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POST-CONFLICT EDUCATION AND RECONCILIATION: THE NEW CURRICULUM IN BRITISH COLUMBIA AND THE LEGACY OF COLONIALISM

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ABSTRACT

In February 2018, current Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau reiterated the need for all Canadians to "confront our past and commit to charting a brighter, more inclusive future" in order to reconcile the relationship between Aboriginal people, non-Aboriginal people, and the government, the international perception of Canada as a peaceful democratic nation with the devastating reality of disparity and inequality, and the violent colonial past with a progressive, socially just future. This dissertation investigates the extent to which the government of British Columbia (BC) and the Ministry of Education are actively and effectively contributing to reconciliation with Aboriginal peoples in BC. In order to ground the discussion in an understanding of the historical and contemporary reality of colonialism, the dissertation addresses the historical treatment of Indigenous peoples by the Canadian government. From there, a review of post-conflict literature explores the potential for education to reduce conflict and promote positive peace and reconciliation. Use of a postcolonial theoretical lens ultimately frames the evaluation of the new curriculum policy and the educational reform movement in BC, questioning its potential to transform students, teachers, and the education system. The dissertation concludes that the federal government's bold rhetoric offers a promising beginning to a new and powerful chapter in healing the damaged relationship with Aboriginal peoples. At the same time, the paper attempts to explain, in its discussion and analysis of the implementation of the BC education system's reform agenda, how resources of contemporary education practice may be better harnessed to support the country's emerging political mandate. As an indispensable tool for social justice, education can and should be a potent source for good in the world.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

In February 2018, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced that the government would develop a Recognition and Implementation of Rights Framework in pursuit of Crown-Indigenous reconciliation to undo "the decades of mistrust, poverty, broken promises, and injustices" (Trudeau, 2018). While this rhetoric has become more prominent in the Canadian national discourse since Prime Minister Trudeau took office in 2016, this declaration indicates a quality of explicit political boldness setting leadership precedent for provincial governments and ministries in their commitment to a more equal relationship with Aboriginal peoples and nations. Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, Carolyn Bennett, further clarified the intention of this framework to "address Canada's uncomfortable truth—centuries of colonial practices have denied the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples" (Bennett, 2018). The Prime Minister acknowledged that "reconciliation calls upon us all to confront our past and commit to charting a brighter, more inclusive future" (Trudeau, 2018). In the announcement of the Framework, the federal government articulated their commitment to confront the destructive colonial past and the responsibility of all Canadians to take part in the post-conflict, postcolonial reconciliation process.

This dissertation considers the extent to which the government of British Columbia (BC) and the Ministry of Education are actively and effectively contributing to reconciliation with Aboriginal peoples and nations in BC. In order to ground the discussion in an understanding of the historical and contemporary reality of colonialism, the dissertation opens with an overview of the historical relationship between Aboriginal peoples, the Canadian government and various religious organizations. From there, a review of post-conflict literature explores the potential for education to reduce conflict and promote positive peace and reconciliation. Use of a postcolonial theoretical lens frames the evaluation of the new curriculum reform, questioning its potential to transform students, teachers,

and the education system. The dissertation concludes that the federal government's willingness to speak boldly offers a promising direction to a new and powerful chapter in healing the wounded relationship with Aboriginal peoples. At the same time, the paper attempts to explain, in its discussion and analysis of the implementation of the BC education system's reform agenda, how resources of contemporary education practice may be better harnessed to support the country's emerging political mandate. As an indispensable tool for social justice, education can and should be a potent source for good in the world.

Historical Context

Between the early 1860s and the 1990s, the Canadian government legislated colonial policies intended to gain control of the land and force Aboriginal people to "cease to exist as a distinct people with their own government, cultures, and identities" (TRCC, 2015a: 57). Aboriginal people were forcibly removed from their traditionally occupied lands and confined to reserves through a legislated 'pass system.' Their traditional governing structures, founded on kinship networks, were undermined when the Canadian government replaced leaders with powerless band councils who could be manipulated, overridden, and deposed based on their responsiveness to the government. Aboriginal women, who held significant cultural and political power in many First Nations, including the Tlingit, Dekelh, and Haudenosaunee, were legally and socially disempowered. The legislation of the *Indian Act*, which defined "Indian"[1] status as specifically male or conditional upon a male relative, systematically eroded

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[1] In Canada, the official contemporary term most commonly used to collectively describe First Nations, Inuit, and Métis is "Aboriginal peoples." The term "Indigenous" has been determined by the United Nations as the most inclusive and universal descriptor for global first peoples. Where possible, contemporary names will be used when referencing specific Nations for accuracy, and to reflect the fact that there is not a single, common Indigenous or Aboriginal system of beliefs, values, practices, or experiences. The term "Indian" will be used only when referencing the legal or historical use of the term, such as in the Indian Act or Indian Residential Schools. When discussing Indian Residential Schools, the term 'First Nations' will be used because Inuit and Métis were widely excluded from this specific legislation (TRCC, 2015).

socio-cultural and political structures and values of the matriarchal and matrilineal Nations in particular. Additionally, cultural, spiritual, and social practices, such as potlatches, ceremonial dances and regalia, were outlawed (TRCC, 2015a).

Central to colonization was the Indian Residential School (IRS) system, considered, at best "institutionalized child neglect" (TRCC, 2015a: 47) or alternatively, "an inherent element of savagery" (RCAP, 1991). Richard Wagamese (2011), an Ojibwe author, described his family as having "suffered in an institution that tried to scrape the Indian out of their insides… they came back to the bush raw, sore, and aching" (28). John A. Macdonald, the first Prime Minister of Canada, imagined that the ideal school would ensure the "Native child would be dissociated from the prejudicial influence by which he is surrounded on the reserve" (quoted in Miller, 1996: 103). The first church-run, government-funded residential school was built in the Canadian prairies in 1883, marking the beginning of the eventual construction of 139 total schools to 'educate' over 150,000 First Nation, Metis, and Inuit students (TRCC, 2015a: 3). The justification of these schools was framed as civilizing and converting Aboriginal children (Chrisjohn, Young, & Maraun, 2003), but the literature demonstrates that they were based on a fear that if the children were not 'appropriately' educated, Aboriginal peoples would disrupt the social order of the young, vulnerable nation of Canada (MacDonald & Hudson, 2012; O'Connor, 2000; TRCC, 2015a).

Recently, it has been widely accepted that the IRS system was not simply a controversial education program, but "an integral part of a conscious policy of *cultural genocide*" (TRCC, 2015a: 57, emphasis added). As defined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRCC), cultural genocide "is the destruction of those structures and practices that allow the group to continue as a group" (TRCC, 2015a: 1). Residential schools played the most significant role in

disrupting and preventing the transmission of Aboriginal identity from one generation to the next and embedding within Aboriginal people a feeling that they neither belonged in their own communities nor the developing Canadian nation (Kirmayer, Gone, & Moses, 2014). A secondary layer of this social-emotional marginalization and historical trauma was the justification of this system propagated to non-Aboriginal Canadians (Sinclair, 2015), which resulted in a legacy of constructed cultural division and mistrust between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians (Deiter, 1999; MacDonald & Hudson, 2012; TRCC, 2015a).

Although these colonial policies were not 'successful' in achieving their stated aims, they had and continue to have devastating impacts on Indigenous people across Canada (Kirmayer, Gone & Moses; 2014; MacDonald & Hudson, 2012; Sinclair, 2010). Systemic violence and marginalization have not released Aboriginal people from colonial injustice and discrimination, and the continued suffering can be seen as ongoing structural conflict, not just the result of past trauma (Kirmayer, Gone & Moses, 2014). Historical trauma is the term used to by Kirmayer, Gone and Moses (2014) to describe the long-term impacts of colonization resulting in persistent health and wellness inequalities. Even when residential schools began to close in the 1970s, the provincial child-welfare systems stepped in to maintain the colonial aims (TRCC, 2015a). In the late 1970s, Aboriginal children constituted an average of 50% of the children in care across Canada (TRCC, 2015a: 72). Many studies indicate that even in the 21st century, the situation may not be improving markedly. Ten percent of "status Indian" children are in government-run care, and First Nations children are two and a half times more likely to be placed in out-of-home care than non-Aborginal children (Trocmé et al, 2005: 588). And as of 2015, more than 50% of the young people in care in BC were Aboriginal (ACCWG, 2015). The most likely reason for an Aboriginal child to be removed from their home is cited as "neglect," which

indicates the prevalence of poverty, poor housing conditions, and substance misuse in contemporary Aboriginal families (Trocmé et al, 2005).

The average rate of poverty for Aboriginal children was 41% in 2000 (Swift, 2011: 6). For the majority of Aboriginal people in Canada, life has been characterized by economic, social, and political disparity compared to national standards of living (McDonald & Hudson, 2012). Aboriginal status is considered a social determinant of health in Canada, and Aboriginal people experience a disproportionate burden of illness across all indicators of health (Newbold, 1998). Adelson (2005), along with other academics, argues that the collective burden of "a history of discriminatory practices, unjust laws, and economic or political disadvantage" have had an undeniable impact on experienced quality of life for Aboriginal people (46). The legacy of societal inequalities has taken its toll on individuals through disease, disability, violence, and premature death (Adelson, 2005). Additionally, Aboriginal communities experience higher rates of suicide, alcoholism, domestic and sexual violence, and mental health challenges than the national average, which have been linked to historical trauma (Kirmayer, Gone & Moses, 2014: 311; MacDonald & Hudson, 2012). These challenges are further exacerbated by the often actively discriminatory attitudes of the broader society towards indigeneity (Kirmayer, Gone & Moses, 2014).

Richard Wagamese (2012), articulates the personal and communal experience of these stark statistics in his novel, *Indian Horse:*

> When your innocence is stripped from you, when your people are
> denigrated, when the family you come from is denounced and your
> tribal ways and rituals are pronounced backward, primitive, savage,
> you come to see yourself as less than human. That is hell on earth, that
> sense of unworthiness. That's what they inflicted on us. (81).

Duran and Duran (1995) describe the system as having inflicted a collective "soul wound" on Indigenous people; historical trauma is a manifestation of this wound etched into the community beyond the body and mind (42).

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada
Concern over the systematic oppression of Aboriginal people rose in the late 1980s (TRCC, 2015a). In the 1990s, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples concluded that "a reign of disciplinary terror, punctuated by incidents of stark abuse" was sustained by the Canadian government through church-operated schools (RCAP, 1996: 373). Although no specific recommendations for reparation were made, the findings opened the door for future legal and restorative reconciliation processes (O'Connor, 2000).

In response to the RCAP, the Ministry for Indian Affairs and Northern Development acknowledged the physical and sexual abuse widely experienced in the government-developed residential schools, claiming that it was essential to learn from the past in order to "move forward together" (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1998). Although this statement was carefully crafted to avoid admissions that could be used in lawsuits against the government, by 2002 more than 11,000 legal cases had been filed through alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, indicating the significance of the justice system in the reconciliation process (Jung, 2009; O'Connor, 2000).

In 2009, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRCC) was created in response to the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, where the Canadian federal government acknowledged that "Canada and certain religious organizations operated Indian Residential Schools for the education of Aboriginal children...[and] certain harms and abuses were committed against those children" (IRSSA, 2006: 6). The TRCC aimed to collect and synthesize voluntary testimony from IRS survivors in order to expose and report on the realities of the

IRS system first before the next steps of reconciliation could be approached (TRCC, 2015a). Ultimately, it was created to educate all Canadians about the IRS system, and thereby move towards a new, respectful, and reconciled relationship between the government and Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people.

One important criticism of the TRCC is that it focuses specifically on the legacy of the IRS system, which reduces the scope of injustice and limits an understanding of the full extent of colonial policies against Aboriginal people and their continued relevance today (Jung, 2009). Weiss (2015) argues that the ambiguity of the foundational concepts, "truth" and "reconciliation," and the limited legal power of the TRCC process make genuine transformational success unlikely. Weiss (2015) sees the inability for the TRCC to achieve legal or punitive justice as a significant obstacle to reconciliation.

But, if the creation and five-year-long journey of the TRCC is an indication of anything, it signals the government's acknowledgement of the need to address the historical conflict and systemic trauma and violence of the past (Weiss, 2015). This alone places Canada in similar company as Northern Ireland, Boznia-Herzegovina, and Rwanda— all of which experienced more traditional violent conflicts (Pingel, 2009; Quaynor, 2012)— and speaks to the need for Canada to address their reconciliation process from a post-conflict perspective (Korteweg & Russell, 2012).

Reconciliation

One of the greatest challenges for post-conflict nations is developing an understanding of peace, reconciliation, and justice (Battiste, 2002). While these are ambiguous and complex concepts, the TRCC states that to establish and maintain a "mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples" in Canada, "there has to be awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes,

and action to change behaviour" (6). Another statement by the TRCC— "we must restore what must be restored, repair what must be repaired, and return what must be returned" (6)— will be simple in some cases, and challenging and contentious in others. This is further explored by Martin (2009), who argues that "in order to heal, to be forgiven, or to reconcile, we must first re-open wounds, recount sins, and resurrect conflicts. In order to forget, we must remember" (51).

The optimistic inclusivity of the term reconciliation has inspired some thought-provoking criticisms. Ultimately, the details of the reconciliation process are often intentionally or unintentionally overlooked (Martin, 2009). One of the main concerns is the fixation by non-Aboriginal Canadians and the government on resolution, which could be seen as premature and problematic in its correlation with 'forgetting' (Martin, 2009). Absolution from colonial injustices appears a more approachable aim than the challenging, messy, complex, intangible and long-term process of reconciliation, which often includes transitional justice and must result in positive peace (Alfred, 2009; Bellino, Paulson & Worden, 2017). This was particularly evident through the Harper government, where even the official apology for IRS failed to acknowledge its place within the history of colonialism. The Canadian government addressed one aspect of colonial assimilation, but absolved itself of the multifaceted system of colonial oppression that continues to impact contemporary political, socio-economic and cultural dynamics (Henderson & Wakeham, 2009).

The national discourse on reconciliation focuses primarily on setting aside differences in the pursuit of peacemaking and 'moving forward,' especially in relation to land claims (Henderson & Wakeham, 2009; TRCC, 2015a). Aboriginals' desire to connect with their unceded, untreatied, traditional territories is a significant area of disagreement that is still left relatively undiscussed (Alcantara, 2007). Conversations around land ownership and sovereignty raise

significant concerns for the status quo of settler society and the Canadian government (Henderson & Wakeham, 2009), but reconnection to lost lands holds cultural and religious significance in the reconciliatory justice process for Indigenous groups (TRCC, 2015a). As the TRCC did not have the jurisdiction to instigate legal repercussions on specific individuals or schools, and the IRS system itself was legalized, the TRCC mandate was unable to assess legal culpability (Weiss, 2015). For some, this fails to recognize the role that justice plays in the reconciliation process (Jung, 2009). That being said, legal compensation for personal experiences in the IRS system, the child welfare system, and over land claims is possible through the Canadian provincial and federal courts (McDonald & Hudson, 2012).

Martin (2009) claims that not finding a common understanding of or goals for reconciliation will only result in further injustice. Considering Galtung's (1969) conception of positive peace—the absence of structural and cultural forms of violence and the systemic existence of social justice and "positive and harmonious relations" (Eichler, 2016: 3)— reconciliation is a long process that demands fundamental change to the political and power structures that created and perpetuated negative societal phenomena against Aboriginal people (Eichler, 2017).

Ultimately, a more inclusive, balanced, and critical approach to the national history narrative is commonly articulated in all noteworthy perspectives of reconciliation that were available. Rod Robinson, a Nisga'a elder, claims that in order to "resolve the issues that separate us, that tear at the heart of this great country…then we must each retrace our steps through our history to the source of our misperception and misconception of each other's truth" (quoted in Battiste, 2002). This understanding of reconciliation demands a new pedagogical approach to history in schools. It is not enough to simply consume a single dictated historical narrative, critical analysis must be taught and the power

imbalances must be fundamentally challenged (Chrisjohn & Wasacase, 2009; McKegney, 2014). Justice Murray Sinclair, head of the TRCC, stated that "a just reconciliation requires more than simply talking about the need to heal the deep wounds of history... concrete action on both symbolic and material fronts is required" (quoted in Austen, 2015). Again, the education system has the potential to play a powerful role in approaching these goals and teaching the relevant skills (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Lauritzen, 2016; TRCC,2015a).

The remainder of the dissertation recognizes and addresses the relevant theories and research concerning post-conflict education. The literature review focuses on post-conflict education, and international and Canadian discourse on conflict and genocide to frame the argument that Canada is in a post-conflict period. The following section addresses the research methodology and data that were used to explore the potential for the new BC curriculum to effectively and authentically promote reconciliation and peacebuilding processes. I chose a critical theory research paradigm with an historical realist ontological perspective to connect to the post-conflict, postcolonial nature of the topic and give space for a transactional and subjectivist epistemology in consideration of future action plans. The findings section critically reviews the various documents most relevant to the new BC social studies curriculum, including the requirement of teachers to integrate Indigenous content into the classroom, and information provided by Ministry professionals on the curricula development process. Finally, the conclusion suggests adjusted approaches for teachers and the Ministry of Education aimed at improving the quality of teacher and student experience and success in the reconciliation process.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW—POST-CONFLICT EDUCATION

There is a global consensus that education plays a crucial role in post-conflict reconciliation efforts (Bellino, Paulson, Worden, 2017; Brown, 2011; Bush & Saltarelli, 2000). However, there remains ongoing discussion about how best to translate these efforts to the classroom and ensure their success. This is evident in the number of instances where education has not been effectively used to achieve the stated goals of reconstruction, peacebuilding, and reconciliation in post-conflict situations— in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Rwanda, and South Africa for example (Pingel, 2009). Furthermore, the opposing causal direction is also significant as conflict leaves destructive traces in the education system (Brown, 2011). The first part of the literature review focuses primarily on the international research on post-conflict education and the theoretical lenses through which researchers are exploring the use of education to reduce conflict and promote peace and reconciliation after internal identity-based violence. The second chapter in the literature review addresses the Canadian historical and contemporary situation through a postcolonial lens, exploring the extent to which Canada should be considered a post-conflict nation.

Orthodox Perspectives

The mantle of expectation rests heavy on the shoulders of the education system and teachers, especially in post-conflict societies. Education is viewed globally as an essential tool with which to transform individuals, communities, and society. A site of mobilization, education intersects with countless dimensions of culture, politics, the economy, and society (Brown, 2011). Despite limited quantitative data, there is evidence that education plays a crucial role in conflict and post-conflict situations. For this reason, it is becoming more commonly used to promote peace, create a cohesive national identity—especially through language and history courses—and to reduce inequality by providing access to greater skills and financial opportunities (Sahlberg, 2007).

In conflict and early post-conflict situations, education is normatively perceived as the fourth pillar of humanitarian aid (Machel, 2001). Baraket et al. (2013) recognize the role that successful implementation of basic education plays in reinforcing peacebuilding processes, building government legitimacy and promoting recovery and reconciliation values and practices. The World Bank has conducted large-scale assessments that support the decentralization of authoritarian regimes, legitimize education ministries, and reconstruct and strengthen school and community programs (Buckland, 2005). The Education in Emergencies and Post-Crisis Transition program, created in 2007 to support sustainable progress towards basic education for all, increased the resilience of education service delivery (UNICEF, 2011). In addition, the 2011 Education For All (EFA) report concluded that despite the potential for education to be misused and manipulated, it is ultimately necessary for recovery from conflict (Barakat et al, 2013). The research conducted by Barakat et al (2013) demonstrated that in countries like Kenya, Nepal, and South Sudan, where significant tensions related to identity have long resulted in intra-state conflict, education that focused on creating peaceful, pedagogy-driven learning environments for all children was necessary to address social divisions. This research reinforces the recent increased global support for maintaining functional education even throughout conflict so that post-conflict education efforts do not have to start from scratch (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Paulson, 2008).

I. Education and Social Cohesion
Beyond direct conflict, nations with significant internal cultural divisions recognize education as a normative tool to promote social cohesion (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Pingel, 2009; Quaynor, 2012). Niens and McIlrath (2010) found that teachers and students in Northern Ireland supported the idea of discussing controversial topics, specifically historical, in classrooms to confront the indoctrination of students against 'othered' groups. The desegregation of schools

and Education for Mutual Understanding in Northern Ireland, for example, have eroded geographic and ideological sectarian divisions (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000), and promoted societal satisfaction and economic growth (Brown, 2011). This advance is also reflected in the efforts of UNESCO through EFA to increase access to education and then address quality (Quaynor, 2012). Furthermore, Bush & Saltarelli (2000) refer to the impact that bilingual language programs have had on increasing inter-group understanding and decreasing cultural tensions in places like Canada and the United States. Language is directly connected to culture and identity, and being able to communicate across cultures decreases societal barriers and promotes cultural sensitivity (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000).

II. Education and Human Capital Theory

For nations aspiring to be more competitive in the global economic market, human capital theory argues that investing in education increases the economic capability and capacity of the population and engagement with global markets (Dahlman, Routti, Ylä-Anttila, 2006; Sahlberg, 2007), which in turn promotes national stability and growth. This approach is clearly embedded in Sustainable Development Goal 8 — "community cohesion and personal security" result from investments in quality education that provide young people with employment skills and opportunities (UN SDG8, 2015). Hanushek and Wößmann (2007) consolidate the relevant empirical research and conclude that educational quality has a significant impact on individual and national economic growth and equality. The data suggest that this remains the case, despite concerns over the injection of economics-focused initiatives into the education system, considering the impact that socio-economic background has on student experience and attainment in school (Colclough, 2012; Tikly, 2004).

III. Education and the Social Determinants of Health

Additionally, education is considered a social determinant of health, related directly to quality of life and socio-economic status (Low et al, 2005; Ross and

Van Willigen, 1997). Well-educated people experience more agency in lifestyle and health behaviours and greater access to additional education, job opportunities, and 'spiritual resources'—including a sense of community, work ethic, and self-esteem—which support informed judgements and the development of resilience (Fogel, 1999). While the research indicates that these are especially relevant factors in the conflict and post-conflict literature (Barakat et al, 2010, 2013; Machel, 2001), there is some critical commentary on resilience that should be addressed here. Resilience does not make one invulnerable to stress (Olsson et al, 2003), but better able to recover positively from negative events due to a "dynamic ability to adapt, cope and transcend disruption or longer-term adversity" (Garrett, 2015: 1913). Evidently, resilience is a useful quality to develop in young people, but some critical academics claim that it places the responsibility on the individual (and educators), instead of challenging the societal expectations and external factors that have created targeted adversity (Bottrell, 2009; Garrett, 2015). This is an important perspective to consider, especially in the context of post-conflict education. Ultimately, the Commission on Social Determinants of Health (2008) explicitly recognizes the role that education plays in establishing critical foundations for the lives of young people, including resilience. Providing this support amidst violence, social disruption, and systemic marginalization is challenging, but crucial, especially when conflict destroys education infrastructure and then begets more violence (Novelli & Cardozo, 2008).

For these orthodox perspectives, education serves as a protective asset, especially for the young people who are most vulnerable in fragile, conflicted spaces (Bellino, Paulson, & Worden, 2017). But that does not mean that education can provide a guaranteed magic solution to conflict.

Critical Perspectives

The orthodox perspectives on education in post-conflict situations are commonly challenged in recent literature for their overly optimistic focus on education potential (see Ahonen, 2014; Burde et al., 2017; Mundy & Dryden-Peterson, 2015). More critical perspectives recognize that education has two faces (Bellino, Paulson, & Worden, 2017; Paulson, 2008). It is deeply politicized and can be easily exploited by governments and powerful organizations (Brown, 2011). Just as it can promote social cohesion, education can be used in exclusionary ways to incite violence and group-focused enmity (Czyzewski, 2011; Tawil & Harley, 2004; Brown, 2011). It is important to consider the problematic role that education can play in conflict and take responsibility for establishing a growth mindset approach to continuous improvement.

I. Education and Social Reproduction Theory

Social reproduction theory, for example, argues that schools are mechanisms that perpetuate social inequalities (Bellino, Paulson, & Worden, 2017). From this perspective, educational systems maintain and then reproduce the legacies of inequality and exclusions historically experienced by marginalized groups, thereby compounding injustice from generation to generation. Parkes (2007) explores how governments craft specific national narratives in order to build a preferred national identity. This is relevant in former colonial nations like Australia and Canada, where the design and delivery of the history curriculum were used to celebrate Anglo-European histories and marginalize, misrepresent, or entirely erase Indigenous narratives (Russell, 2001). Parkes (2007) states that, even today, the use of education to reproduce prescribed narratives diminishes citizens' ability to think critically and perpetuates socio-economic inequality and cultural divisions. In a postcolonial context, this means that although the colonial regime may fall, people continue to be oppressed through the "discourse in which the subjectivities and identities" have been inscribed (Parkes, 2001: 392; Spivak, 1997). Although there is limited quantitative evidence to support

Bourdieu's social reproduction hypothesis, research conducted by Dale, Lindley & Dex, (2008) demonstrates that schools do perpetuate exclusionary practices that specifically target minorities, despite governmental endeavours to expand access to educational facilities.

II. Education and Neoliberalism

Furthermore, the neoliberalization of education arguably forces a public right to become a private good (Gandin & Apple, 2002). Integration of neoliberal values into public services, like education and healthcare, can allow the marketplace to determine the distribution of resources based on standardized accountability mechanisms, which results in limited teacher and school agency and a greater inclination towards privatization (Bellino, Paulson, & Worden, 2017). Analysis of the globalization of neoliberal values argues that this process increases inequality and inequity (Raphael & Bryant, 2006), as evidenced by United Nations human development reports (MacEwan, 1999) and in research conducted by Burde (2012) in Afghanistan. Increasing levels of disparity can exacerbate conflict, as explained by the critical political economy approach. Duffield (2001) claims that a neoliberal global economy is grounded by mechanisms that either exclude specific groups from the benefits of globalization or enforce foreign mechanisms of globalization that foment exclusion, and push people towards illicit activities, crime and violence (Novelli et al., 2014). Education in Afghanistan, for example, has recently been reframed by the Millennium Development Goals and Education for All, stressing the economic benefits of human capital theory and secularization over social inclusion, justice, individual well-being, and the peace-building needs of the local population (Novelli et al., 2014). The increasing levels of violence are indicative of the resentment experienced by some local groups against the significant control that foreign nations and organizations have over Afghan systems (Glad, 2009; Novelli et al, 2014; Vanner, Akseer & Kovinthan, 2017). Overall, access to low quality (when compared to private institutions), foreign-mandated education has yet to result

in access to the greater skills and financial opportunities promised by neoliberal globalization and human capital theory (Brown, 2011; Sahlberg, 2007).

III. Education and Postcolonialism

Postcolonialism is also a common lens used to evaluate post-conflict education. It acknowledges the history and legacy of colonialism and challenges new structures of discourse and power reinforced through the education system (Rizvi, Lingard, & Lavia, 2006). Commonly, colonial assumptions remain embedded in the structures, discourses, and practices of the education system. Literature claims that justice, equity, and positive peace can only be accessed with significant, intentional unsettling of these pervasive assumptions and world views (Galtung, 1969; Girouard-Frappier, 2014; Takayama, Siprakash & Connell, 2017). Acknowledging and beginning to compensate for the legacy of colonialism requires more than simply expanding access to the educational structures that were used to reinforce the exclusion and marginalization in the first place (Bellino, Paulson, & Worden, 2017).

Postcolonial Theory and The Legacy of Colonialism in Canada

For this dissertation, postcolonialism has been placed at the forefront of the analysis of both the legacy of colonialism in Canada and the curriculum reform in BC. Postcolonialism, as a set of debates that questions the North-South modes of discourse and structures of power that impact identities, social relations, politics, and the distributions of wealth and resources, is especially pertinent in the Canadian context (Andreotti, 2006).

In order to frame our understanding of historical injustices in Canada and their impact on the social, cultural, and economic inequalities of the present (Beavis et al., 2015), we need to question the new curriculum and to what extent it can effectively undermine the colonial legacy and promote reconciliation.

In Canada, colonialism established and celebrated a power relationship between the British and those they perceived as racially and culturally inferior obstacles to British territorial expansion and economic development (Beavis et al, 2015; Wolfe, 2006). Seeing Aboriginal peoples as uncivilized and spiritually heathen laid a foundation for the imposition of social control and the separation of Aboriginal children from their traditional communities under the guise of 'cultural transformation' (TRCC, 2015a). As was clear in the popularization of Rudyard Kipling's poem at the turn of the 19th century, Britain claimed responsibility for the civilization of the non-white world (Kipling, 1899; Nagai, 2007). This colonial 'burden' was also articulated in 1883 by Lord Rosebery: "It is on the British race...that rests the highest hopes of those who try to penetrate the dark future, or who seek to raise and better the patient masses of mankind" (quoted in TRCC, 2015a: 51). The colonial program went far beyond occupation of the lands into the colonization of the mind, through the inscription on the historical record of an inferior, subdued population (Parkes, 2007). The British imposed their beliefs and values on the "patient masses" with the presumption of universally superiority (TRCC, 2015a; Hutcheon, 2004). Similar to the United States where 'full-blood Indians' were considered "legally incompetent" (Lawrence, 2003: 15), the colonial system in Canada adhered to the British belief in a paternal relationship that made Indigenous peoples "wards" of the British empire (TRCC, 2015a; Turpel, 1993).

The Canadian government, established in 1867, justified the cultural, social, and economic manipulation of Aboriginal nations and individuals in order to legally dissolve their political agency, territorial rights, and cultural existence (TRCC, 2015a). The 1876 *Indian Act* provides a clear example of the extent to which the government legislated control over all aspects of Indigenous lives (TRCC, 2015a). It allowed the Canadian government to track and manage the Indigenous presence with the express intention of eliminating a culture deemed unfit for

survival (Library and Archives Canada, 1920). It was with the *Indian Act* that systemic cultural genocide was most clearly and comprehensively legislated.

The IRS system, first defined in the *Indian Act,* was an integral part of the colonial policy toward Aboriginal people (TRCC, 2015a). It aimed the colonial worldview and legislative intentions directly at First Nations children, viewed as easier to manipulate, exploit, and mould, than their parents, who were already too far steeped in their cultural practices and values (TRCC, 2015a). The residential schools gave the government a tool to manipulate First Nations' self-perception in light of the unequal power relationship with colonial settlers and vice versa (Currie, 1990). It was in these schools that First Nations children were directly educated about their colonial position as an oppressed people (Regan, 2010). This perception, that Indigenous peoples could only retain 'value' (as defined by the colonial government) if they were amputated from their traditional culture, was widely articulated in schools and the media and quickly became embedded in the Canadian consciousness (Henderson & Wakeham, 2009; Sinclair, 2010).

The colonial legacy is firmly reinforced in contemporary Canadian social, political, and economic structures (Adelson, 2005; Jung, 2009). In response to this, postcolonialism is useful to frame the analysis not only of the colonial system, but also of the continued prioritization of British colonial values, beliefs, and ways of seeing the world (McKegney, 2014). In 2009, even after offering an official apology for the government's role in the IRS system, Prime Minister Stephen Harper stated that Canada had "no history of colonialism" (Wherry, 2009). Even in the 21st century, the Canadian government was explicitly confining the colonial oppression of Indigenous peoples to the historical realm, instead of recognizing its continuing, multifaceted impact on contemporary society (Henderson & Wakeham, 2009). The celebration of the British mark on Canada is especially clear in history curricula. The political system, the names of

towns, cities, and provinces, and the famous explorers who 'discovered' the new world illustrate the British colonization of what would become Canada (Hutcheon, 2004).

While Canada may not yet be considered a traditional postcolonial space like the West Indies or India (Hutcheon, 2004), postcolonial analysis of social structures, like education, still demands a more balanced narrative that reinforces more equitable practices. It is especially important to understanding the ways in which we unintentionally continue to perpetrate practices associated with or derived from colonialism—education cannot be separated from the broader sociocultural contexts, and therefore each intimately influences the other (Beavis, 2015).

A postcolonial approach will also give necessary space for Indigenous knowledge[2] and perspectives, which are essential to an inclusive and balanced critical analysis of education for reconciliation in BC (Takayama, Sriprakash & Connell, 2017). As a result of the pervasive power of the colonial ideology, the challenge first is to acknowledge the colonial legacy that continues to define the nation. And second, to force or demand an internal, collective interrogation of the 'normative' principles that maintain socio-cultural, political, and economic inequality and the marginalization of Aboriginal people (McKenzie et al, 2016). Without making space for Indigenous knowledge, perspectives, and stories, we will not be able to dismantle the colonial legacy and work towards reconciliation and positive peace (Galtung, 1969). The postcolonial perspective emphasizes critical engagement with multiple worldviews and ways of knowing in order to undermine the problematic assumptions layered in our education practices

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[2] The definition for Indigenous knowledge and perspectives that I find most comprehensive and useful for this context has been borrowed from the Battiste, M (2002) text, titled *Indigenous Knowledge and Pedagogy in First Nations Education: A Literature Review with Recommendations:*
"Indigenous knowledge thus embodies a web of relationships within a specific ecological context; contains linguistic categories, rules, and relationships unique to each knowledge system; has localized content and meaning; has established customs with respect to acquiring and sharing of knowledge (not all Indigenous peoples equally recognize their responsibilities); and implies responsibilities for possessing various kinds of knowledge."

(Andreotti, 2006). In the words of author Lee Maracle (1996), "the voices of the unheard cannot help but be of value" in this process.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW—CANADA AS A POST-CONFLICT NATION

In order to discuss the potential for the use of education as a tool to promote peacebuilding and reconciliation in Canada, we must first explore the extent to which Canada can be considered a post-conflict country. The treatment of Aboriginal people in Canada has been defined in a variety of ways, from colonization to systemic violence to genocide. How we as a nation define the historical relationship between the Canadian government and Aboriginal people has a significant impact on the contemporary discourse and the path to reconciliation (Sexias, 2009).

The most simplistic definition of a post-conflict society refers to one that has recently experienced a violent conflict that affected the daily lives of citizens (Chetail, 2009) and resulted in at least twenty-five deaths per year (Harbom & Wallensteen, 2009). Education for post-conflict reconciliation should not only strive for an end to violent conflict, but also to achieve positive peace and thick democracy. Achievement of 'thick democracy' sets the foundation for broader transformative processes of sustainable structural peace, demanding meaningful and equitable civic participation through the processes. Where peacebuilding relates more closely to the concepts of reconstruction and recovery after violent conflict, and focuses on development assistance and building national capacity for long-term growth and sustainable development (UNDP, 2000), reconciliation appears more complex and ambiguous. Ball (2005) argues that reconciliation is essential for establishing an authentic culture of peace by healing the social wounds, but still recognizes the need for positive peace, compromise, justice, and the absence of violent conflict.

Canada and Conflict

Despite being a nation founded on cultural division, Canada is not included in the research on post-conflict nations, and civil violence is rarely affiliated with

Canada. Conflict has not violently affected the daily lives of all citizens, nor has there been a considerable death toll, relative to other historic conflicts. Despite that, the National Residential School Death Register, created in 2015, found evidence that between 1867 and 2000, approximately 3,200 students died in IRS, a far higher number than those students in the general population (TRCC, 2015a: 93). And a 2014 federal police report found that 1,271 Aboriginal women and girls had been killed or were missing between 1980 and 2012 and two hundred and twenty-five of these cases still remain unsolved (RCMP, 2014). Overlooked or not, Canada is still a country divided by conflict. The violent and systematic colonization and oppression of Indigenous peoples by the Canadian government resulted in deeply embedded inequitable divisions and Indigenous peoples continue suffer from systemic discrimination, violence, and marginalization today.

Although the Canadian case does not fit perfectly into this definition, it is evident that conflict between Aboriginal and the government has significantly impacted the daily lives of Aboriginal Canadians, as well as the Canadian national identity (Martin, 2009; Robinson, 2013). Even with the relatively low number of deaths, the IRS system still meets the 'conflict' criteria between 1876 and 1996 (Sambanis, 2004; TRCC, 2015a). And while many non-Aboriginal Canadians who did not live near reservations or an Indian Residential School may have been unaware of the daily conflict (Regan, 2010), many lives were directly and devastatingly impacted (TRCC, 2015a). And those who were far removed from the sites themselves, would still have been exposed to the government's propagated image of Indigenous peoples (Regan, 2010), thereby instilling in Canadian citizens the perception of conflict between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian values of civilization and modernization (Milloy, 2017).

Although the term 'post-conflict' has not been formally or academically applied to Canada, there is evidence in new curricula that there is an intentional

attempt to use education as a tool for conflict-related reconciliation (BC MoE, 2010). Additionally, there is language used throughout the political discourse in Canada that further illustrates the relevance and timeliness of exploring these issues (Austen, 2017; Canadian Press, 2018; Trudeau, 2018). Fraser (2005; 2008) claims that systemic injustice, political misrepresentation and misframing, constitute contemporary forms of conflict, which cannot be reconciled through symbolic gestures alone. While defining Canada as a post-conflict nation may not make a difference in some contexts, limitations will continue to undermine this conversation and political action without official recognition of the complexities and controversial issues inherent in Canadian colonial history. Sambanis (2004) discusses the ongoing challenges with defining and coding conflict, especially in cases where levels of violence fluctuate widely over space and time, like in the case of Canada. Crean (2009) however, argues that Canadians have a moral and ethical obligation to explicitly acknowledge the prevailing value system that legalized and continues to perpetrate a system of injustice and conflict.

Canada and the Genocide Debate

Canada's history also places it in an interesting academic and legal discussion on the concept of "genocide." While there is reasonable evidence to evaluate Canada as a post-conflict nation (King, 2005; Korteweg & Russell, 2012; Quaynor, 2012; TRC, 2015), there is also reason to consider its post-genocide status (McDonald & Hudson, 2012; TRC, 2015; Wolfe, 2006).

First, we must consider the legal definition of genocide and genocidal offences in relation to the IRS system. There is considerable dissonance between genocide scholars and the judicial system around the concept of genocide (MacDonald & Hudson, 2012) and international law and Canadian domestic law have established significantly different definitions. The original definition of genocide, written by Raphael Lemkin (1944), described a broad and inclusive "coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of the essential foundations of the life

of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves" (27). The important distinction between his definition and our contemporary popular understanding of genocide is that extermination was not considered crucial to the destruction of a group. He claimed that genocide included the "disintegration of the political and social institutions, of culture, language, national feelings, religion, and the economic existence of national groups and the destruction of personal security, liberty, health, dignity, and even the lives of the individuals" (27-28). Lemkin's definition was narrowed during the UN Genocide Convention (UNGC) in order to absolve some nations of legal obligations (MacDonald & Hudson, 2012). Canada was one such country with their federally sponsored policies of assimilation. The final UNGC definition only protects religious, national, ethnic, and racial groups (Power, 2002; UN, 1948), but is still more inclusive than the ratified Canadian definition of genocide. Genocide constitutes any intention of the following acts:

> (a) Killing members of the group;
> (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
> (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
> (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
> (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group (UN Secretariat, 1947)

This definition established a framework for genocide as a crime prohibited under international law (UN, 2018). The Canadian legal definition, ratified into federal law in 1952, only includes points (a) and (b) (MacDonald & Hudson, 2012). This has resulted in contentious and politicized international debates (Bolen, 2014; Fontaine & Farber, 2013; Friesen, 2013), as well as case-by-case developments in the Canadian domestic legal system (MacDonald, & Hudson, 2012). Through this process, consensus in the Canadian system found that genocidal offences were perpetrated in residential schools, which constitute serious bodily and mental harm that "prevent[s] the victim from living a normal life" and "threaten[s] to

destroy the targeted group in whole or in part" (R. c. Munyaneza, 2009: para. 87). But this precedent remains case-specific, and the international definition of genocide is still seen by many as a political or moral standard, not a legally binding document (MacDonald & Hudson, 2012). These debates notwithstanding, the Canadian government has yet to admit that the policy of assimilation, including the IRS system, constitutes genocide under the UN or federal definition. As a result of the TRCC, the term "cultural genocide" has been used to describe the treatment of Aboriginal peoples by the Canadian government (Pullella, 2017), but this term is a political and moral acquiescence, and not legally binding (TRCC, 2015a; UN Nations, n.d.). It should be noted that the definition of cultural genocide relates closely to the original intention of Lemkin's definition for genocide. In the context of this essay, the evidence, legal constructs, and discussions on the IRS system and genocide help to establish a deeper rhetorical space into which to move the conversation around reconciliation and positive peace in Canada.

CHAPTER 4: DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Research Paradigm

My research, concerned with exploring the role of education in combating this legacy of systemic violence, cultural genocide, legal discrimination and marginalization is framed by a critical theory research paradigm with an historical realist ontological perspective. This complements the postcolonial theoretical lens addressed in the second chapter. Guba & Lincoln (1994) state that historical realism describes a reality that was once flexible, but became more structured over time as it was shaped by social, political, cultural, and economic factors, resulting in the structures becoming "historical reality" (110). There are ontological similarities between critical historical realism and constructivist relativism in the understanding of the world as socially constructed and the belief that people share experiences based on their interactions with those constructions. The important difference between the two paradigms is the significance of the historical element. The power of the western European hegemony, cemented over centuries, continues to influence global realities and marginalize former colonized peoples (Jung, 2009; Kirmayer, Gone & Moses, 2014). Geo-politics and literature acknowledge that we have yet to experience any major modification or adjustment to these structures since their global acceptance as reality (Beavis et al., 2015; Chrisjohn, Young, & Maraun, 2003; Mishra, 2017).

The epistemological question, which focuses on the relationship between what I know and what I believe can be known, can be defined as transactional and subjectivist — my values are inextricably linked to the inquiry I have chosen to pursue (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). My personal and professional interest in education, my belief that education is among the most crucial tools to increase access to social justice, and my experience as a historian drove my desire to engage with this research. In order to explore this subject area, dialectical dialogue with education professionals and the literature has been a crucial

component of the methodology. Giroux (1988) explains this transformational approach to methodological inquiry as an attempt to "uncover and excavate those forms of historical and subjugated knowledges that point to experiences of suffering, conflict, and collective struggle…to link the notion of historical understanding to elements of critique and hope" (213). It is in pursuit of greater empathetic and dialectic understanding in order to prompt, encourage, and guide positive change that all of my work is ultimately aimed. Valuable personal and professional growth have also been furthered throughout the process of this dissertation—allowing me to explore my passion, problematize the aspects of education that we consider inherent to the system, and develop my confidence as a student, academic, and educator.

Personal Position

In terms of my personal position in the research process, it is important to note that I chose this topic intentionally in recognition of the questions, concerns, and challenges I experienced as a student and young teacher. In light of this fact, and based on the critical interpretivist perspective, I acknowledge that this process is not objective, and believe that my subjectivity, borne of passionate commitment, increases the quality and relevance of the project (Stenbacka, 2001). My understanding for and belief in the new curriculum reform comes in part from my Bachelors of Education school experience at the University of British Columbia. Even before the new curriculum was officially released, students training to be teachers were exposed to the value, purpose, legitimacy and integrity of Aboriginal knowledge and perspectives, contemporary social justice issues, differentiated instructional values and strategies, and the First Nations Principles of Learning.

For myself, as a non-Indigenous Canadian teacher, I have relied on the perspectives, guidance, and written work of Aboriginal Canadians in an attempt to develop an authentic understanding of the historical and contemporary

experiences of Indigenous peoples. Fiction, in particular, has been a useful tool to immerse myself in the perspectives of individuals whose experiences have differed markedly from my own. As an historian, the novel provides important information and emotional connections to alternate perspectives that are unavailable in other sources (Allen, 1983). Although fiction does not hold the same perceived academic value as other forms of evidence (Howell & Prevenier, 2001), I choose to integrate fiction into my understanding of history, especially concerning the deep, emotionally personal experiences of those people who have lived through past or distant events. By reading the stories in fictional texts alongside the primary sources, quantitative data, and peer-reviewed articles, the picture that emerges is clearer, richer, and more emotionally complex. This way of developing meaning also aligns with the historical realist ontological approach to reality, which recognizes that people, documents, and structures cannot be objectively removed from the context in which they were formed (Guba & Lincoln, 2011). In this case, I believe that using fiction written by Indigenous authors provides powerful insight into Indigenous knowledge, perspectives, and stories in opposition to a system that attempted to silence and bury the Indigenous voice. Academically, there is a recognized connection between the development of international human rights law and the popularization of the idealistic *bildungsroman* novel (Slaughter, 2006), further demonstrating the influence that the novel can have on our understanding of the human condition and the historical expansion of human rights.

Research Methods

This qualitative research project combines information collected through literature review and semi-structured interviews to analyze policy documents through a critical postcolonial lens. The survey of literature began with research into scholarly databases, focusing on post-conflict education, reconciliation, history education, and Indigenous knowledge and perspectives. International research and case studies were identified in the literature review to provide

comparison and guidance to the developing Canadian case. My research on theory focused on similar databases with peer-reviewed articles. In this way, I was able to establish a foundational understanding of relevant orthodox and critical approaches to post-conflict education, with specific focus on the critical postcolonial framework. The postcolonial approach structures the analysis of the new BC curriculum in reference to the historical events and colonial relationship between the Canadian government and Aboriginal peoples and the potential for reconciliation (Kirmayer, Gone & Moses, 2014; TRCC, 2015a).

I. Literature Review

In the case of this project, where post-conflict education and reconciliation-based research is still relatively new (Ahonen, 2012; Bellino, Paulson, & Worden, 2017), a literature review established a common ground upon which the Canadian context could be considered (Webster & Watson, 2002). Additionally, it opens the critical analysis of the research already available and explores the limitations of the conclusions. Relevant independent projects, resources, and developing initiatives were also collected and addressed to provide a broader understanding of the education for reconciliation and positive peace movement in Canada. As Canada does not fit easily into post-conflict, post-genocide, colonial or imperial categories, this literature review also provides structure to the scope of this research and the scope of the developing analysis. In recognition of this, the dissertation concludes by considering future research that could fill in the gaps in this field.

II. Document Analysis

Using the policy documents that have recently been produced by the BC Ministry further grounds this research in a tangible and relevant reality. The reformed curriculum documents reveal information about the contemporary discourse in global, national, and regional education, and the BC government's response to the TRCC report. This analysis of the new curriculum is intended to consider the

pedagogical approaches, information and activities, and values being explored and digested in classrooms around BC. Some consideration of assessment mechanisms addresses the extent to which the Ministry will be able to measure the successes and failures of this reform. Adding information collected from Ministry professionals provides further clarity to the policy documents.

III. Semi-structured Interviews

The semi-structured interviews targeted individuals working in the BC Ministry of Education who could have professional insight into the curriculum development process, current and future goals, and underlying intentions, specific to the integration of Aboriginal content into the classroom. This methodological tool was chosen as it allowed me to investigate a specific area, but leave space for the expertise of the professionals to direct some of the process. With the flexibility of this style, I could follow up on information that was provided in conversation and clarify points that were unclear or previously unexplored. Additionally, it was a useful method through which to ask the professionals to comment on the information provided in literature-based research. This would not have been possible in surveys, observations, or questionnaires.

Validity/Reliability

In order to further establish the trustworthiness of the methodology, I would like to clarify my understanding of validity and reliability in the broad context of qualitative research. Although reliability and validity are most commonly used in positivist epistemology, they still establish a standard in the qualitative and naturalistic realm of research (Winter, 2000).

In quantitative research, reliability can be defined as the extent to which results or observations are replicable when using similar methodology (Joppe, 2000). Understanding, which is paramount in qualitative research projects, may not be easily measured by reliability, especially when you consider what and how you

are measuring (Stenbacka, 2001). A more appropriate concept to aim for, according to the recent literature, is 'trustworthiness' (Golafhani, 2003). Healy & Perry (2000) advocate strongly for using various methods and perspectives through interviews, discussions, available contemporary literature, and well-established theoretical literature to reinforce the 'trustworthiness' of the qualitative research conducted, especially when using a critical theory and historical realist ontological perspective. In this case, a range of sources enhance the trustworthiness of my research process and conclusions.

Validity determines the extent to which the research accurately measures what it is intended to measure (Joppe, 2000). Golafshani (2003) recognizes that while replicability may not be relevant to qualitative research, credibility and transferability should be maintained in all research projects. Validity in qualitative research should focus less on measurability and more on the extent to which the conclusions provide meaningful understanding to the specified area of study (Stenbacka, 2001). The sources I chose can be considered valid because they work within the Ministry of Education, their work is part of the "problem area," and they have the opportunity to speak freely about their own knowledge and expertise (Stenbacka, 2001: 552).

According to Healy & Perry (2000), in order to establish trustworthiness and validity within a critical theory research paradigm, the above-defined criteria relating to ontology, epistemology, and methodology should be used to judge the quality of the research. This can be tricky with a realistic ontology, because it deals so much more with subjective, fragile boundaries than positivism. But, using multiple perspectives on a single reality, along with a variety of data sources, can result in dependable, trustworthy, and valid conclusions. By combining multiple layers of data, it is possible not only to explain what happened historically, but why it happened and why it has resulted in contemporary injustice and inequity, thereby establishing contingent validity and

trustworthiness (Golaghani, 2003; Yin, 1994). It is important to note that this validity is contingent on the specific context in which it was developed. Testing my conclusions against an already-established theory, such as postcolonialism, allowed me to determine construct validity, trustworthiness, and produce relevant meaning to consider transformational change (Healy & Perry, 2000).

Data Analysis Methods

Odena's (2013: 366) 'generative model of social knowledge development' was useful to structure the data analysis methods used throughout the dissertation process.

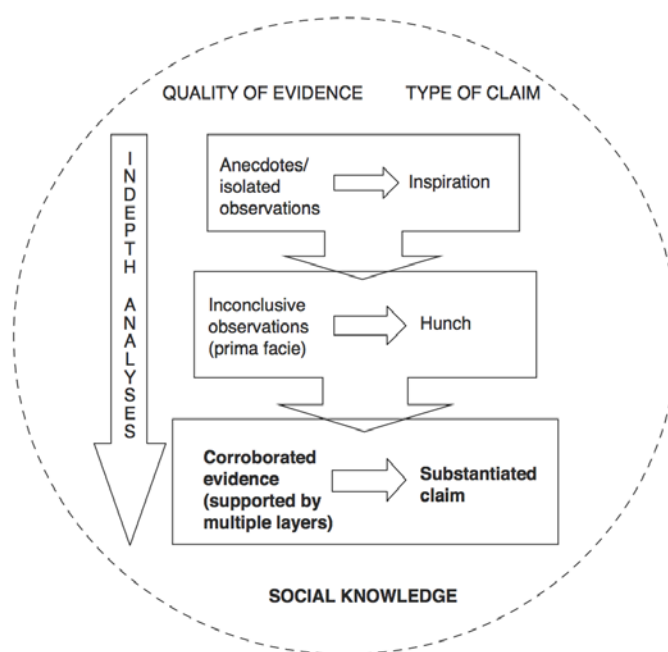*Figure 1: A generative model of social knowledge development. Source: Odena (2013)*

It positions 'making meaning' as the ultimate aim of data analysis, and allows for multiple layers of exploration, questioning, reflection, and dialogue throughout the process of deliberation (Odena, 2013). This reflects an authentic engagement with the research process, which is often messy, multifaceted, and recursive. It

provides space for reflecting on the material available on the spot, drawing on existing frameworks and literature review, and reflections processed before and after the data analysis, all in a fluid, cyclical structure (Day, 1999; Odena, 2013; Schön, 1983). This model also provided an effective structure to my data analysis without using Information Communication Technologies (ICT), which I determined would be unnecessary and could complicate the data collection and analysis process. In line with my research paradigm, theoretical framework, and the personal and individual elements inherent in education, de-contextualizing the data and removing the human element from the interpretation of meaning would neither serve the process nor the outcome (Odena, 2013; Richards, 2002).

Ethics

This research follows the guidelines established by, and has been approved by, the University of Glasgow School of Education Ethics Committee (2018).

Although the ethical considerations for this dissertation are low-risk (University of Glasgow College of Social Sciences, 2016), there are some issues that should be clarified. First, no vulnerable people, as defined by the Ethics Committee (University of Glasgow, 2016), were interviewed or observed.

My personal investment in this subject area, as already recognized in my research paradigm, comes from my professional commitment to the BC Ministry of Education as a certified teacher. There are inherent ethical issues that should be acknowledged when members of an organization are critiquing the host organization (University of Glasgow, 2016). This also applies to the requested participation of Ministry employees to discuss and reflect on the new BC curriculum, which they were involved in developing and disseminating. In order to protect participants against potential professional or personal harm, anonymity of the participants interviewed has been maintained (ESRC, 2015).

Additionally, the BC Ministry of Education has been made aware of this research and the involvement of professional and consenting members of the Ministry.

Limitations

Ultimately, every research project is subject to limitations, and this one is no different. First, the newness of the curriculum and the ongoing development of reconciliation discourse, research, and projects in Canada mean that while this research is contemporarily relevant, the landscape is shifting and Canada-specific research on this topic is still developing (Kirmayer, Gone, & Moses, 2014; Korteweg & Russell, 2012; TRCC, 2015a). With the federal Liberal government in power for at least another year and BC's provincial NDP government's mandate for a three-year commitment to education, the curriculum reform and reconciliation projects should continue as indicated by the governments. Second, interviews, while important for more in-depth, flexible investigation, are less effective in producing overarching information that can be used to make generalizable conclusions. Interviews are time-consuming and the limited number of people interviewed and involved in the research means that there is potential for missed opportunities, information, and insights (Merriam, 1998). As mentioned, the interviews focused primarily on Ministry professionals to collect additional insight into the development of the new curriculum and the future goals which may not yet have been firmly established. Through these conversations, it is evident that participants were committed to adhering to the Ministry agenda, thereby limiting the information that contrasted with the messages and content of public Ministry documents. These points indicate a possibility for there to be limitations in the understanding of potential intended and unintended consequences and knowledge of how the new curricular and pedagogical approach is being implemented in individual schools and classrooms.

The various forms of data were ultimately amalgamated and analyzed to identify key emergent themes in an attempt to determine the potential for the new BC

curricula to address and encourage reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. After summarizing the background research and primary findings and evaluating the current situation regarding the integration of Indigenous knowledge and perspectives for reconciliation in BC, this dissertation will conclude with inferences about and suggestions for the future of education for reconciliation in Canada and the role that the BC Ministry can play in supporting more effective progress and positive outcomes.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

The new BC Curriculum was established in response to the Global Education Reform Movement, the 2012 Tripartite Education Framework Agreement (TEFA), and the TRCC's Calls to Action (MoEd, 2015). In this way, the new BC curriculum fits into a broader global and national context of educational development, focusing specifically on increasing skill development over content acquisition and educational equality and equity (Banks & Banks, 2010). It responds directly to increasing pressure on the government to address, repair, and advance the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples. Documents like the TEFA and the TRCC Calls to Action provide guidance and progressive aims for this process, and the TRCC executive summary report has played an important role in documenting the history of colonialism and the IRS system in Canada. Additionally, the First Nations Principles of Learning have been instrumental in guiding the BC government's approach to integrating Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into the curriculum, as well as teacher training programs. It is through an analysis of the BC curriculum documents, in the context of global and national education reform movements and supplemented by my conversations with Ministry officials, that I consider the extent to which Aboriginal attainment and reconciliation goals can be achieved in BC and Canada.

Global and National Initiatives

The Global Education Reform Movement (GERM) has played a significant role in 21st century education reform, and Canada is no exception. Although the GERM gained traction in the late 1990s and early 2000s (Sahlberg, 2006), the creation of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2012 reinforced the use of education to achieve positive national transformations, increase quality of life, and reinforce peacebuilding initiatives (UN, 2015).

In BC, the TEFA was signed in 2012 by the First Nations Steering Committee, the Canadian and BC governments and is considered a fundamental component of the BC First Nations education system. With specific focus on the educational outcomes of First Nations students in BC, one of its main purposes is to coordinate a "unified voice for policy development, communications, and advocacy" for First Nations-related education in BC (FNSA, 2018).

After five years of collecting historical documents and testimony related to the IRS system, the TRCC created an almost 400-page executive summary called "Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future" and a comprehensive list of Calls to Action directed towards everyone, from survivors to the Canadian public to the governments. Of particular importance are articles 62 and 63. Article 62 addresses the need for all Canadian governments, in collaboration with Aboriginal people and educators, to create specific curricula for every level of education that addresses Aboriginal historical and contemporary contributions to Canada. Additionally, it calls for teachers to be more appropriately trained to integrate Aboriginal content into their classrooms (TRCC, 2015b). Article 63 more broadly calls on the Ministers of Education to "maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues" (TRCC, 2015b: 7). This article includes developing learning resources on Aboriginal history and the history and legacy of residential schools. Building student capacity for reconciliation values and positive peace is also explicitly suggested in Article 63 (TRCC, 2015a).

While the Calls to Action are clear, the curriculum directives remain vague regarding the introduction and exploration of Aboriginal content. The Introduction to BC's Redesigned Curriculum, released in 2015, states that the "presence of Aboriginal languages, cultures, and histories [will be] increased in provincial curricula" in order to improve academic success for Aboriginal students (MoEd, 2015: 7). In recognition of the necessary national scope for reconciliation, the new curriculum demands that "Aboriginal content is a part of

the learning journey for *all* students" (emphasis added; MoEd, 2015: 7). Positive peacebuilding values are also mentioned, providing students with opportunities to "understand and respect their own cultural heritage as well as that of others" (MoEd, 2015: 7). The BC Ministry states that references to Aboriginal perspectives and knowledge would be explicit and implicit in the redesigned curriculum, and that "rich instructional samples to inspire teaching and learning" would be collected and shared (MoEd, 2015: 8).

Based on my research and correspondence with Ministry professionals, there are two areas where the implementation of these points does not adhere to the policy documents. For one, there has been a clear decision by the Ministry to withdraw from the resource development and production process (MoEd, 2018). They have chosen to authorize primarily Indigenous organizations to create resources that are authentic, appropriate, and locally relevant. They claim that this autonomy will allow teachers, schools, and districts to work with resources that are best suited to their needs and the needs of the students—taking into account the geographical location of the districts, the socio-economic and cultural composition of the classroom, and the professional discretion of the teachers (MoEd, 2018). Additionally, it is important for them to avoid creating the perception that the government is once again imposing curricular content on the population (Andreotti, 2006; Parkes, 2007). Unfortunately, this has resulted in teachers using out-of-date and inaccurate resources (Sterritt, 2017), or simply avoiding the subject altogether (Brend, 2018).

Also problematic is the focus on improving attainment for Indigenous students (BC MoEd, 2015). Without some comprehensive learning objectives or common resources, individual teacher autonomy has the potential to oversimplify the situation without consideration of the greater context. Recognition of the broader challenges around the attainment gap—the extensive systemic colonial policies intended to perpetrate cultural assimilation and genocide—is lacking

from the curricular discourse (BC MoEd, 2015). The rhetorical gap between documents like the 2006 Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, the official apology by then Prime Minister Stephen Harper in 2008, the TRCC summary report and Calls to Action, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's political rhetoric and the new BC curriculum documents hinders progress and open discourse. On the one hand, Trudeau is providing a leadership model that encourages progressive and courageous policy change that will demand fundamental, and at times uncomfortable, societal shifts. And on the other, the curriculum documents lean on critical thinking, literacy, and numeracy skills and the autonomous leadership of individual schools and teachers. Taking into account the political differences between the federal and provincial governments, this rhetorical disconnect is confusing for teachers and students alike and has implications for the design and development of relevant curricula. These first documents demonstrate explicit acknowledgement of the systematically destructive abuses that Canada and specific religious organization committed against Indigenous peoples in Canada (IRSSA, 2006), but the BC curriculum continues to be politically evasive and BC Ministry professionals appear unconcerned (MoEd, 2018).

The ambiguity in the BC Ministry's curricular objectives has created challenges for current implementation and is likely to limit success in the future. The integration of Indigenous content into the curricula has yet to be framed by the government as a necessary approach to Canadian reconciliation, but is still considered useful to improving targeted attainment (Brend, 2018). Even now, it is evident that this has hindered the design and development of a cohesive and collaborative approach to the new curriculum (MoEd, 2018), which is necessary when attempting such a challenging and complex fundamental reform (Riveros, 2012). Numerous Aboriginal organizations have stepped forward to provide educational support, including resource development, witnesses and speakers, lesson and unit plans, language support, etc, but this has been primarily

independently driven, leaving geographical and thematic gaps (MoEd, 2018). Pingel (2009) clarifies that history educators are readily poised and commonly expected to "secure the sustainability of peace and contribute to fostering attitudes towards peaceful cohabitation" (184), but the Ministry's aversion to explicitly commit to a post-conflict approach to reconciliation, fractures and undermines the potential cohesive strength of a teaching community with a common, clearly established goal (Riveros, 2012). Ministry officials claim that that if the suggestions are in the curriculum documents, integration will happen organically (MoEd, 2018). Considering the complexity of these issues, even for experts, and the limited established knowledge of Indigenous content and pedagogy in most schools, automatic integration and success is unlikely (Pingel, 2009). Especially when there are also no clearly established targets or metrics to help measure reconciliation or peacebuilding aims (MoEd, 2018).

The resistance by the Ministry to commit to a post-conflict approach to reconciliation critically undermines potential success. Refusing to acknowledge and articulate a more factually accurate framing of the history of Canada, limits the capacity to collaboratively engage with the global and international research developing around the world (Tawil & Harley, 2004). The Ministry is choosing to exclude itself from the multifaceted, expanding conversation on post-conflict and postcolonial education, which is likely to exacerbate the uncertainty experienced by teachers, students, and educational stakeholders, and make measuring growth and success even more difficult. How is reconciliation and positive peace going to be achieved if we do not all know what we are committing to and why? The current research contains significant gaps and there is no easy path to reconciliation, however, this developing field provides a considerable amount of guidance based on case studies, qualitative evidence, and theoretical discourse that BC and the Ministry should engage with (Pingel, 2009; Takayama, Sriprakash & Connell, 2017). Additionally, explicit acknowledgement of Canada and BC as tackling education reform through post-

conflict, postcolonial perspectives would bring them into a conversation that would attract more researchers and expand the scope of scholarship, thereby providing more academic support to the process (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; King, 2005; Sambanis, 2004).

Without an expanded leadership mandate provided by the Ministry's explicit recognition of and commitment to postcolonial post-conflict education, a lack of cohesion will likely continue. While the integration of Indigenous content and perspectives is addressed in Bachelor of Education degrees and teacher-training programs (UBC, 2017), there is still limited explicit explanation of this mandate from the government or ministries of education, resulting in inconsistent levels of engagement from both the teachers and the students. This further perpetuates the myths and negative stereotypes (Brend, 2018). As explored by Martin (2009), a fixation on a resolution or tangible result (improved attainment for Aboriginal students) without a full comprehension of the context will result in forms of forgetting and resentment by the wider community. Resentment and racism are already problematic across Canada, especially concerning the still limited knowledge of Aboriginal experience, Indian status, and the *Indian Act* (Warick, 2017; Wheeler, 2015). Delivery of the new curriculum has been further challenged in the past year with political instability, massive teacher shortages (CBC News, 2018; Zussman, 2016), and uncertainty about common exams (Brend, 2018).

I witnessed some of this resentment and frustration grounded in misunderstanding through my teaching experience. Students admitted to feeling overwhelmed, especially where explanations were inadequate or contextual narrative was incomplete. This was exacerbated by lessons that lacked a deep and authentic portrayal of the history of colonialism or critical evaluation of policies like the *Indian Act* and IRS system. Students who had either already been exposed to the myths and negative stereotypes of Indigenous peoples or who had

no previous understanding of Aboriginal or Canadian history struggled to understand the experiences of Aboriginal peoples in Canada and the role that the government had played in creating and reinforcing the socio-economic, cultural, and political divisions. My own professional efforts to provide a broader historical context, and thus try to address the contemporary relevance of Indigenous experience and knowledge, were also often uneven and inconsistent. Tackling complex and controversial topics in a classroom will always be challenging and necessitate continuous collaboration, discussion, negotiation, reflection, and adjustment. Having the professional confidence and support to engage with these difficult processes take time and practice, which are often tragically overlooked in the teaching profession.

To reflect again on Giroux's argument for methodological inquiry, a transformational approach must link teachers' and students' empathetic and dialectic understanding to "elements of critique and hope" through a thorough uncovering of history (Giroux, 1988). Educational institutions, and the Ministry in particular, are missing opportunities to personally engage people with the process of educational reform, reflection, and bold growth.

CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS

Comparing the new curriculum documents with the relevant literature suggests that, despite the gaps, there is yet potential in the BC education system to achieve reconciliation goals and improve attainment and experience for Aboriginal students (Battiste, 2002; TRCC, 2015b). This section will address the opportunities for success and make recommendations for the Ministry to consider for the future.

Despite the challenges noted above, the BC Ministry policy documents do clearly reflect an intention to integrate Aboriginal content into the classroom (FNESC, 2016; BC MoEd, 2016; TRCC, 2015b). In delving deeper into individual history course curricula, it is evident that the values, core competencies, and emphasis on flexible learning environments adhere to the expectations of the BC TEFA and align with many of the First Peoples Principles of Learning (MoEd, 2016). In the absence of a structured, Ministry-led approach to post-conflict reconciliation, the First Peoples Principles of Learning are being used to guide teachers' integration of Indigenous knowledge, perspectives, and content into the new curriculum (FNESC, 2014; FNESC, 2016). In particular, there are two themes addressed in the FPPL that work especially well with the new BC curriculum and should be intentionally used to drive and guide lessons.

First, First Nations learning processes and knowledge acquisition is inherently tied to the land. Building an attachment to, an understanding of, and authentic relationship with specific biospheres, landscapes, and natural processes is only becoming more necessary in this age of climate crisis. Not only will all students benefit with a greater connection to the land, but so will the planet (Higgs & McMillan, 2006). The new BC social studies curriculum encourages students to develop an authentic appreciation for the natural world to the extent that they will be prepared to consider and eventually adopt more environmentally-sustainable practices. For example, Social Studies 8 addresses changes in

population and living standards, and ensures that students can determine which specific human factors have the most significant environmental impacts (BC MoEd, 2016). In addition, Social Studies 10 focuses on the physiographic features and geological processes of Canada and asks students to evaluate the relationship between geography and demographic shifts and patterns of migration (BC MoEd, 2016). Finally, the Explorations in Social Studies 11 curriculum covers relevant issues of industrialization, urbanization, and environmental protection and challenges students to assess the short-and long-term causes and consequences of people's actions in relationship to the environment (BC MoEd, 2018).

Currently, there is an ongoing archeological excavation of the ancient Ye'yumuts village settlement near Duncan, BC to develop a place-based classroom for "living Indigenous history lessons." This initiative could provide authentic, cross-curricular lessons driven by FPPL to achieve a variety of curricular and reconciliatory aims and allow students to be actively involved in their own historical consciousness (Meissner, 2018). In the spirit of increasing Indigenous postcolonial discourse in the classroom, the relationship between knowledge and the land further confronts the colonial territorial control and colonial control in general, as well as increasing students' sense of connection to and responsibility for the land (Wolfe, 2006).

Second, for Indigenous peoples, knowledge is seen as a process that seeks to better understand oneself, the world, and one's purpose in the world (Battiste, 2002). Within Aboriginal pedagogy, students develop their knowledge of themselves and the world through dialogue, observation, experiential learning, modelling, and storytelling, all of which are present in the new BC curriculum (BC MoEd, 2015). All students are required to gather, interpret, and analyze ideas; communicate their findings and decisions; take on different perspectives on issues, developments, or events; and make inferences about their beliefs, values, and motivations (BC MoED, 2016). Additionally, students are expected to

develop personal and social competencies, which includes the abilities needed to thrive as individuals, understand and care about themselves and others, and to find and pursue their purpose in the world (BC MoEd, 2016). By encouraging students to develop greater knowledge of themselves in relationship with the world around them, they are developing skills that will allow passionate engagement with local and global issues and resist indoctrination (Quaynor, 2012).

Based on these curricular objectives, the education system is a crucial space through which to explore and dismantle the conflicted relationship between a Eurocentric worldview and the postcolonial power of Indigenous knowledge (Battiste, 2002; Cote-Meek, 2014; Wortley, 2003). Where Eurocentric postmodernism promotes the perception that there is only one historical narrative, only one global perspective and only one economic-political ideological structure, Indigenous postcolonialism directly demonstrates how inaccurate that is. Recognition of Indigenous knowledge further confronts the settler-colonial logic of elimination that justifies acts of genocide as a reasonable route to development (Wolfe, 2006).

Recommendations

The following recommendations acknowledge the work already achieved by the Canadian national and provincial governments, the ministries of education, and various independent Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations. That being said, critical analysis of and improvement to education should always be a civil and political priority. Guided by Weiss's (2015) argument that education should not be allowed to act as a salve over the wounds of history to purify the country's violent history, these recommendations are intended to encourage genuine structural change in BC and Canada's policies towards Aboriginal peoples.

I. Explicit Recognition of and Commitment to Post-Conflict Education and Reconciliation

Ultimately, the literature concludes that in order to promote reconciliation and create a more positive experience for all students, Indigenous knowledge and perspectives must be explicitly and authentically integrated into the already established curricula and pedagogy (Battiste, 2002; Kirmayer, Gone & Moses, 2014; TRCC 2015a). This supports the widely held perception, addressed earlier, that an inclusive, balanced, and critical approach to the national historical narrative is a necessary foundation for the reconciliation process. In line with the government's recognition of the history of injustice, dispossession, and assimilation (Canadian Press, 2018), integrating the voices that were systematically excluded from discourse and society is crucial (Andreotti, 2006). Only by intentionally raising these buried stories can Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people begin to see clearly that the justification for colonialism does not hold up against legal, moral, or logical scrutiny (TRCC, 2015a). Additionally, more equitable representation of Aboriginal history, narrative, and culture in contemporary Canada respects the nation-to-nation treaties signed during the colonial era (FNESC, 2016). By blending these two epistemologies and pedagogies, BC can take on the challenge laid down by the federal government and create an innovative educational system, driven by history education (Battise, 2002).

Pingel (2009) and other academics recognize that history education is integral for rebuilding society (Ahonen, 2014; Parkes, 2007; Quaynor, 2012; TRCC, 2015a), but rarely given the appropriate space, time, and support necessary for positive productivity. As the colonial legacy is so evidently grounded in a historical space, the social studies curriculum provides an obvious tool to drive the integration of Indigenous content and peacebuilding skills. Additionally, students inherently want to know and understand local, regional, and national stories (Pingel, 2009). The expressed lack of tough and bold commitment to mobilize the history

curriculum by the Ministry appears to be an unfortunate oversight or missed opportunity to achieving the narrow goals stated by the Ministry itself and the progressive mandate articulated by the federal government.

II. Teacher Training

In order to effectively integrate Indigenous content into classrooms, teachers must be better supported through the reform process. International research on post-conflict education, as well as more recent research on education reform in Canada, clearly recognizes the need for heavy investment in teacher-training programs in order to ensure teachers are appropriately supported in teaching new curricula and pedagogy (DuFour & DuFour, 2015). Pingel (2009) recognizes that failure to enact new curriculum and pedagogy happens commonly when teachers are not trained in the new methods that that they are expected to use. When faced with the multifaceted challenges of the classroom, we rely on what is most comfortable. For teachers who were raised to see the world from a Eurocentric, colonial lens, acknowledging the duality or plurality of historical and ideological narrative and encouraging equal recognition and representation must be learned and practiced (Pingel, 2009). Horner et al. (2015) acknowledges that teachers are often perceived as crucial caregivers outside of a student's home. Therefore, it is imperative that teacher training addresses the destructive power that teacher bias can have if it continues to celebrate or perpetuate the colonial legacy of marginalization and oppression (Burde et al., 2017; Davies, 2007).

The integration of Indigenous content into the new curricula is directly confronting the narrow-mindedness of colonialism and Eurocentric postmodernism. Teachers, themselves, must be educated to the extent that they see Indigenous knowledge and perspectives as a way of knowing and engaging with the world, instead of a culture or religion that is studied in a specific subject (Battiste, 2002; Sterritt, 2017). Teachers' own learning process must be prioritized if they are going to be expected to authentically understand the

legacy of colonialism, evaluate Canadian history and contemporary structures through a postcolonial lens, and actively promote post-conflict reconciliation values and perspectives (Bellino, Paulson, & Worden, 2017; Battiste, 2002). The Aboriginal Education Enhancements Branch (2006) makes it clear that in order to teach controversial or challenging topics, teachers must be prepared to regularly conduct self-reflection activities that identify and confront their own biases. Research conducted by the OECD further supports this recommendation, ranking teacher training and professional development as one of the factors that will provide the highest positive impact on educational transformation (OECD, 2017). This information should be used to reframed the focus on the attainment gap from students to the system (French, 2018). The government and the Ministry should be providing deliberate, sustained support to teachers in order to ensure they have the knowledge, skills, and capacity to authentically integrate Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into their classrooms (French, 2018; OECD, 2017).

III. Pedagogy

Within these developing teacher-training and professional development programs, teachers are learning to more effectively use pedagogy to reinforce reconciliation and peacebuilding values and improve the quality of educational experience for Aboriginal students. The contemporary global pedagogical shift reflects the historical arc as it bends towards truth, reconciliation, and social justice in Canada (Barakat et al., 2013; Bellino, Paulson & Worden, 2017; Trudeau, 2018). Parkes (2007) acknowledges how pedagogy fits into the educational reform movement in teaching students how to think critically and analyze historical narratives as artifacts of particular "regimes of truth," (Foucault, 1980: 394) instead of fixed reality. Teaching students to question historical perspectives that further foment division, misunderstanding, and violence is crucial to promoting engaged citizens committed to social cohesion and positive peace (Machel, 2007).

Seixas (2004; 2006) has produced a significant amount of work demanding more focus on 'historical consciousness' and historical thinking skills through this large-scale pedagogical shift. Beyond historical literacy or awareness, Seixas (2004) argues that developing historical consciousness in teachers and students requires a personal and social engagement with history, a vital human asset for an orientation to the world and life. If we can cultivate critical thinking skills and a sophisticated level of historical consciousness through the lessons we produce, we can more effectively promote structural change in our communities (Ahonen, 2005; Seixas, 2004). Specifically, he has popularized the use of "structural" historical concepts necessary to ground historical thinking, including primary source evidence, historical perspective-taking, historical significance, and cause and consequence (Sexias, 2006). Seixas (2009) argues that the use of these concepts, which demand skill development and a significant level of knowledge, will result in a greater historical consciousness crucial to quality engagement with the past in support of a more authentic path to reconciliation (Henderson & Wakeham, 2009; Martin, 2009). Especially relevant to the Canadian context, promoting a more sophisticated level of historical consciousness will equip students with the ability to "use historical narratives to inform judgements about moral and policy questions in the present" (Seixas, 2006; 11).

Additionally, new provincial numeracy and literacy exams will be created to assess the extent to which students are achieving the learning objectives, especially higher-level thinking skills (BC MoEd, 2017). But there is still no structure, framework, or evaluation process that will be used to provide feedback on the extent to which the integration of Indigenous content has played a role in peacebuilding and reconciliation or improved the daily school experience for Indigenous students (BC MoEd, 2015; BC MoEd, 2017; MoEd, 2018). In order for us to best understand the gap between the reconciliation discourse and the achievement of a more equitable experience of positive peace in

Canada, assessment must be structured, rigorous, and thorough (Doiel & Sanders, 2009).

IV. Transformational Education

Although reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada may seem like a popular topic of conversation when we focus on the literature and political and educational discourse, changing individual behaviours in response to Indigenous peoples will be a challenge, especially when for many people, contact with Indigenous history, people, and culture is relatively limited (Statistics Canada, 2016). Habacon (2017) argues that diversity and understanding are simply not enough for reconciliation and positive peace. We need to promote active and fundamental changes to our worldview and behaviours (Allen, 2013; Habacon, 2017). In line with Seixas' work, Habacon investigates active intercultural understanding not as something that simply happens when we learn new material, but that is achieved through intentional, explicit pedagogical design (Allen, 2013). For teachers, this means structuring "courageous conversations" about complex and controversial issues through open dialogue (Habacon, 2017). Dialogue should play a significant role in the classroom, Habacon (2017) states, because it is an "interactive process of reflective learning between participants who aspire to understand each other's viewpoints and deeply held assumptions," not simply discussing issues in order to find a solution or correct answer. Subjective interest in, joint recognition of, and accountability for understanding others can be appropriately developed through lessons founded on open and critical dialogue (Bellino, Paulson & Worden, 2017; Habacon, 2017).

Future Research

While there is significant international research on reconciliation, post-conflict and post-genocide education, and education for peacebuilding, there is limited research that frames Canada as a post-conflict nation. As mentioned above,

without a greater understanding of the history of conflict and trauma in Canada and the impact that this has had on marginalized groups, we are limiting the extent to which we can measure success in the future.

Additionally, there is a lack of quantitative data measuring the impact of peacebuilding curricula and pedagogy in Canadian classrooms. While specific consideration of the experience of Aboriginal students is unlikely to have existed before now, there is a significant need for this to be the next academic focus. This gap has been recently recognized by Mahboubi & Richards (2018), who argue that identifying Indigenous students in Canada's PISA data and learning more about how they are performing will allow for more accurate targets for improved experience and academic achievement. Our understanding of the impact of historical and generational trauma is still relatively narrow, but additional focus and investment could result in a much stronger approach to social justice and reconciliation in Canada.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

In consideration of the international, Canadian, and Aboriginal literature, a postcolonial theoretical framework, policy analysis, conversations with teachers and Ministry of Education professionals, and my own personal experience, the new BC curriculum has the potential to support reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in BC and Canada. Peacebuilding skills and values, including critical and historical thinking, critical self-reflection, and personal and social competencies and awareness, are evident in the curriculum and pedagogy, as is the demand to integrate Indigenous knowledge and perspectives. Success will be limited and clear advances difficult to achieve without explicit and bold leadership from the BC government and Ministry of Education, heavy investment in teacher training and development, and a pedagogical approach that demands a fundamental shift in individual and national historical consciousness. These are not easy or comfortable shifts, but they are necessary to confront the systemic inequality in Canada, expand access to social justice, and heal the still raw wounds inflicted by colonialism and the Indian Residential School System.

I would like to conclude this study with an eye-witness account of a First Nations-sponsored exercise on Indigenous Residential School experience, held at St. Margaret's School, in Victoria in February 2017 as part of a series of ISABC teacher-training workshops on the new Ministry curriculum. On condition of anonymity, the author has agreed to its publication in this form.

The day-long workshop was organized into three parts: an introduction to set out the defining historical phases or stages of First Nations experience in Canada; a session of elder personal testimony on residential school experience, including reflection, confession and prayer; and a final segment enabling participants to share and reflect on their own experience of the workshop. Unforgettable in its poignant emotional intensity, the workshop experience compelled a new understanding, one deeper and more complex, of the richness,

variety, qualities of suffering, resilience, resourcefulness, grace and wisdom, of Indigenous people. Colleagues and I, many of us overwhelmed by the emotional content several times throughout the day, shared an extraordinary personal and professional journey in this exercise, one that will no doubt benefit our teaching and lend additional, powerful integrity to the quality of our delivery of the new curriculum. If anyone questions the motivation for the Ministry's new direction in support of Indigenous learning, they need only spend a few minutes in conversation with an elder to see the rightness of it.

Reconciliation is a subjective and emotional process that demands the commitment of all Canadians. Once we accept that reality, together we will be able to achieve passionate and empathetic responsibility for dialogic and dialectic investigation and engagement and progress—in our classrooms, in our policy development, and in our own lives. In recognizing the fundamental theme of this project, I will close with the words of author Robert Arthur Alexie (2009), "healing is a journey—there is no end" (201).

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