ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY

TRUTH, RECONCILIATION, AND UNSETTLING SETTLER SPACES AND PLACES:
AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHY
BY
DAVID M. LOEWEN

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULLFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
ATHABASCA, ALBERTA

JANUARY, 2021

Athabasca University
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The future of learning.

Approval of Dissertation

The undersigned certify that they have read the dissertation entitled

**TRUTH, RECONCILIATION, AND UNSETTLING SETTLER SPACES AND PLACES:
AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHY OF PRIVILEGE AND TENSIONED INTERFACES
WITHIN ONLINE DISTANCE EDUCATION**

Submitted by:

David M. Loewen

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Distance Education

The examination committee certifies that the dissertation
and the oral examination is approved

Supervisor:
Dr. Debra Hoven
Athabasca University

Committee Member:
Dr. Janelle Baker
Athabasca University

Dr. Reinekke Lengelle
Athabasca University

External Examiner:
Dr. Lindsay Morcom
Queens University

March 15, 2021

Acknowledgements

I would like to first, acknowledge the traditional territory of the Lheidli T'enneh where I live, work, and play – and where the bulk of my doctoral journey has unfolded.

It may be a cliché; however, dissertations and doctoral programs do not simply complete themselves. These are no solitary journeys. In my case, this process has been referred to in our household as "our project". The support and sacrifices of my wife Lisa could fill a large database. Achieving this doctorate and completing the course work and research has meant days of my unavailable brain, as it thrashed about in this work, and in evening classes online, whilst working full time and sessional faculty contracts. It has also involved innumerable hours listening to me read aloud draft papers, dissertation drafts, and many-a-rant about this or that. This has been a family affair, and for that, my words of thanks will not do my gratitude justice. As we both frequently say, something to the effect of: "these have not been easy years, however, they are worth it." Thank-you Lisa.

Thank-you to the kids of our home: Teeghan, Joseph, and Fynnley. Remarkable to engage in a reflective-based research project, to include you three in this research, and contemplate what five years means in your young lives as I wound my way through this process; close to half your lives in some ways.

Several deep thank-yous, to my immediate family, my mother and step-father, Cindy and Simon, five years or so of me pondering this research, has built upon lifetimes of your contemplating and living components explored in this research. Many a dinner time or beach side conversation were immensely impactful to this journey. To my brother John, and sister Mare, also many a conversation and encouragement. Also, to my sister Sarah, who passed away at the beginning of the 2nd year of this program. She was also in the midst of a doctoral program and left on a new journey prior to completing.

Thank-you, to a good friend and professional colleague, Dr. Margo Greenwood. Humor, wise advice, and an uncountable number of conversations related to topics pondered in this research, and to the broader discussions related to truths, reconciliations, and ultimately, relationships between peoples and communities.

Thank-you to my supervisor, Dr. Debra Hoven, and committee members, Dr. Reinekke Lengelle and Dr. Janelle Baker. Support, feedback, guidance, and many excellent questions have facilitated this project reaching completion. Thank-you to Dr. Yvonne Poitras Pratt for her

Abstract

In late 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) on Indian Residential Schools in Canada released its *Final Report* and 94 *Calls to Action*. The TRC laid out how Canada has enacted ongoing policies and practices of cultural genocide against Aboriginal peoples and communities. In a 2014 book outlining a proposed research agenda for online distance education, long-time researchers in the field, Zawacki-Richter and Anderson argued that social justice is always at the forefront for individual educators and institutions engaged in the field. The purpose of this critical qualitative inquiry was to test and reflect upon this argument, as well as reflect on my personal position within this frame.

To do that, this study has been conducted through critical self-reflection upon my own privileges (white, male, Settler, etc.) framed by my experiences completing an online distance education doctoral program, in turn, interfacing these with my reading of the TRC reports and *Calls to Action*. This study was framed and conducted in this way, in order to examine whether social justice aspirations, such as for example the TRC *Calls to Action*, are at the forefront of educators and institutions engaged in online distance education, and not just glossy aspirational statements, otherwise referred to as bullshit (à la Frankfurt, 2005). The process and outcome of this study was guided by the narrative method of autoethnography, which is recognized as both process and product. This dissertation highlights some of that process, and the results represent the product.

This autoethnographic research is based on one practitioner's experiences – mine, a non-Indigenous, white, Settler, able-bodied, male in the geographic area currently called Canada. This is intermeshed with my experiences within online distance education, and more specifically the doctoral program that I have participated in since 2015, which specializes in the field of online education. This dissertation explores and reflects upon various tensioned interfaces through interrogating my white Settler privileges, along with broader Setter responsibilities and response-abilities articulated within the TRC *Calls to Action* and related processes. These include interfaces with the Indigenous-informed concepts of cultural safety, ethical space of engagement, and cultural interface.

Keywords: distance education, online learning, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, bullshit, interfaces, autoethnography, social justice, Settler, cultural safety, ethical space, cultural interface

Prologue

Dear Teeghan, Joey, and Fynn,

 Where to begin…? Let's start in Kun̲x̲alas, or Gray Bay (Figure 1).

 This is a spot that you three know well. The "soft sand" at Gray Bay (Kun̲x̲alas Haida Heritage Site). The picture below was taken in 2018; this was your tenth time to this amazing spot. Fynn it was your ninth; your first visit here was in-utero.

Figure 1

Kun̲x̲alas Heritage Site (Gray Bay)

Note. Taken by author 2018

 When I took this picture, I had in the back of my mind my academic research and eventual compiling and completion of this doctoral dissertation. Watching this moment unfold, I thought to myself, "what a fitting metaphor and visual image for my thinking." There is much about this particular place that carries many, many meanings – for me personally, for our family, for many families, and for my pondering related to my life and specifically in relation to the document that follows this introductory letter.

 As a kid around your ages (12, 11, and 8 in this image), I spent some time at a summer camp just to the north of Kun̲x̲alas (Gray Bay), at a place called Copper Bay. We came to

Kun×alas as part of that summer camp, although at that time, these areas were *officially*
recognized and named by the BC Government as Gray Bay and Copper Bay. As a kid, we also
came periodically to Gray Bay on family excursions. The rock about mid-beach and mid-bay that
sits on its own (Figure 2) – used to be something we would dive and jump off as the tide came in
or on its way out, being careful not to slip and slice ourselves on barnacles.

Figure 2

Fishing off the Rock Mid-bay

Note. Taken by author 2018

The thing I love about the *soft sand* spot is that you guys run to it every year as soon as
we arrive for our week or so of camping by the beach. Maybe this will wane as you get older?
Or, maybe you will bring your kids to this spot and act out silly stories as we have over the years.
For example, we all still laugh at the silliness of pretending to "walk down the road" shouting
"Ms. Teeghan Ms. Teeghan, Ms. Teeghan!!", then pretending to step on a banana peel and
having a most dramatic fall with our feet above our heads landing on our backs, with the sand
absorbing our falls like a mattress crash pad – similar to the image above where two of you are
doing standing flips and landing on your bums.

The thing with images though, is that they are like research reports, or some argue, like Western thinking in general – rather static and noun-based (Little Bear, 2000). Images are a snapshot of an instant in time. That snapshot neither accurately represents the movement inherent in the action, nor accurately represents the series of moments, or movements, prior to, during, and preceding. Our mind has to make a leap of imagination. I have used this image metaphorically to ask audiences of presentations a series of questions and make a few points. Starting with, thinking about the photograph, what happens when we map this moment? And I provide this image below as one example (Figure 3).

Figure 3

What Gets Lost in Mapping?

Note. Source: Original

What is potentially lost in this mapping? What is gained? What remains the same?

Answers to these questions vary widely. One conclusion, we can suggest, is that the image in Figure 1 is not the moment itself – it is a representation of it. A flicker of an instant. An inanimate rendering of a very animate event. So is Figure 3 above; some might suggest, an even bleaker rendering. Both images/artifacts were determined by someone's choices. In this particular case, it is the same person that took the photo and drew the map (e.g. me); however, this is not always the case. And, yet, like art or other imagery, the interpretation is largely up to the viewer – beauty in the eye of the beholder, so to say.

This is little different than research, or the writing or imagery to represent research (or are these the same thing? – e.g. a letter of the alphabet is simply an image to represent a concept or sound). In the deeper context, that I hope you three come to appreciate as you get older, is that "the map is not the territory" (Korzybski, 1933) – meaning that a representation of reality, is not necessarily reality itself. Or as ancient philosopher Heraclitus is suggested to have said, you can never step in the same river twice, as it's a different river, and a changed person. Think of it as similar to jumping into the ocean on a hot day. At first, it's gasping cold; however, as you surface, stand up, then dip in again, it becomes "warmer" or, at least, more bearable.

In the process of working towards completion of this doctorate degree, you have seen many days of me surrounded by books, papers, and a laptop regularly occupying my lap. This has been a bone of contention at times, as we have worked as parents to limit your 'screen time'. At times, you three have fronted good logical arguments such as "but, dad is on his computer" or "you guys are always on your laptops".

Often, we would meet you with some parental, adult explanation of the fact that we were doing schoolwork and educational activities. These explanations often appearing to land a bit empty.

In the pages to come, is a wandering, pondering, and wondering about what the last four years or so have included and some of the reasons why. An exploration of what I was thinking about and why. The format is what many might suggest is associative thinking; trying to look for links and connections – the whole. Yet, through this, similar to my commentary above, this document is but a simple single snapshot (mine) representing a look back, a reflection, an exploration, of some of the things I have been thinking about, and what some of the many books and papers, and otherwise that were lying around the house, were suggesting to me through their snapshots in time, which had also travelled through time to meet me in relationship at the time that I read them. It also is a look to the future, with a distinct connection to the past. This future, is one that you three will be navigating. Sometimes folks call an autobiography a look back on a life, and some folks call a teliography a look forward to what the future might bring. This document is an autoethnography, which does both of those, as well as exploring links and connections and associations.

A lot has happened in our families' time over the last four years – as it has in any family. Some of these are woven through the story, or stories, I weave in this dissertation. For example,

five of your great grandparents have passed away in this time frame, and one aunt (my sister). These are the sorts of entanglements of life and death, and what I mean when I talk about tensioned interfaces.

Maybe, you're wondering, even though we've discussed it a few times: What is a dissertation?

Fair question. Maybe one you will ponder yourselves if you choose a path through the educational realm. Or, maybe not. This one that I have pulled and pushed together may not fit the standard format. Generally, a dissertation is a longer written document outlining one's mastery of a subject or subject area. These are generally written as a significant component of completing a doctorate degree. Once written, and during writing, the dissertation is reviewed by a student's committee – also experts in that area. Then an external examiner reviews the dissertation and the student must defend what they have written in an oral defence. That is generally one of the final stages of the doctoral journey.

This dissertation may be a little different than the standard, as I have started with this letter to you collectively and this sort of personal subjectivity has often been frowned upon in the standards of academia. I have also chosen to incorporate more visual components, beyond just the shapes that make up words (e.g. letters), and collectively how words themselves are visual. My hope is that as you become older you may have an opportunity to read, view and ponder a bit of what I have written and explored in this work.

The underlying foundation to my message is that often things are not as they seem. Things that seem so *certain* at times can become a wispy puff of a cloud – one moment hovering over a mountain on a sunny day – gone the next. Even as I pondered and slithered and pounded and prodded my way through this research and this program – I have come to appreciate even more the slipperiness of many of the things that many of us are taught in school that are purported to be solid, concrete, known, established, entrenched. Things like an understanding of what terms and words such as learning, education, knowing, knowledge, teaching, and others. Often this fits more into the realm of linear thinking; in other words, thinking in lines and sequences.

In the world of what is frequently called "advanced education" – the education one pursues generally after completing high school (or credentialing, as I frequently refer to it as) – these terms (e.g. education, knowledge, thinking, etc.) get wrapped into more complex words

such as epistemology (basically, meaning ways of knowing), ontology (ways of being), axiology (values and ethics), and ideology (a set of beliefs or values that guide how some things are organized – for example, think of the schools each of you attends and courses you complete). How an academic, such as someone like myself doing a doctorate degree and writing a dissertation, explores those terms, or perceived things, is often done in the form of written products such as a dissertation. It is suggested that this is done through various methodologies and methods – two more slippery terms. I think sometimes, academics forget that letters and words are inherently visual – unless one is blind and uses touch to interpret letters and words.

The three of you have learned about Indian residential schools in your elementary school classes, and now for two of you (Teeghan and Joey) as you enter high school. That is a prime example of how epistemologies and ideologies can do harm. A dominant society enforces its ideologies on other societies. Learning about residential schools, in present day education is a change from when I was a kid. I never heard this term – residential school – until I was in my early 20s, well into the 1990s. Added to this is the reality that I grew up alongside Indigenous families and communities, many of which were directly impacted by residential schools and family members that were forced to attend these schools. Many of my classmates would have been, and are, children of residential school survivors. A lot of my research interweaves in and out of stories and realities that continue to persist as a result of government and church policies to enact and enforce residential schools. These are deeply intertwined with notions of education, learning, schooling, knowledge and otherwise. These are not simple issues or concepts. They are all laden with a weight, and often supported by ways of knowing, ways of thinking, and systems of beliefs. These are things I've been pondering as you have seen me sitting on the couch or at a desk surrounded by papers, books, and my eyes on my laptop screen.

What I have found in my various travels, explorations, professions, and pondering – is that what carries some of the most important weight, is the relations between things and people, not necessarily the things themselves – or the perceived things. This is the associative thinking piece, rather than linear. Take the image of you three on the beach for example – this is both a knowing and knowledge; it is an education and teaching; and ultimately it is relational. A key element of the event that this image captured is a relationship with gravity; a relationship with the soft sand (as opposed to barnacle covered rocks), that soft sand was created by a mixing of currents and deposition from incoming and outgoing tides. Think even further back, and that

particular intertidal zone was also influenced by glacial ice sheets and currently the rebounding of the earth's crust, ever-so-slowly, recovering from the weight of ice. Taking this further, also relational with technology; we now have a relationship in the present with an event from the past. Viewing the photo sparks things in our brains that facilitate us remembering that event, each in our way of seeing and being. This is also about the relationship of family – a blended one. Me to you; you to me – each of you in your own different ways. And, us to a larger family.

That event, of jumping around in the soft sand from the past, is ingrained in our minds in some mystical way, it affects our present as we ponder it. And, as the image lives on, it influences us into the future. This is the slipperiness of time – or temporality, as academics tend to call it. Adding letters hoping that words sound smarter and thus perhaps demonstrating the smartness of the writer of those words. Yet, recognizing fully, that images carry words, so to say; as do brains. Brains also carry images, that are words, which in turn makes meanings.

I'll explore more of this throughout this document. Much of this is in text, however, I also incorporated visual aspects so as to create, highlight, and explore interfaces between ideas, thoughts, and more. This also includes the interfaces between words and images.

I imagine that you most likely, if ever, will not read this document until you are older. That is totally fine. And, maybe you never read it all – and that is fine too.
I love you guys.

Dad, dave, "but-dad"[1]

---

[1] "but-Dad" refers to common explanations to Fynn our youngest that I am "Dad" – not "but-Dad", as this tends to be the beginning of many of his incantations.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Chapter 1. Introduction to the Study

> History matters. It matters not just because we can learn from the past, but because the present and the future are connected to the past by the continuity of a society's institutions.
>
> – (North, 1990)

> Reconciliation is in the best interests of all of Canada. It is needed not only to resolve the ongoing conflicts between Aboriginal peoples and institutions of the country but also to remove a stain from Canada's past so that it can maintain its claim to be a leader in the protection of human rights among the nations of the world.
>
> – (TRC, Vol. 6, p. 19)

Orientating into Tensioned Interfaces: Online Distance Education, Social Justice, and Hard Truths

Over the last couple decades, much of my professional work has been with and for Indigenous communities in the western part of this nation; however, my family background is non-Indigenous, white Settler. This has resulted in many personal and professional tensioned interfaces. In my work, I have seen no shortage of evidence related to the stains of Canada's past as pointed out in the epigraph above from the TRC, which is intertwined with the epigraph from North (1990). In addition, much of my professional work, and my personal life, has been intertwined and entangled with questions and processes of what is commonly referred to as *reconciliation* in this geographic area now called Canada by some, and Turtle Island by others, and home by many. This reconciliation is purported to be between Indigenous peoples and Settler peoples, which itself represents a highly-tensioned interface.

My work over many years in multiple fields (natural resource management and preservation, youth work, education, healthcare, and Indigenous governance and rights) has revealed and involved multiple tensioned interfaces, including my own education in formal education systems over the past several decades, which sits alongside and intermingled with my learning from working within Indigenous communities, and decades of education on the land and on, or in, the water (freshwater and ocean). My experience within formal education systems has involved decades of learning through online distance education, as well as teaching and facilitating through online distance education. Since mid-2015, I have been completing a doctoral program in education at an institution based in western Canada. This institution also sits

at an interface area between two of the numbered Treaties that exist in Canada. This doctoral

dissertation is the culmination of over four years of focussed research on the interfaces of online

distance education, education in general, and initiatives heralding social justice, specifically,

initiatives and education that propose to *reconcile* relationships (e.g. between Indigenous peoples

and Settlers in the area currently called Canada) and that discuss and reveal truths – many of

which are brutal, hard, nasty truths. These are difficult to hear, and even fathom.

These Truths include, as stated in the epigraph above, *the stains on this nation's past* as

referred to by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) on Indian Residential Schools,

completed in 2015. Many of the truths navigated by, and highlighted by the TRC, are

unquestionably related to issues of social justice and social injustice. One of these injustices is

the cultural genocide enacted by governments, churches and many other institutions within this

country (TRC, 2015). This particular stain, and the thinking that enacted it, have long lasting

impacts through history, through the present day, and well into the future. The TRC has been

foundational to framing this dissertation.

The tensioned interfaces between social justice and online distance education along with

privilege and whiteness, will be highlighted shortly. First, it is important to explain further what I

mean by *tensioned interfaces* in this work.

Interfaces

For over four years, in working towards completing a doctoral degree, I have navigated

many interfaces. I use this word *interface* within its many meanings and connotations. For

example, the Merriam Webster dictionary defines interface as:

1. a surface forming a common boundary of two bodies, spaces, or phases. For
   example, an oil-water interface.
2. *(a)* the place at which independent and often unrelated systems meet and act on or
   communicate with each other. For example, the man-machine interface [fitting for
   online distance education and educational technology].

   (b) the means by which interaction or communication is achieved at an interface.

Interface is a fine word and concept for the problems and opportunities I explored through this

research and that informed this dissertation, as well as much of my research and course work

throughout the doctoral program. The word *inter-* originates from Latin roots meaning: "among,

between, betwixt, in the midst of" (Online Etymology Dictionary). The word *face*, has many

meanings, however, often referring to the surface of something, or the front of something. A computer screen is an example of an interface, a mouse and keyboard are interfaces, the software program Windows also provides an interface.

The natural world is also full of interfaces. The image below (Figure 4) is from the summer of 2018 (the third year of my participation in the doctoral program), and it is a photograph I took of two of our kids exploring an intertidal zone on Haida Gwaii – off the northwest coast of British Columbia (BC) where I grew up. This particular area where this image was taken is a beach I spent countless hours on from near birth to close to their age (pre-teens) – from birthday parties, to family gatherings, to walking and wandering aimlessly. The purpose of this image is to highlight the *in-between* spaces, the space between tides, and the interfaces between land and sea. These assist in highlighting fluidity – such as where does the land end and ocean start? This depends on the tide, as well as the weather. This depends on air pressure and sea temperatures. Where does the ocean end and the sky start? This is also dependent on tides, or weather, or vantage points.

Figure 4

Example of an Interface

Note. Source: Original

The image also represents the in-between spaces in families and generations. And, it relates to an important experience as a child.

Vignette

A few hundred metres from this spot, my brother and a childhood friend found a skull jutting out of the sand dunes along the beach. The area had been exposed by a recent storm that eroded the sand banks along the beach. I was about seven or eight years old at the time. About the same age of my youngest son in 2018 (he's not in the image above). My brother brought me out to the beach to see the skull embedded in the sand. Shortly after the RCMP were called to come and take a look. The museum was called. We learned eventually that the skull was estimated to be about 800 years old.

The area where it was located was thought to be an old burial ground for Haida people, pre-colonization. The name of the rural area where we lived – Tlell – was actually an anglicized version of a Haida word for that place. I did not learn this until later in life, closer to my 20s. As a child, I had not given it much thought. During those times, we referred to where we lived as the Queen Charlotte Islands, not Haida Gwaii. Queen Charlotte was the name of an early British explorers' boat, referencing back to a past monarch in England. This is the sort of ignorance that exists in colonized lands and some colonized minds. Place names given by colonizers that overlay places that had names going back thousands of years. These modes of thinking are what I refer to when I ponder and discuss unsettling Settler places and spaces.

Alexander Galloway wrote a trio of books exploring the "politics and aesthetics of information technology" (2012, p. x). In his 2012 book, *The interface effect*, he argued that interfaces "are not simply objects or boundary points. They are autonomous zones of activity. Interfaces are not things, but rather processes that effect a result of whatever kind" (p. vii). In the opening pages to his book, Galloway pointed out that, "Like it or not the new culture is networked and open source, and one is in need of intelligent interventions to evaluate it" (p. 1). Interfaces become the mediators of these spaces, yet, in contradiction, are not the spaces themselves. Interfaces exist for and within specific social and historical reasons. "Interfaces themselves are effects, in that they bring about transformations in material states. But at the same time interfaces are themselves the effects of other things, and thus tell the story of the larger forces that engender them" (Galloway, 2012, p. vii). Galloway argued that "the interface is above

all an allegorical device that will help us gain some perspective on culture in the age of information" (p. 54). That is a fitting description for how interface may be interpreted in this work. Added to this is Indigenous scholar Martin Nakata's notion and theoretical underpinning of the Cultural Interface.

Cultural Interface

Indigenous scholar Nakata (Torres Strait Islander) proposed the concept *Cultural Interface* (1997; 2002; 2010) in relation to diverse knowledges. He suggested that a cultural interface represents the intersections of Western and Indigenous domains. He proposed that the:

> *Cultural Interface* is the place where we live and learn, the place that conditions our lives, the place that shapes our futures and more to the point the place where we are active agents in our own lives – where we make decisions – our lifeworld… It is a place of tension that requires constant negotiation (2002, p. 286, emphasis in original).

Viewing the Cultural Interface as a possible beginning point accepts that inevitably knowledge systems, as they operate in people's daily lives, will interact, develop, change, and transform – which moves away from the idea of *traditional knowledges* remaining static and relegated to the past (Nakata, 2002).

The Cultural Interface accepts that all "knowledge systems are culturally embedded, dynamic, respond to changing circumstances and constantly evolve" (Nakata, 2002, p. 286). It is not strictly about the replacement of one with the other, nor the undermining of one by the other, it is more about maintaining the continuity of one when having to harness another and "working the interaction in ways that serve Indigenous interests, in ways that can uphold distinctiveness and special status as First Peoples" (p. 286). Nakata stated that at the interface,

> traditional forms and ways of knowing, or the residue of those, that we bring from the pre-contact historical trajectory inform how we think and act and so do Western ways, and for many of us a blend of both has become our lifeworld. It is the most complex of intersections and the source of confusion for many. For in this space there are so many interwoven, competing and conflicting discourses, that distinguishing traditional from non-traditional in the day to day is difficult to sustain even if one was in a state of permanent reflection. (2002, p. 285)

Nakata (2007) proposed the Cultural Interface as a way to examine different knowledge systems, sometimes opposite knowledge systems, in a non-oppositional way. Nakata's theorizing on this

concept is something I have drawn from, quoted, and pondered in my work throughout the doctoral program I have been engaged in since 2015. It also serves as a framing concept for this dissertation; sitting as one of the tensioned interfaces I refer to frequently.

Tensioned Interfaces Explored in this Research

The first meaning of *tensioned interfaces* in my research and in the title of this dissertation refers to the interfaces between online distance education (and related educational technology) and both notions and claims of social justice. This is a common area of tension – and is referred to as such by Zawacki-Richter and Anderson (2014) in their edited volume proposing a research agenda for online distance education. These two long-time online distance educators and researchers argued in the introduction to *Online distance education: Towards a research agenda* that social justice must be at the forefront of all online programming. Figure 5 is an artifact from personal presentations given in various contexts.

Figure 5

Image Evoked From Reading Zawacki-Richter & Anderson, 2014

Throughout my research, I add social *injustice* to this continuum and thus a tensioned interface oscillating between social justice versus social injustice, as these terms may be related, yet, offset from one another. Similar to notions of trying to distinguish seas from skies – it can depend on one's viewpoint(s) when distinguishing between one's ideas of social justice and another's notions of social injustice. Social justice itself is also a contested term (Furman, 2012).

The second tensioned interface that I build upon comes from a process, and set of products, that were released in 2015, the year I started the doctoral program. These are the TRC, including final reports and 94 *Calls to Action*. The TRC was part of the result of a large class action lawsuit filed against the Federal Government of Canada by residential school survivors in the 2000s. The TRC carried out a multi-year inquiry into the Indian Residential school system enforced in Canada for over 100 years. The *Calls to Action* from the TRC call into question the responsibilities of Settler governments, institutions, and individuals. For example, at least nine of the TRC *Calls to Action* speak to specific professions or groups of non-Indigenous Canadians that require focused education. For example, Call #57 states:

> We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

There are several other *Calls* which recommend similar education for: social workers (Call #1); medical and nursing students (Call #24); lawyers (Call #27) and law students (Call #28); church congregations (Call #59); church clergy (Call #60); students in journalism programs and media schools (Call #86); management and staff of businesses (Call #92); and Calls #62-65 which deal with "Education for Reconciliation" involving curriculum development for K-12 school systems.

This is an immense number of Canadians (including new Canadians) requiring education, covering a huge geographic area, across diverse areas of need and ignorance. Online distance education will be, and in some cases already is, a key agent in implementing educational initiatives related to the TRC *Calls to Action*. Many organizations, especially those identified in the *Calls*, are seeking, designing, and engaging in education initiatives related to the items identified in the *Calls*. Charlotte Reading, an Indigenous scholar in Canada, observed that "in general, Canadians are unaware of the history and effects of colonialism on Indigenous peoples in Canada" (2014, p. 4). She points to the lack of critical engagement with colonial histories in Canada and the resulting "damaging consequences to the health and well-being of Aboriginal peoples" (p. 4).

In turn, Paulette Regan, the lead researcher for the TRC, wrote (in Asch, Borrows, & Tully, 2018): that the TRC in Canada had a unique purpose in that it was not established like other TRCs globally, whereby "their work of repairing and reconciling the nation strengthens dominant culture national histories and identities while marginalizing others in the name of national unity" (p. 211). She outlined that the TRC in Canada resisted this approach, in part because of its establishment in relation to the class action lawsuit filed against the federal government and churches by residential school survivors, and its accountability to Indigenous organizations and people across the country. This dual mandate resulted in the TRC resisting national narratives of dominant societies "by making Indigenous knowledge, perspectives, and practices central to its work, and by expanding the scope of reconciliation beyond residential schools to encompass the whole settler colonial project" (p. 211).

Through community-based work for decades and a position within a provincial health authority for the past five years in a position focused on supporting Indigenous peoples and communities and the interfaces with Western health systems, I have been immersed in projects that seek to address and intervene in these damaging consequences related to the settler colonial project – as well as alleviate and eliminate some of the ignorance of non-Indigenous peoples in Canada of the colonial experience, history and impacts – including my own.

Problem Statement

This research is not intended to further outline or define the devastating intergenerational impacts of what former Supreme Court Chief Justice Beverly McLachlin called the "worst stain on Canada's human-rights record" (Globe and Mail, 2018), when referring to Indian Residential Schools. This research set out to investigate some of the responsibilities, and "response-abilities" (Kuokannen, 2011), of non-Indigenous peoples; of Settler peoples in this country in relation to the findings of the TRC, including myself. Ingold (2018) stated that "there can… be no responsibility without 'response ability'. To be answerable, one must be able to answer" (p. 27). The term *responsibility*, and related *response-ability*, is used purposefully in this dissertation. Datta (2020) explained this notion clearly, building upon Arendt's (2003) notion of belonging, which "sees all obligations as collective" (p. 25). In this case responsibility suggests "a consideration of accountability (what are we responsible for?) and obligation (to whom are we responsible?), as well as living (are we viewed as responsible by those who we are obligated

to?).” (p. 25). In this case, responsibilities and response-abilities, are both individual and collective.

The doctoral program I have been engaged in since 2015 is one that focusses on online distance education. I have participated in online distance education for approximately two decades in a variety of roles. These roles include as a student and learner – approximately ninety percent of my post-secondary education has been completed online (like the doctoral program I have been engaged in) – as an instructor and facilitator for over a decade, and as a periodic online course and curriculum designer. I have often wondered and analyzed, how responsible is this field, can it answer the call? And, how *responsible*, and how much ability to respond, do I have and carry in this work and in this field?

My decisions to pursue and propose a critically reflective approach in this research, informed by social justice, were instigated by an excerpt in the TRC reports which has had a lasting impact on me since reading it shortly after its release in the summer of 2015. The TRC Commissioners stated in the *Principles* report:

> … non-Aboriginal [people] need to comprehend how their own identities and family histories have been shaped by a version of Canadian history that has marginalized Aboriginal peoples’ history and experience. They need to know how notions of European superiority and Aboriginal inferiority have tainted mainstream society’s ideas about, and attitudes towards, Aboriginal peoples in ways that have been profoundly disrespectful and damaging. They too need to understand Canada’s history as a settler society and how assimilation policies have affected Aboriginal peoples. This knowledge and understanding will lay the groundwork for establishing mutually respectful relationships. (2015, p. 185)

Components of this excerpt have instigated and guided much of my research through the last several years of the doctoral program. This excerpt framed the problem that my research explored, as well as informing my research questions.

The problem that this study examined included an exploration of the tensioned interfaces that exist between calls for social justice within education, and specifically online distance education (e.g. Zawacki-Richter and Anderson, 2014), and the TRC *Calls for Action* (2015). I embarked on this exploration of tensioned interfaces, through critical qualitative inquiry that intended to interrogate my own White, Settler, male, privileges, which were set against the

summons for Settler responsibilities and response-abilities in many of the TRC *Calls* and reports, as framed by the TRC quote above. Online distance education researcher Saba (2014), argued that:

> Researchers have succeeded in adopting qualitative methods of inquiry that, unlike descriptive and comparative studies, actually offer new knowledge about which constructs are operational in a distance education system and how such constructs can be analyzed and studied further in future research projects. (in Zawacki-Richter and Anderson, 2014, p. 158).

In this research, I set out do this through framing this qualitative research within my experiences and structures of the online distance education program I navigated as I completed this doctoral degree. A critical part of this included considering notions of, and interrogating privilege and whiteness throughout this work – as this type of analysis and reflection sits at the core of any notions of social justice (Buettner-Schmidt & Lobo, 2012; Casebeer, 2016; & Mora, 2016).

Privilege and Whiteness

The Merriam Webster dictionary defines privilege as "a right or immunity granted as a peculiar benefit, advantage, or favor". Kendall (2013) argued, "*Privilege*, particularly white or male privilege, is hard to see for those of us who were born with access to power and resources" (p. 22, emphasis in original). It is one thing to engage in scholarly readings and teaching about racism, privilege, oppression and other social justice issues; it is a completely different process and prospect to "have White people place themselves personally within the web of oppression" and face their own personal implications (Lund & Carr, 2012, p. 109) and complicity. As such, through investigating my own white, male privileges in a process of intrapersonal and interpersonal reflections, I also found myself thinking about systems and structures of privileges and oppressions through reflection on more intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects of my life.

Similarly, in this research, I link and reflect upon individuals embedded within systems and structures of influence – especially those of colonization and colonialism, and unearned privilege. As an able-bodied, White, settler male I occupy a site with much privilege, much of it inherited through systems of colonization and colonialism. Through interrogating my own whiteness and inherited and unearned privilege within education, I could not avoid the systems and structures which often further embed privileges and oppression.

Sue (2003, in Sue 2015) defined white privilege as

the unearned advantages and benefits that accrue to White folks by virtue of a system

normed on the experiences, values, and perceptions of their group. White privilege (a)

automatically confers dominance to one group, while subordinating groups of color in a

descending relational hierarchy, (b) owes its existence to White supremacy, (c) is

premised on the mistaken notion of individual meritocracy and deservingness (hard work,

family values, etc.) rather than favoritism, (d) is deeply embedded in the structural,

systemic, and cultural workings of U.S. [and Canadian] society, and (e) operates within

an invisible veil of unspoken and protected secrecy. (p. 154)

Case, Iuzzini and Hopkins (2012) outlined, "Undoubtedly, privilege and privileged identities function within any system of oppression" (p. 2). Furthermore, "privilege is defined in relational terms and in reference to social groups, and involves unearned benefits afforded to powerful social groups within systems of oppression" (p. 3). They highlighted the importance of research into unearned privilege and how this type of research "brings dominant group advantages into sharp focus, making this unrecognized element of oppression and internalized domination visible" (p. 3). These researchers identify the interlinked basis of examining group privilege (e.g. whiteness) at a personal level as well as at a systemic and structural level.

Oppression and privilege go hand-in-hand (Mullaly & West, 2018); one does not exist without the other. Racism is a form of oppression (DiAngelo, 2018). Yet, having White students and even white educators critique social differences and racism can be an exceptionally challenging task, as most "white students… generally have been raised *not* to critique social differences and racism" (Lund & Carr, 2012, p. 110, emphasis in original). In an earlier paper, Lund and Carr (2010) had asked whether many White people realize that they are in fact White, and reflected upon the question: "If White people do not know that they are White, then how can those who are in positions of power effectively understand and challenge their unearned privilege?" (p. 230). Similarly, Brookfield (2019) pointed out that "One of the markers of whiteness is being unaware of having a racial identity" (p. 14). Therefore, it was also essential that I uncover the frequent invisibility of whiteness (Sue, 2015), at least to those that occupy that societal position. This includes, especially, education systems and the inherent privilege that comes with seeking to achieve doctoral-level certification. In building my research proposal, there seemed to be little better focus than turning inward to critically reflect upon my own white privileges.

        Online distance education is intertwined within systems, structures and histories of education. Individuals are also embedded within, and influenced deeply by, systems, structures, and histories. Intrapersonal reflection automatically engages interpersonal reflection, which engages wider societal structures and systems. This is reminiscent of social and development psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979). Bronfenbrenner (1979) argued for the importance of linking and bridging social policies and children's developmental research within an overall systems theory perspective. Therefore, it is critical to consider, question, and interrogate these realities when pondering and investigating interfaces of education and reconciliation efforts, especially within doctoral programs focused on education and education systems – even more, when some leading scholars in the field have argued that social justice is always at the forefront of educators and institutions engaged in education.

Social Justice, Reconciliation, and Online Distance Education?

        Through my research in the doctoral program, and as part of completing this dissertation, I framed these interrelated and entangled components as part of my research questions explored in this dissertation, and framed by my conceptual framework. My research questions for this research are critically reflective and self-interrogative – with an eye to my experiences as a white male Settler with privilege including in and through online distance education – the smallest circle in the diagram below (Figure 6).

Figure 6

Interrelated and Entangled Reflections Within Tensioned Interfaces
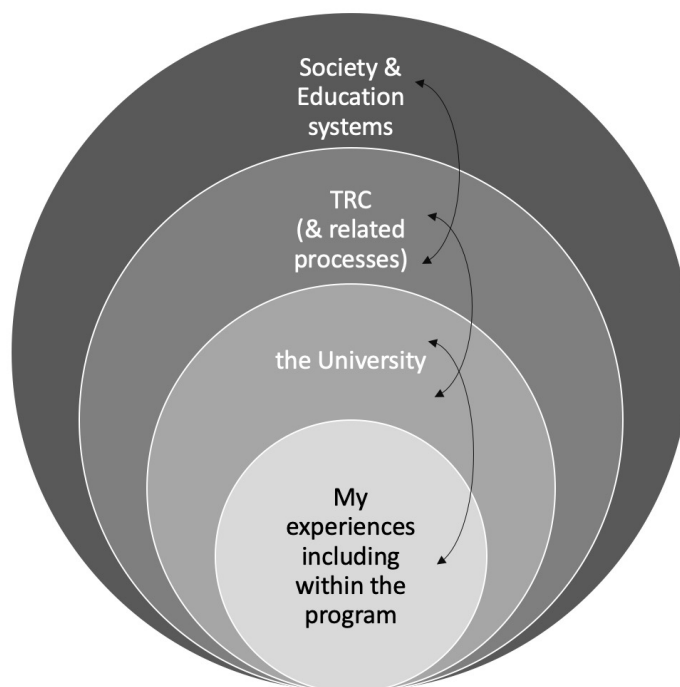
      The online distance education area that I chose to focus the majority of my efforts on included the institution and the program (degree specializing in online distance education) in which I am completing doctoral studies – the second circle. My research questions were intended to further interface and critically engage processes such as the TRC and UNDRIP – the third circle. All of these cannot be critically engaged without considering aspects of the larger context in which these are embedded (e.g. society, policies and practices, and educational systems) – the outermost circle. The research questions that this diagram encompasses are outlined in the next section.

Research Questions

      I have attempted to frame this through critically reflecting upon my own non-Indigenous, white Settler adult identities, which are imbued with privilege. These questions are also nested within wider systemic and structural societal influences and institutions.

      The first research question, and sub-question emanate from the first sentence from the previous TRC quote:

1. How do I, as a non-Aboriginal person (white Settler), comprehend and interpret my identities and family histories as they have been shaped by a storied version of Canada and Canadian history that has marginalized Aboriginal peoples' history and experiences?

    a. To what extent have these been propagated, supported, or ignored in my experiences or actions within online distance education or larger education systems, including this doctoral program? Has whiteness been invisible?

The second set of research questions arises from the second sentence:

2. How do I reconcile these false notions of European superiority (e.g. whiteness) and Aboriginal inferiority that I may have been taught, implicitly or explicitly, within mainstream education systems (including online distance education)?

The third set of research questions flows from the third sentence:

3. How do I come to a personal understanding and recognition of Canada's recent history as a white settler society, myself as a white Settler, and the impact of assimilationist policies on Aboriginal peoples and communities?

    a. How do I see these potentially being enabled or disabled through online distance education?

The nature of the doctoral program I have been completing also required that research explored within the program must link with the field of online distance education. The interfaces between these are largely the subject of this research.

The Gap.

I have seen directly, and heard stories of racism and prejudice (interpersonal and systemic) documented throughout the TRC, and, I continue to hear about it regularly through my work and personal life. As I have been writing this dissertation in 2020, a national and international discussion focused on systemic racism has exploded. This has included the Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests in the United States and Canada, and questions of police forces (e.g. RCMP) in Canada, and deaths of Indigenous peoples while in the custody of police forces or interactions with the police (Mercer, Ross, & Flatt, 2020). As of June 19, 2020, a government-induced investigation into systemic anti-Indigenous racism in British Columbia (BC) healthcare institutions has also begun (Schmunk, 2020). As a white, non-Indigenous Settler, in the geographic area of Canada, I am largely insulated and sheltered from direct experiences of

racism due to whiteness and unearned advantage and privilege. However, I am most certainly implicated in the existence and ongoing impacts of systemic and structural racism. Many of these impacts can be traced back to long-standing government policies, statutes, and legislation, which in turn influence and support the blindness and ignorance of those that are not directly impacted by those same policies.

My societal position and personal identities translate to inherently walking, talking, instructing, facilitating, and teaching, from, with, and within these privileges. Interrogating and confronting our own privileges requires work on the personal level, "rather than colluding with privilege and oppression by remaining silent, we should show up, stand up, and speak out" (Mullaly & West, 2018, p. 64). A strategy to confront privilege and oppression in education suggests that educators need to engage in critical analysis based upon "personal reflection on privilege, bias, assumptions, and the ways in which instructor's social identity may impact the learning community" (Mullaly & West, 2018, p. 63). These long-time social work researchers also advocated for infusing confrontation and interrogation of privilege across curriculums and institutions. Mullaly and West's suggestions included infusing into mathematics, economics, biology, and others. These are important issues, laced with ironies, paradoxes, and contradictions. However, these issues are also vital to navigate, interrogate and articulate – especially within a context which purports to be enacting social justice (e.g. education systems and online distance education).

There is little published research and literature that has engaged critical, qualitative, and self-reflective methods such as autoethnography within the field of online distance education, and efforts in the field to engage, enact, and articulate social justice. Zawacki-Richter et al. (2009) identified intercultural aspects of distance learning "are dreadfully neglected" (p. 21) and that "there is a great need for more research on the role of culture and cultural differences in global distance learning" (p. 44). These same authors added that research on "the impact of cultural differences on leadership" (p. 44) and management has also been woefully inadequate. There is even less research by individuals occupying privileged societal positions who choose to interrogate that privilege (e.g. confronting their own whiteness and unearned advantages) and related impacts such as the potential dominance of whiteness and white spaces within education. May (2015) argued, "Online spaces are becoming increasingly vital arenas for social interaction, yet there is limited analysis on how research methods can develop to reflect the growing

significance of virtual communities in shaping social and cultural trends" (p. 159). She felt that there is a significant lag in research keeping up to the rapidly expanding arena of digital media and online environments.

Added to this, there is also a dearth of research that critically reflects upon the interconnected and interfaced components of education – specifically within the entangled contexts of the TRC *Calls to Action*. This includes the interconnected and rapidly growing field of online distance education. (*Note:* As I write and edit this dissertation, the world has entered a new reality with the influx of COVID-19 in early 2020 and every institution and K-12 school moving their programs to online delivery over a significant period of time). This research intends to contribute to potentially filling a gap in existing research including: online distance education and truth and reconciliation across this country, as well as the role that the continuum of privilege-oppression exists, as well as responsibilities to changing and dealing with systemic racism.

An education researcher for almost four decades, Cochran-Smith (2003) outlined that within the education field, researchers are adopting self-study methodologies and reflecting upon their own programs, courses and learning communities as important areas and approaches for research. She has written for many years about the interfaces between social justice, teaching for social justice, and teacher education. For example, Scoty Wylie a teacher educator, adopted Cochran-Smith's conceptual approach to social justice in teacher education, through the use of autoethnography: "a type of self-narrative that seeks to locate the self within a social context" (p. 7). Cochran-Smith (2003) outlined that in the field of education research, there is a growing use of establishing "the research site [as] a program, project, partnership, or course in which the researcher himself or herself is also an active practitioner and participant" (p. 8). Autoethnography has a relationship to the more well-known and established form of autobiography; autobiographies are focused on "the unique qualities of individuals, autoethnographies compel authors to foreground their experiences in relation to a larger social group" (Carey-Webb, 2001, in Camangian, 2010, p. 183).

Camangian (2010) highlighted the differences in etymology between the two words and forms: "auto(self)-bio(life)-graphy (writing) means to write about your individual life, often in much greater detail than your context, whereas an auto (self) – ethno (culture) – graphy (writing) means to write about yourself necessarily as a member of a larger social group" (p. 183).

Furthermore, he outlined that critical reflection within an autoethnography is essential, and can be used as a pedagogical tool to examine the ways that learners "experience, exist, and explain their identities—who they are, what they stand for, and why—and to recognize their racial, cultural, and gendered social relations" (p. 183). My research engaged in this type of approach and viewpoint. The research site included my experiences within an online doctoral program, in the context of a post-Truth and Reconciliation country, and one in the midst of engaging in a broad discussion of what systemic and structural racism mean, and how these are enacted, experienced, and maybe most importantly, contradicted.

The format, style, and presentation of this dissertation – autoethnographic – is intended to create a reciprocal relationship with readers in order to compel a response through the use of both text and images (e.g. artifacts), as well as personal, evocative writing and sharing of experiences and reflections in the form of vignettes. The evaluation and trustworthiness of this reciprocal relationship lies with you the reader upon reaching the end of this document, or along the journey within, or along the journey after. If this dissertation causes you to stop and ponder your own privileges and experiences of oppression; to ponder what truth and reconciliation means; to ponder how history matters; and to ponder the influences of intrapersonal, interpersonal along with systemic and structural influences (including racisms) – than this could define a successful enterprise and initiative with some significance.

Significance of the Study

In the world of the privileged and for those marginalized by privilege, including in Canada, racisms are pervasive. Similarly, engaging in *race talk* can be uncomfortable and explosive (Sue, 2015). Paulette Regan, a non-Indigenous scholar and Lead Researcher for the TRC, pointed to the importance of research projects by non-Indigenous people engaging in critical self-reflection related to Indigenous-Settler relations. She argued "very few non-Indigenous negotiators or policy makers who have been involved in attempts to resolve Indigenous-settler conflicts or in treaty or claims resolution processes have written about the personal and sociopolitical insights they have gained from their experience" (2010, p. 30). Regan outlined that the TRC "provides a rare opportunity for non-Native Canadians to undertake a deeply critical self-reflective re-examination of the history and themselves" (p. 8). In line with this, my research in recent years has identified a significant gap in the literature and research on purposeful practitioner critical self-reflection within the field of online distance education –

especially research exploring whiteness and white privilege in the field, and how it relates to social justice and social injustice. Furthermore, my research has explored how this relates to problems identified by the TRC and other processes and reports (e.g. Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, (RCAP) 1996).

My professional work, including in the field of online and distance education, over the last few decades, has navigated through some of these Indigenous-Settler interfaces and conflicts including treaty or treaty-related processes, as well as discussions about educational initiatives related to these and other related issues (e.g. cultural safety). This study is intended to contribute to filling the gap noted by Regan, because as she suggested, these stories "have much to teach us about the importance of building trust, attending to history, and repairing relationships" (2010, p. 30). These stories also reveal some challenging realities within this work, the emotional toll, and the grappling with moral and ethical issues that confront those engaging in the work (p. 30).

In line with this sentiment, Parkes (2015) argued that "self-reflection is a catalyst for social change. The significance for white researchers to reflect on their own power in terms of whiteness and privilege cannot be overstated" (p. 103). Camangian (2010) outlined that utilizing autoethnography as a research method instigates "learning about and understanding lived experience in order to benefit self, society, community, and culture" (p. 184). If an autoethnography does not do this, it "risks being an exercise in self-centeredness. This move from self-centeredness to collective consideration is important to foster interpersonal communication and intercultural compassion" (p. 184). Those are the aspects of personal responsibility that many beyond myself are asking in a country that is exploring some difficult realities and horrific truths. Cook (2017) in discussions with Pat Makokis, a Cree scholar based in Alberta (Saddle Lake Cree), framed this excellently in a University of Alberta alumni magazine New Trails (Spring 2017 issue) called: *Truth First*, referring to how many people, especially non-Indigenous peoples in Canada need to come to terms with, or even simply just learn about, the legacy of residential schools, before moving forward on reconciliation. Cook (2017) in summarizing conversations with Makokis, stated:

> "It's a head-to-heart journey" Makokis often tells us, and it's true. One you learn the truth
> of what happened to those children in Canada's residential schools, and the legacy of
> shattered families, your heart can't help but be moved. Then, at some point, you
> inevitably ask yourself, 'What if it were my child?' (p. 20)

There is an individual and societal responsibility to broach these issues through education (in multiple forms) and dialogue, and the TRC and Commissioners were clear on this. In the same UofA alumni magazine, Gillespie (2017) outlined how Indigenous scholar, Steven Newcomb explained that the shared history between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada "has been about domination and dehumanization" (p. 28). Newcomb argued that "if we can't tell the truth about that, there is no point in having a conversation about reconciliation" (in Gillespie, 2017, p. 28). In connected thinking, Regan, a non-Indigenous scholar and lead researcher for the TRC insisted that:

> Whether one is an educator, a policy maker, a negotiator, a church layperson, a professional or blue-collar worker, or an ordinary citizen committed to social justice, reconciliation as resistance involves accepting personal and political responsibility for shifting colonial attitudes and actions that do not serve us well in our relationships with Indigenous peoples. (2010, p. 217)

Indigenous scholars Allan and Smylie (2015) further supported this when they claimed that the work of social justice and exploring Indigenous rights "demands a foundational shift in how matters of racism and racialization are taken up by Canadian social institutions beyond the health care system, including education, child protection and justice" (p. 43).

These are similarly reflected in the broad TRC *Calls to Action* which intersect across disciplines, institutions, and aspects of communities and societies in Canada. This also interfaces with Indigenous-informed approaches such as cultural safety, ethical space, and cultural interface, which are explored throughout this dissertation. Furthermore, this also interfaces directly with programs such as the doctoral program I have been engaged in at an institution in Western Canada. It is a program, like many others, that purports to prepare leaders and scholars in educational and other fields. However, many institutions that deliver online education have many certification programs (e.g. degrees) and organizational strategic plans which speak directly to reconciliation efforts and relationships with Indigenous peoples and communities. However, central in this type of approach argued critical scholar Ahmed (2004), is ensuring whiteness and Settler privilege is not simply re-inscribed at the dominant centre of this work or left unmarked, or un-remarked. There must remain an interface and connection – a shared history; shared truths; and components of shared journeys forward. These are also explored in future chapters.

Limitations

In a critical qualitative study, especially one utilizing autoethnography, the researcher becomes the instrument of data collection, analysis, and representation. Edwards, Perry, and Janzen, (2011) argued that "qualitative research studies are not intended to be objective" (p. 106). As such, autoethnography is subject to criticism, and can be rife with limitations (Graeme, 2013, p. 516). Critics of the approach argue that it is unscientific, can lack credibility, that it is too self-focused and can marginalize others, that its narcissistic, that it overemphasizes narration at the cost of cultural interpretation, and can be plagued with ethical challenges (Graeme, 2013). Similarly, Webster and Mertova (2007) outlined some traps and limitations associated with stories in research, including potential for an endless "burrowing process rather than broadening approach" (p. 114-115). Narrowing down analysis and modes of presentation is also difficult, as well as making decisions about how to edit stories or excerpts, comparing extracts and analysis of these, as well as other related materials (e.g. pictures, artifacts, etc.) (Squire et al., 2014). Therefore, the final product presented here has various limitations due to length, relevance, and other criteria. For example, with too little data, the research may get lost in the researcher's narrative, or suffer from reduced credibility and trustworthiness. The stories and narrative presented in this dissertation are a snapshot in time as pointed out in the opening letter to my kids. Concepts such as reconciliation, culture, equity, and social justice are fluid and ever-shifting.

Despite the growing body of research and uses of autoethnography, there are some gaps in how it plays key roles in expanding collective knowledges such as the "ways in which intersecting identities (e.g., race, class, gender, ability, sexual identity, age, etc.) influence, and are influenced by [various] structures and practices as well as societal arrangements and norms" (Cooper, Grenier, & Macaulay, 2017, p. 50). Many researchers utilizing autoethnography "may seek to discover notions of stability, coherence, unity, likeness, inclusiveness, and commonality [however] the complexity and multiplicities often involved in this methodological approach may not render clear, comfortable, and traditional interpretations of these concepts" (p. 50). Cooper et al. (2017) pointed to the importance of researchers' engagement and consciousness of "ethical issues surrounding representation, privilege, and authenticity" (p. 51). That has sat at the crux of the many tensioned interfaces I have explored throughout this research, especially when framing some of my research as an analysis within a specific program of study.

This research, just as the geographic places in which it is situated and was enacted, is disputed and contested territory – a tensioned interface. Whether I have successfully, or unsuccessfully, navigated these tensioned interfaces will be up to those whom read this dissertation – and specifically those who identify as Indigenous. This is at the heart of cultural safety, a concept explored in-depth in future sections; however, the first principle of cultural safety is that it requires critical self-reflection by those that occupy privileged positions and power, as they engage in interpersonal and intercultural interactions. The second principle of cultural safety, is that it is those that are marginalized (historically and currently) that evaluate and identify whether they feel that their cultural identities are (or were) in fact safe, and that they have not felt diminished, demeaned, or disempowered (Wood & Schwass, 1993; Ramsden, 2002). Whether my research and analysis has in fact added to practices of cultural safety will be determined well after final edits and defense have been conducted.

The main features of autoethnography, with its emphasis on the self, is that this specific feature (e.g. the *auto*) can highlight problematic ethical considerations (Ellis, 2007; Mendez, 2013), and this needs to be factored into considerations of this study. With this in mind, limitations to this research include:

1. It may not be readily generalizable to other researchers as it is based upon my own critical reflections and experiences. The goal of this autoethnographic approach is to provide thick, rich description of the phenomenon to allow readers to determine their own levels of generalizability to their own circumstances and experiences, as well as to claims of validity that I as the researcher make.

2. The researcher, me, a Settler Canadian white, able-bodied male, with all privileges inherent in that positionality, may limit the scope and adequateness of potential findings. Analyzing oneself can be difficult and painful, and expose vulnerabilities. It may also be perceived to place a white male perspective back at the centre of this work and research.

3. Time constraints are a key component of any research. Conducting a critical autoethnographic study based on decades of experiences could result in endless navel-gazing and multiple areas of focus and reflection. Some of the research and compiling of data for this study occurred throughout the doctoral program; however, limiting this research into a reasonable time frame has presented some limitations to

the end product and results. However, I intend to continue this narrative beyond the time limits of my doctoral research and program, as it continues to have deep implications for my professional work, field, and relationships with communities and community members in the north.

Some of these components are further explored in the delimitations for this study, outlined in the next section.

Delimitations

This study is a narrative-based autoethnographic investigation, which is based largely upon my experiences and interpretations, as well as self-reflections and engagement with various literatures and community-based knowledges. This research is solely a self-study and critical self-reflection – with the bulk of this focused on my online distance education experiences within a specific program in western Canada. Furthermore, I am the only one that collected data in this study, and thus this study is my subjective, interpretive engagement with the data and experiences examined. This research did not involve interviews of anyone, neither Indigenous nor non-Indigenous participants. However, it did include numerous conversations with many colleagues, friends and family members – as well as feedback from instructors and other cohort colleagues, audiences that experienced presentations on the research, and evaluations submitted by audiences. It also included feedback from my committee and external examiner during proposal defence and candidacy exam – completed in mid-2019. Those are not captured specifically within this dissertation; however, they have deeply influenced this work.

Summary

This chapter has set the foundation and frameworks for this research study. This research explores the tensioned interfaces that exist when outlining social justice within online distance education – specifically when considering the TRC in Canada. In proposing a research agenda for online distance education, long-time researchers Zawacki-Richter and Anderson (2014) outlined that social justice is critical to understand in the field, as well as critical for online distance educators and institutions. This research study was proposed and undertaken as a critical qualitative inquiry that interrogates and explores the tensioned interfaces that exist within these focus areas. To do this required looking both intra-personally and interpersonally through multiple layered views. There is little research in this field that has taken this sort of approach.

The Rest of the Study.

The next chapter outlines a process of positioning myself in this research, as this is a critical component of outlining a qualitative researcher's standpoints along with epistemological, ontological and axiological influences and views. Chapter 3 of this study lays out the research design and methods that were utilized to navigate and highlight tensioned interfaces. These first three chapter comprise Part 1 of this study.

Part 2 of this study is comprised of Chapters 4-7, which are the more traditional results and findings of this research. These are interspersed with autoethnographic vignettes and visual artifacts. These four chapter are built on the frame of four courses that I completed within an educational institution based in western Canada. Chapter 8 is the final chapter of the dissertation and wraps up with some discussion, reflections and concluding thoughts drawn from this research.

Chapter 2. Orienting to Position, Positionality, and Privilege

The struggle has always been inner, and is played out in outer terrains. Awareness of our situation must come before inner changes, which in turn come before changes in society. Nothing happens in the "real" world unless it first happens in the images in our heads.

- Anzaldúa, 2009, p. 310

In this country, educators as well as the general public remain, for the most part, vastly ignorant of the history of the relationships between Aboriginal peoples and the nonnative majority.

- Haig-Brown, 1997, p. 15

Introduction

This chapter is intended to lay the groundwork for positioning myself within this qualitative research study. As framed by Anzaldúa above, little changes in the surrounding world until we start in our selves. Engaging in a critical interrogation of one's own position and roots is important in qualitative research (Creswell, 2014). In many dissertations, the second chapter frequently involves a literature review. This dissertation slides away from that norm, as reviewed literature is presented throughout the dissertation, especially within reflections in Part 2. However, some literature is reviewed in this chapter which is related to critical reflection and reflexivity.

Extending the scope of reconciliation speaks directly to questions such as the one asked by Tait and O'Rourke (in Zawacki-Richter and Anderson, 2014) in relation to social justice in online distance education; they ask "what is to be done?" Further conjoined with this is Zawacki-Richter and Anderson's (2014) appeal for clear rationales for "thoughtful inclusion of social justice concerns in the policy and the practice of *all online programming*" (p. 11, emphasis added) – as outlined in the last chapter. However, critical challenges to these approaches swirl, such as "while the acquisition of the long-ignored history of residential schools has the potential to centre marginalized perspectives and narratives, knowledge acquisition alone is not necessarily a reconciliatory endeavour" (Gebhard, 2017, p. 1). A critical component related to learning about the other, is learning and reflecting upon one's self. This chapter outlines some literature related to critical self-reflection, then positions me within this research. This is a vital aspect within critical qualitative research.

Education scholar Haig-Brown quoted in the second epigraph, wrote about "Healing the Fractured Circle" (in Haig Brown, et al. 1997). As she argued, and this also relates to the TRC

quote informing my research questions, any exploration or examination of grade school and university curricula in Canada "demonstrates that assumptions of European superiority continue to be an organizing force in the way that we select the content to which we expose the children and adults in our educational institutions" (p. 23-24). She made this observation almost 25 years ago, in many respects this still holds accurate. Haig-Brown articulated what she called "A Fractured Circle" (Figure 7) and where the fracturing took place, and whom is responsible.

Figure 7

Adapted From Celia Haig-Brown's "A Fractured Circle"
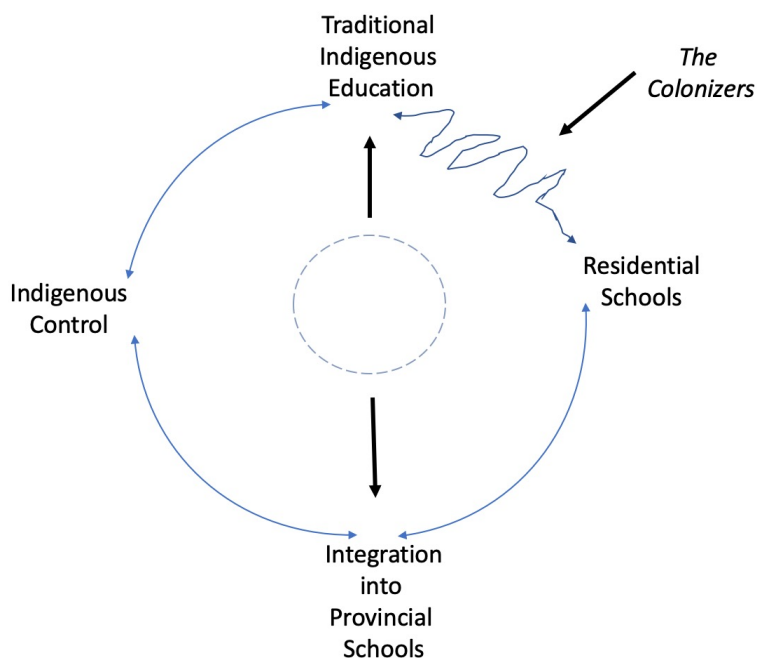
Note. Source: Haig-Brown, 1997, p. 20

Haig-Brown explained that the fractured circle is "an effort to depict the disruption when world views collide and cultures move on from there, inextricably interlinked, inescapably affected by one another" (p. 19). She also argued that the circle might be fractured, however, it is not broken. There is hope in healing the fractured aspects of the circle. This, she advocated, can come through teaching about the truth – the stain upon the nation, referred to earlier. Critical to facing the truths, is also positioning oneself and research within that process, through critical self-reflection. What to reflect upon, is much of what is considered in this dissertation, and much of this can be unsettling to explore.

Positioning this Research

In the context of my research, Kuokkanen (2007), an Indigenous (Sámi) scholar warned that "the question of whether anyone can know other people and cultures is further complicated by the fact that knowing does not necessarily increase sympathy and mutual respect and may in fact result in violence" (p. 100). This is an argument frequently raised in relation to long-standing initiatives and training on cultural competency (Isaacson, 2014; Yeager & Bauer-Wu, 2013). Similarly, Lengelle, Jardine, and Bonnar (2018) argued that, "providing the factual histories and listening to the stories of others is only a starting point for true reconciliation and a cultural shift" and as they further argued, "*personal action* must include an inner shift" (p. 85, emphasis in original). To reach that place of transformative inner shifts often requires critical self-reflection (Brookfield, 2017).

The TRC *Final Report* (2015) outlined in a section titled "We are all Treaty people". With this reality comes shared responsibilities (Figure 8).

Figure 8

Image Evoked From Reading the TRC reports

Note. Source original

The TRC reports outlined that:

Reconciliation calls for personal action. People need to get to know each other. They
need to learn how to speak to, and about, each other respectfully. They need to learn how

> to speak knowledgably about the history of this country. And they need to ensure that
>
> their children learn how to do so as well. (*Vol. 6,* p. 221)

This is a notion similar to that explored in a book by non-Indigenous scholars in Canada, Poelzer and Coates: *We are all Treaty people: A road map for all Canadians* (2015). They argued that Canada as a nation is built largely upon treaties with Indigenous peoples, and that obligations exist on both sides of these treaties. In their book, Poelzer and Coates (2015) explored the ongoing and sometimes willful ignorance displayed by non-Indigenous people of the histories of this country, ongoing inequities, and the responsibilities owed to signed treaties – from all sides of the agreements. Often this ignorance takes shape in anti-Indigenous racism (Reading, 2013). It also takes shape in education systems across the country. This may be shifting, especially with recommendations such as Zawacki-Richter and Anderson's (2014) advocacy for social justice considerations within all online programming. However, interrogating and identifying what notions of critical social justice, where, how, and when are also essential components (Sensoy and DiAngelo, 2017). Deeply intertwined with this are notions of individual and larger societal ignorance.

Please note, that as I was nearing final stages of drafting this dissertation, a significant series of events, beyond COVID-19 began to unfurl. Many of these were focused on calls to end systemic racism in various institutions in the country (e.g. RCMP). Protests related to the Black Lives Matter movement were rolling out across the United States and parts of Canada. In late June 2020, in BC, the Minister of Health Adrian Dix hosted a scathing press conference and launched an independent review to identify allegations of and practices of systemic racism in BC healthcare institutions. Negative discrimination, stereotypes, and racism are wrapped into ignorances.

Bridging Ignorance and Building Critical Social Justice Literacy Through Online Education?

Ignorance generally carries negative connotations; however, the history and definitions of the term simply mean "lack of knowledge, education or awareness" (Merriam Webster Dictionary). If we ponder this for a moment, we are all in fact far more ignorant then we are knowledgeable. Bridging ignorance is exactly what education is intended to do. Yet, the important questions begin to focus on what knowledge in what areas?

Online distance education is an exponentially growing field, discipline, and practice. Globally, over half of the world's population, over 4 billion people, now have access to the Internet, with the fastest growth in developing countries (Salmon & Asgari, 2019). More people have access to "virtual education" or online education than any set of institutions could handle or accommodate in or on campuses. Salmon and Asgari (2019) argued that as a result of this, much of the innovation and development within education is outside of academia, with entrepreneurs leading the way. They pointed to large corporations such as Amazon, Google, and Microsoft as companies that are shifting the landscape and development of education, as well as shifting the balance of power. These are important considerations when pondering the links between social justice and online education – especially considering ideologies.

Long time researcher in this field, Veletsianos (2016) argued, in relation to online and digital education, that "Educational systems worldwide are facing enormous shifts as a result of sociocultural, political, economic, demographic, and technological changes" (p. ix). This is absolutely the case as I write and edit this dissertation in early 2020, in the midst of a global pandemic and public health emergency: COVID-19. Around the globe, entire education systems and program are moving online due to physical distancing and self-isolation requirements. With these types of shifts can also come much ignorance, which long time distant educator and researcher Anderson (2008) pointed out, needs to be confronted. Part of my research objective and my professional practice is potentially confronting and shrinking ignorance in specific areas, as well as addressing my own ignorance – such as those that are often entrenched in whiteness, privilege, and oppression.

My research through the doctoral program proposed to grapple with many questions and issues from the Zawacki-Richter and Anderson (2014) edited volume, along with the various researcher's chapters within the book. I have read, highlighted, and re-read, Alan Tait and Jennifer O'Rourke's (2014) chapter "Internationalization and concepts of social justice: What is to be done?" – the first chapter in the volume. They proposed and explored some questions related to social justice in online distance education, and argued that when considering social justice "clear, agreed-upon concepts of this term are essential underpinnings for robust support for strategies to remedy *social injustice*" (p. 39, emphasis in original). I agree whole-heartedly, yet, argue that these clear agreed upon concepts must emanate from critical social justice. And, that reaching apparent *agreements*, is a complex and sometimes paradoxical process in the midst

of privilege and oppression; in the midst of various racisms; and, in a country that had to embark on and complete a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which outlined how policies of cultural genocide have left horrific stains on the country's history, and future.

My arguments explored through this dissertation, and in other arenas, is that the work that the TRC did, the specific issues it addressed, and the final reports and *Calls to Action* that resulted – are clearly addressing issues of *social injustice* (e.g. specific agendas of cultural genocide). As Tait and O'Rourke sagely point out "Without this clarity [e.g. what is social justice, or, social injustice], there is a risk that those who claim it as a goal but have no intention or capacity to deliver it will appropriate the term" (p. 39). Exactly. This is where Sensoy and DiAngelo's (2017) work on outlining critical social justice is imminently important. This is also explored further in chapter seven, which engages in reflections upon leadership within online distance education.

Many institutions including education, health, businesses, government ministries, and many others are working, scrambling, meeting, discussing, and somehow trying to find ways to respond to the TRC *Calls* and now UN DRIP legislation in BC, hundreds of *Calls to Justice* from a national inquiry into murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG). There are institutions and individuals trying to take responsibility, and to respond with abilities (response-abilities). Yet, as much as institutions are critical in enacting actions, such as the *Calls to Action*, and principles of UN DRIP – individuals enacting intrapersonal and interpersonal reflection and action sit at the heart of this matter and these initiatives. These require considering positionality, privilege, reflexivity, and critical self-reflection as a starting point. This chapter sets some frames for this dissertation by reflecting upon my own positionality – a critical part of qualitative research.

Reflexivity and Reflection: Who and Where am I in this Qualitative Research Project?

As pointed out in the previous chapter, there is little research in the field of online distance education that has engaged critical qualitative approaches and methods such as autoethnography. Parkes (2015) pointed out that "autoethnography has long been recognised as a qualitative research method involving reflexivity" (p. 93). The relationship between the terms reflective and reflexivity is a close one, and sometimes, an example of another tensioned interface. The common thread relates to subjectivity. As outlined by Anzaldúa in the epigraph above, the notions of what is occurring in our own heads – reflexivity – is critical to changing

external situations – such as those related to social injustice and enacting initiatives related to truth and reconciliation. Similarly, Jamaican-born cultural studies scholar Stuart Hall (1991) argued that one has to position themselves "somewhere in order to say anything at all… the past is not only a position from which to speak, but it is also an absolutely necessary resource in what one has to say" (p. 19). Initiatives such as the TRC dig deeply into a collective past, and reading a comprehensive set of volumes such as this, is valuable in reflecting upon one's own past and relationship to events, legislation, policy, and processes of socialization.

Social work researcher and educator Jan Fook argued in her mid-1990s edited book *The reflective researcher: Social worker's theories of practice research* that it is critical to "recognise the importance of subjectivity in all aspects of research and practice" and to continually reflect, as a researcher, on "the ways in which the researcher influences the situation" (p. 196). This is what she considered as comprising: reflexivity. The purpose of this type of approach, argued Fook (1996), is that it navigates the tensioned interface between our personal experiences as researchers (theorizing) and professionals (doing), and, the public expression of these tensions. Similarly, Reflexivity in research "is the researchers' acknowledgement of and response to the impact of their own history and life issues on their interactions with their research participants" (Pitard, 2015, p. 8), and that reflexivity is critical in producing, or exploring, knowledge in qualitative research.

Reflexivity in research can also be a difficult and challenging process. Practices of reflexivity, include "both a scrutiny of ourselves and our research, a willingness to critique and, where necessary, alter our research practices, which in turn reshapes the research and, indeed, ourselves" (Bryant & Livholts, 2013, p. 406). Therefore, it is critical to interrogate the normativity of non-Indigenous Settler, often White privilege and/or supremacy, whiteness, and social dominance and how these operate to deny or exclude others from the benefits of society (Kobayashi and Peake, 2000; Henry, Dua, Kobayashi, James, Li, Ramos, & Smith, 2017; Pease, 2010). Adding further complexity and challenges, is the fact that those of dominant cultures that profess to be defenders of rights, can easily lose track that the rights they are supposedly defending in the name of social justice are in fact discriminatory in the first place (Noël, 1994; DiAngleo, 2018). Baines (2011) claimed, promoting social justice must entail "self-reflexive practice and ongoing social analysis [as] essential components of social-justice oriented… practice" (p. 20-21). This is especially the case when considering privilege.

Social work theorist Bob Pease, in his book *Undoing Privilege: Unearned advantage in a divided world* (2010) suggested that in any social justice-related work or perspectives "members of privileged groups have a responsibility to critically reflect upon their own position" (p. 31). He argued that it is almost more important for those that carry privilege to question themselves and each other, than it may be to work with oppressed groups. Henry et al. (2017) observed in their study of racialization, Indigeneity, and racism in Canadian Universities that "it is often a challenge to resist and survive the sheer weight of Whiteness within the academy" (p. 15). They argued that policy makers must be able to recognize these challenges and that these issues are part and parcel of an overall culture of Whiteness. Therefore, to have these same policy makers "actually understand such issues is even more difficult; to ask them to consider their own positionality in creating a culture of Whiteness – and indeed to consider a policy to destroy the culture of Whiteness – is daunting indeed" (p. 20).

Considering the collective weight of whiteness in the academy, it is vital to consider the ethnic make-up of Canadian post-secondary institutions. The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) reported that in 2016, based on data from Statistics Canada, that only 1.4% of university professors and 3% of college instructors in Canadian institutions self-identify as Aboriginal. Furthermore, 79% of professors at Canadian universities identify as a non-visible minority (e.g. white), and over 85% in Canadian colleges. The CAUT (2018) reported that:

> Despite longstanding employment equity policies and practices mandated by legislation, employment and wage inequities remain in Canada's universities and colleges. Racialized and Aboriginal academic staff experience an earnings gap and higher unemployment than their white colleagues, and this is compounded for Aboriginal and racialized women. (p. 12).

The report, *Underrepresented & underpaid: Diversity & equity among Canada's post-secondary education teachers* released in 2018, argued that "Institutions and academic staff associations need to look more critically at the structures and practices that perpetuate inequities" (p. 12). It is not only the institutions, it is also the faculty that need to take a critical look at themselves and their positionalities and power, as well as ignorances (e.g. lack of knowledges). I have been sessional faculty in several BC-based post-secondary organizations (both universities and colleges) for many years. Reflecting upon that has been a critical component of my research throughout the particular doctoral program, and within this dissertation research. Socialization is

immensely strong in post-secondary institutions. For those who occupy privilege in society (white Settler), it is too simple to swim with the currents.

Hooley (2009), a non-Indigenous education scholar argued that "while attempting to understand what it means to be a person of colour… a white and non-Indigenous person can reflect on his or her own understanding of the world and provide a critique of personal and collective white standpoints" (p. 35). This critical engagement in my research, and in this dissertation, shift back and forth between critically engaging and interrogating my own white standpoints, as well as those of various processes and systems I engage(d) in, including the doctoral education program I have been engaged in. It has not always been clear to me when which is which, and may not be for the reader. This represents another tensioned interface woven through this dissertation. The next section presents some distinctions between related practices engaged in this research.

Critical Reflection, Reflexivity and Whiteness

There are some distinctions between reflectivity, reflexivity, and critical reflection, for example Fook (2012) suggested that reflectivity refers "more to a *process* of reflecting upon practice"; reflexivity refers "more to a *stance* of being able to locate oneself", especially in research and "to appreciate how one's own self influences the research act" (p. 49, emphasis in original). Critical reflection is an inherently complex and contested term.

The critical reflection I engaged and navigated involved complexities of whiteness (personally and institutionally) and its intersections with reconciliatory efforts between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada, such as those outlined by the TRC and, for example, in Haig-Brown's (1997) notion of un-fracturing the circle. This has been based on my experiences in the field of community-based work in Indigenous communities in BC, in online distance education, in my current role as a Director of an Indigenous Health department in a provincial health authority, and in my research within the doctoral program over the past five years.

This research and dissertation is a critical qualitative inquiry embedded within two key frames:

1. My critical self-reflection, reflectivity, and reflexivity, is based upon my identity and positionality as an able-bodied, heterosexual, male, white-Settler, born and raised in

western Canada, and the inherent, unearned privilege that comes with a white male

identity and societal position.

2. This critical self-reflective inquiry is based largely on my diverse experiences through

close to two decades of experience in online distance education as a student, faculty,

course and curriculum developer, course facilitator, and over the last four years as a

doctoral student and researcher focused on the field of online distance education and

interfaces with purported aims of social justice.

With these frames in mind, critical self-reflective approaches require identifying my societal

position and positionality, which has been a key part of the orientating process in this early

chapter. Researchers engaging in qualitative inquiry must disclose their position in relation to

data and the larger study, which can include considering, as Pitard (2017) argued: "Who am I in

relation to the research? becomes the central tenet in disclosing the positioning of the researcher"

(p. 1). She contended "that what we know (ontology), and how we know it (epistemology), are a

result of our philosophical beliefs developed through our lifelong learning and not a precursor to

them" (p. 1).

The societal position I find myself in, that I occupy, is one described as embedded in

whiteness. Similar to a point argued by Parkes (2015), "As a white [person] researching in

Indigenous contexts my thoughtfulness around the power I hold and the implications of this for

the research design are open for close scrutiny" (p. 95). She observed that her family history is

linked to a wide group of largely white people who have colonized Indigenous country. Through

acts of self-reflection and "shifting the focus to one's self, we are steering away from the

common inclination to centralise notions of oppression and disadvantage" (p. 96) and that

through self-reflection this becomes a counter to the reinforcement of white privilege (or

otherwise). This is a "conscious act that animates privilege, disrupting its invisibility by adding a

new perspective … and unravel its societal construction more broadly" (p. 96). Yet, for myself, I

had to keep some awareness that the *location* of researchers in their research can be "fluid,

multiple and illusive" (Kirsch & Ritchie, 1995, p. 8). The next section begins to articulate some

of that positionality through attempts at locating and positioning myself in this research.

Orienting and Locating my Non-Indigenous Settler Self within this Research

The TRC *Final Report* raised narratives as a crucial component of the reconciliation

agenda: "Non-Aboriginal citizens, those whose families settled here generations ago and those

who are more recent newcomers, must also be active participants in the reconciliation process. National reconciliation involves building respectful relationships at the community level" (p. 194). Plus, as the TRC Final Report quoted Indigenous Elder Dave Courchene: "When you talk about truth, whose truth are you talking about?" (p. 192).

In this dissertation, this is largely my versions of *truths* (which often shift and flow), the interrogation of those truths, coupled with my stories and experiences, which are all relational and fluid. These are fluid, because ignorance of events (e.g. the reality of residential schools, cultural genocide, etc.) may be one person's truth at one point in their life, until such time as they learn and become knowledgeable of events, of other truths, and thus their truth is fluid and shape-shifting. Maneuvering through these requires some orienting to my own positionality. This is evident throughout this dissertation, starting with the prologue and inclusion of many personal artifacts. This section adds to framing my positionality.

My location and positionality represents a position near the top of global privilege. I am a Settler, able-bodied, middle-aged, English-speaking, white male. I am employed full-time in a well-paying administrative position within a provincial government-funded health authority. I teach part-time in a university and in a community college. In many cases, I represent the patriarchal pinnacle within current global politics, policy, power, and privilege (DiAngelo, 2018) – especially within Canada. I live in a city named after a British monarch, yet, also unceded First Nations territory: Lheidli T'enneh. The name of the Indigenous people that have lived in this area for millennia means "people from where the rivers flow together" (Lheidli T'enneh, 2005, p. 11). The two rivers that flow together are the Nechako and Fraser Rivers. I own property and a home on a tiny chunk of land about 100 m from the Nechako River and about 1 km from the junction of the two large rivers. Our property and house, a standard city lot, is on the edge of what in fact was once considered Reserve land, under the *Indian Act* (1876). Reserves were land set aside by the federal government for First Nation peoples, as part of colonial expansion (1860s) and implementing the *Indian Act* post-1876, which consolidated previous colonial laws related to Indigenous peoples. Part of this was called the *BC Land Act* and implemented in 1875.

The area that contains the present-day city of Prince George (approximate population of 90,000) was once called Fort George Indian Reserve (IR) #1. Fort George refers to the Hudson Bay Company trading post that was established in this area in the early 1800s, following the expeditions of Alexander Mackenzie and Simon Fraser through this area (both of which now

have major rivers bearing their family names). The Fort George Indian Reserve #1 was created in 1893 by the federal government. By the early 1900s, Fort George IR #1 had become a valued piece of land for the expansion of the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. From 1907-1909, the Lheidli people rejected several offers to sell IR #1 to accommodate railway expansion and land speculators. By 1911 the land was sold in a highly controversial deal that is still part of court action and claims against the federal government, over 100 years later. By 1913, any remaining Lheidli members had homes burnt and were forcibly removed to areas outside of the growing city. In 1917, the first Indian Residential School was built in the area, approximately 160 km northwest of Prince George, near Fort St. James (another former HBC trading post). By the early 1920s, the more permanent residential school was built at Lejac, approximately 150 km west, near the current community of Fraser Lake – another location named after an earlier European explorer. The school was moved from the Fort St. James area to Lejac due to concerns that Indigenous parents were too close to children and interfering with the residential schools. Lejac residential school remained in operation until 1976, as did other provincially-operated residential schools, including in Prince George (Lheidli T'enneh, 2014).

Through that same time period, from approximately mid-1800s to 1920s, through various government *Acts* and legislation, First Nations peoples were banned from gathering in large groups (1880 until 1927); banned from hosting potlatches (1885-1951); banned from fishing commercially (1871); banned from voting in BC elections (1872) and municipal elections (1876) and this was not restored until 1960 over 40 years beyond when non-Indigenous women could vote. In addition to this, First Nations people were banned from hiring lawyers to pursue land claims (1927). Through this same time period Indian residential schools were being established and Indigenous children forcibly removed from their families. (Lheidli T'enneh, 2014; Harris, 2002; Reynolds, 2018)

Fort George Indian Reserve #1 no longer exists on maps; it has to ceased to exist, or, many are ignorant to its existence and history – as well as the history preceding the establishment of reserves. There is much that I remain ignorant to. I am also aware of the potential contradictions posed through writing this dissertation in search of one of the highest certification levels of education, for which my positionality has assigned me inherited privilege and access. I am also a private property owner on Indigenous territory that remains disputed territory between the Crown and an Indigenous community (e.g. treaty negotiations are still underway). History

and geography scholar Cole Harris in his book *Making Native Space: Colonialism, resistance, and reserves in British Columbia* pointed out that "the assumption of colonialism and the pursuit of self-interest were intimately linked" and that the basic values instilled in a colonial and colonizing mindset (2002, p. 51). This included the

> most basic sense of who they were and what was most important in life, they were disinclined to attach much importance to the people who already lived there, and unresponsive to the idea that these people and their lands warranted special protection. (p. 51).

This reality is one of many tensioned interfaces – for example, my family has title (private property) to an area of land, which has been referred to as Crown Land (title held in the name of a monarch), and I am well aware of the Aboriginal title claimed to this area based upon eons of occupation prior to European contact. There have been active treaty negotiations between the federal, provincial and Lheidli community for decades. I, and my family, benefit greatly from our collective privileges as white Settlers, with family roots largely back to Europe and early colonizers. As Harris pointed out, a white Settler himself, "those of us who comprise this settler society need to acknowledge not only the remarkable achievement of creating modern British Columbia, but also the destruction that accompanied it" (2002, p. 322). This also represents, yet, another tensioned interface; a paradoxical reality to be navigated. It is also a nasty reality that many non-Indigenous people remain oblivious and ignorant to.

My positionality as a privileged white male in these fields also reflects the position(s) in which structural, systemic, institutional, and colorblind racism, along with oppression and discrimination are frequently enacted – or ignored, due to ignorance, lack of knowledge, and/or socialization. DiAngelo (2018) argued that "white men occupy the highest position in the race and gender hierarchy" and that this "white racial frame" dictates the power to "define their own reality and that of others" as well as whose experiences are valid, and "*who* is fundamentally valid" (p. 136, emphasis in original). This filters through to whose knowledge is considered valid, and whose knowledge should be taught to others through education and learning. Or, alternatively, whose knowledge may need to be interrupted and interrogated within education and learning. I regularly navigate these types of contradictions, tensions and interfaces, through my work with a provincially-funded health authority. The particular position I have in the organization and the work involved is built upon decades of experience working with and for

Indigenous communities at the interface between white privilege and claims alongside Indigenous sovereignty and rights, and sometimes delicate positionality and standpoint as a privileged white male.

Positioning Myself as White Settler

Through experiences growing up, and decades of work in and with Indigenous communities, I have observed, and learned, the importance of positioning oneself as introduction, or as a way of being positioned within social structures and stories. As I introduced myself at a face-to-face Orientation for this doctoral program in August 2015, the only face-to-face component of the program, I acknowledged the Traditional Territories of the Treaty 6 peoples on which we were gathered at that time. As I write this dissertation, and to recognize where I live, work, and play, I acknowledge the Traditional Territories of the Lheidli T'enneh peoples in the north-central area of BC. Yet, I also appreciate the paradox in that I did not engage anyone from Treaty 6 communities in my visit to those territories. I did not engage the Lheidli community to seek recognition of my purchase (or more accurately, financing) of a piece of disputed territory.

In their exploration of Settler identity in Canada, Lowman and Barker (2015) suggested, "Identities are complex, shifting and multiple" (p. 13). Mine is no exception. I grew up on Haida Gwaii (once mistakenly referred to as the Queen Charlotte Islands) off the coast of northwestern, what is now called British Columbia (BC) (Figure 9). Haida Gwaii is Haida territory, and has been known as such for eons. I am descendant of, as referred to in the Haida language: *YaatsxaaydaGaay* (literally "Iron Men" in Haida), early European explorers (Steedman & Collison, 2011). My family moved to Haida Gwaii from the BC northwest coast community of Kitimat (Haisla territory) in the early 1970s when I was a year old.

Figure 9

Tl'all River, Haida Gwaii, Author Approximately Six Years Old.

Both my parents grew up in southern Ontario. My father a descendant of, on his father's side, Mennonite settlers that fled southern Russia in the mid to late 1800s. On his mother's side, a first-generation in Canada, English mother. My mother is a descendant of Welsh (her father) and Irish (her mother) immigrants, who came to Canada in the period following World War II. As such, I identify as a non-Indigenous, white, male Settler, with Mennonite, English, Irish, and Welsh roots. This Settler identify is an interrogative identity as it "connects a group of people with common practices, a group to which people have affinity, and can belong either through individual identification or recognition by the group (or some combination)" (Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 15). This is fluid, complex and messy business. In some ways, my self-identify comes more informed by what I am seen as, or identified as, by Indigenous peoples in the geographic area of Canada. And, sometimes by what I am not – for example, a non-Indigenous person.

"If This is Your Land, Where are Your Stories?"

Professor of English at the University of Toronto, J. Edward Chamberlin published a book in 2003: *If this is your land, where are your stories?* His title was inspired through quoting a Gitskan (Gitsxan) Elder, not far from where I grew up in what is currently called British Columbia, near the northwest coast of what is now called North America – referred to as Turtle Island by many Indigenous peoples. In his introduction, Chamberlin tells a story about the

Gitskan Elder speaking to government officials who were claiming hereditary Gitskan territory as Crown land; government land. The Gitskan Elder asked the government officials in English the question that serves as the title to Chamberlin's book, and then expanded his story by speaking Gitskan. Chamberlin explained, that for him, "Other people's stories are as varied as the landscapes and languages of the world; and the storytelling traditions to which they belong tell different truths of religion and science, of history and the arts" (2003, p. 1-2).

Chamberlin outlined that the purpose of his book, or "modest ambition" was "to give the reader a sense of how important it is to come together in a new understanding of the power and paradox of stories" (p. 239). The stories that he explores in his book focus on the term "title", and what that word means when referring to land – especially in the tensions between Indigenous peoples and communities and relative newcomers; Settlers in many parts of the world where outsiders colonized places and lands that they viewed as essentially empty – *terra nullius*. Yet, these early Settlers were not oblivious to the fact there were in fact people on the land. In fact, the early development of Canada was framed by multiple treaties; some of which were called peace and friendship treaties. However, it is important to note that these generally did not involve transfers of land, or rights.

The Settler identity is rooted in the processes and practices of settler colonialism and colonization, including living "on lands that have a pre-existing and undisputable claim upon them" (Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 15) – this is the same "title" that Chamberlin explored. In the province of BC this is unextinguished and unresolved Aboriginal rights and title, with the exception of a few modern-day treaties (e.g. Nisga'a, Tsawwassen, Maa-nulth). This reality, in turn has created what Western legal systems entitle: fiduciary (trust-like) obligations from the Federal government and the individuals they collectively represent – the Settler/colonizers that continue to occupy, name, and partition the waters and landscapes. This obligation flows back a long time, for example to the *Royal Proclamation* signed in 1763 which implicates a long complex history in relations between Indigenous peoples and newcomer Settlers. This is also one of the core principles of the TRC in Canada as identified in Pr*inciple 6* which states "All Canadians, as Treaty peoples, share responsibility for establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships" (p. 3).

Yet, as I have learned from many Indigenous peoples, this idea of all Canadians as "treaty peoples" is also a sensitive and messy subject – especially in areas like BC where, for the

most part, treaties were never signed. Or in other areas where distinct peoples were simply not recognized by the governments and therefore not incorporated into the *Indian Act* or associated legislation that granted government recognition of peoples and territories. The land and resources was simply deemed Crown land, and continues to be recognized as such. This while many Indigenous communities and Nations have been mired in Treaty negotiations for decades upon decades, and many embroiled in legal challenges asserting Aboriginal rights and title. Therefore, a common reference to *disputed territories* within much of BC – there was no conquest, no surrender of lands, it was simply taken. Negotiations (plus court challenges) based on that reality have been going on for a long time, such as the Lheidli T'enneh territories where I currently live, work and play. I grew up in the midst of these struggles, as do my children.

In My Early Years

Through my early formative years, I was raised on the edges of Indian Reserves – small parcels of land established, maintained and enforced by the federal government through the *Indian Act*, brought into legislation in 1876. The name meant that these lands were "reserved" for Indigenous peoples and communities. Let's be clear the *Indian Act* is legislation of segregation (Haig-Brown et al., 1997); and an *Act* and legislation that is still in force almost 150 years later, and still segregating and marginalizing. I have early recollections at about five years old (near the current age of my youngest son) in the late 1970s, standing on a beach by the Skidegate Reserve, *Hlgaaglida*, a former Christian mission referred to as Skidegate Mission until the mid-1900s. Our family was attending a totem pole raising. The pole was carved by world famous, and now passed on, Haida carver Bill Reid. It was the first monumental pole to be raised in the village since the 1800s and commemorated the opening of *Iitl'lxid Naay* (the House of Chiefs), which was the new home of the Skidegate Band Council. Little did I know at that time that the event was part of an ongoing resurrection, recovery, and reinstituting of Haida culture and language, nearly eradicated by smallpox, tuberculosis, settler intrusion, and colonial policies such as the *Indian Act*, Indian Residential Schools, and enforcement of Indian Reserves. (Steedman & Collison, 2011)

The resurgence of Haida culture, some refer to this as rising from the "Silent Years" – a time through much of the 1900s when Indigenous people in Canada were unable to vote, hire a lawyer, or practice essential spiritual, cultural, and community practices such as potlatch (a central core cultural, spiritual, and protocol institution) – and into the 1980s and early 1990s

coincided with the peak of industrial logging and commercial fishing in and around Haida Gwaii. Tensions increased and confrontations bubbled over as corporately owned logging companies, supported by government policies and bureaucracies, grew on a yearly basis as fragile and steep coastal hillsides began sliding into salmon bearing creeks and rivers in the valleys as ancient old growth forests were logged off. Logging roads pushed deeper into the heart of the islands and up and over forested hills, and further along myriad coastlines. The bulk of logged trees were dumped into coastal inlets, bound into large bundles, loaded onto massive self-propelled barges, and shipped raw to southern B.C. sawmills and processing facilities – taking jobs, economies, and government subsidies with them – not to mention Haida sacred relationships to forest beings and places.

Through these early years my parents (my mother and step-father as my mother had remarried at this point) did whatever work was needed to keep four kids fed, clothed, and active; however, they also worked on various research projects that frequently aligned with Haida interests for longer-term sustainability on the islands (e.g. analyzing wood waste due to industrial logging practices). This also meant that perceptions of what our family was engaged in, had us out of alignment with families engaged in the logging industry; largely non-Haida and often geographically mobile through logging corporations up and down the BC coast. Almost forty years later those relationships my parents forged, and the projects they engaged in, continue as the Haida Nation has been successful in multiple venues advocating for Haida rights and title to the Islands and a more sustainable approach to land-use, and surrounding ocean and waterways. This includes creation of the Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site in the late 1980s, which followed years of blockades and Haida protests. The Haida Nation has been successful in one of the penultimate court cases related to Aboriginal rights and title (*Haida 2004*).

Another Tensioned Interface

The *Haida* (2004) court case against the federal and provincial governments focused on Aboriginal rights and title and the interface with resource extraction and corporate consolidation. The 2004 Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) case was built upon previous actions brought forward by the Haida Nation, as well as built upon precedents of multiple other court cases regarding Aboriginal rights and title. That court case assisted in the negotiation and signing of *The Kunst'aa guu – Kunst'aayah Reconciliation Protocol* (K & K Agreement) in 2009.

The K & K Agreement between the Province of BC and the Haida Nation outlined an unprecedented model of strategic shared decision-making in BC, as well as returned the correct name to the islands, from its previous colonial incantation of an earlier explorers' boat name – the Queen Charlotte – in reference to a past English monarch. The preamble to the agreement states that the Province of BC recognizes the Haida claim to rights and title across the lands and surrounding waters of Haida Gwaii. Figure 10 is an image from the preamble of the Agreement. Alternately, the agreement asserts that Haida Gwaii is also Crown Land. The purpose of the agreement, essentially, is to recognize the tensioned interfaces between these two assertions. Now the question is: what happens in that tensioned interface?

Figure 10.

Excerpt From K & K Agreement

Preamble to *The Kunst'aa guu – Kunst'aayah Reconciliation Protocol (2009)*

The Haida Nation asserts:	British Columbia asserts:
Haida Gwaii is Haida lands, including the water, resources, subject to the rights, sovereignty, ownerships, jurisdiction and collective Title of the Haida Nation who will manage Haida Gwaii in accordance with its laws, policies, customs and traditions.	Haida Gwaii is Crown land, subject to certain private rights or interests, and subject to the sovereignty of her Majesty the Queen and the legislative jurisdiction of the Parliament of Canada and the Legislature of the Province of British Columbia.

Note. Source: original.

It is vital to note that the Haida Nation has never ceded rights, title, ownership, or jurisdiction over Haida Gwaii so agreeing to co-management is in fact a significant compromise for the Haida. This is in line with the notion of "Entangled territorialities", the title of a book by Indigenous legal scholar and Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Law John Borrows (2019). Borrows argued that all of Canada remains an interface of many 'titles' over the land: Crown, Treaty, unceded Aboriginal title, and private property titles. The K & K agreement remains at various stages and phases of implementation. I also highlight it as an important example of tensioned interfaces that beckon creative approaches to exploring the spaces between Indigenous

knowledges and ways of being and Settler knowledges and ways of being (e.g. assertions of Crown Land). There is a tensioned interface between the two assertions that open this internationally unique agreement. This particular tensioned interface is a good frame for much of what is discussed, explored, and interrogated through this dissertation. What happens in these tensioned interfaces? What is to be done? What sort of education needs to occur to enact and operationalize this agreement? How do people and organizations learn and enact two separate claimed and interfacing sovereignties? Broaching these questions becomes a process of exploring epistemologies and ontologies – as answering these will depend on one's epistemological and ontological roots.

Epistemological and Ontological Roots

It is through my upbringing and now close to two decades of community-based work with several Indigenous communities throughout BC and the Yukon – that my epistemological and ontological roots formed and continue to take shape. In my early adulthood, I returned to Haida Gwaii and spent several years working on fisheries-related projects, as well as working with youth. The bulk of these projects were salmon habitat restoration and rehabilitation within coastal streams. Restoration is a relative term in these cases – like reconciliation in many ways (to be explored in future sections). To *restore* an ecosystem severely disturbed by industrial extraction processes (e.g. forestry, mining, dam building, etc.) is a misnomer – like reconciliation in the context of cultural genocide. The hard truths of the matter are that once relationships are severed – like old growth forests that hold up coastal hillsides – restoring these, or reconciling these relationships, may not be possible for eons. Even then, things will not return to the previous state, which is the actual literal meaning of *to restore*.

Across vast areas of Haida Gwaii, a century of old-growth logging has removed high economic value trees such as cedar, yellow cedar, spruce, hemlock, and others. Ecologically, these large trees are essentially massive sponges which in turn absorb the dramatic coastal rainfalls as intense weather systems plow in off the Pacific Ocean dumping metres upon metres of rain on steep coastal hillsides and mountains. Shallow soils exposed by logging operations, steep hillsides, and rotted root systems combined with gravity, generally result in entire sections of hillsides sliding into creeks in valley bottoms and stream channels. The combination of old stumps, soil, and other debris clogs creeks, as well as increased water flows due to no more sponges, has created an ecological situation more akin to attempting triage than *restoration* or

even rehabilitation. In many cases, the ecological impacts mirror the social impacts – boom and bust economies, dwindling fisheries, high-grading logging operations, transient populations, and, long-standing tensions with Indigenous nations and communities that assert title. Legalizing these economic operations had to be done through asserting Crown title, which has been shoddy practice in the absence of land agreements such as treaties or otherwise.

During these same years, in the early 2000s when I had returned to the islands, I also completed contracts as a youth worker, largely working with "high-risk" youth, as defined by Provincial government policies. The majority of these youth were Indigenous – many navigating legal systems and at times in-and-out of "youth in care" arrangements; largely meaning foster families, and frequently living or placed off the islands away from extended families and kin groups. It was during this work that my awareness grew of a term previously unknown to me: Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and the varied impacts on individuals' mental health and wellness as well as families.

This growing awareness also included some social and political roots to these challenges, which are enmeshed in marginalization, oppression, and racism – as well as relationships back to residential schools. It is not much of a metaphorical stretch to begin to compare the impacts of genocidal policy and practice of Settler governments – such as residential schools, the sixties scoop, the *Indian Act* (enacted as legislation in the late 1800s)– and the challenges faced by Indigenous youth in the present age, with notions of restoration and rehabilitation of landscapes and coastal zones decimated by industrial practices – many based on Euro-Western positivistic concepts such as Maximum Sustained Yield and labelling old growth forests as tree farms, giving out Tree Farm Licenses to log them – under auspices that the forests were being *managed*.

With my own growing self-awareness of marginalization and oppression in various areas of communities I lived and grew up in, precipitated crash-learning (e.g. on-the-job and in youth work 'practice') of the Canadian prison system and significant over-representation of Indigenous peoples (especially youth) within this system, as well as child apprehension from Indigenous communities. This on-the-job learning and training also included principles of restorative justice and community and/or circle sentencing, as well as the impacts of the 1999 *Gladue* decision in the Supreme Court of Canada. The *Gladue* decision revolved around interpretation of the *Criminal Code of Canada* section dealing with sentencing for crimes. Section 718.2 (e) stipulates that particular attention must be paid for Aboriginal offenders during sentencing.

The purpose of this section and the interpretation offered through the *Gladue* decision are a result of significant over-representation of Indigenous people in Canada's jails – close to 20% and now closer to 30% (Auditor General of Canada, 2016) – with Indigenous people representing less than 5% of the overall population of Canada. Achtenberg (2000) identifies that in some western Provinces the prison population can range between 60-80% identifying as Indigenous; sometimes higher. The *Gladue* decision acknowledged that "the underlying roots of discrimination must be addressed if we are to lower the over-representation of Aboriginal people within the correctional justice system" and that "over-representation of Aboriginal people in the correctional system is due in part to the historical relationship of Aboriginal people with Canada" (Achtenberg, 2000, n.p.). As such, for me, this began a deeper and deeper exploration of historical relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada, and other parts of the world. Also, of concepts such as reconciliation, restoration, rehabilitation, which often appear to be used more as metaphors than actual processes.

This exploration led to growing awareness of the legacies and impacts of Indian Residential Schools on Indigenous peoples, families, and communities in Canada (the last closing in the mid-1990s), and specifically the historical trauma and intergenerational trauma that continues to play out as a result of over a century of assimilation-based and colonial policies and practices on the parts of governments and government-sponsored churches (Linklater, 2014; Methot, 2019). Remarkably, to that point in my life (mid-20s) with over ten years of formal schooling (e.g. elementary and secondary school) I had learned nothing of these stark realities. Not once do I recall hearing the term "Indian Residential School" or colonialism within the official state-sponsored curriculum and mandated textbooks. I do recall, however, learning about the War of 1812, the fur trade and how the Hudson's Bay Company opened up Canada, with a few mentions of the Métis-led rebellion by Louis Riel within the Red River valley of present day Manitoba.

Much of these historical events located thousands of kilometres from Haida Gwaii. This reality of state-mandated (e.g. Provincial and Territorial) curriculum and education paths has shifted in the last few decades; however, the reality of Indian Residential Schools is still but a course mention and textbook chapter here and there, and little mention of the legacies and policy implications of race-based legislations such as the *Indian Act*, still in force today. It is this lack of education for Canadians that sits at the roots of the challenges broached by the TRC *Calls to*

Action, and before that the 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (RCAP). Yet, in recent years, I have learned of a closer family connection through my Mennonite family background and land in the Red River valley in Manitoba that was given to Mennonite and other families as they moved in, leaving areas of Europe and Russia. This has a direct connection to the rebellions that Louis Riel led in the 1800s, especially in land allotment to new settlers.

Over the last decade-plus, my professional and personal work (e.g. volunteer) has continued a learning journey through multiple academic disciplines (education, geography, law, natural resource management, psychology, sociology, literature, healthcare, and more), as well as being invited to work in several Indigenous communities and nations. Some of these were communities operating within signed Treaties (e.g. in the Yukon), and many others located in BC where treaty negotiation existed, and still exists, at various stages of negotiation. Similarly, as did, and do, varying other approaches utilized by Indigenous communities and nations such as protest, blockades, negotiation with industry (e.g. mining, forestry, fisheries), and the legal realm (e.g. judicial reviews and rights and title cases).

Ways of Knowing About and Ways of Being in Relationship

My eclectic range of work has exposed me to multiple *ways of knowing*, multiple forms of knowledge, multiple *ways of being*, varying ethical standpoints, and exposure and indoctrination in many ideologies. Some may suggest these are the same as epistemological and ontological roots – I tend to make some distinctions. These multiple forms have created a variety of interfaces, such as those between Settler communities and Indigenous communities (e.g. Haida Gwaii, Treaty implementation, habitat restoration and rehabilitation) – but also between academic disciplines, especially as one explores the complex terrain of Aboriginal rights and title court decisions and challenges. The legal realm of Aboriginal rights and title, and treaty rights, require journeys across continents and oceans to explore decisions and outcomes in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, and closer to home, in the United States, for example, Alaska, which I could see on a clear day while growing up on Haida Gwaii.

The work I have done in, and with, Indigenous communities, especially relating to relationships with land, water and sea has clearly demonstrated that "there is a difference between Indigenous peoples' knowledge through oral traditions and Western society peoples' knowledge" (Eigenbrod & Hulan, 2008, p. 4). Yet, there also frequently exists an ebbing and flowing of interfaces and spaces of engagement and relationship. There is no single satisfactory

definition of Indigenous knowledges, nor Western-based knowledges. It is not a simple dichotomous relationship (Agrawal, 1995). However, as Cree scholar Margo Greenwood and her co-author Nicole Lindsay point out, "land, health, and knowledge are so closely intertwined for Indigenous peoples that it is impossible to consider any of them in isolation of others" (2019, p. 84). The tensioned interfaces between the way different knowledge systems see, believe and interact with surrounding land and water are critical components.

Anthropologist Julie Cruikshank (2007) in her book *Do Glaciers Listen?: Local knowledge, colonial encounters, and social imagination* explored how different knowledges plus historical and cultural histories are entangled in different conceptions and relationships to glaciers. She points out: "Oral traditions make us think about how humans generate social worlds as well as what we now call knowledge" (p. 248). In my work over decades, and through my upbringing I have been especially privileged and blessed to have been shaped by many oral traditions shared with me in various capacities: stories of place, stories of space, stories of relationships, and stories of protocols and ethics, to name a few. Non-Indigenous scholar Somerville (2007), based on her work in and with Indigenous communities, framed, similar to my own, her viewpoint, standpoint, and fluid experiences:

> Place, that is, both a specific local place and a metaphysical imaginary place, was presented as an alternative lens through which to construct knowledge about the world. In my work with Aboriginal people, place has come to offer a way of entering an in-between space where it is possible to hold different, and sometimes contradictory, ideas in productive tension. It is a meeting point for my own interest in ecology and body/landscape connection, and Aboriginal ontologies and epistemologies based on land. It is a site for the development of new theories of bodies and spatiality, and new place literacies. (p. 149)

This has materialized in my work, life, and academic pursuits often through a critical perspective and critical lens along with openness to many different ways of knowing, understanding realities, and many different knowledges. The research informing this dissertation, as well as many years of academic work, explores this through autoethnographic methods – the many tensioned interfaces and interstitial spaces.

Similar to my epistemological views, or ways of knowing, explored above, my ontological assumptions, or ways of being, point to multiple realities, and that these are shaped

by power and privilege, positionality, desires for basic human rights and social justice, political spectrums, and cultural, economic, race, ethnic, gender, plus disability values. I have a strong orientation to Freire's (2006) notion of praxis – reflection and action in constant cycling – like coastal tides and the water cycle. This constant cycling is the intimate connection between critical reflection and social change (Kreber, 2012, p. 325). Additionally, a *transformative worldview* holds that research inquiry needs to be intertwined with politics and political change agendas to confront social oppression at whatever levels it occurs (Mertens, in Cresswell, 2014, p. 9, emphasis in original), and further that, "specific issues need to be addressed that speak to important social issues of the day, issues such as empowerment, inequality, oppression, domination, suppression, and alienation" (p. 10). My research has, and continues to, dance in those realms. This dissertation is an exploration and explication of that dance.

In chapters to follow, I have revisited and reflected upon my experiences starting with the face-to-face Orientation to this doctoral program through to completion of this dissertation. This is explored through materials shared by the institution prior to Orientation, at Orientation, along with, my thoughts and reflections during course work, not long after, and well-after, as I formulated this dissertation. Within this, I begin to formulate my own *orientation* to this particular research, and to the experiences I had moving through the program, and the self-reflective relationship back to the purpose of this doctoral program, and back to documents and processes such as the TRC and its identification of many weaknesses within the education systems in Canada. Furthermore, to specific calls for non-Aboriginal people in Canada to learn more about Indigenous peoples, communities, knowledges, laws, treaties, agreements, and experiences – as well as about human rights, intercultural communication, and anti-racism.

Summary

This chapter has positioned this research and the researcher (me) within this research. Critical qualitative inquiry, and specifically the methodology and method of autoethnography, explored in the next chapter, requires locating the research and researcher within their position, positionality, and directly approaching privileges. This chapter has also laid out my epistemological and ontological grounding, which sets the foundation for the research design, methodology and methods. My research is inherently relational; in the context of my relations to the research and content, but also the relations that my research questions intend to engage.

These are explained further in the next chapter, which lays out the research design, methodology and methods.

Chapter 3. Research Design and Methods for Navigating Tensioned Interfaces

Writing was a personal quest, a way into myself, and into my culture.

- (Goodall, 2000, p.39)

I write because I want to find something out.

- (Richardson, 2001, p. 35)

Introduction

The TRC identified that the dominant, mainstream education system within Canada has both omitted critical information, as well as committed to support and encourage dominant white Settler ideologies (Baldwin, Cameron, & Kobayashi, 2011; Henry & Tator, 2009; Henry et al., 2017; TRC, 2015). Brookfield (2012) argued that "dominant ideology comprises the set of broadly accepted beliefs and practices that frame how people make sense of their experiences and live their lives" (p. 134). This is clearly the case for many non-Aboriginal people in Canada, and sits at the core of much of the TRC's work and *Calls to Action*. There is a crucial need for transformative change.

I set out to analyze and interrogate these particular notions of critical social justice within online distance education through framing these aims within what the TRC recommended (e.g. *Calls to Action*) and documented (six volume report) and comparing this against my experiences within a doctoral program focused on online distance education. This process inherently engaged and reflected upon the doctoral program itself, as I have framed the critical reflection and autoethnographic focus largely on my experiences within the program. To fulfill this purpose, this study was proposed and conducted as a critical qualitative inquiry, framed by critical social theory within an autoethnographic approach that served as both methodology and method – and a significant component of the end product. Articulating this within the academic realm, requires a significant amount of writing. As Goodall (2000) and Richardson (2003) pointed out in the epigraphs to this chapter, writing itself is a form and process of inquiry. This chapter presents and lays out the study design, which led to the writing and presentation of this dissertation as an autoethnography.

Research Paradigms: Critical Qualitative Inquiry

There has never been "a greater need for a critical qualitative inquiry that matters in the public sphere" (Denzin, 2017, p. 8). Denzin argued that the purpose of critical qualitative research, is to make this type of research accessible "for public education, social policy making, and community transformation" (2017, p. 8). He felt that critical qualitative inquiry, is rooted in transformative critical paradigms, and requires ethical frameworks that focus on rights and social justice. Vidich and Lynch (in Denzin, 2010) argued "that the history of qualitative methods has been deeply embedded in the study of race, and the politics of colonialism" (p. 12). Qualitative research must "become more accomplished in linking interventions to those institutional sites where troubles are turned into public issues, and public issues transformed into social policy" (Denzin, 2010, p. 20). Denzin suggested that critical scholars are key in "showing how the practices of critical, interpretive qualitative research can help change the world in positive ways" (2010, p. 25). Engaging in in this type of transformative qualitative inquiry requires consideration of critical social theory linked to potentially enacting and realizing critical social justice.

In this study, the institutional sites and public issues are intertwined into online distance education which is practiced across a global context, yet, is "deeply embedded in cultural, national, and bureaucratic institutions that greatly impact its function" (Zawacki-Richter & Anderson, 2014, p. 486). Therefore, reflecting upon and interrogating practices of online distance education requires multi-layered inquiry, from the personal through to national and international levels. In my research this was guided by critical social theory, and engaged autoethnography as the method and methodology to achieve this layered inquiry.

Critical Social Theory

Education engaged in aspects of, or calls for critical social justice, cannot ignore the social milieu in which the so-called *justice* is pursued and potentially reached, or journeyed towards. Similar to calls for truth, in social justice work important questions include: who's justice, and by what definition? Who evaluates if justice has been achieved? Think for example of Aboriginal rights and title cases within the Supreme Court of Canada. The federal government of Canada frequently argues against claims of Aboriginal rights and title within an inherently adversarial system – just as the federal government and others argued against the class action lawsuit brought forward by residential school survivors. These are often claims of one justice

against another. Or in the case of Indigenous rights, it is often a set of rights embedded deep within another set of rights (e.g. Canada's *Constitution* and western-based legal system). Critical educators Kincheloe and McLaren (2000) argued:

> critical social theory is concerned in particular with issues of power and justice and the ways that the economy, matters of race, class and gender ideologies, discourses, education, religion and other social institutions, and cultural dynamics interact to construct a social system. (p. 281)

Critical social theory is "a crucial body of scholarship in education that offers a lens for understanding the role of schools in perpetuating and subverting the race, class and gender interests of state and society" (Jansen, 2009, p. 367). Important links exist between critical theory and curriculum research, especially as "knowledge is not neutral" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011, p. 37). Furthermore, they asserted in their textbook, focused on research in education, that "curriculum is an ideological selection from a range of possible knowledges" and the "link between values and power is strong"; thus "curricula and pedagogy are problematical and political" (p. 36).

Critical social theory and its relationship with learning and education "involves adults learning to recognize how dominant ideology shapes, or perhaps more accurately circumscribes, their individual choices, decisions and actions" (Brookfield, 2012, p. 139). Brookfield pointed to a focus in some practices of critical social theory "on understanding how adults learn the component elements of dominant ideology and how they fail to understand how that same ideology constrains their life choices and hence prevents the possibility of transformation" (2012, p. 133). These are components of what is frequently coined socialization, and socialization is a critical component of anyone's views, or, underlying epistemologies, ontologies, axiologies and otherwise.

In line with this Sensoy and DiAngelo pointed out that they see consistent "predictable gaps in peoples' understanding of what social justice is and what might be required to achieve it" (2017, p. xix). In their experience, they pointed to "society-wide social justice illiteracy and argue that this illiteracy is not due to lack of information alone. Rather, social *in*justice depends on this illiteracy; it is not benign or neutral, but actively nurtured through many forces and services specific interests" (p. xix, emphasis in original). The approach to critical social theory that I chose to engage has been influenced and informed by Sensoy and DiAngelo (2017) and

their distinctions between social justice and critical social justice. They identified that there is a significant amount of scholarship focused on social justice, and "the gap between the *ideals* of social justice and the *practices* of social justice" (p. xx, emphasis in original). The ideals they refer to are the general mainstream ideas of social justice that focus on fairness, equality, and links to human rights. However, they point out that critically engaging with these begins to surface a variety of challenges and paradoxes, due to varying definitions of the terms social justice, and various other practices captured under this umbrella term. Added to this are the purported practices of social justice, which to the majority of folks means that they can say that they treat everyone the same and that they do not see difference. Therefore, many people feel that this is their way of practicing social justice on a daily basis; and, yet, inequities and social injustices continue to run rampant, while privileges frequently remain unexamined. I often drawn an analogy when discussing these distinctions between organizational strategic plans, which tend to theorize an organization's direction and goals over a certain time period (e.g. 3 - 5 years), and, and operational planning which takes the theorizing of the strategic plan and operationalizes it over a shorter time period (e.g. 6 - 12 months).

It is important to distinguish "critical social justice" from mere social justice, as the addition of the critical recognizes that "society is stratified (i.e., divided and unequal) in significant and far-reaching ways along social group lines that include race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability" (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017, p. xx). Critical theory is: "grounded in the day-to-day lives of people, structures, and cultures. It pays attention to the educational ideas, policies, and practices that serve the interests of the dominant class while simultaneously silencing and dehumanizing 'others' " (Brown, 2004, p. 78). In line with this, U.S.-based Indigenous scholar Brayboy (Lumbee) proposed a tribal critical race theory, that argued that racism and colonization are endemic to society, and are essential components in considering the tensioned interfaces occupied by Indigenous peoples within the geographic area of North America (2005). Similarly, Sensoy and DiAngelo argued that "Critical social justice recognizes inequality as deeply embedded in the fabric of society (i.e., as structural), and actively seeks to change this." (2017, p. xx). Based on this, they proposed a critical theoretical approach with the following shared principles:

- All people are individuals, but they are also members of social groups. These social groups are valued unequally in society. Social groups that are valued more highly have greater access to the resources of a society.

- Social injustice is real, exists today, and results in unequal access to resources between groups of people.

- Those who claim to be for social justice must be engaged in self-reflection about their own socialization into these groups (their "positionality") and must strategically act from that awareness in ways that challenge social injustice. This action requires a commitment to an ongoing and lifelong process. (p. xx)

- Add to this, Brayboy's (2005) point that colonialism and racism are endemic to society.

Therefore, as a process of developing critical social justice literacy, anyone intending to engage in critical social justice practices must be able to:

1. Recognize that relations of unequal power are constantly being enacted at both the micro (individual) and macro (structural) levels,

2. Understand our own positions within these relations of unequal power,

3. Think critically about knowledge; what we know and how we know it [e.g. epistemology], and

4. Act on all of the above in service of a more socially just society. (adapted from Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017, p. xxi)

This dissertation research engaged in this type of process looking into my own critical social justice literacy, and/or illiteracy, and compared this against what education systems and programs are putting forward on this front. In this case, the doctoral program that I am in the process of completing. These sorts of programs are important socialization avenues for individuals and groups of people, and often include educating leaders within educational institutions – a topic covered in Part 2 of this dissertation.

I cannot say whether my research study will bring about social justice-related changes in online distance education; however, it unpacks some experiences and assumptions within the field and explores, for example, if I may have engaged in silent consent to racism and/or oppression. The next section outlines how narrative methods are central to the approaches and presentation of this research.

Narrative Research Methods: In the Midst of Interfaces

The methods for this exploratory critical social research are framed by the broad field of narrative research including *writing as method* (Richardson, 2003), *writing the self* (Lengelle, Jardine, & Bonnar, 2018), and critical autoethnography (Boylorne & Orbe, 2014). Narrative research is an inclusive term for a range of methodologies (Kim, 2016; Clandinin, Cave, & Berendonk, 2017). Narrative analysis refers to an "extremely varied family of methodologies and a large toolkit of techniques for analysis" (Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault, 2015, p. 30). Taylor et al. highlighted multiple ways in which narrative analysis may look at stories told in everyday life from shorter stories such as those told on children's playgrounds, through longer narratives from therapy sessions, from interviews about various experiences, or legal approaches to various problems (e.g. Aboriginal rights and title), research participants' written narratives, visual materials (e.g. like the artifacts included in this study), in the study of illness and its impact on identity, and the increased use of narrative analysis in health professional education.

In and through narrative research, "*story* is one, if not the fundamental, unit that accounts for human experience" (McAlpine, 2016, p. 34, emphasis in original). McAlpine recommended that narrative research "incorporates a range of methodological stances as well as ways in which data are conceived, collected, analysed, and reported" (p. 34-35), and yet one of its strongest fundamental values is the ability to place importance on multiple ways of knowing (p. 40). Narrative research, like many research methods, is constantly evolving in use and forms, and "the notion of emergent design is vital" (Bruce, et al., 2016, p. 1). The autoethnographic approach that I engaged in and present in coming chapters explores ways of valuing and navigating multiple ways of knowing, and was certainly emergent in form throughout this research process.

Narrative Inquiry

A specific form of narrative research known as narrative inquiry seeks to understand and study experiences (Clandinin, 2013). Similarly in line with narrative inquiry is Indigenous scholar Jo-ann Archibald (Stó:lö) and her theory of Indigenous Storywork (2008). A commonly-cited definition of narrative inquiry presented by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggested:

> People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a

person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and

made personally meaningful. (p. 60)

Narrative inquiry is "relational inquiry as we work in the field, move from the field to field text, and from field text to research text" (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 60). Narrative inquiry and narrative inquirers, "hold relationships central to the living out of our inquiries" (Saleh, Menon, & Clandinin, 2014, p. 272). Narrative inquiry also means that we are constantly engaged *in the midst* – resulting in key components of the relational nature of the research approach (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Key components within narrative inquiry include: cross temporality (past, present and future), sociality (personal, social, and in my case intercultural), and spatiality (environment and institution). These three dimensions, and building blocks, of narrative inquiry highlight the emergent nature of qualitative inquiry within this paradigm. Clandinin (2013) laid out how the three-dimensional inquiry space of temporality, sociality, and spatiality sets the researcher up for attending to storylines and stories of the past, present and future, while exploring inner and outer emotions with and in place(s). That sits at the basis of how this research has been represented within this dissertation, and is also nested within the micro, meso, macro layered analysis and approach.

The focus of narrative inquiry is not only intended to focus on individuals' experiences but also on the particular narratives arising from social, cultural, and institutional contexts – especially those with "which individuals' experiences are constituted, shaped, expressed, and enacted" (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 35). I have represented these through the interlinked and interfacing model of individual, systemic, and structural factors (micro, meso, and macro) – inspired by Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theories (1979), demonstrated below in Figure 11. This interlinking of the macro, meso, and micro factors with connected interfaces in-between is a common theme throughout my research and this dissertation.

Figure 11

The Interlinked and Interfacing of Individual, Systemic, and Structural Factors
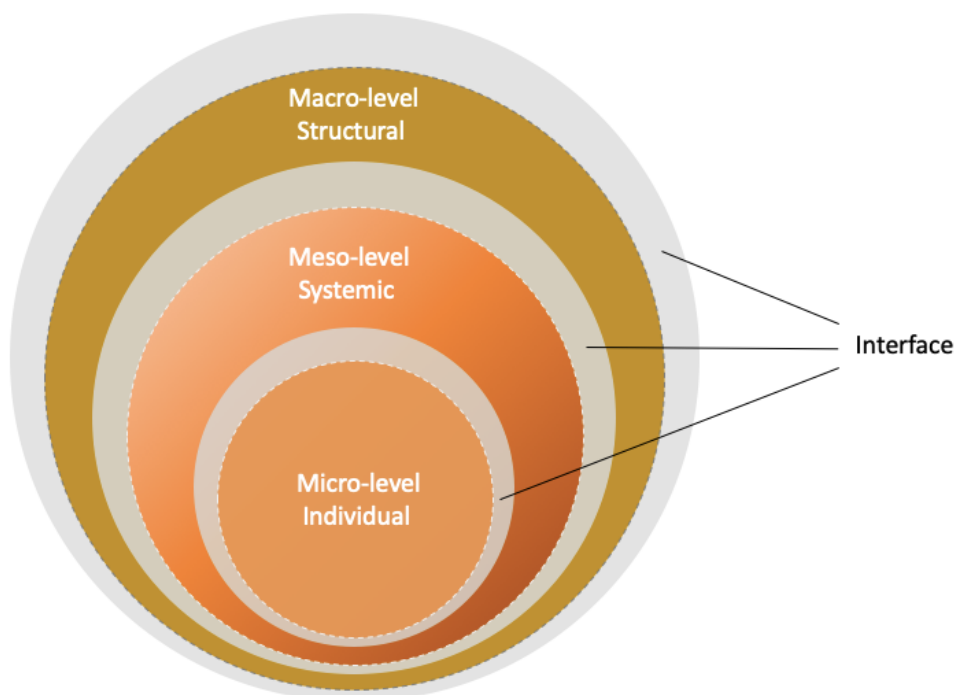
Related to this nested system, autoethnography is a form "of narrative research that seeks to systematically analyze the researcher's personal experience embedded in a larger social and cultural context" (Kim, 2016, p. 123). This ecological systems approach informed the conceptual framework and methods of my research. Autoethnography as a narrative form of research was the key process for this dissertation, as well as the product. Autoethnography has an amphibious identity, like words and images.

Autoethnography: Process, Product, Methodology and Method

Autoethnography has etymological roots suggesting it is writing and analysis (*graphy*) about the self (*auto*) within culture or cultures (*ethno*) (Holman Jones, 2005) (Figure 12). Autoethnography as a qualitative and interpretive method is "flourish[ing] in professional journals and at academic conferences, and numerous books" (Jones, Adams & Ellis, 2016, p. 21) and that the characteristic that "binds all autoethnographies is the use of personal experience to examine and/or critique cultural experience" (p. 22). These same researchers pointed out that

there are specific characteristics that separates autoethnographies from other personal writing (e.g. autobiographies, memoir, etc.); these include:

1. purposefully commenting on/critiquing of culture and cultural practices;
2. making contributions to existing research;
3. embracing vulnerability with purpose; and
4. creating a reciprocal relationship with audiences in order to compel a response (p. 22).

Autoethnography is a research methodology and method that has "emerged in response to concerns about colonialism, the need to recognize social difference and identity politics… and, acknowledgement of different ways of learning" (Adams, Jones, & Ellis, 2015, p. 22). Autoethnography is:

an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze personal experience in order to understand cultural experience. This approach challenges canonical ways of doing research and representing others and treats research as a political, socially-just and socially-conscious act. A researcher uses tenets of autobiography and ethnography to do and write autoethnography. Thus, as a method, autoethnography is both process and product. (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011, n.p.)

Autoethnographic writing facilitates the researcher's own emergence from the shadows directly into a research study with the goal of the writing "to include the personal and cultural while framing [the] research within literary and scholarly contexts" (Smith-Sullivan, 2008, p. 27). In this case, the purpose of my research is to explore potential insights in the general field of online distance education with respect to the TRC *Calls* through critical reflection on my experiences and privileges in the form of autoethnography, which is both research process and product; methodology and method. Autoethnography, for me, has become both a fluid process, and product (Figure 12). The river in the image is the Endako River and is located not far from where I currently live.

Figure 12

Image Evoked from Reading About Autoethnography as Fluid Process and Product

Note. Source: Original

However, it must be kept top of mind that as longtime cultural studies scholar Raymond Williams argued, the word culture "is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language" (1976, p. 25). Williams outlined that the term has come to mean different things in different disciplines; for example, "in archaeology and in *cultural anthropology* the reference to culture or a culture is primarily to *material* production, while in history and *cultural studies* the reference is primarily to *signifying* or *symbolic* systems" (p. 28, emphasis in original). In an in-depth analysis of relationships between culture and health, Napier et al. (2014) outlined that "culture is a dynamic concept – sometimes overtly expressed, sometimes not openly defined" (p. 1609). Their general guidance is that culture "can be thought of as a set of practices and behaviors defined by customs, habits, language, and geography that groups of individuals share" (p. 1609). Their proposed definition stated that culture is "the shared, overt and covert understandings that constitute conventions and practices, and the ideas, symbols and concrete artifacts that sustain conventions and practices, and make them meaningful. (p. 1610). It may be important here to contemplate the interfaces between culture and socialization, and how these ebb and flow and relate to each other.

Anthropologist Edward Hall proposed the metaphor of an iceberg in the 1970s to highlight the complexities and layers of culture – the cultural iceberg. Hall proposed that culture has two main components consisting of external (and visible, or surface culture) along with internal (not as easily visible, and deep culture). The iceberg metaphor suggests that we see approximately 10% of the object which is above the surface, yet, about 90% of the object remains below the surface of the water and largely invisible (Figure 13).

Figure 13

The Cultural Iceberg

Note. Source: *from Penstone (2011)[2]*

Hall (1976) also proposed that the surface aspects of culture are often visible through observing and experiencing peoples' behaviors. However, the more deeper aspects of culture begin with beliefs, which can be somewhat visible – just above or just below the surface. The much deeper aspects of cultures are the thoughts and values that guide individuals within cultures. Looking at this particular iteration of a cultural iceberg, even notions of self are located well-below the surface.

---

[2] Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales License.

Over the years, the metaphor of the cultural iceberg has been contested or critiqued, specifically because it may box certain ideas into simplistic notions of culture (Vaudrin-Charette, 2019). However, it remains an effective educational tool for discussing the complexity of conceptions and realities of cultures, as well as nuanced and layered realities of cultures. Some researchers have argued that the surface aspects of culture represent the more objective aspects (dress, dance, food, etc.) and the below the surface components get more subjective the deeper we look (approaches to death, raising children, marriage, etc.). Vaudrin-Charette, a non-Indigenous scholar that works as an educator in Indigenous communities, explored the metaphor of the cultural iceberg in relation to reconciliation and reconciliatory initiatives related to the TRC. She framed her research by arguing that the TRC *Calls to Action* combined with her experiences working with Indigenous Elders and students have caused her to move from an intercultural focus to an equity focus. One of the challenges with the cultural iceberg, she suggested, is that it tends to remain in the intercultural focus area (e.g. diversity), and does not bridge into a more critical equity-focused approach.

The argument from Vaudrin-Charette (2019), including highlighting other scholars, is that intercultural focus in education (and other arenas) puts too much focus on *celebrating* diversity and difference, and not enough focus on the experiences of anger, exhaustion and alienation as a result of inequities experienced by those marginalized. She pondered whether the cultural iceberg might get more in the way of the work towards equity; similar to arguments that focusing too soon on *reconciliation*, and not first highlighting and dealing with *truths*– may hinder the Calls made by the TRC. Related to this, quoting Indigenous (Sami) scholar Kuokkanen's question: "If Indigenous ontologies and philosophies represent a radical epistemic challenge to the academy, how can we expect the academy to welcome them?" (2007, p. 8). Based on this, Vaudrin-Charette felt that institutional responses to Indigenous knowledges and reconciliation can focus too narrowly on just the cultural – or notions of the cultural iceberg. Yet, deep within the beliefs and value systems, deep below the surface are connections and relationships to land, place, other beings, spirit, and more. With this in mind, I argue that starting to compare these between different cultures may quickly result in an incommensurability (more on this in Chapter 7). Yet, the metaphor of the cultural iceberg can still be very useful as an initial stepping stone to highlight and reveal ignorances, and the opening of an individual's mind for a different way of seeing things. This should never be discounted, especially when

contemplating education that is intended to institute critical self-reflection, and engage notions of equity and social justice – as well as contemplating critical self-reflection for non-Indigenous peoples on things such as Indigenous knowledges and relationships to place, which may be things that non-Indigenous peoples have never been exposed to our learned about.

Autoethnography as a method is intended for researchers to select personal experiences that are part of the research, and then writing about them in retrospect through critical examination, reflection and analysis (Kim, 2016). Napier et al. (2014) referred to what is commonly labelled the "anthropological paradox" which means "the hardest thing to know in a relative and comparative sense might be one's own culture" and that this paradox highlights how difficult it is to "critique objectively the subjective nature of our own practices" (p. 1610). This is a fitting representation of my research presented in this dissertation. Within this approach, reflecting upon my societal position and positionality were also critical, and at times paradoxical, components to this research and process. I find these amphibious qualities of objectivity and subjectivity are analogous to the lives of ocean crabs, or forest salamanders; interchangeable between fluidly submerged or land-wardly mobile.

In the case of this critically self-reflective study, the interruption proposed was, and is: to whiteness and privilege (Pease, 2010) and white Settler privilege and ideology within the fields of online distance education. This was intended to challenge and interrogate potentially fuzzy concepts of social justice that are often immersed within, and enacted from, dominant ideologies. In my research, this has been conducted through critical exploration and reflection upon my own experiences. Some of this has begun in the previous chapter, the next section describes how this fits within practices and processes of autoethnography.

Positioning and Positionality Within Autoethnography

Positioning of "the personal and culture at the periphery makes space for autoethnographic engagement to acknowledge the various standpoints that exist within one person and to situate them culturally" (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014, p. 18). Critical autoethnographers are invested in "*politics of positionality* that require researchers to acknowledge the inevitable privileges we experience alongside marginalization and to take responsibility for our subjective lenses through reflexivity" (ibid, p. 18, emphasis in original). These perspectives are also aligned with the TRC reports and what the TRC *Calls to Action* refer to, along with self-reflective approaches on positionality and privilege within this research and my professional practice.

Critical autoethnographers "identify and attempt to remedy personal/cultural offenses, [and] discuss how to live with individuals—themselves included—who have been complicit in and/or committed these offenses" (Adams, Ellis, & Jones, 2017, p. 79). One of the primary purposes of critical autoethnography is to identify social injustices, and offences, and discuss potential remedies, or responses, for these offences. Therefore, there is critical engagement with an ethical imperative, which requires important considerations of positions and positionality, as well as relationality and socialization. The challenge of autoethnography, "is to create… a new ethically informed practice: one that approaches self as a social subject rather than self as self-justification" (Freeman, 2015, p. 203). Freeman contended that what matters most in autoethnographies is "not necessarily a work's record of an authentic historical past (assumedly the lived experience of the author) so much as the ways in which it functions as a form that is fundamental to the construction of modern life" (2015, p. 203). The social justice work and social justice education that this research explored, in the midst of online distance education, the TRC and other events and issues, is most certainly related to messy, complex, and diverse arenas within modern life. Critical autoethnography is a process which connects the interpersonal experiences of race, gender, sexuality, and ability to larger systems of power, social privileges, and oppression (Boylorn & Orbe, 2013).

The approach to presenting and reflecting upon this is what Ellis, Adams, and Bochner (2011) referred to as a *layered account*. They compare layered accounts in research to grounded theory, in that "data collection and analysis proceed simultaneously (Charmaz, 1983, p. 110)" (para. 20). The key to layered accounts, argued Ellis et al. (2011) is that they use vignettes, reflexivity, and introspection. Through the use of these tools the researcher intends to create evocative texts, on par and as important as abstract analysis, and that these layered accounts "invoke readers to enter into the "emergent experience" of doing and writing research" (para. 20). This research has very much evolved, and is presented in, a layered fashion. One of the guiding factors to this layered approach where data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously, was critical self-reflection, which is highlighted in the next section. This layered approach can also lead to more inductive and generative writing.

Critical Self (Auto) Reflection

Engaging in critical reflection and critical self-reflection within a methodology for research poses some challenges, however, also has some history through qualitative methods and

scholarship. Paulette Regan was one of the lead researchers for the TRC. In her 2010 book *Unsettling the Settler within: Indian residential schools, truth telling, and reconciliation in Canada*, Regan outlined that the TRC "provides a rare opportunity for non-Native Canadians to undertake a deeply critical self-reflective re-examination of the history and themselves" (p. 8). In her book, she posed a challenge, as a non-Indigenous person in this work: "we, as non-Indigenous people can begin by asking ourselves some troubling questions" (2010, p. 6). She suggested engaging critically-informed questions such as: "What does our historical amnesia reveal about our continuing complicity in denying, erasing, and forgetting this part of our history as colonizers while pathologizing the colonized?" and "What does the persistence of such invisibility in the face of living presence of survivors tell us about our relationship with Indigenous people?" (p. 6). She challenged her own assumptions and work as a non-Indigenous person engaged with Indigenous communities – in the interfaces – through writing the book, through the process of, and product, of autoethnography.

Regan's questions and challenges are posed to other non-Indigenous people in Canada suggesting that "surely, without confronting such difficult questions [above] as part of our own truth telling, there can be no genuine reconciliation" (p. 6). These are deep, tough and challenging questions, that require even deeper self-reflection; however, they are also essential in this work and journey as individuals, within systems, within Nations. I, for example, am an able-bodied, white, Settler male sitting in the interfaces between and amidst these challenging issues. The paradox here is that my position in current society is also one steeped with privilege and power, as is my pursuit of a doctoral degree and the act of writing this dissertation.

These questions and paradoxes are also at the heart of the problem engaged by my study and research methodology. I agree with these questions and arguments, such as those posed by Regan and other researchers; however, there is little published research and literature linking critical social justice-related, reconciliatory endeavors (between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples and communities) in the field of online distance education – and more specifically that critically interrogate and critically reflect on whiteness and privilege and their impacts on the field, and, on the researcher themselves. As long-time online distance education scholar (former Canada Research Chair in Distance Education) and educator Terry Anderson argued that "the online learning environment is … a unique cultural context in itself" (p. 48). Anderson also quoted Benedikt (1991) who suggested that cyberspace "has a geography, a physics, a nature,

and a rule of human law" (in Anderson, 2008, p. 48). This sort of contemplation for me also raises interfaces with place, geographies, and natures of natural places.

Critically engaging and interrogating the culture(s), as well the place(s) and space(s) of online distance education, is an important endeavor, especially in relation to calls and connections to social justice within the field. Autoethnography, as a qualitative method, challenges a researcher to explore "her/his unique life experiences in the context of the social and cultural institutions that have shaped the world the researcher inhabits" (Pitard, 2017, para. 15). In my experiences, it is near impossible to separate the geographies of place and space from the proposed geographies of cyber-spaces. The central purpose of the autoethnographic approach in my research was to unsettle some positions (in education, and online distance education) through critical self-reflection, and to present those through generative, layered accounts. This layered approach was taken into consideration in developing a conceptual framework to support this research, and in consideration of data sources, collection and analysis which is explored in the next section.

Data Sources, Collection, and Analysis

Any research design should describe how theoretical perspectives are connected to strategies of inquiry and highlight data sources, collection, and analysis (Lincoln & Denzin, 2003). Data represents the observed evidence collected through the course of a research study, and that in qualitative research this data can be in the form of words, pictures, objects, artifacts, or otherwise (Neumann, 2006). Qualitative data are descriptions of "what happens in a particular social setting – in a particular place or amongst a particular group of people" (Holliday, 2007, in Choi, 2017, p. 70). In this proposed research study, me and my experiences are two of the primary data sources. Narrative, as a form of qualitative data, connects processes of learning with ways of knowing while simultaneously referring to social and cultural influences (Neumann, 2006; Kim, 2016).

Data interpretation in qualitative research can be assisted through the creation of *field texts*, which consist of field notes and other documents from the field (Lincoln & Denzin, 2003, p. 37). In this case, I have kept research journals and field notes from various projects since beginning graduate studies in 2008 (Figure 14). Throughout my research for this dissertation, I had access to the Moodle (online course management) pages for each course that I completed. Included in these are discussion forums and other sources of data. I have also kept the majority

of course work from my online education going back to undergraduate studies started in 2004.

These have been essential data sources throughout this research.

Figure 14

Several of the Research Journals I Kept Throughout the Doctoral Program

Data collection and analysis within narrative research can present particular and unique challenges (Hunter, 2010). A valuable approach to narrative inquiry can be premised on "a storytelling approach" within human-centred research (Webster and Mertova, 2007, p. 103) as "storytelling is a natural and common form of human communication, and that storytelling is used to communicate those elements of experience that have had a profound impact on an individual" (p. 103). The strength of narrative research is that it facilitates varying ways of navigating, analyzing and examining different kinds of data (Squire, Davis, Esin, Andrews, Harrison, Hydén, & Hydén, 2014; Archibald, 2008). Additionally, Squire et al. (2014) suggested that "Choosing whether and how to combine data depends on where it is assumed narratives can be found" (p. 101). They pointed to diverse data sources, such as: public and private documents (e.g. birth certificates, newspaper articles, greeting cards, etc.), court reports, literary works, artwork, dance, music, buildings, and landscapes as some examples of diverse data sources for narrative exploration.

The stories and data collected in this study came from, a wide range of sources including: field notes, journals, my own and other's observations (published), storytelling, letter writing, emails, blog posts, autobiographical writing, documents from school (e.g. assignments, discussion posts, etc.), discussions, newsletters; as well as visual sources such as pictures, videos, drawings, among others. All of these have been drawn upon as sources of data during this research, and included at times in this dissertation as artifacts, with protection of identities other than myself – unless pulled from published and public materials. However, this does not mean that "anything goes" – the data collection and analysis must be informed by the questions guiding the research (Squire et al., 2014, p. 101). This has been the case in this study, and throughout my research. There were a multitude of data sources such as documents from the TRC, court cases involving Aboriginal rights and title, the UN DRIP, which also sits at the core of the TRC *Calls* and many more processes, policy, and governance guidance.

Intimately related to collecting data on narrative, is the process of collecting and analyzing data as part of autoethnographic methods. The nature of this study is that it has been qualitative and autoethnographic, thus facilitating a naturalistic approach to data collection and analysis.

Autoethnographic Data Collection and Sources

There are many strategies for collecting relevant data when completing and engaging in autoethnography (e.g. process), along with multiple strategies for managing data and analyzing it, along with presenting it to formulate a completed autoethnography (e.g. product). Autoethnography scholar and researcher Chang (2008) pointed out "Given that culture is a web of self and others, autoethnography is not a study simply of self alone" (p. 65). I utilized Chang's three strategies proposed for engaging in autoethnographic research, through the following focus areas for data collection: (1) personal memory as a foundational component; (2) self-observational and self-reflective data from the past and present; and, (3) external data (e.g. visual artifacts, documents, and other individual's published literature). Following these strategies, Chang outlined that these "provide additional perspectives and contextual information to help you investigate and examine your subjectivity" (p. 103). This was important as I explored my own relational processes and responsibilities in responding to and enacting the challenges outlined by the TRC, and previous related processes (e.g., Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (RCAP), 1996). These also included reflecting upon the responsibilities of a non-

Indigenous, white, Settler in the geographic area of Canada. This was framed by reflecting upon my experiences within the doctoral program and other online education programs and experiences. The next section outlines the data collection strategy that I utilized for this critical autoethnographic research.

Sources and Strategies for Personal Memory Data

Personal recollections of "the past forms the basis of autoethnographic data" (Chang, 2008, p. 71) and one of the first data collection strategies for this research involved accessing and exploring personal memory data. In my research, this was collected from a range of sources through three specific strategies including:

1. Chronicling the past – create an autobiographical timeline, that includes major events or experiences, especially in relation to the research focus. Think about "border crossing" experiences "that occur when you become friends with others of difference or of opposition or when you place yourself in unfamiliar places or situations" (Chang, 2008, p. 73). In this research, this was framed by the chronological timeline of moving through the doctoral program linked with past professional, personal and educational practice. These are presented through vignettes, reflections and personal artifacts.

2. Inventorying self – through collecting, evaluating and organizing data which can be themed to the research focus. Considering rituals and celebrations, mentors, and cultural artifacts; e.g. "objects produced by members of the society that explicitly or implicitly manifest societal norms and values" (p. 80). These included data and artifacts from this doctoral program and courses completed.

3. Visualizing self – through strategies such as kinship diagrams, free drawing, and other images. These images can then be unpacked through writing about them. These "visualization activities mix the collection of your personal memory data through self-reflection and self-introspection with cultural analysis and interpretation through organization and explanation" (p. 81). This has been included in various parts of this dissertation as various artifacts with some reflections shared regarding those images and associated stories.

These three strategies were utilized with success and are reflected throughout this dissertation in various forms. I chose to represent *border crossings* through various stories, presented as vignettes and reflections upon course work, experiences, and critical reflections. Many artifacts

have been highlighted in this dissertation in various forms, along with visualizing self through various methods – also, often in the form of artifacts, and associated narratives or stories.

Second, in collecting self-observational and self-reflective data, Chang (2008) asserted that these are the factual data collected at the time of research; whereas self-reflective data is introspective related to present perspectives. Self-observation data "records actual behaviors, thoughts and emotions as they occur in their natural contexts" (p. 90). This type of data collection needs to be disciplined throughout the research. Thus, throughout my doctoral studies, and related to the fact that from the outset, I contemplated conducting autoethnography as a potential methodology for my dissertation, I have maintained detailed research journals that documents the research I have engaged in, as well as personal field notes and observations as I moved through the program, and through the process of completing this dissertation.

In all courses within the doctoral program, I was required to make presentations based on course work. I kept notes and reflections on these presentations, as well as keeping the feedback given by instructors and peers, as well as the notes I made regarding the feedback (e.g. field notes). These notes include items such as reactions and other emotions arising related to my research, research material, course work, and feedback (Figure 15). I continued to track these as I moved from the dissertation proposal stage into deeper dissertation research, and drew upon those as another critical data source within this research. The image below is my exploration of the idea of dichotomous orthodoxy, which is explored in the next section.

Figure 15

A Journal Page From the First Course in the Program
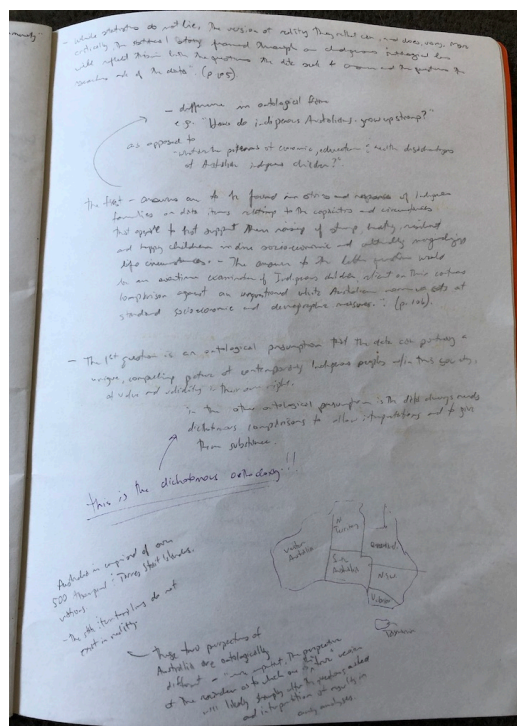
Self-reflective data results from introspection, self-analysis, and self-evaluation – which can accompany self-observation (Chang, 2008). This is represented by the research journals (e.g. field journals) that I have maintained throughout my doctoral studies and much of my professional career over the last decade plus. This can facilitate exploring personal values and preferences. Self-reflection can also be applied to "the data collection of [one's] cultural identities and group memberships" (Chang, 2008, p. 97), as well as discovering self through other self-narrators. This can be done by writing responses to other self-narratives, which facilitates exploration of one's own beliefs, values, perspectives, and emotions. Chang also recommended self-discovery through comparing and contrasting similarities and differences with others, across and within cultures. I have tracked these observations in research journals and field notes as I have explored similarities and differences across this field. This process continued throughout the study and writing period.

Lastly, the third strategy, recommended by Chang (2008), involves collecting external data. She highlighted the self-referential qualities of the first two strategies and the importance of adding this third strategy to "provide additional perspectives and contextual information to help

you investigate and examine your subjectivity" (p. 103). The recommended data sources include: visual artifacts, documents, and other individual's published literature as "artifacts are material manifestations of culture that illuminate their historical contexts" (p. 107). Chang argued that artifact collection in autoethnography is an essential data collection technique because "additional evidence is supplied by meaningful artifacts acquired throughout [one's] life… to fill some of the gaps left by the snapshots" (p. 107). Artifacts can be text-based such as: officially produced documents; personal documents such as assignments, travel journals, essays, personal letters, poems, or documents about the researcher such as newspaper articles or otherwise. This can also include: non-text based artifacts such as: photographs, video images, trinkets in a memory box, memorabilia, family heirlooms, souvenirs, video tapes, or any other type of artifact. This process connects the private individual story with the outer world – a key component of triangulating between various data sources.

This three-pronged approach, outlined by Chang (2008), also sits at the heart of my exploration and interpretation of relational spaces involved and circulating in social justice-related education, in online distance education, and in my professional and personal practices, which are frequently intertwined with the TRC final reports, UN DRIP, and other reports and processes. These three interlinked approaches to data collection have been critical components of my research project and guided the data analysis, through to the final product – this dissertation. As I moved through my research for this dissertation, as well as reflected back upon research within the program and my professional work – I realized the importance of personal artifacts (e.g. my research and personal journals, class and assignment presentations, discussion postings, etc.) as well as visual components such as drawings, mind mapping, and otherwise.

Personal Artifacts

Artifacts are "things made, used, or given special meaning by human beings…and they usually are displayed publically" (LeCompte and Ludwig, 2013, p. 1). LeCompte and Ludwig (2013) suggested that these become *cultural* "when they acquire meaning or significance because of how they relate to the history, behavior, practices, and values and beliefs of the groups that produce and use them." (p. 1). They provided some specific characteristics of artifacts, such as:

- Usually produced by human beings,
- Often publicly displayed in a home or community setting,
- Sometimes a natural object that has been given cultural meaning,

- Sometimes a natural object that is represented in human-made objects to evoke a cultural meaning,
- Usually part of the material culture of a group, something that is made or constructed by human beings,
- An object used in everyday life or for rituals or special occasions, and
- Any item to which cultural (rather than personal) meaning has been ascribed. (p. 2).

A cultural artifact can be "Any object to which cultural meaning has been ascribed" and can serve as an "artifact for researchers if that object helps to explain how people live and experience their world" (p. 3). These do not have to be exotic and they can be everyday objects. LeCompte and Ludwig (2013) argued that "such artifacts tell us about the every day, taken-for-granted cultural meanings that people value, give to their surroundings and to the things they make and use, and how they adapt the resources they have to their needs" (p. 9). These objects are important to be able to "read" in ways which might illuminate "what people think about themselves and their environment" (p. 9). People are surrounded by artifacts and these can be visual and auditory markers and may be semi-text based, text-based, or physical objects including artwork, sketches, photographs and others. Figure 16 is an image of an area in our house with many artifacts: a painting by my wife (my favorite), gifts from our wedding over a decade ago (wooden vase and feathers), and various personal 'treasures' including rocks, crystals and shells collected from various travels.

Figure 16

The Mantle in Our House With Many Artifacts

Cultural artifacts generally "evoke cultural identity; they have a great deal to "say" about who people are and how they wish to present themselves" (LeCompte & Ludwig, 2013, p. 37). Le Compte and Ludwig (2013) referred to identity kits such as those utilized by the military; for example, uniforms and the various insignia denoting rank and status, or awards they have received. These identity kits suggest to those around military personnel how individuals should be treated – e.g. deference or the opposite. These artifacts "serve as markers of status and culture that can be read by ethnographers as well" (p. 37). In the educational realm, these can include titles such as Doctor, Professor, Dean, or otherwise.

In this dissertation and research, I have utilized various materials including courses, course materials, assignments, online course discussion forums (my postings), and presentations as potential artifacts in my cultural study of the educational program I was in, and aimed to complete through completion and defence of this dissertation (e.g. doctorate). This is, in ways, an ethnography of the program. In turn, I study myself within that *culture*, or, *cultures*. This has resulted in the process of, and, production of this autoethnography. In this dissertation, artifacts are presented throughout in the many figures that have been included.

Data Analysis Through to Final Product

Writing is a critical component of the autoethnographic process from initial conceptualization through to finished product (Adams, Jones, & Ellis, 2015). Adams, et al. (2015) explained how autoethnographies can often begin as journal entries, blog posts, poetry, or other forms of personal writing that look to explore experiences, with a goal to try to understand them and share them with readers. Linked with this, "data management, collection and analysis are dynamically interconnected to inform and modify each other" (Chang, 2008, p. 113) and eventually result in a final product. "Selves and lives are storied performances" (Denzin, 2014, p. 35); however, "a story that is told is never the same story that is heard" (p. 55). Denzin argued that:

> The boundaries and borders between the multiple stories is never clear-cut, for the meaning of every given story is only given in the difference that separates its beginnings and endings from the story that follows. As one story ends, another begins, but then the earlier story overlaps with the one that is now being told. Stories become arbitrary constructions within the larger narratives that contain the story the teller is attempting to tell. (p. 55-56)

As such, the final product from this project is the autoethnographic story of my reflections and explorations of purported (or lack of) social justice education in online distance education, through my experiences, and within the context of a post-TRC country and citizens that exist within tensioned interfaces. This has also included critically self-reflecting upon my own privileges and power as a non-Indigenous, white, male Settler engaged in critical social justice work and education.

These have been explored, identified and explained through autobiographical storytelling and vignettes, accompanied by reflective components and components of research I have explored throughout this program. These resulted in the final text presented here. The goal is that the final product is lifelike, believable, and possible for others to read and relate to (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2010). This process of reflexivity should also work to transform my own understanding of various phenomena, and thus potentially change my own critical social justice practices, which it has (Bolton, 2010). It is also intended to engage readers in contemplating and reflecting upon the same.

Validity, Reliability and Trustworthiness

There are many varying definitions of what comprises validity in autoethnography and larger narrative methods. In educational research, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) pointed to over twenty different types of validity (p. 179) and argued that it is the "touchstone of all types of educational research" (p. 180). Similarly, these same researchers argued that reliability as a useful term in qualitative research is contested (p. 201). Lincoln and Guba (1985), in exploring shifts in research to more frequent use of qualitative methods, suggested alternatives to assessing rigour in qualitative research, replacing the concepts of reliability and validity typical of quantitative methods. At the time, they asked: "How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences that the research findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to (p. 290)?" They proposed trustworthiness as a parallel concept, which in turn, consists of four aspects: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

The face and practice of qualitative research is in a constant state of change, and for this reason discussions of validity and rigour are consistently debated, especially when utilizing autoethnography (Le Roux, 2017). Quoting various researchers, Le Roux asserted that presenting research requires that it be "intellectually accurate, thorough, and trustworthy" further arguing that "without rigour, research is meaningless" (p. 195). How that is accomplished or recognized in qualitative research is consistently debated – and more so as specific methodologies are engaged (e.g. autoethnography, narrative approaches, etc.). Freeman (2015) argued that "fusing field notes with external data from sources such as interviews and published documents can provide a way of enhancing the accuracy and validity of autoethnography" (p. 87). In my case, I have integrated and explored published documents and literature, along with my own course work and reflections.

Autoethnography is valuable and effective in education research, because as it is expressed, "it shows people in the process of figuring out what to do, how to live and what their struggles mean" (Bochner & Ellis (2006), in Mendez, 2013, p. 111). In doing this, people are not only building meaning in their own lives, but also in others as they reflect upon evocative narratives (Mendez, 2013). Yet to achieve this, credibility, trust, and reliability in any type of research are key (p. 285). Autoethnography is a valuable way of "shedding light on society through one's involved participation and is not about using that society as an opportunity to write

primarily about oneself" (Freeman, 2015, p. 69). And, yet, this is a constant balancing act within autoethnography, and writing about challenging and difficult topics.

Reliability in autoethnographies generally comes down to the credibility of the narrator. The validity and trustworthiness of autoethnography is anchored in verisimilitude, as it evokes in readers "a feeling that the experience described is lifelike, believable, and possible, a feeling that what has been represented could be true. The story is coherent. It connects readers to writers and provides continuity in their lives" (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 282). Ellis (2004) suggested that autoethnographies can, and should also be evaluated in terms of whether they assisted readers communicating to and with others different from themselves, or offered ways to improve the lives of readers, or the author's own life. In autoethnography,

> the focus of generalizability moves from respondents to readers, and is always being tested by readers as they determine if a story speaks to them about their experience or about the lives of others they know; it is determined by whether the (specific) autoethnographer is able to illuminate (general) unfamiliar cultural processes. (Ellis et al., 2011, n.p.)

Richardson (2000) included this shift in generalizability, suggesting that autoethnography should be appraised against five criteria: (1) substantive contribution, (2) aesthetic merit, (3) reflexivity (defined as self-awareness and agency within self-awareness), (4) the impact the narrative causes on the reader, and (5) its credibility. However, if the value of autoethnography is to be understood more clearly by the wider research community,

> those engaged in this emerging art need to assist their readers in judging its worth. To include in the research report adequate justification for the choice of this method and demonstration of how appropriate evaluation criteria might be applied are two ways in which researchers can help reviewers appreciate what autoethnography has to offer. (Duncan, 2004, p. 12)

In this case, this is represented through the components of the final results of this research study.

The validity and trustworthiness of this research and final product lies in the presentation of data and its interpretation, as well as the judgement of readers in evaluating the worth of this product. This is guided by the need for research as called for by the TRC and other related processes (e.g. RCAP, UNDRIP, etc.).

Ethical Considerations

There was minimal risk involved in this study, as pointed out in the limitations section. This research has been entirely critically self-reflective. With that in mind, I had access to various mental health professionals to discuss or explore any personal mental challenges that arose through this critical introspection and exploration. I also had access to an employee and family assistance program (EFAP) through my employer, including mental health and counselling support; however, I did not find the need to utilize these through this research. Many conversations with colleagues provided the support, guidance, and motivation to complete the work. As relatively simple as this sounds, critical self-reflection is not *easy*, nor simple. Engaging and immersing oneself into ideas and concepts such as genocide, social injustice, and the deep, nasty truths of the TRC, for example, requires some preparation and some healthy outlets such as self-writing, physical exercise, a lot of time outdoors, and friends, family and colleagues willing to immerse themselves in conversations related to these concepts.

Within the final product, any names, or easily presumed identities have been masked as much as possible through the use of pseudonyms or other tactics and strategies to protect identities; a common tactic in autoethnography. This is with the exception of utilizing published stories or materials available in the public realm. The Athabasca University Research Ethics Board provided approval of this research in September 2019.

Summary

This chapter has laid out the research design, methodology and methods for conducting this study. This critical qualitative inquiry is focused on critical social justice within online distance education and interfaces with TRC *Calls to Action*. The central methodology and method for conducting this study is autoethnography, which is intended to focus on the self (*auto*) through interfaces with cultures (*ethno*), with the final product generally represented as a written analysis (*graphy*). This dissertation research involved critical self-reflection upon my experiences in online distance education and engagement with principles of critical social justice. The simultaneous process of data collection, compilation, and analysis led to the layered and generative accounts presented in the forthcoming sections.

Part 2: Research Findings

People who imagine that history flatters them (as it does, indeed, since they wrote it) are impaled on their history like a butterfly on a pin and become incapable of seeing or changing themselves, or the world. This is the place in which it seems to me most white [North] Americans find themselves. Impaled. They are dimly, or vividly, aware that the history they have fed themselves is mainly a lie, but they do not know how to release themselves from it, and they suffer enormously from the resulting personal incoherence.

- Baldwin, *White man's guilt* (1985, p. 410-411)

Introduction

Australian professor of theatre John Freeman wrote a book focussed on autoethnography, published in 2015, *Remaking memory: Autoethnography, memoir and the ethics of self*. Freeman argued that conducting and completing autoethnographies "is to engage in a form of social research that explores the researcher's personal experience and connects the autobiographical story to wider cultural, political and social meanings" (p. 200). He explained that "autoethnography is about work that draws on personal experience and which foregrounds this as a meaning-making endeavour to engage the broader social issues of a given community" (p. 164). It is relational, he argued – which is also the theme of reconciliation. Autoethnography, "can present an individual performer's perspective, it is one that draws on and connects to a collective understanding" (p. 164). Freeman discussed how the shaping of his book about autoethnography, was also partially autoethnographic: "a partial autoethnography might be neither fish nor fowl, and might yet be so curious a hybrid that it satisfies neither one camp nor the other" (p. 2). The research findings laid out in this dissertation are similar. The vignettes follow some common autoethnographic methodologies (e.g. Pitard, 2017), and the surrounding sections are also partially and fully autoethnographic as I explore and write about (*graphy*) my self (*auto*) within various cultures (*ethno*).

In framing these research findings, following deep reflection upon the data compiled for this research, and building upon Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological model(s); these findings are autoethnographic and nested within further partial autoethnography. The product itself – this dissertation – in turn represents and presents an autoethnography. These findings are shared,

explored and framed around four core courses that I completed within the doctoral program. Each vignette is a reflection of various elements and personal experiences – some from my doctoral (online) course experiences, and some from earlier life experiences that relate and arose in my research journals, course work, and data analysis in preparing this dissertation. In turn, each of the sections and components of each chapter presented in these Findings, are autoethnographic. Each section that is sandwiched around vignettes has been built upon, framed around, or drawn from course materials, course presentations, course papers, research journals, discussion postings from each course (mine), and a variety of other materials that were outlined in the previous chapter. As I wrote these findings, I moved through multiple iterations of presentation. An early draft of this dissertation, for example, was comprised entirely of imaginary letters; letters that I wrote back to courses, imaginary letters from other researchers, and so on. I moved away from that form, yet still drew upon that draft to reach this final version.

In writing about the context of reconciliation in Canada, Lengelle, Jardine and Bonnar (2018) proposed that, "cultural tensions must be genuinely addressed to realize our educational and democratic ideals and yet this requires a different learning process than hitherto offered in most educational contexts" (p. 81-82). These same researchers advocated a process of "writing the self" (part of the title of the article) and that when pondering and engaging in processes focussed on reconciliation, or even considering cultural competencies, that "we must cultivate the self in order to become inter-culturally competent, and this includes facing shadow aspects through truthful dialogues and caring for the self" (p. 82). Highlighting earlier research by Lengelle, this process of *writing the self* requires exploring one's inner conflicts, contradictions and paradoxes "in a felt way" (p. 82). These researchers argued that writing the self "contributes to a process of reconciliation with the self and subsequently between cultures (e.g., Indigenous peoples and the dominant culture of colonization)." And, that we "learn from ourselves [through] examining a specific intention of reconciliation in Canada [which] can have broader implications for education globally" (p. 83).

The next four chapters explore and reflect findings of my research and analysis and are framed by the online courses I completed in a doctoral program. I drew from experiences in these courses in the data collection and analysis stages. In late 2014 as I prepared my application materials for the doctoral program at a university in western Canada, and in early 2015 as I prepared to enter the program, I read and referred frequently to the 2014 released volume: *Online*

distance education: Towards a research agenda edited by long-time online distance education scholars and researchers Olaf Zawacki-Richter and Terry Anderson. In their introduction, and highlighted through several chapters, they pointed to the importance and opportunities to enact principles of social justice through online distance education. In concluding their book and outlining a research agenda for distance online education, Zawacki-Richter and Anderson suggested that they hoped "that the proposed research framework with the associated research issues and open questions will be regarded as our common ground in the community of distance education researchers, scholars, and reflective practitioners" (2014, p. 488). They advocated that they "both support and encourage research filtered through multiple cultural lenses (p. 488-489). There were aspects to this edited volume and focus on social justice that were encouraging – especially when I began to read through the TRC *Calls to Action*. Yet, other aspects that had me thinking of Baldwin's quote shared in the epigraph above, reflecting upon a deep ignorance that many hold about history – especially many non-Aboriginal people in Canada about the history of colonization and colonialism, and the long-lasting impacts.

As evident in the opening chapters to this dissertation, I reference this edited volume on a proposed research agenda frequently, and have done so through over the four years of doctoral course work and preparation for this research. To assist in framing the research in this dissertation, I have placed the focus areas of Zawacki-Richter and Anderson's (2014) proposed research agenda into a visual, or map, of recommendations that were included in the volume (Figure 17).

Figure 17

The Micro, Meso, and Macro Components of a Proposed Research Agenda for Online Distance Education

Distance education systems and theories
- Access, equity, and ethics
- Globalization of education and cross-cultural aspects
- Distance teaching systems and institutions
- Theories and models
- Research methods in distance ed. and knowledge transfer

Management, organization, and technology
- Management and organization (e.g. strategies, admin, organizational infrastructure, etc.
- Costs and benefits
- Educational Technology (Ed Tech)
- Innovation and change (e.g. new media, staff workload, tenure, etc.)
- Professional development and faculty support
- Learner support services
- Quality Assurance

Teaching and learning in distance education
- Instructional or learning design
- Interaction and communication in learning communities
- Learner characteristics

Macro (structural-level)

Meso (systemic-level)

Micro (individual level)

Note. Adapted from Adapted from Zawacki-Richter and Anderson's (2014) proposed research agenda.

The darker red arrows moving between each level are intended to represent my reflective pathways in thinking about, putting into practice, and reflecting upon online distance education, along with interfaces with the TRC reports and *Calls to Action*. These are explored in the coming sections, which reflect the findings of my reflective research. These are framed through the experiences of the specific courses I engaged in within the doctoral program, and reflections upon those experiences. This essentially became my fieldwork. As anthropologist Van Maanen proclaimed "Ethnographies join culture and fieldwork" (1988, p. 4). Within autoethnography, the focus becomes written reflections and analysis (*graphy*) of the self (*auto*) within cultures (*ethno*) (Freeman 2015). Online distance education definitely has a culture, or cultures (Anderson, 2008). My research engaged critical self-reflection within that.

Critical Self-reflection

In my professional work over the past several years, I have been engaged in designing curriculum and delivering workplace training that promotes and engages processes of self-reflection. Much of this is part of training related to enacting cultural safety and cultural humility within healthcare systems and services (more on this in coming chapters). A common question or inquiry arises: "what should I be reflecting upon?" and "what is the difference between self-reflection and *critical* self-reflection?"

Social work scholar, researcher and writer, Jan Fook has written about critical self-reflection for decades. She argued that critical self-reflection entails engaging "our ability to locate ourselves and our personal influences in a situation" (2012, p. 73). Fook argued that critical reflection, from a critical social theory standpoint, requires engaging knowledge through reflection, recognizing "the processes by which this knowledge (and thus power structures and relations) is maintained" (p. 47). This is done through a process of deconstruction, especially in questioning and disrupting dominant structures and relations, and reconstruction that "lays the groundwork for change" (p. 47). She outlined the following five key principles in critical reflection:

1. It challenges domination in three areas: external structures, social relations, and personal constructions;

2. It recognizes multiple and diverse constructions;

3. This recognition potentially disrupts dominant constructions;

4. Knowledge is constructed inclusively, through both empirical and reflexive processes; and

5. Communication and dialogue are important processes in negotiating inclusive structures and relations. (2012, p. 47).

These relate directly to my research, as this study was based on and embedded within critical self-reflection – mine and in contemplating how this might occur, or be supported, within online distance education. I attempted to focus my own critical self-reflection on the frequently unmarked and unnamed territory of whiteness through critical autoethnography and narrative inquiry within online distance education, and my experiences of online distance education. This entailed a critical gaze inwards to my own privileges and outward to seeing those, such as whiteness and male privilege, intertwined in education systems, as well as within the roll out of

educational technology in many forms. This is put into visual form utilizing a similar view as the structures of racism in the previous chapter (Figure 18), and built upon Greenwood's (2019) model of change related to cultural safety.

Figure 18

Spheres of Critical Self-reflection Within This Research
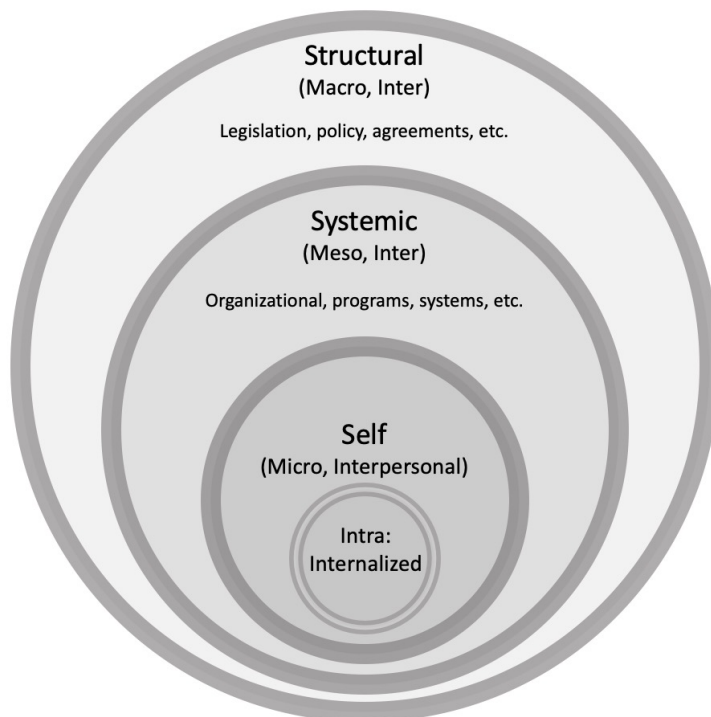
Engaging in critical self-reflection, inherently involves engaging and exploring one's experiences "so that the relationship between [a researcher's] subjective experiences are explained in relation to how they interact with the world of others" (Parkes, 2015, p. 93). Parkes argued that this is even more critical when navigating issues of social justice and when occupying sites and position of privilege (e.g. being white) and working with Indigenous peoples, or in cross-cultural or intercultural contexts. I was aware of some of this coming into the program based on professional experiences and previous education.

As outlined by Fook above, the self-reflection must move through an iterative process beginning with the intrapersonal – the internalized self. This emanates out to the interpersonal on the micro-scale, including reflection upon impacts and interactions with family, friends, neighbors, and day-to-day (e.g. work). These are the key influences of socialization for every

individual (DiAngelo, 2018). These are embedded within the systemic or meso-scale, whereby organizations and programs influence each individual within, including education systems (another key socialization pathway). The outermost influence in this model is the macro-level, whereby structures such as legislation (e.g. *Indian Act*, UN DRIP, etc.) have systems-wide impacts and influence. The dark gray circles between each scale represent the tensioned interfaces.

This model of envisioning spheres of influence, both within an individual's day-to-day life, as well as a similar model for envisioning a proposed research agenda for online distance education are a fitting shift to revisit the research questions for this dissertation, which were framed around the TRC final reports and *Calls to Action* and potential interfaces with online distance education. As an individual carrying privilege, and a practitioner, researcher, and teacher it is essential for me to build some understanding and recognition that there is a responsibility praxis (e.g. cycles of reflection and action), as well as reflect upon my response-ability in this work. Upon reflection, it's important that I resist urges to live too comfortably and hangout in the protected area that my privileges can provide, which can include the privileges of remaining silent. As critical educator Brookfield asked himself: "Given the all-pervasive nature of ideological conditioning, how can whites who breathe in the air of white supremacy every day come to recognize it as the carbon monoxide poison it constitutes" (2019, p. 12-13). Ideological conditioning is a powerful force of socialization, and socializing privilege.

As a tool, autoethnography offered the opportunity to explore myself and realities in this way and to understand that this method "is both a process and a product" (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011, p. 273). This *process* is an essential part of studying whiteness, particularly on the part of a privileged white male researcher and practitioner. "Acknowledging white complicity entails more than just a facile confession. It involves understanding of how whiteness works through white bodies and the discourse practices of well-intentioned, caring and even progressive white people" (Applebaum, 2010, p. 180). Continuing to engage critical whiteness will entail deepening my explorations and potential understandings, not only of myself and practices, but also how this awareness can be applied towards changing systems engaged in the tensioned interfaces of Indigenous-Settler relations in this nation. In this particular dissertation, I have attempted to keep this with a focus on online distance education.

Autoethnography scholar and writer Carolyn Ellis suggested that "In this space, we learn to live meaningfully in the stories of our lives. In this space, we learn to see and feel the world in a complicated manner and then reflexively turn that lens on ourselves" (2004, p. 98). However, this lens, or lenses, must remain consistent in my personal and professional practices. Often in my own experiences, this requires a multi-layered approach, which in this dissertation is framed by guidance from social work scholars Mullaly and West (2018). These scholars suggested engaging in anti-privilege practices at the personal, systemic, and structural levels. These levels also provided effective frames for outlining future research possibilities. The next four chapters represent this exploration, and are framed around doctoral courses, intermeshed with personal vignettes from my work over a few decades.

Chapter 4. Topics in Distance Education

Ignorance.... is not a passive state of absence – a simple lack of information:

it is an active dynamic of negation, an active refusal of information.

- (Felman, 1982, p. 26)

Introduction

This chapter begins a reflective process, and reflection on a course within the online doctoral program I completed, which included an on-site face-to-face Orientation session. Listed in the goals for this course were suggestions that through completing the course (including the face-to-face Orientation for a cohort of twelve) students would:

- Draw on, or contribute to, as required and appropriate, the social and interpersonal resources of the student cohort, to support the personal, social, and learning needs of the course group;

- Describe and critically examine personal teaching and training beliefs and practices, specifically in light of the findings, principles, concepts, and viewpoints found in the distance education and related literature; and

- Apply to personal practice appropriate knowledge and skills acquired from various sources, including reading, observation, discussion, and critical analysis and reflection.

There were four units to this course: (1) fundamental theories, concepts, and basic research in distance education; (2) distance education as a field of study and practice; (3) issues in distance education; and (4) principles and practices in online education. This chapter begins the process of self-reflection and larger reflection upon my experiences within this program and this course in particular. And, as outlined in the goals for this course, this draws upon personal experiences and resources.

Orienting to the Doctoral Program: Vignette

In August, 2015, I got in my car on a warm summer Sunday and drove many hours east, from Prince George in north-central BC to a city in Alberta. The drive was along a stretch of road known as The Highway of Tears. *This refers to the number of Indigenous women and girls that have been found dead, or gone missing on this highway. I booked a dorm room at a*

university in the city; a relatively affordable, simple room. It's about a 30 minute walk from the university dorms – across the river – to the Orientation site in the downtown core. It was the week of Orientation for the doctoral program. The cohort I am assigned to is to meet face-to-face all week with a cohort of 12 students and faculty and support staff within the program and institution.

I have a bit of nerves, slight excitement, however, also not really looking forward to a week with a group of folks I do not know and noticing that our group has rather disparate interests for research and professions. Some similarities; however, much difference. Added to this is the thought of sitting inside for days and the potential for a lot of 'theorizing' about academia and academic practice. I recognize the paradox and contradictions in this as I have decided to pursue a doctorate degree. I also remind myself of the privilege I walk with by being able to take this program, and secure the resources to complete the program. At the time, this was a prospect of just under $15,000 per year for tuition and course fees.

Our first day of Orientation starts with an unsettling experience. I arrive to a boardroom like setting, high up in an office building on the edge of the downtown. The room is rectangular, with one wall containing the door. One wall a screen, and two walls are windows. In the middle is a rectangular, U-shape set up of tables and chairs. Around the perimeter on the window sills are a series of poster size black and white images (head shots). I recognize several of them: Dewey, Piaget, Freud. At some point, it is explained to us that these are the heroes of education. These are the "shoulders of giants" upon which we are to stand; the discourses to swim in. These are many of the "original" educational theorists, including various psychologists and sociologists. All names I recognize from some undergraduate and graduate courses.

There comes an opportunity over the few days where I express what I saw as an ideological bias that was demonstrated by celebrating and recognizing only these particular theorists and researchers. Yes, I shared, they are important individuals. However, they also represent a limited view, and some might even argue, narrow view of what "education" is, means, and can be, and could mean. I point out that these are images, largely, of dead white guys (DWGs). Looking around the room at my cohort, I saw, and heard introductions from three males (including myself) and nine females. Was there potentially a problem here? For some, yes; for some, maybe no.

I wondered at time if there was a power play at work? As a cohort of new students into a doctoral program – were folks feeling they could raise questions of authority? Would questions and critique of this display result in potentially negative experiences in the future four months of the course with the same instructor? Would questions of critique, or critical engagement, result in labels of "trouble-maker"? Or, "shit disturber"; a "know-it-all" that needed be cut down to size?

Reflecting Upon the On-Site Orientation

The Orientation session was, as pointed out in materials from the programs, "intended to provide students with knowledge, tools, personal contacts, language, and experiences that will assist them as they proceed through the doctoral program." The following were outlined as components of the program:

- the Orientation session will include social and interpersonal components with other members of the cohort;

- the Orientation will begin to address some of the program and course content objectives;

- between the Orientation session and work in the first course, students in the program are provided with "understanding of the key theories, principles, concepts, practices, and opinions of the field" so as to begin to participate in "dialogue, debate, and discussions with peers and instructors"; and

- students begin initial work on developing their dissertations and "engage in advanced study of the remaining topics in the program." (program website)

The Orientation session was a chance to meet several faculty within the program, as well as other support programs (e.g. library) and administrators that support the program. The session included several presentations from various faculty, administrators, and support staff connected to the program (e.g. Library). Included were some of the common aspects one might expect, such as outlining goals and expectations for the program (Figure 19).

Figure 19

Goals and Objectives of Doctoral Program,

Note. From a Presentation Slide at Orientation

The goals and objectives for this program are important considerations within my research, as well as within the contexts that Zawacki-Richter and Anderson's (2014) proposed research agenda that suggests social justice considerations should be front and centre in online distance education offerings, programming, and policies. For individuals that become, or are already, engaged in senior responsibilities, as outlined above, at public education institutions in Canada, would fall within the TRC *Calls to Action*, including #57, which suggests all non-Aboriginal government employees require specific training. The same could be argued for those that undertake these sorts of roles within the private sector as well.

A visual map was provided at Orientation outlining a linear structure for the program and where Orientation fits in the mix (Figure 20).

Figure 20

Doctoral Program Process
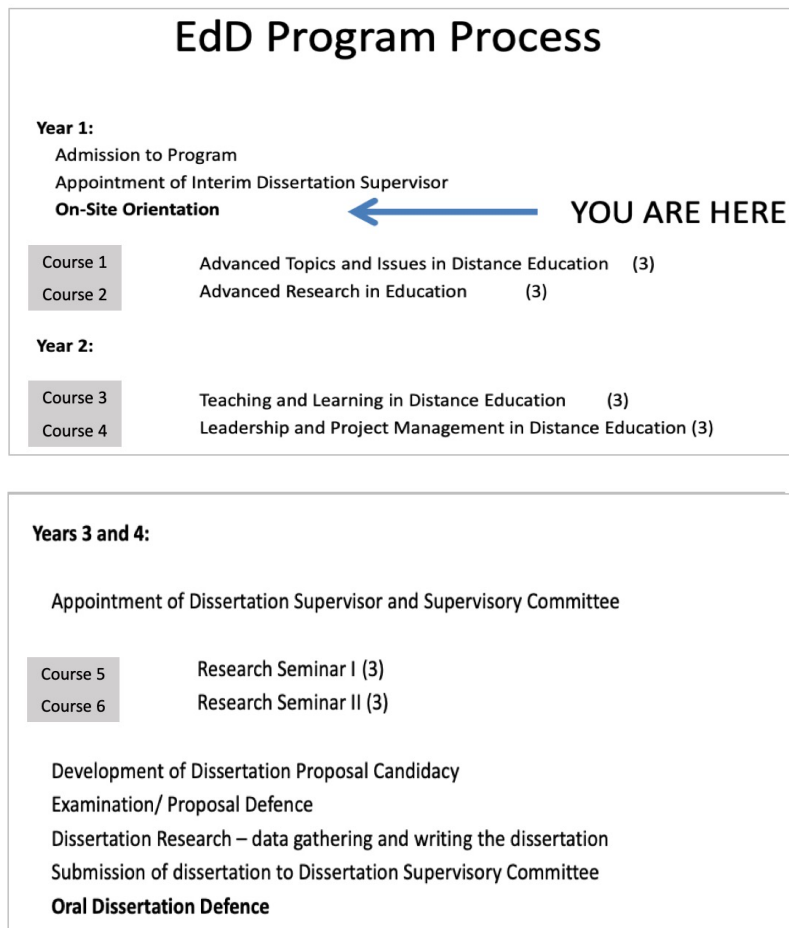
Note. From a Presentation Slide at Orientation

One of the stated goals in the program suggested that moving through this first course would include applying my personal "practice appropriate knowledge and skills acquired from various sources, including reading, observation, discussion, and critical analysis and reflection" (program course materials). As with many other students entering this program; learners and participants come with experience and practice. I recall hearing at Orientation that the average age within the program I engaged in is close to fifty years old. It appears that our cohort was not far off that average, with diversity in experiences and professional practice. There were also some early discussions of people's research interests, as "People usually do research on the issues they're trying to work on in their own lives" (Goodman, 2011, p. 1). This came out quite

clearly in cohort colleagues' experiences and goals for the program. It was also the case for me as I reflected upon potential research and dissertation topics.

The Orientation session also included discussions at length regarding theory, theories, and theory-building (Figure 21), which appeared to immerse this program in the culture of academia. For example, the course objective "understanding of the key theories, principles, concepts, practices, and opinions of the field" – referring to online distance education.

Figure 21

An Image from Course Materials

Fundamental questions for theory-building
- *What have others done?*
- *What did they find?*
- *What do they recommend?*
- *What can I use?*
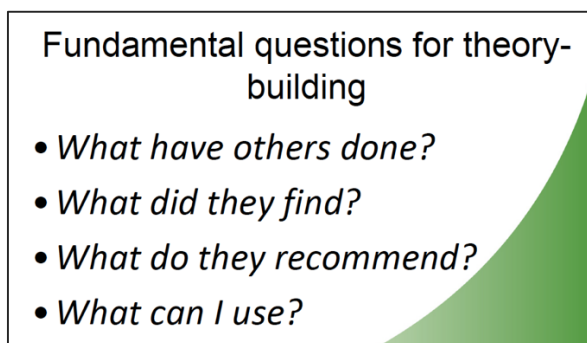
Note. From a Presentation Slide at Orientation

I contemplated these questions, as I looked up the etymology of the word *theory*. The Online Etymology Dictionary suggests Latin and Greek roots, and that a theory was initially a "contemplation, speculation; a looking at, viewing; a sight, show, spectacle, things looked at…" The deeper roots of the word point to a Proto-Indo-European word meaning "to perceive". As I pondered this (theorized?), some key questions to consider may include: who makes these determinations? Who draws the line between key theories, and not-key theories? Which *others* are being referred to in "what others have done?"

The next section begins to articulate and explore some of the assignment and course experiences, as well as my reflections upon these activities, and exposure to certain *theories*. One of the first course assignments following Orientation is explored and reflected upon in the next section. This assignment set a foundation for my research in this course, and for much of the rest of the program, including in this dissertation. Themes from this assignment have surfaced repeatedly in my research and writing of this dissertation.

The Curse of Dichotomous Orthodoxies: Where do We Draw the Line when Navigating Social Justice in Online and Distance Education?

In the first presentation and paper for the first course in this program, I considered notions of social justice (and purported notions of equity) within online, distance, and e-learning initiatives. This was built upon, and informed by, (a) the calls within Zawacki-Richter and Anderson's (2014) proposed research agenda for online distance education, (b) the recently completed TRC in Canada, and (c) the 2007 UN DRIP. Taking this on, required a few central considerations focused on social justice. I chose an image I have used frequently in presentations over the past several years – a drawing (poster size) from my daughter (Teeghan) when she was about four or five years old (Figure 22).

Figure 22

One Representation of Canada, from the View of a Non-Indigenous Settler Five-year Old

Note. Source: Original

This image, for me, highlights the diverse views and ways of being that can define or shape a nation – and that these change over time, as we all age, learn, and shift our perspectives (and theories). That presentation was also a melee of slides and information, coming in at close to one hundred slides for a one hour presentation. Things moved quickly. The title of

that first presentation was: "Where do we draw the line? – the curse of the dichotomous orthodoxy" (Figure 23).

Figure 23

Title slide for a Course Presentation
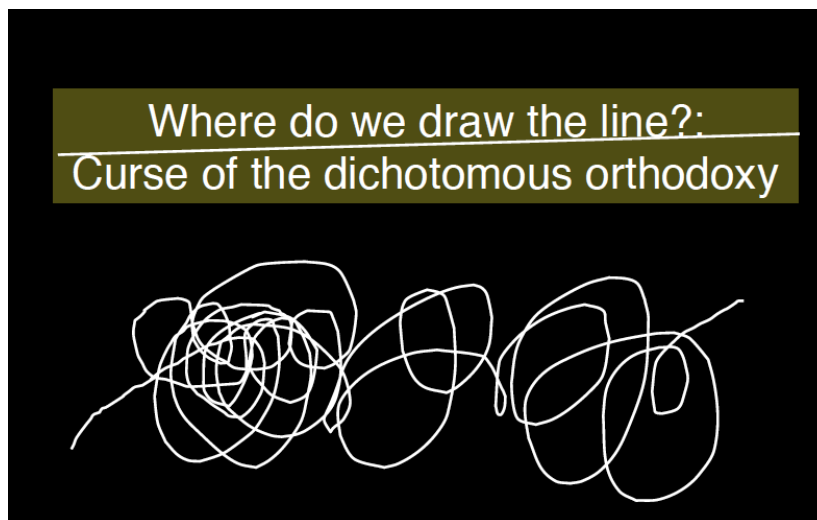
The use of *the line* in the title was purposeful – both as text and as images (one straight, one knotted and twisted). These represent amphibious identities (Sousanis, 2015) – images and text, as these two things often move between different areas of our brain for processing. Some of the impetus behind pondering *lines* was precipitated by social anthropologist Tim Ingold who wrote the book *Lines: A brief history* (2007). He begins the book asking: "What do walking, weaving, observing, storytelling, singing, drawing and writing have in common?" He suggested an answer stating, "they all proceed along lines of one kind or another" (p. 2). He argued that "As walking, talking and gesticulating creatures, human beings generate lines wherever they go" (p. 2). I was also purposeful in using the straight line and the circuitous non-linear line as imagery – a purposeful visual dichotomy, and amphibious identity. Dichotomy-dichotomous and orthodoxy were utilized with intention in this particular presentation, with definitions provided within (Figure 24).

Figure 24

Defining Orthodoxy and Dichotomous; From a Course Presentation
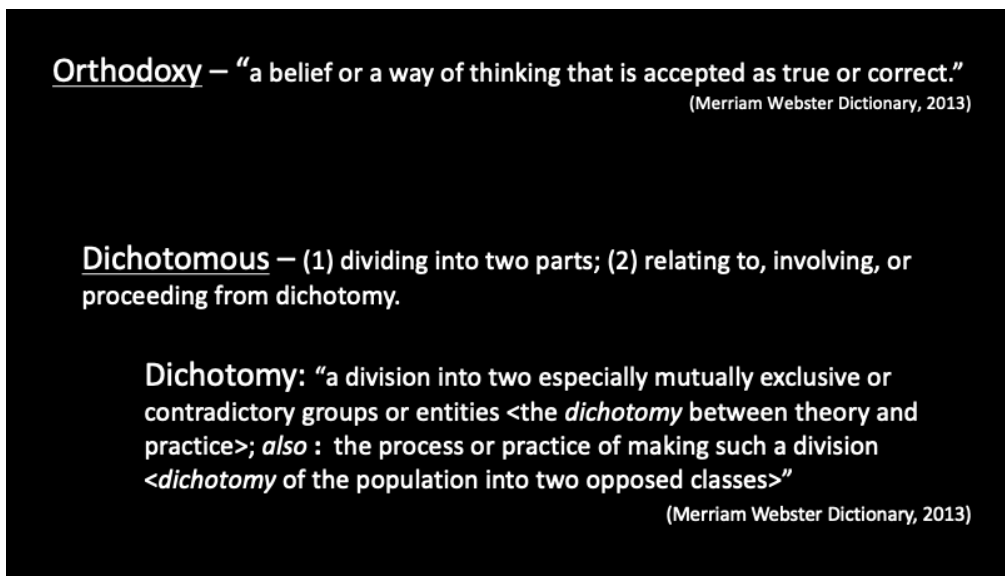
Note. Source: Original.

Part of the reason for exploring orthodoxies (e.g. particular ways of thinking) that are often dichotomous (*either* this, *or* that) – is that there are many debates surrounding what might be considered online education and what might not; what might be considered education, and what might not; what is an educational technology, and what is not. Sometimes these are important distinctions (e.g. dividing into mutually exclusive entities). The challenge becomes, however, is that terms such as social justice often do not lend themselves very well to dichotomous orthodoxies. Ideas of societal *reconciliation* and *cultural genocide* also do not lend well to clear dichotomies; mutual exclusiveness. As the definition of dichotomy highlights, some people feel a divide exists; a dichotomy between theory and practice. This is a concept I tend to argue against rather vehemently.

In this first presentation, I referenced Ingold (2007) and his thinking about *the line* and especially its prevalent use in Occidental (Western) societies. Ingold explored and compared ideas and examples of *the line* and how *thinking straight* or *being straight* have distinct meanings and connotations in English, and Western forms of thinking (Figure 25). He conducted an anthropological archeological investigation into *the line*. He highlighted the dichotomies evident, for example, through social categorizations such as gay —

straight. He included social comparisons and differences between literate (e.g. having knowledge of letters) and oral-based cultures. This included ways of thinking and being; otherwise referred to as epistemological and ontological differences. The straight line is also directly related to, and with, numerical values and, thus, quantitative thinking (e.g. think about fractions) – sometimes dichotomous to qualitative thinking. He compares this difference with more qualitative ways of thinking; more circuitous and complex; fluid – especially processes of self-reflection and societal reflection. This links back to my presentation and title slide highlighting distinctions between straight lines and convoluted messy knotty lines.

Figure 25

A Quote From Ingold, 2007

"In Western societies, straight lines are ubiquitous. We see them everywhere, even when they do not really exist. Indeed the straight line has emerged as a virtual icon of modernity, and index of the triumph of the rational purposeful design over the vicissitudes of the natural world."

-Tim Ingold, social anthropologist, *Lines: A Brief History* (2007)

Ingold compared uses of the word *ruler* – referring both to one that rules the land (or a territory), and one that measures the land (or territory): "In establishing the territory as his to control, the ruler lays down guidelines for its inhabitants to follow" (2007, p. 160). In turn, the ruler, the sovereign, makes "political judgements and strategic decisions – his rulings – [as] he plots the course of action they should take" (p. 160). The *straight* line encompasses many functions such as to separate, to define, to order, to measure, to express number and proportion – as well as define difference – to *draw a line* between; to dichotomize into: *either/or*. The straight line, or the line in general, argued Ingold, is imposed to create "certainty, authority, a sense of direction" (p. 167) and yet, with some irony, a line can also be endless, as well as fragmented. A line can be open-ended like the mathematical concept of pi (π). Thus, the dichotomy; on one hand, a line can stretch to infinity, yet, bifurcate between two ideas, concepts, places, and otherwise – such as the line (e.g. border) between Canada and the US. Sometimes that line is relatively straight, or at least a curved straightness and neatness as it follows the curve of the globe. At other times,

that nice neat curving line, must divert to encompass geopolitical realities (e.g. think of southern Ontario, Vancouver Island, etc.). These reflections highlight some of *the curse of the dichotomous orthodoxy*. Efforts at ruling by, and with, a ruler, by a ruler, on a spherical ever-changing surface (think plate tectonics and continental uplift) – this is complex business.

My purpose for this wandering exploration and reflection, links, for example, back to the opening letter in this dissertation and the actual photographic image versus image *map* of my kids jumping and flipping in the sand. It also links to thinking about theories. I stretch this metaphor into further natural settings such as the following artifacts which were included in a presentation in this first course, and in several other presentations I have given over the years. With this image, I ask: how do we map things like migrating animals? How do we engage in *theory-building* regarding them? Whose questions are being pondered? The image below (Figure 26) is of the Porcupine Caribou Herd which migrates great distances across the Northwest Territories, Yukon, and northern Alaska. I have used this image as a slide in many presentations with the question: how should we map fluid movements? How do we build theories around unpredictable fluid movement?

Figure 26

How Should We Map Fluid Movements?

Note. Image from US Fish and Wildlife Service/Wikimedia Commons.

If we began to *map* this, what would we *map*, what should we map – each individual animal, a family, the entire herd? Live animals versus dying animals, or both? Young versus old? How about predators? Generally, these migrations get mapped as blobs (or polygons) on a map, with varying colors to distinguish different areas, at different times of the year for the herd, along with different colors to distinguish what the herd is doing. For example, calving grounds on the north slope area of northern Alaska, and movement back across the Yukon and NWT in the fall and winter. This does not begin to incorporate potentially mapping the river channel in the image. River flow changing hourly due to meltwater from mountain glaciers. Or, mountains moving in geological time.

However, these sorts of images, or maps, are solid depictions (e.g. snapshots in time) of a very fluid and active process; like trying to map a heartbeat or a thought. Catch the moment, lose the movement. Even the word map itself has a fluid identity, to *map* as a verb, and a *map* as a noun; a thing. Yet the noun: *map*, is still but a representation, a metaphor for actual things. And most maps, take very dimensional active things and processes and put them on a static, flat two-dimensional plane. Even the act of mapping, takes the reality of existence on a globe; a sphere, and, generally, projects it onto a flat surface. This creates problems. And, this creates opportunities. And, to ponder this further, complications ensue when fluid, fluctuating, flowing concepts, or maps, are put onto flat digital screens. In this case, think of online distance education.

In the same light as caribou, I ask regularly in presentations about the scenario below (Figure 27). Pacific salmon migrate huge distances from natal freshwater rivers and streams stretching from California all the way up and around Alaska to the Mackenzie River in the NWT. Pacific salmon migrate out into the open North Pacific, then back a few years later to their natal streams. Pacific salmon also come in various species. Each species generally has different habits and migration paths and routes. Another example, of fluid, always shifting, movement that does not translate well to a permanent snapshot on a flat plane such as a piece of paper (e.g. map), or a computer screen. Think of the challenges of trying to portray the weather, as any weather person on the daily news attempts with multiple tools and props.

Figure 27

How do We Map Salmon Migrations?

Note. Source: Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported license.

My past experiences, work, professional practice and other factors played a large part in my preparation and application to the doctoral program reflected upon in my research. Many online distance education courses explicitly involve taking active, fluid processes and placing them in static two-dimensional platforms (e.g. course management platforms such as Moodle, or otherwise). Adding further paradox to this, a flat information and content management system (e.g. Moodle) is called a learning management system (e.g. LMS). Yet, just because the content is organized into boxes or pages, does not inherently result in *learning*. Or, at least, maybe not the learning, that the course learning objectives are suggesting *should* be occurring within the course. For example, someone new to Moodle, may learn to navigate the platform, but, not necessarily learn the content.

The next section provides a reflection on my preparation and application to this program and a reflection of past experiences, which still remain connected to the ideas that have been explored above.

Learning from Distance, Staying in Place

When I applied to the doctoral program focused on online education, I made my initial application to the program pointing out my connection to the research I hoped to explore. My application material was called: *Learning from distance, staying in place*. When I had applied to the program, I hoped to bring, and bring together, my experience in online distance education, working in remote communities (mainly Indigenous), and a variety of other personal experiences. Part of my experiences in education, and goal, was to explore if it is possible to move through the various levels of educational credentials, doing only courses I wanted to do and viewed as interesting – not courses that I had to do to satisfy some academic requirement. Then, in turn, utilizing the knowledge and experience gained in the programs for the potential benefit of northern communities and organizations navigating puzzling issues, initiatives, and opportunities, such as reconciliation, Aboriginal rights and title, and Treaty rights.

Therefore, I came into the doctoral program in 2015 with the view that separating my personal and professional practice (e.g. social justice related work and experiences), from my research practice and theory interests, was not going to happen. These are not simple dichotomies to parse into separate distinct pieces. I recognized that this may create some friction with some scholars or those in academia that see a strong line between objectivity and subjectivity; quantitative and qualitative. That was my point in drawing a line and labelling it a *dichotomous orthodoxy* – a point explored in coming chapters. This also raises complications of pondering what does it mean to navigate between the lines, and what might it mean to be navigate the in-between? (Ingold, 2007).

As a result, and purposefully, in this first presentation in the first online course, I chose to link my thinking, research, and theorizing into my personal realm. I utilized another example from my personal life to emphasize my point(s) about lines, blobs, and the challenges of navigating dichotomous orthodoxies.

Vignette

In July 2001, I set out on a long bicycle trip. The first leg of my bicycle trip started in Inuvik, Northwest Territories (NT) near the mouth of the Mackenzie River. That leg included riding southwest down the Dempster Highway to Dawson City, Yukon (YT). At the

time, I had idealistic notions of riding westwards through Alaska and then south down the
Pacific coast to Los Angeles, with fall and winter weather chasing me south.

The first leg of the trip included The Dempster, an approximately 800 km thin
ribbon of gravel across the tundra and through a couple mountain ranges, connecting
Inuvik to southern highways and towns. In July on the tundra, the mosquitoes are at full
power. This is also part of the reason caribou, like the Porcupine Caribou Herd, migrate
great distances; they are being annihilated by mosquitoes. Below is an image from inside
my tent during that trip (Figure 28).

Figure 28

Mosquitoes on Outside of My Tent

Note. Source: Original

I have used this image in a variety of presentations over the years. In the first
course of the program, in sharing this image, the point I made was multi-faceted. The
point, I ask is: "how would you map this – by individual insect, by a blob representing all
of them, by where I was geographically?" And then, I will ask: "if you were mapping this,
what would you do when another mosquito lands, or one moves?" Then consider the wider
context of time, for example, if I lay in the tent for days, or, through a season: "How would
this change?"

This highlights the dichotomous, fluid puzzle, and that ultimately how to map this
means, essentially, one needs to draw a line; a dichotomous one. A line between this
moment, or, that moment. A line between this mosquito, or, that mosquito. Or, the
distinction between this representation (individual points), or, that representation (a blob,
or polygon). This movement, or that movement?

I then add further to my points (or, is it line of thinking)… through utilizing
personal anecdotes from that particular bicycle trip. During that first leg, I rode entirely
alone. I had done little training before hand and decided to build my stamina by simply
getting on the road. Along with this information I share an elevation profile for the
Dempster Highway (Figure 29).

Figure 29

An Elevation Profile of the Dempster Highway.
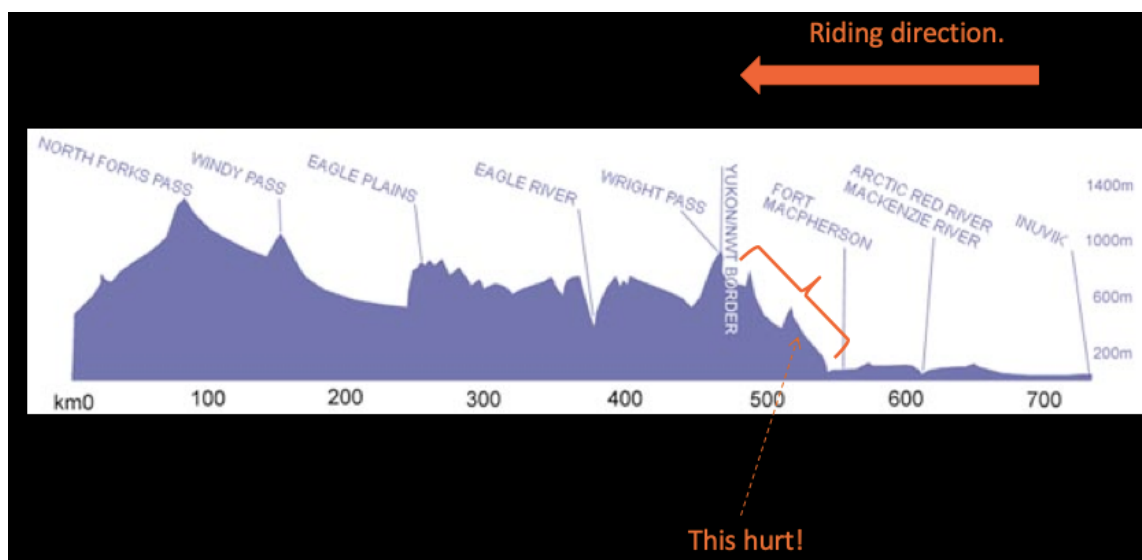
Note: Source: Original.

The profile shows Inuvik, where I started, on the right of the image, and the end of the
highway at km 0 on the left. Geographically, the Dempster Highway 'starts' just south of
Dawson City, Yukon – however this notion of beginnings depends on where you start, and
where you exit. The section highlighted with a bracket, from near Fort Macpherson to the
Yukon/NWT border (Figure 30), is a very quick elevation gain (approx. 1000 m.) over a
short distance (80 km). I share how my body felt through that (not good), along with an

image of that area from the trip. The problem with quick elevation gains on bicycle, is that

it means slow riding. Slow riding and clouds of mosquitoes are not pleasant.

Figure 30

Self-portrait, 2001 at Yukon/NWT Border on Dempster Highway

In turn, I share an image of an evening camp (Figure 31). I discuss having nowhere to

hang my food (e.g. in trees) along most parts of the highway (e.g. to protect it and me from

bears). Yet, open terrain generally meant more wind, and thus, less mosquitoes. I share

that this particular image is late in the evening. In July, north of the Arctic Circle, days are

very long. I'm huddled close to the tent to try and shelter from the evening wind.

Figure 31

Self-portrait From the Dempster Highway 2001

I also often include a map in my presentations, so that an audience can potentially place the location spatially and geographically. If I mention dates, I have also placed this temporally. When I share a map of the Dempster, I will often joke that it didn't really serve much purpose for finding my way. The only road for thousands of kilometres is the Dempster Highway. It is not like I was going to take a wrong turn somewhere. The map I carried with me was useful for linear purposes, such as where the next community or gas station, or river crossing may be. At this point in the presentation, I also refer back to the academic literature – the theories; the research.

The Dempster Highway, named after an officer of the Northwest Mounted Police, was built largely due to oil and gas exploration and drilling in the 1950s and 60s. It snakes through the territories of the Gwich'in people, which other than Inuit, are some of the most northerly Indigenous peoples in North America. Prior to colonization, Gwich'in peoples extended from Alaska across the northern Yukon, and Northwest Territories. The building of the snaking highway across the tundra has had lasting impacts (Figure 32)

Figure 32

A Path or Line of Another Type, Nested within Lines of Hills and Horizons

Note. Source: Original

Mapping Lines and Truths in Education

The argument(s) I make, and continue to make, is that drawing lines on a map, and then living with the belief that those lines are the *truth*, is, in many ways, a process of imagination; a leap of faith. When I stood on the apparent border between Northwest Territories and the Yukon, there was nothing within the landscape that showed any *border*. It was only a sign erected at the top of a hill, in a very windy mountain pass. Yet, it was some line thought up by a colonizing force, then drawn as a line on maps (e.g. border), that made this so. This line divided families, communities, and pre-existing governance structures. These peoples then became subject to different political regimes; Territorial governments, which for many years were essentially wards of the federal government. Similarly, when I rode my bike across the Yukon and Alaska border – an International border. If not for some low-lying hut built near the top of some hill in subalpine terrain, on the *Top of the World Highway* – I would not have noticed. And, yet, that line – that border – has significant implications on people's lives; and the lives of animals. This has had even bigger impacts in splitting peoples into different nationalities.

The links into education, and online distance education, have similarities to imaginary, yet very real lines, in many ways. For example, the apparent *lines* between disciplines; the imagined and metaphorical *towers* or *silos*, even though a university faculty member in anthropology might be across the hall from a faculty member in mathematics or economics. What might it take for these faculty members to stop and talk about or think about the many traditional Indigenous economies; or, complexities of say the mathematics involved in turning cedar trees into intricate totem poles; or, complexities of ocean navigation, mathematics involved, and economics engaged? These are the sorts of collaborations that may result in culturally relevant and/or culturally safe curriculum. This is even more the case when one begins to contemplate how Indigenous knowledges – more holistic – are also incorporated into western-based institutions.

The lines that are drawn on maps have long lasting and, at times, devastating impacts. Wars are fought over them. Families are split and divided. And yet, it is *rulers* (ala Ingold, 2007) that establish these lines, and often rulers that are used to draw the lines on the map. In turn, more rulers and rulers are involved in potentially building walls at borders, and putting up buildings to enforce and surveil border crossings and crossers. In Canada (think back to my daughter's sketched image), borders have been drawn up by rulers and rulers. Lines have been drawn around Indian Reserves, as per the *Indian Act*, 1867. Lines have been drawn around identity – for example, status Indian or non-status Indian; British Columbian or Albertan. The lines drawn on identity by forcing name changes upon Indigenous children and families. These lines forcibly split and destroyed families, for example, through placing children in Indian residential schools, or day schools – in many cases, for generations. Or, segregating peoples into different hospitals (e.g. Indian hospitals). Or, enforcing a pass system for Indigenous peoples to be able leave reserve-areas, and in-turn, banning social gatherings, or banning the hiring of legal representatives.

The impacts of drawing lines through disciplines and disciplining the lines, has frequently resulted in the need for processes such as the TRC, UN DRIP, and many other inquiries, investigations, and independent judicial reviews. These then become central issues of social justice within online distance education, yet, many of these issues and challenges can become unsettling and uncomfortable for those placed within their

disciplines. Similarly, and in relation to the presentation in this course, who draws the line on what is considered *in* a particular course, and what is *out* (e.g. content)? These are questions every course and curriculum designer must consider. How do those that evaluate course work make determinations about what is considered *in* and appropriate (e.g. right) and what is considered *out*, and inappropriate (e.g. wrong)? The concept of cultural safety provides some valuable guidance to reflect upon. More on this in coming chapters.

This first course in the doctoral program was intended to provide opportunities to draw on social and interpersonal resources to support personal, social, and learning needs. It was also intended to critically examine personal teaching beliefs and practices. Furthermore, it was intended that I draw upon my personal practice knowledge and skills. My presentation in this course most certainly contributed to meeting those objectives. However, I also learned, observed, and reflected upon the feedback, or lack of (e.g. silences) of cohort colleagues and faculty, when it comes to potentially difficult conversations and facts related to truth and reconciliation, racism, and the work of the TRC. At the time of completing this first course, the Final Reports were just being released.

Summary

This chapter highlighted and provided reflections on my early experiences within the doctoral program, through the first course, which included an on-site and face-to-face Orientation session. The early experiences in this program began to reveal the ideological bias inherent in the program – one of whiteness and colonial constructs. My initial projects within this program, and this first course, began to set the links and interfaces between the proposed research agenda for online distance education proposed by Zawacki-Richter and Anderson (2014) and outlined as goals and objectives of this course and larger program, along with my experiences and professional work in and with Indigenous communities in western Canada. Two reflective vignettes, one from arriving at Orientation and another from almost two decades ago, highlight the links and *auto* (self) *ethno* (cultural) *graphic* (writing, images and analysis) components of this dissertation. The next chapter moves to my experiences and reflections upon the second course in this program, which focused on research methodologies in education.

Chapter 5. Advanced Research in Education?

The neglect of Aboriginal languages affects all Canadians. It impedes the ability of

non-Aboriginal Canadians to understand and to appreciate the linguistic and

cultural diversity that is part of a shared history. The language and culture of all

Canadians is infused with the words and the history of Aboriginal peoples. Too

easily people forget that proper names such as *Québec* and *Saskatchewan* and

everyday words such as chipmunk (Odawa) and moose (Ojibway) are gifts from

Aboriginal people and their ancestors.

- (TRC, 2015, Vol. 3, p. 126).

Introduction

This chapter explores another course within this program which considered advanced

research in Education. It is common in doctoral programs to have a *research methods* course,

and this course represented this component of this doctoral program. The course was organized

into five areas of roughly equal emphasis: (1) epistemologies and ontologies of educational

research; (2) planning educational research projects; (3) research methods; (4) strategies for data

collection, and (5) strategies for data analysis. In the course materials was a mindmap that laid

out the structure of this course (Figure 33).

Figure 33

Mindmap for Second Course in Program
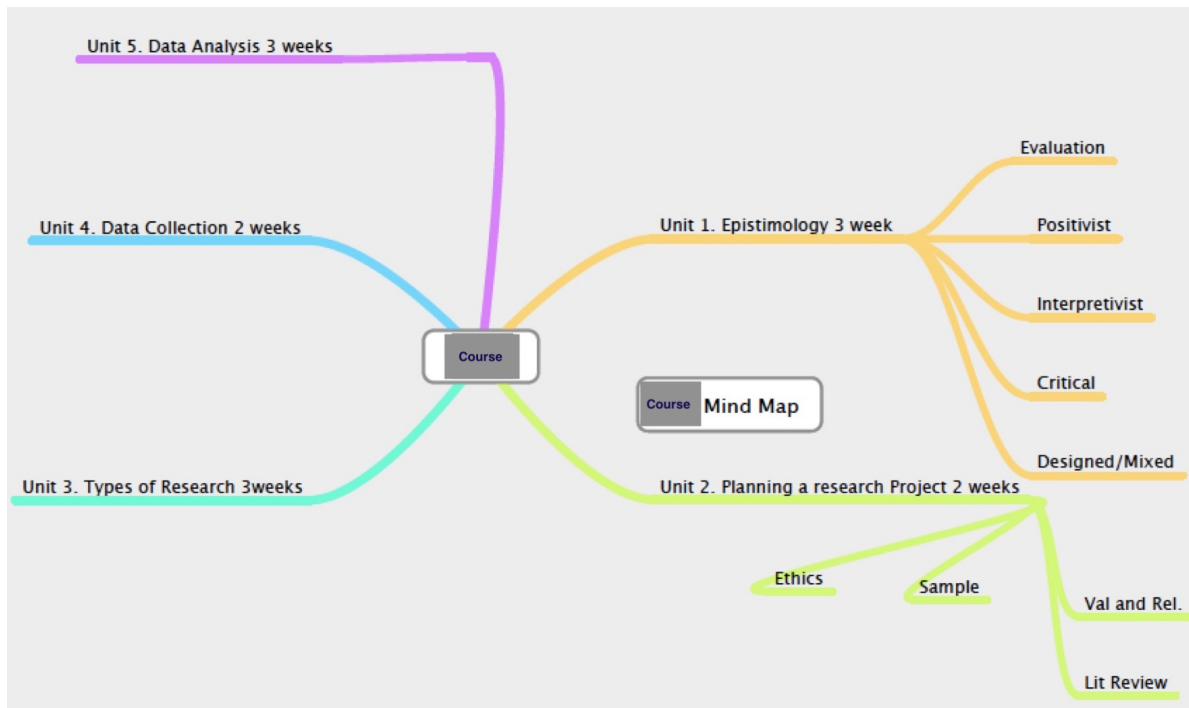
Note. Source: Adapted from course webpage

This chapter outlines the course and some of my experiences within. It also highlights the Indigenous-informed concept the *ethical space of engagement* (Ermine, 2007) and the links and interfaces with the TRC process and UN DRIP. Within these are ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions. The link between languages and cultures with epistemology and ontology is an important connection. The epigraph to this chapter highlights the relational aspects of links between language and cultures in this country. These are important to consider within any research in education, and specifically across many disciplines when the scope of the TRC *Calls to Action* are considered.

Advanced Research in Education

The first unit of this course focused on contexts of educational research: "The methodological approach that we use in our research activities is reflective of our ontological and epistemological assumptions" (n.p.). The online page for this course, on Moodle, the content management system, it stated:

Effective and knowledgeable leadership and practice at all levels and areas of distance education requires the ability to understand and apply the results of research and evaluation in the field and to conduct research in/on practice. Doctorally-prepared distance educators are often called upon to deal with problems requiring research capabilities. As such, this doctoral course provides learners with an advanced understanding of the conceptual issues relating to philosophy and theory in qualitative and quantitative research, as well as practical issues involved in designing and conducting research. A range of both qualitative and quantitative approaches will be examined in depth. (n.p.)

Different styles and approaches to research will result in different research results, and some philosophical paradigms are better suited for some research over others. It is important for researchers to be: "mindful of their own ontological and epistemological assumptions, as well as the political agendas that their research might serve" (n.p.).

In this course, as shown in the mindmap, scientific and positivist contexts and approaches were explored. Alternative approaches such as interpretive, naturalistic, phenomenological, interactionist, and ethnographic were included, as well as critical theories and complexity theories. The unit concluded with "an overview of how distance education research serves as a political agenda through the links between research and policy-making" (n.p.). This is a critical point to keep in mind throughout this dissertation.

This course is "geared toward an advanced understanding of research approaches and those who are actively thinking about pursuing research questions that can be explored through diverse styles of research methods" (n.p.). Course materials suggested that as students worked through the comprehensive assignments in this course they should, "focus on research designs of your choice, but you are encouraged to think and study broadly, rather than narrowly, on any particular design" (n.p.). The learning outcomes for Unit 1 suggested that upon completion of readings and activities for Unit 1, a learner will be able to:

- Explain the ontological assumptions and epistemologies underlying different kinds of empirical research.
- Differentiate between positivist and interpretative approaches to research in education.

- Describe how feminist and critical theoretical orientations differ from more traditional methods.

- Discuss the implications of educational research for policy making. (n.p.)

The first assignment for this course required building a framework for a proposed research project, which included outlining some theoretical paradigms and potential research projects. In the first paper, students were required to position themselves in their research including proposed research interest, and personal epistemological and ontological bearings or positioning. These included personal theories of reality and the nature of knowledge and knowing. In the first assignment, potential research questions were to be explored, and considerations of ethical and credibility implications. All of these were then to include some concluding reflections. It was at this point in the doctoral program that autoethnography began to take hold in my mind as a potential methodology and method for my dissertation research. Research and course work completed through this second course also framed components of the second chapter of this dissertation. It was critical for me to ponder various assumptions I was making throughout course work and in thinking about my potential research.

I found it surprising that this course raised political agendas, and even suggests that methods for distance education research generally serve a particular political agenda – especially when considering links between research and policy-making. Through the first course in this program, I became interested in how some of the TRC *Calls to Action* will be enacted (e.g. operationalized), such as those calling for education for non-Indigenous peoples, on topics such as Aboriginal rights and title, Indigenous law(s), and Indigenous-Crown relations – to mention a few. Many of these are place, context, and nation or community-specific aspects; however, the experiences of spaces and places are generally built upon one's ontological, epistemological and axiological grounding and foundations. The TRC *Calls to Action* contemplate the need for different grounding and foundations to come together in tensioned interfaces. For example, a white Settler male working in government learning more about Aboriginal rights and title, Indigenous laws and otherwise, inherently places knowledges of federal and provincial policies and governance, up against Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

It is one thing to provide the terrain for the knowledge map, and to shift the viewpoints or vantage points – such as raising awareness of overlapping titles (Settler and Indigenous) on the same map. This can be done through online distance education, in the name of social justice and

equity, however just because someone has the map that shows the terrains, does not necessarily mean they know what to do with that knowledge; how to navigate *per se*.

Ontological, Epistemological and Axiological Assumptions in Education?

I may have got a little ahead of myself in the first course in this program as I discussed and presented ideas on epistemologies, ontologies, and axiologies – outlining that not only are there diverse epistemologies; there are diverse perspectives on what the terms actually mean; and that pondering epistemologies and ontologies often does not lend well to dichotomous orthodoxies. Epistemologies and ontologies can be fluid over time and through space and place.

Vignette

I notice as I begin this course that the course page on Moodle outlined that: "The course is geared toward an advanced understanding of research approaches and those who are actively thinking about pursuing research questions that can be explored through diverse styles of research methods" (n.p). I appreciated the first assignment which focused on research paradigms and potential research projects. Students are required to write a paper that includes highlighting a couple of research paradigms, and the students' own epistemological and ontological positioning. (Note: Some work from that paper has informed this dissertation).

For the second assignment, students are asked to choose a research methodology and become a discussion leader on this methodology. A list is provided on the course website. Some methods include: case study, ethnography, action research, discourse analysis, autoethnography, survey studies, meta-analysis and more. This assignment provoked some of my early reading on autoethnography. This assignment includes giving a 20-minute online presentation on the chosen research methods and post information on a university social media platform called "The Landing" – in a dedicated area called the "Paradigm Wiki". The purpose of this is to add to previous cohort's posts on this assignment, and to have that information posted for future cohorts to visit.

I had some experiences with the university website and platform: The Landing. *It was built by faculty at the institution and operates similar to a social media website. It is listed as a place "where… staff, students, and friends can connect, share, and communicate." It is also noted to be a "secure social media system" operated by the university. I have found the site quite awkward and clunky. I can appreciate the sentiments behind the website – a social connecting area that a wide variety of folks associated with AU can engage and connect on, share materials*

and learning, and explore other courses utilizing the platform – however, one of the more

striking features I discovered about The Landing, was where the name arose from. There is a

short blurb on the website, explaining the name (Figure 34)

Figure 34

What's in a Name?

What's in a name?

Athabasca Landing was named after the original settlement that grew into the current town of Athabasca, Alberta. Athabasca Landing served as a debarkation site for paddle steamers and human powered craft heading north to the Klondike gold fields, northern settlements and the Arctic Ocean. The Landing served historically as a source of community, provision and support. This online version of Athabasca Landing aspires to provide these same services to current and future members of the ████████ University Community.

Note. Source: Screenshot from institution website

This naming exemplifies an epistemological and ontological assumption – the one

generally privileged and dominant within academic institutions. It speaks to Settler, colonial

roots. Maps of Treaty 8 and Treaty 6 show that the Athabasca River is the boundary between the

two Treaty areas, with the town of Athabasca located in Treaty 6 territory. Regardless of treaty

boundaries, there would have been Indigenous settlements in this area well before the Gold Rush

of the late 1800s. Added to this, the Gold Rush was devastating for many Indigenous

communities, and one might hope that the services that were provided at Athabasca Landing for

gold seekers, are not simply replicated through the online version of The Landing. If I was to

hazard a guess, it might suggest that these colonial roots, or epistemological and ontological

basis for this naming have not even been considered by the creators or the institution.

The name, or word, Athabasca, like many other place names in the present geographic

area of Canada has specific Indigenous roots. There is some debate, however, Athabasca is

suggested to be a Woodland Cree word "aeapaskāw" associated with areas where reeds, or

other plants grow, as well as referencing the meeting place of different waters (Parlee, 2011). It

is also associated with a large Indigenous language group, with the insertion of a 'k' rather than

a 'c'. The area around the community of Athabasca, previously Athabasca Landing, has been

utilized by Indigenous peoples for many thousands of years. There are also critical stories

associated with the signings of Treaty 6 (1876, same year as the first Indian Act*) and Treaty 8 (1899, last formal Treaty until Nisga'a agreement in BC in the 1990s).*

Like many places in North America, the documented "history" of a place like Athabasca Landing often begins with the first White or European explorer through the area. In the case of Athabasca Landing, it's David Thompson in 1799. Soon after that the Hudson's Bay Company and the fur trade. Lost in many of those stories is the fact that it's not like David Thompson and his fellow explorers, or the fur traders to follow, miraculously navigated the hinterlands of present-day Canada with little assistance. Indigenous peoples up and down the many waterways, now braised with White fellow's last names (e.g. Thompson, Fraser, Mackenzie, etc.) were critical guides and supports.

I pondered these sorts of ideological roots and assumptions as I navigated through this course. I wondered what the experience is, or would be, for someone who may have alternate epistemological and ontological basis from the dominant Settler narratives that seem to permeate much of academia (e.g. whiteness). As I thought about these, I dug a little deeper into Indigenous methods and methodologies in this course. This along with trying to understand why Indigenous methodologies were not even mentioned in this course, or by any student from the seven previous cohorts that posted on the wiki page on The Landing.

Ethics and Planning in Educational Projects?

The second unit of this course delved into questions and challenges of ethics in educational research. The course website stated: "The research community and those using the findings of research have a right to expect that research activities be conducted rigorously, knowledgeably, and in an ethically responsible manner." In this part of the course, important ethical issues are covered including "the following touchstones of ethical research: privacy, anonymity, confidentiality, betrayal, and deception" (n.p.) In the textbook chosen for this course, Cohen *et al*. (2011) suggested that the emerging field of critical education research should focus on interrogating:

> the relationships between school and society; how schools perpetuate or reduce inequality; the social construction of knowledge and curricula – who defines worthwhile knowledge, what ideological interests this serves, and how this reproduces inequality in society; how power is produced and reproduced through education, whose interests are

served by education and how legitimate these are (e.g. rich, white, middle-class males

rather than poor, non-white females). (p. 32)

Critical education research is intended to focus on interrogating power, with a transformative

agenda "concerned [with] mov[ing] from oppression and inequality in society to the bringing

about of social justice, equity, and equality" (p. 32). This is where my approach and motivation

for pursuing further education is centred.

After many years of frontline work (e.g. practice), which continues in current

professional roles, I utilized that frontline work, relationships with individuals, organizations,

and communities to guide my research interests – both within the program and in this

dissertation. Related to a critical theory informed approach, is engaging and privileging

Indigenous voices, research, and methodologies. Tuck and Yang (2012) argued, decolonization

is directly connected to treaty and traditional rights to land, or land entitlement and

determination, as well as understood as being much deeper, and more complex than simply a

metaphor for non-Indigenous settler notions of social justice and equity. They asserted that

decolonization will take a substantial amount of uncomfortable or even painful re-education by

non-Indigenous Canadians to learn and respect Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination.

An important theoretical concept that may assist in this potentially painful re-education, has been

developed by Cree Elder and scholar Willie Ermine (2007): *the ethical space of engagement*.

Ethical Space of Engagement

Similar to explanations within the TRC, Ermine pointed to issues within the Western

education system and the embedded assumptions of "Western universality", which pose as a

"festering irritant for Indigenous peoples" (2007, p. 198). He argued that this

notion of universality remains simmering, unchecked, enfolded as it is, in the

subconscious of the masses and recreated from the archives of knowledge and systems,

rules and values of colonialism that in turn wills into being the intellectual, political,

economic, cultural, and social systems and institutions of this country. (p. 198)

Ermine asserted, these systems of dominance and inequities come from somewhere, and are also

enacted and enforced from somewhere. As a result, the norm in Western-based societies is that

systems of governance, policy and procedure become pervasive, entrenched, and often invisible

and unexamined. This can become the case in academic institutions and programs, especially

when the racial and gender composition of faculty are taken into consideration.

Therefore, "trans-cultural communication, the dialogue of nations, or simply, the conversation between equals continues to be undermined by the persistence of these interests and attitudes borne in the hype and glory of European colonialism" (Ermine, 2007, p. 199). This, in turn, results in persistent tensions and disagreements (e.g. court cases, blockades, etc.). These "breaches and ruptures between Indigenous peoples and the state is in large part a result of the continuing influence of this established undercurrent of values, interests and assumptions brought to the encounter" (p. 198) between the various communities. Ermine argued that Western dominance across institutions and practices continues to negatively impact possibilities for the future, including notions of reconciliation.

Ermine pointed to a simple notion of ethics as the "capacity to know what harms or enhances the well-being of sentient creatures" as well as an intrapersonal component which includes one's "capacity and integrity to stand up for cherished notions of good, responsibility, duty, obligations, etc." (2007, p. 195). Ermine suggested that, "with our ethical standards in mind, we necessarily have to think about the transgression of those standards by others and how our actions may also infringe or violate the spaces of others" (p. 195) – a notion I have tried to keep front of mind in my own work and research. Ermine, also pointed to Supreme Court of Canada rulings regarding Aboriginal rights and title, as well as the *UN DRIP*, and other related challenges and issues, suggesting the emergence of new ethical standards and new rules of engagement for "Indigenous-Western dealings" (p.194).

Ermine's *ethical space of engagement* highlighted that this space could represent a "new partnership model [as an] ethical space, in a cooperative spirit between Indigenous peoples and Western institutions, [which] will create new currents of thought that flow in different directions of legal discourse and overrun the archaic ways of interaction" (2007, p. 194). Ermine's theorizing of ethical space is built upon theories posed by European scholar Roger Poole in the 1970s – representing an ethical engagement in itself between Indigenous (Ermine) and non-Indigenous (Poole) scholarly work. The ethical space proposed by Ermine is envisioned as the "two sets of intentions confronting the in-between space that connects Indigenous and Eurocentric knowledge systems (Battiste, 2013, p. 105).

Marie Battiste, an Indigenous (Mi'kmaw) scholar recommended that looking to the ethical space can assist in making "one consider the limits of the boundaries one chooses, and reconsider how what one chooses may infringe on another's space or standards, codes of

conduct, or the community ethos in each community" (2013, p. 105). She suggested that these ethical spaces are where Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada can speak to the hard and difficult truths, and the related issues and that these are vital enabling spaces. These are also tensioned interfaces that should be subjected to dichotomous orthodoxies, as the ethical space represents possibilities and interactions in the spaces between two entities that, in Ermine's theorizing, is represented as the spaces that arise between Indigenous and Western thought worlds. Yet, shifting perspectives in the encounters between these multiple thought worlds, argued Ermine "may also remind us that frameworks or paradigms are required to reconcile these solitudes" (2007, p. 201). Ermine proposed the ethical space as a promising framework for reconciling viewpoints. However, he warned that "configuring ethical/moral/legal principles in cross-cultural cooperation, at the common table of the ethical space, will be a challenging and arduous task" (p. 201) – especially in the context of systemic and structural racism and inequities.

Ermine pointed to the importance of reconciliation, of leveling the playing fields, which can be achieved by recognizing that "the idea of the ethical space, produced by contrasting perspectives of the world, entertains the notion of a meeting place, or initial thinking about a neutral zone between entities or cultures" (2007, p. 202). Battiste (2013) supported similar notions arguing that these discussions are vital when pondering curricular knowledge construction in educational fields. She suggested these discussions require exploration of questions such as: "whose knowledge is included, whose languages are considered legitimate vehicles for carrying the knowledge, who are the people who make these decisions, how will their choices be made, and what governs those choices?" (p. 105). She pointed to colonialism as a "theory of relationships… embedded in power, voice, and legitimacy" whereby "whiteness is hidden in [the] system, because it never looks at itself, only the perceived *different other*" (p. 106, emphasis in original). As I have moved through the program and learned more of the embeddedness and invisibility of whiteness, I realized the power of Ermine's theorizing and its potential in re-exploring and reinvigorating educational realms.

To meet in ethical spaces, Ermine (2007) suggested that it may seem overwhelming for many as it involves complex areas such as "language, distinct histories, knowledge traditions, values, interests, and social, economic and political realities and how these impact and influence an agreement to interact" (p. 202). However, as Greenwood, Lindsay, King and Loewen (2017)

pointed out "Indigenous knowledges are diverse, local, land- and language-based, and cannot be generalized (p. 180). These same researchers, two Indigenous and two non-Indigenous, quoting Ermine's *ethical space,* argue: "for greater engagement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous thought worlds in an ethical space that acknowledges, honours, and values Indigenous ways of knowing and being" (p. 180). As a result, they (which includes myself as one of the authors) extended an invitation and encouragement for "deeper exploration of the myriad of diverse wisdoms available to readers in their own communities and organizations (p. 180).

A fitting example of where this type of work has begun and was framed in the second chapter of this dissertation through identifying the *K & K Agreement* on Haida Gwaii between the Council of the Haida Nation and the BC government. The spaces in which this agreement operates and represents, is an ethical space of engagement, as well as represents Nakata's cultural interface. These represent some areas for future research and exploration when considering online education, social justice, and areas of efforts focused on reconciliation. The next section highlights some work on this front including the TRC and UN DRIP.

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People

The *UN DRIP* ratified by over one hundred and forty nation states around the world in 2007, and by Canada in 2010, affirmed that Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their institutions, educational systems, and provide education in their own languages, in a manner deemed appropriate by them. UN DRIP also affirms that "all doctrines, policies and practices based on or advocating superiority of peoples or individuals on the basis of national origin or racial, religious, ethnic or cultural differences are racist, scientifically false, legally invalid, morally condemnable and socially unjust" (para. 3). Additionally, UN DRIP contains several articles including these two relevant to education: *Article 13 (1)* which states: "Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons." Plus, *Article 14 (1)* which declares: "Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning."

In 2009, the UN Human Rights Council through its *Report of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* outlined multiple international agreements in which Indigenous

education is embedded including the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. The *Declaration* stated that everyone has the right to education. The report also stated "Education must be within safe physical reach (physical accessibility), either by attendance at some reasonably convenient geographic location or via modern technology, such as access to distance learning" (p. 8). The report is clear in stating that an Indigenous child's right to education is not only about access and availability; it is also about content: "The form and substance of education, including curricula and teaching methods, have to be culturally appropriate and acceptable to indigenous peoples, that is, relevant, of high quality, culturally safe and appropriate" (p. 8). This begins to push past relatively simplified idea that the mere provision of access to education, will in turn provide equity, and ethical approaches (ala Zawacki-Richter and Anderson, 2014). This is simply not the case without pondering content, approaches, along with ideologies, epistemologies, ontologies, and more, that may be implicitly or explicitly enforced – or, in turn, ignored. There must be more consideration guided by concepts such as ethical spaces of engagement, cultural interface and cultural safety (explored in the next chapter).

TRC *Call to Action* #43 calls upon "federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement" UN DRIP as the "framework for reconciliation". There is another vital reference back to the UN DRIP which relates to the TRC and its *Calls to Action*. *Article 15* in UN DRIP outlined education that needs to be provided to Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals with a directed focus on combating prejudice, and building "understanding, tolerance and good relations among segments of society, including the development of respect for the cultural identity, language and values of indigenous peoples. Human rights education is an important tool for the realization of this aim and objective" (p. 10). The UN report, also similar to the TRC reports, outlined how Indigenous peoples have been subjected to "monolithic" mainstream education systems that "have eroded traditional ways of life and languages, imposed foreign ideologies and belief systems and institutionalized discriminatory attitudes against indigenous peoples, leading to further marginalization and the exacerbation of conflicts, including armed conflicts" (p. 10).

Added to this, the 2009 UN report argued that these "Mainstream education systems have been imposed through State institutions, political ideologues, religious groups, non-governmental organizations and business interests. It is the responsibility of States to address and undo past wrongs to reform mainstream education systems" (p. 20). In relation to social justice in open,

distance, and e-learning, these several components from the international realm compliment the TRC's recommendations and *Calls to Action*, as well as begin to outline some recommendations from Tait and O'Rourke's question 'what is to be done?' (in Zawacki-Richter & Anderson, 2014). An important note here, is that as this dissertation was being written, British Columbia became the first province/jurisdiction in Canada to pass legislation putting UN DRIP into law. The *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* (DRIPA) was passed in the fall of 2019.

Social Justice in Online Education?

Alan Tait and Jennifer O'Rourke, both longtime online distance education scholars and researchers, wrote the first chapter in Zawacki-Richter and Anderson's (2014) book and proposed a research agenda for online distance education. Their chapter was titled, "Internationalization and concepts of social justice: What is to be done?" They referenced the UN *Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), specifically in reference to the term "equality" (p. 40). They did this through their argument that "clear, agreed upon concepts of this term [social justice] are essential underpinnings for robust support for strategies to remedy *social injustice* (emphasis in original, p. 39).

This is directly in line with the UN World Health Organization, and its report released in 2008, led by Sir Michael Marmot, *Closing the gap in a generation: Health equity through action on the social determinants of health*, which stated, quit simply that "social injustice is killing people on a grand scale" (n.p.). This was also the title of the press release accompanying release of the report (WHO, 2008). One of the startling examples in the release stated that, "life expectancy for Indigenous Australian males is shorter by 17 years than all other Australian males" (n.p.). In Canada, the numbers are not much different when comparing Inuit men versus the general population of males – 15 years less for an Inuit male. It is not as stark for First Nations, or Métis men, however, still a difference of five and six years respectively (Stats Canada, 2015).

Tait and O'Rourke (2014) compared some theories of social justice and summarized that concepts of social justice

> for each individual encompasses both the notion of equality rights as a level playing field
> and the right to opportunities and support that enable each person to fully participate in
> all aspects of society – to get to the playing field in the first place. (p. 43)

Included in these, similar to the UN WHO report, are things related to social determinants of health: education, housing, access to income and fair wages – which are all rights that go "beyond access to participate in the economy" (p. 43). Yet, they also suggested that there is more to social justice than just the cumulative human rights of each individual. They pointed to, for example, trust and reciprocity between different peoples. To do this, Tait and O'Rourke analyzed the International Labor Organization (ILO), which addressed social justice directly in 2008. Their work discusses the important connections between individual and social aspects of social justice. As they pointed out, implementing social justice endeavours and initiatives must be systemic, not case-specific. With this type of approach, "the onus is on society rather than the individual to change structural, institutional, and cultural barriers that impede equal access to human rights" (p. 43) – and, not putting the onus on marginalized individuals or pathologizing the issues (e.g. unemployment, etc.). This, I argue, points back to personal responsibilities of those with unearned advantages and privileges, such as whiteness and male privilege.

It is important to note here that the ILO also has a Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (*Convention 169*) which has the following critical components of its definitions of Indigenous Peoples:

- The person regards herself or himself as Indigenous;
- The peoples who have a historical continuity in a certain geographical region;
- The peoples who have a specific culture and way of life different from others of the national population; and
- The peoples who do not have a dominant position. (Seurujärvi-Kari & Virtanen, in Datta, 2020, p. 37)

Convention 169 initially began in the late 1950s as an earlier convention, and was adapted for ratification in 1989, with over forty articles contained within that cover areas such as land, health, education, employment, social security and others – all determinants of health and well-being. There are also important articles related to relationships of respect and dignity. For example, *Article 31* stated:

Educational measures shall be taken among all sections of the national community, and particularly among those that are in most direct contact with the peoples concerned, with the object of eliminating prejudices that they may harbour in respect of these peoples. To this end, efforts shall be made to ensure that history textbooks and other educational

materials provide a fair, accurate and informative portrayal of the societies and cultures of

these peoples. (ILO, Convention 169).

Just over twenty countries have ratified the Convention, and Canada is not one of them.

However, the UN DRIP was built partially upon *Convention 169*.

International agreements, conventions, and ratified principles are vitally important especially in education. However, at times, there are "no simple links between social justice and online distance education and learning" (Tait and O'Rourke, 2014, p. 44). Furthermore, there are some dichotomous caveats required when considering educational provisions. Online distance learning can reduce barriers such as accessing a physical classroom, "providing the ability to offer flexibility and to support educational systems across national boundaries" (p. 44). Yet, these types of flexibilities can also remove the learner's contexts, for example, culture, language, customs, etc. This can result in dissemination of "ideologies that are incompatible with local beliefs or cultures" (p. 44). As Canadian media and communications scholar Marshal McLuhan observed in the 1960s, no technology is neutral. There is an exchange and an impact that affects both the creator and the user. There is also a distinct opportunity for assumptions, ideologies, and concepts that are not even considered by the creator. However, "transplanting any technology along with its ideological roots brings the risk of imposing an inappropriate set of assumptions and values on the users, thus detracting from, rather than supporting intended goals" (Tait and O'Rourke, 2014, p. 45).

This is a vital notion in the idea of engaging in education for reconciliation – such as those recommended in the TRC *Calls* or UN DRIP. Online learning can certainly extend opportunities over a wide area; however, this can also result in broad-based implementation of pedagogies and learning that is not relevant to more local or regional contexts – and the transplanting of technologies. Yes, online education can expand opportunity, however, it can also re-emphasize digital divides, or institute certain orthodoxies and ideologies. Dichotomous realities. Moving beyond just providing access to education, as a principle of social justice, means that beginning to answer the question of *what is to be done*: "involves considering different concepts of social justice in education: access, curriculum, pedagogy, and management" (Tait and O'Rourke, 2014, p. 46).

In working through those four categories, starting with access, Tait and O'Rourke pointed to Athabasca University in Alberta, a fully online institution, as an example and the institution's

commitment to improved access for education, such as the "removal of barriers that restrict access to and success in university-level study" (2014, p. 46). I agree with these notions of access, and even framed my admissions material based on this philosophical approach. Yet, I have also grown to recognize that these arguments about access require academics and institutions to look further and deeper. For example, the *access* argument also requires "recognizing every individual's right to learning which is appropriate to his or her needs, and acknowledging that strengthening society's capacity requires responding to both individual and societal needs" (p. 47). This is an important point in pondering the TRC *Calls to Action*, for example, whereby a societal need has been clearly identified – the education of non-Aboriginal peoples as a critical factor. These will require digging into issues that are individual, structural, and systemic – such as racism, prejudice, ignorance, and misinformation.

In the second category identified by Tait and O'Rourke, they pointed to the curriculum and pedagogy focused on social justice – highlighting critical Brazilian scholar Paulo Freire and his argument that no curriculum or pedagogy is value-neutral. They pointed to the link between corporate and financial goals being implicated in education, and obsessions with professional credentials – all important considerations. Furthermore, a vital consideration in my own research, is that without denying "the realities of dominant ideologies influencing both curriculum and pedagogy, it is also important to recognize the capacity of committed educators to enable learners to think outside these dominant forces" (Tait and O'Rourke, 2014, p. 48). However, if an educator comes from, and has been steeped in dominant ideologies, how is one's one own privilege interrogated and investigated?

Reflecting Upon Privilege

My approach and connection to these topics is absolutely one that I am connected to personally. However, as social work scholar Bob Pease argued in his book *Undoing privilege: Unearned advantage in a divided world* (2010), it is important that "dominant groups critically interrogate the ways in which their own world views and practices sustain the oppression of others" (p. 29). Pease advocated for a process of interrogating personal privilege, and that for those that occupy privilege, it is critical to reflect upon those positions: "From a social justice perspective, members of privileged groups have a responsibility to critically reflect upon their own position[s]" (p. 31). He argued that "privileged academics seem to be more interested in studying subordinate groups than they are in studying the groups to which they belong" (p. 32).

Looking in a metaphorical mirror to critically self-reflect upon one's own privileged position, is the essential starting point. There is not much question that "more white, middle-class males need to read and reflect upon the writings by those who are marginalised and they need to learn how to listen to experiences of marginalised people" (Pease, 2010, p. 32). And, that this must be in conjunction with challenging their own privilege, and through this, "they make it harder to for others to discount the experiences of subordinate groups as simply advocating their own self-interests" (p. 32). Yet, doing this work, individuals must be cautious, as they may be labelled as a "traitorous identity". Folks engaged with these sorts of labelling risks must consider the differences between those "who are unaware of their privilege and those who have a critical consciousness of their privilege… [and it is] from this basis that white people will challenge racism and that men will challenge patriarchy" (p. 29-30). Pease (2010) argued that this is difficult, especially when considering his own identity and experiences as a privileged white male within academia. However, he also outlined that it is not impossible.

Vignette

In 2016 as I am completing the second course in the program, our family is sitting with neighbors outside on a spring day. It is a husband and wife. Our neighbors are friendly, largely retired, originally from Alberta. They have welcomed us to the neighborhood and been great with our kids. They have also assisted in clearing snow and other tasks as we adjust to the new place. As we're sitting at the picnic bench having a drink and talking, the husband asks me, "so what is it that you do again?"

"I work within the Indigenous Health team with the health authority."

"Oh…" he says quizzically. "Are you Indigenous?"

"No."

"Then why would you do that work; don't they get everything for free?"

I'm taken aback, but also not. I've heard these sorts of myths and ignorance across decades of doing this work. I give a bit of my stock response, choosing not to engage deeply, "Well… that is a common misconception among many people in Canada".

"They don't pay taxes… get free medical, free dental, free housing, you know… all sorts of things we have to pay for."

"Well, it's not quite like that, however, there are some things that the federal government funds. There are long historical reasons on why that is the case." I then move to change the subject. My intuition suggests this is an immovable object at that point in time.

When I reflect upon these sorts of conversations, I'm often left with an icky feeling. By not engaging in a mini-lesson of the realities faced by Indigenous communities, or the history documented by the TRC, am I engaging in silence that simply reinscribes these ignorances? Why do I get the privilege of choosing which 'hill to die on'?

White Privilege

I think about these points above often, when I reflect back upon the comments from an instructor in this program that suggested my initial presentation was too "self-indulgent", and that I was "too close" to the material; too engaged – a "fish in water" was the expression used. Reflecting upon those comments, and tracked in my research journals, various thoughts have included:

- What if I was an Indigenous scholar, in this same program, that was deeply engaged in exploring online distance education as a critical tool for an Indigenous language program? Would I have been subject to the same critique?
- What if I was a female, feminist scholar in this program deeply engaged in initiatives related to #metoo and critiquing patriarchal structures, systems and language? (And, maybe the reason for this deep immersion was due to trauma inflicted by male perpetrators.)
- Would this too be subject to critiques from an academic, or institution, with the power to credential or not credential, that this was too personal?

I think of the brave and vulnerable testimony from residential school survivors in multiple forums, from the class-action lawsuits that led to formation of the TRC, to the TRC itself. I wonder frequently, what is it, other than deep personal commitment, that generally leads to change? Are there some within academia that think they are beyond this? Above this? That a marking rubric causes a faculty member to be fully *objective*? And that *objectivity* is what is required of academics and instructors? Indigenous scholars, such as Sean Wilson (2008) ask whether objectivity is even possible or a goal, especially within Indigenous ways of knowing and being; or, considering how objectivity is part of overall interrelatedness with subjectivity.

Frances Kendall has written and presented about white privilege for close to four decades. Kendall, a white woman and scholar, has presented around North America for decades and released a second edition of her book in 2013, *Understanding white privilege: Creating pathways to authentic relationships across race*. She argued that white people working in academic institutions, as well as in corporations, "have little conscious understanding of the complexities of white privilege and how it affects their daily lives, people of color in all organizations are very clear that primary access to power and influence lies in white hands" (p. xvii). She has advocated repeatedly for the importance of self-work and self-reflection: "every one of us has self-examination to do based on the identity groups to which we belong. Systems of privilege are intertwined, each on the other." (p. xviii). This is because, as she argued, if people who are white, and access unearned advantage, "don't look at ourselves, our biases and prejudices, and our "blindnesses" first and continually, anything else we do will be built on a shaky foundation" (p. xviii). Similar to my thinking in approaching this dissertation and utilizing autoethnography, Kendall argued that "As those of us who are white begin to examine racial privilege, our first and perhaps most important task is to explore what it means for each of us, personally, to be white" (p. 1).

A foundational component of her suggested reflections and self-examination are built upon a model of three tiers (Figure 35). This model is inspired by Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. She explained that the basis of the model is that each tier influences the others. The first tier of the model is the personal. "On the personal level, we carry all of our thoughts, biases and prejudices, our various belief systems, values and judgments, our ideas, the conversations we have in our heads" (p. xviii). As she pointed out, many people have a "complacent fantasy" that all of these factors remain inaccessible to others, until we share them – which is a misplaced fantasy, as many of these seep out in any number of forms.

Figure 35

The Three Tiers of Self-reflection

The Three Tiers

Personal
Stored personal data--
known only to oneself

Individual &
Group
Behavior

Affiliations

Communication
Patterns

Organizational Values

Relationships

Leadership Style

Interpersonal

"In" and "Out" Groups

Organizational Image

Policies and
Procedures

Succession
Practices

Norms

Organizational

Adapted from Pacific Management Systems
by Frances E. Kendall, Ph.D. © 2008

Note. Source: Kendall, 2012

The first place in which these impact us is the second tier: the interpersonal. Kendall (2013) suggested that our internal thinking guides our external interactions with others, such as who we build friendships or affiliation with (or not), the ways in which we speak to others (or not), and the types of behaviors we display with individuals and with groups. All of these are affected by what is happening at the intrapersonal level. In the third tier, the organizational level, are often the assumptions on how certain leaders, or leadership groups have established systems and structures. However, this can be misguided as systems theory discusses how cultures of organizations become established and embedded.

One of the examples that Kendall (2013) utilized to highlight the three tiers is what she refers to as: "white spaces". Kendall defined a *white public space* as "a set of interconnected routine strategies that work together to sustain the subordination of people of color by white people" (2012, p. 1). These spaces hold "systemic white privilege in place because together they

surround and support the dominating white ways of the "professional" class" (p. 1). Kendall points to prisons and schools as clear examples of white spaces, that within, "even with shifting demographics, white people retain their dominance by remaining the gatekeepers who decide which people of color will get to share in the resources" (p. 2). Higher education is also a clear example, especially when considering the domination of white academics in the field.

Kendall argued that white privilege "is an institutional, rather than personal set of benefits granted to those of us who, by race, resemble the people who hold the power positions in our institutions" (2017, p.10). As she argued, quoting Bataldena healthcare improvement professor and researcher: "Every system is exquisitely designed to produce the results it gets. If you want to change the results, you have to change the systems" (Kendall, 2017, p. 3). Kendall argued that white privileges are generally given or ascribed to white people by the many institutions imbued with whiteness, and it's largely due to race, not to earned rights or deserving merit. In different areas, Kendall has provided several examples of this, including the writing of national Constitutions (e.g. United States, Canada, etc.), writing and enforcing of immigration laws, Acts of segregation (e.g. *Indian Act*), and others. She also points to ongoing pervasive discrimination such as laws and policies around housing, judicial systems, healthcare, and education. White privilege, and whiteness, continues to be pervasive and dominant, because it is supported by systems and institutions that make it so. She represents this in systems diagrams comprised of three tiers shown above.

Kendall, referenced past work on this front, for example, Page and Thomas (1994) who argued that

> Either in its material or symbolic dimensions, white public space is comprised of all the places where racism is reproduced by the professional class. That space may entail particular or generalized locations, sites, patterns, configurations, tactics, or devices that routinely, discursively, and sometimes coercively privilege Euro-Americans over nonwhites. (p. 111)

In their article, Page and Thomas argued that "to sustain the white privilege created, white public space had to be [continually able to] transform its capacity to reshape its racial control practices" (p. 111). In their article, these researchers were focused on nursing as a professional field, and health inequities between people of color and white people within the US. They argued that researching health inequities and relationships to nursing, must require a fundamental re-visit of

the assumptions and values that are espoused in nursing training programs and within the profession. "We believe that this rethinking must include critical insight into the discursive construction of ideological whiteness, white public space, and white privilege" (1994, p. 113). The subject of rethinking must be that "unequal health status will only be improved by our willingness to rigorously rethink race and ethnicity in our research designs" (p. 113). Their model for describing this outlined how taken-for-granted values, they call it Euro-American white values, filter through ideologies "of color-culture blindness" (p. 115).

Kendall's three tiers outlined how white public spaces are maintained by color-blindness. Cabrera, Franklin and Watson (2017), pointed to higher education as a key site of white space, and that "A core component of Whiteness is colorblindness, or an ideology that finds virtue in being "colorblind." In practice, this means framing racial inequality in terms of anything but racism." (p. 20). They argued that "colorblindness informs a great deal of interpersonal interactions, policy, and even the way scholars conduct research" (p. 21), especially because a "large part of this stems from White students entering higher education rooted in a racial ideology of colorblindness" (p. 21). Their model for analyzing how whiteness is reproduced in higher education aligns with Kendall's and is also built upon Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory – starting with the intrapersonal (micro), which is embedded with the surrounding meso and macro factors. Kendall's three tiers demonstrate how whiteness is embedded within white students, faculty or administrators, is supported and reinscribed through interpersonal affiliations and interactions, and on through organizational. A further societal circle, embedded within a globalized circle could be added to Kendall's three tiers. The next chapter begins to expand this model out further.

Summary

This chapter was framed around a course in the doctoral program that focused on research methods within education. This course highlighted that the research activities conducted in doctoral programs are generally reflective of the researcher's ontological and epistemological assumptions and grounding. Through this course, I explored early iterations of preparing a research proposal, which included explorations of research methodologies and philosophical paradigms. The course highlighted that educational research is inherently implicated in political effects and the design and implementation of policies. In addition, completing this course and

engaging the readings shared in this course highlighted debates and tensioned interfaces that come when discussing objectivity and subjectivity in research.

A particularly important and influential concept that impacted my research is Cree scholar and Elder Willie Ermine's *ethical space of engagement*, which is also enmeshed with Nakata's *cultural interface*. There are important considerations for critical reflection when considering the role, influence, and overwhelming presence of whiteness in the academy and educational programs. Kendall's three tiers model represents an effective process for reflecting upon the impacts of whiteness and privilege and the ability of these in deeply influencing socialization and color blindness. Her work advocates for critical self-reflection of practitioners, and ensuring thought is put into questions of what it means to be white.

The next chapter considers a third course in this program, which focused on teaching and learning in distance education. Through this course, I linked back to my professional work and engagement of the Indigenous-informed concept and practice of cultural safety.

Chapter 6. Teaching and Learning in Distance Education

> Together, Canadians must do more than just talk about reconciliation; we must
> learn how to practise reconciliation in our everyday lives – within ourselves and
> our families, and in our communities, governments, places of worship, schools,
> and workplaces. To do so constructively, Canadians must remain committed to
> the ongoing work of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships.
>
> -(TRC, Vol. 6, p. 17)

Introduction

This chapter explores a third course within this program, which focussed on teaching and learning in distance education. This course returns focus back to the practices and theories within the field of online distance education across many contexts. In this course, I contemplated and reflected upon some key work I was engaged in at the time, with a provincial health authority covering north-central and northern BC. As I moved through this third course, my research was directly engaged and related to my personal professional practice, as a Lead on an Indigenous Health team within a provincial regional health authority in BC. A lot of my day-to-day work focused on both education and evaluation – including evaluation of educational initiatives. A central focus of my work is engaged with an Indigenous-informed concept and theory: cultural safety.

Teaching and Learning in Distance Education

The course materials suggested that this course was designed to address: "advanced topics in instructional models, research on instructional approaches, online teaching methodology, and the design and implementation of online and distance instruction" (n.p.). The course is comprised of four units: (1) instructional competencies; (2) instructional theory; (3) instructional approaches, techniques and technologies; and (4) learning theories. This course is broad-based with the aim to provide an "in-depth examination of instruction and the teaching-learning process in distance education, and to explore its application in the post-secondary, K-12, and training/workplace learning sectors." This course approaches this through combining standard scholarly study and research, some experiential learning, and critical reflective practice. Students in the program are expected to:

1. Analyze selected core models and paradigms underlying the nature of instruction, and assess their application to distance education within the post-secondary, K-12, and/or training/workplace learning contexts.

2. Outline the components of selected instructional theories and approaches and critically evaluate their application in a variety of distance education contexts.

3. Synthesize instructional models and theoretical frameworks and assess their application in a variety of instructional and experiential contexts.

4. Critically analyze and apply research findings to the design of instructional processes or materials in a variety of distance education contexts.

5. Explain the importance of a supportive learning environment for effective student learning, and describe strategies for creating supportive environments in a variety of distance education contexts.

6. Critically analyze the moral and ethical implications of selected instructional issues involved in teaching and learning in a variety of distance education contexts.

7. Develop a personalized theory of teaching and learning, and explore its application in the design and implementation of instruction in distance education.

8. Analyze selected learning theories and assess the application of these theories in a variety of distance education contexts, including personal experience.

Through the first unit of this course students are expected to learn about teaching and learning in distance education, personally experience both teaching and learning, and reflect upon experiences as a teacher and as a learner. In the course learners are introduced to reflective practice and explore how to adopt this approach within the course, and integrating theory with practice, along with building capacity to provide insightful, expert instruction. There was also a teaching internship worked into this course. I utilized that opportunity to critically explore my workplace educational initiatives focused on the Indigenous-informed concept of cultural safety. Cultural safety arose from both an educational and healthcare context – as well as a deep historical treaty relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Settlers.

Cultural Safety: Facilitating Social Justice Through Online Education?

Cultural safety evolved from a need to address social justice issues related to culture, initially in relation to nursing in healthcare in Aotearoa, New Zealand (Vernon & Papps, 2015, p. 59). However, internationally over the last decade, cultural safety has evolved to include nursing,

education, and research (and other disciplines) due to emphasis on critical self-reflection, critique of structures, discourses, power relations, and assumptions – as well as its connection to a social justice agenda (Browne, Varcoe, Smye, Reimer-Kirkham, Lyman, & Wong, 2009). Thus, social justice and cultural safety are complementary and intertwined principles and practices. Cultural safety has also been adopted in many national and regional contexts around the globe.

Origins and meanings of cultural safety have been explored in numerous papers and publications over the last decade. Some terms and practices labeled *cultural safety* are contested; however, few disagree that the term originated in Aotearoa New Zealand in the 1980s and 90s. The term arose as "a response to the social, historical, economic, political, and in many instances emotional reasons behind health disparities between Maori and non-Maori populations" (Fast, Drouin-Gagne, Bertrand, Bertrand, & Allouche, 2017, p. 153). The concept is broad as it also includes combinations of cultural awareness (which acknowledges that cultural differences exist), cultural sensitivity (respecting cultures different from one's own), and cultural competency (working effectively with diverse populations and peoples) (Ramsden, 2002b; Parisa, Negarandeh, Afsaneh, & Sarieh, 2016; Yaphe, Richer & Martin, 2019). What distinguishes cultural safety from these other three terms, is that it requires critical self-reflexivity on issues such as power and privilege with professional practices (Auger, Crooks, Lapp, Tsuruda, Caron, Rogers, & van der Woerd, 2019) – largely healthcare, and healthcare related education (e.g. nursing) as that is the field where the term originated (Ramsden, 2002a, 2002b).

The actual term – *cultural safety* – comes from a young Maori first year nursing student, Hinerangi Mohi, who was attending a large educational gathering in the late 1980s focused on health outcomes and the health care system (Lock, 2018). After sitting quietly and listening for several days at the gathering, Mohi asked the critical question: "You people talk about legal safety, ethical safety, safety in clinical practice and a safe knowledge base, but what about Cultural Safety?" (Ramsden, 2002b, p. 1). This question became the heart of cultural safety, and guided Maori nurse and nurse educator Irihapeti Ramsden's decades of work in the late 1980s and through the 1990s. Ramsden's work led to grounding principles and practices of cultural safety within Aotearoa New Zealand's nursing practices and educational processes, as well as government legislation and policy surrounding the *Treaty of Waitangi* signed in the 1800s. For many decades, Ramsden had observed and experienced significant health disparities between

Maori and Pakeha (non-Maori settlers) in New Zealand. Maori, similar to Indigenous peoples of Canada, experience a greater burden of ill health as compared to settler populations largely of European descent (Ramsden, 2002b; Adelson, 2005; Wepa, 2015). The goal of Ramsden's work was to reframe healthcare experiences of Maori people and ensure equitable care and treatment; cultural safety became the framework to do this. Cultural safety emerged, and is now engaged in tension-filled colonial relationships between Indigenous and settler societies (Browne, Varcoe, Smye, Reimer-Kirkham, Lynam, & Wong, 2009). In other words, cultural safety provides an interface, or many interfaces, in Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships and interpersonal as well as intercultural communication.

Ramsden's work and research, along with the support of many others, set the foundation for the Nursing Council of New Zealand (NCNZ) – a New Zealand government agency – to provide definitions of cultural safety (Wepa, 2015). The first definition was officially recognized in the early 1990s and has evolved through various iterations. The most recent definition was updated in 2011 and contains the following guidance and principles:

- Cultural safety is the effective nursing practice of a person or family from another culture, and is determined by that person or family.

- Culture includes, but is not restricted to, age or generation; gender; sexual orientation; occupation and socioeconomic status; ethnic origin or migrant experience; religious or spiritual belief; and disability.

- The nurse delivering the service will have undertaken a process of reflection on his or her own cultural identity and will recognize the impact that his or her personal culture has on his or her professional practice.

- Unsafe cultural practice comprises any action, which diminishes, demeans or disempowers the cultural identity and wellbeing of an individual. (NCNZ, 2011, p. 7)

The term Cultural Safety and the practices engaging it have expanded in many ways since the 1990s, including updates in New Zealand policy and legislation in 2011, and now in other jurisdictions including Australia and Canada. However, there is a caution required here. Cultural safety arose in a specific context, related to specific relationships. As it expands as a process and product into other areas and jurisdictions, there must be caution in ensuring it is fluid within different context(s).

Cultural Safety in British Columbia

The term began to be activated in Canada in the early 2000s, through the work of the National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO) and the Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada (Schill & Cajax, in Yaphe et al. 2019). In the British Columbia (BC) context, in mid-2015 the *Declaration of Commitment, Cultural Safety and Humility in Health Services Delivery for First Nations and Aboriginal Peoples in BC* (referred to as "the Declaration" in the remainder of the dissertation) was signed by the BC Ministry of Health, all the CEOs of the six health authorities in the Province, and the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA). This has been followed up by multiple other organizations, including all professional health regulators in BC in 2017 (Figure 36).

Figure 36

Declaration of Commitment Signed by all Twenty-Three Health Professional Regulators

This signing was then followed by several other organizations signing and endorsing the Declaration including in 2017: Providence Health Care, BC Coroner's Service, BC Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions; in 2018 and 2019, federal government Indigenous Services Canada, Health Canada, and Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), insurer Pacific Blue Cross, Emergency Management BC, Doctors of BC, Federation of Optometric Regulatory Authorities of Canada, and BC College of Family Physicians.

The *Declaration* in BC defined cultural safety as: "an outcome based on respectful engagement that recognizes and strives to address power imbalances inherent in the healthcare system. It results in an environment free of racism and discrimination, where people feel safe when receiving healthcare." In turn, cultural humility is defined as a "process of self-reflection to understand personal and systemic biases and to develop and maintain respectful processes and relationships based on mutual trust. Cultural humility involves humbly acknowledging oneself as a learner when it comes to understanding another's experience." The *Declaration* also includes guiding principles built upon these definitions, which include:

- cultural safety is defined by each individual client's health service experience;
- cultural safety must be understood, embraced and practiced at all levels of the health system including governance, health organizations and within individual professional practice; and
- all partners, including First Nations and Aboriginal individuals, Elders, families, communities, and Nations must be involved in co-development of action strategies and in the decision-making process with a commitment to reciprocal accountability. (FNHA, 2016, n.p.)

This last point is a critical component of realizing the *Declaration* in practice. Some of the action strategies and decision-making processes have been, or are currently being negotiated through regional agreements and processes. The Deputy Minister of Health in BC, a signatory to the Declaration, has stated that cultural safety must get "hardwired" into health authorities and health institutions throughout the Province. However, within the context of northern BC, geographic and rural realities emphasize the importance of utilizing technology to shrink the distances and connect communities and individuals across large areas. Education is inherently one of the "action strategies" for "hardwiring" and must involve the community-based people indicated by the FNHA (2016, n.p.).

In promotional and educational material focused on the *Declaration*, the FNHA begins to lay out potential strategies for what can be done explaining that "Today, colonial trauma and oppression takes place within the health system through culturally unsafe and discriminatory care" and that following the arrival of Europeans, First Nations health and wellness was "disrupted through a process of colonization and oppression including tactics and policy initiatives such as the Indian Residential School System, the *Indian Act*, and Indian Hospitals" (2016, n.p.). The legacy of these practices includes historical and intergenerational trauma (Linklater, 2014) and severe social inequities, and as a result "First Nations continue to bear a disproportionate burden of disease or health disparities" (FNHA, 2016, n.p.). These disparities are well documented in research and literature (e.g. Adelson, 2005). The *Declaration* is a high-level political commitment to transforming health organizations in BC to become more culturally safe in order to address health disparities, inequities, prejudice, and racism (e.g. Allan & Smylie, 2015). However, being a high-level policy commitment now means the difficult and complex work of implementation (e.g. "hardwiring") begins – with education for non-Aboriginal peoples as a central strategy, aligning it with the TRC *Calls to Action*.

The BC *Declaration* is built upon a foundation of legal precedents in Canada (e.g. Aboriginal rights and title) and complex negotiations over more than a decade, between First Nations political leadership in BC, the provincial Government of BC, and the federal Government of Canada – part of which resulted in a ground-breaking agreement called the *Transformative Change Accord* signed in 2005 by these three parties. The *Accord* is part of the winding and historic path to the *Declaration* which is not well understood in the general population, or even within healthcare institutions signatory to the *Declaration* (Johnson, Ulrich, Cross, & Greenwood, 2016). Therefore, working towards the TRC *Calls to Action* focused on education, may also meet the commitments laid out in documents such as the *Declaration*, the *Transformative Change Accord*, and various other agreements, court decisions, and tribunal rulings signifying that efforts to reconcile are afoot.

Vignette

In 2004, the Supreme Court of Canada Haida *decision came down. I had sat in on some of the early parts of this court case, as the case weaved its way from the BC Supreme Court, the BC Court of Appeal, and on to the Supreme Court of Canada for its final decision. Some of the*

initial BC Supreme Court proceedings were held on Haida Gwaii, where I lived at the time. The
case was specifically focused on logging rights, transferring forest tenures and impacts on Haida
Gwaii, and Haida peoples claim to Aboriginal rights and title to the islands. This case focused
on the obligations of consultation and accommodation when Aboriginal rights and title have
been claimed.

Adding a more complex interface to the court hearings that I attended on Haida Gwaii,
was that it was hosted in the same space that was also an active youth drop-in centre. My work
at the time was working with local youth and youth organizations on funding and various
initiatives (e.g. financial literacy workshops). That particular space was in a building complex
that had once been owned and operated by the Canadian Forces. The north-end of Haida Gwaii
had once been an active Canadian Forces station right up until the 1990s. When the Forces
reduced their presence, many of the housing units and infrastructure reverted to various mixes of
public and private ownership. When I was in the high school, there was a significant contingent
of Canadian Forces families that came and went as postings were handed down.

One of the events that occurred during the Haida case that still stands out in my mind,
was listening to the Judge speak the day after flying over sections of the islands that had been
subject to clear cut logging for over a generation. He was visibly struck with some emotion as he
explained his experience of the overflight, and sheer impacts that the landscape had undergone
due to forest tenures and logging operations. While conducting the overflight and through the
court case the judge was able to learn about the different epistemological and ontological
positionings and understandings of the landscape – the Haida, corporate logging companies,
and government ministries such as the Ministry of Forests, who were the respondent in the court
case.

Aboriginal Rights and Title

Learning about Aboriginal rights and title, is one of the central components of many of
the TRC *Calls to Action*. In a simplified form, Aboriginal rights and title in Canada flow from
two places: one from treaties, the other from historical practices on land and waters (Knafla &
Westra, 2011). In BC, few treaties have been negotiated and signed. This has supported a long
set of contentious disagreements in the province focused on territorial disputes and the inherent
rights and title that existed prior to colonial rule, and continue to exist as encumbrances on
Crown title. In the midst of these disputes, many of which have entered colonial courtrooms are

questions of sovereignty, and self-determination (Galois & Sterrit, 1998) – at least as defined in colonial-based languages, law and practices. For example, an oft-quoted case originating from BC is the *Delgamuukw* case (1997) in the Supreme Court of Canada whereby Gitsxan and Wet'suwet'en hereditary Chiefs were successful in having Indigenous oral histories (Gitsxan *adaawk* and Wet'suwet'en *kungax*) recognized as evidence within the western-based legal system. This case set the stage for proving existence of un-extinguished Aboriginal rights and title within BC and Canada. These rights have survived colonization and continue to be valid within colonial common law.

Two significant cases, at the Supreme Court of Canada in 2004, involving Aboriginal rights and title included *Haida* and *Taku*, which both hinged on relationships and Aboriginal rights asserted on land, place, and traditional territories. The case of *Haida Nation v. British Columbia (Minister of Forests)* (2004) focused on the impacts of forestry on Haida Gwaii. The case of *Taku River Tlingit First Nation v. British Columbia (Project Assessment Director)* (2004) focused on impacts of mining, specifically a proposed 160 km access road through the Taku Tlingit traditional territory which straddles the northern BC and southern Yukon borders. In both cases, the First Nation that launched the case essentially won or made significant strides in changing how the Crown must consult (and potentially accommodate) First Nations that assert Aboriginal rights and title to their traditional territories. Both of these cases had, and continue to have, far reaching impacts, including setting off a cascading set of political negotiations in BC between the federal and provincial governments and First Nations political leadership.

These two cases: *Haida* and *Taku*, "were a catalyst for new relationships and partnerships amongst First Nations in BC, and between First Nations and federal and provincial governments" (Johnson, Ulrich, Cross, & Greenwood, 2016, p. 77). Following these two groundbreaking court decisions, three First Nation organizations in BC agreed to work together forming the BC First Nations Leadership Council to serve as the political representative for First Nations in BC on a variety of issues – including health. These shifts in the legal and political landscape of BC sparked close to a decade of critical negotiations and agreements within healthcare, education, and other areas that involved the federal government, BC provincial government and First Nations Leadership Council. This included *The New Relationship*, *Transformative Change Accord*, and eventually formation of the First Nation Health Authority (FNHA) – which took

over funding from the federal ministry Health Canada and specifically the First Nation, Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB).

For the last almost five years I have worked within healthcare and specifically as part of an Indigenous Health team within a provincial health authority. The interface with Aboriginal rights and title is an important one. Indigenous scholars Stout (Kétéskwew) and Downey (Ojibwe) (2006) suggested, "the relationships between theoretical concepts of Indigenous health care provision and culture is one with many complexities" (p. 328). Healthcare in BC is no exception, as it must account for a vast geographic and culturally diverse area rife with multiple legal, social, and historical complexities and realities. Healthcare for Indigenous people in BC adds much complexity with over two hundred separate and diverse First Nation communities; some with settled treaties (e.g. Treaty 8 and Nisga'a), most without. Adding further layers, and based in historical legislation, the *Indian Act* of the late 1800s defines Indigenous peoples in the geographic area of Canada, specifically First Nations peoples, as a federal responsibility, with the resultant fiduciary responsibilities. Yet, the divisions of power within Canada's *Constitution* (e.g. Sections 91 and 92), legislates education and healthcare as Provincial responsibilities. Therefore, any discussions and/or legislation related to First Nations, Inuit or Métis people's healthcare, must be tripartite discussions involving the federal and provincial governments and Indigenous leadership; representing more tensioned interfaces.

In healthcare, these negotiations led to signing of the *Declaration of Cultural Safety and Cultural Humility* in mid-2015. This *Declaration* was signed by all of the health authorities in BC, the BC Ministry of Health, and the relatively new First Nations Health Authority. The relationship between Aboriginal rights and title, healthcare, and other issues in BC, is indeed complex. However, in this course, I came face to face with navigating some of these complexities in thinking about the link between implementing the *Declaration*, which talked about hardwiring cultural safety into healthcare systems, and, the challenges and realities of large geographic distances. However, before looking into the challenges of training and education related to this, some background to the terms is important.

Relationships Between Cultural Safety and Online Distance Education

To meet definitions of social justice related to cultural safety and cultural humility in healthcare across vast geographic and rural populations (e.g. most of BC and Canada), will, and has required, the use of online and distance education technologies, platforms, and strategies.

However, essential to any educational strategies is the input of partners as defined by the *Declaration* "including First Nations and Aboriginal individuals, Elders, families, communities, and Nations" (2015, n.p.) who must be involved in co-development of action strategies, and any course, training, or curriculum development. Furthermore, as the *Declaration* has evolved from court cases involving assertion of Aboriginal rights and title. These rights, and the associated titles, are very geographic place specific. The oral histories that are engaged to assert rights and title are deeply enmeshed within the landscapes, coastal areas, marine areas, and the supernatural – as well as millennial long relationships with neighbors.

The limitations within most instructional design models is that "they do not fully contextualise the learning experience, and are themselves the product of particular cultures" (McLoughlin & Oliver, 2000, p. 58). As these scholars pointed out, design of distance and online instruction "is not culturally neutral, but instead is based on the particular epistemologies, learning theories and goal orientations of the designers themselves" (p. 58). In addition, as educational technology scholar and critic Selwyn (2014; 2016) asserted, these technological tools come immersed deeply in particular ideologies, epistemologies (world views), ontologies (ways of being), and axiologies (values and ethics) – he referred to it as a deeply embedded orthodoxy, and one that is often dichotomous. These are sticky and murky areas to navigate.

Tait and O'Rourke (2014) suggested that social justice incorporated into discussions surrounding open, distance, and e-learning generally creates immediate tension. Zawacki-Richter and Anderson (2014) observed that "Distance education in particular and the teaching and learning process in general are complex matters" (p. 16). This also holds true for cultural safety, a complex term with a complex history and sets of objectives – especially when considered as both process and product, which is not all that different than online distance education. The core of questions from the researchers above focus on questions and explorations of whether open, distance, and e-learning adds to, or, subtracts from social justice – especially in light of the fields' ability "for supporting the development of formal education on an international basis and the complexity of intentions, inputs, and outcomes in any educational provision" (Tait and O'Rourke, p. 39). Yet, teaching for cultural relevance and social justice is a complex enterprise that "cannot be separated from the social and political forces that affect education and society" (Leonard, Brooks, Barnes-Johnson, & Berry, 2010, p. 267). Social justice is also a term

signifying both process and product. It is an ongoing process, subject to ongoing evaluation and change; as well as ever shifting product and objective.

Indigenous (Kanien'kehá:ka) scholar Sandra Styres argued that working with and in Indigenous contexts "is first and foremost about reciprocity and relationships [and that] these relationships involve an acknowledgement and understanding of cultural positionalities and relations of place" (in Tuhiwai Smith, Tuck & Yang, 2018, p. 25). The social and political forces surrounding cultural safety are indeed complex, especially when immersed in place – yet, potentially delivered online, which is often dispersed and dis-placed. The question then becomes how to hardwire cultural safety in an increasingly wireless world.

Hardwiring Cultural Safety in a Wireless World?

The *Declaration* in BC is intended to be a guiding framework for hardwiring cultural safety and humility into healthcare services with the objective of improving health outcomes for Indigenous peoples, families, communities, and nations. In their critical engagement of the term and practices of cultural safety, Stout and Downey (2006) argue, "the over-arching goal [of cultural safety] is the health development of Indigenous people"; yet, they also warn "too much can be taken for granted when a perceived panacea like cultural safety emerges" (p. 327). As such, they ask: "Are we certain that 'cultural safety' is paving the path to self-determination? How will we ensure that a cultural safety conceptual model makes room for self-determination and traditional knowledge?" (p. 330). I add to these questions, if cultural safety, or related initiatives are to be "hardwired" how do we do that in an expanding wireless and digital world?

In line with these questions, Ramsden's (2002 a; 2002b) research focused on cultural safety asks: "What are the processes for assessments of theoretical and clinical cultural safety?" and "How does the patient say that students [or health practitioners] are culturally safe?" (2002b, p. 107). These are challenging and slippery questions, often with an answer or response along the lines of: *it depends* – especially in the context of BC, where much of the geographic area of the province are smaller rural communities spread across large areas; similar to much of Canada north of the 49th parallel, below which the majority of the Canadian population resides.

Ramsden (2002b) suggests that the evolution of cultural safety has been guided by many theorists and researchers "who have been concerned with social boundaries and margins" and "concerned with social justice" (p. 179). She argues that cultural safety is inherently wrapped in with social justice and centrally focused on "nurses, power, prejudice and attitudes rather than

about ethnicity or cultures" (p. 5). Although cultural safety is a concept initially unique to nursing in Aotearoa New Zealand, it has gained more recognition in Canada (NAHO, 2006). It involves a process in which nurses and nursing students engage in self-reflection about their own cultural values and beliefs, thereby recognizing impacts their culture may have on caring for patients of other cultures (Wepa, 2015). Cultural safety is focused on fostering a change in nurses' beliefs, from those which continue to support current systems of health care and dominant practices to those which are more supportive and receptive of the health beliefs and practices of culturally diverse groups (Polaschek, 1998). Changing beliefs, however, is no simple task, just as changing behaviors can be a monumental task. Socialization is a deeply influential process and education is an absolutely critical component of that.

The arguments and logic for cultural safety come rooted in the *Treaty of Waitangi* signed in 1840 in Aotearoa New Zealand by Maori leaders and the British Crown. When initially signed, the *Treaty* contained two versions, one in English and another in Maori. Struggles over the years ensued to ensure that Maori interpretations of the Treaty were respected and implemented, alongside English versions. These struggles related to the Treaty, resulted in legal challenges in the 1970s as, "the Treaty became a focus for race relations activity, particularly in respect to property rights" (Wepa, 2015, p. 9). These court battles led to recognition of both versions and a shift in the relations between Maori and Pakeha (non-Maori) as well as government legislation requiring government departments and agencies to ensure their practices and policies are consistent with the Treaty (Jungersen, 2002). The Nursing Council of New Zealand is one of those agencies.

The original intent of cultural safety also lies within its mandate to counter any tendencies in healthcare provision deemed as "cultural risk" – for example, when an individual from a marginalized population experiences any of the three D's: demeaned, diminished, or disempowered (Wood & Schwass, 1993), which are also incorporated in the current NCNZ definition of cultural safety outlined earlier. In response to the three D's of cultural risk, those practicing in culturally safe ways must be aware of and support actions which promote the three R's: recognize, respect, and rights (Wood & Schwass, 1993). These can be framed as 'culturally unsafe' and 'culturally safe' practice (Figure 37), represented along a continuum of cultural safety.

Figure 37

The Cultural Safety Continuum
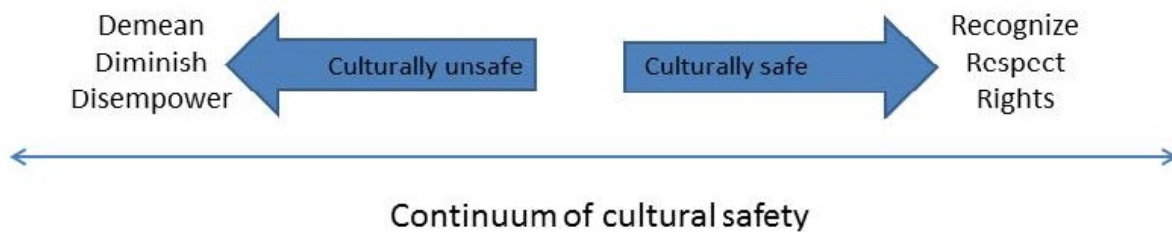
Note. Adapted from Wood & Schwass, 1993 and Gerlach, 2012

This is not intended as an over-simplification of a complex scenario; however, it can serve as an effective simple visual representation to demonstrate differences between culturally unsafe and culturally safe practices. In other words, to start a conversation, which can build trust between healthcare providers and clients. As Richardson (2010) argues, "cultural safety is concerned with the safety of the person receiving care, and the ability of the healthcare professional to develop trusting and effective relationships" (p. 6). In this representation, the client is the one that deems whether the interaction is in line with the R's – along with other aspects of culturally safe practice. Yet, discussions of recognizing and respecting rights of Indigenous people in Canada are a deeply complex enterprise, especially in the context of teaching learning and leadership. Similarly, as outlined in the third chapter, culture itself is a deeply complex term. Safety, in turn, is also complex and layered. Therefore, many questions of the role of education remain.

Cultural Safety as Educational Model and Pedagogy

Cultural safety arose from a foundational critical educational model and pedagogy. As Richardson (2010) suggests, "Philosophically and theoretically, cultural safety occupies in between spaces within mainstream health services and is influenced by critical theory, post colonialism, indigeneity, postmodernism, and humanism" (p. 9). Teaching principles associated with cultural safety come rooted in critical theory focused on exposing and analyzing power inequities in society including healthcare, as well as creating lifelong processes of self-reflection and reflexivity in practitioners (Ramsden, 2002b; Doutrich, Dekker, Spuck & Hoeksel, 2014).

If the next generation of healthcare practitioners, support staff and administrators do not come grounded in the process and desired objectives of cultural safety – the *Declaration* stands little chance of being realized and *hardwired*. This is clearly laid out by Ramsden (2002b) in the foundational work done in Aotearoa New Zealand and the continued work of the NCNZ and other agencies. Yet, foundational to cultural safety in New Zealand is the *Treaty of Waitangi* and the signatories' obligations and commitments.

In Canada, cultural safety and the *rights* to be recognized and respected, come rooted in treaties and in inherent Aboriginal rights and title, which are in turn rooted in cultures, communities, specific places, and language. As Parisa, Reza, Afsaneh, and Sarieh (2016) argue, "cultural safety also respects cultural tradition… [including] recognition of the social and political conditions of particular groups in society [and] emphasizes the structural inequities that affect the systems of health care" (p. 34). Yet, as Ramsden (2000b) suggests, the fundamental root to many of the challenges in New Zealand, and specifically within healthcare, are rooted in a lack of awareness of colonial history due to a lack of teaching and curriculum development in schools focused on the impacts on Maori people and communities a result of colonization and ongoing colonialism. Linked to this is a historical focus in healthcare on biomedical approaches that generally find fault for a client's illness, in the client themselves with little connection to wider historical, social, economic, and cultural realities. Ramsden (2002b) argued that:

> The dream of Cultural Safety [is] about helping people in nursing education, teachers and students, to become aware of their social conditioning and how it has affected them and therefore their practice. It was also critical to alert them to the health and disease issues for the indigenous people of the New Zealand islands (p. 2).

However, attempting to implement education and curriculum changes in New Zealand in the 1990s came with significant public and media backlash and pushback. Some of these challenges continue today.

This is not unusual for any process or theory based on emancipatory change, argued Ramsden (2002b), and challenges to the *status quo*. Ramsden felt that cultural safety is doing two separate by interrelated things:

> Firstly, it aims to identify attitudes that may either consciously or unconsciously exist towards cultural/social differences in the provision of nursing care. Secondly, it attempts to transform those attitudes by tracing them to their origins and enabling students to see

their effects on practice through a framework of practice related reflection and action.

Cultural safety always seeks to locate its action in the belief systems and behaviors of the

caregiver rather than the patient. (2002b, p. 121)

Parallel to this, in Canada, the National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO) stated that

cultural safety "moves beyond the concept of cultural sensitivity to analyzing power imbalances,

institutional discrimination, colonization and colonial relationships as they apply to health care"

(2006, n.p.). Richardson (2010) argued that "Cultural safety is positioned within historical

colonizer/colonized relationships of power and marginalization and the guidelines could be read

as behavior and attitudes of the dominant white group that apply to all nurses regardless of

culture or ethnicity" (p. 9). Thus, the underlying foundation is change patterns of socialization

and therefore behaviors and attitudes. This relates back to the WHO definitions and purposes of

social justice, which is to put right inequities, especially in healthcare including access, levels of

service, and experiences.

Links Back to Social Justice and Possibilities for Online Education

In the proposed research agenda for online distance education, Tait and O'Rourke started

their chapter on social justice outlining how discussions of social justice in open, distance, and

online learning always creates an immediate tension (2014, p. 39). This relates directly to part of

the overall title of this dissertation. They argued that there are no simple links between social

justice and online distance education. These two authors and long-time researchers ask an

important question related to the tensioned pressures on institutions that offer online distance

education and how to balance a social justice mandate "with all the other pressures that affect

policy and practice. How can an ODEL [open, distance, e-learning] provider make social justice

an integral part of all levels of its operations and provision?" (p. 49). Bell (1997) argued that

social justice in educational settings "includes a vision of society in which the distribution of

resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure" (p.

3). In the complex context in which they conducted their research in Aotearoa New Zealand, Fu,

Exeter, and Anderson (2015) suggested that social justice and equity "means addressing [the]

stark inequalities in health outcomes and the history of colonization and ongoing forms of

oppression" (p. 224).

Similarly, in line with this sentiment, Adams and Bell (1997) suggested that social justice

"involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social

responsibility toward and with others and the society as a whole" (p. 3). This last sentiment and overall exploration of social justice relates directly to terminology and definitions of cultural safety. Educational practices and professional practice within a mandate of cultural safety entails practitioners critically reflecting on their own agency, privilege, and responsibilities. Similarly, many of the TRC *Calls to Action* are insisting that non-Aboriginal people in Canada need to stem ignorance of many of these issues (e.g. Aboriginal rights and title, etc.).

A comprehensive literature review and concept analysis conducted by Buettner-Schmidt and Lobo (2011) outlined a definition or understanding of what *social justice* means, with a focus on nursing contexts. Their review included exploring definitions across disciplines including health: nursing, public health, and medicine; philosophy; law; psychology and social work; geography; economics; and religion. They argued that social justice as a complex and contested concept, could be defined as "full participation in society and the balancing of benefits and burdens by all citizens, resulting in equitable living and a just ordering of society" (p. 948). They suggested key attributes include:

(1) fairness;

(2) equity in the distribution of power, resources, and processes that affect the sufficiency of the social determinants of health;

(3) just institutions, systems, structures, policies, and processes;

(4) equity in human development, rights, and sustainability; and

(5) sufficiency of well-being.

In teaching to hardwire cultural safety and culturally safe practitioners in BC (and other areas of Canada) within a social justice focus – curriculum and pedagogy will both need to be diverse and critically oriented with objectives of creating critically self-reflective practitioners. However, also grounded in the particular places where treaty rights and Aboriginal rights and title are grounded. In a place like BC, with vast geography and spread out rural populations this adds further complexity. These will also need to take into consideration Indigenous methodologies. Within the doctoral program this is currently a gap – and therefore, it is not a far stretch to ask if this is a gap in promoting and advocating for social justice within online distance education?

Objectives for the course I completed in the doctoral program included things such as synthesizing instructional models and theoretical frameworks for a variety of contexts; critically analyzing instructional processes and/or materials for a variety of distance education contexts;

and critically analyzing the moral and ethical implications of selected instructional issues in a variety of distance education contexts. With this in mind, critically engaging with the concept and practices of cultural safety became a very fitting process, specifically signing of the *Declaration of Cultural Safety* in BC in 2015 and subsequent years. Added to this was that this course was intended to encourage and support critical reflection.

Upon completing this course, and experiencing the multiple other presentations and discussions by other students in the program, it became clearer that the TRC *Calls to Action* were not yet a priority for many non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. There often seems to be a perspective gleaned that these sorts of discussions and critical analysis are better left to Indigenous or First Nations Studies classes. The Maori-rooted, and health system developed term "cultural safety" may provide some avenues for further discussion, exploration and embeddedness. At the root of cultural safety are two basic principles: 1) Critical self-reflection of practitioners; and 2) That the subjective assessment of safety is left with Indigenous peoples. This speaks to a long-standing colonial and colonizing doctrine that defines the relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. If online distance education is rooted in notions and practices of social justice, then it has much work to do to realize these notions.

Tait and O'Rourke advocated for a social justice audit as one of their strategies. They proposed that a social justice audit be focused on an overarching question: "What characteristics should ODEL have in order to achieve social justice, or to have an impact towards social justice?" Or as they described, "In other words, what should social justice look like, in terms of goals, policies, and practices? (2014, p. 51). As a part of this social justice audit, Tait and O'Rourke (2014) proposed approaches based on participatory evaluation. A participatory approach, they suggested is a process of:

> self-assessment, collective knowledge production, and cooperative action in which
> stakeholders in a development intervention participate substantively in the identification
> of the evaluation issues, the design of the evaluation, the collection and analysis of data,
> and the action taken as a result of the evaluation findings. (p. 51)

Tait and O'Rourke (2014) provide a detailed set of suggestions for what might be included and evaluated in a social justice audit conducted through participatory approaches such as: explicit organizational statements related to social justice mandates; policies that support social justice goals (e.g. access, quality, consistency and sustainability, and social contracts); operational

strategies supporting social justice; strategies addressing access and accessibility; strategies for maintaining quality (e.g. management strategies, administrative services, instructional supports and services, and instructional resources); strategies for consistency and sustainability; and strategies to maintaining social contracts.

One of the critical components of evaluating educational institutions involves measuring outcomes. Tait and O'Rourke (2014) discussed processes of measuring outcomes for online distance education programs and institutions, and how these generally focus on things such as completion rates, student satisfaction, job placement after graduation, salaries, and others. They point out that engagement of alumni in measuring outcomes may also be a valuable component of a social justice audit.

I argued in this course, and beyond, that if the principle of cultural safety were engaged in social justice audits of online distance education institutions – than participatory evaluation could be a very important component of social justice audits. In this case, Indigenous communities, community organizations and individuals would be crucial participants in the participatory process in designing and outlining the elements of a reconciliation agenda that are most appropriate and relevant for themselves. For example, answering questions such as:

- If you had a graduate of a university program, not from your community, who works in your community, what would you want them to know?
- If you had a graduate working in your community, what knowledge of Indigenous-Settler relations would you want them to be competent within?
- If a university has an organizational objective focused on conciliation (in relation to reconciliation), how would that be enacted in graduates that you work with in your community?
- When this university has students graduate from their programs, what principles of the TRC *Calls to Action* would you like to see embedded in their skills and competencies?

Cultural safety has two simple principles; the second is that the receiver of services evaluates whether their experience was culturally safe or not. A participatory evaluation process focused on social justice, and specifically principles of reconciliation embedded within the TRC *Calls to Action*, could include Indigenous peoples evaluating graduates from this university that work with, or in, their communities.

It is one thing for organizations to haves stated principles and goals focused on reconciliation – this is important. However, realizing, implementing, and operationalizing these will require evaluation from those that will be most impacted by realizing these stated principles. Due to the histories that matter – that will be those most marginalized over time.

Summary

This chapter reflected upon my experiences in a third course in this program focused on teaching and learning in online distance education. The course has been designed consider concepts and themes such as instructional competencies, instructional theories, approaches, techniques and technologies (considered further in the next chapter), and learning theories. The objectives for the course were broad based, however, and emphasized the importance of supportive learning environments for students, as well as critically analyzing the moral and ethical implications of various instructional issues.

The Indigenous-informed concept and practice of cultural safety is a potentially powerful concept and approach that arose from both an educational and healthcare context; as well as, a tensioned interface between Maori and non-Maori peoples and communities in Aotearoa New Zealand. Arising in the late 80s, cultural safety has been embedded within Aotearoa New Zealand healthcare and educational processes, and has since expanded to an international adoption, including BC. In BC, the *Declaration of Cultural Safety and Humility* has been widely endorsed within the province from the Ministry of Health through to health professional regulators. However, hardwiring cultural safety throughout the system comes with many challenges and pitfalls. For example, engaging in discussions of cultural safety requires discussions about discrimination and racism. These are difficult topics to explore and engage in within educational contexts.

Cultural safety (as well as TRC Calls to Action and UN DRIP) also requires discussions of Aboriginal rights and title in Canada, and specifically in BC, and these can be difficult, highly-charged discussions. The vignette I shared, highlighted this. Yet, these have often been deeply socialized within non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. Socializing these to a different reality, will take deep engagement and discomfort for many. The next chapter reflects upon a fourth course in this program which focused on leadership and project management within online distance education. A critical factor of leadership is also required in realizing social justice principles within the field.

Chapter 7. Leadership in Online Distance Education: The Ghost in the Machine?

> Reconciliation requires political will, joint leadership, trust building, accountability,
> and transparency, as well as a substantial investment of resources.
>
> - (TRC, Vol. 6, p. 16)

> Unlike with the residential schools of the past, where Aboriginal peoples had no say
> in the design of the system and no ability to protect their children from intrinsic
> harms, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples today want to manage their own lives.
> In terms of the economy, this autonomy means participation on their own terms.
> They want to be part of the decision-making process … They want opportunities to
> work for companies that are proactively addressing systemic racism and inequity.
> Corporations can demonstrate *leadership* by using [UNDRIP] as a reconciliation
> framework.
>
> - (TRC, Vol. 6, p. 208, emphasis added)

Introduction

This chapter comprises a reflection framed by a fourth course in the doctoral program, which focused on various aspects of leadership related to online distance education. The first epigraph above frames the critical aspects of leadership required in this era of *reconciliation*. The second epigraph relates directly to TRC *Call to Action* #92, which focused on the business and corporate world and the importance of recognizing and implementing UN DRIP. Yet, as pointed out in the second epigraph, to do this requires focus on those capable of leadership, or in actual leadership roles, playing key parts in broaching and eliminating inequities and systemic, structural, epistemic, and interpersonal racism. These racisms, which are explicitly related to social justice (Bailey, Krieger, Agénor, Graves, Linos & Bassett, 2017), are explored in this section, as there are important distinctions between each. (*Note*: as I was editing and refining this chapter, charges of systemic racism in the BC healthcare system were hot topics in the news. This was first announced in mid-June 2020 by the BC Minister of Health Adrian Dix, which included the launch of an independent investigation (Schmunk, 2020).)

This course in the doctoral program presented an opportunity to explore interfaces between principles and practices of leadership regarding social justice and the role of educational

technologies (referred to as *ed tech* in the rest of this chapter), especially those engaged in delivering online distance education. My focus in this course was on the role and potential interfaces between ed tech, the *Declaration of Cultural Safety in BC*, UN DRIP, and working against systemic and structural racism, as a key component of claims to social justice. There are many claims made regarding ed tech and its connection to social justice initiatives, however, interrogation and analysis of these is important – including the preponderance of buzzwords, phrases, or claims. These sorts of terms and claims, are what retired Princeton philosophy professor Harry Frankfurt (2005) labelled: bullshit.

This chapter explores notions and definitions of *bullshit*, following Frankfurt's original 1986 essay, which was published as a small book in 2005 by Princeton University Press. Frankfurt argued that bullshitting is occurring when someone asserts something "without any regard for how things really are … without conscientious attention to the relevant facts … without bothering to take into account at all the question of its accuracy (2005, p. 30-31). Frankfurt stated that it is a "lack of connection to a concern with truth—this indifference to how things really are—that I regard as the essence of bullshit" (p. 33-34). Building on Frankfurt's essay, organizational management scholar André Spicer argued that bullshit is "a discourse which is created, circulated and consumed with little respect for or relationship to reality" (2013, p. 654). The reality of many organizations and institutions in Canada is that racism is deeply embedded – and specifically anti-Indigenous racism. Leadership in social justice must work against this stark reality – this includes in the practices, policies and offerings of institutions engaged in online distance education. Unfortunately, many organizations may be missing, or ignoring some of the deeper realities and truths of what they are making statements regarding. This chapter highlights some of those potential realities, through exploring interfaces of leadership and ed tech combined with online distance education.

Leadership in Distance Education

This fourth course took a slight turn from the three previous courses in the doctoral program. The course webpage outlined that this course covered general leadership theory, some contemporary issues in educational leadership, specific leadership issues related to online distance education and training, along with "special topics on leadership and project management, as they relate to educational technology, innovation and change" (Course website). The opening welcome to this course stated:

Can leadership be taught? Yes, definitely. Is this course to teach students to be leaders? Well, not exactly. This is a course about leadership, the field of education and the solving of social problems through education leadership. It is an advanced graduate level course – so critical discussion of theory, research and practice is required. The course is not designed for leadership training – this is a much different approach. This is a course about leaders and leadership, and the cases that bring these concepts to life. (Course website).

The course syllabus outlined that: "Students will be required to bring issues, problems and cases to the class for analysis, evaluation and strategy development." The third module of this course covered specifically, critical social issues and distance education leadership. The opening to that module stated:

When we speak of leadership in education, we are speaking of leadership in public institutions that are designed to serve the greater good. It is not possible to provide effective leadership without an understanding of the purpose of education, and its role in society. We are considering leadership of public education systems of modern industrial societies… Education is fundamentally characterized by a quest for improving the human condition. It is to overcome social and economic challenges, resolve inequities, promote societal power and prowess and allow for individual development. (n.p.)

This highlighting of social issues, and apparent quest for improving human conditions was an encouraging opening. I saw an opportunity to engage critical social issues identified by the TRC, and by the *Declaration of Cultural Safety* in BC, several of which have been explored in this dissertation.

In an assignment for this course, students were required to select a *social problem*, propose an education intervention, propose an online distance education solution, and the necessary leadership strategies to make it happen. This assignment required giving a presentation to the course cohort and writing a paper, which is where some of the artifacts for this chapter were excavated from. I selected the proposed implementation of cultural safety in healthcare (as per the *Declaration* in BC) and the interfaces with the TRC *Calls to Action*. Added to this, as I have been engaged in writing this dissertation, the BC Provincial Government, in the fall of 2019 passed legislation to enact UN DRIP. The quotes from the TRC highlighted in the epigraph to this chapter were part of framing my thinking and research through this particular course on

leadership in education – for example demonstrating leadership in corporate environments through framing reconciliation within implementation of UN DRIP. My critical engagement with the course material started early with one of my first posts in the course discussion forum.

Vignette: My First Discussion Post on Moodle Course Page for Fourth Course in 2017

     Apologies for my late chiming in. I have grappled with 'leadership' and much of the evolving literature on this front - for many years. For example, I struggled immediately with Cleveland-Innes' (2012) Editorial: Who needs leadership? Social problems, change, and education futures*, from the* The International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*, where she suggested that:*

> *Currently, changes in many things, including technology, "constitutes [sic] the most consequential set of changes in society since the late nineteenth century, when the nation went from a largely domestic, rural, agrarian mode of living to an industrial, international, and urban economy."*

I would argue that the arrival of Europeans, and the 'guns, germs, and steel' as Jared Diamond's book was titled (1997) - was far more impactful to the 'nation' or at least geographic area referred to as such. For example, where I grew up on Haida Gwaii, over 90% of the Haida population was obliterated in less than half a decade following contact with European explorers and traders (small pox, typhoid, influenza, etc.).

     I agreed with some of the notions of the second paragraph, but then struggled significantly with the start of the third paragraph: "When we speak of leadership in education, we are speaking of leadership in public institutions that are designed to serve the greater good." I agree with the notion of the greater good - yet... by whose definition? And often, what is "good" for one, is "not good" for another. Akin to the laws of physics, for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.

     The reality is that 'education' has also been used as a tool for assimilation and "Cultural genocide" - as outlined in the release of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC) on Indian Residential Schools, Final Report. Education, and educational institutions also continue to be implicated as tools of assimilation and requiring much transformation. And many 'Canadians' continue to accrue great benefit from territories that remain disputed, or simply stolen.

I disagree with the statement "one of the best means of achieving greater social equality is to allow every individual to develop to their full potential." Respectfully, I feel this is a statement utilized too often by those in privileged positions, and who determines what the 'potential' is? Potential for what? It is also the core of a 'neoliberal' approach which tends to value the individual over society, and approaches such as the free market and market-based approaches. The reality is that the silent majority does not have much say in that - other than through protest, direct action and otherwise.

There are some components of the editorial I agree with - however, much that I don't, which also reflects some of my greater struggles with this area of research. As such, this tends to frame some of my own thoughts on 'leadership', esp. in education. First, effective leadership cannot start without a significant investment in critical self-reflection. Second, "Leaders" are often ineffective and potentially dangerous, without deep and diverse communication skills (which includes mindfulness and the ability to listen and when to remain quiet). Third, leaders will be ineffective and also potentially dangerous if they are not aware of, and deeply reflective about power, and its many and complex forms and iterations.

I am not an Indigenous person, however, after decades of work in Indigenous communities have been exposed to and had explained 'leadership theories' which are not reflected in the academic literature. Although, starting to, and potentially reflected in theories such as transformational leadership.

An article I came across during the MAIS [Masters of Arts Integrated Studies] program at Athabasca University exposed me to some other thoughts as well (available on Google Scholar): Fitzgerald (2003). Changing the deafening silence of indigenous women's voices. *Journal of Educational Administration. She stated: "One of the troubling aspects of Western leadership theories is the claim that the functions and features of leadership can be transported and legitimated across homogenous educational systems." She further argued,*

> *Just who might be leaders and how circumstances of social class, location, ethnicity and cultural worldview might underpin their work and identity is not fully discussed and disclosed... That is, considerations of race and ethnicity are not uncovered to examine ways in which these trajectories impact on the exercise of educational leadership.*

As with laws of physics, this is not an either/or debate, but a both/and. Yet, I feel, in need of some deeper critical unpacking and interrogation.

Social Justice and Online Education: The Ghost in the Machine?

Social justice is a complex and messy concept, practice, and goal (Furman, 2012) – often broaching complicated and slippery subjects and concepts such as power, equality and equity. Furman, in her analysis of social justice leadership, identified social justice as an umbrella term with "multiple meanings" (2012, p. 193). She argued that "a common understanding among many leadership scholars is that social justice focuses on the experiences of marginalized groups and inequities in educational opportunities and outcomes"; furthermore, based on this focus, she stated "that leadership for social justice involves identifying and undoing these oppressive and unjust practices and replacing them with more equitable, culturally appropriate ones" (p. 194). Similarly, in my experiences and in my own approaches, questions of leadership and social justice raise questions of equitable societal participation and benefits – in the midst of systemic and structural imbalances. For example, how is this participation possible in the midst of personal, institutional, and systemic domination or embedded racisms? Yet, as the course materials outlined, education is intended to improve the human condition and "overcome social and economic challenges, resolve inequities, promote societal power and prowess and allow for individual development." This idea of resolving inequities may require some interrogation, critical analysis, and deeper self-reflection – especially when considering leadership and leadership theories.

Bertrand and Rodela (2018) conducted an exploration of social justice leadership in education and argued that "social justice leaders [are] those who comprehend the structural nature of racism and other inequities, and actively challenge these in school practices" (p. 10). They pointed to the notion that "social justice leadership scholarship, despite its focus on equity as an end, often overlooks equity in decision making as the means to this end" (p. 10-11). Their detailed analysis proposed a social justice leadership strategy within education "based upon the concept of "collective transformative agency" and a critical understanding of racism and other forms of inequity" (p. 11). This approach considers both the end goals of social justice, but also the process of reaching it and is not carried out by only those in leadership position within educational institutions – it also involves those who are marginalized and suffering from inequities. This aligns with the theoretical tenets of cultural safety.

In her 2017 book, *Bandwidth recovery: Helping students reclaim cognitive resources lost to poverty, racism, and social marginalization*, Cia Verschelden argued that "there is ample

evidence that racism and poverty make people sick, waste human capital, and diminish cognitive resources" (p. 5). Verschelden, a self-identified white woman, pointed to the complex nature of these difficult truths regarding racism. She suggested that most important and "discomfiting to acknowledge is that the systems of discrimination, hostility, and inequality that are the manifestations of racism and unfettered capitalism seem to have benefited us [white folks] at the expense of others" (p. 5-6). Verschelden utilized the metaphor of *bandwidth*, building on past theorizing, to outline that: "racism and poverty rob people of mental bandwidth, leaving them with limited cognitive resources to learn and perform to their potential and resulting in the national tragedy of blighted hope and squandered human capacity for creativity and problem-solving" (2017, p. 8). When individuals face persistent racism, at many levels, it is an immense drain on cognitive, mental, and physical resources. Individuals and communities that face persistent racisms may have much different notions of what social justice means, requires, and what forms or components of leadership may be instituted.

Indigenous scholar Eve Tuck (Unangax) and Wayne Yang (non-Indigenous) argued for an "ethic of incommensurability" within theories and practices of social justice (in Smith, Tuck & Yang, 2018, p. 1-2). Commensurable generally means to have a common measure (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Adding the prefix *in-* directly translates as "not commensurable". The Merriam Webster Dictionary defines incommensurable as "having no common basis, measure, or standard of comparison…utterly disproportionate." In their edited volume *Towards what Justice? Describing diverse dreams of justice in education*, Tuck and Yang discussed the incommensurability of social justice as not necessarily "separations of great distance", but that an ethic of "incommensurability means that we cannot judge each other's justice projects by the same standard, but we can come to understand the gap between our viewpoints, and thus work together in contingent collaboration" (2018, p. 2) – another way of identifying a tensioned interface. This also rings of reconciliatory endeavours, and tenets of cultural safety, ethical space, and cultural interface. For example, practices of cultural safety point to practitioners, self-reflecting upon their own cultures, power, and privileges that they may bring to health care interactions, especially with those from marginalized populations in society.

Tuck and Yang identified their "warm ambivalence" to the term social justice, as it is commonly used, but not so commonly defined (in Smith, Tuck, & Yang, 2018, p. 4). They argued that social justice in the interdisciplinary field of education "is a way to refer to all

research and practice within the domains of education which are a departure from behavioral or cognitive developmental approaches" (p. 4). As they pointed out:

> People who use social justice as a signal for what their work engages with understand
> that inequities are produced, inequities are structured, and that things have got to change
> in order to achieve different educational outcomes. Social justice education is a *choice
> away* from pathology and linearity." (p. 5, emphasis in original)

Yet, they cautioned, social justice must not be institutionalized, especially as this generally surfaces deep contradictions. This links back to earlier discussions on the impacts of *the line*. As Tuck and Yang stated, "we do not say that all education programs should be called social justice programs. Rather, we say that social justice is the *ghost in the machine* of the educational apparatus" (p. 5, emphasis added). This observation and statement informed the sub-title of this chapter and this section, and framed some of the reflections upon how fields of education are hardwired, or should be hardwired, for broaching social justice.

Social Justice and Online Distance Education

Social justice figured prominently in Zawacki-Richter and Anderson's (2014) edited volume on a proposed research agenda for online distance education. They asked in the introduction to their edited volume: "what is required for successful leadership in distance education?" (p. 3). In a similar line of thinking, Zawacki-Richter and Anderson identified the need for macro-level research that broaches issues of "access, equity, and ethics" (p. 10). In the first chapter of the edited volume, Tait and O'Rourke (2014) explained that the "central concept of social justice is a conviction that human beings have some core characteristics of equality" (p. 39). They suggested that "for each individual [this] encompasses both the notion of equality rights as a level playing field and the right to opportunities and support that enable each person to fully participate in all aspects of society" (p. 43). The edited volume highlighted important issues, however, I continue to ask: but what about privilege and social power? Will those that occupy privileged positions potentially release the power, or even consider the impacts of that power, so that those more marginalized can *fully participate*? Do those with privilege even know they carry power and privilege? Does increased *access*, for example, to online distance education and more ed tech, in turn result in increased *equity*, and *ethics* for those that experience marginalization? Or, does putting these terms in strategic plans and institutional statements give the aura of ethical engagement and broaching reconciliation?

I have argued, in various forums and presentations, for quite some time that the notion of equality and equity are two different things: incommensurable, per se. Equality is about sameness, such as 2+2 = 4 (e.g. commensurable). Equity is never about sameness, "rather it seeks to identify and redress historical, social, and political imbalances and inequities and how they have impeded the opportunities for socially and/or culturally marginalized minorities" (NATSIHWA, 2016, p. 7). This aligns with the idea of the incommensurability surrounding social justice. However, as Tuck and Yang suggested, "incommensurability does not necessarily mean separations of great distance... [it] can be as close as two people holding hands" (in Smith, Tuck & Yang, 2018, p. 2) – such as some ideas related to reconciliation. There are important distinctions to be identified when education, including online distance education, begins to tout notions of social justice, and takes a macro view of access, equity, and ethics. For example, Hackman (2005) argued that education related to social justice

> does not merely examine difference or diversity but pays careful attention to the systems of power and privilege that give rise to social inequality, and encourages students to critically examine oppression on institutional, cultural, and individual levels in search of opportunities for social action in the service of social change. (p. 104)

However, there is a fundamental and deep incommensurability, in critically examining oppressions and racisms from the perspective of one that experiences it daily, as opposed to one insulated from these daily due to privilege and social position. This includes me, as a privileged, white Settler male. There will never be *equality* of experience in this sense – these are incommensurable. As social work scholar Pease (a white male) identified, "many members of privileged groups are disconnected from the lived experiences of people who are oppressed" (2010, p. 176). This highlights that this is most likely more a people problem, than a technical one.

Are the Challenges People, and not Technology?

Within Zawacki-Richter and Anderson's edited volume (2014), online distance education researcher, Paul argued that "the biggest challenges facing academic change are cultural, not technological" and that this "is consistent with much writing on leadership and change in higher education" (p. 180). Paul suggested, "strong leadership is an important element in bringing about the necessary changes and support for an effective online learning strategy" especially as "distance learning becomes part of the academic mainstream." (p. 177). He asserted that

"Leadership in distance learning is not confined to those directly responsibility for online courses and programs in a campus-based university. The attitudes, knowledge, and support of chairs, deans, and provosts are also critical" (p. 183). This points to both the systems, and the people within as the key to examining and shifting the cultural realities within institutions. This also links with the difficult tasks of changing attitudes and changing socialized patterns of beliefs and behaviours to address racisms (e.g. interpersonal, systemic, structural, etc.).

However, as another longtime scholar in this field, Dron, argued in a chapter also within Zawacki-Richter and Anderson's (2014) edited volume: "Traditionally, the history of distance education has been divided according to the kinds of [information communication technology] ICT it employs, which, given that the field is largely defined by ICTs, makes some sense" (p. 238). He pointed out that "Almost every aspect of distance education is enacted and defined through technology, from organizational processes to communication tools, from production methods to pedagogies" (p. 239). This may further emphasize notions of a ghost in the machine, especially in relation to enacting many potentially incommensurable notions and goals of social justice. Dron argued that, "To understand technology and how it changes is thus by far the most important foundation for understanding change in distance education." (p. 239). Furthermore,

> The minimal definition of a learning technology is that it must incorporate, as part of its orchestration, pedagogy or pedagogies, whether implicit or explicit. Simply put, learning technologies must do something to enable people to learn, which implies that they employ some method for bringing about learning. (p. 240)

However, a key question here is learning about what? Is this learning about access, equity, and ethics – for example. Or, is the learning simply re-inscribing privilege, socialization, and societal positioning?

The tensioned interfaces between Paul and Dron, one pointing to people and cultures in institutions, and the other pointing to technology, for enacting change – is an important tension. Ed tech scholar, Neil Selwyn fronted a related argument, informed by critical theory. A central argument within Selwyn's critiques is the fact that much of the language batted around in the field, and related specifically to ed tech, is "the presumption not only that learning is taking place, but also that learning is being driven actively by the use of technology" (2015, p. 438). He warned against the field and study of ed tech becoming too ripe with bullshit, as institutions navigate these tensions. Without at least some clarity, social justice and related terms such as

equity, are reduced to mere buzzwords (Hackman, 2005); or, as these types of terms are called more frequently: *bullshit* (Frankfurt, 2005; Spicer, 2013). As Contandriopoulos (2019), the Research Chair of the Canadian Institute for Health Research (CIHR) described, "bullshit is language carefully crafted to evade any specific and precise meaning while also being effective in ongoing social games" (p. 1). Organizational scholar Spicer (2013) referred to bullshit as "the type of organisational speech and text that is produced with scant regard for the truth and is used to willfully mislead and to pursue the interests of the bullshitter" (p. 653). The preponderance and perpetuation of bullshit buzzwords in online distance education has been raised Selwyn, and is explored further in the next section.

Perpetuating Bullshit in Online Distance Education?

In 2015, Selwyn wrote an editorial for the journal: *Learning, Media and Technology* and titled it: "Minding our language: why education and technology is full of bullshit… and what might be done about it". He argued in the article, "the hyperbole that surrounds digital technology and education certainly emanates from all manner of unlikely sources" (p. 437). Selwyn cautioned against the overly positive, hyped-up, no-brainer type of language associated with ed tech: "… anyone *not* drinking the Ed-Tech Kool Aid might do well to distance themselves from much of the language that pervades digital education" (p. 440, emphasis in original). He also pointed out that this field needs some deep critical engagement and scrutiny – far more than it currently receives. This has many parallels with the concept and operationalizing of social justice initiatives even more so when the two of these are combined.

Selwyn built his discussion of bullshit on Frankfurt's essay. Frankfurt argued that to bullshit is different from lying, as lying has some regard for, and relationship to the truth. Whereas, bullshit, and the bullshitter, have little regard for the truth. One of Frankfurt's first statements, referring to American society, is that "One of the most salient features of our culture is that there is so much bullshit" (2005, p. 1). Spicer (2013), building upon Frankfurt, outlined that "bullshit is language that has two distinctive characteristics: (1) it is articulated without concern for the criteria of the truth and (2) the bullshitter willfully articulates it to pursue their own purposes and interests" (p.657). As Kotzee (2007) pointed out, bullshit "is a communication that pretends to be genuinely informative, but really is not" (p. 163). As a result, Frankfurt argued, bullshit can be more dangerous than lying, because as one bullshits, there is an "indifference to how things really are" (2005, p. 6), which lies at the root of bullshit's purpose. A

lie is distinguished by its falseness and its relationship to truth; however, bullshit can be either correct or incorrect and the bullshitter is often unconcerned with a commitment to, or the actual truth.

The central characteristics of a bullshitter is the misrepresentation of what the individual is up to:

> [What] we are not to understand is that his intention is neither to report the truth nor [as with the liar] to conceal it... The bullshitter ... is neither on the side of the true nor on the side of the false. His eye is not on the facts at all, as the eyes of the honest man and of the liar are, except insofar as they may be pertinent to his interest in getting away with what he says. (Frankfurt, in Meares, 2002, p. 235)

Frankfurt (2005) emphasized that "the production of bullshit is stimulated whenever a person's obligations or opportunities to speak about some topic are more extensive than his knowledge of the facts that are relevant to that topic" (p. 99). This highlights the underlying and implicit challenges of someone such as myself, a white able-bodied Settler male, making claims about social justice when enacting educational strategies within, or for, Indigenous communities or individuals.

Referencing Frankfurt, Mears (2002) argued that "bullshitting can serve as a form of institutional or political discourse whose "latent" function is to obscure or maintain social structural inequality". Also, referencing Frankfurt, Lorenz (2012) outlined that within educational institutions, "the bullshitter… is only interested in effects and does not necessarily believe in what he states himself" (p. 627). This may be a critical factor when analyzing and engaging discourses surrounding social justice, as well as the interfaces with ed tech and online distance education. For example, the TRC *Calls to Action* which clearly lay out a strategy and need for non-Indigenous people in Canada to learn more about Indigenous peoples, communities, and governance structures. If bullshit is produced, according to Frankfurt, when speaking or writing about something that one does not really have the facts or knowledge of, and there is a significant lack of knowledge of Indigenous realities in Canada (Figure 38), then is there not a danger of educational institutions producing bullshit when speaking of equity, equality, access, and ethics? Furthermore, when discussing in ed tech and social justice through online distance education, have institutions and leaders within conducted a thorough reflection to ensure they are

not propagating bullshit through not having sufficient knowledge of Indigenous realities in Canada?

Figure 38

Image Evoked From Reading the TRC

Note. Source: Original

I also ask myself these questions. Engaging in social justice initiatives at educational institutions without explicitly acknowledging and engaging spheres of racism, may very well mean that bullshit discourses are occurring, or simply re-circulating. Without explicit agendas addressing the many spheres of racism, and the leadership required to address it, notions of social justice may be in danger of fitting definitions of *bullshit* – especially claims of social justice that promote ed tech and online distance education, without a deeper critical engagement of potential inequities and reinforcing powers of whiteness. Further critical engagement and research into these various fields may be essential when expounding notions of social justice leadership.

Ed Tech and Social Justice Leadership in Education?

There is no shortage of grand claims made regarding the role of ed tech and social justice in education. Furthermore, there are no shortage of claims made by institutions towards their apparent social justice leadership. Neil Selwyn has written extensively about his concerns and

critical research on and with ed tech and specifically a focus on the day-to-day realities in the relationships between education and technology. He argued there is much slipperiness and murkiness in these discussions. In 2016, Selwyn published the book: *Is technology good for education?* which was a follow up to his 2014 book: *Distrusting educational technology: Critical questions for changing time*s. His intentions for the 2016 book, he explained, were focussed on the fact that digital education and ed tech are unquestionably a "big deal" and that we must "remain as dispassionate and circumspect as possible, and set about asking suitably critical questions" (p. 23). I argue that there are distinct similarities between Selwyn's discussions of being wary of ed tech within the field of education, and online distance education, engaging in social justice initiatives and apparent leadership in the field.

Selwyn outlined critical questions for exploration in the realm of ed tech, of which could also be asked of online education, which inherently involves ed tech. These questions could also be asked of social justice initiatives, for example: What is actually new here? What are the unintended consequences or second order effects? What are the potential gains? Losses? What underlying values and agendas are implicit? In whose interests does this work? Who benefits, and in what ways? What are the social [justice] problems that digital technology is being presented as a solution to? How responsive to a 'digital fix' are these problems likely to be? (2016, p. 24). Engaging in these questions, requires an inherently skeptical and critical inquiry. The importance of this type of inquiry increases when ed tech begins to engage related terms such as digital disruption, digital transformation, digital improvement, and others. It is also essential when taking a cultural safety lens to this work, such as who is answering these questions above? Who is providing the evaluation to suggest success or failure, or perspectives anywhere in between on this continuum?

Selwyn argued that, quite often, "bullshitting… stems from a cynical lack of concern over the truth or authenticity of what one is talking about" and that when it comes to education and technology, there are frequently too many people "talking loudly, confidently and with sincerity regardless of accuracy, nuance and/or sensitivity to the realities in which they speak" (2015, p. 440). A fitting example that Selwyn utilized is the example of someone in a privileged position within a British university and society making all sorts of claims about the benefits of the digital world and ed tech for disadvantaged youth, and how this scholar may be celebrated for these insights – and, yet, have no basis of experience or input from disadvantaged youth to

make such claims. These ring of similar notions in Tait and O'Rourke's (2014) argument for social justice audits within online distance education. They proposed these audits as one of the answers to their question: what is to be done? This also links to the theoretical underpinnings of cultural safety. For example, the measure, or evaluation, of whether or not an interaction was deemed culturally safe, rests with the individual accessing services, not the individual delivering services.

In contemplating Selwyn's thoughts, I wonder if there might be some dangers in similar work in relation to Indigenous peoples and communities in the geographic area of Canada? How many educational institutions and researchers making claims of increased *access, equity, and ethics* as a result of ed tech or online distance education, are self-evaluating these claims? Is their evaluation based in their ideological bias, or, has there been deep input by those that operate from different ideologies? Are there deep assumptions about uninhibited access to the Internet; to access to devices to engage in online distance education; to the relevance of the learning?

When pondering these, I think back to my own work over the years, including as a youth worker – and I ask myself, how much bullshit have I perpetuated, or created? If I am to make various claims about the social justice that has been enacted through engaging ed tech in educational initiatives within Indigenous communities, have I simply peddled in bullshit? These raise the potential for even more tensioned interfaces.

Conceptual Interfaces

In his 2014 book *Distrusting educational technology: Critical questions for changing times*, Selwyn argued that there must be a stronger academic analysis and critical interrogation of education and technology and the relationships between. Selwyn quoted Galloway (2012) from his book *The interface effect*, where he asserted that:

> Ideology is not something that can be solved like a puzzle, or cured like a disease…
> Instead ideology is better understood as a problematic, that is to say a conceptual
> interface in which theoretical problems arise and are generated and sustained precisely as
> problems in themselves. (p. 57).

Selwyn asserted in the opening to his book that digital technologies have "long promised much in the way of changing education along more democratic, more equitable and fairer lines, but have usually delivered far less" (p. vii). He argued that the use and distribution of ed tech is a "profoundly political affair – and site of constant conflict and struggle between different interests

and groups… the educational use of digital technology needs to be seen as an ideologically driven concern" (p. viii). Similarly, Selwyn pointed out that educational and digital technology are dominated by a small minority of elites. He argued for a critical area of change focused on "wider collective self determination of those groups who are currently less empowered and less engaged by the use of digital technologies in education" (p. 148). Furthermore, that a top priority is to establish a collective sense of educational technology. Within that would be included "issues of commitment, loyalty, solidarity, trust, mutual obligation and dignity; a concern with equality and redistribution; and overall interest in improving the human condition" (p. 149). Principles of truth and reconciliation would fit into that category. These also align with tenets of cultural safety.

Thus, I argue, that various social justice-oriented programs that market and purport to provide empowerment for individuals to meet their *full potential*, generally do not come informed by an understanding or reflection upon the immense drain of racism and poverty experienced by those that are marginalized in any number of ways. This is called ignorance. Anwaruddin (2015) outlined that "the idea of ignorance suggests deficiency, omission, or a gap in an individual's or group's understanding of various phenomena, some scholars argue that ignorance is often actively produced in social, cultural and political contexts" (p. 742). Added to this, the number of educational programs that purport to increase opportunity, of which many do; however, they are also subject to ideological and epistemological domination by those in power and carrying privilege – sometimes implicit; sometimes explicit. Bailey (2007, in Anwaruddin, 2015) argued that:

> From positions of dominance ignorance can take the form of those in the center either refusing to allow those at the margins to know, or of actively erasing indigenous knowledges. More subtle examples of socially constructed ignorance include epistemic blank spots that make privileged knowers oblivious to systemic injustice.
> (p. 742)

As I reflect upon this statement, I see myself reflected in it. I have socially constructed blank and blind spots due to the ideologies I have been steeped in through various arenas. Therefore, as highlighted in the earlier vignette in this chapter, when Cleveland-Innes (2012) spoke of leadership in education, suggesting that "we are speaking of leadership in public institutions that are designed to serve the greater good." This may be too easy a statement to make for those that

carry some privilege and may not face the cognitive, mental and physical drain of racism and the associated economic insecurities (Verschelden, 2017). Similarly, in line with Selwyn's anecdote of the privileged university academic that makes claims about disadvantaged youth, without actually incorporating the voices of those youth into that perspective.

Yes, education institutions may have thoughts of serving the greater good, however, Anwaruddin pointed out that it is critical to consider epistemologies of ignorance within systems and structures. He argued that oppressive systems "produce ignorance as a one of their effects". This occurs, he suggested, because:

> Oppressive social structures often inculcate specific belief-forming practices that produce and popularize incomplete and inaccurate accounts of social realities. From this perspective, ignorance is not viewed as a lack of knowledge and information, but as an epistemic practice in itself. (2015, p. 743)

This points to Figure 39 earlier, whereby the TRC identified a significant lack of knowledge (otherwise known as ignorance) throughout out Canada on the realities faced by Indigenous communities, and how those realities came to be (e.g. *history matters*). A central challenge faced by the education system in Canada is the education of non-Indigenous peoples in Canada (Godlewska, Moore & Bednasek, 2010). The education system continues to cultivate ignorance and has been built upon cultivating ignorance for centuries: "The history of Canada's dealing with Aboriginal Peoples is a history of ignorance, not a passive or haphazard but a profoundly purposive and willful ignorance" (Godlewska, Moore & Bednasek, 2010, p. 419). Therefore, the importance of recognizing the continuum that has knowledge on one side and ignorance on the other, which in turn presents an important conceptual interface.

The TRC *Calls to Action*, UN DRIP, and the *Declaration of Cultural Safety* are components of social justice agendas and initiatives that look to limit historical impediments (e.g. social injustices, inequities and racisms) – especially those that are legacies of colonialism and colonization. As Godlewska, Moore and Bednasek (2010) argued, "as far as understanding the evolution of colonial laws, almost all [Canadian]citizens are ignorant" (p. 418), and that as "a citizenry we are complacent about a deep-seated ignorance of the country's past and present affecting both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians" (p. 417).

Social justice in online distance education are potentially messy propositions. Issues of access, equity, and ethics are critical in online distance education; however, consideration of

those goals must consider and reflect upon the fact that ed tech comes from an ideological basis (Selwyn, 2015; 2016; and, Zawacki-Richter & Anderson, 2014). Within that ideological basis are risks to embedding and enacting those sets of assumptions and values onto those that utilize educational technology and what it provides; all of this at a potential loss to the intended objectives of a more equitable social realm. I have often referred to these as difficult as the challenges and conundrums of trying to *hardwire* social justice in an increasingly wireless world.

Online Education and Social Justice in British Columbia: Hardwiring in the Wireless World?

The discussion of ed tech and dangers of bullshit ring of similar claims and predictions on how important digital and ed tech may be in *hardwiring* cultural safety and cultural humility into healthcare services, and inherently, education. Or, how digital technology and ed tech might play a critical role in the education of non-Aboriginal people in Canada about deeply specific and nuanced things such as Aboriginal rights and title, Indigenous law, Indigenous-Crown relations, and other aspects of the TRC *Calls to Action*. Healthcare in British Columbia, and healthcare for Indigenous peoples and communities in BC is no exception with over 200 separate and diverse First Nations communities; some with settled treaties, most without – layered against a complicated Constitutional morass that must be worked through. For example, healthcare and education that falls under *Sec. 92* of the *Constitution* is delivered by provinces. Whereas, Indigenous peoples and communities fall under *Sec. 91* of the *Constitution*, and provision of their services is considered a federal relationship and responsibility through the *Indian Act*.

Cultural safety has origins in two institutions – healthcare and education – and the future of cultural safety must continue to be found and embedded in both. However, most importantly cultural safety must be rooted in the many and shifting cultures in which clients and patients come from – as well as the cultures that practitioners bring. This must also take into account the ambiguity and fluidity of the term *culture* in the first place. In an Indigenous context, those cultures, and inherent Aboriginal rights, are generally (but not always) rooted in specific geographic places – as well as complex legislative and legal arenas. The cultures of practitioners may be similarly complicated, as are the cultures and sub-cultures of practitioners and institutions. These are examples of more conceptual and tensioned interfaces.

Social justice and cultural safety may be complementary principles and practices – yet, also, at times, potentially incommensurable (ala Tuck & Yang, 2018). In the BC context, in

promotional material focused on the *Declaration of the Cultural Safety* the First Nation Health
Authority (FNHA) begins to lay out potential strategies for what can be done. The FNHA
explains that "Today, colonial trauma and oppression takes place within the health system
through culturally unsafe and discriminatory care" and that following the arrival of Europeans,
First Nations health and wellness was "disrupted through a process of colonization and
oppression including tactics and policy initiatives such as the Indian Residential School System,
the Indian Act, and Indian Hospitals" (2016, n.p.).

       The legacy of these practices includes historical and intergenerational trauma (Linklater,
2014) and severe social inequities, and as a result "First Nation [peoples] continue to bear a
disproportionate burden of disease or health disparities" (FNHA, 2016, n.p.). These disparities
are well documented in research and literature, and as such the *Declaration* is a high-level
political commitment to transforming health and educational organizations in BC to become
more culturally safe in order to address health disparities and inequities. Yet, being a high-level
commitment now means the difficult and complex work of implementation (e.g. *hardwiring*)
begins. This requires leadership at many levels, and therefore the links and relations explored in
this chapter and throughout this dissertation.

       The BC *Declaration* defines cultural safety as: "an outcome based on respectful
engagement that recognizes and strives to address power imbalances inherent in the healthcare
system. It results in an environment free of racism and discrimination, where people feel safe
when receiving healthcare." In turn, cultural humility is defined as a "process of self-reflection to
understand personal and systemic biases and to develop and maintain respectful processes and
relationships based on mutual trust. Cultural humility involves humbly acknowledging oneself as
a learner when it comes to understanding another's experience." This last point is a critical
component of realizing the *Declaration* in practice. Some of the action strategies and decision-
making processes have been, or are currently being negotiated through regional agreements and
processes in BC. The Deputy Minister of Health in BC, a signatory to the Declaration, has stated
that cultural safety must get *hardwired* into health authorities and health institutions throughout
the Province. This will also require hardwiring cultural safety into educational institutions, as
these are the arenas that train future healthcare workers and professionals.

       To meet goals of social justice related to cultural safety and cultural humility in
healthcare across vast geographic and rural populations (e.g. most of BC and Canada), will most

likely require the use of online and distance education technologies, platforms, and strategies. It will also require leadership, steady commitments, active dialogue, and diverse partnerships. The TRC *Final Report* (2015, *Vol. 6*) discusses the importance of education in the digital world, "where students have ready access to a barrage of information regarding Treaties, Aboriginal rights, or historical wrongs such as the residential schools" (p. 125). However, critical to this access to the digital world (such as through online distance education) is the ability to assess the credibility and legitimacy through engaging "in debate on these issues, armed with real knowledge and deepened understanding about the past" (p. 125). This debate will need to occur carefully and cautiously, respecting power differentials in who controls and disperses knowledge (e.g. academic institutions, government agencies, communities etc.).

Summary

This chapter was framed by a fourth course in this program which was designed to explore leadership issues in education, with some focus on broaching social challenges, inequities, and power imbalances in society. In other words, this course intended to engage in social justice related issues. However, one of the challenges of leadership as an expanding discipline, for example entire degrees are now focused on Leadership, is that it has become a field rife with bullshit. In this sense, referring to bullshit as defined by American philosopher Harry Frankfurt which is now well established in peer review literature. Bullshit defined as discourse that is created and circulated with little connection to reality, or to in fact realize change. Within academic institutions, the field may be ripe with this discourse, as social institutions in Canada are faced with enacting the TRC *Calls to Action*, and, broaching discussions of systemic racism. In advanced education, this could become even more exceptionally difficult as the field is largely dominated by white professionals – as outlined by statistics in the first chapter. This domination of whiteness could be argued, is the ghost in the machine. Similarly, this may be referred to as epistemic racism (Reading, 2013).

Components of this chapter outlined that to engage and effect leadership in the field of education, and specifically online distance education, there will need to be much more guidance and discussions reflecting upon how marginalized knowledges (e.g. Indigenous) become privileged and critical guides in shaping education for non-Indigenous people in Canada as recommended in several TRC *Calls to Action.* However, phrases and statements to this effect can quite quickly start to sound like potential bullshit – meaning a disconnection from the reality of

how things really are; e.g. continued marginalizing, and further privileging the privileged. These are critical times, as in importance; however, they also require critical practices, such as those informed through critical social theories and critical reflection. However, the questions remain – critically reflect upon what? And, how? For what purpose? These are explored in the final chapter.

Chapter 8. Discussion and Conclusion: Reflections within Tensioned Interfaces

Words are imperfect, unfaithful, imperialistic, break bones. But they're all we got.

- (Spry, 2011, p. 210)

The question researchers need to ask themselves is "What are we doing with the knowledge we produce to challenge oppression in schools and society?" Research cannot be anti-oppressive if it continues to repeat the desire among researchers to be detached.   – (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 89)

Distance and Online Education: Navigating Tensioned Interface(s)

My research was designed to look outward to the social spaces and places in which I have interacted while navigating online distance education. This research was also intended to look inward at myself as a privileged white Settler male from various backgrounds. One of the central focusses was conducting this look inward framed by my experiences within education, and a particular online education program I enrolled in. In turn, the research was designed to look forward and backward in time and experiences, in line with guidance from methods of narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). All of these comprised various fluid cultures and interfaces between cultures. Our intercultural relationships are generally framed by our intracultural relationship – however these may be represented interchangeably. Aspects of this are captured effectively in the Indigenous-informed concept of the *cultural interface* (Nakata, 2002), explored in the first chapter.

This research was designed to explore some of these complexities through personal self-reflection and self-study, which is also at the heart of the Indigenous-informed concept and practice of cultural safety (Ramsden, 2002a). Cultural safety, in turn, asks practitioners in various fields, to reflect upon power that they may carry or possess. My research also sought to critically engage with the education program I have been completing, as a proxy for the larger field. I argue that there is an inherent need for deeper exploration of the confines and challenges of the colonizer, and/or internally colonized mind, so as to begin an engagement within Indigenous-informed concepts such as the ethical space of engagement, cultural safety, and cultural interface. Within this work have been critical and distinct links and possibilities for the field of online distance education – especially with calls for achieving and working towards

social justice within this field – and larger field of education. In these cases, I am left pondering whose notions or definitions of social justice? Plus, who is evaluating initiatives to see if they achieve social justice? From the perspective of cultural safety this would be up to those that receive services – be it clients/patients in healthcare, or, students and communities in education. In my case, this evaluation will always remain un-finished – as long as the images and words I have compiled here exist in some form where others may look upon and comprehend and interpret them.

This chapter begins the final stages of this dissertation. I am fascinated by etymology, and the etymology of the word *research* – is not lost on me. The etymology of research is described as coming from Old French *recercher* to "seek out, search closely", which comes from "*re-"* which originates from Latin meaning "again, back, anew, against". This is combined with *cercher* meaning "to seek for", and going back further in Latin: *circare*, meaning "go about, wander, traverse" and further into Latin from *circus* "circle" (Online Etymology Dictionary). This has certainly been the case in my research, and the decision to conduct this research through autoethnography. Online education is also many *interfaces*, and presents many potential sites for ethical spaces of engagement, interfaces for cultures, and sites of safety and un-safety.

Online distance education is an exponentially growing field, discipline, and practice. Athabasca University (AU) Press, in their explanation of the *Issues in Distance Education* book series suggested, "Distance education is the fastest-growing mode of both formal and informal teaching, training, and learning." Furthermore, "It is multi-faceted in nature, encompassing e-learning and mobile learning, as well as immersive learning environments" (www.aupress.ca). In an AU Press published book, within the series: *The theory and practice of online learning*, Anderson (2008) stated that:

> education is one of the few sustainable means to equip humans around the globe with the skills and resources to confront the challenges of ignorance, poverty, war, and environmental degradation. Distance education is perhaps the most powerful means of extending this resource and making it accessible to all. (p. 4)

Online and digital education are intertwined within larger educational systems worldwide, and these are facing constant shifts due to social, political, cultural, economic, demographic and technological changes (Veletsianos, 2016). Therefore, online learning is no longer a form of education existing on the periphery or simply supplementary to bricks and mortar education, or

better named *bricks and clicks* when referring to fully online educational institutions. Online education is an integral part of mainstream society and educational institutions. Thinking about this field and re-visiting the visual schematic I created of Zawacki-Richter and Anderson's (2014) proposed research agenda (Figure 39).

Figure 39

The Micro, Meso, and Macro Components of a Proposed Research Agenda for Online Distance Education
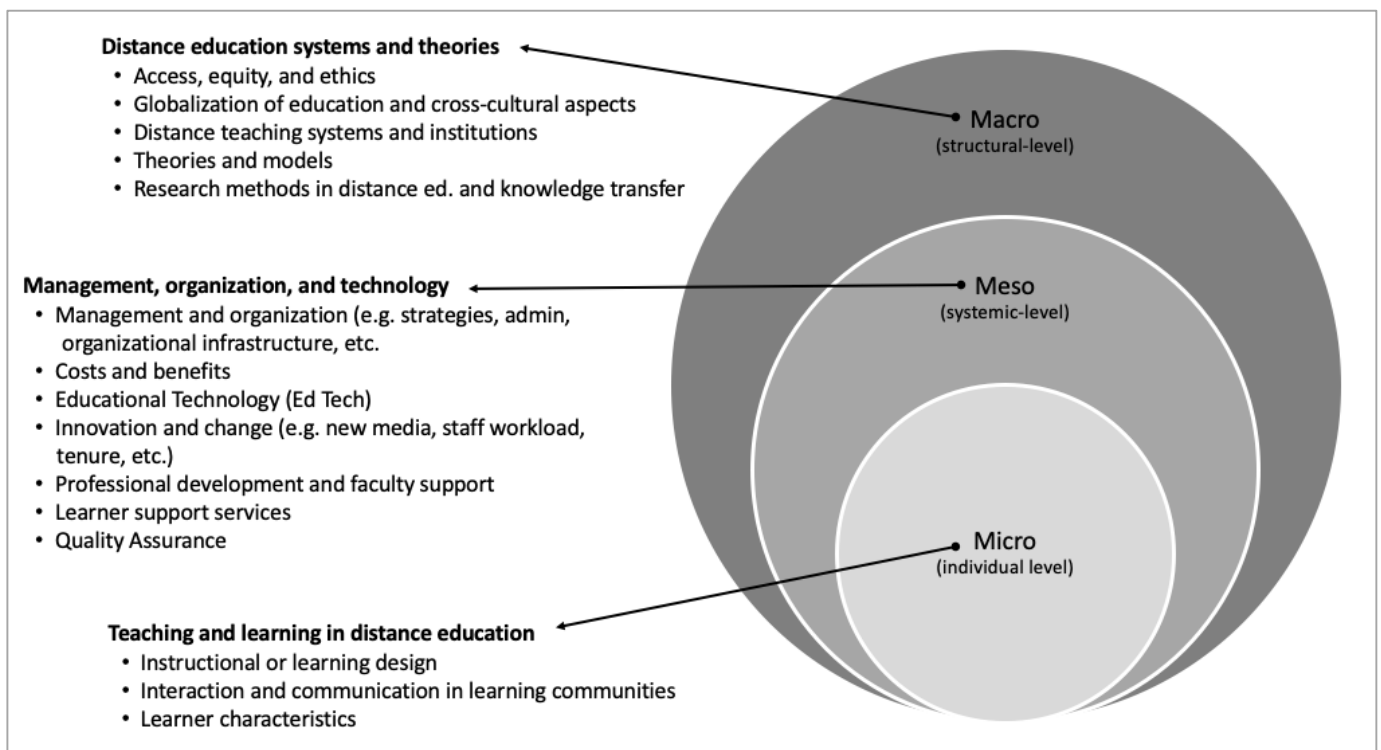
It is important to keep the visual schematic above in mind as it is a frame for this discussion and concluding chapter.

Re-visiting Research Purpose

        This critical qualitative inquiry intended to interrogate my unearned privileges: whiteness, male, able-bodied, Settler, and others; for example, the micro components that begin with self. This research was intended to interface these privileges with systemic (meso components) and structural (macro) components and privileges inherent in the field of online distance education; a field that is purported to hold social justice in high regard. Autoethnography, a methodology, method, product and process, is a research strategy and output

designed to inquire into the self (*auto*) within cultures (*ethno*) resulting in written or visual analysis (*graphy*). This research and reflective process was highlighted through interfacing the field and research within, with the TRC reports and *Calls to Action*. Bronfenbrenner's (1974; 1977) social ecological theory was a common theme and influence throughout this dissertation research, as well as my overall doctoral program experience. This is not because the program and courses discussed systems-based approaches, but more because contemplating systems-based approaches and theories continually surfaced in my course work and research. Figure 40 is a re-visit of the conceptual framework that guided this research, shared in the first chapter. What my reflections and analysis have led me to, is the need for much deeper engagement and reflection (personally, institutionally, and societally) on the outer most circle of this diagram.

Figure 40

Interrelated and Entangled Reflections Within Tensioned Interfaces
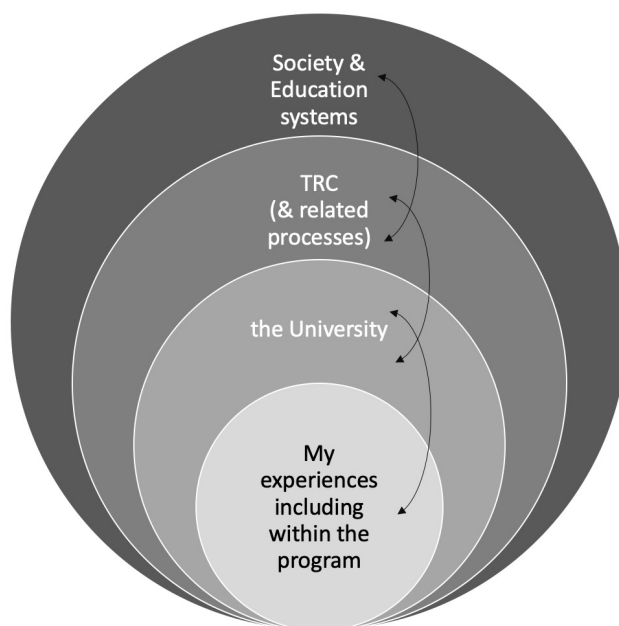
What my own realizations and reflections reveal when considering social justice and interfaces with TRC *Calls to Action*, *Declaration of Cultural Safety*, UN DRIP, and other processes is the need for much deeper considerations of the impacts of marginalization and racism – in its many forms. This has come to the forefront as I have begun the concluding stages of this dissertation with demonstrations across the U.S. and Canada related to systemic and structural racisms (e.g. Black Lives Matter, systemic racism in the RCMP, systemic racism in BC healthcare

institutions). The next section highlights several aspects of marginalization and racisms, that must be a critical component of social justice education.

"History Matters" – Education and Troubled Relations.

Four of the online courses I completed in the doctoral program were used as frames for the autoethnographic components of my research, and explored *micro* (instructional and learning design, learning communities, and learner characteristics), *meso* (management, leadership, educational technology, innovation and change, and professional development), and *macro* (social justice, equity, ethics, institutions, theories and models, and research methods combined with knowledge transfer). This was part of the reason for engaging the courses, through autoethnography, within the doctoral program. Within the context and interfaces with the TRC, each of these three levels of systems and structures are critical in realizing and operationalizing the TRC *Calls to Action*, and many calls for change and justice (e.g. Black Lives Matter). In this case, returning to the epigraph in the first chapter history matters; and matters a lot.

The TRC (2015) argued that "much of the current state of troubled relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians is attributable to educational institutions and what they have taught, or failed to teach, over many generations" (*Vol. 6,* p. 117). My experiences growing up in coastal northwest BC, living much of my life in northern BC, combined with my experiences in education (online and classroom) – align deeply with this statement. However, these must be kept in a temporal context, as the official government curriculum that socialized my formal school learning, did not include the truths and realities of residential schools and the *Indian Act*. The government curriculum that my kids experience, does contemplate these. As the epigraph for the first chapter argued: *history matters* especially in relation to the second epigraph, which highlighted the ignorance of history that the education system has ensconced within non-Indigenous people in Canada. There is a deep ignorances within many non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada, about the history and current realities faced by many Aboriginal peoples and communities. This includes my own deep ignorances. There are deeply embedded systemically racist principles underlying our collective societies. These principles are often hidden, or just ignored – or, blinded by socialization. It is important to highlight the underlying racisms that are alive and well in Canada, however, this must also be balanced against some hope and desire for transformative change.

The TRC expressed some hope suggesting that despite this history of educational institution's failures and omissions, "or, perhaps more correctly, because of its potential – the TRC believes that education is also the key to reconciliation" (2015, p. 117). As a part of that hope, the TRC concluded its work with 94 *Calls to Action*, many of which are focused on education for non-Indigenous peoples to bridge deep ignorances surrounding the colonial experience and truths. This ignorance, generally expands into ignorance of privilege and oppression. In the context of the educational realm that I have explored in my research, how that education is designed, delivered, and evaluated is critical in engaging in and eliminating ignorance of the histories that matter – especially in the context of reflecting upon oppression, power, privilege, and domination of whiteness in many fields and educational system. Making progress on highlighting horrific truths and enacting reconciliatory initiatives will require principles of transformative learning, which, in turn, requires deep consideration of emotional knowledges and cognitive faculties that lead to practices of critical self-reflection in learners, educators, and institutions (Brookfield, 2017; Mezirow, 2009; De Angelis, 2018). Related to this, is the fact that taking a shame and blame approach for bridging ignorances, will not lead to transformation. Alternatively, supporting uncomfortable realizations, realities, and conversations, may lead to more sustainable transformation.

A fundamental challenge within these reflections, however, is outlining what in fact folks may need to critically self-reflect upon. As researchers such as Sensoy and DiAngelo (2017) and Kendall (2013) pointed out, within cultures of privilege, and specifically white privilege, individuals with these privileges are akin to a fish that spends its life in water, not ever really thinking about the water. The fish simply experiences water as a part of its identity and daily experiences. Yet, the fish is separate, but cannot survive without that water. Therefore, like the fish in water, humans often do not consider or reflect upon the systems surrounding them that give those daily meanings and experiences (e.g. socialization) – at least not until crises occur. These are inherently cultural influences that create meaning-making systems and structures. Mapping and highlighting these, for example through curriculum mapping, can sometimes be like mapping migrating salmon or caribou. How to capture individuals within the morass of individuals – the collective? Some of these cultural influences have been explored within this dissertation through highlighting some of the deep layered complexities of these elements, for

example, through using the cultural iceberg metaphor to highlight complexities of the term. These complexities are also highlighted through my research questions.

Research Questions Revisited

My decisions to pursue and propose a critically reflective approach for this research, informed by the concepts of critical social justice and social injustice, were instigated by TRC final reports, *Calls to Action*, and specific excerpts within. In the opening chapter, I shared how the research questions were built from a specific quote in the TRC reports. In addition, one of the most lasting TRC reports that continues to haunt me is *Volume 4: Missing Children and Unmarked Burials* (2015). Some gruesome numbers are recorded in that volume, for example, the TRC identified 3,200 deaths in its analysis of the registers of the schools:

- For just under one-third of those deaths (32%), the government and the schools did not record the name of the student who died.

- For just under one-quarter of these deaths (23%), the government and the schools did not record the gender of the student who died.

- For just under one-half of these deaths (49%), the government and the schools did not record the cause of death. (p. 1)

The TRC pointed out further:

> The most basic of questions about missing children – Who died? Why did they die? Where are they buried? – have never been addressed or comprehensively documented by the Canadian government. This document reports on the first systematic effort to record and analyze the deaths at the schools, and the presence and condition of student cemeteries, within the regulatory context in which the schools were intended to operate. (p. 4)

These sorts of documented evidence point clearly to cultural genocide. These also point to very difficult truths.

As a father of three children, I shudder and have a difficult time placing my thoughts into a reflective position to consider what I would have done or felt in similar circumstances – not just death at residential schools, but the thought of having children taken away to attend these schools in the first place, then also returning home to families after these experiences. It is mind-numbing to consider. The Commissioners shared that, "the work that the Commission has commenced is far from complete" (p. 2). Nary have truer words been written.

Based on the evidence in the TRC, and other reports, and a specific excerpt in the TRC reports I proposed research questions that attempted to critically reflect upon my non-Indigenous, white Settler adult identities, which are imbued with privileges. These questions were also nested within wider systemic and structural societal influences and institutions, as outlined above. These questions also resonated in my mind as I have read and re-read sections and volumes of the TRC. The nature of the doctoral program I have been engaged also required that research explored within the program must link with the field of online distance education. The tensioned interfaces between these, largely, became the subject of this research, which also involved my *self* (past, present, and future). This work is also, incomplete – like a life lived. As I wrote this discussion and conclusion I recalled anthropologist Julie Cruikshank's work and book (1992), in collaboration with Indigenous Elders Angela Sidney, Kitty Smith and Annie Ned *Live lived like a story: Life stories of three Yukon Native Elders*. The book began with the line, "One of the liveliest areas of discussion in contemporary anthropology centers on how to convey authentically, in words, the experience of one culture to members of another" (p. 1). As such autoethnography, as a narrative method, was a fitting method and product for reflection and representation. This method supports exploration of many aspects of culture, especially in potentially sharing between cultures.

Autoethnography, itself, represents a tensioned interface at the "meeting place of my story and the reader's life" (Bochner and Ellis, 2016, p. 240). "Unlike traditional social science, which usually comes across as an exclamation point (!)" argued Bochner and Ellis, "autoethnography emphasizes the question mark (?)" (p. 247). They outlined that "Anything we can write about life ought to be understood as conditional, incomplete, and unsettled. What happened to us in the past may be fixed, but our memory of it, and what we can say about it, will keep changing as long as we live." (p. 254). That is much the case with this research, and is highlighted when revisiting and reflecting upon my research questions.

Research Question 1: Comprehending Identities of Whiteness and White Privilege?

My first research question asked: *How do I, as a non-Aboriginal person (Settler), comprehend and interpret my identities and family histories as they have been shaped by a storied version of Canada and Canadian history that has marginalized Aboriginal peoples' history and experiences*? The sub-question asked: *To what extent have these been propagated,*

supported, or ignored in my experiences or actions within online distance education or larger
education systems, including this doctoral program?

　　As I moved through my dissertation research and engaged in reviewing, transcribing, pondering, and reflecting upon my multiple research journals, course materials, discussion posts, presentations, and other materials, I learned some new things about my family history. Over the past many years when I have discussed my upbringing on Haida Gwaii I have told stories of what I learned in Social Studies and Geography classes while in grade school. As with many other people in my generation, I learned of the War of 1812 and early explorers such as Cartier, Vancouver, and others from other countries other than England. The high school I attended was named after a land surveyor that travelled many parts of Canada in the late 1800s (George M. Dawson). One of the few Indigenous people I can name from my high school studies in the late 1980s is Louis Riel, the Métis leader and key founder of the province of Manitoba. Riel had battled for special language rights within the newly formed Manitoba and when Mennonites arrived in the area they too benefited from these language rights and were able to provide education in German and other mother-tongue languages. There were also many relationships between early Mennonite settlers in Manitoba and Métis peoples and communities. Family roots, embedded in my last name and from my father's side, come from Mennonites that settled in Manitoba upon leaving southern Russia (Ukraine area) in the 1800s. A clear difference existing in the fact, though, that none of my early relatives were put to death; at least that I am aware of.

　　My experiences in this particular doctoral program highlighted further marginalization of Indigenous peoples and histories in this nation – more by actions of omission and silence. These experiences also linked to TRC reports that pointed to the acts of omission or commission that have created the lack of knowledge and ignorance present in education systems and programs in Canada. This ignorance includes teaching and learning about privileges. This is an important link to the decision surrounding methodologies for this research. Bochner and Ellis (2016) pointed out, "an autoethnographic text directs attention to meanings rather than facts, readings rather than observations, and interpretations rather than findings." (p. 239). My experiences shared and reflected upon through this dissertation are not necessarily *findings* of commission; however, are more my experiences and interpretations of gaps in the program, and gaps in experiences and knowledges of faculty members, as well as my own, and cohort members; an omission some might argue. Many researchers and practitioners in the field of online education discuss notions

of social justice, however, actually operationalizing and evaluating how social justice was achieved and who said so – is a much more difficult task. Embedding these into systems and structures – hardwiring in a wireless world – is a very difficult task. Hardwiring into worlds of privileged, generally means, if we follow the metaphor, a re-wiring.

Privilege and oppression go hand in hand, there is no separation – they represent a tensioned interface. As Brod (1989) outlined:

> Privilege is not something I take and which I therefore have the option of not taking. It is something that society gives me, and unless I change the institutions in which give it to me, they will continue to give it, and I will continue to have it, however noble and egalitarian my intentions. (p. 280-281)

The preface to this quote is that Brod identified the systemic and structural qualities of privilege. As he argued, there is no way for any one individual to give up their privilege, or to be external to it. "One is always in the system. The only question is whether one is part of the system in a way that challenges or strengthens the status quo." Similarly, Kendall (2002), quoted the well-cited article by Peggy McIntosh (1995) "White privilege and male privilege", which suggested that "those of us who are white usually believe that privileges are conditions of daily experience… [that are] universally available to everybody." Further, [McIntosh] says that what we are really talking about is "unearned power conferred systematically" (pp. 82-83)". Ultimately, those who are white, "can't choose not to get the privileges we are granted, but we can choose how to use them to make personal and systemic changes (Kendall, 2013, p. 38). Kendall argued that white privilege is an institutional set of benefits, and is further re-inscribed and given by those who hold power in institutions (e.g. education). This highlights the system of systemic privilege-giving and maintenance. It also highlights areas where education can assist in supporting critical self-reflection. This will not necessarily change the privilege, however, it can change how one operates recognizing that privilege exits.

Reflecting upon these sentiments, coming to terms with these, and as a metaphorical fish, considering the waters I swim in, is critical to revisiting my second research question.

Question 2: Reconciling False Notions of Superiority…

My second research question asked: *How do I reconcile these false notions of European superiority (e.g. whiteness) and Aboriginal inferiority that I may have been taught, implicitly or explicitly, within mainstream education systems (including online distance education)?*

This question has caused discomfort throughout my research. Discomfort for myself, and discomfort for some reviewers of this research. I have tried to reconcile this discomfort through explaining that this question emanates directly from a quote within the TRC. By no means is this question intended to suggest I feel there are superior and inferior aspects of European or Aboriginal societies and individuals. However, deeper exploration of what is, and continues to be taught within programs, such as education programs, reveals immersed ideologies that are often not interrogated. As I navigated my professional life and work while completing this program, I have found immense value in exploring and engaging terms such as cultural safety. This Indigenous-informed concept has evolved from a context which explicitly questions the domination of settler colonial dominated systems, epistemologies, histories, and ignorance.

With signing of the *Declaration of Commitment* in BC, and new legislation in the fall of 2019, related to UN DRIP, there is movement towards proposed acts of *reconciliation* and of realizing *new* relationships between Indigenous peoples and communities, and Settler-based governments, judicial systems, and education systems (e.g. think back to the *K & K Agreement* on Haida Gwaii). However, many of these systems still come with perched privileged views and deep seated ignorances. These also come from views that frequently stigmatize the disadvantaged and quoting statistics of disadvantage, which too easily deteriorates into pathologizing. The privileged and elite within academic institutions, of which includes myself, are too frequently experts at looking outwards to *the other* and designing campaigns, curriculum, and materials designed to pull the disadvantaged out of the trenches of despair and onto a *level playing field*, with notions of educational technology and online education purported to cut gaps and dam the many divides. Often these are even well-intentioned efforts; however, in many cases, so were Indian residential schools in the minds of those that designed and implemented.

The challenge with these outward-focused efforts is that these generally hone in on, and emanate from positions and viewpoints of the privileged. It is supported by and propped up by notions of superiority, implicitly and explicitly. Granted that some notions of community-based research are intended to level this playing field. However, true community-based research is actually when the community itself identifies the topics, areas, and issues it wants researched then goes to find a researcher to assist. Not the reverse. Far too often, community-based research becomes researcher, institution-based and funder-based research – subject to the timelines and career notions of the researcher themselves and the funding timelines that they must adhere to.

Or, to the timeline of degree completion for the researcher. And to tricky questions of ownership, control and protection of data – often referred to as knowledge.

Some strengths of the Indigenous-informed concepts of cultural safety, ethical space of engagement, and cultural interface – are that they change the privileged viewpoint. Cultural safety has two basic principles:

1. That those with power in interactions must engage in critical self-reflection upon that power and privilege; and

2. that the notion of safety is evaluated by patients or clients within a healthcare system – not the provider of care. These privileges the voices of those marginalized.

This is an equity-inducing principle. This can eliminate, or at least reduce, or facilitate an ethical space for those that hold societal, cultural, economic or other privileges must stop and consider that. This comes with many questions of: why?

Autoethnography as a research methodology also assisted in this process as I was able to explore how seeing my personal histories and narratives could be used as "cultural texts through which the cultural self-understanding of self and others can be granted" (Chang, 2008, p. 13). This leads to revisiting the third research question.

Question 3. Coming to Personal Understandings of White Settler-isms

The third research question guiding this dissertation asked: *How do I come to a personal understanding and recognition of Canada's recent history as a white settler society, myself as a white Settler, and the impact of assimilationist policies on Aboriginal peoples and communities?*

Added, to this question, the nature of this doctoral program also required that research explored within the program must be linked to online distance education. Therefore, the sub-question asked: *How do I see these potentially being enabled or disabled through online distance education?*

As I maneuvered through the doctoral program and wrote, submitted, and defended a dissertation research proposal, I realized that a narrative methodology would be critical in exploring this research question. The method I chose, which is a fluid method and methodology, was autoethnography. Bochner and Ellis (2016) highlighted the intimate connection between memory and stories within autoethnography, as the two are interrelated. "As works of memory, stories about the past are made, not found. The work of memory begins with the activity of

remembering, a working through and toward the past, making what was absent coming into presence." (p. 252). This can be compared to a metaphorical archaeological dig. What we remember or recollect; the material – represents the artifacts, like the images shared throughout this dissertation. These artifacts require interpretation in the present; that present, being the present moment of writing. However, then there is the present moment of reading, which is a different present moment. "As time passes, we rethink, re-describe, even re-feel the past as part of our ongoing sense-making endeavors." (p. 253). These are also important considerations when reflecting upon what different generations have learned in formal education systems.

In the larger, grander scene, Settler-colonialism and coming to terms with its impacts, also involves a re-describing, a re-feeling, and a sense-making. These are critical within notions of re-conciliation. Regan (2018) pointed out an important set of themes that run through the TRC *Calls to Action*. She argued that those common set of themes pointed to the fact that "Indigenous peoples' rights have been violated, and the state is accountable for remedying this in ways that flow from the fundamental principle of Indigenous self-determination" (p. 213). Furthermore, she argued that the TRC, through the *Calls*, advocated that "various levels of government, in partnership with Indigenous peoples, to change laws, policies, and programs to assist Indigenous communities in their efforts to reclaim, revitalize, and regenerate Indigenous ways of life" (p. 213). However, the barrier to this is, as the TRC pointed out, many individuals educated in Canada, to the most part, only know one side of this country's history (TRC Vol. 6, p. 34). Undertaking this work requires both collective education efforts and responsibility, along with individual efforts and responsibility. Taking some responsibility, also ensures building response-abilities. Coming to terms with the impact of white settler privilege is a life-long enterprise.

My understandings may have grown through this program and this research, however, I compare this to metaphorically to the ancient Greek mythical beast Hydra, as one head is cut off (one question answered), two more surface to replace the one (two more questions arise). Puzzling and pondering through this requires practices of self-reflection. Critical reflection is a fluid ever-moving piece of work, especially when engaging the metaphorical water surrounding the fish, that the fish spends most of its life ignorant to. Or, the air that engulfs the flight bound bird. Critical self-reflection is also key to navigating notions of the Indigenous-informed methods and concepts of cultural safety, ethical spaces of engagement and cultural interfaces.

The sub-question related to this research question, asked how all of these may be important areas for future research within the field of online distance education.

Vignette

Approximately a decade ago, I worked in a community college in BC. At the time, the BC Government was providing increased funding for Indigenous students at post-secondary institutions. A common term used at the time, was that post-secondary institutions were going to "Indigenize". As a part of this process, many institutions developed what were called Aboriginal Service Plans, many of which are still in place or in operation. At the institution where I worked as an administrator and sessional faculty, funding was utilized to establish an Aboriginal Resource Centre (ARC). The centre was established as a particular site where Indigenous students could come and receive tutoring supports, academic advising, or simply to sit and relax between classes. An Elder-in-residence was hired and funded through the program. The ARC was a well-utilized space.

One afternoon while chatting with a colleague in the hallway, this individual pointed to the ARC and whispered to me: "why do those people get a special room and resources? What about the rest of us?"

In as much as I've heard enough of these hushed racist comments, there is often still a pit in my stomach as I prepare a response.

"Well," I said hesitantly. "There are some long standing historical reasons on why centres such as this are critical for student success."

"I think it's racist," this individual interrupted. "Nobody should receive special privileges. I think everyone should be treated the same."

Over the years, I have found that engaging much past this point in this sort of conversation, has little utility. Yet, I have also struggled for years, as, I, occupying the privilege position of white able bodied male, can walk away with my own frustrations or perspectives. However, I do not live this. I can return to my metaphorical, comfortable living room and relax.

I left this conversation with feelings of discomfort, and thinking in my head, "well, a centre like that is needed, because the rest of the institution is white space. The faculty is dominated by white-Euro individuals, the curriculum is largely white history and values, and activities such as a national Aboriginal Day are required because the other 364 are for white Euro backgrounds."

At that time, I was completing my Masters through AU. My final project focused on so called "Indigenization" efforts within post-secondary institutions. A key argument I have fronted for many years is that if an institution is named after a white European explorer, and is based on disputed territory (e.g. no treaty and presence of unextinguished Aboriginal rights and title), can it really become "indigenized", or even decolonized?

Anti-racism and Anti-oppression?

The role of anti-racism approaches is frequently discussed and debated as a set of theories, practices and pedagogies – especially in relation to justice-motivated processes such as TRCs and in educational approaches. Often included in discussions of anti-racism, are anti-oppression, and anti-discrimination. Approaches of anti-racism are also listed in some of the TRC *Calls to Action*. Carol Schick and Verna St. Denis, one a Settler and the other an Indigenous scholar, have written about anti-racist practice and curriculum for many years in Canada (Figure 41).

Figure 41

Image Evoked From Reading Schick and St. Denis, 2005

"Without acknowledging racism and race privilege in curricular practices, the effects of colonization continue."
(Schick & St. Denis, 2005, p. 299)

"…addressing racism means more than examining the experiences of those who experience racism." (p. 296)

Note. Source: Original.

They argued that power relations "are not acknowledged in the production of racial identities and the nation, minorities are too readily blamed for the effects of racism; in contrast the rhetoric of multiculturalism is enacted as a symbol of the "good" nation" (2005, p. 295-296). In the educational realm, Schick and St. Denis suggested that:

> A curriculum that is anti-oppressive needs to examine the production of racial identifications, including the construction of whiteness in a Canadian context, where racism often exists in denial. Without a critical race analysis, the "celebration of diversity" and other popular narratives have every possibility of reinforcing relations of domination. (p. 295)

As Schick argued in a later paper, "[i]n the context of anti-racist theory, teaching about culture and history of a people may be the least political and least assertive type of curricular knowledge" (2014, p. 90) – such as teaching about treaties, or teaching about Indigenous communities. She compared this to what anti-oppressive education researcher Kumashiro (2000) described as "Education about the other." There is certainly a place for learning about communities and specific local Indigenous cultures; however, it is only one lever for change amongst many.

Similar to Schick and St. Denis' arguments for addressing racism in curriculum, Lengelle, Jardine, and Bonnar, two non-Indigenous and one Indigenous scholar, wrote about reconciliatory endeavours in Canada in relation to the TRC and argued that "reconciled stories within the self are at the heart of reconciliation" (2018, p. 92). They proposed that "politicians, school leaders, and educators would be more able to support reconciliation if they had to first explore their own stories of exile and marginalization and examined their unquestioned beliefs about the Other" (p. 93). This also sits at the heart of this overall dissertation, through promotion of critical self-reflection as an essential early step in social justice endeavours. This also sits as a foundational principle of cultural safety, whereby practitioners contemplate and reflect upon their own personal privileges and power, and the impacts this may have on interactions with those generally marginalized in society.

Considering these arguments, may then create a feedback loop to the importance of considering concepts and practices of cultural safety, ethical space, and cultural interfaces – especially as each of these can facilitate deep critical self-reflection upon aspects of privilege and power, as well as interconnected strategies, like Cree scholar Greenwood's (2019) framework for

change within notions of cultural safety. These spaces must be navigated through social interaction, however, how is cultural safety maintained within these interactions and spaces? The current digital-age combined with online distance education and delivery platforms may be key spaces for these social interactions. However, these online spaces can also be breeding grounds for further racist, oppressive, and hate speech. Chat forums, emails and digital communication can become areas where ignorant opinions and assumptions can live and multiply, with little reflection on the impacts of these.

In these spaces, privileging of voice and knowledge will also be crucial – especially efforts to ensure that these are not simply further entrenching already privileged positions and voices (e.g. whiteness) and adding to further acts of commission (e.g. social injustice) or omission of social justices within education systems, as identified by the TRC. Linked into these notions are also questions of evaluation, such as who determines when cultural safety, or ethical space, or a cultural interface have been effectively enacted?

The tensions and challenges of engaging in digital online environments to educate non-Indigenous peoples about things, or processes, such as Indigenous law – as called for in the TRC *Calls to Action* and TRC reports – will require some careful navigation, and deep discussion with Indigenous peoples and communities. This goes not just for content, but also for how would these teachings be assessed and evaluated – if that would even be appropriate? Who would do that? Or, is this simply a further Western construct that education and learning must be evaluated and assessed (e.g. against pre-supposed learning objectives)?

Cultural safety and cultural humility, for example, are terms and theory-based strategies, that arose to work against discrimination and racism; however cultural safety is also an outcome. Cultural safety originated from healthcare and education, as a response to health inequities and Maori struggles in Aotearoa New Zealand; the journey in BC is similar. As such, the future of cultural safety must be found and embedded in both education and healthcare (as well as other institutions and arenas). However, maybe most importantly, it must be rooted in the many and shifting cultures in which clients and patients come from. There is no 'blanket' or 'pan-Indigenous' approach to say that in *Place A* (e.g. all of BC), this is what defines culturally safe practice, and this is what defines cultural humility. Nor is there any evaluative checklist that practitioners, or clients-patients, can fill out after each interaction. The reality is that culturally safe practices will always be determined by the receiver of services – which means that every

interaction between a healthcare provider and a client-patient-individual (or an educational professional and a learner) will be different, based on different circumstances of the day, or even the hour.

Yet, it must be kept front and centre, that the safety of each cultural interaction is supported, in party, by the critical self-reflection of the practitioner – of the one holding the majority of power; for example, my former colleague highlighted in the vignette. However, if she was asked to reflect upon her privilege and power to approach her bias and perspectives differently so as to potentially be more *culturally safe* – what would she be asked to critically reflect upon? If her only experience of an Indigenous person or community was those that she learned about through commercial media, social media, and her K-12 schooling – then how can she really be expected to have any less bias? Yes, one can argue that there is a personal responsibility to engage in this, however, where would the impetus come from to encourage this, and support this?

Cultural safety represents a large umbrella term that encompasses approaches that could be labelled anti-racist, anti-oppressive, anti-discriminatory, or otherwise. A challenge with labelling almost anything as *anti-something* is that it may establish a dichotomy. Then the debates become about whether this is *anti-this* or *anti-that*, and do not focus on the fundamental underlying issues at hand, which are not often simply dichotomous. For example, systemic racism is embedded in systems and structures. Absolutely essential to any social justice approaches that broach racisms, discrimination, and oppression is the need for individuals to critically self-reflect upon their roles, response-abilities, and privileges. How to go about that are some of the most challenging aspects to identify and design, as well as facilitate and instruct upon. There must also be self-reflection on whose voices or ways of seeing and being are being privileged at any one time.

Critically Reflecting on Power and Privilege?

When it comes to instituting principles of social justice, such as strategies to combat systemic and structural racism, educational and healthcare institutions have many challenges. When it comes to critically self-reflecting upon one's power, privilege, and/or advantage, these challenges exponentially increase. One of these, as pointed out earlier in this dissertation, is one of representation. The far majority of faculty in educational institutions in Canada are white. Many of these are like a fish in water, not aware of the water. They have inherited, unearned

advantage through white privilege, which means easily swimming along with the current – this includes me; and added to mine is male and able-bodied privilege.

Critical reflection has been highlighted throughout this dissertation. However, a vital question to ponder within discussions of supporting critical self-reflection, is critically reflecting upon what? The next section contemplates and discusses some of this for the sake of moving to concluding sections.

Critically Reflect upon What?

Critical reflection is a contested, complex, and oft-debated and misunderstood term (Smith 2012; Gardener, 2014). Smith, a nursing researcher and educator, argued that "explicitly teaching critical reflection is a logical step towards students being able to recognise and negotiate complex ethical and professional issues" (2012, p. 211). However, as she pointed out, there are issues with a flood of related terms including: critical thinking, critical analysis, reflective practice, reflection, reflexivity, positionality, and others. Furthermore, she identified that critical reflection is often not considered an academic process or activity in various disciplines. Smith explored how to teach critical self-reflection. She argued that engaging in critical reflection "allows us to examine the uniqueness of our individual 'positionality' within social systems" (2012, p. 213). Related to this, and looking at positionality, this means "looking at how we align ourselves with particular identities (mother, father, doctor, nurse, patient, etc.) or how these identities encourage us to act in certain ways" (p. 213).

Smith's analysis and reflection upon critiques of critical reflection is revealing. As she pointed out, teaching and supporting critical reflection can open "a revolving door between the belief that objective knowledge exists or can be taught; and to the uncertainties of knowledge and the need to address personal and social influences on professional practices" (p. 220). Gardener, in her book on critical reflection, outlined that "critical reflection provides a theoretical approach to help understand… challenges [in professional practice] as well as a process for engaging constructively with the dilemmas and issues that inevitably arise in professional practice" (2014, p. 1). Her approach encouraged professionals "to identify the underlying assumptions and values that influence their practice and to consider how they act in line with their preferred assumptions and values (p. 1).

Gardner laid out a way of approaching critical reflection that "makes explicit the underlying connectedness between all… aspects of the self and of the self in relation to the social context" through engaging the interconnections between:

- an experience (and it helps the process to use a specific experience);

- the emotions, thoughts, reactions and actions related to that experience;

- meaning: what matters about the experience, including related assumptions and values at a fundamental level; and

- the influence of social context and history both individually and collectively with the experience of the critically reflective process leading to socially just change. (2014, p. 24).

Gardner outlined how being critically reflective does not necessarily need to be learnt (2014, p. 181). An individual can start with a specific experience to critically reflect upon; however, one can also simply look at feelings of unease or discomfort. She outlined that *being critically reflective* (also the title of her book), "is about creating or allowing an open inner and outer space, which holds opposites together in a creative tension… like [a] liminal space" and that overall she believed that this sort of approach leads to more "socially just practice" (p. 184). This highlights another sense of tensioned interfaces.

Similarly, critical educator and scholar Stephen Brookfield, has argued that a critical approach to social justice must question and highlight inequities, and shine a light on ideological manipulation or enforcement. As Prinsloo (2011) argued, all curricula "are contested spaces and the result of a combination of compromises and victories of different ideologies and claims by different stakeholders" (p. 88). Prinsloo pointed out that almost all education, especially those in institutions, is built upon and sustains "the epistemologies and ontologies of those who developed these curricula" – and in the case of open, distance and e-learning, these curricula, ontologies and epistemologies, are exported to others (p. 88). Therefore, questions remain for me, what if someone is not clear on how to identify or recognize inequities or dominant ideologies? What if they believe in the principles of individual success and work ethic as the root of their own accomplishment and success? What happens when they've been steeped in the waters of their own tea? And, then, in turn, develop curriculum based on those experiences?

Smith's (2012) analysis of critical reflection in higher education surfaced some challenges; "supercomplexity" she called it (p. 217). Teaching critical reflection, argued Smith,

can sometimes "be at odds with traditional academic practices… particularly… the sciences, which focus on teaching operational and academic forms of knowledge" (p. 217). Gardener highlighted the importance of critical reflection within organizations and how this may assist in alleviating "interpersonal and intra- and interorganizational conflicts" (2014, p. 178). Smith outlined that critical reflection involves "asking what questions, issues or ways of thinking have been privileged by whom and for what reasons? This type of reflection aims to address concerns about the influence of powerful groups by acknowledging and surfacing different interests and agendas." (p. 217). These are complex questions that cannot generally be broken down into knowing what propositions with easy to evaluate answers – e.g., right or wrong. Smith (2012) identified some important aspects of critical reflection literature and suggested practices for consideration, for example, that

> a person's view of their relationship to a subject or practice depends on their position, not only in a spatial sense, for example where they live, work, the communities they are part of, but also in more general terms including their cultural values and what is normal to them, and in a metaphoric sense according to their willingness to question their outlook on the issues at hand. (p. 215).

These are critical factors to consider, especially when thinking about incorporating aspects of the TRC Calls into various curriculum and professional practice and development. Smith proposed a model for forms and domains of critical reflection (Figure 42), which she suggested could assist in navigating the different forms and techniques that may be engaged for critical self-reflection.

Figure 42

Forms and Domains of Critical Reflection
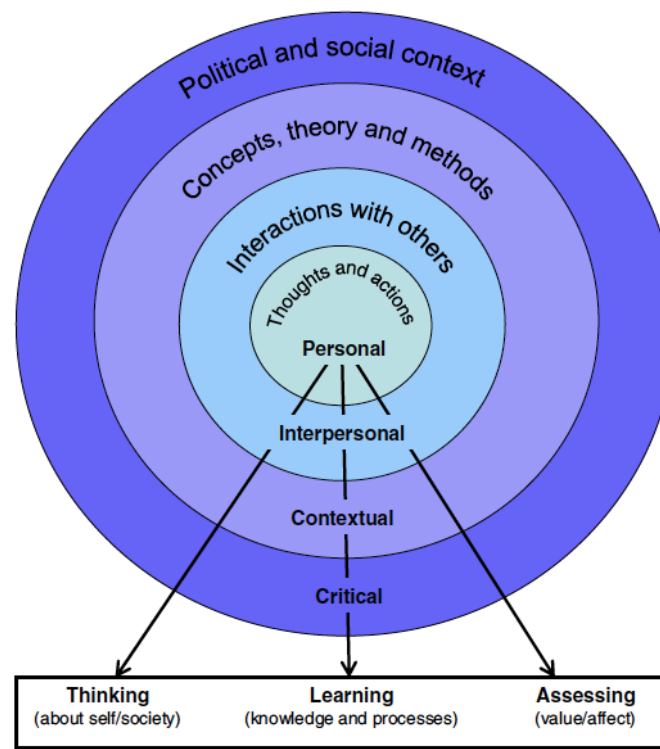
Note. Source: Smith, 2012, p. 216

      The rectangular box along the bottom identifies the forms in which critical reflection can occur. The nested circles identify the four domains: personal, interpersonal, contextual, and critical. The inner-most circle involves critical reflection upon oneself including specific thoughts and actions. The interpersonal circle involves interactions with others. Smith highlighted that this domain can include health care practitioner and client/patient, and surfacing various norms and practices that may require investigation. Furthermore, within the interpersonal domain "this type of reflection aims to address concerns about the influence of professionalism and group interactions by acknowledging and surfacing disciplinary traditions and ways of working." (2012, p. 217). These are essentially the pockets of organizational cultures or sub-cultures.

      The contextual domain/sphere (second from the outside) critically engages what is considered common knowledge and practice and, "involves questioning the knowledge

structures we operate within" (Smith, 2012, p. 217). In line with this, the critical domain engages "making explicit any ethical, political or social issues encountered and the impact this may have had on the people involved, or those not involved" (p. 217), as well as, "asking what questions, issues or ways of thinking have been privileged by whom and for what reasons? This type of reflection aims to address concerns about the influence of powerful groups by acknowledging and surfacing different interests and agendas" (p. 217). As Brookfield (in Fook, et al., 2016) pointed out, what makes critical reflection truly critical is that it questions power and power relationships. He argued that without questioning power in relationships and society, critical reflection becomes a much simpler form of just *reflection*.

Smith suggested that further formalization and incorporation of critical reflection into curriculum has the potential to transform pedagogy and education on a variety of fronts – with both students and teachers/instructors. She argued that incorporating and embedding more critical reflection into higher education will facilitate far more critical engagement by students in their learning and "to be constructive in their criticism and pay attention to personal and social influences on their practice that might otherwise be overlooked" (p. 221). This has direct links back to reflecting upon artifacts such as the cultural iceberg and reflecting upon things that are easily visible upon the surface, and what might be less visible deeper below the surface. These require deep reflection by each individual on particular aspects of socialization.

Yet, as has been pointed out in numerous government reviews, inquiries, and the TRC - these types of critical practices have the potential to support and enable much required shifts in power structures, which enable movement towards actual social justice – not, just proclamations of more socially just aspirations. The quickly expanding discussions of systemic racism within Canada may very quickly surface educational and pedagogical strategies to address these. However, systemic and structural changes can also take a long time to enact and see; however, they can also sometimes occur immediately. An analogy can be drawn here with the slow erosion of a river bank over time, or the near instantaneous erosion caused during a flood.

Recommendations: Future Research in the Tensioned Interfaces of Online Distance Education

A common aspect of concluding chapters in doctoral dissertations includes suggestions or recommendations for future research. The challenge with tensioned interfaces is that they are

generally always in motion, and can depend upon one's levels of engagement and perspectives. These perspectives can be both metaphorical or literal.

Long-time scholars of Indigenous-Settler relations, Michael Asch, John Borrows, and James Tully edited the volume *Resurgence and reconciliation: Indigenous-Settler relations and earth teachings* (2018). These two Settler and one Indigenous scholar advance the contested terms "reconciliation *and* resurgence… [acknowledging] our situatedness in overlapping regimes of knowledge, power, and subjectification" (p. 7, emphasis in original). Asch, Borrows and Tully advocated that binary thinking (e.g. dichotomous orthodoxies), do not lend themselves well to the tensioned, overlapping realities of a post-TRC era in Canada. Their edited volume includes chapters by Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars and their approach is intended to highlight that "we are differently situated and governed, in both constraining and enabling ways, in relationships of division, patriarchy, imperialism, racism, capitalism, ecological devastation, and poverty" (p. 7). Their approach and recommendations to reconciliation and resurgence, defined as fluid and flexible terms, are about existing in relationships and in reciprocal exchanges. They argued that "engagement in these exchanges also exposes the limits of one's own view and makes possible the self-critical task of accepting the epistemically humbling insight that we need each other's perspectives in order to understand the complex world we co-inhabit" (p. 11). This engagement requires a healthy tension and ongoing transformations in working to understand ourselves, to understanding others, and to understanding the tensioned spaces between. This highlights the importance of building more awareness and understanding of intrapersonal vs. interpersonal; as well as, intracultural vs intercultural.

This also relates back to the *K & K Agreement* on Haida Gwaii contemplated in the second chapter. Engaging, designing and implementing learning opportunities that navigate tensioned interfaces between two distinct contemplations of rights and governance, does not necessarily require anti-racism, anti-oppression, and/or anti-privilege types of education. For example, if we are engaged in the "anti" components of these items listed, what is the opposite or objective of these anti-type campaigns. Is not the purpose of education designed to sit in the tensioned interface between two contemplations of rights (e.g. Aboriginal rights and title and Crown title), actually, a proposal to *privilege* both contemplations of those rights?

There are two models I propose in this dissertation that could function as important areas to design strategies for critical self-reflection and discussion – individually, within courses, or

within professional development in institutions. The first is the spheres of critical self-reflection and the second is interrelated spheres of racism (Figure 43). These can be depicted within the same visual structure.

Figure 43

Spheres of Critical Self-Reflection and Spheres of Racisms, Within Tensioned Interfaces
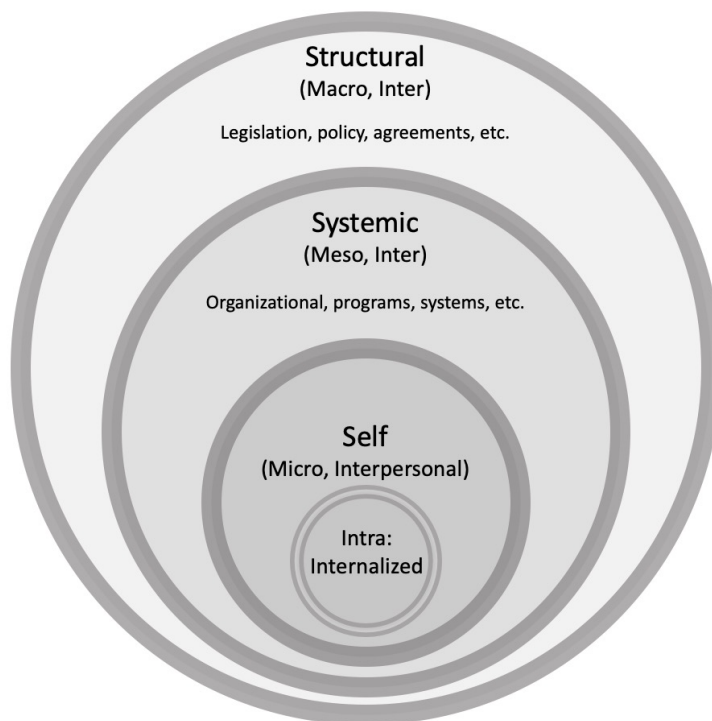
Education initiatives, including online distance education, could be built upon these spheres, through building awareness and better understandings of privilege, oppression, responsibility, and racisms. This must also include building these from the micro (personal) through the meso (systemic), to the macro (structural). The recommendations below focus on responsibility related to personal privilege. These are also important components of future research, and have been built upon work by Mullaly and West (2018, p. 337) on confronting privilege and oppression.

Incorporating narrative and storywork methodologies, including autoethnography, into courses and curriculum may be fitting methods, for example, for investigating:

- Taking responsibility for one's own growth and learning: go deep, go personal, and unpeel the layers; work through your own guilt; keep track of how much you speak, listen, and who you listen to.

- Acknowledging that oppression and privilege exist as linked sides of a spectrum: develop an intersectional analysis and understandings of capitalism, patriarchy, heterosexism, whiteness, and colonization.

- Paying attention. Understand how one may be helpful when we realize we are not needed, act with humility, accept our mistakes, engage with the heart.

- Engaging in action through doing a bit every day, including taking little risks, but doing something: being brave, being creative; changing social practices that normalize privilege; addressing privilege with family and friends; daring to cause discomfort and writing about these.

Each of these items could be incorporated into online distance education pedagogy and courses, as well as research. Approaches such as digital storytelling, blogging, forum posts, and assignments could all be built to support these recommendations. Individual assignments in many courses could request a balance between writing on certain topics, and preparing a personally critical self-reflection on potential layers, or intersectional, powers and privileges. Each of these could also incorporate arts-based methods, which will encourage different ways of contemplating these challenges.

Added to the above strategies focused on privilege, exploration of systemic and structural levels is also essential, which includes anti-privilege pedagogy. Mullaly and West (2018) highlighted some strategies at the systemic, cultural and structural levels. These could also be incorporated into research programs focused on online distance education, and/or, into online distance education and pedagogy, such as, introducing privilege as an intersectional process and intimately linking these with oppression, such as: (a) emphasizing privilege as unearned invisible group advantage; (b) identifying that privilege carries benefits and perpetuates oppression; (c) discussing layers of privilege and marginalization; (d) discussing the costs of privilege; and (e) linking structural and systemic privilege with personal privilege. Added to these, could be exploration of the emotional processes involved when increasing privilege awareness: defensiveness, guilt, race to innocence, entitlement, fear, belief in meritocracy, etc. As well as, giving topics the respect and time they deserve, and:

- using conversation starters (paraphrasing, validating, assuming the best, clarifying, etc.);
- not using conversation stoppers (arguing, personal attacks, self promotion, preaching, etc.);
- modeling reflexivity; and
- trying to build safety for marginalized individuals, by not isolating or asking to explain or defend their experience. (adapted from p. 343)

In addition, Sensoy and DiAngelo laid out important individual skills for enacting critical social justice such as how we might: (1) recognize relations of unequal social power and how these are constantly being renegotiated at both the micro (individual) and macro (structural) levels; (2) building understanding of our own positions within these relations of unequal power; (3) thinking critically about knowledge; and (4) acting on the above in service of a more just society (2017, p. 199). Arts-based and arts-informed methods of teaching and learning, beyond writing, will be important methods for learning design and implementation.

Sensoy and DiAngelo (2017) offer some critical social justice literacy skills that are fitting for a program such as a doctorate program in education, as well as represent and reflect my experiences quite fittingly. Future research and course development could highlight how these have direct impacts on online distance education including: (a) highlighting that there is no neutral text, all texts represent a particular perspective; (b) that all texts are embedded with ideology and that the ideology embedded in most mainstream texts functions to reproduce historical relations of unequal power; (c) that texts that appeal to a wide audience usually do so because they reinforce dominant narratives and serve dominant interests; and, (d) that individuals must expect there to be social consequences for challenging dominant ideology (2017, p. 210). These must also keep in mind Indigenous scholar Brayboy's (2005) point that racism and colonialism are endemic and embedded in the geographic area of North America.

Such a struggle requires commitments and responsibilities to be vulnerable, to be comfortable with ambiguity, to be uncomfortable, and sometimes to be willing to sit in the fire and discomfort of feeling pushed and pulled in, and through, many tensioned interfaces. Similar to Kendall's model and three tiers outlined earlier – much of this work starts at the intrapersonal level. Without the work, reflection, and consideration at the intrapersonal level, the work and reflection at interpersonal, and on to the systemic and structural levels becomes hampered.

Writing can be a very important component, and has been within my research. This said with recognition of the bias towards literacy. However, as has occurred in this dissertation, writing, can also involve visuals.

Writing as Inquiry and Witnessing

The approach and production of this dissertation, has demonstrated that writing is a "*method of inquiry*" (Richardson, 2003, p. 499, emphasis in original). Richardson argued that writing is more than just a tool for telling, for example "writing is not just a mopping-up activity at the end of the research project… it also a way of knowing" (p. 499). Exploring different modes of writing, she argued, opens up new and innovative ways of discovering and exploring our topics and relationships to it. "Form and content are inseparable" she stated (p. 499). In exploring ethical spaces and interfaces between knowledges, societies and cultures, as well as in considering intercultural and interpersonal communication – it is important to pay heed to the influence of words on paper – or on a screen. However, we must also be open to different forms of *reading*, and how writing on the land and on the water, is also a critical component. Writing as a method of inquiry provides a research context and practice in which we can:

> investigate how we construct the world, ourselves, and others, and how standard objectifying practices of social science unnecessarily limit us and social science. Writing as method does not take writing for granted, but offers multiple ways to learn to do it, and to nurture the writer. (Richardson, 2003, p. 500)

We must pay attention to how we *word the world* and how we *reword* the world – especially in the context of colonization, on many fronts, from documents to oral histories to maps (p. 500). We must also pay heed to the many wordings of the world that we simply may have not been socialized to, or are aware of – such as reading the land, or reading water.

Writing personal stories also emphasizes the importance of witnessing, which facilitates participants and readers observing and testifying "on behalf of an event, problem or experience" (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011, n.p.). In exploring numerous other researchers writing on the same topic, Ellis et al. (2011) suggested that:

> writing personal stories can be therapeutic for authors as we write to make sense of ourselves and our experiences, purge our burdens, and question canonical stories— conventional, authoritative, and *projective* storylines that *plot* how *ideal social selves* should live. In so doing, we seek to improve and better understand our relationships,

> reduce prejudice, encourage personal responsibility and agency, raise consciousness and promote cultural change. (n.p., emphasis in original)

This is certainly the case in a post-TRC environment in Canada. This research has explored the process of witnessing – in this case, my own. This has included reflecting on what witnessing might mean in the context of individuals, institutions, and nations as they to explore concepts of *truth* and *reconciliation* in relation to a colonial and colonizing history. This links to Indigenous scholar Sarah Hunt's (in, McGregor, Restoule, & Johnston, 2018) notions of a "witnessing methodology".

Autoethnographic texts are never complete, which as Richardson (2003) observed, can release researchers from "trying to write a single text in which we say everything at once to everyone" (p. 502). I can relate that at times, you the reader at various times in this text, may have felt like you were down a rabbit hole or two, or off on a winding path away from where you just were in the text. This is the emotional and embodied proof of the challenges related to autoethnographic approaches. This also relates back to the opening letter to my kids.

I see, feel, sense, and argue that a research text is like a snapshot of an event, or set of events. It is not the event or events themselves. Thus, examining and reflecting upon compositions of narrative can result in temporal, contextualized, biographical reconstructions highlighting key moments and factors in the shaping of a life, or viewpoints within life (Creswell, 2013). However, this is not only for the writer, this is also for the reader with their own experiences and thoughts that arise as they read and contemplate a text. This is important to keep in mind as one contemplates this dissertation. The liminal or interstitial spaces between writer and reader are critically important areas, as I am only one individual immersed in many stories – further examples of tensioned interfaces.

From a somewhat theoretical viewpoint, Allen-Collinson and Hockey (2005) pointed out that autoethnographers generally seek to engage readers through not only analysis and interpretation of a text, but to also have readers share or empathize or connect with the feelings, sensations, and emotions that are being expressed within an autoethnographic account. Or, similarly, having reactions, or disagreements with a text. Ellis, Adams, and Bochner (2010) argued, the involvement of readers in autoethnography is an essential component of bringing meaning to the research, and, therefore, the therapeutic value, or simply *value*, can potentially be duplicated for the researcher and for the reader of the research.

Some Concluding Thoughts

I started this dissertation with a letter to my kids. In that letter, I highlighted the various tensions inherent in a photograph; in a visual image. A photograph is but a visual snapshot in time; as is a dissertation or research report. Maps are snapshots in time, and are challenged to capture fluid movements. Ponder for example, looking at world maps from the late 1980s when I was in grade school, as compared to world maps that my kids are looking at. The challenge with many maps, is that they are out of date the moment they are printed. Similarly, a map must aggregate large sets of data into visual categories. This can also be the case with curriculum and course learning objectives.

I frequently use analogies and metaphors from the natural world in presentations or course work. Figure 44 demonstrates the movement and migrations of the Mississippi River over geologic time.

Figure 44

Image of the Meander Channels of the Mississippi River, Over Time
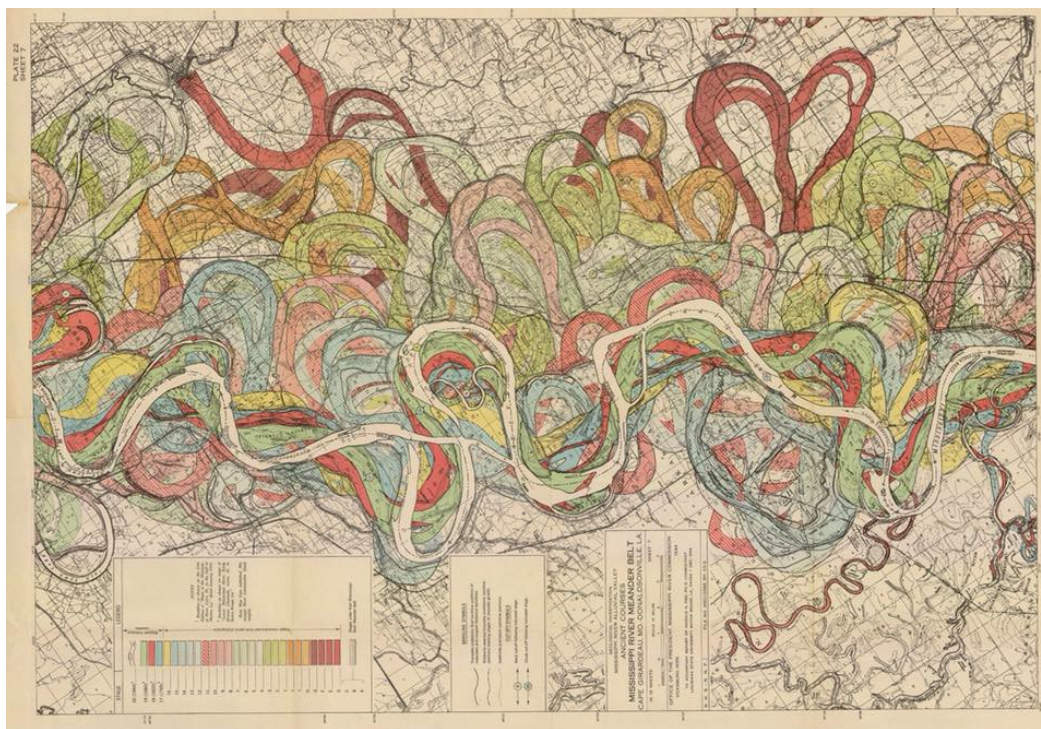
Note. Source: Fisk, 1944

Each color represents a previous path of the river over time (geologic time), with the current main channel left without color, snaking through map horizontally near the centre of the image.

The image attempts to capture and portray fluid movement, in one static image – like trying to map a running animal or a human thought. There is a clear analogy that arises in my thinking – and that is a broad, fluid term such as social justice, or related terms such as cultural safety, ethical space, cultural interfaces, and cultural humility. The meaning of these change with time, and with the times.

If online distance education is, in fact, dedicated to realizing social justice in all aspects of the field and in institutions (as per Zawacki-Richter and Anderson, 2014) – then framing the educational work around very difficult tasks such as those framed by the TRC *Calls to Action* and final reports, UN DRIP, *Declaration of Cultural Safety and Humility*, will require fluidity and flexibility in both processes and outcomes. Similar to Bronfenbrenner's social ecological theories of childhood development, adopting and engaging systems views of the challenges posed by social justice initiatives, will require many congruent strategies and work utilizing various levels, or levers, within the many systems. Engaging *truths* and moving towards reconciliation requires intrapersonal work, as well as interpersonal and intercultural work. Any thoughts of reconciling and unsettling Settler spaces and places begins with single, small steps. These are vital and critical steps. Yet, there is no one strategy or approach that will un-muddle the messiness of the situation.

Non-Indigenous peoples in this country must commit and become *response-able* through doing their own personal investigations, research, learning, and reflections. There are no shortage of resources, books, individuals, and media that can assist in these personal lifelong learning journeys (e.g. cultural humility). Ignorance (e.g. lack of knowledge, by definition) does not need to be a negative label; nor, does accepting that racisms are embedded systemically, historically, and structurally. It should not always be the responsibility of a purposefully-designed course or curriculum, or through mandated courses in organizations and institutions, to teach individuals about their personal responsibilities, or, response-abilities. *Privilege* has the same etymological roots as *private*; arising from *privus* "one's own, individual," and Latin *privatus* "set apart, belonging to oneself (not to the state)" (Online Etymology Dictionary). I interpret this to suggest that it also should not always be incumbent upon *the state* (e.g. governments) to enact, enforce, and engage in educational initiatives that, for example, are *Calls to Action* for privileged individuals to take responsibility, and be able to respond, relate, and thus reconcile past wrongs – especially as the reconciliation required in many cases would require giving territory and land

back. However, multiple levers on multiple fronts, from private through to state, will support the transformative change that is required.

As many individuals, organizations, institutions and governments ponder, grapple, and inquire about all the underlying strategies and education required to address the many social justice related calls and processes – there are no single, simple answers, or strategies, or modes of delivery (e.g. online versus face-to-face; cohort versus self-directed, etc.) – just as different people learn in different ways. In a large healthcare organization, or educational institution, are many people of many age groups, backgrounds, and histories of socialization. This in turn means that these many varying people also have varying privilege and marginalization, at varying times (e.g. intersectional analysis), in various scenarios. These many varying people have also experienced many varying educational systems, modes of delivery, and experiences across age and stage.

The debate, for me, is not one of online versus face-to-face; it is a both/and scenario. A computer screen, a mouse, an operating system, are all *interfaces*. So is a classroom, a whiteboard, and a book; so is a thought, a feeling, and a conclusion. As Indigenous scholar Nakata contemplated in his theorizing of the *cultural interface*, knowledge systems are embedded and dynamic and constantly shifting – like a river bed or a shoreline or a body or brain. Oppression and privilege are also interfaces; as are reflecting upon truths, and preparing for reconciliations. Clearly, as highlighted at the beginning of chapter two, there is a fracturing in the circle of learning, and that notions of European superiority, a long history of white Settler domination and white privilege in the story of this country and education systems, have established a legacy that needs to change. These changes, however, must engage head and heart (as per Indigenous scholar Pat Makokis highlighted in the first chapter). This means multiple modes of delivery – online, face-to-face, memory-based, discussion-based, arts-based, collective (group) and individual (self), classroom-based, community-based, with Elders and with youth, inside and outside, through writing and drawing and talking and thinking in silence.

I puzzled and reflected upon whether this dissertation should conclude the way it started – with a letter to my kids. I chose to leave that aspect open-ended. The style and format of this reflective research has been associative and generative, and this is not generally the way of dissertations, at least not the majority. However, this is changing through many qualitative forms and formats, and the many interfaces of knowledges and experiences. My work and educational

journey – formal education and informal – have maneuvered as they have over decades, similar to a river channel. This dissertation was an exploration and reflection of some small components and corners of that journey. Similarly, the journey of explicating the *Truths* of the TRC, and the potentially even murkier journeys of reconciliations, will continue and extend well beyond my time. Maybe in years to come my kids will read this reflection, and maybe not. Maybe you as the reader in reaching this final page have reflected upon your own journey, privileges, responsibilities, and maybe response-abilities. Maybe not.

What I do feel confident and rested about, this research journey compelled me to become deeply familiar with the 26-pounds of Final Reports that the TRC Chief Commissioner Murray Sinclair has said in a few settings that one of the most important things many non-Indigenous people in Canada can do, is actually read the reports. For that experience of reading, and re-reading, I am thankful. It was not easy. It's not supposed to be. However, it has affected my ideas of responsibility in this journey, and most certainly affected my contemplation and development of my own response-abilities. The tensioned interfaces will continue to be a permanent aspect of this work and the work to come. And, there is a lot of work to be done. Unsettling, is exactly that: un-settling.

References

Achtenberg, M. (2000). Understanding restorative justice practices within the Aboriginal context. In *Forum on Corrections Research* (Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 32-34). Correctional Service of Canada.

Adams, M. & Bell, L. A. (eds.) (1997). *Teaching for diversity and social justice: A sourcebook*. Routledge.

Adams, T.E., Jones, S.H. & Ellis, C. (2015). *Autoethnography: Understanding qualitative research*. Oxford U Press.

Adams, T. E., Ellis, C. & Jones, S. H. (2017). Autoethnography. In, J. Matthes, C.S. Davis & R.F. Potter (eds.) *The International Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods.* John Wiley & Sons.

Adelson, N. (2005). The Embodiment of Inequity: Health Disparities in Aboriginal Canada. *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 96(2).

Agrawal, A. (1995). Dismantling the divide between indigenous and scientific knowledge. *Development and change*, *26*(3), 413-439.

Ahmed, S. (2004). Declarations of whiteness: The non-performativity of anti racism. *borderlands*, *3*(2), 1-15.

Allen, B. & Smylie, J. (2015). *First Peoples, Second Class Treatment: The role of racism in the health and well-being of Indigenous Peoples in Canada*. The Wellesley Institute.

Allen-Collinson, J., & Hockey, J. (2005). Autoethnography: Self-indulgence or rigorous methodology. *Philosophy and the sciences of exercise, health and sport: Critical perspectives on research methods*, 187-202.

Anwaruddin, S. M. (2015). Pedagogy of ignorance. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 47(7)*, 734-746.

Anzaldúa, G. (2009). *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*. Duke U. Press.

Applebaum, B. (2010). *Being white, being good: White complicity, white moral responsibility, and social justice pedagogy*. Lexington Books.

Archibald, J. A. (2008). *Indigenous storywork: Educating the heart, mind, body, and spirit*. UBC Press.

Asch, M., Borrows, J., & Tully, J. (Eds.). (2018). *Resurgence and reconciliation: Indigenous-settler relations and earth teachings*. University of Toronto Press.

Auditor General Canada. (2016). *Report 3: Preparing Indigenous Offenders for Release—Correctional Service Canada*. Accessed online Feb. 3, 2020 from:http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_oag_201611_03_e_41832.html

Auger, M., Crooks, C. V., Lapp, A., Tsuruda, S., Caron, C., Rogers, B. J., & van der Woerd, K. (2019). The essential role of cultural safety in developing culturally-relevant prevention programming in First Nations communities: Lessons learned from a national evaluation of Mental Health First Aid First Nations. *Evaluation and program planning*, *72*, 188-196.

Bailey, Z. D., Krieger, N., Agénor, M., Graves, J., Linos, N., & Bassett, M. T. (2017). Structural racism and health inequities in the USA: Evidence and interventions. *The Lancet*, 389 (10077), 1453-1463.

Baines, D. (2011). *Doing anti-oppressive practice: Social justice social work* (2nd edition). Fernwood.

Baldwin, A., Cameron, L., & Kobayashi, A. (Eds.). (2011). *Rethinking the great white north: Race, nature, and the historical geographies of whiteness in Canada*. UBC press.

Baldwin, J. (1985). White man's guilt. In *The price of the ticket: Collected nonfiction*, 1948-1985 (pp. 409-414). St. Martin's/Marek.

Battiste, M. (2013) *Decolonizing education: Nourishing the learning spirit*. Purich Publishing.

Bauder, H., & Engel-Di Mauro, S. (Eds.) (2008). *Critical geographies: A collection of readings*. Praxis ePress.

Benoit, B. (2016). Schools as artifacts: Critical autoethnography and teacher renewal. *McGill Journal of Education/Revue des sciences de l'éducation de McGill, 51(3)*, 1121-1142.

Berkovich, I. (2014). A socio-ecological framework of social justice leadership in education. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *52*(3), 282-309.

Bertrand, M., & Rodela, K. C. (2018). A framework for rethinking educational leadership in the margins: Implications for social justice leadership preparation. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education, 13(1)*, 10-37.

Blanchet-Cohen, N., & Richardson/Kinewesquao, C. (2017). Foreword: fostering cultural safety across contexts. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, *13*(3).

Bocking, S. (2011). Indigenous knowledge and the history of science, race, and colonial authority in northern Canada. In: A. Baldwin, L. Cameron, & A. Kobayashi, (Eds.).

(2011). *Rethinking the great white north: Race, nature, and the historical geographies of whiteness in Canada*. UBC press.

Bolton, G. (2010). *Reflective practice: Writing and professional development*. LA: Sage.

Borrows, J. (2019). *Law's Indigenous ethics*. U of Toronto Press.

Boyer, Y. (2014). *Moving Aboriginal health forward: Discarding Canada's legal barriers*. Purich Publishers.

Boylorn, R. M., & Orbe, M. P. (Eds.). (2016). *Critical autoethnography: Intersecting cultural identities in everyday life*. Routledge.

Bradshaw, A. C. (2017). Critical pedagogy and educational technology. In: A.D. Benson, J.R. Joseph, and J.L. Moore (Eds.), *Culture, learning, and technology: Research and practice*. Taylor and Francis.

Brayboy, B. M. J. (2005). Toward a tribal critical race theory in education. *The urban review*, *37*(5), 425-446.

Brod, H. (1989). "Work Clothes and Leisure Suits: The Class Basis and Bias of the Men's Movement." In M. S. Kimmel and M. Messner (Eds.), *Men's Lives*. Macmillan.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Harvard U. Press

Brookfield, S.D. (2012). Critical theory and transformative learning. In *Handbook of Transformative Learning: theory, research, and practice*. John Wiley & Sons.

Brookfield, S.D. (2016). So what exactly is critical about critical reflection? In, J. Fook, V. Collington, F. Ross, G. Ruch, & L. West, (Eds.). *Researching critical reflection: Multidisciplinary perspectives*. Routledge.

Brookfield, S. D. (2017). *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*, 2nd edition. Jossey Bass.

Brookfield, S.D. (2019). Uncovering and Challenging White Supremacy. In G. Yancy (Ed.) *Educating for Critical Consciousness* (pp. 11-27). Routledge.

Browne, A. J., Varcoe, C., Smye, V., Reimer-Kirkham, S., Lynam, M. J., & Wong, S. (2009). Cultural safety and the challenges of translating critically oriented knowledge in practice. *Nursing Philosophy*, *10*(3), 167-179.

Bruce, A., Sheilds, L., Molzahn, A., Beuthin, R., Schick-Makaroff, K., & Shermak, S. (2014). Stories of liminality: living with life-threatening illness. *Journal of Holistic Nursing*, *32*(1), 35-43.

Bryant, L. (ed.). (2016). *Critical and creative research methodologies in social work*. Routledge.

Bryant, L., & Livholts, M. (2013). Location and unlocation: Examining gender and telephony through autoethnographic textual and visual methods. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *12*(1), 403-419.

Buettner-Schmidt, K., & Lobo, M. L. (2012). Social justice: A concept analysis. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 68(4)*, 948-958.

Cabrera, N. L., Franklin, J. D., & Watson, J. S. (2017). *Whiteness in Higher Education: The Invisible Missing Link in Diversity and Racial Analyses: ASHE Higher Education Report, Volume 42, Number 6*. John Wiley & Sons.

Camangian, P. (2010). Starting with self: Teaching autoethnography to foster critically caring literacies. *Research in the Teaching of English, 179-204*.

Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT). (2018). Underrepresented & Underpaid: Diversity & Equity Among Canada's Post-Secondary Education Teachers. Report accessed online Oct. 10, 2019 from:
https://www.caut.ca/sites/default/files/caut_equity_report_2018-04final.pdf

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). (2015). "Uncivil dialogue: Commenting and stories about indigenous people". Accessed Nov. 3, 2019 from:
https://www.cbc.ca/newsblogs/community/editorsblog/2015/11/uncivil-dialogue-commenting-and-stories-about-indigenous-people.html

Carey, M. & Prince, M. (2015). Designing an Australian Indigenous studies curriculum for the twenty-first century: Nakata's 'cultural interface', standpoints and working beyond binaries. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 34:2, 270-283.

Case, K. A., Iuzzini, J., & Hopkins, M. (2012). Systems of privilege: Intersections, awareness, and applications. *Journal of Social Issues*, 68(1), 1-10.

Casebeer, D. (2016). Mapping dispositions for social justice: towards a cartography of reflection. *Reflective Practice, 17(3),* 357-368.

Chamberlin, J. E. (2003). *If this is your land, where are your stories?: Finding common ground*. Vintage Canada.

Chandler, M. (2010). Social determinants of educational outcomes in Indigenous learners. *Education Canada*, 50(2), p. 46-50.

Chang, H.V. (2008). *Autoethnography as method: Developing qualitative inquiry*. Left Coast Press.

Chilisa, B. (2012). *Indigenous Research Methodologies*. SAGE Publications.

Choi, J. (2016). *Creating a multivocal self: Autoethnography as method*. Routledge.

Clandinin, D. J. (2013). *Engaging in narrative inquiry*. Routledge.

Clandinin, D. J., Cave, M. T., & Berendonk, C. (2017). Narrative inquiry: a relational research methodology for medical education. *Medical education*, *51*(1), 89-96.

Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. Jossey Bass.

Clandinin, D., & Rosiek, G. (2007). Mapping a landscape of narrative inquiry: Borderland, spaces and tensions. In: D.J. Clandinin (ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: mapping a methodology*. Sage.

Cleveland-Innes, M. (2012). Who needs leadership? Social problems, change, and education futures. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, *13*(2), 232-235.

Cochran-Smith, M. (2003). The multiple meanings of multicultural teacher education: A conceptual framework. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, *30*(2), 7-26.

Cohen, L. M., Manion, L. L. & Morrison, K. (2011) *Research methods in education* (7th edition). Routledge.

Collinson, D. (2017). Critical leadership studies: A response to Learmonth and Morrell. *Leadership, 13(3)*, 272-284.

Contandriopoulos, D. (2019). About academic bullshit in nursing. *Nursing inquiry* 26(1).

Cook, L. (Spring 2017). How did this happen here? *New Trail 73(1),* 20-21.

Cooper, J. N., Grenier, R. S., & Macaulay, C. (2017). Autoethnography as a critical approach in sport management: Current applications and directions for future research. *Sport Management Review*, *20*(1), 43-54.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th edition). Pearson.

Creswell, J. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixes methods research* (4th

edition). Sage.

Cruikshank, J. (1992). *Life lived like a story: Life stories of three Yukon Native elders*. U of Nebraska Press.

Cruikshank, J. (2007). *Do glaciers listen?: local knowledge, colonial encounters, and social imagination*. UBC Press.

Davis, M. (2011). "I live somewhere else but I've never left here": Indigenous knowledge, history and place. In G. Sefa Dei (ed.) *Indigenous philosophies and critical education: A reader*. Peter Lang.

De Angelis, R. (2018). Entwining a Conceptual Framework: Transformative, Buddhist and Indigenous-community learning. *Journal of Transformative Education, 16(3), 176-196.*

de Leeuw, S., Lindsay, N. M., & Greenwood, M. (2018). Introduction to the Second Edition: Rethinking (Once Again) Determinants of Indigenous Peoples' Health. *Determinants of Indigenous Peoples' Health: Beyond the Social*. UBC Press.

Denzin, N. K. (2006). Analytic autoethnography, or déjà vu all over again. *Journal of contemporary ethnography*, *35*(4), 419-428.

Denzin, N. K. (2014). *Interpretive Autoethnography*, 2nd edition. Sage Publications. [Kindle Edition].

Denzin, N. (2016). *The qualitative manifesto: A call to arms*. Left Coast Press.

Denzin, N. K. (2017). Critical qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *23*(1), 8-16.

DiAngelo, R. (2011). White fragility. *The International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*. 3(3).

DiAngelo, R. (2018). *White fragility: Why it's so hard for white people to talk about racism*. Beacon Press.

Doutrich, D., Dekker, L., Spuck, J., & Hoeksel, R. (2014). Identity, ethics and cultural safety: Strategies for change. *Whitireia Nursing and Health Journal*, (21), 15.

Duncan, M. (2004). Autoethnography: Critical appreciation of an emerging art. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *3*(4), 28-39.

Dussart, F., & Poirier, S. (Eds.). (2017). *Entangled Territorialities: Negotiating Indigenous Lands in Australia and Canada*. U. of Toronto Press.

Eagleton, T. (2000). *The idea of culture*. Blackwell.

Edwards, M., Perry, B., & Janzen, K. (2011). The making of an exemplary online educator. *Distance Education*, *32*(1), 101-118.

Edwards, S. (2018). Critical reflections on the interfaith movement: A social justice perspective. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, 11(2), 164.

Eigenbrod, R., & Hulan, R. (Eds.). (2008). *Aboriginal oral traditions: Theory, practice, ethics*. Fernwood Publishing.

Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. (2000). Researcher as subject: Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity. In: N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd edition). Sage.

Ellis, C. (2004). *The ethnographic I: A methodological novel about autoethnography*. Rowman Altamira.

Ermine, W. (2007). The ethical space of engagement. *Indigenous Law Journal*, 6, 193–203.

Fast, E., Drouin-Gagné, M. È., Bertrand, N., Bertrand, S., & Allouche, Z. (2017). Incorporating diverse understandings of Indigenous identity: toward a broader definition of cultural safety for urban Indigenous youth. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, *13*(3), 152-160.

Felman, S. (1982). Psychoanalysis and education: Teaching terminable and interminable. *Yale French Studies*, (63), 21-44.

First Nations Health Authority (FNHA). (2016). *Leading a framework for cultural safety and humility for First Nations in British Columbia* (PowerPoint slides). Retrieved from http://www.fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-Leading-a-Framework-for-Cultural-Safety-and-Humility-for-First-Nations-in-British-Columbia.pdf

Fisk, H. N. (1944). *Geological investigation of the alluvial valley of the lower Mississippi River: US Army Corps of Engineers*. Mississippi River Commission.

Fook, J. (1996). *The reflective researcher: Social workers' theories of practice research*. Allen & Unwin.

Fook, J. (2012). *Social work: A critical approach to practice* (2nd edition). Sage.

Fook, J., & G.A. Askeland. (2006). The 'critical' in critical reflection. In: S. White, J. Fook, & F. Gardener (Eds.). *Critical reflection in health and social care*. Open U. Press

Foster, J. (2009). Cultural humility and the importance of long-term relationships in international partnerships. *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic & Neonatal Nursing*, 38(1), 100-107.

Frankfurt, H. G. (2005). *On bullshit*. Princeton U. Press.

Frankenberg, R. (1993). *White women, race matters: The social construction of whiteness*. U. of Minnesota Press.

Freeman, J. (2015). *Remaking Memory: autoethnography, memoir and the ethics of self*. Libri Publishing.

Furman, G. (2012). Social justice leadership as praxis: Developing capacities through preparation programs. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *48*(2), 191-229.

Galois, R., & Sterritt, N. J. (1998). *Tribal boundaries in the Nass watershed*. UBC Press.

Gardner, F. (2014). *Being critically reflective: Engaging in holistic practice*. Macmillan International Higher Education.

Gebhard, A. (2017). Reconciliation or Racialization? Contemporary Discourses about Residential Schools in the Canadian Prairies. *Canadian Journal of Education*, *40*(1), 1.

Gerlach, A. J. (2012). A critical reflection on the concept of cultural safety. *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, *79*(3), 151-158.

Gillespie, C. (Spring 2017). A hard walk. *New Trail 73(1),* 20-21.

Gingrich-Philbrook, C. (2013). Evaluating (evaluations of) autoethnography. In: S. H. Jones, T. E. Adams, & C. Ellis (Eds.), *Handbook of autoethnography* (pp. 609–626). Left Coast Press.

Given, L.M. (ed.) (2008). *The Sage Encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*. Sage.

Godlewska, A., Moore, J., & Bednasek, C. D. (2010). Cultivating ignorance of Aboriginal realities. *The Canadian Geographer/Le Géographe canadien*, *54*(4), 417-440.

Goff, W., & Veresov, N. (2015). Examining teacher-researcher collaboration through the cultural interface. *Cultural Studies of Science Education*, *10*(3), 621-627.

Goodall Jr, H. L. (2000). *Writing the new ethnography* (Vol. 7). AltaMira Press.

Goodman, D. J. (2011). *Promoting diversity and social justice educating people from privileged groups* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Graeme, C. S. (2013). Indigenous health research and the non-Indigenous researcher: A proposed framework for the autoethnographic methodological approach. *Pimatisiwin: A Journal of Aboriginal and Indigenous Community Health*, *11*(3), 513-520.

Green, B., and Reid, J. (2014). Social cartography and rural education: Researching space(s) and place(s). In: S. White and M. Corbett (eds.), *Doing educational research in rural*

settings: Methodological issues, international perspectives and practical solutions. Routledge.

Greenwood, M. (2019). Modelling change and cultural safety: A case study in northern British Columbia health system transformation. In *Healthcare management forum (Vol. 32, No. 1, pp. 11-14)*. SAGE Publications.

Greenwood, M., & Lindsay, N. M. (2019). A commentary on land, health, and Indigenous knowledge (s). *Global health promotion*, *26*(3_suppl), 82-86.

Greenwood, M., Lindsay, N., King, J., & Loewen, D. (2017). Ethical spaces and places: Indigenous cultural safety in British Columbia health care. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, *13*(3), 179-189.

Guri-Rosenblit, S. (2014). Distance education systems and institutions in the online era: An identity crisis. In O. Zawacki-Richter & T. Anderson (Eds.). *Online distance education: Towards a research agenda*. Athabasca U Press

Hackman, H. W. (2005). Five essential components for social justice education. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 38(2)*, 103-109.

Haig-Brown, C., Hodgson-Smith, K. L., Regnier, R., & Archibald, J. A. (1997). *Making the spirit dance within: Joe Duquette High School and an aboriginal community*. James Lorimer & Company.

Hall, E. (1976). *Beyond Culture*. Doubleday

Hall, S. (1991). Ethnicity: Identity and difference. *Radical America, 23:4, 9-21*.

Härkönen, E. (2018). Teach Me Your Arctic: Place-Based Intercultural Approaches in Art Education. *Journal of Cultural Research in Art Education, 35, 132-150*.

Harris, C. (2002). *Making Native Space: Colonialism. Resistance, and Reserves in British*. UBC Press.

Harter, L.M., Japp, P.M. & Beck, C.S. (Eds.) (2005). *Narratives, health, and healing: Communication theory, research, and practice.* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Henry, F., & Tator, C. (Eds.). (2009). *Racism in the Canadian university: Demanding social justice, inclusion, and equity*. U. of Toronto Press.

Henry, F., Dua, E., Kobayashi, A., James, C., Li, P., Ramos, H., & Smith, M. S. (2017). Race, racialization and Indigeneity in Canadian universities. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *20*(3), 300-314.

Hill, C., & Curry-Stevens, A. (2017). Organizational Change and Racial Equity: Implications for Capacity-Building Practice for Organizations and Networks. *The Journal of Nonprofit Education and Leadership*, 7(1).

Holliday, A. (2007). *Doing and writing qualitative research*. Sage.

Holman Jones, S. (2005). "Autoethnography: Making the personal political." In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp.763-791). Sage.

Holt, N. L. (2003). Representation, legitimation, and autoethnography: An autoethnographic writing story. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 2(1).

Hook, J. N., Davis, D. E., Owen, J., Worthington, E. L., & Utsey, S. O. (2013). Cultural humility: measuring openness to culturally diverse clients. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 60(3), 353–66.

Hooley, N. (2009). *Narrative life: Democratic curriculum and indigenous learning*. Springer.

Hughes, S. A., & Pennington, J.L. (2017). *Autoethnography: Process, Product, and Possibility for Critical Social Research*. SAGE Publications, [Kindle Edition].

Hunt, L. M. (2001). Beyond cultural competence: Applying humility to clinical settings. *The Park Ridge Centre Bulletin*, 24, 133–136.

Ingold, T. (2007). *Lines: a brief history*. Routledge.

International Labour Organization (ILO). C169 – Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169). Accessed July 15, 2020 from: https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C169

Isaacson, M. (2014). Clarifying concepts: Cultural humility or competency. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, *30*(3), 251-258.

Johnson, H., Ulrich, C., Cross, N., & Greenwood, M. (2016). A journey of partnership: Transforming health care service delivery with First Nations in Northern BC. *International Journal of Health Governance*, 21(2). 76-88.

Jones, C. P. (2000). Levels of racism: a theoretic framework and a gardener's tale. *American Journal of Public Health*, 90(8).

Jungersen, K. (2002). Cultural safety: Kawa Whakaruruhau: An occupational therapy perspective. *New Zealand Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 49, 4-9

Kelm, M.E. (1999). *Colonizing bodies: Aboriginal health and healing in British Columbia, 1900-50*. UBC Press.

Kendall, F. (2013). *Understanding white privilege: Creating pathways to authentic relationships across race* (2nd edition). Routledge.

Kendall, F. E. (2017). "Understanding White Privilege-An Introduction", presentation, April 20, 2017; Accessed Jan. 26, 2020 from: https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc1132745/. U. of North Texas Libraries, UNT Digital Library

Kim, J-H. (2016). *Understanding narrative inquiry: The crafting and analysis of stories as research*. Sage.

Kimmel, M.S. & Ferber, A.L. (Eds.). (2018). *Privilege: A Reader* (4th edition). Routledge.

Kincheloe, J. & McLaren, P. (2000) Rethinking Critical Theory and Qualitative Research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Sage

Kirsch, G. E., & Ritchie, J. S. (1995). Beyond the personal: Theorizing a politics of location in composition research. *College Composition and Communication*, *46*(1), 7-29.

Knafla, L. A., & Westra, H. (Eds.). (2011). *Aboriginal Title and Indigenous Peoples: Canada, Australia, and New Zealand*. UBC Press.

Korzybski, A. (1933). *Science and Sanity: A non-Aristotelian system and its necessity for rigour in mathematics and physics*. Institute of General Semantics.

Kotzee, B. (2007). Our Vision and our Mission: Bullshit, Assertion and Belief. *South African Journal of Philosophy*, *26*(2), 163-175.

Kreber, C. (2012). Critical reflection and transformative learning. In E.W. Taylor & P. Cranton *Handbook of transformative learning: Theory, research, and practice*. John Wiley & Sons.

Kuokkanen, R. (2007). *Reshaping the university: Responsibility, Indigenous epistemes, and the logic of the gift*. UBC Press.

Kumashiro, K. K. (2000). Toward a theory of anti-oppressive education. *Review of Educational research*, *70*(1), 25-53

Kumashiro, K. K. (2002). *Troubling education: "Queer" activism and anti-oppressive pedagogy*. Routledge.

LeCompte, M. D., & Ludwig, S. A. (2013). Defining, collecting, cataloging, and analyzing artifacts. In, J.J. Schensul & M.D. LeCompte (eds). *Specialized ethnographic methods: A mixed methods approach*. AltaMira Press.

Lengelle, R., Jardine, C., & Bonnar, C. (2018). Writing the self for reconciliation and global citizenship: The inner dialogue and creative voices for cultural healing. In F. Meijers and H. Hermans (Eds.), *The Dialogical Self Theory in Education*: *A multicultural perspective* (pp. 81-96). Springer.

Leonard, J., Brooks, W., Barnes-Johnson, J. & Berry III, R.Q. (2010). The nuances and complexities of teaching mathematics for cultural relevance and social justice. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 61 (3), 261-270.

Le Roux, C. S. (2017). Exploring rigour in autoethnographic research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, *20*(2), 195-207.

Lheidli T'enneh. (2005). *Reserve Land Use Plan 2005*. Accessed online October 20, 2019 from: https://labrc.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Lheidli-Tenneh-Land-Use-Plan.pdf

Lheidli T'enneh. (2014). *Lheidli T'enneh Historical Timeline*. Accessed online June 20, 2020 from: http://www.pgdta.ca/uploads/2/4/1/7/24178565/lheidli_tenneh_historical_timeline_2014v.pdf

Lincoln, Y. S., & Denzin, N. K. (Eds.). (2003). *Turning points in qualitative research: Tying knots in a handkerchief*. Rowman Altamira.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.

Linklater, R. (2014). *Decolonizing trauma work: Indigenous stories and strategies*. Fernwood Publishing.

Little Bear, L. (2000). Jagged worldviews colliding. In M. Battiste (Ed.). *Reclaiming Indigenous voice and vision* (pp. 77-86). UBC Press.

Lock, M. J. (2018). *Australian Healthcare Governance and the Cultural Safety and Security of Australia's First Peoples: An Annual Critique. No.1: Focusing on Knowledge Governance*. Committix Pty Ltd: Newcastle, Australia. Accessed online: https://committix.com/projects/the-cultural-safety-project/

Loppie, S., Reading, C., & de Leeuw, S. (2014). *Aboriginal experiences with racism and its impacts*. Technical Report. Prince George, BC: National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health.

Lowman, E.B., & Barker, A. J. (2015). *Settler: Identity and colonialism in 21st century Canada*. Fernwood Publishing.

Lund, D. E., & Carr, P. R. (2010). Exposing privilege and racism in the great white north: Tackling whiteness and identity issues in Canadian education. *Multicultural Perspectives, 12(4)*, 229-234.

Lund, D. E., & Carr, P. R. (2013). Disrupting denial and white privilege in teacher education. In P.C. Gorski, K. Zenkov, N. Osei-Kofi, & J. Sapp. (eds). *Cultivating social justice teachers: How teacher educators have helped students overcome cognitive bottlenecks and learn critical social justice concepts* (pp. 108-125). Stylus Publishing.

MacKenzie, L., & Hatala, A. (2019). Addressing culture within healthcare settings: the limits of cultural competence and the power of humility. *Canadian Medical Education Journal* 10(1).

Martin, G., Nakata, V., Nakata, M., & Day, A. (2017). Promoting the persistence of Indigenous students through teaching at the Cultural Interface. *Studies in Higher Education*, *42*(7), 1158-1173.

May, D. (2015). Ethnography: Research methods for the study of online communities. In L. Bryant, (ed.), *Critical and creative research methodologies in social work*. Routledge.

McAlpine, L. (2016). Why might you use narrative methodology? A story about narrative. *Eesti Haridusteaduste Ajakiri. Estonian Journal of Education*, *4*(1), 32-57.

McGregor, D., Restoule, J. P., & Johnston, R. (Eds.). (2018). *Indigenous research: Theories, practices, and relationships*. Canadian Scholars' Press.

McLoughlin, C., & Oliver, R. (2000). Designing learning environments for cultural inclusivity: A case study of indigenous online learning at tertiary level. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, *16*(1).

Mears, D. P. (2002). The ubiquity, functions, and contexts of bullshitting. *Journal of Mundane Behavior, 3(2*), 223-256.

Meijers, F. (2013). Monologue to dialogue: education in the 21st century. Introduction to the special issue. *International Journal for Dialogical Science*, 7(1), 1-10.

Méndez, M. (2013). Autoethnography as a research method: Advantages, limitations and criticisms. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*, *15*(2), 279-287.

Mercer, G., Ross, J. & Flatt, J-F. (2020, June 14). RCMP killings of Indigenous people intensify calls for police reform. *Globe and Mail*. https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-rcmp-killings-of-indigenous-people-intensify-calls-for-police-reform/

Methot, S. (2019). *Legacy: Trauma, story, and Indigenous healing.* ECW Press.

Mezirow, J. (2009). *Transformative learning in practice: Insights from community, workplace, and higher education (1st ed.).* Jossey-Bass

Moewaka Barnes, H., Borell, B., & McCreanor, T. (2014). Theorising the structural dynamics of ethnic privilege in Aotearoa: Unpacking "this breeze at my back". *International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies*, 7(1), 1-14.

Mora, J. (2016). Socially constructing learning space: communication theory and pedagogy for social justice. *Review of Communication, 16(2-3)*, 176-191.

Morrow, S. L. (2005). Quality and trustworthiness in qualitative research in counseling psychology. *Journal of counseling psychology*, *52*(2), 250.

Mullaly, R. P., & West, J. (2018). *Challenging oppression and confronting privilege: A critical approach to anti-oppressive and anti-privilege theory and practice* (3rd edition). Oxford U Press.

Nakata, M. (2002). Indigenous knowledge and the cultural interface: Underlying issues at the intersections of knowledge and information systems. *IFLA Journal*, 28(5/6), 281–291.

Nakata, M. (2007). The cultural interface. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, *36* (Supplement 7), 7-14.

Nakata, M. (2010). The cultural interface of Islander and scientific knowledge. *Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, 39, 53-57.

Napier, A. D., Ancarno, C., Butler, B., Calabrese, J., Chater, A., Chatterjee, H., Guesnet, F., Horne, R., Jacyna, S., Jadhav, S., Macdonald, A., Neuendorf, U., Parkhurst, A., Reynolds, R., Scambler, G., Shamdasani, S., Zafer Smith, S., Stougaard-Nielsen, J., Thomson, L., Tyler, N., Volkmann, A., Walker, T., Watson, J., de CWilliams, A.C., Willott, C., Wilson, J. & Woolf, K. (2014). Culture and health. *The Lancet*, 384(9954), 1607-1639.

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Association (NATSIHWA).
    (2016) *Cultural Safety Framework*. Accessed online:
    https://www.natsihwa.org.au/sites/default/files/natsihwa-cultural_safety-
    framework_summary.pdf

Neuman, W. (2006). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (6th ed).
    Pearson.

Ngai, P., Baek, U.K., & Paulgaard, G. (2015). Indigenous education in the Norwegian and U.S.
    contexts. In K.W. Shanley & B. Evjen (Eds.). *Mapping Indigenous Presences: North
    Scandinavian and North American Perspectives*. U of Arizona Press.

Ngunjiri, F. W., Hernandez, K. A. C., & Chang, H. (2010). Living autoethnography: Connecting
    life and research. *Journal of research practice*, *6* (1), 1.

Nicoll, F. (2004). Reconciliation in and out of perspective: white knowing, seeing, curating and
    being at home in and against Indigenous sovereignty. In A. Moreton-Robinson (ed.).
    Whitening race: Essays in social and cultural criticism. Aboriginal Studies Press.

Noël, L (1994). *Intolerance: A general study*. (A. Bennett, Trans.). McGill-Queens U. Press.

North, D. C. (1990). *Institutions, institutional change and economic performance*. Cambridge U.
    Press.

Ortega, R.M., & Coulborn Faller, K. (2011). Training child welfare workers from an
    intersectional cultural humility perspective: A paradigm shift. *Child Welfare*, 90(5):27–
    50.

Page, H., & Thomas, R. B. (1994). White public space and the construction of white privilege in
    US health care: Fresh concepts and a new model of analysis. *Medical Anthropology
    Quarterly*, 8(1), 109-116.

Paradies, Y., Ben, J., Denson, N., Elias, A., Priest, N., Pieterse, A., Gupta, A. Kelaher, M & Gee,
    G. (2015). Racism as a determinant of health: a systematic review and meta-analysis.
    PloS one, 10(9).

Parisa, B., Reza, N., Afsaneh, R., & Sarieh, P. (2016). Cultural safety. *Holistic Nursing Practice*,
    30(1), 33-38.

Parkes, A. (2015). Reflexivity as Autoethnography in Indigenous Research. In L. Bryant (Ed.),
    Critical and Creative Research Methodologies in Social Work (pp. 93-106). Routledge.

Parlee, B. (2011). *Traditional Knowledge Overview for the Athabasca River Watershed*.
    Athabasca Watershed Council. Accessed online July 29, 2020 from: https://awc-
    wpac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/AWC-WPAC-State-of-the-Watershed-Phase-1-
    Traditional-Knowledge-Overview.pdf

Patel, L. (2014). Countering coloniality in educational research: From ownership to
    answerability. *Educational Studies*, 50(4), 357-377.

Pease, B. (2010). *Undoing privilege: Unearned advantage in a divided world*. Zed Books Ltd.

Pease, B. (2012a). The politics of gendered emotions: disrupting men's emotional investment in
    privilege. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, *47*(1), 125-142.

Pease, B. (2012b). Interrogating privileged subjectivities: Reflections on writing personal
    accounts of privilege. In M. Livholts (ed.), *Emergent writing methodologies in feminist
    studies* (pp. 71-82). Routledge.

Pinnegar, S., & Hamitlon, M.L. (2009). *Self-Study of Practice as a genre of qualitative research:
    Theory, methodology*, *and practice*. Springer.

Pitard, J. (2015). Using vignettes within autoethnography to explore layers of cross-cultural
    awareness as a teacher. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social
    Research*, 17 (1).

Pitard, J. (2017). A journey to the centre of self: Positioning the researcher in autoethnography.
    Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 18 (3).

Pitsoe, V., & Letseka, M. (2013). Foucault's discourse and power: Implications for instructionist
    classroom management. *Open Journal of Philosophy, 3(1)*, 23

Poelzer, G., & Coates, K. S. (2015). *From treaty peoples to treaty nation: A road map for all
    Canadians*. UBC Press.

Polaschek, N. R. (1998). Cultural safety: a new concept in nursing people of different ethnicities.
    Journal of advanced nursing, *27*(3), 452-457.

Priest, N., Paradies, Y., Trenerry, B., Truong, M., Karlsen, S., & Kelly, Y. (2013). A systematic
    review of studies examining the relationship between reported racism and health and
    wellbeing for children and young people. *Social science & Medicine*, 95, 115-127.

Prinsloo, P. (2011). *Towards a social justice architecture for open, distance and e-learning*.
    Proceedings of the Cambridge International Conference on Open, Distance, and E-
    learning: Internationalisation and Social Justice: the role of Open, Distance and e-

Learning. Retrieved from: https://www.vhi.st-edmunds.cam.ac.uk/events/past-events/conferences/CDE-conference/CDE-Papers/2011-Main

Quay, J. (2004). Knowing how and knowing that: A tale of two ontologies. In A. Brookes (Ed.), *Conference Papers of the International Outdoor Education Research Conference: Connections and Disconnections.* Bendigo, VIC: Latrobe University.

Ramsden, I. (2002a). Cultural safety/kawa whakaruruhau ten years on: A personal overview. *Nursing Praxis in New Zealand. 15(1)*: 4-12.

Ramsden, I. (2002b). *Cultural Safety and Nursing Education in Aotearoa and Te Waipounamu*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, Victoria University, Wellington.

Ravenscroft, A. (2004). Anxieties of dispossession: Whiteness, history, and Australia's war in Viet Nam. In A. Moreton-Robinson (ed.). *Whitening race: Essays in social and cultural criticism*. Aboriginal Studies Press.

Razack, S. (Ed.). (2002). *Race, space, and the law: Unmapping a white settler society*. Between the Lines.

Reading, C. (2013). *Understanding racism*. Prepared for the National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health. Prince George, BC: National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health.

Reed-Danahay, D. E. (Ed.). (1997). *Introduction. Auto/ethnography: Rewriting the self and the social*. Berg.

Regan, P. (2010). *Unsettling the settler within: Indian residential schools, truth telling, and reconciliation in Canada*. UBC Press.

Reynolds, J. (2018). *Aboriginal Peoples and the Law: A Critical Introduction*. Purich Books.

Richardson, F. I. (2010). *Cultural safety in nursing education and practice in Aotearoa New Zealand: a thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for Doctor of Philosophy, Massey University*. (Doctoral dissertation) Massey University.

Richardson, L. (2001). Getting personal: Writing-stories. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *14*(1), 33-38.

Richardson, L. (2003). Writing: A method of inquiry. In Y.S. Lincoln & N.K. Denzin (Eds.), *Turning points in qualitative research: Tying knots in a handkerchief* (pp. 379–414). AltaMiraPress.

Richardson, C., Carriere, J., & Boldo, V. (2017). Invitations to dignity and well-being: cultural safety through Indigenous pedagogy, witnessing and giving back!. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, *13*(3), 190-195.

Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). (1996). *Highlights from the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*. Retrieved from: https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100014597/1100100014637

Saad, L. F. (2020). *Me and white supremacy: Combat racism, change the world, and become a good ancestor*. Sourcebooks, Inc.

Saleh, M., Menon, J., & Clandinin, D. J. (2014). Autobiographical narrative inquiry: Tellings and retellings. *LEARNing Landscapes*, *7*(2), 271-282.

Salmon, G. & Asgari, T. (2019). Higher Education–the Last Bastion? Distance and e-Learning Policy and Development – The Role of e-Learning and Distance Education in the Modernisation Process of Economies, Societies and Education Systems. *European Journal of Open, Distance and E-learning*, 22(1).

Schick, C., & St. Denis, V. (2005). Troubling national discourses in anti-racist curricular planning. *Canadian Journal of Education/Revue canadienne de l'éducation*, 295-317.

Schmunk, R. (2020, June 19). B.C. investigating allegations ER staff played 'game' to guess blood-alcohol level of Indigenous patients. *CBC*. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/racism-in-bc-healthcare-health-minister-adrian-dix-1.5619245

Sefa Dei, G. (2000). *Anti-racism education: Theory and practice*. Fernwood Publishing.

Selwyn, N. (2013). *Distrusting educational technology: Critical questions for changing times*. Routledge.

Sensoy, O., & DiAngelo, R. (2017). *Is everyone really equal?: An introduction to key concepts in social justice education*. Teachers College Press.

Seurujärvi-Kari, I. & Virtanen, P.K. (2020). Sámi reconciliation in practice: A long ongoing process. In R. Datta (ed.), *Reconciliation in practice: A cross-cultural perspective*. Fernwood.

Sharp, A. (1997). *Justice for the Mäori: The philosophy and practice of Mäori claims in New Zealand since the 1970s* (2nd edition). Oxford U Press.

Smith-Sullivan, K. (2008). *The autoethnographic call: Current considerations and possible*

futures. (Unpublished PhD Dissertation). University of South Florida, Tampa, Florida.

Smith, L. T., Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (Eds.). (2018). *Indigenous and decolonizing studies in education: Mapping the long view*. Routledge.

Smylie, J., Williams, L., & Cooper, N. (2006). Culture-based literacy and Aboriginal health. *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 97(2), 21-25.

Somerville, M. (2007). Place literacies. *The Australian Journal of Language and Literacy, 30*(2), 149-164.

Sousanis, N. (2015). *Unflattening*. Harvard U. Press.

Spicer, A. (2013). Shooting the shit: The role of bullshit in organisations. *M@n@gement*, *16*(5), 653-666.

Spry, T. (2001). Performing autoethnography: An embodied methodological praxis. *Qualitative inquiry*, *7*(6), 706-732.

Spry, T. (2011). *Body, paper, stage: Writing and performing autoethnography*. NY: Routledge.

Squire, C., Andrews, M., Davis, M., Esin, C., Harrison, B., Hyden, L. C., & Hyden, M. (2014). *What is narrative research?* NY: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Statistics Canada. (2015). "Aboriginal Statistics at a glance." Accessed online Oct. 12, 2019 from: https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-645-x/2010001/c-g/c-g013-eng.htm

St. Denis, V. (2011). Silencing Aboriginal curricular content and perspectives through multiculturalism: "There are other children here". *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, 33(4), p. 306-317.

Steedman, S., & Collison, N. (eds.). (2011). *That which makes us Haida*. Haida Gwaii Museum Press.

Stout, M. D., & Downey, B. (2006). Epilogue: Nursing, Indigenous peoples and cultural safety: So what? Now what?. *Contemporary Nurse*, *22*(2), 327-332.

Sue, D. W. (2015). *Race talk and the conspiracy of silence*. Wiley.

Swalwell, K. (2013). *Educating Activist Allies: Social justice pedagogy with the suburban and urban elite*. Routledge.

Tait, A., & O'Rourke, J. (2014). Internationalization and concepts of social justice: What is to be done? In: O. Zawacki-Richter, & T. Anderson (Eds.). *Online distance education: Towards a research agenda*. Athabasca U Press

Taylor, S. J., Bogdan, R., & DeVault, M. (2015). *Introduction to qualitative research methods: A*

guidebook and resource. John Wiley & Sons.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission. (2015). *What we have learned: Principles of truth and reconciliation*. Winnipeg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Retrieved online from: http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=3

Truth and Reconciliation Commission. (2015). *Calls to Action*. Winnipeg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Retrieved online from: http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=3

Truth and Reconciliation Commission. (2015). *Honouring the truth, reconciling for the future: Summary of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. Winnipeg: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Retrieved online from: http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=3

Tuck, E., & Yang, W.K. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 1(1), 1-40.

Turkel, W. (2011). *The archive of place: Unearthing the pasts of the Chilcotin Plateau*. UBC Press.

Van Maanen, J. (1988). *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography*. U. of Chicago Press.

Vaudrin-Charette, J. (2019). Melting the Cultural Iceberg in Indigenizing Higher Education: Shifts to Accountability in Times of Reconciliation. *New Directions for Teaching & Learning, (157)*, 105–118.

Vaught, S. E., & Castagno, A. E. (2008). "I don't think I'm a racist": Critical Race Theory, teacher attitudes, and structural racism. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *11*(2), 95-113.

Veletsianos, G. (Ed.). (2016). *Emergence and innovation in digital learning: Foundations and applications*. Athabasca U. Press.

Vélez-Agosto, N. M., Soto-Crespo, J. G., Vizcarrondo-Oppenheimer, M., Vega-Molina, S., & García Coll, C. (2017). Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory revision: Moving culture from the macro into the micro. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 12(5),* 900-910.

Vernon R, Papps E. (2015). Cultural safety and continuing competence. In: D. Wepa (ed.). *Cultural safety in Aotearoa New Zealand* (2nd ed.) Cambridge U. Press.

Verschelden, C. (2017). *Bandwidth Recovery: Helping students reclaim cognitive resources lost to poverty, racism, and social marginalization*. Stylus Publishing.

Warren, J. T. (2011). Reflexive teaching: Toward critical autoethnographic practices of/in/on

pedagogy. *Cultural Studies? Critical Methodologies*, *11*(2), 139-144.

Webster, L., & Mertova, P. (2007). *Using narrative inquiry as a research method: An introduction to using critical event narrative analysis in research on learning and teaching*. Routledge.

Weedon, C. (1997). *Feminist practice and poststructuralist theory* (2nd ed.). Blackwell.

Wepa, D. (Ed.). (2015). *Cultural safety in Aotearoa New Zealand*. Cambridge University Press.

Williams, R. (1976). *Keywords: a vocabulary of society and culture*. Fontana/Croom Helm.

Wilson, D., de la Ronde, S., Brascoupé, S., Apale, A. N., Barney, L., Guthrie, B., Harrold, E., Horn, O., Johnson, R., Rattray, D. & Robinson, N. (2013). Health professionals working with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis consensus guideline. *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Canada*, 35(6), S1-S4.

Wilson, D., & Neville, S. (2009). Culturally safe research with vulnerable populations. *Contemporary Nurse*, 33(1), 69-79.

Wilson, S. (2008). *Research is ceremony: Indigenous research methods*. Fernwood Publishing.

World Health Organization (WHO). (2008). "Inequities are killing people on grand scale, reports WHO's Commission." Accessed online Oct 24, 2019 from: https://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2008/pr29/en/

Wood, P. J., & Schwass, M. (1993). Cultural safety: A framework for changing attitudes. *Nursing Praxis in New Zealand*, 8, 4-15.

Wylie, S. (2014). *The challenge of critical pedagogy as a social studies teacher educator* (Doctoral dissertation), Columbia University.

Yaphe, M. D., Richer, M. D., & Martin, C. (2019). Cultural Safety training for health professionals working with Indigenous populations in Montreal, Quebec. *International Journal of Indigenous Health*, *14*(1), 60-84.

Yeager, K. A., & Bauer-Wu, S. (2013). Cultural humility: Essential foundation for clinical researchers. *Applied Nursing Research*, *26*(4), 251-256.

Zawacki-Richter, O. (2009). Research areas in distance education: A Delphi study. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 10(3).

Zawacki-Richter, O., & Anderson, T. (Eds.). (2014). *Online distance education: Towards a research agenda*. Athabasca U Press.

Zawacki-Richter, O., Bäcker, E. M., & Vogt, S. (2009). Review of distance education research

(2000 to 2008): Analysis of research areas, methods, and authorship patterns. *The

International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 10(6), 21-50.

Appendix A: Certification of Ethics Approval

Athabasca University
RESEARCH CENTRE

CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

The Athabasca University Research Ethics Board (AUREB) has reviewed and approved the research project noted below. The AUREB is constituted and operates in accordance with the current version of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS) and Athabasca University Policy and Procedures.

Ethics File No.: **23573**

Principal Investigator:
Mr. David Loewen, Graduate Student
Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences\Doctor of Education in Distance Education

Supervisor:
Dr. Debra Hoven (Supervisor)

Project Title:
Truth, reconciliation, and unsettling Settler space(s) and place(s): An autoethnography of whiteness and privilege in online distance education

Effective Date: September 16, 2019   **Expiry Date**: September 15, 2020

Restrictions:

Any modification or amendment to the approved research must be submitted to the AUREB for approval.

Ethical approval is valid *for a period of one year*. An annual request for renewal must be submitted and approved by the above expiry date if a project is ongoing beyond one year.

A Project Completion (Final) Report must be submitted when the research is complete *(i.e. all participant contact and data collection is concluded, no follow-up with participants is anticipated and findings have been made available/provided to participants (if applicable))* or the research is terminated.

Approved by: **Date:** September 16, 2019

Cheryl Kier, Chair
Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences, Departmental Ethics Review Committee

_____

Athabasca University Research Ethics Board
University Research Services, Research Centre
1 University Drive, Athabasca AB Canada T9S 3A3
E-mail rebsec@athabascau.ca
Telephone: 780.675.6718