not “project [her] own emotions and thoughts to them.”

The use of language was also discussed by several participants, with many having experienced shame around the use of Asian languages in Vancouver. William and I described our respective feelings of embarrassment when we spoke Chinese Mandarin/Cantonese in public with our families, particularly in helping them to communicate when their English skills weren't sufficient. For both of us, speaking another language meant that we and our families weren't fitting in to the society around us. He noticed similar sentiments when interacting with his students' guardians. They tended to shy away from using Cantonese or Mandarin to communicate even though it would have been easier or clearer. Caitlyn and I related to each other in being sent to Mandarin school by our parents to develop reading and writing skills. It was a strange phenomenon to our peers that we were sent to cultural institutes on the weekend to develop our heritage language skills. In trying to navigate her world in both English and Mandarin, Caitlyn described feelings of not being "quite Chinese enough" and that she was "losing aspects of her culture." In Gujri's case, she found that she was less articulate in Punjabi than her brother and spoke English without an accent, and thus her brother saw her as the Canadian of the family. She now faces some pressure from her partner to be responsible for teaching their daughter Punjabi, since he is not as fluent. For these participants, the use of Asian languages is strongly tied to their respective cultural values and standards and is a determining factor of their identity or sense of belonging to their heritage culture.

The ability to see oneself reflected in the curriculum was also a recurring theme in these interviews. Elena, Caitlyn, and Martha each commented on the lack of Asian Canadian history and representation in their experiences of K-12 and university curricula. Caitlyn pointed to a few lessons about the Chinese Head Tax as the only time that she had seen Asian-Canadian history represented in the curriculum. Elena described her experiences in the elementary curriculum as

being “very American, Anglo-Saxon type of white culture.” Elena also referred several times to the differences between her experience in teaching non-European cultural music in the classroom and her own memories of learning about non-European culture in her elementary education experiences, recalling that her peers often reacted negatively when other cultures were introduced in the classroom. Martha expressed that not seeing people of her cultural background in the curriculum led to her struggle in grappling with her identity. She shared that she never learned about the history of Asians in B.C. during her time in school, but, in fact, it was her father who had taught her about racism against Asians. She described her father as having a strong interest in the history of Asians in Canada and that he had gone to great lengths to research the migration of Asians into the western regions of Canada and the United States. “We went to a museum in Portland, in Chinatown, a newly opened Chinese history museum. He ended up knowing more than the curator. He was going around and telling people what was going on.” It was through an experience of learning about the history of Asians and racism towards Asians in B.C. and the western U.S. that she learned to understand her identity as an Asian and person of colour in Vancouver.

An important aspect I explored deeply in each interview was the participants’ conceptions of their identities as Canadians. All six participants were immigrants who had gained Canadian citizenship; four immigrated with their families to Canada before or during their elementary education, one immigrated with their family during high school, and one arrived solo as an international undergrad student and attained citizenship later. When I asked the question: “Do you identify as a Canadian?”, no participants hesitated to affirm, but almost all participants immediately appended their heritage to their response. A few participants shared that it was important for them to explain that they weren’t “just Canadian,” and that they felt like they

were neglecting an essential part of their identity if they replied simply with, “I’m Canadian.” Participants explained that their answers also changed depending on who asks the question and the geographical location of where the question is asked. The answer was likely to be simply “Canadian” when they were visiting their country of heritage, but in Canada and while travelling to countries outside of Asia, there was a greater need to explain their heritage culture. My speculation is that people in Asia have a general understanding that there are significant populations of Asian migrants around the world who have naturalized or become citizens in other countries, yet in countries where Asians are a visible minority, the notion of an Asian with a nationality of a country outside Asia is less understood.

I then explored how connected the participants feel to Canadian culture. Most participants commented that they felt that they were outside of Canadian culture. In the interviews, Canadian culture was often associated with white culture. For all participants, their heritage culture existed outside of Canadian culture, with many referring to Canadian culture as “Anglo-Saxon,” “White,” and “Western.” Participants thus explained feelings of being “stuck,” “in-between,” and “outside” of cultures. Gujri expressed that her family’s strong roots in their Indian cultures was a barrier for them to “fully grasp Canadian culture,” and that a person is “Canadian” if they have “fully adopted white culture.” Sarah, who initially came as an international student and attained Canadian citizenship later, described her journey of learning Canadian culture, referring mostly to Anglo-Saxon and French-Canadian culture. Almost all participants identified Canadian culture as white settler culture and indicated that Canadian culture is exclusive of the diversity of cultures that are present in Canada, including Asian and Indigenous cultures.

The participants' responses to questions around language, racial/heritage identity, national identity, and cultural identity reflect the Asian Critical theory of "perpetual foreigner" – i.e., that Asian North Americans struggle with concepts of being "American" or "Canadian," – even after having lived most their life with American or Canadian citizenship (Coloma, 2012; Iftikar & Museus, 2018). The lack of Asian-Canadian narratives in the education system leaves Asian Canadians on their own in navigating their heritage culture and nationality in a Eurocentric-dominant curriculum.

5.2 Settler and Immigrant Identity

My motive in asking whether participants identified with "settler" and/or "immigrant" was to inquire about how they saw themselves in relationship to Indigenous land. In my interpretation, the use of "settler," as a non-Indigenous identity, acknowledges that one does not trace one's ancestry to the land, and that one recognizes that there are original Indigenous inhabitants who were displaced through settler colonialism. In my interpretation as the researcher, identifying oneself as a settler is a political statement that recognizes a history of Indigenous people on this land prior to colonization and entails the consideration of the way that one is implicated in the consequences of colonization and migration. On the other hand, labelling oneself as an "immigrant" is only an acknowledgement of one's relationship to the colonial structures that dictate the legal processes of obtaining rights to live and work here, namely Immigration, Refugee, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), and does not necessarily entail recognition of one's relationship to Indigenous people, sovereignty, and self-determination.

In this research, no participants chose to use the term "settler." It is important to note that none of the participants were born in Canada; five participants went through the legal

naturalization process of immigration as children, one as an adult. Thus, all participants identified with the term “immigrant,” and most were apprehensive of identifying as a “settler.” Some were not completely familiar with concept of settler. One participant expressed a preference in identifying as “immigrant” over “settler,” following with the statement, “not many people use ‘settler’ here.” Another participant expressed: “I got a permit to be on this land ... ‘I’m an immigrant’ rather than ‘I’m a settler.’” Participants associated the term “settler” with colonialism in Canada and with arrivers from Europe who were responsible for the settler colonial history of Canada. A few participants expressed that their ancestors were not involved in the settler colonial displacement and elimination of Indigenous peoples in Canada and thus “being a settler” was not a part of their narratives. In light of this, I stand with Jo-Anne Lee (2016), who writes about the decentring of Eurocentric narratives in social justice and decolonization in favour of centring the narratives of Indigenous and marginalized minority people. Lee writes as Chinese Canadian who has felt “sidelined by language that fails to account for my community’s history” (p. 4). It is perhaps with this sentiment that these participants of colour feel an animosity towards – and misrepresentation in the use of – the term “settler.”

With a few participants, I shared my perspective on immigration, i.e., that arriving through colonial immigration structures is benefitting from settler colonialism. I explained it is a colonial assumption to view national immigration institutions, such as IRCC, as proprietors of complete authority to issue legal rights of living, working, and learning in a specific territory that was colonized. Thus, by participating in immigration, we are implicated in the consequences of settler colonialism. By realizing governmental institutions as structures of colonization, immigrants, particularly settlers of colour, are able to see the ways they are implicated in colonization and the ways in which they hold responsibilities to decolonize such structures.

5.3 Experiences of Learning about and Teaching for Indigeneity

Understanding decolonization begins with learning about Indigenous peoples, the history of colonization, and the strive towards Indigenous self-determination. This section presents the participants responses to questions pertaining to when each participant first learned about Indigeneity as well as the ongoing journey of learning about Indigenous people and issues.

Four out of five participants who migrated to Canada prior to university learned about Indigenous peoples and cultures during their elementary and secondary schooling. Most commented a negative image was portrayed, such as being tribal, or of the past. Most participants commented that they didn't quite comprehend that Indigenous issues were present-day issues. Martha recalled that her elementary teacher was active in incorporating Indigenous teachings, but the lack of Indigenous peers contributed to the difficulty in relating to Indigenous content. She further added that the resources used in the classroom portrayed Indigenous people as history, rather than communities that are still present today. William, whose family immigrated more than a decade earlier than the other participants doesn't recall learning about Indigenous peoples in his K-12 experience. It wasn't until he was preparing for a career-switch to K-12 teaching that he encountered Indigenous education. Sarah, the only participant to have arrived after secondary education, shared that her experience of learning about Indigenous people in the States led her to conceive of American Indian people as a people "adorned with the furry hats." She later learned about Indigenous peoples and culture through her B.Ed. and through applying for Canadian citizenship, but this experience was not profound.

In the interviews with the participants, a common conversation recurred around the difference between knowing about Indigenous peoples as a historical fact and understanding Indigenous issues as contemporary issues as a result of settler colonialism. Most participants

commented that their early experiences of learning about Indigenous peoples was “textbook” and factual and that they developed an understanding for Indigeneity during their university studies. Caitlyn was the only participant that encountered First Nations knowledge and perspectives in her undergraduate program as part of her minor in English literature. She described the experience of encountering texts written by First Nations authors as powerful, and she deeply appreciated the opportunity to read and understand through the lens of Indigenous authors. This experience was not paralleled in the courses she took for her major in music, nor was this experience shared by other participants. All other participants responded that they did not encounter Indigenous knowledge or perspectives as part of their undergraduate programs in mathematics or music.

It appears that the Bachelor of Education programs were the most helpful learning experience for most of the participants around Indigenous issues. Martha, Gujri, and Elena all expressed that their time during their teacher preparation programs was most transformative. Elena, Caitlyn, and Sarah recalled there was only one mandatory course offered on Indigenous issues and education, and Sarah and Caitlyn remembered that it was a short summer course towards the end of their B.Ed. program. This timing of this course in the program made it seem like understanding Indigenous issues and education was a low priority. While Elena found this course informative and transforming for her teacher preparation, she remembered that her some of classmates were quite apprehensive to the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in their specific teaching areas. For Elena, the most helpful experience of Indigenous education in the B.Ed. program was her practicum, where she saw her placement school holding events around reconciliation to students. She was able to see how the administration and teacher approached Indigenous issues, the way community was built with

neighbouring First Nations communities, and how the students responded to these activities. During Caitlyn's practicum experience, she enjoyed the developing skills in teaching First Nations text as unit on English literature.

Since Sarah and I have both spent considerable time before coming to Canada in our birth countries—Sarah in Taiwan, and I in New Zealand, I explored our individual experiences of how our respective countries have developed ways of sharing Indigenous culture, language, and music with the settler population. In my conversations with Sarah, we compared our perceptions of Indigenous music and culture and its presence in media and education. In our respective countries, we both felt that the Indigenous cultures was approached much differently than in Canada; Indigenous culture through public events and in schools was much more visible and accessible. We recalled learning about Indigenous culture, music, and art in our elementary experiences, as well as seeing Indigenous communities being represented on television and in local events. We both shared that finding resources around Indigenous music for public education in Canada was much more difficult—that there is a lot more privacy around Indigenous music and the sharing of Indigenous cultures. Those working in music education are cautioned to treat Indigenous music with high sensitivity and to be highly aware of protocols. (The implementation of Indigenous content and perspectives in music education is further explored in section 5.5.) In reflection of this conversation, I reminded myself that while there is a high representation of Indigenous culture, not all representations of Indigenous culture and music in media and education have necessarily followed respectful protocols of sharing. It is possible that our experiences of Indigeneity in our respective countries as children and adolescents may have been disrespectful to Indigenous communities that we are not yet aware of.

The First People's Principles of Learning resource was brought up by many participants in discussion of ways that they have implemented Indigenous perspectives in their teaching practice. Half of the participants noted that they have consulted it as a guide for their teaching practice. Most participants recognize these principles as principles good teaching and that not all of the principles necessarily specific to Indigenous culture. When I questioned further into the use of FPPL, no participant responded that they explicitly share these principles with their students as Indigenous principles. Elena was the only participant that had a positive experience of working with FPPL, mentioning that during her first year of teaching in West Vancouver, the administration put a strong emphasis on incorporating the First People's Principles of Learning school wide. Her school had made it a priority for all teachers and students to acknowledge Canada's history of residential schooling and the importance of presenting Indigenous narratives. On the other hand, Gujri commented that the FPPL were introduced without any support on how to implement these principles into teaching. She notes that posters were handed out to be displayed in classrooms, but there was no training around how to implement it as a pedagogical resource. In Sarah's view, many of the principles are executed in a good choral program. She comments that almost all aspects of her choral classroom and community exemplify the FPPL. She doesn't explain FPPL to her students and assumes that English literature and socials departments are more dedicated to the explication Indigenous perspectives.

5.4 Interpretations of Decolonizing Education

Decolonization, within and outside of education, is an expansive concept in which stakeholders hold many different views and goals. While the literature review in Chapter 2

presents my perspective (as well as those of cited scholars) on decolonization, this section examines the various views of decolonization held by participants.

Caitlyn spoke of decolonization education as a restructuring of the classroom and pedagogical methods, moving away from traditional settings derived from Eurocentric models of education and towards more equity for the students in decision-making processes. She said she focuses on developing student-centric pedagogy with more democracy and student leadership, and decentring models of teaching and learning derived from large Western Art ensembles; she criticized traditional choir classrooms as autocratic learning environments led by the conductor/teacher. She explained her conscious awareness of which traditions are reflected in her repertoire selection, expressing that it is the “easiest way to decolonize,” particularly because she had been struggling with directly implementing Indigenous content.

Gujri, through the analogy quoted in her narrative, spoke to decolonizing being a process of centring Indigeneity. She emphasises that decolonizing requires us to centre the names of those who had originally “built the house”—to acknowledge where and who we have built our present-day colonized structures on, and who experienced the loss of land, people, and knowledge. Similarly, for Elena, decolonizing begins with reflecting on the histories. In her own experiences of learning about decolonization, it began with learning about settler colonization in Canada and its implications upon Indigenous peoples. After learning about the horrifying history of residential schooling, she realised the importance of students knowing and understanding the history of colonization from the first year they enter school. Reflecting upon the negative image of First Nations that had been portrayed to her through her own educational experience, she now challenges herself to find ways to fight against the negative images of First Nations that may have previously been portrayed to her students.

Martha, who works with a significant population of Indigenous students, finds that decolonizing and Indigenizing education is a way of empowering her students. She aims to create learning environments where her Indigenous students see themselves reflected in the curriculum, and where their ways of knowing, passed through their families and ancestors, are validated in the classroom. She also speaks to the importance of decolonizing the curriculum to help students from diverse cultural backgrounds feel represented. Decolonizing is a conscious decision to support her Indigenous students as well as provide opportunities for students who come from varied privilege and life experiences. For Martha, opening up curriculum to discuss intergenerational trauma faced by Indigenous peoples presents an opportunity for students who may have experienced various traumas to reflect on social injustice that they themselves have experienced. Interestingly, this resonates with Gujri's own experience of learning about Indigenous issues and relating those narratives to her and her family's experiences of systemic oppression as Punjab Sikhs in India.

5.5 Participants' Challenges: Music Education

The recurring theme throughout the conversations in decolonizing music education was that teachers are afraid of adapting materials for the classroom. The fear originates in the understanding that much of Indigenous music is private and sacred. All three music educator participants commented on many professional development sessions emphasizing the privacy of Indigenous music—that much of it is reserved only for particular performers, audiences, and settings. However, it seems that this understanding has caused two of the music teacher participants to be quite reticent about incorporating Indigenous music into their classrooms. Two participants (Sarah and Caitlyn) questioned the appropriateness of bringing Indigenous music

into their classroom, asking whether they, as non-Indigenous teachers, have the right to use Indigenous music in the classroom. They both expressed that it would be better to have guest Indigenous musicians and educational consultants teach their students Indigenous content. Sarah and Caitlyn seemed slightly critical of the B.C. Ministry of Education's approach to Indigenizing the curriculum. Both wondered if the process is being pushed too much without the right supports in place and whether there might be negative consequences in mandating all teachers to teach Indigenous education without strong resources to support teachers in doing so. Caitlyn recognized that having Indigenous worldviews and perspectives are important in Canadian education and that the Ministry of Education is attempting to be progressive by Indigenizing the curriculum but noted that it is only a starting point. She pointed out that there is a lack of resources and structure around professional development for teachers to further their approaches for incorporating Indigenous content into their classrooms. Sarah and Caitlyn expressed their frustration from attending professional development workshops on Indigenous music education where they learned songs that they were not permitted to use in their classrooms.

All three music teacher participants exhibited an understanding of respectful protocols around including Indigenous music in their teaching practice; they referred to the importance of communicating with Indigenous communities to obtain permissions for use. Both Caitlyn and Elena have worked with Aboriginal Education workers in their school districts to locate resources for teaching Indigenous content. Elena attended specific workshops taught by First Nations musicians and educators to learn about Indigenous music to use in her classroom and she also clarified that she informs her students of the protocols, sharing that she received permission from Sherryl, a Cree musician, to teach particular First Nations songs to them. The conversations with these participants demonstrated that they treat Indigenous music much more carefully than

other repertoire and that learning about the practices around Indigenous music, such as permissions of use, has also sparked them to inquire deeply into the background of other musics, particularly those of cultures outside of Western art music.

Caitlyn spoke more directly to the outdated system of music education in Canada, that it focuses largely on Eurocentric performing ensembles: orchestras, bands, and choirs. She acknowledged that large ensemble-type courses are harder to manipulate in order to include Indigenous repertoire. While such programs provide ample opportunities for students to develop rehearsal and performance skills, the Eurocentric roots of these ensembles – manifested in their performance practices – represent a barrier to Indigenous knowledge and perspectives. On a similar topic, Sarah expressed her opposition to ensemble-style classes being exchanged for generalized music classes, a change recently proposed in Vancouver schools. (We were discussing overall issues in music education in Vancouver rather than the possibility of greater inclusion of Indigenous music in generalized music.) Her opposition may have been due seeing the structural change as part of the larger budget cuts to arts programs that have been proposed and implemented in the schools of the Vancouver School Board.

5.6 Participants' Challenges: Math Education

Out of the three teacher participants interviewed for their perspectives on incorporating Indigenous content and perspectives into math education, Martha was the only participant who had attempted to bring Indigenous worldviews into her pedagogy. Her attempts at including Indigenous perspectives in mathematics stem from her successful experiences in incorporating Indigenous perspectives in her science classes. Her approach to Indigenizing mathematics education was to move away from the use of textbooks and facilitate hands-on learning

experiences of mathematics by observing and interacting with mathematics in nature. She shared that she finds it much more challenging to incorporate Indigenous knowledge and perspectives in mathematics in comparison to her science classes.

Gujri and Martha both commented that professional development in Indigenous mathematics education have not been helpful for their teaching practice. Even after attending several workshops around teaching math for Indigeneity, Martha has not yet encountered resources for Indigenous mathematics that she has found practical for implementing with senior mathematics. She clarified that the professional development workshops may have been more useful for elementary and middle years mathematics teachers, but the activities presented were difficult to embed into the topics like pre-calculus algebra. Gujri had a similar experience; professional development seminars and workshops all seemed quite unfeasible for her classroom and she said she had not yet been presented with practical ways to incorporate Indigenous knowledge into her teaching practice.

Martha and Gujri both commented on the emphasis on Greek/Eurocentric mathematical developments and concepts in their experiences of learning and teaching mathematics. While the new B.C. curriculum has changed its focus from specific knowledge and topics in mathematics to more widely adaptable core competencies of communication and critical thinking skills, it seems that teachers of senior mathematics still face an obligation to cover certain topics, such as pre-calculus algebra and trigonometry, and hence feel that there is less space for Indigenous mathematics to be explored. William, who teaches across various subjects as a Grade 1 classroom teacher, commented that his students are too young to understand Indigenous issues and that the lack of exposure of his students to Indigenous communities and issues would make it

difficult for his students relate to Indigenous education. At present, he does not include many of Indigenous perspectives in his teaching practice in mathematics or other learning areas.

Gujri and William both shared that a lack of drive from their school administrators to include Indigenous perspectives contributed to their own lack of incentive to weave in Indigenous knowledge and worldviews into their pedagogy. Gujri shared that during her practicum, she had tried to implement Indigenous knowledge into teaching mathematics, but the “high-end” school where she taught had not prioritized Indigenous education, and thus she did not feel motivated to continue that aspect of her teaching practice. William also commented that if his school had placed a stronger emphasis or created a culture that highlighted the importance/benefits of teaching for Indigeneity, he might also feel compelled to expand his teaching practice in that direction.

In decentring Eurocentric mathematics, I co-imagined with William the use of other languages and cultures around mathematics teaching. We wondered how students might appreciate mathematical concepts when presented through another language. While William had used Chinese Mandarin and Cantonese one-on-one with certain students to troubleshoot particular issues, I suggested the possibility of having an entire class participate with their home languages/mother tongues. While he was open to the idea, he wasn’t sure what results it might achieve since he felt that his students don’t suffer a lack of representation.

5.7 Factors Affecting Asian Teachers’ Participation in Decolonizing Education

There two main interests that participants that repeatedly brought up when discussing their frequency of incorporating Indigenous content and perspectives, including school

administrative priorities and practices in including Indigenous worldviews and the proportion of Indigenous students that the participants teach/taught.

The most evident factor that influenced the participants' engagement with Indigenous content and worldviews in their practice was the priority placed on Indigenous education by school administrators. Gujri and William were the participants who incorporated less Indigenous knowledge and perspectives in their teaching practice than other participants. Both participants commented that they have low motivation to teach for Indigeneity because their school administration (as well as disciplinary departments) placed low priority for Indigenous knowledge and perspectives. Gujri, who teaches secondary mathematics, felt that her school placed a higher emphasis on academic achievement and transitions into higher education and that Indigenous education was not of importance. William spoke about "school culture that the administrators create" and observed that if teachers felt that administration gave more importance to Indigenous education, then "more of the staff are likely to move in that direction." Other participants who had school administrators make large efforts to connect with Indigenous communities and present Indigenous narratives were more motivated to incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing in their practice. This seemed to be an effective top-down approach for Elena, who saw a school-wide precedence for recognizing the stories that came out of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Caitlyn and Elena, who both teach elementary music, had seen their respective schools and districts engage with Indigenous elders and communities to present Indigenous cultures and raise the profile of injustices and ongoing issues faced by Indigenous peoples. Both these participants developed teaching practices to include Indigenous music either by working with their schools' Aboriginal Ed worker, or by reaching out to external First Nations educational consultants.

Another large motivation factor towards decolonizing curriculum is the proportion of Indigenous students that the participants teach. Martha and Caitlyn taught in schools and classrooms that had a visible population of Indigenous students. Both these participants expressed the desire to make sure their Indigenous students' heritage and culture were represented in the classroom. Martha undertook this task by inviting her students to bring in perspectives from their homes and their cultures, creating a discussion around Indigenous approaches to science and comparing them to Western approaches. By drawing on her students' knowledge, she created space for Indigenous worldviews in her science curriculum. Caitlyn took a different method by researching local contemporary First Nations songs in order to generate room for discussion. In this activity, she saw her Indigenous students become more willing to share their views around Truth and Reconciliation. While both Caitlyn and Martha seem to have experienced a degree of success in incorporating Indigenous worldviews into their teaching practice, both expressed certain levels of discomfort in teaching Indigenous content to Indigenous students. Martha was concerned that her Indigenous students would dismiss her pedagogy of Indigenous content. She further expressed that a great amount of care and research is required when presenting Indigenous ideas and knowledge to her students, particularly for Indigenous students who may suffer forms of trauma from their previous experiences of seeing Indigeneity being presented in the classroom. For Caitlyn, it was her first time (since graduating from her B.Ed. program) to develop a unit around Indigenous music. She shared her difficulty in judging whether the learning experience was entirely positive for her students. She explained that she received mixed responses from the students and said, "Kids are kids. I don't know how well the whole thing went over." She explained further: "I don't want to say the wrong thing, especially because it's not my story to tell and especially when we talk about Indigenous

perspectives.” Concern with self-confidence was also shared by Sarah, who expressed a desire to feel confident and comfortable in teaching Indigenous music and music of other cultures.

Chapter 6: Decolonizing Education with Settler Teachers of Colour

The questions that guided this research are:

1. How are Asian teachers informed by their identities as non-Indigenous people of colour in their practices of decolonizing education in the disciplines of mathematics and music?
2. What methods are taken by Asian educators in their practice to decolonize education in the disciplines of mathematics and music, and what challenges do they face in these pursuits?

The results of this study from exploring these questions with six participants provide a partial snapshot of how Asian teachers have constructed their identities as non-Indigenous Canadians of colour and how their identities have been factors of influence in their methods of decolonizing education. In response to the first research question, this study found that all six participants all described feelings of contention between their national, cultural, and heritage identities. Many of the participants did not identify with the term “settler” and associated that term with being white Canadian. The participants did not see themselves and their ancestry as being directly responsible for the injustices suffered by Indigenous peoples as a result of settler colonialism. These perceptions largely affected the amount of effort that the participants dedicated towards decolonizing their teaching practices. In response to the second research question, teachers within each discipline – mathematics and music – faced similar challenges in decolonizing their practice. In mathematics, the secondary school teacher participants tended to center NUC-mathematics in discussing their challenges around Indigenizing school mathematics. The elementary school teacher, William, has not engaged in decolonizing his mathematics pedagogy. In music, all three participants commented on the privacy and specificity of

Indigenous music and expressed fear of misusing Indigenous music in the classroom and on the stage. Only one of the music teacher participants was actively using Indigenous resources in the classroom and organizing seminars on teaching Indigenous music for her district. Overall, the participants relied on their B.Ed./teacher training experiences and professional development offered by their districts and professional education associations.

While the new B.C. curriculum policy changes aim for a greater inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and perspectives, it takes a much deeper exploration, both internally, into personal identities as educational practitioners, and externally, into the aims of decolonizing education to realise how decolonizing unfolds in teachers' practice. It requires a reflection on the implications of a colonial educational structure on Indigenous peoples, white settlers, and settlers of colour, and on how we might imagine future relations amongst these groups. Identity construction, as explored through these interviews, is largely conditioned by our relations, and the lack of them, with each other. Without an inquiry into the racial, cultural, national, and settler/Indigenous identities of teachers and students, educational institutions will continue to exist as spaces that “deny and silence the multiple, holistic experiences of children by overemphasizing the cultural norms of the dominant society” (Hanson, 2019, p. 127).

In this chapter, I discuss the differences of decolonizing and diversifying education and draw upon Kelly Hanson's (2019) work in centring the First Peoples Principles of Learning by explicating and decentring Eurocentric principles of learning. I use Hanson's reflection of her own journey in decolonizing her teaching practice as a framework to offer suggestions of approaches towards decolonizing music and mathematics education.

6.1 Identity and Responsibilities towards Decolonizing Education

The aim of this research was to explore the ways in which Asian teachers construct their identity as Asian Canadians and how these constructs of identity have guided their work in decolonizing education. In the interviews, I explored the participants' identity construction with respect to race/ethnicity, culture, nationality, immigration, and settler colonialism. All six participants identified strongly with their heritage culture and spoke their heritage languages with at least a basic conversational fluency. All six were immigrants in Canada who had attained citizenship and claim Canadian as their nationalities. However, when I asked if they identified with Canadian culture, it was clear that no participants felt comfortable saying that they related well to Canadian culture. Perhaps asking and answering the questions, "Do you identify as Canadian?" and "Do you identify with Canadian culture?" is as complex as, if not more than, "Where are you from?"—a common racial microaggression faced by people of colour (Cheryan & Monin, 2005) – a phenomenon was raised by Caitlyn in her interview. In this study, it became clear that most participants identify the "culture" of Canada as a white, Anglo-Saxon culture that has largely excluded their heritage cultures and more troubling (to me as the researcher), by omissions in the responses, Indigenous cultures. It was not surprising to me, as an Asian New Zealander with similar experiences, to hear that the participants found their cultures excluded from being Canadian, and thus, supports the Asian Critical theory of Asians as perpetual foreigners (Iftikar & Museus, 2018; Museus, 2013)—such sentiments are residuals of past and ongoing anti-Asian racism and xenophobia in Canada. The perpetual foreigner theory is experienced by the Asian-Canadian participants, who simultaneously conceptualize and construct a Canadian culture that is white and excludes them. In view of both this complex construction of Canadian culture and the predominantly white perspectives in settler narratives, it

is understandable why none of these participants identified as settlers. I interpret the construction of a North American cultural identity, which excludes of Asian immigrant/settler cultures, as a symptom of a lack of representation in the curriculum. More specifically, a study on the invisibility of Asian teachers commented that the lack of Asian representation in curriculum was a factor of the low proportion of Asian teachers (Han, 2019). Participants in this study shared their experiences of not seeing themselves reflected in the curriculum. Elena recalled negative experiences during her elementary school years of her peers' negative attitudes and comments when learning about marginalized cultures. Martha lamented about the difficulty of constructing her own identity due to not seeing herself represented in classroom content. Caitlyn pointed out that there were only one or two lessons with Asian representation in her K-12 experience—brief mentions of the 1885 Chinese Head Tax. With increasing rates of immigration in Canada and the majority of these immigrants arriving from Asia (Statistics Canada, 2009), it becomes pertinent to examine the ways in which communities across Canada construct Canadian identity, and how the cultures and histories of marginalized, but growing communities are represented in curriculum (Snelgrove et al., 2014). Dua and Lawrence (2005) re-affirm that “people of colour are settlers ... liv[ing] on land that is stolen and contested” (p. 134) and acquire rights that are denied to Indigenous peoples. On the issue of Asians disengaging from Indigenous-settler discourses where they find themselves unrepresented, Jo-Anne Lee (2016) has expressed her concern for the non-white ally's difficulty in locating themselves in the work of developing allyship with Indigenous peoples due to the “erasure of non-white settler and Indigenous relations,” which has contributed to a lack of “alternative imaginaries of possible democratic, non-colonized futures” (p. 20). I suggest not only centring Indigenous knowledge and perspectives as actions towards decolonizing education, but also of fostering a greater inclusion

of students' cultural identities in curriculum to assist students in developing identities as Canadians. Creating pathways for marginalized students to find their own ways of creating their settler identity will assist them to acquire an understanding of their responsibilities to decolonize. Such moves would be actions to disrupt Dion's (2007) *perfect stranger* and support settler teachers of colour and marginalized students in acquiring understanding their own version of a settler consciousness and their relationship to Indigenous peoples, lands, and knowledge systems.

6.2 Decolonization vs. Diversifying Education

While this study has examined the participants' different approaches to teaching for diversity and how they shape perceptions of race, decolonizing education must not be conflated with diversifying education. While the two have similarities in presenting alternative narratives, diversifying education in itself does not necessarily work towards decolonizing education. Diversifying education aims to introduce worldviews and knowledge of various identities, including Indigenous knowledge, into the curriculum. On the other hand, decolonizing education places importance on centring Indigenous perspectives and knowledge, through the decentring of Eurocentric perspectives and diversifying of education, ultimately working towards the larger process of decolonizing Canada for Indigenous self-determination. In this study, it became clear that a representation of students' cultures in the classroom would be beneficial to students in helping them shape their identities as marginalized Canadians and towards examining their responsibilities to decolonize themselves as settlers. However, in order to take actions towards decolonizing education, not just diversifying education, but Indigenous self-determination must be maintained as the goal.

As an example, I highlight the First Peoples Principles of Learning (FPPL), a resource that was repeatedly referenced in the interviews when the participants discussed their approaches to incorporating Indigenous worldviews in their pedagogy. With the outlook of decolonizing education, I caution against the appropriation these principles, and the making of claims that they are being used in the classroom when they have not been centred as pedagogical principles, but rather as afterthoughts. Those who appropriate them fall into the trap of what Battiste (Battiste, 2017) names “cognitive imperialism,” where Indigenous knowledge become “white-washed” (p. xix). I present two scenarios to distinguish more clearly between decolonizing and diversifying education. Diversifying education is exemplified by one who hangs a FPPL poster on the classroom wall and occasionally points out one of the principles. In this scenario, Indigenous principles are marginalized as one of many othered cultural values to consider. By contrast, an example of a teacher working effectively to decolonize education is one who raises the FPPL at the start of a school year or when beginning teaching unit and asking how the members of the learning community, both teachers and learners, might develop experiences and deeper understandings of Indigenous worldviews through the FPPL.

In the interviews, many participants acknowledged that the FPPL are guidelines of good teaching. Some participants expressed that the principles aren’t all specific to Indigenous cultures. While this view may hold true for several of the principles in the document, such as, “Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one’s action,” it is important to note that these principles were developed in consultation with First Nations elders and the communities to put forward Indigenous worldviews about learning. With goal of decolonizing in mind, I highlight the need to centre Indigenous worldviews, particularly when such resources are readily available. If the First People’s worldviews, such as those typified in the FPPL, are not centred

and continue to be neglected, we inevitably arrive at another case of cultural appropriation, not dissimilar to the music teacher participants' views on using Indigenous music without recognizing the backgrounds of or protocols around the music. My advice for both teachers and administrators is to prioritize pathways for settler teachers to examine of the FPPL in their learning community, and to seek counsel from their Aboriginal education workers and local First Nations elders on how to practice the FPPL, as well as other principles of learning specific to their local First Nations. Hanson (2019) has offered her own experiences of exploring the FPPL as a settler teacher, presenting her comparison of First Nations principles against the often invisible, yet dominant, Eurocentric principles of learning she inherited as a learner and teacher. By making her own worldviews visible and explicit, she allowed her own principles of learning to be scrutinised and decentred in favour of the FPPL. She suggests that settler teachers examine the FPPL by approaching it as “a space of not knowing [which] has power that may hold a key to decolonization” (p.18).

6.3 Decolonizing Mathematics Education

In this study, participants shared their obstacles in understanding in how Indigenous mathematics and worldviews intersects with abstract NUC-mathematic topics of algebraic manipulation. With NUC-mathematics held as a dominant curriculum, other worldviews of mathematics, particularly Indigenous approaches to mathematics, are supplementary to NUC-mathematics (Barton, 2009). Participants expressed uncertainty around how to incorporate non-NUC-mathematics to their teaching practice. My first recommendation follows along the approach taken by Hanson (2019) in her exploration of the FPPL. In order to decolonize her own pedagogy and develop methods of Indigenizing her teaching practice, she examined her own

worldview with regard to learning and unequivocally revealed principles of learning that she had taken for granted as universal/best approaches to teaching and learning. Once her own beliefs had been exposed and deconstructed, she was able to decentre her Eurocentric beliefs about learning and prioritize the development of deeper understanding around and incorporation of the FPPL.

I posit that NUC-mathematics must be treated similarly. In order to decolonize mathematics, educators must explore their own assumed constructs about mathematics learned in their own experiences with mathematics and the worldviews that are attached to these constructs. Once these beliefs of mathematics are clarified, educators will be able to see more clearly the ways NUC-mathematics and its approaches conflicts and align with other approaches to mathematics, more importantly, the ways in which NUC-mathematics devalues Indigenous knowledge and culture (Barton, 2009; Bishop, 1990; Matthews, Watego, Cooper, & Baturo, 2005). I urge educators to explore their own constructs of mathematics with their students in order to decentre NUC-mathematics, to investigate the ways that NUC-mathematics oppresses other mathematical ways of thinking, and to recognize various histories and approaches of mathematics (Stavrou & Miller, 2017). While decolonizing mathematics education encompasses a decentring of Eurocentric practices in mathematics, it is not a complete resistance and opposition against NUC-mathematics.

Teacher-participant Martha commented specifically about the challenge she faces in finding ways to incorporate Indigenous worldviews into mathematical topics that are much more abstract and procedural, such as the manipulation of rational expressions. My suggestion for such scenarios is to explore the histories and culture of such areas of mathematics, not dissimilar to the ways in which the music-teacher participants have shared about surveying the backgrounds

of particular musics. Such an approach would orient particular methodologies that dominate mathematical discourses as cultural, rather than absolute, ways of knowing (Tate, 1995).

6.4 Decolonizing Music Education

For decolonizing music education, there were several concerns that arose in the interview, including the sacredness/privacy of Indigenous musics and concepts of Indigenous musics. Participants were unsure of how to acquire more resources and determine which resources were appropriate to use in their teaching practice. Similarly to the suggestions put forward in the previous section on decolonizing mathematics education, I highlight the importance of reflecting on personal and cultural constructs as part of an ongoing process of decolonizing music education (Prest, 2016). In section 2.3 of the literature review, I presented common colonial conceptions of music in which music has evolved and become treated as a product of performance and entertainment. These constructs unfold in the music education programs in ensemble-oriented music programs, in which music educators are encouraged to produce staged performances throughout the year to demonstrate colonial concepts of musical excellence. To decolonize music education, educators must deconstruct the function of music in both secular culture and in the classroom; else, a music curriculum that includes “othered” music and cultures will continue to marginalize such cultures and prioritise Eurocentric music knowledge systems (Bradley, 2006, 2012).

Elena shared in her interview about a particular experience in which she attended an Indigenous music seminar. Elena indicated that she was not able to implement the techniques she learned in that seminar into her pedagogy because she found the vocal production of the singing to be very hoarse and, hence, judged it to be an unhealthy way of singing. During that

conversation, I shared that we need to reconsider our conceptions of healthy singing, which have often followed Western aesthetics of vocal music. In this scenario, with a decolonial lens, the decision that way of singing sounds or feels hoarse is engrained in a colonial concept of how singing sounds and feels. It is with such reflections that educators must reconsider their Eurocentric conceptions of musics and music education. On a similar thread, Caitlyn mentioned that during her teaching practicum (as part of the B.Ed. program), she used a song with the lyrics retrieved from an Indigenous text. She expressed that she felt confused and didn't know whether it was considered Indigenous music because the musical content was not Indigenous. This particular scenario emphasises a need to reconsider the liminal and dynamic spaces of what we categorize as Indigenous culture and music.

Regarding participants' fear of misappropriating sacred/private music, I highlight the need to develop relationships with local Indigenous communities and knowledge holders, such as the effort exemplified by Elena in this study, who approached local First Nations musicians to develop her understanding of Indigenous music. In a study of Indigenous Knowledge in rural B.C. music education, Prest and Goble (2018) found that the primary factor in incorporating Indigenous music and worldviews lay in relationships built with local First Nations "culture bearers" (p. 50). By developing reciprocity and trust with local First Nations, the culture bearers became mentors to music educators and assisted in developing appropriate pedagogy that respected Indigenous musics. In line with this study, I recommend an approach to decolonizing music education rooted in relationships with local First Nations communities.

6.5 Limitations of this Study

This study gathered six narratives of Asian teachers in their constructions of identity and their perspectives and practices in decolonizing education. It is important to remember the limitations of the participant group, that these narratives are different representations of immigrants who have arrived to Canada during their lives and that a full diversity of Asian Canadian narratives is not represented in this thesis.

Thus, the views of these participants do not represent the entire diversity of views of Asian Canadian teachers, which include intersections with other aspects of identity, such as gender and sexual orientation, dis/ability, mixed heritage, and other lived experiences. Although this thesis presents a rich combination of stories, it includes only the perspectives of teachers who are in their first ten years of their teaching careers, are first generation Asian Canadians of Generation 1.5 (immigrants who came as children) and are immigrants who came by express entry/technical skills. These narratives are of voices that contain particular privileges within the Asian migrant community.

The thesis is also limited by my interpretations as a researcher, a second generation gay cis-male Asian New Zealander born to immigrant parents from Taiwan.

Chapter 7: Concluding Thoughts

The aim of this thesis was to inquire into the narratives of Asian teachers to provide a space for different voices in the discourse of decolonization that is often dominated by white perspectives (Lee, 2016) and arose out of a concern that anti-racism discourses in Canada and other settler nations exclude important considerations concerning the relationship between Indigenous peoples and settlers of colour (Lawrence & Dua, 2005).

It is important to bear in mind that these interviews and the results of the analyses are only “snapshots.” Through a social constructivist lens, the conversation-interviews that captured the participants’ views represent a particular moment in time, inclusive of their interpretations of past experiences that shaped their current views of their identity and their teaching practice. In this snapshot, participants may or may not currently have best practices, which in themselves are continuously evolving and in contention. Participants arrived at the moment of these interviews having embarked on a journey in understanding and constructing their identity and developing their practices, and they continue to journey and reconstruct their identities and practices. The conversations in this study were also reflections of my own understandings around race, culture, and decolonization. Throughout the course of this study and the interviews, I furthered my own understandings of how different elements of individuals’ experiences and identity construction shape their understandings of their responsibilities towards decolonization. My hope is that my discussions with the participants and their interpretations will continue to spark further discussion and action in decolonizing education, particularly for those who are often marginalized in the discourses of decolonizing Canada and other settler-colonial countries.

In conversing with the six participants, I learned to re-interpret my own identity, particularly in exploring how my own story contrasts with those of the participants. As a child of

immigrant parents, I did not identify as an immigrant myself – since I did not migrate between countries. While I had learned during my time in Vancouver to identify myself as a settler, chiefly through academic discourses in decolonization, the participants were all immigrants, and chose to identify as immigrants and not settlers. The difference in stories and identities raises the importance of highlighting the discourses of settler identities in B.Ed Indigenous Education courses and professional development to assist teachers to orient themselves and their identities in the work of decolonizing education.

In this study, I also came across obstacles in discussing concepts around decolonization. Since identities are very personal elements to individuals, it was often perplexing to challenge participants' concepts of colonization and decolonization. In the case of Gujri, I felt emotions of shock and disbelief when I heard her analogy of colonization. In my interpretation, her analogy mischaracterized the scenario of first contact between Indigenous Peoples and early settlers and downplays the severity of the implications of settler colonization in Canada. During the interview, I felt ill-equipped emotionally to challenge her presentation of colonization, and I was reminded that I was also on my own ongoing journey in developing my practices in decolonizing research and education.

It is clear that simply changing policies to include Indigenous content and worldviews in B.C. curricula is not so easily practiced and does not necessarily contribute to the wellbeing of Indigenous (and settler) students, nor does it automatically translate to decolonizing education for Indigenous self-determination. Decolonizing must be interpreted as a deconstruction and decentring of Eurocentric cognitive imperialism. It involves decolonizing oneself by examining the ways that one has embodied and contributed to advancing settler colonialism. For non-Indigenous non-white individuals, it requires exploring the ways we have been racialized, how

they have distracted us from responsibilities and actions towards decolonization, and the ways that our unique narratives can contribute towards Indigenous self-determination. The responsibility to decolonize falls not only on Indigenous activists and governmental Ministries of Education, but on all those working at various levels in public and private education and teacher preparation programs, including educational administrators and practitioners. With the participants experiences in undergraduate programs in mind, particularly with Caitlyn's empowering experience of Indigenous narratives in her English literature minor, I raise the importance of incorporating of Indigenous content and worldviews in undergraduate mathematics and music programs. The complete absence of Indigenous knowledge in higher mathematics and music education is an indication that Indigenous knowledge is not yet of significance in such fields.

I return to Marie Battiste (2017), who places importance on confronting and eliminating racism, and respecting Indigenous languages in education systems. While Battiste's work focuses on the wellbeing of Indigenous students, I extend the two notions to encompass possibilities for teachers and learners to work towards decolonizing education for Indigenous self-determination. In light of the interviews and reviewed literature, Indigenous languages become crucial tools for engaging in decolonizing education. Indigenous languages have been shaped by local conditions and have evolved out of the experiences of Indigenous peoples, including their interactions with settler-colonialism, and they carry the richness and depth of Indigenous knowledge and worldviews. By embedding Indigenous language into teaching practice, Indigenous worldviews can be centred through the vocabulary and language structures of such languages. Battiste (2017) advances the use of Indigenous language in promoting "knowledge system[s] that hold depth[s] of knowing that has not yet been tapped for

contemporary education” (p. 146) in Canada. I prioritize a focus on learning and using Indigenous languages in classrooms, and exploring and engaging with the embedded worldviews, which requires and supports relationships with between settlers and local Indigenous elders and communities and contributes to language revitalisation and Indigenous self-determination.

In conjunction with the use of Indigenous languages, I also highlight the importance of introducing heritage language of students in the classroom. Using the languages of students in the classroom, such as William’s use of Chinese to teach number sense, provides an opportunity for students of non-Anglo/Franco heritage to see themselves in the curriculum. Further, the inclusion of alternate languages in the classroom presents alternate worldviews and invites students of marginalized minorities to bring their holistic experiences into and out of the classroom. Creating higher visibility of the heritages and cultures of students in the classroom contributes to the construction of a Canadian identity as a culturally pluralistic nation. Therefore, my recommendation is for teachers to engage with Indigenous languages through developing relationships with local Indigenous communities as a practical method of centring Indigenous worldviews and to explore the ways in which the histories, cultures, and languages of marginalized students can be included.

To conclude this thesis, I return to the framework of decolonizing education by highlighting the need for place-based education, for curriculum to be rooted in locality (Chambers, 1999), examining the identities of the local populace. A place-based education must, first and foremost, centre Indigenous peoples as the original dwellers on and stewards of these territories. It must also consider the relationships between various non-Indigenous and Indigenous communities. I restate the possibilities of decolonizing education through the use of

Indigenous languages to centre Indigenous worldviews and the use of heritage languages to provide a reflection of students' identities and cultures. I also highlight the importance of establishing and maintaining relationships with Indigenous communities that support their self-determination and sovereignty.

There are no quick and easy solutions to decolonizing. educators must persist in envisioning relationships between Indigenous and settler peoples for future generations and work to find agreement on what that relationship needs.

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Appendices

Appendix A : Question Script

As the format of the interview is a semi-structured conversation exploring narratives/stories, the questions listed below are examples of the types of questions that will be used in interview to investigate the themes laid out in the proposal/research questions. The wording of questions in the actual interviews will likely be modified from the ones listed below, in order to inquire into specific ideas, with supplementary questions to clarify understandings of participant perspectives.

Part I: Participants' conceptions of racial/ethnic and settler/migrant identity

1. Could you please share the story of how you/your family came to be in Canada?
2. What does the phrase "being Canadian" mean to you, and what sort of thoughts and emotions does it make you feel?
3. What does Indigeneity and being non-Indigenous mean to you? When and where did you to learn and develop these ideas?
4. Do you identify with the terms "migrant"/"immigrant" and/or "settler"?
5. Do you have any other preference of terms, whether in English or another language? When did you come across these terms and how do they differ?
6. Could you share a story of when your race/ethnicity was apparent to you and caused you to feel different/"othered"?

Part II: Participants' perspectives in decolonizing/Indigenizing education

1. What do you see as the goals of decolonizing/Indigenizing curriculum?
2. In what ways has your racial/ethnic identity been a factor of hindrance or agency/empowerment in your profession?

3. What resources do you consult for decolonizing/Indigenizing curriculum?
4. What are some strategies you have implemented in your practice of Indigenizing/decolonizing your teaching practices?
5. How do you think these have gone? How have your students responded?
6. What obstacles have you faced in implementing/incorporating Indigenous knowledge in your teaching practice?
7. What supports would be more helpful to you to help you implement a practice that decolonizes education?

Appendix B : Interview Transcript Sample

The following is an excerpt of an interview transcript. The letter A denotes me, the researcher, the letter C denotes Caitlyn, a research participant.

A: And... have you used the term settler before?

C: No, actually.

A: Are you familiar with what it entails... like the concept?

C: Like, to settle, somewhere... in any place... I guess I would have used the word, "immigrant." Not many people use "settler" here.

A: Yeah, I mean never came across the term settler until I came to Canada, where I guess there is a lot more progress in Indigenous rights.

C: Okay, yeah.

A: And maybe just in academia, I'm not entirely sure. Umm... but yeah, I came across the term settler and I... and I started thinking, "Well... Am I in that category? And if I'm not in that category, what am I?" because...

C: You were born in New Zealand.

A: Right but if your family migrated to live somewhere, then you have a settler background. It's like, with white kids who were born here, they're still settlers because they came from that sort of background, rather than being Indigenous. Um... so that's when I kind of... I feel like my world got shaken up... I was like, "I'm not..."

C: - from here.

A: - from here.

C: Okay

A: I'm born here, but I...

C: Interesting, cause -

A: Yeah, I feel like I've assumed the right to be here where I haven't thought about what it means to really be from here... and what that might mean to people who are Indigenous to somewhere.

C: Well, because you were actually born in New Zealand and so even like between you and I - I think maybe, like, growing up, I never felt like - like I always knew I came to Canada, you know. I felt Canadian, like I felt like, "Yes, I do have a right to be here, but I always knew I came from somewhere else. Whereas, I've never asked my younger brother if he feels kind of like -

A: he was born here, right?

C: Yeah

A: I mean, in New Zealand, I never thought about - you know, I'm born in New Zealand, you get the question asked to people of colour: "Where are you from?" And I'm like, "Oh, like, -

C: - New Zealand

A: Yeah, "I was born here, but my parents are from Taiwan" kind of thing. You have to answer with that heritage because that's what they want to know.

C: That's what they want to know.

A: That's what they want to know...

C: Of course, ... I guess I always identify myself as Taiwanese first. I always say Taiwanese Canadian, but one that jumps to my mind first, is not the Canadian part.