

TEACHER EXPERIENCES INCORPORATING ABORIGINAL KNOWLEDGES
AND PEDAGOGY INTO THEIR PRACTICE

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of teachers in two Lower Mainland school districts as they incorporate Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their practice. The BC Ministry of Education, in the process of updating the K- 12 curriculum has stated that teachers need to incorporate ‘Aboriginal ways of knowing’ into their practice. Across Canada including the Richmond and Vancouver School Districts, students who identify as Aboriginal are less likely to graduate High School than their non- Aboriginal peers. In Richmond and Vancouver, Aboriginal students consistently report having more negative school experiences than their peers.

The research consisted of eight interviews with elementary and secondary teachers from the Richmond and Vancouver School Districts. It finds that there is a widespread lack of knowledge and confusion about Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy. Experienced teachers feel overwhelmed at the thought of incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy respectfully into their practice. Furthermore, non-Aboriginal teachers have feelings of guilt about the legacy of the residential school system. An additional group of teachers was identified as those who are resistant to the incorporation of Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy.

Recommendations include supporting the teachers who are interested in incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their practice in becoming ambassadors who will promote discussion in staff rooms and disseminate knowledge. Other recommendations are increased engagement with the Aboriginal community and the development of links between Faculties of Education, which are now including undergraduate courses about incorporating ‘Aboriginal ways of knowing’ for teacher candidates and Boards of Education.

Preface

This graduating paper was submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Education in the Faculty of Graduate Studies in Educational Administration and Leadership at the University of British Columbia (Vancouver). This collaborative study was co-conducted and co-written by Cathy Thomas and Kevin Li. The study supervisors were Dr. Wendy Poole and Dr. Marilynne Waithman. Our study and preparations for our research began in September 2014 and the final paper was finished in April 2015.

The UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board (H14-02824) approved our proposal to conduct in-person interviews with practicing teachers in the Vancouver and Richmond school districts. Cathy Thomas invited potential participants through e-mail invitation to all administrators in Vancouver. The District Learning Services department invited potential participants through e-mail invitation in Richmond.

The content of this paper can be revised as needed prior to any publication.

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We acknowledge that we study, work, live and play on Coast Salish territory and on the traditional lands of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh people.

We would like to thank the participants who gave their time to help us to complete the research. We appreciate the honesty and reflection that they brought to the study and hope that their contribution will improve the educational outcomes all for the students with whom we work.

We are also thankful to our research supervisor, Dr. Wendy Poole and our principal investigator, Dr. Marilynne Waithman for giving their time so generously- for discussion and prompt, honest and constructive feedback.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

It is widely acknowledged by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal scholars, lawmakers and politicians, that historically the education system in Canada has failed the Aboriginal population. (Antone, 2000; Battiste & Henderson, 2009; White, Budai, Mathew, Rickson Deighan, & Gill, 2012).

According to Statistics Canada 2011 census data, 29% of Aboriginal¹ Peoples aged 25 to 64 did not have a high school diploma, compared to 12 % of non-Aboriginal Peoples (Ferguson & Zhao, 2011). The education of Aboriginal people has long been viewed as a political act, driven by a policy of colonization; designed to assimilate the native population into a Euro-centric and ‘white’ way of thinking. The main strategy for assimilation was the implementation of the residential school system (Barman & Gleason, 2003).

When Duncan Campbell Scott, deputy superintendent for Indian Affairs from 1913 to 1932, negotiated a joint agreement between the federal government and the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, and Methodist churches to establish the structure and mandate for residential schools in 1920, it was agreed that the schools would focus on primary education in an effort to, “forcefully Christianize and civilize Indians” (Matthew, 2001, p.13)

In June 2008, the Prime Minister of Canada, Stephen Harper read the following to Parliament:

Two primary objectives of the residential schools system were to remove and isolate children from the influence of their homes, families, traditions and cultures, and to assimilate them into the dominant culture. (Harper, 2008)

¹ Since 1982, Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution defined the term Aboriginal as the first inhabitants of Canada, and includes First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. Aboriginal is the term that we will use for the purposes of this study.

As Harper explained in the apology of 2008, these objectives were based on the assumption that aboriginal cultures and spiritual beliefs were inferior and unequal.

Battiste and Barman (1995) explain the impact of the education system upon Aboriginal people,

Aboriginal peoples began to see educators, like their missionary predecessors as nothing more than racists, patriarchs and oppressors who hid behind fine sounding words or ideology. In effect, education did little except equip Aboriginal youth with resentment and cynicism and erode human consciousness within Aboriginal communities. (p. viii)

Provincial Government Response

In 1999, the Minister of Education in British Columbia (BC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Chiefs Action Committee, the Federal Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs and the President of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF). The memorandum stated,

We the undersigned, acknowledge that Aboriginal learners are not experiencing school success in British Columbia. We state our intention to work together within the mandates of our respective organizations to improve school success for Aboriginal learners in British Columbia. (BC Ministry of Education, 1999)

The Ministry of Education has constructed the framework for the formulation, implementation, accountability and review of Enhancement Agreements and has made it compulsory for every school district in BC to develop an Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement (AEEA) in collaboration with the local Aboriginal community. The Ministry of

Education website explains that Enhancement agreements:

- are intended to continually improve the quality of education achieved by all Aboriginal students;
- support strong cooperative, collaborative relationships between Aboriginal communities and school districts;
- provide Aboriginal communities and districts greater autonomy to find solutions that work for Aboriginal students, the schools and the communities; and
- require a high level of respect and trust to function.

(BC, Ministry of Education, Aboriginal Education, 1999).

Following a six-year consultation process with the Musqueam Indian Band, Métis Nation BC, Urban Aboriginal community and the Ministry of Education, the Vancouver Board of Education (VBE) signed its first AEEA in 2009, which expired in June 2014. Richmond School District (RSD) signed its first AEEA also in collaboration with its Aboriginal community partners, in 2011. Richmond's AEEA will expire in June 2016.

Educators' Response

In addition to the BC government recognition that it needs to improve the educational outcomes of Aboriginal students, so too has the Association of Canadian Deans of Education (ACDE). In the *Accord on Indigenous Education* (Archibald, Lundy, Reynolds, & Williams, 2010) the ACDE recognized the role and responsibility that it has to improve educators' knowledge about and understanding of Indigenous education. As a result, Faculties of Education across the country have committed to improving policies and developing courses and programs

to support Aboriginal students and educators and to promote an understanding of Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy.

At the University of British Columbia (UBC), the Faculty of Education celebrated the fortieth anniversary of its Native Indian Teacher Education Program (NITEP) in 2014. NITEP is a program for Aboriginal students, which has been operating since 1974 for elementary teachers and since 2004 for Secondary teachers. The ACDE recognized that historically there have been fewer opportunities for non-indigenous teacher candidates to learn about Aboriginal knowledge and pedagogy and how to incorporate it into the curriculum. One such course developed following the ratification of the *Accord on Indigenous Education*, is the UBC EDUC 440 course. Currently, all UBC teacher candidates must take EDUC 440-Aboriginal Education in Canada, as the Faculty of Education aims to prepare new teachers in how to respectfully and meaningfully integrate Aboriginal knowledge and worldviews into their practice. This required course will provide teacher candidates with insight on how to enhance the education outcomes for all students, not just Aboriginal students (Course Description: EDUC 440: Aboriginal Education in Canada, <http://teach.educ.ubc.ca/files/2013/08/EDUC-440-052014.pdf>).

The researchers have identified a gap in the in-service education of practicing teachers and recently certified teachers with regards to their ability to meaningfully incorporate Aboriginal knowledges² and pedagogy into the curriculum. Using data from the Vancouver Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement: Fourth Annual Report- 2012/2013, (*Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement*, 2014) and the Richmond School District Aboriginal

² Munroe, Lunney Borden, Murray Orr, Toney, and Meader (2013) use Indigenous knowledges in its plural form because they believe that one should not see Indigenous peoples as all the same. Therefore, it is false to assume that the knowledge from one Indigenous community is the same as the knowledge from another community. As a result, knowledges are referred to in the plural form in our study because we also respect the belief that there is more than one knowledge.

Education Enhancement Agreement 2012/13 Annual Report, (BC, Ministry of Education, Business Intelligence Branch, 2013) it is possible to identify commonalities in the educational experiences, attitudes and outcomes of Aboriginal students in the two school districts.

In 2009, in the Vancouver School District, 29.4% of Aboriginal students completed six years of secondary school. In 2013, these rates had improved to 43.3% of Aboriginal students completing seven years of secondary school. In 2011, in the Richmond School District, 45% of Aboriginal students completed six years of secondary school. In 2013, these rates had improved to 73.8% of Aboriginal students completing six years of secondary school.

Each year, grade four and grade seven students in British Columbia sit the Foundation Skills Assessments³ (FSAs). In 2012-2013, Aboriginal students from the VSD and RSD in grades four and seven and were less likely than their non- Aboriginal peers to meet or exceed expectations in the subjects of reading, writing and numeracy. The VSD report states that, “significant gaps are evident between the Aboriginal and non- Aboriginal student FSA performance rates” (*Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement*, p.13).

Ministry satisfaction survey results⁴ for 2012-2013 for the Vancouver and Richmond school districts for grades 3/4, 7, 10, and 12, (BC, Ministry of Education, Business Intelligence Branch, 2013a, BC, Ministry of Education, Business Intelligence Branch, 2013b) consistently show that Aboriginal students report having more negative school experiences than their peers in the areas of liking school, feeling safe at school and being bullied by others. In addition, Aboriginal students are three times more likely to want to move to a different school. From these

³ The FSAs are annual, province wide assessments in reading comprehension, writing and numeracy, developed by the BC Ministry of Education and administered in public and provincially funded independent schools for grade four and grade seven students.

⁴ The satisfaction surveys are an annual province wide anonymous online survey developed by the BC Ministry of Education for students in grades four, seven, ten and twelve, their parents and school staff to provide feedback about their school experiences and school system.

data, the researchers draw the conclusion that teachers need to continue to develop their practice in order to provide a more positive experience of school for Aboriginal students.

Purpose

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore the experiences of teachers in two Lower Mainland school districts as they incorporate Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their practice.

In doing so, the paper seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What do classroom teachers understand Aboriginal knowledges to be?
2. What do classroom teachers understand Aboriginal pedagogy to be?
3. What are the challenges faced by classroom teachers in incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy?
4. What factors and conditions support classroom teachers' perceived successes in incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy?
5. What professional development opportunities are available for teachers to develop their Aboriginal awareness, knowledges and pedagogy?
6. Based upon their findings, what recommendations do the researchers have for the two school districts in order to best support teachers as they incorporate Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their practice?

Significance of the Study

The study is significant because the research will contribute to understanding the experiences- both the successes and the challenges- of teachers in their respective school districts as they incorporate Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their practice. It is also relevant with regards to the new BC curriculum that is currently being introduced which has a focus on

the explicit inclusion of Aboriginal worldviews and a focus on the perspectives of cultural groups such as First Nations. The new curriculum calls for the purposeful integration of Aboriginal content across all subject areas through the incorporation of 'Aboriginal ways of knowing'. Although feedback from teachers responding to the inclusion of this concept has been positive, the BC Ministry of Education (2014, p.6) reports, "Many respondents stated that they would need professional development and specific teaching and learning resources to be able to support the learning intentions related to Aboriginal ways of knowing in the renewed curriculum."

The researchers plan to share the study with the Aboriginal district administrators from their school districts. The findings will contribute to both the existing institutional knowledge and understanding of each district about how teachers incorporate Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their practice and inform the district administrators for planning purposes. The study will raise awareness about the challenges teachers face and may uncover successful strategies that non-Aboriginal teachers have used to connect with students. Both districts, and possibly other districts in BC, should be able to use the findings of the study to provide evidence that can support the writing of the AEEAs, which are being completed this year.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

As discussed in the opening chapter, historically, the education system has failed the Aboriginal population (Antone, 2000; Battiste & Henderson, 2009; White et al., 2012) and educators are having to respond to this failure at federal, provincial, district and institutional levels. The purpose of the literature review is to place current educational practice into context by giving a historical overview of Aboriginal education policy and to discuss literature that explains the key principles of Aboriginal education. In this review, we will demonstrate how the Eurocentric model of education upon which our BC public education system is based, fails to meet the needs of students who identify as Aboriginal.

This chapter is organized into five sections. The first section provides the historical background to Aboriginal education in BC and examines the impact that it has had upon the education of Aboriginal peoples, with a focus on the language and curriculum. The second section starts with the definitions of Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy that we are using for the purposes of the paper and then uses literature to examine these concepts in greater detail. The third section examines literature that discusses the importance of enhancing the education experiences of Aboriginal learners. The fourth section examines the challenges of accomplishing changes in pedagogy, and discusses approaches that have been suggested. In the final section, we explore the challenges of integrating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into the curriculum and naturalizing it into contemporary educational practices. Through this study, we can broaden the existing knowledge base and contribute to an understanding of the challenges and successes associated with integrating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into the BC curriculum.

The history of Aboriginal education and its impact upon current educational practice

The purpose of this section is twofold; to provide an overview of the factors that have shaped Aboriginal education in BC and to examine the impact that history has had upon the current practices of schooling Aboriginal students. The purpose of this section is not to provide an in-depth analysis of the history of Aboriginal schooling. We recognize that we could not do such an analysis justice in this study. For a more comprehensive history, we direct the reader to the work by Kirkness (1999) and Miller (1996).

Researchers in Aboriginal education unanimously agree that the colonization of Canada by Europeans, since first contact, has had a negative impact on Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogies (Antone, 2002; Battiste, 1998; Hodgson-Smith, 2005; Schimmel, 2007). Since 1620, public education policy in what was first called New France and in the country that later became known as Canada, has been based upon the assumption that Eurocentric ways of knowing are superior to the beliefs, knowledges and practices of the Aboriginal population. In our study, we explore the experiences of educators, who have been educated in this system, as they incorporate Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their practices.

History

Since the start of colonization, education has been used by government as a tool to assimilate or to ‘civilize’ the native population into a Eurocentric and ‘white’ way of thinking. Paquette and Fallon (2010, p.15) provide a summary of what they describe as the ‘pathologization’ of First Nations education. They state that this pathologization started in 1620, when the Récollets and for a brief time, the Jesuits, sent Aboriginal children to France in an effort to re-educate them culturally and religiously. After this, the Jesuits created seminaries where Aboriginal students were educated to speak French and expected to absorb French culture.

According to Paquette and Fallon, this was the “first residential school experiment,” (p.15).

Early schools for Aboriginal students were run by churches- by Protestants, Roman Catholics, Anglicans and Methodists. These schools prioritized the Christianization of the child.

The passing of the federal *Indian Act* in 1876, which was a consolidation of the earlier *Gradual Civilization Act* of 1857 and the *Constitution Act* of 1867, gave the government responsibility for the education of the Aboriginal population. The *Indian Act* established Aboriginal people as ‘wards of the state’ and legalized the paternalistic relationship of the government towards the Aboriginal population. Elements of the *Indian Act* are still in effect to this day (First Nations Studies Program, 2009). In its commitment to its policy of assimilation the government began to establish and to operate residential schools across Canada.

In total, there were up to 139 residential schools in Canada, with 18 residential schools located in BC (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, n.d.). The first residential school in BC was founded in 1863 by the Roman Catholic Church and the last residential school in BC was closed in 1984 (Brasfield, 2001). The last residential school in Canada closed in 1996 in Saskatchewan.

In 1920, following further additions to the *Indian Act*, it became mandatory for every Indian child to attend a residential school. Authorities would take children to schools far from their home communities in order to increase their sense of helplessness and isolation, separating siblings within schools and keeping boys and girls separate. The schools were chronically underfunded and conditions were brutal. It is estimated that up to 50% of the children who attended these schools died (Kirkness, 1999) from disease, starvation and abuse. Emotional, psychological, physical and sexual abuses were widespread. This cruel and violent government sponsored genocide has left a devastating legacy upon Aboriginal communities, which will take

generations to heal. As Milloy, (1999) wrote:

It is clear that the schools have been, arguably, the most damaging of the many elements of Canada's colonization of this land's original peoples and, as their consequences still affect the lives of Aboriginal people today, they remain so. (p.14)

The consequences that still affect Aboriginal communities today stem from loss- loss of love, of healthy family relationships, of belonging, of language and of culture. According to the Manitoba Justice Institute (1999), residential schools were the foundation for the epidemic of domestic and child abuse that is prevalent in Aboriginal communities today. In Aboriginal communities suicide rates are twice the national average. Rates of suicide for young Aboriginal males aged 15- 24 are five to seven times the national Canadian average when compared to non-Aboriginal males in the same age range (Aboriginal mental health: The statistical reality, n.d.).

In the 1980s, residential school survivors started taking the Government and the religious organizations that had run the schools to court and the horrors and reality of the system started to become public. In 1996, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples issued a report that raised the awareness of many non- Aboriginal people in the country who had not known about the system previously. Since then, there have been apologies from Churches and the Government for their roles in failing to protect the children in their care and for allowing the abuses to occur. As a result of this history, many Aboriginal people mistrust the education system and the people who represent it.

Part of the move towards healing the past has been the formation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which was inaugurated on June 1st 2008. Prime Minister Stephen Harper gave the government's apology for the residential school system on June 11

2008, (Harper, 2008). To many people the apology was significant, for it meant that government was acknowledging the harm that had been done by its policy. Others, however, remain unconvinced that the government is truly committed to improving relations with the Aboriginal community (First Nations Studies Program, 2009). The mandate of the TRC is “To inform all Canadians about what happened in Indian Residential Schools. The Commission will document the truth of survivors, families, communities and anyone personally affected by the IRS experience.” (TRC, n.d.). In addition to the TRC, communities and residential school survivors are undertaking their own initiatives aimed at healing and looking forward to the future.

For decades, Aboriginal leaders have recognized the effect of the government’s educational policies upon their communities and have pressured the government for greater control over the education of their children. The first step towards this being granted occurred in 1973 with the federal government’s acceptance of the *Indian Control of Education Act*. This Act stated:

Our aim is to make education relevant to the philosophy and needs of Indian people. We want education to give our children a strong sense of identity with confidence in their personal worth and ability. We believe in education... .. as a preparation for total living. ... as a means of free choice of where to live and work. ... as a means of enabling us to participate fully in our own social, economic, political, and educational advancement.
(*Indian control of Indian education*, 1972)

Impact upon language

The use of language in the education system was central to the deconstruction of the

Aboriginal person. Using the policy of assimilation in order to “kill the Indian in the child,” (Stabler, 2010), Aboriginal children were punished for using their own language and forced to speak English. Paquette and Fallon (2010) describe in detail, the punishments that were meted out to Aboriginal students for speaking in their own languages at residential schools. They explain how speaking in one’s native tongue attracted, “some of the most inhuman tortures,” (p. 12).

For the establishment, limiting the access of Aboriginal people to their own language and only recognizing English or French, was a cornerstone in the policy of assimilation. As a result, Aboriginal people encountered barriers to trade and education and had no recourse to the protection of the law. This is still apparent in society today, where English and French are the only two official languages of Canada. The banning of languages other than English at the residential schools in an attempt to assimilate the Aboriginal population was a powerful way of controlling the native population. Not only did it limit their access to society, but it also exerted a fundamental control over their rights as a person:

“...to deny other people’s ability to communicate, to prevent them from making sense, understanding, and questioning the world in which they live in, is one of the cruelest forms of violence that can be harnessed on a human being.”

-Paulo Freire, (1970), (Nieto, 2007, p. 236)

Aboriginal languages signify a deep spiritual connection to the land, their heritage and to each other. This connection is described by Carrie when talking about life as an Aboriginal person living in an urban area (Wilson & Peters, 2005)

“...I really miss the language. I am fluent in Ojibway but I don’t get the chance to speak

it here. It is the language. When you translate something from Ojibway the flavour isn't there. My mother was a great storyteller. The connection I feel when I speak the language is incredible. I miss the opportunity to speak the language." (p. 407)

Indeed as Thomas (2014) explains, access to one's own language is now recognized as a fundamental right, one that is written into the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. However as King (2012) points out, the Federal government funding for teaching French in Nunavut is around \$4 million a year, while support for teaching Inuktitut is about \$1 million. Therefore, we ask the question what is the ongoing motivation for implementing financial limitations for the Native population in accessing their own languages? Is it in order to perpetuate the linguistic hegemony?

We agree with Fettes and Norton (2000) who have found that this control over access to language continues to the present time. They report that while most provinces have taken steps to provide second language instruction in Aboriginal languages, they are generally insufficient to achieve oral fluency or to preserve language. No province is providing regular instruction in public schools, through the medium of an Aboriginal language. This is only known to occur in the school boards of northern Quebec and the Eastern Arctic and then only for the first few years of schooling. Fettes and Norton believe that this neglect will continue to erode Aboriginal language use and transmission.

Battiste (1998) explains that the consequences of assimilation deny many groups of people their language and cultural integrity and maintain the legitimacy of only one language, one culture, and one frame of reference. Furthermore Battiste believes that forced assimilation has led to the loss of Aboriginal languages, where languages are a critical link to knowledge

given to them by their Creator who blessed them with their languages and in them gave instructions for their development and survival.

Impact upon Curriculum

Children attending the residential schools were not taught English to a standard that would provide them with meaningful access to society. Bednasek and Godlewska (2009) explain how the government's nineteenth and twentieth century 'betterment strategy' controlled the curriculum that was delivered in Canadian residential schools. The focus of the schools was to teach boys manual labour skills and for the girls to learn vocational and housekeeping skills. Until the 1950s, a feature of Aboriginal schooling was that the students received instruction for only half a day, with the second half of the day used by the girls to complete domestic chores and for the boys to engage in manual labour. The goal was, "to create schools that would 'encapsulate hierarchically' First Nations persons on the lowest rung of Canadian society by training them not to think or to reach beyond the script of the lowest position in the social system." (Paquette and Fallon, 2010, p.5)

At this time, the government used the provincial curriculum in non- Aboriginal schools to perpetuate the myth of the inferiority of Aboriginal people. Stanley (2003) contends that by 1925, the BC curriculum was used to indoctrinate the population in the concept of white supremacy; it constructed all non- white peoples as inferior to the dominant white race. The use of language in the textbooks at this time promoted imperialism using words such as 'civilizing', 'patriotism', and 'morality' (p.45). Stanley finds that the 'Indian' was described in the past tense and was compared to animals in his use of 'barbaric' practices.

Carleton (2011) argues that public secondary education was, 'not a neutral project.' (p.103). He states that, 'the settler state harnessed public education between 1920 and 1970

to colonize the hearts and minds of non- indigenous students to make them good subjects.”

(p.111) He reports how in textbooks, indigenous people were described as, “savages,” and that the British Empire was shouldering the burden of ‘civilizing’ them.

Colonization continues

With the recognition that educational achievement of Aboriginal students is still lower than that of non- Aboriginal students (*A Portrait of First Nations Education*, 2012), control over Aboriginal education continues to be a contentious issue between government and Aboriginal leaders who still accuse the government of having a paternalistic stance in its attitude regarding Aboriginal education. In May, 2014 the Assembly of First Nations voted to reject Bill C-33, the *First Nations Control over First Nations Education Act*, citing concerns about the lack of consultation with Aboriginal communities and that it still enabled the government to have too much control over on- reserve education (FNESC, 2014). Following the second reading in Parliament, Bill C- 33 was put on hold by Parliament in May 2014.

The policy of colonization continues to impact the content and delivery of the BC curriculum and we agree with the assertion by Hickling-Hudson and Ahlquist, (2003) that Indigenous knowledges and contributions continue to be under-represented in discussions about the development of science, mathematics, histories and literature. Battiste (2009) states that contemporary Indigenous scholars and educators have revealed the wealth and richness of Indigenous languages, worldviews, teachings, and experiences and argues that all of these have been systematically excluded from history, from contemporary educational institutions, and from Eurocentric knowledge systems. Additionally Battiste argues, it is only white men who are portrayed as making history in science, the arts, and humanities, and who it would be believed,

have made the important contributions to the world.

Schimmel (2007) agrees that our current model of education is Eurocentric based and is still being forced onto the Aboriginal community. Schimmel goes so far as to state that government policies which require Indigenous people to learn exclusively or primarily in the dominant language of the country in which they live, rather than in their own language, violate Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Schimmel further claims that coercive educational development policies with assimilationist intentions not only destroy indigenous peoples' culture and values, they also fail to lift tribal peoples out of poverty and to improve their social and economic conditions.

White et al. (2012) also find that the children of residential school survivors continue to experience colonization due to the lack of instruction in their native language and curricular exclusion. Furthermore, we believe that the majority of teachers, who have been educated in this Eurocentric system from Kindergarten to their post-graduate experience, perpetuate this pedagogic hegemony in their practice as they have themselves been immersed in this model.

Understanding Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy

Definitions

The First Nations Studies Program (2009) at the University of British Columbia defines the terms Aboriginal and Indigenous as follows:

The term Aboriginal refers to the first inhabitants of Canada, and includes First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. Since 1982, Section 35 of the Canadian Constitution defined the term as such and has been in popular usage in Canadian context ever since. This term is not commonly used in the United States.

The term Indigenous is a term used to encompass a variety of Aboriginal groups in an international and global context. This term became widely used in the 1970s when Aboriginal groups across different nations advocated for a greater presence in the United Nations (UN). In the UN, Indigenous is used to refer broadly to peoples of long settlement and connection to specific lands who have been adversely affected by settlers and colonization.

For the purposes of our study we will use the term Aboriginal as we are located in BC, Canada. However, the study draws upon research from Canadian and global scholars who use the term Indigenous to refer to contexts beyond a Canadian perspective and we maintain their reference to Indigenous when referencing their work.

Aboriginal knowledges

Munroe, Lunney Borden, Murray Orr, Toney, and Meader (2013) use Indigenous knowledges in its plural form because they believe that one should not see Indigenous peoples as all the same and therefore, it is false to assume that the knowledge from one Indigenous community is the same as the knowledge from another community. Therefore, we refer to knowledges in the plural form in our study because we also respect the belief that there is more than one knowledge.

Through their analysis of Aboriginal epistemology, Sinclair (2004), Absolon (2010), and Doige (2003) contend that spirituality and interconnections construct the foundations of Aboriginal knowledges. Specifically, Sinclair states that Aboriginal epistemology is based on the concepts of “All my Relations” and “sacred”. He considers “All my Relations” to be the

cornerstone of Aboriginal worldviews wherein individuals need to understand how they are connected with all that exists in the universe. He understands “sacred” to refer to the spiritual component that is the supreme law that permeates all aspects of the universe. Absolon supports this thinking in arguing that we must recognize how we are connected before we can understand rich Indigenous knowledges while Doige (2003) argues that without a spiritual core learning is superficial.

In Aboriginal epistemology, the learner looks at life’s mysteries within the self, whereas Western epistemology seeks to synthesize knowledge to understand the outer world (Absolon, 2010, Battiste & Barman, 1995, Doige, 2003). Battiste and Barman (1995) contrast this with the Western world-view, which seeks to understand the world objectively by keeping everything separate from our inner- selves. The fundamental Aboriginal world-view is that all existence is connected in a holistic model (Battiste & Barman). As educators in the BC public education system, we experience the tension between these two world-views as we are starting to try and incorporate Aboriginal epistemology into our practice. We believe that the fundamental difference in believing how knowledge is constructed poses the greatest challenge for us as educators working within the educational system that we currently find ourselves.

Aboriginal Pedagogy

As there are many interpretations of Aboriginal knowledges, there are many interpretations of Aboriginal pedagogy. For our study, we have selected the two that we believe offer the most succinct synthesis. Davidson (2008) describes several characteristics of Aboriginal pedagogies:

- Learning is holistic.

- Learning is relationship-based.
- Learning is contextual.
- Learning is practical.
- Learning is continuous.

Biermann (2008) characterizes Indigenous pedagogies by three key characteristics to support the concept of a personal lifelong journey in learning:

1. Experiential-learning means guiding and challenging students creatively, physically, and emotionally through inquiry-based research, multi-sensory hands-on experience and reflective discussions.
2. Group-dynamic learning is where learners rely on the formation of a cooperative classroom where learning takes place from direct experience through observation of peers as well through dialogical and dialectical processes.
3. Student-centred learning puts an emphasis on partnership and participation of the students and educator where the students are involved as much as possible in planning, problem solving, and decision-making in their learning.

A common approach to learning is using the medicine wheel to show the understanding of human journeys at individual, community, national, and global levels (Battiste & Barman, 1995). The medicine wheel is effective because it comes from a holistic approach in helping the learner to see interconnectedness while considering the physical, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual way of thinking.

Anuik, Battiste & George (2010), Battiste (2009), and Biermann (2008) state the importance of nourishing the learning spirit, the spiritual component of Aboriginal epistemology, to fulfill the responsibility of learning as a lifelong journey. Anuik et al., (2010) argue that all

learners have the potential to make great achievements after the layers of feelings are peeled away so that the learning spirit may come through. The learning spirit finds itself attracted to certain learning experiences to provide inspiration, guidance, and nourishment to fulfill the purpose of a lifelong learning journey (Anuik et al. 2010).

Using a holistic approach is an effective method to engage the learning spirit so that the learner is highly motivated to reach a goal and to seek whatever learning assists in attaining that goal because Aboriginal knowledges are constructed based on the concept of “All my Relations” (Anuik et al., 2010, Doige, 2003, Sinclair, 2004). Aboriginal learning should emphasize students’ personal, spiritual, physical, and social transformation as much as the development of their minds in the classroom. Anuik et al. (2010) claim that the holistic approach allows Aboriginal learners to effectively critique knowledge making them self-sustaining and productive members of postcolonial Canada. Schimmel (2007) further supports our argument that there is an ongoing failure of the current Eurocentric education system to meet the needs of Aboriginal students when he states that education for Indigenous people needs to be developed in an holistic way that integrates parents into the learning process and that empowers them through literacy and numeracy programs or otherwise a vicious cycle of educational underachievement, poverty, social marginalization and related health deficiencies will continue.

The importance of Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy

This section outlines the importance of Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy to enhance the education experience of Aboriginal learners through supporting the learning spirit. We argue that a positive education experience will instil pride and empowerment for Aboriginal students as well.

Battiste (2009) claims that when Indigenous knowledge is naturalized in educational programs, the learning spirit is nurtured and animated. According to Anuik et al. (2010), Aboriginal Elders, cultural resource people, and Indigenous scholars urge educators to recognize that all learners are “spirit, heart, mind, and body” in order to identify, comprehend, and nourish the learning spirit. In their research, they find that students who struggle in academic subjects, learning through Eurocentric learning systems, respond well to the presence of Elders and traditional teachers and participate actively in the activities taught in Aboriginal culture camps. Aboriginal culture camps in Fort Frances, Ontario provide awareness of traditional Aboriginal culture and heritage where the program complements the formal schooling system (Anuik et al., 2010). Anuik et al. state that these same students who return from the culture camps have a drive and a desire to participate in learning in the formal classroom because their learning spirit has been nourished. We believe that if the students’ learning from outside experiences is not complemented in the public school system, no further progress will be made. Teachers need to recognize and honour the learning that happens outside of the classroom. This need has been recognized in the new BC curriculum (BC Ministry of Education, 2012a, p.3), which states, “Curriculum writers need to consider the First Peoples principles of learning. The Ministry needs to ensure that First Nations ways of knowing are respected in all curriculum areas.”

Anuik et al. (2010) state that Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy will instil a sense of pride in learners’ heritage, language, kinship ties, and nation. Anuik et al. claim that Aboriginal learners need to engage with traditional teachings at a deeper level in order to enhance their understanding and appreciation of the epistemologies unique to their community and nation. The challenge for public school educators is being able to nourish that drive for learning with at-risk Aboriginal students. Again, we question whether teachers in Vancouver and Richmond have

sufficient familiarity with these ideas to support Aboriginal students in this manner.

Aboriginal theorists advocate the use of alternative models of education that incorporate cultural Aboriginal experiences for they believe that these experiences enrich the character and dignity of Aboriginal people (Anuik et al., 2010; Antone, 2000; Battiste, 1998). Antone (2000) states that the Aboriginal voice is lifted up when traditional knowledge and values are incorporated into the education of Native students in the school system. We see evidence of this starting to happen through the provincial government mandated AEEAs, in which school districts and the Aboriginal community, are working collaboratively in order to meet the needs of Aboriginal students.

Since the educational system plays an extremely influential role in lives of North American children beginning at an early age, it is crucial that educators do the best to provide a positive and meaningful education experience for all students (Brade, Duncan, & Sokal, 2003). Lack of Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy in the current BC curriculum has limited positive experiences for Aboriginal students. In addition to the lack of cultural connection in school there is the loss of culture within the community due to the legacy of the residential school system. Brade et al. found significantly lower levels of self-acceptance among Aboriginal students in their early teens compared with their white counterparts. They also found that rates of self-acceptance get even worse at the postsecondary level. Brade et al. suggest that participation in cultural activities, would increase educational attainment for Aboriginal peoples, as participation increases pride in heritage and self-identification among Aboriginal peoples

The challenges of incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into the curriculum.

There are a number of challenges associated with incorporating Aboriginal knowledges

and pedagogy into the curriculum. Battiste (2009) states is that there is a lack of understanding of Aboriginal knowledges among practicing teachers. This leads to knowledges and pedagogy being treated as separate entities by educators and in our experience, seldom integrated into the curriculum model in which we work. This compounds our argument that our current education system is entrenched in a Western framework that has in turn educated the teachers.

Secondly, Eurocentric models have long ignored, neglected, or rejected Aboriginal knowledges as primitive and inferior, centering and privileging European methodologies and perspectives. This means, as Battiste (2009) contends, that Aboriginal knowledges and their internal perspectives have not been captured, understood, or stored systematically by Eurocentric knowledge traditions and conventional educational systems. The real challenge of enhancing Aboriginal education is creating curricula, pedagogical methodologies, and school environments that foster respect for Aboriginal culture and simultaneously offering a rigorous educational program in literacy, numeracy, and other skills in order for Aboriginal learners to succeed socially and emotionally in a broader national context (Schimmel, 2007). In order to fully understand the foundations of Aboriginal epistemology and to address these issues, practicing educators in the Vancouver and Richmond school districts need to receive greater opportunities for professional development in these areas. Since the fall of 2012, UBC's Faculty of Education requires all undergraduate students in education to take EDUC 440-Aboriginal Education in Canada; however, most current teachers in public schools have neither taken courses about and from Aboriginal peoples. The results of this study will contribute to an understanding of how practicing teachers are addressing this void in their professional training.

Thirdly, there is teacher resistance to incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into the curriculum. Hongyan (2012) cites studies across different schools in Saskatchewan,

Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia, which state that teachers are resisting the teaching of Aboriginal curriculum content, because they believe that the number of Aboriginal students within their classes is either low or zero. We agree with Hongyan's findings and offer an additional reason for this 'resistance'. From our experience as educators, we suggest that it may also stem from teachers' fear in incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy in ways that may be perceived to be disrespectful to the Aboriginal community.

Finally, within the BC education system there is the challenge of what Miled (2012) terms "celebratory multiculturalism." Miled found this to be an approach commonly promoted in schools, purposefully designed not to challenge the cultural hegemony. McCreery (2009) supports this assertion:

In their efforts to recognize diversity, schools have amended their calendars, adding Black History and Asian Heritage Month. But adorning the walls with displays of ethnic art and bringing cultural performers into school assemblies do nothing to help teachers and students interrogate systems of racial power. Inserting ethnic heroes and holidays into a Eurocentric curriculum fails to disrupt the normative whiteness of Canadian settler society (p. 45).

Miled (2012) states that in failing to challenge the cultural hegemony, the education system is failing to address issues of social justice and equity and silences discussions about the distribution of power and privilege.

How Aboriginal ways of knowing can be naturalized into contemporary education systems.

This section outlines methods to naturalize Aboriginal ways of knowing through teacher awareness, Aboriginal community involvement, resources and the adoption of a decolonizing

approach.

Aboriginal scholars stress the importance of creating opportunities for learners to see History, English, Science, and Math from their point of view and from the view of Aboriginal Elders and Aboriginal professionals (Anuik et al., 2010; Kirkness, 2005). Culture camps for students provide one of the best environments for Aboriginal students to learn one's Indigenous language and culture (Anuik et al., 2010). We suggest that these culture camps can be extended to non-Aboriginal teachers through a series of workshops so that teachers are able to have a better understanding of Aboriginal knowledges in order to incorporate these knowledges into their practice.

Brade et al. (2003) state that Aboriginal students are more willing to participate in classroom activities, discussion, and are in general more responsive in the classroom setting when their teacher is Aboriginal. The reality in Vancouver and Richmond is the lack of Aboriginal teachers in the system to offer more support for the students. The challenge is how to support non-Aboriginal teachers to provide a setting that engages Aboriginal students.

The case study by Hickling-Hudson and Ahlquist (2003) provides an example of an ideal learning environment where a community school has Indigenous community involvement. In consultation with the Indigenous community and a number of Indigenous teachers, the school adopted a curriculum with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous content (Hickling-Hudson & Ahlquist, 2003). Hickling-Hudson and Ahlquist stated that Indigenous science, philosophy, and culture were more affirmed visually in these classrooms to include globes, world maps, maps of tribal groups, and maps of the world before the European conquests. Field trips were viewed as necessary journeys into the world around this rural community. The library was well organized and stocked with a rich offering of Indigenous and Western books. We agree that community

involvement in integrating traditional Aboriginal knowledges can lead to success for Aboriginal students, but putting this into practice is the challenge because the majority of public school teachers in urban school districts are non-Aboriginal.

Biermann (2008) and Munroe et al. (2013) emphasize the importance of a decolonizing approach in order to integrate Indigenous philosophical and ecological understandings. Munroe et al. state that Indigenous knowledges must be integrated into education and cannot be treated as an “add-on” or “other”. In support of a decolonizing approach, Schimmel (2007) argues that education programs for Indigenous people must fully respect and integrate human rights protections. Schimmel argues that programs in the past were often designed to forcibly assimilate and destroy the uniqueness of Aboriginal language, values, and culture. This negative working relationship is a barrier to overcome as we introduce new programs to enhance Aboriginal education into practice. Progress has been made with each school district’s AEEA being developed in close consultation with the Aboriginal community, however, we believe that the school districts need to continue to nurture these partnerships with the Aboriginal community in order to effectively integrate Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy.

Schimmel (2007) states that educational opportunities designed for Indigenous people often run into difficulties because although they are well intentioned, they are designed in a manner that reflects a lack of knowledge on part of non-Indigenous peoples. Schimmel describes success where some countries have initiated measures to incorporate the voice and visions of Indigenous peoples into educational programming and promotion of Indigenous languages to incorporate meaningful ways of transmitting culture and values. Schimmel’s case study showed that bilingual and bicultural educational programs created and taught by Alaskan teachers have resulted in a vastly improved educational experience for Alaskan natives that honour their

culture. Math and science concepts are taught using various aspects of native Alaskan knowledge systems and skills including curricular content on hunting, trapping, fishing, and weather forecasting. Schimmel also reports difficulties for Haida Nation members maintaining their culture within the context of a school system that interferes with the traditional patterns of hunting and culture of the Haida Nation. For example, whole families take part during fishing season and the children should not be in school so they can be taught the traditions. This important aspect of the Haida community can be addressed since balanced school year calendars are already in effect across many school districts in BC.

The Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre (ALKC) in Saskatchewan state that one of its learning principles is to encourage a transformative approach to learning that embraces Indigenous knowledge, experience, and knowing while respecting mainstream knowledge and experience, and includes formal and informal approaches for learning programs that reach all ages (Battiste, 2009). This is an indication of progress to integrate and not resist against mainstream pedagogy by working in collaboration with all the stakeholders, which is aligned with the ideas presented by Schimmel (2007).

Limitations with current literature and moving forward

We believe that Miled (2012) provides the closest representation, of the incorporation of Aboriginal content into the curriculum in urban school districts in BC, through the lens of multiculturalism. The scope of her work however does not cover the experiences of teachers incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their practice.

In the effort to provide a better educational experience for Aboriginal students, the case studies by Hickling-Hudson and Ahlquist (2003) and Schimmel (2007) described in this paper

offer ways to integrate Aboriginal knowledges into the curriculum that were proven to be successful, however, these strategies possibly may not be applied in diverse urban public schools.

Challenges remain in how to meet the needs of Aboriginal students in urban school districts such as Vancouver and Richmond. In the VSD, the approximately 2000 self-identified Aboriginal students, represent about 600 bands and nations from across Canada (Vancouver, 2014). Successful incorporation of Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy occurred in schools, which were well staffed with knowledgeable Aboriginal teachers. In Vancouver and Richmond schools are mainly staffed with non-Aboriginal teachers who in our experience, have limited training in Aboriginal education. In order to move forward, the Vancouver and Richmond School Districts must provide resources to educate staff to be aware of and to understand Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy.

In completing this review, we read a number of examples of success, which have happened when Aboriginal educators introduce Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into schools with a significant number of Aboriginal students in the population. However, we found limited research that shared successes and strategies for non-Aboriginal teachers in urban school districts facing the challenges such as those mentioned in Vancouver and Richmond.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This is a phenomenological study focused on the experiences and perspectives of teachers who are endeavouring to incorporate Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogies into their classroom teaching practice. Phenomenological research has its origins in the philosophical writings of Husserl and Heidegger. A phenomenological study seeks not only to describe and understand the lived experiences of individuals who have experienced a certain phenomenon, but also to explain what Moustakas describes as, “the essence of the experience.” (Lichtman, 2011, p. 77).

The researchers chose the qualitative research design of a phenomenological study, because as Suter (2012, p. 352) explains, “The depth afforded by qualitative data analysis is believed by many to be the best method for understanding the complexity of educational practice.” In addition to this, a phenomenological research design seeks to, “focus on the lived and shared experiences of several individuals” (Creswell, 2013, p.80), which is what we were trying to achieve through the use of one-to-one in- depth interviews.

Setting

The study took place in the two urban Lower Mainland School Districts in which the researchers work. Both school districts are ethnically and culturally diverse. The Vancouver School District has approximately 54,000 students from kindergarten to grade 12 in 92 elementary schools and 18 high schools. Twenty five percent of students in the Vancouver School District have English as a Second Language and sixty percent of students speak a language other than English at home. Vancouver has a wide socio- economic range, comprising some of the most affluent neighbourhoods in the country and also some of the most impoverished. In the school year 2012/2013, 2,166 students in Vancouver self- identified as

Aboriginal, which was 3.8% of the school population (Our District, n.d).

The Richmond School District has about 21,000 students from kindergarten to grade 12 in 38 elementary schools and 10 secondary schools. Sixty percent of students in the Richmond School District are from homes where English is not the first language. Richmond also serves students from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. In the school year 2012/2013, 261 students in Richmond self- identified as Aboriginal, which was 1.2% of the school population (About our District, n.d)

Participants

All teachers in the Vancouver and Richmond School Districts were invited to participate in the study by an initial email advertisement (Appendix A and Appendix B). In Vancouver, Cathy sent the advertisement to elementary and secondary Administrators requesting that they forward the advertisement to their teaching staff. She did not include her own school in this study, as this would have raised ethical concerns regarding her position of influence as a vice principal in this setting. In Richmond, the Research Study Review Committee emailed the invitation to elementary and secondary administrators and asked that they forward the advertisement to their teaching staff. Upon receiving expressions of interest to the initial advertisement, selected participants received a letter of invitation (Appendix C), a copy of the informed consent form (Appendix D) and an advance copy of the interview questions (Appendix E) by email.

The number of participants in this study was limited to eight due to time constraints and recommendations from the university supervisor regarding project feasibility. To select the participants from the responses we received, we used the approach of non- probability purposive

sampling as promoted by Patton (1987), using the method of maximum variation sampling in order to select participants who reflected as wide a range of teachers and sites as possible, given the limited number of participants, in each of the two districts. Maximum variation sampling enabled the researchers to capture a limited, but reasonably wide range of perspectives for the study and enabled us to identify themes that are common across the sample.

Through the use of criteria-based questions on the initial email response, we purposefully selected participants who offered the maximum variation and who would, "...best help the researcher understand the problem and research question" (Creswell, 2014, p.189). In the initial advertisement (Appendix A and B) we asked prospective participants to indicate in their reply whether they:

- were elementary or secondary teachers who have a continuing contract
- have been teaching for a minimum of three years in the Vancouver/ Richmond school districts.

Teachers who have a continuing contract were included because as part of their responsibilities these teachers are required to design a program of study for their students to follow. Teachers who do not hold a continuing contract were excluded because they do not have this responsibility and so would not be able to discuss the experiences that are relevant to the research question. We also believed that participants would need to have established competence in their practice in order to be knowledgeable enough to contribute to the study in a meaningful way and decided that a minimum of three years teaching experience would place them beyond the beginning teacher career stage.

When the teachers replied with an expression of interest, they were sent a letter of invitation. In order to select participants by applying maximum variation sampling, respondents

were asked to answer the following questions in their reply to the letter of invitation (Appendix C):

- a) Are you an elementary or secondary teacher?
- b) Do you hold a continuing contract?
- c) For how many years have you been teaching in the Vancouver/ Richmond School District?

Therefore the criteria for maximum variation sampling of respondents were:

- the school district in which they teach- Vancouver or Richmond,
- the setting in which the participant teaches- elementary or secondary,
- the number of years teaching experience
- whether or not they have a continuing contract.

In order to ensure that we selected participants, “from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of research,” (Mears, 2014, p.171), we followed the three guidelines recommended by Rubin and Rubin (1995), who state that when designing a purposive sampling strategy, informants should be:

- Knowledgeable about the cultural arena or situation or experience being studied
- Willing to talk
- Represent [ative of] the range of points of view (p. 105)

In selecting which respondents to interview, respondents were divided into two groups according to the district in which they teach- Vancouver or Richmond. Within these two groups, respondents were subdivided into which setting they teach- elementary or secondary. We balanced the number of participants in each of these categories by selecting two elementary teachers and two secondary teachers from each school district. Within these categories, we then

selected the elementary and secondary teachers who have the shortest and the longest teaching experience in the relevant district and who hold a continuing contract.

Variations such as gender and grade level were not considered for maximum variation sampling, as the researchers did not consider these to be relevant for the purposes of this study.

Data Collection

The research consisted of standardized, open- ended interviews with eight teachers from the Vancouver and Richmond School Districts in January and February 2015. Seidman (1998, p.3) explains that interviewing, particularly in educational settings, is the best way to, “understand the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience.”

The approach of using standardized, open- ended interviews was selected because it is described by Bryman, Bell and Teevan (2012) as suitable when the researcher has a clear, rather than a general, focus for the research in order to address specific issues. Furthermore, Patton (1987, p. 116) explains that one of the benefits of standardized open-ended interviews is that it reduces, “interviewer effect and bias when several interviewers are used.” As both researchers did not interview all participants but interviewed only the participants in their own school district, this format was considered to be the most appropriate. As is standard practice in qualitative, standardized open- ended interviews, the interviewers used an interview guide (Appendix F). This ensured that both interviewers asked all of the questions. This guide was developed based upon the work of Creswell (2013). When the interviewer felt that answers required follow up or clarification, followed Kvale’s (1996) recommendation of using probing questions made reference to the commonly used probes listed in Johnson and Christensen (2012, p.198).

In designing the interview format, we followed Creswell's (2013) suggestion that researchers use the sub-questions from the research study phrased in a way that the interviewees could understand. We sent each interviewee a copy of the interview questions before the interview so that they were able to prepare their responses. We ensured that the questions were understandable by avoiding jargon and by having the definitions of keywords such as Aboriginal Knowledges and pedagogy written on the interview guide so that we could clarify the terms if asked.

In order to conduct effective interviews, we observed the tips offered by Johnson and Christensen (2012, p.199) and Kvale (1996). Specific tips that the interviewers used were:

- to be empathetic and remain neutral toward the content of what the interviewee says
- to use gentle non- verbal head nods and verbal "um-hms" to show interest in what the interviewee said
- to make sure that the interviewee was doing most of the talking and
- to utilize probes and follow- up questions to gain clarity and depth of responses.

The interviewers recognized that an interview is an, "interpersonal encounter," (Johnson and Christensen, 2012, p.198) and as such, sought to establish a rapport with the interviewee and ensured that the interviewee was comfortable. This was done at the start of the interview by explaining why we are conducting the research, by going through the informed consent form with the interviewee and asking opening questions about their teaching experience. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed as soon as possible afterwards by the interviewer using the recommendation of Bryman et al. (2012, p.173), which is to, "listen to the interviews closely once or twice and then transcribe." Once an interview had been transcribed, it was sent to

the interviewee to check for accuracy. The interviewees could make revisions as they saw necessary. Interviews ranged in length from 15 to 42 minutes.

Data Analysis

Basit, (2003, p.143) describes the analysis of qualitative data as, "... a dynamic, intuitive and creative process of inductive reasoning, thinking and theorizing." With this in mind, the researchers used the general inductive approach described by Thomas (2006) as a framework for analyzing the data. Thomas explains that the purposes of using an inductive approach are:

- a) to condense raw textual data into a brief, summary format
- b) to establish clear links between the evaluation of research objectives and the summary findings derived from the raw data
- c) to develop a framework of the underlying structure of experiences or processes that are evident in the raw data. (p.238).

We followed Lofland and Lofland's (1995) suggestion and started to analyze interview transcripts while the data was still being collected because insights can be gained from these earlier interviews, which can inform later interviews. This also allowed us to become familiar with the content of the raw text so that we could gain an understanding of the themes. The data were then 'cleaned' as suggested by Thomas (2006, p.241) once the interviews were complete. Cleaning involved ensuring that the font, font size and margins were the same and that interviewer comments were highlighted in bold.

This process of using Thomas's (2006) process of inductive coding involved both of us reading through the transcripts together to identify and assign upper-level categories that were closely linked to the research questions. In our findings section, these became the headings of

the four subsections:

1. Classroom teachers understanding of Aboriginal knowledges.
2. Classroom teachers understanding of Aboriginal pedagogy.
3. The challenges faced by classroom teachers in incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy.
4. The factors and conditions that would support classroom teachers' perceived successes in incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy.

We then re-read the transcripts together, to identify the lower-level categories or 'codes' that were the subtopics within each of these subsections (Thomas, 2006). These were the recurring themes that we identified within the responses to the interview questions and were assigned titles that conveyed the essence of each category.

In order to code the data, we chose to use the QSR Nvivo program, Version 10 and followed the instructions of Bryman et al. (2012) in how to use it. After the characteristics (gender, years of teaching experience, elementary or secondary teacher) of each participant were inputted, the 'cleaned' transcripts were uploaded to the program. Next, we set up the 'nodes', which are defined as 'a collection of references about a specific theme, place, person or other area of interest.' (Bryman et al., 2012, p. 356) In our analysis, these were the four upper- level categories that were linked to the research questions. These were then subdivided into 'non-hierarchical nodes', or the lower- level categories that we identified as recurring themes within the upper- level categories. Each transcript was read by both researchers separately and coded. In Nvivo this is done by highlighting the text and applying the nodes to the segment of text.

Coding the transcripts in this way allowed us to identify 'substantive statements'

(Gillham, 2000) made by our participants and to assign these to a category. Using Nvivo, we were also able to analyze word frequency and viewed this visually by creating word clouds and numerically by word count.

Ethics

The UBC's Behaviour Research Ethics Board approved the ethical procedures for the research. Additionally, the researchers received approval from the VSD and the RSD to conduct the study in these school districts.

Participants were asked to sign an informed consent form prior to starting the interview. This form stated that the participant would have the right to refuse to participate and to withdraw from the study at any time. Participants were also encouraged to contact the research supervisor and the co- investigators whose contact details are on the informed consent form if they required any further information or had any questions or concerns about the study. If participants had any concerns about their rights or treatment in the study, the contact details of the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services were also included on the form.

All interview responses and identities in the study were kept completely confidential. All information that may be used to identify an individual was deleted from the transcripts. In addition to this, all interviewees were referred to by pseudonyms in the research report. An electronic version of the data including audio files will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the research supervisor's office for five years.

The interviewee was assured at the start of the interview that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and that all interview responses and identities in the study would be kept completely confidential. They were informed that all information that may be used to identify an individual would be deleted from the transcripts. In addition to this, all

interviewees would be referred to by pseudonyms in the research report. We explained that an electronic version of the data including audio files would be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the research supervisor's office for five years following the end of the study. We also asked permission for the interview to be recorded. The researchers were respectful of the time being given by the participant and stated that the interview would take no longer than one hour. Interviews took place at a location that was convenient for the interviewees in order to ensure that they were in a comfortable and familiar setting and at a time that was convenient for both the researcher and the interviewee.

Social Position and Reflexivity

The researchers acknowledge the work of Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) in understanding that the researcher needs to be conscious of the biases, values, and experiences that they bring to a qualitative research study.

Cathy and Kevin are both full-time educators and part-time graduate students in the Masters of Educational Administration and Leadership (M.Ed. EDAL) program at UBC. They share a passion for improving the educational outcomes of *all* students in the public education system in which they work. The researchers acknowledge that they do not self-identify as Aboriginal people. Cathy identifies as having a British, white middle class background. Kevin identifies as a Chinese-Canadian from a middle class background.

Cathy first became interested in the educational experience of Aboriginal students when she was teaching in a Primary Special Remedial Behaviour program in a Lower Mainland School District. In the four years that she taught this program, at least 50% of the class composition was Aboriginal. Cathy undertook personal research in order to understand why Aboriginal students

were overrepresented in her classroom. She found that although 3.8% of the school district's population self-identified as being of Aboriginal Ancestry at this time, 20% of students in special remedial behaviour classes self-identified as First Nations (Williams, 2000). It is through this lens that Cathy has pursued her M.Ed. studies at UBC. Cathy has used every opportunity to further her knowledge about the history of Aboriginal education in Canada, and Aboriginal educational policies, philosophies and practices.

Since becoming a Vice-Principal in 2012, Cathy has been able to apply her learning to leading the introduction and implementation of the following school goal on the April 2013 school-planning day:

To increase knowledge, acceptance, empathy, awareness and appreciation of Aboriginal histories, traditions, cultures and contributions among all students.

Historically, school planning goals in the VSD are agreed upon by School Planning Councils, which consist of an Administrator, teachers and parents at each school. However, in order to raise the achievement of Aboriginal learners and to address the need to incorporate Aboriginal teachings into the curriculum, the Vancouver School District Learning Plan 2013-2014, (*District plan for student learning 2013/2014*, 2013) stated that every School Growth Plan for 2013-2014 was required to include a goal related to the development of Aboriginal cultural awareness, as well as identify strategies and structures to support the learning success of individual Aboriginal students within each school. As this school plan has been continued into 2014-2015 due to the teacher's job action, Cathy's Professional Growth Plan for 2014-2015 has a focus on supporting staff in working towards this goal.

Kevin's interest in Aboriginal education began when he started his program as a graduate

student at UBC in 2012. He soon noticed the increased attention paid to Aboriginal Education compared to 2007 when he completed his Undergraduate degree in Education. After searching for and reading through his district's AEEA and the 2012-2013 Annual Report (BC, Ministry of Education, Business Intelligence Branch, 2013), he discovered initiatives and projects that the district has established for improving the learning experience of Aboriginal students. This piqued his interest in finding out whether improvement has been observed and documented and if it has, what type of improvement has been observed since the implementation of the AEEA? He was alarmed to learn that Aboriginal students consistently reported a more negative school experience compared to non-Aboriginal students in both the Richmond and Vancouver school districts. Districts are required to work collaboratively with the Aboriginal community to come to an agreement. Therefore, he asks the question, if that is the case, why are students still reporting less satisfaction with their experiences in school?

As a teacher, Kevin feels that there are challenges facing educators who have been trained with Euro-Canadian methods of teaching. Although Aboriginal examples are used in current math textbooks, the contributions of Aboriginals to knowledge in mathematics are not acknowledged. As a math teacher, Kevin would like to see more resources and published material in the standard textbooks that show Aboriginal knowledges in mathematics. Without proper resources and support, Kevin would not feel comfortable incorporating Aboriginal education into his practice.

Another concern for Kevin is that smaller districts, such as Richmond have far fewer funds allocated to Aboriginal education compared to larger districts such as Vancouver. In BC, school districts receive additional funding from the Ministry of Education for each Aboriginal student that is enrolled in the district. In 2014/2015 school districts will receive an additional

\$1,160 per Aboriginal student (*Operating Grants Manual 2014/2015 2015/2016 2016/2017*, 2014). However, in his opinion, size does not matter because the amount of work needed to implement a successful initiative requires the same amount of work even though our target audience is smaller in population. Davidson (2008) talks about integrating pedagogy and not just content through Euro-Canadian methods, which would enhance success. He thinks that a focus on integrating pedagogy is lacking in the current AEEA agreements and having an impact upon the success of Aboriginal students. The AEEAs that all districts have signed is a big step forward for the sake of our Aboriginal students, but there are still challenges educators are facing in delivering this mandate. Also, he believes, there is a lack of promotion within schools in Richmond about Aboriginal education when there is a low Aboriginal student population. This in turn does not help enhance their education experience.

The researchers acknowledge that through their experiences and social positions listed above, their values may influence the study. In order to ensure reflexivity during the data collection, we used an interview guide (Appendix F) that was developed in consultation with our university supervisor, consisting of open and not leading questions. During the interviews we were aware of asking probing and not leading questions. Also, Cathy did not interview any teacher in the school at which she is the Vice- Principal, as this would have resulted in a ‘power-over’ relationship. Additionally, Kevin did not interview any teachers in the Math Department at his school, as he is the Head of Department.

Delimitations

The study explored the experiences of elementary and secondary teachers who have had a continuing contract for at least three years in the Vancouver and Richmond school districts as

they incorporate Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their practice. This study did not explore the experiences of:

- Teachers employed outside of the Vancouver and Richmond school districts,
- Teachers with less than three years teaching experience in their school district,
- Teachers who do not have a continuing contact,
- Teachers in post- secondary settings,
- Teachers in independent schools.

Limitations

The decision to exclude teachers with less than three years teaching experience in the Vancouver and Richmond school districts means that the experiences of recently qualified teachers has not been explored. Because the researchers relied upon self-selection of participants, this may mean that only participants who think positively about their practice regarding the incorporation of Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy volunteered for the study and this could introduce a bias in the findings. Such a risk is warranted because the findings will be disseminated within the school district, and educators will benefit from this sharing of good practice and positive attitudes toward Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy across the school district.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of teachers in two Lower Mainland school districts as they incorporate Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their practice. This chapter is divided into two broad sections. The first section introduces the participants and gives an overview of their teaching experience. The second section presents the findings. The findings are subdivided into four sections:

1. Classroom teachers' understanding of Aboriginal knowledges,
2. Classroom teachers understanding of Aboriginal pedagogy,
3. Challenges faced by classroom teachers in incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy, and
4. The factors and conditions that would support classroom teachers' perceived successes in incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy.

Participants

Of the participants, four teach in the Vancouver School District and four teach in the Richmond School District, two were male and six were female. The length of teaching experience of the interviewees ranged from three years to thirty years. The average length of teaching experience for all participants was 14 years.

Grades taught ranged from kindergarten to grade twelve, however we interviewed four elementary teachers and four secondary teachers. Three out of the four elementary teachers interviewed currently teach grade four and the fourth elementary teacher has taught grade four previously. We found this interesting because key elements of the current grade four social studies curriculum in B.C. covers Aboriginal cultures, exploration, and contact (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2006). This is the grade in which it is common for students to visit the UBC Museum

of Anthropology, make Aboriginal masks and construct dioramas of a traditional Aboriginal village. Each of these teachers gave concrete examples of these activities from their practice. Of the four secondary teachers interviewed two taught in the subject area of English, one taught modern languages and one was a math teacher.

Participant #1 was a white male who has taught in a range of elementary settings for 24 years in Vancouver. Earlier in his career he worked in an inner city school for two years and as a district English language learner (ELL) teacher. His classroom teaching experience has been in grades one, two and five. He is currently a primary resource teacher trained in delivering the Reading Recovery program.

Participant #2 was a white female who has taught in Vancouver for 16 years. For 12 years, she taught Spanish and French at a secondary school where 10% of the population were Aboriginal. She is now teaching in an elementary school.

Participant #3 is an Asian female who started her career as teacher teaching on call (TTOC) in the Vancouver and Coquitlam School Districts in 2006. She has been teaching for the VSB with a continuing contract for seven years. She started as a resource teacher supporting primary students and is now an enrolling teacher, teaching grade four.

Participant #4 was a white female who started teaching in 1999. In addition to working in the Vancouver School District as a TTOC, she worked in the Burnaby and North Vancouver School Districts. Although she was originally trained as a social studies teacher, she got a continuing contract teaching in secondary alternate programs, working with at risk students. She transferred into the main school as an Aboriginal enhancement teacher for one year, following which she joined the English Department at her school. In the study, participant four proved to be the most knowledgeable about Aboriginal Knowledges and pedagogy demonstrated through

her response to our questions. This we believe is due to the specialized role that she had as an Aboriginal Enhancement Teacher. She explained that in this role, she had to support and enhance the learning experience of the students and support the teachers in increasing the Aboriginal content in their lessons and in incorporating Aboriginal teaching and learning styles in the classroom.

Participant #5 was a white male who started teaching in 2011 as a TTOC in Richmond. In the fall of 2011, he started a continuing contract as an elementary resource and ELL teacher. The following year, he was a full-time grade 3/4 classroom teacher. In 2013, he returned to a resource and ELL position. He is currently a full-time grade 5/6 classroom teacher.

Participant #6 is an Asian female who has been teaching for eight years in Richmond. She has taught all levels of secondary math. She completed her B.Ed. and M.Ed. at UBC. She is currently teaching math in a secondary school.

Participant #7 was white female who has been teaching in Richmond for over 30 years. She has taught many levels in elementary schools over the years. She has been a classroom teacher and resource teacher. She has taught at eight to ten different schools in Richmond. She is currently a full-time grade 4/5 classroom teacher. She was the most experienced teacher who we interviewed. Participant #7 contributed the deepest reflections and expressed the most emotional responses.

Participant #8 was a white female who currently works in Richmond. She worked as a primary and intermediate teacher for three years in her career. During her time in elementary schools, she worked as a full-time classroom teacher and resource teacher. She has been teaching for the last 10 years in a secondary school where she has taught resource as well. Her current portfolio is teaching English from grade eight to 12.

None of the participants self- identified as Aboriginal.

Findings

This section is divided into four subsections, which are aligned with each of the research questions. Within each of these subsections, recurring themes are identified and substantive comments from the participants are used to support our findings.

1. Classroom teachers' understanding of Aboriginal knowledges. Our first research question focused on classroom teachers' understanding of Aboriginal knowledges. The responses from our participants were wide ranging. Most of the participants reported a lack of knowledge or the confusion of Aboriginal knowledges with pedagogy. Seven of the participants struggled to explain what they believe Aboriginal knowledges to be. There were many instances where participants were unsure of what Aboriginal knowledges are. Even though the participants did not have a deep understanding in this topic area, they showed understanding of certain aspects such as: Aboriginal knowledges are passed down orally through ancestry and there has been considerable loss of Aboriginal knowledges.

Lack of knowledge. Five out of eight participants said that they did not know what knowledges were. Many began their responses by saying, "I think..." or "I guess...." This signalled a lack of confidence in the topic that was discussed. Findings could be explained by the elementary teachers in Richmond being targeted for professional development and once they have been introduced to the subject, they realize how much there is to learn and how little they know. The responses to the question about what Aboriginal knowledges are did not appear to be consistent. Only one participant gave a concise and clear explanation:

Aboriginal knowledges- in a really large sense as Aboriginal understandings of world systems, our relationships with each other and with the Earth, and our ancestors and another spiritual side (Participant #4).

Interconnections of Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy. Participants often used the terms knowledges and pedagogy interchangeably. One participant, who was asked the question on knowledges, answered the question by linking it to pedagogy. For example, a participant responded that Aboriginal knowledges meant looking at different topics from a holistic lens. There were also statements that referred to Aboriginal knowledges as history that has been passed down from Elders orally. When Participant #2 was asked about her understanding of Aboriginal knowledges, she stated, “I think that a lot of would be oral like teaching history and culture and tradition orally because there was no written language for a long time”. Another response considered investigating place and looking at the world in a unique way as pedagogy; however, this might also describe how Aboriginal knowledges are constructed.

Recognition that Aboriginal knowledges have been lost. Three out the eight participants acknowledge that there has been a loss of knowledge transmitted from one generation to the next. Participants recognize that the loss of Aboriginal knowledges is in part due to the lack of representation in the curriculum, which is supported by:

I know when I went through the school system, that was a storyline that was often overlooked and to highlight the role that Aboriginal and Indigenous people have played in our country’s history and throughout the world I think is very important for our students going forth (Participant #5).

Battiste (2009) and Hickling-Hudson & Ahlquist (2003) reported similar findings.

Colonization, assimilation, and residential schools led to the loss of Aboriginal knowledges (Battiste, 1998). Participants #2 and #7 acknowledge that the loss of knowledge was attributed to residential schools. Participant #7 stated, “They couldn’t learn them [Aboriginal knowledges] because they were not with their parents, grandparents, and greater community to learn them”.

Hickling-Hudson & Ahlquist (2003) found that Indigenous contributions to science and math are underrepresented in relation to Eurocentric knowledge systems; therefore, it was not surprising that many participants related Aboriginal knowledges to teaching humanities, but were not aware of Aboriginal knowledges in science and math. There was undoubtedly an appreciation of history, artwork, myths and legends, but there were only links to the multi-cultural celebration such as art and dancing. Participant #7 was the only person to acknowledge that Aboriginal knowledges are complex knowledge systems:

When you think about the fact that the Aboriginal people were living in this land for 12,000 years and didn't have any of the abilities we have; no communication devices, no transportation devices, nothing at all and they were able to sustain and grow and remain an intact community for 12,000 years before the Europeans came. That's quite a long time to survive and so they must have had a lot of knowledge of the land (Participant #7).

Even though Participant #7 recognized of the complexity of Aboriginal knowledge systems, she did not acknowledge the types of communication and transportation system that Aboriginal peoples used.

Aboriginal knowledges as worldviews. Four out of eight participants described Aboriginal knowledges as a unique lens of looking at the world or a different worldview. Participant #8 described the Aboriginal worldview as, "A unique lens to view the world and is very different than the Western perspective." Some participants referred to differences between Western and Aboriginal knowledges that showed an "us" and "them" discourse. These responses support Battiste and Barman's (1995) claim that people consider Aboriginal knowledges as 'other' where there is a clear division between Western and Aboriginal views of epistemology.

Participant #7 was the only person who realized that the Aboriginal knowledges applies to everyone and stated, "To me, the interesting thing about this [First People's Principle of Learning] is it doesn't have much to do with First Nations and it's got to do with everyone in the

world”. Participant #7 explained that the worldview of the First People’s Principle of Learning is not limited to Aboriginal peoples, but how knowledge is constructed applies to everyone’s learning.

Aboriginal knowledges passed down orally through generations. All of the participants recognized that Aboriginal knowledges have a long history that has been orally passed down by Elders through many generations:

I guess I understand Aboriginal knowledges to be knowledge that is derived from Aboriginal experience or knowledge that has been passed down through Aboriginal ancestry as opposed to more knowledge that has been derived from Western scientists for example (Participant #6).

Nature-oriented. Elementary teachers were more likely than secondary teachers to describe learning as connected with nature. For example, Participant #1 stated, “I think of more rural and in the woods kind of knowledge than in the city kind of knowledge I’m puzzled as to how those fit together, the urban and the sort of more natural setting”.

Most participants were only able to connect knowledge to nature and were not able to explain that Aboriginal knowledge is place-based knowledge, which is actually related to all the connections that exist where the learner is located. Participant #7 was the only person who applied place-based learning in her practice through an exercise where students investigated the area around their school and connected it with Aboriginal knowledges:

The activity was that we had to go into nature and from nature, we had to take two sticks and make a cross and find quadrants. We would then find four different things to place into the four quadrants. Then we had to draw them. The questions were: “What did you take from the environment to create your quadrants?” “What did you notice about your senses?” and the last question was “What could we learn from the First Nations people that will help us understand the purpose of this lesson?” So here is one from a student where they wrote, “The First Nations people never harmed any plants or animals if they didn’t need it. We can learn from the First Nations to not harm or take anything we don’t need from the environment. First Nations also ask the tree for permission if they can take

a little part of the tree and if the tree said ‘Yes’, they took what they needed and thanked the tree” (Participant #7).

2. Classroom teachers understanding of Aboriginal pedagogy. The participants were able to discuss some aspects of Aboriginal pedagogy. Storytelling was the most common pedagogical approach mentioned. Important elements of pedagogy as outlined by Davidson (2008) were either not discussed or discussed on a superficial level. Participants did not make reference to ‘learning is continuous’ or ‘learning is contextualized’. Participants’ responses to concepts of ‘learning is holistic’, ‘learning is experiential’, and ‘learning is relational’ were not discussed in depth. Participants’ responses often included, “I guess” and “I think” when asked about Aboriginal pedagogy, which showed a lack of confidence about their understanding. The responses indicated that Aboriginal pedagogy has not been naturally woven into the practices of current teachers:

When I try to weave in Aboriginal pedagogy with the kids, I show that accepting diverse worldviews are incredibly valuable, but for a mass majority of kids, the Aboriginal point of view is something seen as “other” (Participant #5).

Participant #7 has attended the most professional development in Aboriginal education, but expressed the least confidence when asked about pedagogy:

To answer that question, I don’t know. I really don’t know. In Richmond, there are not very many Aboriginal kids that have attended the classes that I’ve taught. So their way of learning...I don’t know. I would love to know and am interested to find out, but I’m not sure I understand the way of thinking because I don’t have enough experience and knowledge myself (Participant #7).

Participant #7 response indicated she is overwhelmed with all the Aboriginal knowledges that exist and her lack of confidence is due to more exposure to Aboriginal ways of knowing. Other participants have not realized how rich and complex Aboriginal

epistemology as compared to Participant #7 because they have not taken part in as many professional development sessions.

Importance of storytelling. All participants understood that pedagogy included the importance of storytelling and making learning relevant to the learner. For example, how the learner takes from a story and what they need at the time:

You know spoken language is really important too as part of that, so storytellers, wouldn't that be, you know, not just someone coming to tell me a story but you know, telling me a story and here's how to use it and here's how to apply it and it here's how helps people make the reading writing speaking connection (Participant #1).

The stories were told over and over again and it would have been the same story and depending on where you are at in life, either your age or stage of life, or what experiences you've had or what your thinking ability is at the moment, you take different messages out of the same story (Participant #7).

Six participants recognized that using storytelling is an important part of Aboriginal pedagogy and is a powerful tool. They understood that the purpose of storytelling is not the content, but it is used to engage students to make connections with their identity. Participants generally related storytelling to talking about myths and legends in language arts and one participant made a more contemporary reference:

And that is the other thing, I have to say that when we do Aboriginal stories and legends, you know I have just finished *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* with my grade 10s- it is so great, but it does, you know, I have First Nations, Aboriginal kids in the class and so it is always challenging and you know that you need to be very delicate and so sensitive because there are so many stereotypes- I mean you can always deconstruct that and talk about it and that is the perfect book to do that with but it can be tricky (Participant #4).

Storytelling is a component of Aboriginal pedagogy that was well understood among our participants. The participants who spoke about storytelling were aware of the deeper meaning and purpose of storytelling.

Learning is contextualized. Davidson (2008) states that learning should take place in an authentic environment where the context occurs; teach fishing while fishing. This approach to contextualized learning was not mentioned by any of the participants. Teaching dance during ceremonies is another example of the contextualized learning approach. Every participant mentioned dancing by referring to it as bringing awareness and appreciation of Aboriginal culture into the school, but not in reference to how it can be used as an opportunity for contextualized learning. The references made to the use of performances conform to Miled's (2012) discussion of "celebratory multiculturalism"; the purpose of these performances is not to challenge the dominant Eurocentric culture but is tokenistic.

Learning is experiential. All participants indicated that Aboriginal learning is experiential- where students are guided and challenged to think creatively and to be reflective of their learning. Biermann (2008) states that in Aboriginal pedagogy, the learner's experience is important for learning to be meaningful. The participants' responses concur with Biermann's claim because they also value experiential learning and the impact it has to the learner:

Aboriginal pedagogy is where you would learn from experience as opposed to be told that someone has discovered this and now it is the rule that you have to memorized and learn and to accept it as it is. Aboriginal pedagogy would be discovered more; more organic I guess (Participant #6).

Participant #7 explained that learning through storytelling is depending on the experience of the learner at the time the story is told. She explained that different learning could come from the same story:

How is it that when the First Nations peoples did Storytelling, why didn't the stories get distorted? Well, you need to ask an expert. And an expert is someone who has lived it and they would tell you that the story wasn't told once. The stories were told over and over again and it would have been the same story and depending on where you are at in life, either your age or stage of life, or what experiences you've had or what your thinking ability is at the moment, you take different messages out of the same story. And

so the story is told over and over again and when you keep hearing the same story, you will distort it less each time. I think that's what I'm understanding from it. The stories are the same ideas, but they don't necessarily come to a happy ending. Often times, the story ends very abruptly and so you have to take out of it, whatever message you want. That message depends on where you are at in YOUR life (Participant #7).

Learning is holistic. Battiste & Barman (1995) contend that the holistic approach to learning allows the learner to see interconnections between the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual knowledges. The use of the medicine wheel provides the framework for the learner to experience learning through a holistic model and variations of the medicine wheel exist across many Indigenous cultures. None of the participants made reference to the medicine wheel (Battiste & Barman, 1995; Davidson, 2008). Three participants (two elementary and one secondary) recognized that Aboriginal learning is holistic. Participant #5 described the holistic approach as, "Breaking down that fragmentation is more of the First Nation's pedagogy compared to the western model". The Vancouver participants were more than twice as likely to comment on the holistic aspect of Aboriginal pedagogy. Participant #4 describes her understanding of the holistic approach to learning below:

Pedagogy sounds like a very Euro- centric word, if you think of it in that sense it has to do with teaching and obviously Aboriginal peoples have taught each other, but it seems to be a different approach, a lot more of a sharing of knowledge and nurturing of the individual to come to that realization- there is a lot of modeling and storytelling and having people reflect, figure things out on their own. It is not as step by step, it seems to be more holistic- you look at the big picture, then you take it apart and then figure out the parts to it, the sort of deconstruction and reconstruction idea within their culture (Participant #4).

Even though Participant #4 recognized the holistic approach to learning, her reference to breaking down ideas into parts is not in line with the arguments that Battiste & Barman (1995) and Davidson (2008) present. The purpose of the holistic approach is not to deconstruct the learning, but to reinforce learning through making connections between all things that are in existence.

Learning is relational. Six participants recognized that there is a relationship-based concept in Aboriginal pedagogy. The participants recognized that connections are important in Aboriginal pedagogy in order to make learning meaningful. None of the participants used the expression of “All my Relations”, which Sinclair (2004) states that the learner needs in order to understand how they are connected with all that exists in the universe. The participants indicated that Aboriginal pedagogy is human connections to spirits, community, and family and most often the responses related human connections to the environment. Participant #7 comes closest to an understanding of “All my Relations”:

So starting with the big idea that “All people are connected in a network of relationships to ourselves, our community, our Earth and to each other”. We have talked about that with the students and they have made posters around the classroom with that idea. We start with the notion of who are we, where did we come from, where did our families come from, what is our heritage (Participant #7).

Participant #7 made connections with understanding ourselves through identity, but this connection is between humans. The participants in this study recognize that Aboriginal pedagogy involves making connections, but they were not able to express a true understanding of the concept of “All my Relations”.

Learning is continuous. Davidson (2008) argues that traditional Aboriginal pedagogy regards learning as a life-long process that is never finished. This notion was not mentioned by any of the participants when asked about their understanding of Aboriginal pedagogy. Battiste (2009) claims that Eurocentric models have placed a bias that considers Western pedagogy to be superior. As our participants were educated through the Western model, this bias could be the reason why participants did not mention lifelong learning as Aboriginal pedagogy because it is also a concept that is valued in Western education for a long time.

Learning is practical to current life. Davidson (2008) explains that learning experiences

are practical because the needs of the community determined what teachings are needed. Three participants recognized that Aboriginal learning is practical. The participants acknowledged this by stating that learning for students is to apply it to their current life and the problems that they encounter. Unfortunately, participants were not able to provide examples of practical learning. Participant #2 describes the purpose behind First Nations dinners as building relationships and community. Davidson (2008) used an example of practical learning through preparing a feast because it was relevant to the community and it was needed. The dinners that Participant #2 outlined were an excellent opportunity for practical learning if the students had been taught about the meaning of the traditional dinners as they prepared the meals.

3. Challenges faced by classroom teachers in incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy. The answers to the question asking teachers to identify the challenges that they faced in incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their practice, elicited the longest and most detailed responses. We expected participants to list practical examples that present challenges to them in their practice (e.g., resources, time, access to professional development), but the first part of every participants' answer addressed the challenges that they experience in understanding the legacy of the policy of assimilation that was enacted through the residential school system. In analyzing these responses, we believe that the participants are describing challenges in processing their understanding of the residential school system at a personal level as a non- Aboriginal person, in order to be able to address these issues sensitively and accurately in the classroom.

Teachers' feelings of guilt. All of the participants reported feelings of guilt for what had happened in the past as a challenge to their practice. We believe this is because the education system was used to hurt Aboriginal peoples and Aboriginal students are still struggling to have a

positive experience in schools (Paquette and Fallon 2010).

None of the participants self-identified as Aboriginal and a lot of the language that the participants used constructed an “us” and “them” discourse. Responses often contained a paternalistic attitude towards the needs of the Aboriginal community:

I have learned so much about how terrible, terrible those residential schools were and how ‘oh my goodness’ the last school closed in 1996. To me when I heard that, it was really close to our time. What kind of savages are we to do this to people? ... Maybe that is what we did. We’ve done this. We have cut them off from their culture. We need to help them. (Participant #7)

Our participants did show an awareness of having a paternalistic attitude. This attitude is an additional challenge to the incorporation of Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy in their practice. Although they intend it to be an expression of compassion and understanding, it demonstrates a continuation of the view that the Aboriginal community is childlike and in need of rescue. We contend that if this attitude is passed onto their students then the teachers will impede instead of improve their students’ understanding of Aboriginal knowledges.

Time that it will take to ‘fix’ the damage. When talking about their feelings of guilt, six of the participants recognized the impact that the residential school system has had upon the Aboriginal community. After acknowledging the damage caused by the residential school system, there was widespread recognition by the participants that the damage is going to take generations to “fix”:

So I begin to understand that this is not a quick fix; this is something that will take many generations to fix. We have to sort of get through the terrible things that we’ve done and then hopefully begin to build again from that and that will take a lot of time; time and education. (Participant #7)

Participants went on to describe the need for society to repair the damage, as Participant #1 explained, “It doesn’t always happen that we are able to fix a problem with a solution, that we can address a past wrong, but we can address the way we speak today and I think that justice

needs to recognize where we've been but also it has to move forward.”

Three participants used the example of the Truth and Reconciliation hearings as moving towards a solution for society. Again the frequency that this was mentioned indicates that the participants are seeking to find answers to challenges that they are encountering outside the classroom and which have an impact on their practice.

Teacher resistance to the teaching of Aboriginal content. Our findings support those of Hongyan (2012) who found that teachers are resistant to the teaching of Aboriginal curriculum content because they have either few or no Aboriginal students in their class. Participants described hearing their colleagues' question why it is necessary to teach non-Aboriginal students about Aboriginal history and the impact of the colonial policies of assimilation. When sharing examples of teacher resistance, participants related what they had heard in the workplace:

I don't think that we have many Aboriginal students in Richmond so that's why we don't talk about it. [Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy] When it does happen, let's say in the prep room or in the staffroom, usually there is a lot of resistance as we look around and say “What Aboriginal students?” and “How is this relevant to our students?” (Participant #6).

Furthermore some participants used examples heard from their colleagues citing the history and needs of other ethnic groups as reasons not to incorporate Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their practice:

A lot of teachers were saying why can't we move on? We have moved on past Japanese internment, we have moved beyond the Chinese head tax. We don't see the Japanese people constantly saying “we want this, we want that, ” or the Chinese saying “we want this, we want that...So that was one of the arguments- why are Aboriginal issues taking forefront what about all the other ethnicities and all the other races? (Participant #6)

This quote indicates that there are teachers who do not understand the complexities of the damage towards Aboriginal peoples and the generations of harm inflicted on them. These statements indicate that they are trying to simplify the problem with Aboriginal education.

Unfortunately, these views echo the assimilationist policies of the past. It suggests that these teachers hold very simplistic and rationalistic views that are ignorant of the true damage that the residential school and colonial legacy has had and continues to have- not only for Aboriginal people but also for society as a whole. Furthermore, it demonstrates a lack of understanding of the root causes of issues such as poverty that those Aboriginal communities commonly face. These views suggest that as educators, they are failing to teach their students how to understand the history of people who they will come into contact with as they mature- perhaps as classmates at post- secondary institutions or as colleagues at work. This failure will perpetuate the misunderstandings, labeling and stereotyping that are common in society.

Teachers encountering stereotyping and engaging in stereotyping. Five of the participants referred to the stereotyping of the Aboriginal community as being a challenge in incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their teaching. Participant #2 talked about how non- Aboriginal students view their Aboriginal peers: “One of the things I think was a problem in secondary was the stereotypes of Aboriginals especially because Hastings Street was in such close proximity... I do think that the stereotypes are firmly attached and it is hard to counter that.”

When discussing the challenges that they face in their teaching, one of the participants essentialized the Aboriginal community in order to provide a rationale for their stereotyping:

I think that the challenges come from outside the school and I hate to say it, they come from, and who can blame them, attitudes of First Nations people and who can blame them? I watch kids who are relatively studious enough in elementary school and they get into secondary school and there are no work habits, I mean they come every day, but there is no commitment to the academic piece. (Participant # 2)

Participant #2's response shows deficit thinking that puts blame on Aboriginal students for their low achievement and that the education system is not at fault.

Furthermore, in response to the probing question, how would you see education being able to meet that need of the First Nations child in your class or the older students? The same participant responded:

Part of it is that you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink. I mean I really think that we are providing as much as we can given time and resources and all that sort of thing but if it's not translating I don't necessarily know that it is because of us, that it is our side and I don't mean that it's us and them, I mean that it is because of something that is lacking here. I don't know what the sense is like if there if there were FN [First Nations] schools, maybe it would be. Other provinces have FN schools, FN colleges, maybe it would be. I would say, you know, let's explore it. But, in terms of being a part of, it's hard because they are getting conflicting ideas, that's what I think (Participant #2).

The participant did not seem aware that she was stereotyping the Aboriginal community in her response. This response implies that the system has done much for the Aboriginal students, but the students are not buying into the current system. She had expressed compassion and empathy in earlier answers and mentioned the need for the Truth and Reconciliation process to be successful. We believe that this is an example of a teacher who does not identify as Aboriginal, reflecting the wider attitudes and understandings of non-Aboriginal society and subconsciously, encountering a personal challenge as she incorporates the teaching of Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their practice.

Students may not self- identify as Aboriginal. Two secondary teachers linked student identity as a challenge to their practice. In the experience of Participant #4, "There are about almost 100 students who identified as Aboriginal [in the school] and a real mixture of kids who strongly identified and others that either didn't want support or didn't want to be recognized as Aboriginal- didn't want to stand out." We suggest that a history of and ongoing experiences with racism and colonialism lead to a desire for Aboriginal students to not make themselves targets or

to feel that it is a waste of their time to try to change others' perspectives; therefore, Aboriginal students may wish to keep a low profile to avoid being marginalized.

As reported in Chapter one, student satisfaction surveys in B.C. consistently show that Aboriginal students have more negative school experiences than their peers. The work of Hickling-Hudson and Ahlquist (2003) states that Indigenous knowledges and contributions are underrepresented in all curricular areas and that may contribute to an understanding of why this is the case. Is it a result of the stereotyping that they encounter in school from their peers and teachers? Do these students feel negative because their culture and heritage is under-represented in the curriculum? Is there a lack of positive role models in the school system with whom they can identify?

Participant #4 took the subject of identity further and supported our argument about the challenge specifically in Vancouver regarding the large number of nations and bands which are represented by Aboriginal students:

I think that it is like the Urban Reserve here they call it because kids are not connected to, there are so many different backgrounds and so there is not that real sense of group identity, certainly there is so at Musqueam and North Vancouver it is a bit different. Here it is a little bit more isolated. You don't have that group support so much (Participant #4).

Participant #4's statement implies that many Aboriginal students in Vancouver do not have a strong connections to others from the same band because they may not have an established place here in the city. These students would not have access to their ancestral knowledges.

Teachers feeling overwhelmed. As we had anticipated based upon our own experiences as teachers in Vancouver and Richmond, a significant number of the participants (seven) described feeling overwhelmed at the thought of starting to incorporate Aboriginal knowledges

and pedagogy respectfully into the curriculum. Participants #4 and #7, who had shown the greatest understanding of what Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy are, expressed the most concern about being respectful in their practice. Participant #7 described this concern very succinctly, “The biggest challenge is we are told to teach something we know nothing about”. She explained further by describing how after listening to an Aboriginal educator tell a story, she felt herself unable to deliver it to her students. Participant #8 made this point very clearly, “There are certain things that I will not do because I feel that I’m not well educated enough to give it the honour and respect that it deserves”. Participant #2 expressed the fear that being a non-Aboriginal teacher, she would lack credibility in the eyes of the Aboriginal students, “How do they have the right to teach me my own history and they are not from the same background?”

Lack of up-to-date curricular resource s. A lack of access to curricular resources was listed as a challenge by every participant. In the case study described by Hickling-Hudson & Ahlquist (2003) widespread use of authentic Aboriginal resources were vital in promoting the successful integration of Aboriginal knowledges into a school curriculum. However in the experience of our participants, this was a common refrain and was expressed by Participant #7, “So the biggest challenge is that we are told by the government, “you now have to teach First Nations stuff; here you go”. Everyone from K to 12 has to teach it, but there is absolutely no information coming from anywhere really. I mean there are lots and lots of websites.”

In addition to discussing the lack of resources, participants from a Secondary teaching background were more likely to describe a lack of up to date resources as a challenge, reminiscent of the colonial curriculum described by Carleton (2011). Participant #8 refuses to use such a text in her school, “...in the English department, the texts that we have representing Aboriginal peoples are atrocious. We have this Copper Moon; we have these old myth books,

which are not current and frankly, I would never use them because they are inappropriate.”

Participants were unanimous in attributing the lack of up-to-date curricular resources to the financial issues faced by the school districts.

Lack of access to Aboriginal educators. The case study used by Hickling-Hudson & Ahlquist (2003) ascribes the success of the school they studied to the employment of Aboriginal staff and the involvement of the Aboriginal community. There was widespread recognition by the participants that the best qualified people to deliver a curriculum that incorporates Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy are members of the Aboriginal community. As Participant #1 said, “Who is out there who can do that? [teach authentic knowledge] And wouldn’t it be great if it could be someone from a local Band that the children identify directly with? That would be a wonderful thing.” In Vancouver, the participants expressed frustration about their ability to access the Aboriginal Enhancement Workers as a resource, as Participant #3 explains, “...if you don’t have an Aboriginal child in your class, then it is very difficult to have a consultant come into your classroom to deliver a lesson or to meet with you.”

Lack of time. When discussing the incorporation of Aboriginal pedagogy into his practice, Participant #1 asked, “Do people have time to do this?” One answer that we had not anticipated was frustration at the lack of time for building relationships with Aboriginal students, something that we believe to be fundamental in the success of all students.

Additionally, six participants stated that they do not have enough time for professional learning. Participant #3 is involved in a collaborative inquiry with some colleagues from her school on the topic of teaching Aboriginal content. Even though she is able to use some release time she stated that, “Even with those release days[for the collaborative inquiry], we feel that we are still not experts and we would like more time and so usually, it falls into Pro-D or before and

after school time or even our preps.”

Even when an activity is engaging, time is still an issue, as Participant #7 shared, “An Elder came in and it was fascinating; I could have listened for a very long time, but time is limited.” Participant #4 went further and described the other factors in her life that limit her time, “I know that UBC is currently offering a free six week course, which is amazing right? But it is out of school time, I’ve got three kids and I would still be doing all my regular teaching.”

Lack of and low prioritization of professional development opportunities. In addition to have not having the time for professional learning, a challenge common to all participants was that they were unaware of the opportunities available. Furthermore, the opportunities to access professional development were limited, as Participant #8 put it, “In terms of professional development, I don’t know what’s out there. I know my school is doing a session at the Musqueam centre, but beyond that I don’t know.” The participants were keen to offer solutions to these challenges, as Participant #3 suggested, “I would like to see more workshops being given at the school level, so having Aboriginal consultants, different Aboriginal consultants or speakers come and speak to our staff as a whole.”

Even though there was a universal lack of understanding and confusion expressed by our participants about what Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy are, participants admitted that when they were aware of professional development opportunities in the subject of incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their practice, they felt that other professional opportunities had a higher priority for them. This was explained clearly by Participant #1, “I think that you do what you think is important.” Teachers’ misunderstandings and uncertainty about Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy will continue if they do not feel an urgency to engage in professional development on this topic.

4. The factors and conditions that would support classroom teachers' perceived successes in incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy. Participants were able to provide many suggestions that they believe would support them in successfully incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their practice. The most common response was to invite and to employ more people from an Aboriginal background into the school system.

Engagement with Aboriginal elders. Participants from Richmond and Vancouver agreed with Anuik et al. (2010) in recognizing that students, who struggle in academic subjects, respond well to the presence of elders in the school setting. They discussed bringing in members of the Aboriginal community as a resource for both the students and the teachers to learn from, not as performers, but as educators. As Participant #1 expressed, "...if it was an Aboriginal person or someone who is experienced in teaching Aboriginal content and how it connects with Aboriginal learners, wouldn't that be dandy? I think that would be powerful." Elders would be better able to model what Battiste (2009), and Biermann (2008) state as the importance of nourishing the learning spirit, the spiritual component of Aboriginal epistemology.

Hiring Aboriginal educators. Brade et al. (2003) state that Aboriginal students are more willing to participate in classroom activities and discussion and they are, in general, more responsive in the classroom setting when their teacher is Aboriginal. We identified earlier in the study that it is a significant challenge for urban school districts in the lower mainland to hire large numbers of teachers who identify as Aboriginal.

Six participants mentioned that greater support from Aboriginal educators who currently work within the education system would support their success and all of these participants supported the hiring of more resource persons. As Participant #5 said, "I think there should be more Aboriginal Support Workers and having them spend time and share their expertise in the

school is a phenomenal resource.” In Vancouver, the role is school- based and they are located in schools that have a significant Aboriginal student population. In Richmond, this staff is based at the district and they provide support in schools at a teacher’s request.

Engaging Aboriginal families. Following the experience of the residential school system and the paternalistic attitudes of the Government that continue to this day (FNESC, 2014) towards the Aboriginal people, there was a recognition among the participants that some members of the Aboriginal community mistrust the education system. Teachers in Vancouver understood the value of having someone working in school who has credibility within the Aboriginal community and who can engage the families. In Vancouver two teachers gave examples of Aboriginal Support Workers who created opportunities to invite Aboriginal families into the schools, recognizing that they needed to bridge the gap between home and school. The families were invited to dinners in the school as an initial ice- breaker and as a way to start building partnerships. The teachers did not comment on whether or not these dinners continued on a regular basis.

In Richmond, there is a greater challenge to engaging Aboriginal families in schools as there is a much smaller Aboriginal community. Richmond and Vancouver host celebrations at a District level. One example is the Aboriginal student graduation ceremony held each year in both Districts.

Aboriginal performers. Participants stressed the value of having Aboriginal performers visit schools. We caution against the use of performers, whose visits are not put into context for the students as a part of a curriculum. As noted earlier, these would be good opportunities for contextualized learning, but are more often than not used to simply raise awareness and may further perpetuate the stereotypes of Aboriginal people that have already been described. This

further supports Miled's (2012) argument that educators in an urban BC school district have a limited and "celebratory" approach to multicultural education with it being limited to "festivals, food and dance." It would be more meaningful if Aboriginal performers were able to teach students and staff the purpose to traditional performances and provide learning opportunities that are contextualized.

Administrative leadership. Three participants gave examples of how administrative leadership had supported their success. Participants felt they were not alone in the process because administrators were also involved such as participating in afterschool workshops with teachers. Participant #2 indicated the impact of administrator involvement that led to positive changes that resonated throughout the school:

So it became a school goal and it really was focused on. I think because the Board cared and staff and Administration cared that it was something that we were able to get on board with and we believed in it in terms of the philosophy of the school, because as teachers we were always talking about meeting all of the needs and everything else (Participant #2).

District leadership. District leadership was also seen as a factor in teachers' success. In Vancouver, the District emphasis on every school having a goal about Aboriginal awareness was described positively. In addition to this, Participant #3 was excited about the availability of funds through the District collaborative inquiry fund. She felt very fortunate to be able to access the nine release days that the District provides for the teachers in her inquiry group to meet with Aboriginal Education Consultants.

In Richmond, the Elementary participants praised the level and quality of support that has been provided by the District through the "Walking into World" series of workshops developed for Elementary teachers. This series teaches the philosophy of Aboriginal knowledges first and only then introduces the materials and resources:

We are very fortunate to be working with Lynn Wainwright, who is the Aboriginal educator in our district. She has given us some units to develop with her. She gives us a lot of the philosophical side of things and then we try to incorporate them into more practical ways into the classroom...On the other hand, having those workshops and having Lynn has helped me a lot. The support from the district has been great from the workshops given by Leanne McColl and Andrea Davidson (Participant #7).

It is worth noting that the two teachers with the least teaching experience from each District are the only two teachers who have prioritized developing their knowledge of Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy and who are actively engaged in ongoing professional development.

Collaboration with colleagues. Three participants indicated success and professional comfort in working on Aboriginal content when given the opportunities to work with colleagues. The availability of teacher librarians, observations of colleagues, and release time for collaboration were given as examples. Participant #3 valued the release time for the grade four teachers to meet with the teacher librarian to learn about resources that are available in their own school. Participant #7 appreciated having a teaching partner to collaborate with and with whom she could share ideas about Aboriginal education because it was easier and less daunting working together rather than trying to do it alone.

'Useful' Professional Development. The need for Professional Development in this area was evident with all participants, but what participants deemed useful varied. This area was further subdivided:

Hands-on and ready to go. Participants indicated that they wanted guidance with ideas that they could readily integrate into the classroom. Participants wanted resources that they could pick up and use right away with the students, as Participant #2 explained, "The Richmond Museum has an artifact exhibit of a FN [First Nations] group- I'm not sure of the group, but it is a box of stuff that you can get and it is for teachers..." Ready-to-use resources are a good start

for teachers integrating Aboriginal knowledges into the classroom so they can become more comfortable and confident teaching the material. Providing ready-to-use resources for teachers without the epistemological underpinnings is a problem because it does not provide a deeper understanding of the Aboriginal knowledges. It is a good place to start, but teachers need to understand Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy so they can build confidence in developing their own resources around Aboriginal content.

Modeling. Davidson (2008) argues that modeling is an important aspect of Aboriginal teaching. The participants stated throughout their interviews that they did not experience authentic Aboriginal teachings in their education, so they were not confident in delivering Aboriginal content. Participants stressed the need for modeling Aboriginal practices such as the talking circle, by Aboriginal people (the experts), so they may recreate it in their own classroom. It was interesting that participants with less teaching experience mentioned this more often. Participants stressed that they want to ensure they are introducing Aboriginal practices in a respectful way. Participant #5 advocated for the need to observe the modeling of teaching Aboriginal content:

If you hear something great a teacher is doing, hearing it is one thing, but being able to watch them would be amazing. It would be great to be able to do that within the district or even out of district to see First Nations teachers teaching (Participant #5).

Integrating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into practice is an area that all BC public school teachers must be preparing for in the upcoming changes in the curriculum. All our participants have asked for different methods of professional development to assist them to be able to deliver Aboriginal content accurately and respectfully.

Summary

Overall, the participants in this study were not familiar with Aboriginal knowledges and

pedagogy and their responses portrayed a lack of confidence in their teaching of them. As a result, the participants were unable to give many examples of how they have incorporated authentic and meaningful Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their practice. Participants were aware of their lack of knowledge.

Through our analysis, we observed that there were two groups of teachers; those who are open to the discussion about incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their practice and those who have not yet started to introduce it into their classroom. Those who are currently delivering Aboriginal content showed enthusiasm and a desire to learn more about Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy. They gave detailed and rich responses throughout their interviews.

In our study, secondary teachers had less understanding of Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy compared to the elementary teachers. The stereotypical comments about Aboriginal peoples were drawn from the responses of secondary teachers. Also, secondary teachers were not able to indicate specific resources and support from the district in Aboriginal education as compared to the elementary teachers. Elementary teachers were more aware of the resources available, especially the elementary teachers from Richmond.

All of the participants reported feeling overwhelmed when explaining the challenges they face in their practice when trying to incorporate Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy. Because they do not have the confidence and training, the participants, who are non- Aboriginal educators, are finding it difficult to be inclusive of the needs of Aboriginal students while meeting the demands of the curriculum.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Recommendations

Discussion

Our findings indicate that there is limited incorporation of Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogies into teachers' practice. Teachers however, have the responsibility of addressing these issues in their teaching in a meaningful and sensitive way and are obliged to meet the needs of all learners. Additionally, with the integration of 'Aboriginal ways of knowing' into the proposed BC Curriculum, teachers will soon be required to have an understanding of Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy and to be teaching them. The incorporation of Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy was absent from almost all practicing teachers' formal education and teacher training, but it is not possible to wait for recently qualified teachers who have had this training to enter the classroom and take on this responsibility. We need to educate and engage the teachers who are practicing now.

Participants were only able to provide a superficial understanding when asked about their understanding of Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy. Teachers report feeling overwhelmed at how to start teaching this subject respectfully. This topic goes much deeper than questioning professional pedagogy and practice, it questions and exposes teachers' personal belief system.

Teachers who are practicing now are members of a society in which the legacy of the residential school system is only just starting to be collectively acknowledged and

understood. The incorporation of Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into a teacher's practice is far more complex than simply bottling 'best practice' and disseminating it. Just as society is having difficulty coming to terms with the damages and sufferings to Aboriginal peoples, so are teachers. Teachers' responses to our questions reflected the attitudes that we would expect from a cross-section of society if asked about Aboriginal issues- guilt, misunderstanding and labeling. We were surprised to hear stereotypical comments about Aboriginal peoples.

Our study can place the non-Aboriginal teachers into two groups; those who are starting to incorporate Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their practice and those who have not yet started to introduce it. The first group are non-Aboriginal educators who are aware of the damage caused by the education system and are experiencing guilt about how it was used as a tool to implement the policies of colonization and assimilation. These teachers understand the importance of incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their practice, but admit to being overwhelmed with respect to finding a place to begin. There is a second group of teachers who are resistant to starting to incorporate Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their practice for they do not see the importance, relevance or need to do so.

It is encouraging that this first group of teachers are taking advantage of the opportunities that are available for developing their understanding of how to incorporate Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their practice. In Richmond, the 'Walking into World' series has

been positively received by elementary teachers, for in addition to getting the ‘hands on, ready to go’ resources that teachers request, there is also a teaching of the knowledges and pedagogy. In Vancouver a number of teachers and Administrators completed the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) - Reconciliation through Indigenous Education, which was offered through edX⁵ by the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia from January through to March 2015 and was referred to by one of the participants. We found that these opportunities need to be taken advantage of from all practicing teachers.

It is problematic that the second group of teachers is not accessing the resources and professional development opportunities that are available. Our research showed that these teachers blame the lack of time and limited resources for their failure to pursue the same opportunities that their colleagues have used. We believe that they are not prioritizing the need to learn about Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy. We wonder whether these teachers truly understand the impact that colonization has had upon not just the Aboriginal community but society as a whole and how important it is to educate all students about the injustices that continue to exist today. Furthermore, these teachers need to understand that they are stereotyping the Aboriginal community.

The need for change goes deeper- there is a need for societal, structural and systemic change. Not only do teachers play a pivotal role in a student’s education because of the time they

⁵ edX is an organization that offers free online non- credit courses designed by leading universities from around the world.

spend with them, but they have a duty to educate socially responsible, critically thinking citizens who are able to improve the society in which they live. Teachers must be engaged in processes to enhance the experience of Aboriginal students; therefore, strategic planning around professional development is crucial to support teachers in the classroom. We understand that this is a complex issue because teachers have autonomy over their professional development and unless they see the issue as important or relevant, they will not prioritize it. It is important for all teachers to start integrating Aboriginal perspectives into their practice so students can develop a more critical understanding of Canadian history and citizenship by examining diverse perspectives. Although students may not currently interact with Aboriginal peoples on a regular basis, they may very well do so in the future, and relations might be more apt to be positive ones if students are well educated about their perspectives. In a country where multiculturalism is a matter of pride, ignorance about the Aboriginal peoples who inhabited these lands is unacceptable and reprehensible. In order for us to move forward, members of society need to understand the nature and impact of colonialism is an important step in ending colonial ways of thinking and acting.

One implication for future practice, is that stakeholders including the Boards of Education, British Columbia Teachers Federation (BCTF), BC Ministry of Education, and First Nation Steering Education Committee (FNESC) and the Aboriginal community need to work

together more cohesively, using consistent messaging in order to raise awareness of the importance of incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into teaching practice among all educators.

Another implication for future practice is that our findings support the feedback that teachers have provided to the BC Ministry of Education about the draft BC curriculum- that they need professional development in order to incorporate ‘Aboriginal ways of knowing’ into their practice. However, there continues to be a funding shortfall to public education in BC and Boards of Education across the Lower Mainland are discussing ways to cut budgets. We are uncertain as to whether the BC Ministry of Education will fund the professional development opportunities required or expect Boards of Education to meet the needs of teachers in these areas.

Recommendations

The following section outlines a list of recommendations for the Vancouver and Richmond school districts to consider in strategic planning intended to support teachers in incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their practice.

- Acknowledge that professional development has to meet the needs of the two groups; to support those teachers who are starting to incorporate Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their practice and to support those teachers who have resisted to introduce it. As such,

- o Develop workshops around the philosophical understandings that provide a deeper understanding for those teachers who are already engaged in delivering Aboriginal content.
 - o Develop workshops and specific content area resources to provide an introduction to the subjects of colonization and residential schools for those who are not yet engaged in this area of teaching. These teachers need to understand the importance for all Canadians to appreciate Aboriginal knowledges.
- Create a district mentorship program targeting the early adopters who are already integrating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their practice or who are ready to try. We recommend the following:
 - o Provide support for them to become ambassadors so they can promote meaningful Aboriginal curriculum content through conversations in staff rooms.
 - o Create opportunities for like-minded groups of teachers to share challenges, needs, and successes to build energy and enthusiasm in a supportive climate.
- Work collaboratively between districts and local teacher unions on how professional development is offered by the district because all school local teacher unions train Pro-D chairpersons. Pro-D chairpersons are the leaders in their schools who facilitate and develop in-school professional development opportunities.

- Provide meaningful Pro-D with less content in a single session, but presented over a series rather than a single event so teachers are able to digest the material.
- Provide a series of workshops with half-day release time for teachers so more teachers are able to attend.
- Improve access to Aboriginal educators to advise teachers about Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy.
- Extend more invitations to elders in the Aboriginal community to visit schools to educate teachers and students.
- Provide awareness that Aboriginal knowledges are not of the past; we need to be explicit regarding the value they bring to present learning.
- Provide improved support for secondary schools. Teachers in different disciplines are having challenges with integrating Aboriginal content into their practices.
- Arrange for improved organization and promotion of Aboriginal resources. There are resources available, but it is time consuming for teachers to review them.
- Improve links between Boards of Education and the local universities Faculties of Education in order for practicing teachers to complete the courses related to Aboriginal Education, such as the MOOC offered earlier this year by UBC.

- Lobby the Ministry of Education to provide a user-friendly website with links to the Aboriginal content in the new curriculum.
- Lobby the Ministry to provide funding and training for teachers to learn about incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into the updated curriculum.
- Access more funding from the Ministry to hire Aboriginal experts.
- Promote the role of the First Nations Education Steering Committee in the development of resources.

Reflections

We are educators who do not identify as Aboriginal and who did not receive any training about Aboriginal knowledges, pedagogy and curriculum content in our teacher education programs. We started our research from a point of curiosity and in hindsight, naïveté. In our practice we perceived the attainment and achievement of Aboriginal students to be unacceptable. In order to improve students' learning, we wanted to find answers to questions such as:

- Why are students who identify as Aboriginal more likely to be in a Primary Special Remedial behaviour program?
- Why are students who identify as Aboriginal less likely to have a high school diploma?
- Why are students who identify as Aboriginal more likely to express report more negative school experiences than their peers?

- What are schools and teachers doing that are causing Aboriginal students to be less happy at school than non-Aboriginal peers?
- What can we do as educators to improve the school experience for students who identify as Aboriginal?

We quickly realized that we had a superficial understanding of the complexity of the issues involved in the incorporation of Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into teachers' practice, which was probably at the same level as some of the participants who were interviewed for the study.

We have developed an understanding of the importance of meaningful incorporation of Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy in schools in order to engage students who identify as Aboriginal. We believe that our research shows that it is not as simple as advocating for a change in classroom practice or providing more professional development opportunities.

As researchers we experienced how powerful an interview can be as a way of learning. We were surprised and grateful for how open and honest the participants were when sharing their personal experiences.

We acknowledge that we did not interview any teachers who self-identified as Aboriginal. Therefore, our study has not shared the voices of anyone who represent the Aboriginal community. If we were to repeat the study, we would actively seek to interview

educators who self- identify as Aboriginal who are working in the school system. We would hope to learn about their experiences working in the education system. We would also try to interview teachers who work in schools which have a high Aboriginal student population and learn from them what their experiences and successes have been with incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their practice.

Through our research and questioning we have learned a lot and have been humbled by the experience. We recognize that by starting our study, we have simply taken the first steps on a path that we both intend to keep walking. We recognize that it will take a long time for change to occur, but we are both committed to continuing on this journey.

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Appendix A- Initial Email Advertisement- Vancouver



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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Department of Educational Studies

Faculty of Education

2125 Main Mall

Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1Z4

Tel: 604-822-5374

Fax: 604-822-4244

Web: <http://www.edst.educ.ubc.ca>

January, 2015

Teachers are invited to be research participants in a study entitled, **Teacher experiences incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their practice**. Eligible participants are elementary and secondary teachers who have a continuing contract and who have been teaching for a minimum of three years in the Vancouver or Richmond school district.

We will be selecting up to eight respondents based on representation from the Vancouver and Richmond school districts. Having an extensive understanding and background knowledge of Aboriginal educational practices is not a requirement for participation in this study as the researchers are hoping to explore a range of teacher experiences in this field.

The purpose of the study is to explore the experiences and perspectives of elementary and secondary schoolteachers in the Vancouver and Richmond school districts about incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their practice.

The research is being conducted by educators, Kevin Li and Cathy Thomas as part of their Master of Education program at UBC under the supervision of Dr. Wendy Poole, Associate Professor,

[REDACTED]

Interviews will be approximately one hour long. If you are interested in participating, please contact [REDACTED] for an invitation letter with more detailed information.

Thank you for your interest.

Appendix B- Initial Email Advertisement- Richmond

YOU Are Invited To Participate In Our Research Project!

<p><i>Research Study Title:</i></p> <p>Teacher experiences incorporating Aboriginal Knowledges and pedagogy into their practice.</p>
<p><i>Focus of Study:</i></p> <p>Through the use of semi- structured interviews, this study will explore the experiences of eight teachers from elementary and secondary teaching backgrounds in the Vancouver and Richmond School Districts as they incorporate Aboriginal Knowledges and pedagogy into their practice. This study is for dissertation purposes.</p>
<p><i>Significance of Study:</i></p> <p>The new BC curriculum that is currently being introduced has a focus on the explicit inclusion of Aboriginal worldviews and a focus on the perspectives of cultural groups such as First Nations. In light of this, the researchers believe that it would be beneficial to the school district and it's employees to find out both the challenges that teachers are facing as they incorporate Aboriginal Knowledges and pedagogy into their practice and also the conditions that allow for these successes.</p>
<p><i>Who Are The Research Subjects And How Many Are Required:</i></p> <p>We are seeking to interview two elementary and two secondary teachers who have a continuing contract and who have been teaching for a minimum of three years in the Richmond school district. Having an extensive understanding and background knowledge of Aboriginal educational practices is not a requirement for participation in this study as the researchers are hoping to explore a range of teacher experiences in this field.</p>
<p><i>Duration Of Study And Dates Of Data Collection:</i></p> <p>The study will start in January 2015 with interviews being held with participants in January and February 2015. The study will be completed by April 30th, 2015.</p>
<p><i>Research Methodology:</i></p> <p>Prior to the interview, you will receive an informed consent form. The form will state that you will have the right to refuse to participate and to withdraw consent at any time without repercussion. The informed consent form will contain the contact details of the Principal Investigator and the Co- investigators as well as the UBC Office of Research Services, should you have any questions about the study. At this time, you will also receive a copy of the interview questions.</p>

The in- person interview will be approximately one hour long and will take place at a location of your choice at a time that is convenient to you and the interviewer. Interviews will be audio recorded and then transcribed. You will receive a copy of the transcript to check for accuracy and confidentiality before it is analyzed. Following your approval, the transcripts will be organized according to the research questions themes and significant phrases and then analyzed.

Acknowledgements: (How might the research subjects be acknowledged for their participation in the study?)

Participation in the study is voluntary and all interview responses and identities will be kept confidential. Upon completion of the study, you will receive a summary and access to the full study should you be interested.

If you are interested in participating in our research study, please contact me before January 12th, 2014:

Name: Kevin Li

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Appendix C- Letter of Invitation



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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Department of Educational Studies

Faculty of Education

2125 Main Mall

Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1Z4

Tel: 604-822-5374

Fax: 604-822-4244

Web: <http://www.edst.educ.ubc.ca>

November 16, 2014

Dear Teacher,

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled **Teacher experiences incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their practice**. Dr. Marilynne Waithman, in the Department of Educational Studies at UBC, is our principal investigator and Dr. Wendy Poole supervises our research team consisting of Cathy Thomas and Kevin Li, who are both Masters students in the Educational Administration and Leadership program in Educational Studies at UBC.

We are seeking to interview elementary and secondary teachers who have a continuing contract and who have been teaching for a minimum of three years in the Vancouver school district. Having an extensive understanding and background knowledge of Aboriginal educational practices is not a requirement for participation in this study as the researchers are hoping to explore a range of teacher experiences in this field.

The in- person interview will be approximately one hour long and will take place at a location of your choice at a time that is convenient to you and the interviewer.

If you are interested in being a participant in the study, please respond to Cathy Thomas at [REDACTED] by Monday 12th January 2015 answering the following questions:

- a) Please state whether you are an elementary or secondary teacher.
- b) Do you have a continuing contract?
- c) For how long have you been a teacher in the Vancouver School District?

Participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any point. All interview responses and identities in this study will be kept completely confidential. All identifying information will be deleted from the interview transcripts and final report. The researchers will store the data on a password-protected computer. Electronic copies of the data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet for five years in accordance with the University of British Columbia's research and ethics policy.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Cathy Thomas at [REDACTED] our

principal investigator, Dr. Marilynne Waithman at [REDACTED] or our research supervisor, Dr. Wendy Poole at wendy.poole@ubc.ca.

Selected participants will be notified by Tuesday 13th January 2015 to arrange an interview time. At this time you will receive a copy of the interview questions and a copy of the informed consent form.

It is our hope that the findings of this research will contribute to the Vancouver School District's ongoing efforts to improve the educational outcomes for Aboriginal students. We look forward to learning from you.

Sincerely,

Cathy Thomas and Kevin Li

Appendix D - Consent form



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Consent Form

Teacher experiences incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their practice

Research Supervisor:

Dr. Wendy Poole, Associate Professor
Department of Educational Studies
University of British Columbia
[REDACTED]

Co- Investigators:

Kevin Li
Masters Student in the Department of Educational Studies
University of British Columbia

Phone: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Cathy Thomas
Masters Student in the Department of Educational Studies
University of British Columbia

Phone: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Research Purposes:

The purpose of the proposed study is to explore the experiences and perspectives of elementary and secondary schoolteachers in the Vancouver and Richmond school districts about incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their practice. The findings of the study will be shared with district administrators and will contribute to the ongoing development and understanding of how to support teachers in their practice.

Research Procedure and Participation:

Interviews will be conducted with four elementary teachers and four secondary teachers. All participants will be required to have a continuing contract and have at least three years of experience teaching in their current school district.

You will be invited to participate in an interview where you will be asked open- ended questions. Participation is completely voluntary and you may choose to withdraw at any point with no explanation required and with no repercussions. Interviews will be approximately one hour in length. The venues for these interviews are to be determined, based on what is comfortable for you and what is mutually convenient for you and the researcher. Once the transcript of the interview is complete, you will be sent a copy to check for accuracy and to make revisions as you see necessary. The school district and participants will receive a two-page summary of the final report.

Confidentiality and Data Storage:

Personal identities in this study will be kept completely confidential. All identifying information will be deleted from the study and participants will be given pseudonyms. The school district will be identified in this study. An electronic version of the data, including audio files, will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the research supervisor's office for five years.

Contact:

If you have any further questions or concerns, you are encouraged to contact the research supervisor, Dr. Wendy Poole [REDACTED] or the co- investigators, Kevin Li [REDACTED] or Cathy Thomas [REDACTED]

If at any time you have concerns about your rights or your treatment as a participant in this research study, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604 822 8598 or email RSIL@ors.ubc.ca.

Consent:

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without repercussions.

I have been an elementary/ secondary teacher (please circle) in the Vancouver/Richmond (please circle) school district for at least three years and I have a continuing contract.

I have retained a copy of this form for my own records.

I consent to the interview being audio taped.

I consent to be a participant in the study: *Teacher experiences incorporating Aboriginal Knowledges and pedagogies into their practice.*

Participant signature

Date

Please complete this consent form prior to the interview and hand return it to the interviewer before the interview starts.

Appendix E- Interview questions



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Web: <http://www.edst.educ.ubc.ca>

November 16, 2014

Thank you for agreeing to be a participant in our study:

Teacher experiences incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their practice

For your information these are the questions that will be asked during the interview:

- a) What do you understand Aboriginal knowledges to be?
- b) What do you understand Aboriginal pedagogy to be?
- c) How have you incorporated Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into your practice?
- d) What are the challenges that you face in incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy?
- e) What factors and conditions do you believe support you in incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy?
- f) What additional supports are necessary to better enable you to incorporate Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into your practice?
- g) Have you had the opportunity to participate in professional development that developed your understanding of Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy? If so, what was the nature of that professional development and who provided it?
- h) What other professional development opportunities are available for teachers to develop their Aboriginal awareness, knowledges and pedagogy?
- i) What kinds of professional development would you find helpful at this stage of your learning about incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into your practice?

What additional supports are necessary to better enable you to incorporate Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into your practice?

Appendix F- Interview guide

Teacher experiences incorporating Aboriginal Knowledges and pedagogy into their practice

1. Thank interviewee.

2. Go through the informed consent form.

3. Explain the purpose of the study.

The purpose of the proposed study is to explore the experiences and perspectives of elementary and secondary schoolteachers in the Vancouver and Richmond school districts about incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into their practice. The findings of the study will be shared with district administrators and will contribute to the ongoing development and understanding of how to support teachers in their practice.

Note- in our study, contemporary Aboriginal and Indigenous pedagogies are those defined by Davidson (2008):

Learning is holistic.

Learning is relationship-based.

Learning is contextual.

Learning is practical.

Learning is continuous.

4. Questions:

- a) What do you understand Aboriginal knowledges to be?
- b) What do you understand Aboriginal pedagogy to be?
- c) How have you incorporated Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into your practice?
- d) What are the challenges that you face in incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy?
- e) What factors and conditions do you believe support you in incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy?
- f) What additional supports are necessary to better enable you to incorporate Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into your practice?
- g) Have you had the opportunity to participate in professional development that developed your understanding of Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy? If so, what was the nature of that professional development and who provided it?

- h) What other professional development opportunities are available for teachers to develop their Aboriginal awareness, knowledges and pedagogy?
- i) What kinds of professional development would you find helpful at this stage of your learning about incorporating Aboriginal knowledges and pedagogy into your practice?

5. Thank the interviewee for participating in the interview and assure them that all responses will be kept confidential.



The University of British Columbia
Office of Research Services
Behavioural Research Ethics Board
Suite 102, 6190 Agronomy Road, Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z3

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL - MINIMAL RISK

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Marilynne L. (Lorna) Waithman	INSTITUTION / DEPARTMENT: UBC/Education/Educational Studies	UBC BREB NUMBER: H14-02824		
INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT:				
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">Institution</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">Site</td> </tr> </table>			Institution	Site
Institution	Site			
Other locations where the research will be conducted: Research will be conducted in the Vancouver School District and Richmond School Districts. Participants who respond to an electronic invitation will be interviewed at a location of their choice.				
CO-INVESTIGATOR(S): Catherine Thomas Kevin Li				
SPONSORING AGENCIES: N/A				
PROJECT TITLE: Teacher experiences incorporating Aboriginal Knowledges and pedagogy into their practice				

CERTIFICATE EXPIRY DATE: January 6, 2016

DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL:	DATE APPROVED: January 6, 2015	
Document Name	Version	Date
Protocol:		
Research Proposal- Teachers incorporating Aboriginal Knowledges and Pedagogy	1.0	November 30, 2014
Consent Forms:		
Informed Consent form	1.0	November 1, 2014
Advertisements:		
Initial Email Advertisement	1.0	November 1, 2014
Questionnaire, Questionnaire Cover Letter, Tests:		
Interview Questions	1.0	November 1, 2014
Letter of Initial Contact:		
Letter of Invitation (Vancouver)	1.0	November 1, 2014
Letter of Invitation (Richmond)	1.0	November 1, 2014
Other Documents:		
VSB Proposal form	1.0	November 1, 2014
Richmond proposal form	1.0	November 1, 2014
Richmond proposal- outline of methodology	1.0	November 1, 2014
The application for ethical review and the document(s) listed above have been reviewed and the procedures were		

found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

***This study has been approved either by the full Behavioural REB or by
an authorized delegated reviewer***