TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO THE TQS5 AND TRC IN SOUTHERN ALBERTA: TRANSLATIONS THROUGH RELATIONS

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ABSTRACT

My work is centered around the question of how teachers, in K-12 classrooms in southern Alberta, have responded to the Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) Commission's Calls to Action and related reform to provincial education such as the fifth Teaching Quality Standard (TQS5). My work is based on ethnographic interviews with nine Indigenous and settler teachers and follow-up collaborative group sessions with some of them. Along with how teachers are responding the TRC and TQS5, I focus on the challenges and possibilities that they find in responding. I found that their responses deliberately value relations and reflect Indigenous notions of relationality. Their challenges reflect commodified, sanctioned, abstracted, and objective ideas of schooling which align with the logic of homo economicus. Their possibilities seem to lie in non-scalable and relational spaces which provide the potential for struggle, engagement, and enunciation.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
TQS5	Teaching Quality Standard Five

Introduction

Jenny: I think, with some teachers looking at it as a box to check—and that's a, um—mean that's a real problem, obviously. … I feel like it's a good thing that, you know, it's been mandated, TQS5. And that it's right there. It's on everybody's agenda that you kind of have to fill this to—to bring up your competency, or to show at least this competency. And so, for some it's like orange shirt. We wore orange shirts. Like box checked. We talked about some residential school stuff and great, like, done.
Makita: Mhm.
Jenny: The teachers that look at that TQS5 and understand it through the lens of, like, there's so much more to be engaged in and there's a lot to offer—. Like there's so much that's out there. That is—they can offer a teacher that will enrich their teaching practice if they're willing to, you know, involve themselves in it. …
Jenny: And then—it's not so much as, uh, this awareness of a box being checked. It's this much bigger awareness of the ways of knowing. So, I think … there's almost like this line. There's this distinction between TQS5, and, I mean, for us in this territory Blackfoot ways of knowing.
Makita: Yeah.
Jenny: Right. And you can check off a TQS5 box or be enriched, I suppose, by Blackfoot ways of knowing.
(Initial Interview, Zoom, 28 Oct 2021)

This conversation comes from an interview with Jenny, who is a Piikani district teacher of Indigenous education. In this conversation, we are talking about the TQS5 which is the fifth Teaching Quality Standard for teachers in Alberta. This addition to the Alberta Teaching Quality Standard was put into place in 2018. It requires teachers to "develop[] and [apply] foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit for the benefit of all students" (Alberta Education 2018, 6). It states:

> Achievement of this competency is demonstrated by indicators such as: (a) understanding the historical, social, economic, and political implications of: treaties and agreements with First Nations; legislation and agreements negotiated with Métis; and residential schools and their legacy; (b) supporting student achievement by engaging in collaborative, whole school approaches to capacity building in First Nations, Métis and Inuit education; (c) using the programs of study to provide opportunities for all students to develop a knowledge and understanding of, and respect for, the histories, cultures, languages, contributions, perspectives, experiences and contemporary contexts of First Nations, Métis and Inuit; and (d) supporting the learning experiences of all students by using resources that accurately reflect and demonstrate the strength and diversity of First Nations, Métis and Inuit. (Alberta Education 2018, 6)

This standard provides the professional expectation for teachers to be engaging in these issues and specifies a list of sanctioned ways for them to do so. In our conversation, Jenny mentions that she thinks the standard is a good thing because it puts it on the agenda for everyone. However, she mentions that the approach that is often taken is a kind of sanctioned approach where teachers might take part in orange shirt day in order to check the box and say they are done with—and have completed—this required standard. She speaks about how this checking a box, to complete a standard, is a very different approach from having a greater awareness of Indigenous ways of knowing. The rest of my thesis will center around these kinds of tensions.

Research questions

My work is centered around teachers' responses, in southern Alberta, to the Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) Commission's Calls to Action and related provincial changes such as the fifth Teaching Quality Standard (TQS5). My research is based on three main questions:

1) How are teachers responding to the TRC and TQS5?
2) What challenges do they encounter in doing this work?
3) What are the strengths and possibilities in doing this work?

My research took place through ethnographic interviews and collaborative group sessions. Both Indigenous and settler K-12 teachers and district teachers of Indigenous education participated in my research with nine teachers being involved in total. I additionally interviewed two southern Alberta Faculty of Education instructors.

In chapter one, I will explore the relations and context which laid the basis for this research including the influences on my work, my methodology, and my methods. In chapter two I will recount a conversation with a Faculty of Education instructor and highlight two forms of expertise—relational expertise and sanctioned expertise—which both underly our conversation and much of my research. In chapter three, I will address the question of how teachers are responding to the TRC and TQS5 by looking at the two forms of expertise outlined in the previous chapter. In chapter four I will consider the challenges that teachers brought forward in responding to the TRC and TQS5. I will explore how their challenges are based in a logic of homo economicus which shapes institutional structures and which prioritizes commodified, sanctioned, abstracted, and objective visions of schooling. I will detail how this vision contradicts the relational way that teachers are responding to Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing, and the intent of reconciliation. In the final chapter, I will address strengths and possibilities that teachers brought forward highlighting the importance of non-scalable spaces. With this, I will use the literature on Indigenous-focused reform in schools to suggest that these non-scalable spaces—that the teachers are valuing in schools—could provide space for struggle, engagement, and enunciation.

Chapter 1: Relations and context: The basis of this work

1.1 Acknowledgments

It is conventional to separate acknowledgements from the main body of the text, but I am choosing to place them here to highlight the importance of the entanglement of all of my relations with the production of my thesis.

The research for this project was conducted on traditional Siksikaitsitapii and Métis region 3 territory. I have lived on traditional Siksikaitsitapii and Métis region 3 territory for all of my life. I wish to acknowledge my relations to the land and, with this, thank—and acknowledge my relations and obligations to—all of the Indigenous peoples who have shaped and cared for these places.

There are many people who I would like to acknowledge and thank for their guidance and support. I am so grateful for the unwavering support from my supervisor, Dr. Jan Newberry. I would like to thank her for all of the guidance, care, expertise, and opportunities that she has provided me with which have influenced my work and who I am.

I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Amy von Heyking and Dr. Robert LeBlanc for their support and for taking the time to teach me about their fields of study and tailor lessons towards my interests. These lessons have had a great impact on my research. I would also like to thank my committee member, Dr. Erin Spring who has provided me with great support, words of encouragement, and valuable feedback on my work throughout this process.

I am very grateful for, and would like to thank, the many teachers in my life for their support and guidance. In particular, I would like to thank my dad, David Mikuliak, for the hours of conversation and feedback along with his eagerness to read and support all of my work. I would also like to acknowledge my extended family who have supported my growth along with my professors and friends from the Anthropology department, at the University of Lethbridge, who have supported me and my work.

My research would not have been possible without the amazing teachers who took the time to participate in this project. I would like to thank them all for teaching me about what they do and providing me with invaluable insights. Thank you also to the many teachers, Indigenous leads, and University professors who were willing to meet to provide me with guidance and insights for conducting my research.

All of these relations have deeply impacted me and my research. These are all relations which are entangled in the knowledge that is produced in this thesis. Placing my acknowledgments as part of my main text—instead of as a note that is placed outside of the thesis—is a deliberate attempt to value and make these relations visible and part of the "real knowledge" that I am presenting in this thesis.

1.2 Positionality

I am writing this thesis as a white settler cisgender woman. My grandparents on my mother's side came to Canada from Spain and England, my great grandparents from my father's side came from the Ukraine, Ireland, and England.

I became interested in this topic after learning about structures of racism and whiteness in schools in my undergraduate anthropology courses. These courses brought to my awareness how I have been complicit in perpetuating these structures and narratives of racism and whiteness throughout my life. As someone who these structures support, they were largely made invisible to me.

Further, I have a particular connection to settler colonialism (Wolfe 2006) through schooling. I grew up in a household where both my parents were educators and many of my extended family are also currently educators or have worked as educators or in schools. I also have a connection to education through my time as a student. I realize that my life has been highly influenced by narratives and structures of whiteness with these structures allowing for me to be where I am today. This research is very personal, and it is just part of my journey in understanding these structures and my relation to them. This is a starting point for me in understanding and not denying the relations I have to settler colonialism and to begin taking responsibility for these relations. The reason for this introduction is to situate my research within my relations and to emphasize my own subjectivity, intersectionality, positionality, and context as entangled in the production of this knowledge.

1.3 Research context

Residential schooling and its mission to erase and replace Indigenous ways of knowing provides the context for this work. Residential schooling is at the forefront of thought for many people living in Canada with the recent acknowledgement of 215 unmarked graves uncovered on the grounds of the former residential school in Kamloops. Since then, numerous unmarked graves from residential schools have become acknowledged[1]. This formal acknowledgment has brought the impacts of settler colonialism and the role of residential schooling, in this process, to general public attention.

The TRC specifically pointed to the role of education both in colonization and in reconciliation. The TRC's final report includes 94 calls to "redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation" (TRC: Calls to Action 2015, 1).

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[1] The University of Windsor has created a map of these graves and has counted over 1700 graves which have now been formally acknowledged: https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/cfe29bee35c54a70b9621349f19a3db2 (date last accessed: December 9, 2022)

There are 11 calls that specifically request change in education, although others may be considered relevant to education and educators. These calls are wide ranging and include, for example, implementing K-12 curriculum on the history and legacy of residential schools, developing appropriate K-12 teaching material on Indigenous history, building student capacity for intercultural understanding, sharing information for best practices among teachers, supporting teachers in developing competency in this area, addressing funding and achievement gaps for Indigenous students, and initiating school and district specific supports to Indigenous students.

These calls, however, are not specifically directed at teachers but rather are more clearly addressed at governing bodies to help and support teachers in their practices. One way that the Alberta government has responded to these calls is through the creation of the TQS5 which acts as a professional quality standard for teachers across Alberta and mandates various ways in which teachers should develop and apply First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) knowledge.

As I mentioned, I used the TRC and TQS5 as the center of my research question to ask how teachers are responding to the TRC Calls to Action and TQS5, what challenges they face in responding, and what possibilities they might encounter in responding. Throughout this thesis, I often go back to these framing questions. I wanted to use both the TRC and TQS5 as the TRC is a more general call for people to take action and the TQS5 is focused on teachers and prescribes a professional expectation. The TRC calls seemed relevant as it calls everyone to action and the TQS5 provides a standard that all Alberta teachers are required to respond to in some way (even if this response is not changing their practice). In my conversations with teachers, I asked how they were responding to these calls and mandates and asked them to bring in a resource that they saw as relevant to their response in terms of The Calls to Action and the TQS5. Our conversations followed from this.

The context for this research has been complicated as, during the time of this research, a revision of the Alberta teaching curriculum was occurring. The introduction of the draft curriculum in 2021—for K-6 in Alberta[2]—shaped the climate and conversations around education that I had with the teachers. Many of the teachers I spoke with took issue with specific ideas and premises the draft presented. These curricular changes are important to consider as teachers see curriculum as key in providing them with constraints, or possibilities, in taking on Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing. Potential changes to these constraints and possibilities are important to teachers. Curriculum is always political. So having conversations about teaching during these changes shaped my interactions with the teachers. Along with this, my research was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic which put tremendous stress and strain on teachers and brought forward heightened political divide in Alberta. Part of this research was conducted while the 2022 freedom rallies in Canada were occurring. These immediate contexts all had a clear impact on the conversations I had with teachers and the tone of our discussions.

1.4 Theoretical framework

My central framework for this research is that of relationality. This is a framework that emerged directly from my interviews and collaborative sessions. In fact, relations are something that much of the Indigenous literature on education considers, both more generally (Little-Bear 2000; Sabzalian 2019; Simpson 2014; Stagg Peterson et al. 2018; Tuhiwai Smith et al. 2019), and in schooling specifically (Donald 2009a, 2009b, 2012a; Chew and Anthony-Stevens 2017;

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[2] This is a link to the “legacy” Alberta Teaching Association’s website. It provides an outline of the major critiques and has an archive of news and updates which came out around the draft curriculum from 2019-2021. https://legacy.teachers.ab.ca/News%20Room/Issues/Pages/K-6-Draft-Curriculum.aspx

Kirkness and Barnhardt 2001; Kuokkanen 2007; Sabzalian 2019). Many of these works that I reference were works that I read prior to starting my research. Even so, I took this idea of the importance of relations for granted until my data began to scream the importance of them at me as the idea was highlighted in interview after interview. Along with this, I often had embodied feelings of discomfort throughout my research when I would feel as though I was denying my own relations or the teachers' relations for the purpose of making my work "scholarly". My research findings (including both my embodied feelings and the conversations I had with teachers) are how I came to this focus on relations. After I came to this, my interest in relations was furthered by my interest in knowledge production (Strathern 2020) and the political aspect that comes along with the inclusion or denial of relations. However, it was my relations with the teachers and the relations they were bringing forward that made these real. Here I want to provide a brief overview of some of the literatures which have informed my work around relations and knowledge production.

education and anthropology

The question of the relationship between knowledge production and power, social reproduction, and resistance in schools has been of interest to many critical ethnographers (Bettie 2014; Willis 1981). In the context of my research, the reproduction of settler colonialism (Wolfe 2006)—through schooling—is particularly important in considering the colonial legacy of residential schooling as an ongoing structure and logic (Battiste 2008b; Masta 2018; Sabzalian 2018; Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández 2013).

Anthropologists have noted that cultural practices that are outside of hegemonic white norms often are translated into schools as a problem or a "deficit" (Gonzalez 1995; McDermott and Varenne 2006; Philips 1992). Alternatively, educational anthropologists have recognized that education and enculturation occur beyond what is happening in schools (Levinson 2000; Varenne 2007). This emphasizes that schooling is only one form of education. In fact, many anthropologists, Indigenous scholars, and scholars interested in Indigenous ways of knowing, have written about the role of relationships (Little-Bear 2000; Sabzalian 2019; Simpson 2014; Stagg Peterson et al. 2018; Tuhiwai Smith et al. 2019) stories (Hanson 2018; Kimmerer 2013; Little-Bear 2000; Stagg Peterson et al. 2018), and land (Corntassel and Hardbarger 2019; Kimmerer 2013; Sabzalian 2019; Simpson 2014; Tuhiwai Smith et al. 2019; Twance 2019; Wildcat et al. 2014), as important forms of education that have long been recognized by Indigenous peoples.

Gonzalez et al. argue that "at home", or non-hegemonic, learning environments are "funds of knowledge" (1995). Further, they suggest that teachers should be attempting to bring these valuable forms of knowing into classrooms to better facilitate student learning.[3] My research comes at a point when educators and policy makers are similarly recognizing that Euro-Canadian education is only one form of education. Euro-Canadian schools are now understood as reproducing white hegemonic norms while Indigenous models of education still are ignored and devalued (Battiste 2008b; Masta 2018; Sabzalian 2018; Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández 2013). This understanding of the colonizing role of formal schooling is embedded in the TRC's call to bring Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms. This call reflects the need to address Canada's ongoing settler colonialism by paying attention to the narratives and norms which schools reproduce.

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[3] Dhillon (2017) provides a compelling critique of the idea of bringing ways of knowing into the classroom to better facilitate student learning. She notes how such initiatives when they are directed specifically at non-European students can actually further the project of settler colonialism if they are meant to make schooling more intelligible to non-European descent students in order to have an easier time assimilating them into standard Eurocentric models of knowing and being in the end. Her point is that it is very important to pay attention to who these initiatives are directed at, who is initiating these initiatives, and what the intent of these initiatives really are.

reform in education

The reform literature has also considered issues of translation and knowledge production. Educational reform scholars have identified challenges associated with translating large-scale reform, pointing to the difficulty in making changes in Euro-American educational systems in general (Cohen and Mehta 2017; Eisner 2000; Tyack and Tobin 1994). Authors have noted multiple agendas that teachers are navigating (Kennedy 2004) and the tensions of navigating the contradictory values that the Euro-American education system reflects (Labaree 2008, 2012) as key difficulties in this process. Others have specifically pointed to the difficulties in translating reform ideals into classrooms when the complex realities that teachers operate in are not considered—particularly—with the implementation of top-down reforms (Craig 2001; Drake and Sheran 2006; Kennedy 2004; Sloan 2006). These scholars argue that teachers are not passive in the reform process and are essentially always translating reform through their own relations and contexts. These issues reflect my interest in how teacher practice is reformed and shaped and the tensions in translation and knowledge production that come along with reforming practice.

There has been work in the education literature that has specifically focused on translating Indigenous content-centered reform into Euro-Canadian classrooms. Some of these scholars have focused on teacher reactions and the resistance to Indigenous-focused education reforms (Deer 2013; Donald 2009a; Gebhard 2018; Watson and Currie-Patterson 2018). Others have described the different ways people have reformed educational spaces to incorporate Indigenous knowledge and content both in K-12 settings (Douglas, Purton, and Bascuñán 2020; Gebhard 2018; Kanu 2005; Meyer and Aikenhead 2021) and in teacher education settings (Deer

2013; Donald 2009a; Kearns, Tompkins, and Borden 2018; Korteweg and Fiddler 2018; Madden et al. 2020; Poitras Pratt et al. 2017; Watson and Currie-Patterson 2018; Yeo et al. 2019). Many have pointed to issues of translation in this inclusion work, with scholars critiquing the appropriative and tokenistic approaches that are often taken up in classrooms (Kanu 2005; Kerr and Parent 2018; Marker 1998; Meyer and Aikenhead 2021; Sensoy et al. 2010). Donald (2009a) notes that there is a tendency, by settlers, to approach this material with a "frontier logic" (24). He argues that this logic is problematic as it translates Indigenous knowledge into the classroom as a kind of example which allows teachers and students to see themselves as separate from—and not implicated in—this knowledge (Donald 2009a, 2009b). This notion of implication has inspired much of my analysis in thinking about what this implication means in terms of relations and the production of knowledge.

Given my focus on relations and relationality, my research required significant attention to what methods could achieve an understanding of them. In the following, I describe the methodology that guides my decision to capture these struggles and produce a space where these contradictions and tensions can be articulated. I will provide a full description of my methods at the end of this section.

1.5 Methodology

My methodology is premised on ideas developed by collaborative ethnographic researchers. Ethnographic methods have allowed for the close participation in, observation of, and work alongside educators. The ethnographic approach was developed in anthropology and has been generatively taken up in qualitative research in education (Bettie 2014; Willis 1981). My methodology reflects longstanding (Deloria 1988; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Marcus and Fischer 1986) and re-emerging (Marker 2004; Todd 2016, 2018; Tuck 2009; Trouillot 2003) ethical ethnographic concerns in anthropology. There has been a long-standing critique of anthropology's extractive methodology (Deloria 1988; Marker 2004; Tuck 2009; Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández 2013; Tuhiwai Smith 2012; Starn 2011). This critique is based on research where the person conducting the research, who is positioned as the knower, has more power than the participants in the research. Further, the products of the research benefit solely the researcher and their academic prestige (Deloria 1988; Starn 2011; Tuck 2009). This anthropologist is often depicted as a lone ethnographer who travels far from where they live, does their research—in this location—for a couple of years and then returns home to do analysis and produce knowledge based on what they "found" in the field (Gupta and Ferguson 1997). My methodology is based on work of scholars who have responded to these challenges of traditional anthropological ethnographic methods.

I am inspired by scholars who are "studying up" (Nader 1972) by researching people in positions of power to shift the lens (Mitchell 1989) away from exploiting marginalized populations. However, I think my research actually speaks more to "studying across" as I am looking at instructors who are (similar to myself) in institutionalized positions where they are seen as authoritative knowledge producers but yet must be responsive to government, curriculum, and mandates which impacts their production of knowledge. I also am inspired by collaborative methodologies in research which go beyond the lone anthropologist trope to acknowledge the role of research participants in the production of knowledge. This work positions participants as knowers whose expertise is acknowledged through collaborative work. Much of this work has focused on engaging non-anthropologists as co-inquirers, reframing them as knowledge producers and theorists, in their own right, rather than as research participants (Gonzalez et al. 1995; Lassiter 2005; Mack and Newberry 2020; Rappaport 2008).

My methodology is specifically inspired by researchers who have theorized producing a space for co-inquiry, or design (Escobar 2017). With this, I am attempting to bring the participants voices, as authoritative voices, into my research to produce a kind of "ethnographic contact zone" (De La Cadena 2021, 250) with the goal of creating new possibilities and new imaginaries (Astacio 2021; De La Cadena 2021; Escobar 2017; Mack and Newberry 2020; Rabinow 2011; Tsing 2015).

In my research, I attempted to create a shared space for encounter-based co-learning alongside educators. I specifically positioned myself as a co-learner and co-theorizer in the research, while not denying my role as researcher and facilitator, in order to embrace the notion of "hyphen-spaces" (Cunliffe and Karunanayake 2013). Hyphen-spaces promote—methodologically—embracing the identity and relationships within research as part of the process and product of the research. In this frame, I attempted to create a space for myself and the teachers to come together to discuss and comment on resources, that could be seen as responding to the TRC and TQS5 in different ways, *together*. This space was meant to be conducive to recognizing difference and engaging in dialogues that consider the multiple perspectives and standpoints of the teachers (Haraway 1988).

Theorizing my interview and collaborative sessions in this way emphasized multiple things. It highlighted how these spaces could be thought of as "para-sites" to do ethnographic research which challenge the binaries of the "here-ness-and-there-ness" (Marcus 2021, 41) of ethnographic research which is an idea that goes along with studying across. Further, this para-site was not about creating any kind of "authentic" encounter to look at what teachers are "really like" and was rather about engaging with these educators—in this space—as part of the research design and question. Additionally, the goal of the work in these spaces was to engage myself and the teachers in co-theorizing, co-analysis, and co-conceptualization (Rappaport 2008) challenging the “insiderness and outsiderness” (Cunliffe and Karunanayake 2013, 367) often associated with research. This methodology of co-theorization and co-analysis focused on making sense of something that I could not fully anticipate and provided the opportunity to explore unexpected theories and “ethnographic hunches” (Pink 2021) that emerged through our interactions with the resources and each other. For example, the significance of relations and emotions were not something I expected to encounter but I was able to respond and explore them as they emerged by positioning myself as a co-learner. Given this framework for my work, I could take moments (that some might see as tangents) that came up in the interviews and collaborative sessions seriously as important and relevant theorizing moments. This method allowed for unexpected outcomes to arise through the involvement of co-inquirers who were doing their own theorization, allowing for more perspectives and theoretical possibilities.

The co-theorization in this model also reflects the educational reform literature which argues that teachers are not passive recipients in reform (Craig 2001; Drake and Sheran 2006; Ng and Leicht 2019; Sloan 2006). Locating them, rather, as co-theorizers and co-analyzers positions them as knowers with extremely valuable insights on the day-to-day workings of how TRC calls and TQS5 initiatives play out in their practice. Further, the collaborative method, in general, and the collaborative sessions, specifically, reflect Actor Network Theory which emphasizes the importance of tracing the path as knowledge is produced to avoid preconceptions and the reproduction of existing categories and to highlight the production of knowledge in practice (Best and Walters 2013, Latour 1987).

The creation of this kind of space, through interviews and collaborative sessions, aligns with the work from scholars who focus on incorporating Indigenous education in classrooms and specifically advocate for spaces to struggle and engage in the tensions and possibilities between systems (Douglas, Purton, and Bascuñán 2020; Macdonald and Markides 2018; Madden et al. 2020; Korteweg and Fiddler 2018; Poitras Pratt et al. 2017; Yeo et al. 2019). Further, by collaborating and creating connections with and between teachers I intentionally attempted to reflect decolonial methodologies which have called for engagement outside of Eurocentric American paradigms of knowledge (Battiste 2008a; Cochran et al. 2008; Denzin et al. 2008; Menzies 2001; Tuhiwai Smith 2012; Wilson 2008) highlighting relationships and collaboration as centrally important to research methodology (Fast and Kovach 2019; Fiola 2015; Harris and Wasilewski 2004; Kovach 2009; McGregor and Marker 2018; Tuhiwai Smith 2008, 2012). However, I will detail—in my description of methods below—some of the areas where I believe I fell short on this. These ideas, from innovative ethnography, collaborative research methodologies, co-inquiry, encounter-based ethnography, and decolonial methodologies have shaped the design of my methods and coding.

1.6 History of the project

My interest in this topic came from an interest in knowledge production and social reproduction along with an interest in what that means for teachers taking up the TQS5 in Alberta.

Starting this research, I planned to work with two Faculty of Education instructors who were training teacher candidates at two different universities in southern Alberta. I thought this would be an interesting approach as it would focus on how teachers are being trained to approach the TQS5 and TRC. The idea was that this could be about how "expertise" on this topic is being produced and taught to the teacher candidates along with the contradictions that might come from this. My plan was to observe and participate in lessons with undergraduate students that spoke to the TRC, TQS5, or Indigenous ways of knowing more generally. I assumed that the Faculty of Education instructors were already planning such lessons, and I planned to interview the teachers and students involved in these lessons both before and after the lessons. After talking with faculty members, I decided to shift and instead focus on K-12 teachers mainly due to issues that I would have with ethics and access at the university level.

Originally, in shifting to K-12 teachers I had planned to both interview teachers and hold collaborative sessions where we could engage in collaborative annotation of Indigenous education-focused resources. I had planned to only work with middle school teachers so that when we looked at a learning resource to annotate, they would all have a similar context for understanding. However, in practice, it was hard to find teachers who were willing to participate in my research project. I am assuming that this, in part, had to do with this research taking place during a pandemic. Many of the teachers I spoke with noted that they almost did not participate as they were so busy due to their increased workload with the pandemic. Because of this, I ended up reaching out to teachers at all grade levels and interviewing anyone who was willing to talk with me. The other wrinkle in recruitment, for the study, was that I was trying to fit into a hegemonic European scientific model where knowing participants prior to the research is seen as an issue in terms of objectivity and ethics. Because both of my parents were/are teachers, I was trying to avoid interviewing any teachers that I knew or teachers that knew my parents. This limited the pool of teachers that I was able to draw on. Retrospectively, I believe limiting what teachers I could formally talk to became a finding rather than a flaw in my methods and I will speak more about this later.

Originally, when I had shifted to the idea of working with K-12 teachers, I had planned for the two Faculty of Education instructors to also be involved with the collaborative sessions and even provide resources for these sessions. However, after talking with these instructors, I decided not to take this route as we spoke about how they do not use resources in the same way. One of the instructors specifically detailed that they typically provide guiding frameworks and principles for students to work with—rather than resources that could be used in teaching. We also talked about how their presence at the sessions might make potential former students nervous about how they act and respond to the resources. Although I was willing to consider this as a dynamic to account for in my write-up, in the end, it seemed like having the instructors involved was not as logical or necessary as I had originally thought.

Ultimately, my methods included initial interviews, collaborative sessions, and follow-up interviews with K-12 teachers. I still drew on the Faculty of Education instructors' interviews to give me some of the context for the issues I was interested in pursuing, but the specifics of these interviews had less of a central role in the research than I had originally intended. I will now provide a description of these methods.

1.7 Methods

The methods for my research primarily include both interviews and collaborative sessions with educators. [4]The decision to conduct my research in this way, compared to a more traditional ethnographic study where I might go to schools and take part in lessons, had to do largely with issues in access due to the Covid pandemic along with changes in the focus of my research project which I outlined. All stages of data collection in this research were audio recorded and occurred either over Zoom, in a room at the University of Lethbridge, or at a location suggested by the educator. These stages included initial resource-based interviews, group collaborative sessions, and follow up interviews. I will go through each research stage in turn.[5]

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[4] This research, including my methods, has been approved by the University of Lethbridge Human Participant Research Committee. The University of Lethbridge Human Participant Research Committee conducts its reviews in accord with university policy and the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans. The assigned protocol number for the ethical approval of this research is #2021-072.

stage 1: initial interviews

This research involved initial interviews with classroom teachers, district teachers of Indigenous education[6], and Faculty of Education Instructors. These interviews were all semi-structured.

initial teacher interviews

The main focus of my research was the interviews with the K-12 classroom teachers and district teachers of Indigenous education. All the classroom teachers were recruited to participate through recommendations by my committee. I personally contacted the classroom teachers, by email, asking them if they would be interested in being involved in my research. These emails included details on my research and the name of the committee member who thought they would be interested in or willing to be involved. The district teachers of Indigenous education were contacted in a different way as I was recommended to contact a district teacher of Indigenous education that has connections to my family. I was unable to formally interview this teacher due to my ethics that stated I could not interview anyone who knows me or my family. However, instead of formally interviewing him, we spoke more generally about my project, and he provided me with the email addresses of other district teachers of Indigenous education that I could contact. I then contacted these teachers in the same way I contacted the classroom teachers with information and an invitation to participate.

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[5] See Appendix 1. for my outline/protocol for the included initial resource-based interviews, group collaborative sessions, and follow up interviews.

[6] District teachers of Indigenous education are teachers who work in district offices and classrooms.

These interviews involved both settler and Indigenous teachers who teach in both rural and urban schools, and are both new and long-serving educators. During the time that I was reaching out to teachers, there was immense stress on teachers due to the Covid pandemic with many of them having to constantly switch their delivery formats from in person to online. Originally, I was hoping to have roughly an even number of settler and Indigenous, rural and urban, and new and long-serving teachers as I wanted my research to encompass a variety of teacher perspectives; however, in practice, I was thrilled to have any teacher who was willing to talk with me and so I interviewed anyone who was willing. I also had originally planned to only interview middle school teachers so there would be more opportunity for cross conversation when they came to the collaborative session (the second stage of research); however, again, I ended up extending this to all grade levels to recruit as many participants as I could. In the end, I interviewed six teachers who had been teaching for five years or less, two teachers who had been teaching for five to ten years, and one teacher who had been teaching for over ten years. I also ended up talking with seven urban teachers and only one rural teacher. I interviewed two First Nations teachers, two Métis teachers, and five settler teachers. Four of these teachers taught in the grade one to six range, two taught in grade seven to nine, and three taught in grade seven to twelve.

Table 1 Initial Interview Teacher Information

	New and Long Serving (in years)			Urban and Rural		FNMI/Settler			Grade level		
	0-5	5-10	10+	Urban	Rural	First Nations	Métis	Settler	1-6	7-9	9-12

# of teachers	6	2	1	8	1	2	2	5	4	2	3[7]

Each of these interviews were approximately an hour in length. Five interviews took place over Zoom and three interviews took place in person. One interview was almost double in length as it took place over two sessions because the teacher asked if it would be possible to cut the interview short and pick it up the next day. Two of the district teachers of Indigenous education (Erin and Megan) asked if they could be interviewed together, so they were.[8]

Below I provide an extremely brief description of each participant. These descriptions were written in consultation with the teachers to confirm details and ensure they had the opportunity to add details or take out information they did not want to share. I invited everyone to choose their pseudonym; however, some teachers told me that they did not care and that I could pick their pseudonym.[9] In these moments I felt like I was erasing their identity. Although they were erased in the same way when they chose their own pseudonym, this felt less like me imposing this erasure on them. In considering the importance of naming, meaning, and relations, it felt more distinctly wrong when I imposed a new identity upon them. This idea, regarding the erasure of relations, is one I will return to. All teachers have a pseudonym chosen by themselves or by me with the exception of one teacher who noted she was fine with being identified and so I will not use a pseudonym in this case.

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[7] The high school district teacher of Indigenous education mentioned that she had also worked in elementary and middle school settings, along with high school, and spoke to all three of these experiences. This table just captures her current position title and does not show her experience and relation with the other grade levels she has worked in. Such range of experience is probably true for most of the teachers and shows how such quantifiable summaries abstract identity and lived relations. I am leaving this table in, while others might take it out, as I think playing with genre in this way makes a comment on the forms of knowledge production I have been trained in (due to my background in psychology) and what relations are lost when knowledge is translated into abstracted modes of production.

[8] See Appendix 2 for information on all of the interviews, collaborative sessions, and conversations.

[9] I chose the names Ava, Ashley, Carrie, Shea, Megan, and Erin as these teachers did not choose their own pseudonyms.

Ava is a first-year settler teacher who is a grade one generalist at a public urban elementary school. She has also worked on an Indigenous education focused project during her BEd.

Ashley is a fourth-year settler teacher who works as a grade one generalist at an urban Catholic elementary school. She is also currently working on her Master's in education.

Marcela is a fourth-year settler teacher who is a grade 4 and 5 generalist at an urban public elementary school. She has also worked on projects specifically concerning Indigenous-focused K-12 resources.

Carrie is an 11th or 12th-year grades 7-9 humanities teacher (who teaches primarily grade 9) at a 7-12 school in a smaller urban setting. She is Métis, an MEd student, has worked as an FNMI teacher, and has been on committees that vet FNMI resources.

Taylor is a fourth year Piikani teacher who teaches High School English and Social Studies at a reserve school. She is currently working toward completing her Master of Education in Education Leadership.

Shea is a seventh-year settler teacher who teaches grade 9-12 English at a public urban high school. She is also currently working on a Master's in education.

Megan is a member of the Métis Nation Region 3 of Alberta Métis. Her grandmother was born in Duck Lake Saskatchewan and her family was from the Red River area in Manitoba. She is working as an elementary school district teacher of Indigenous Education at an urban and public-school division. She has been working in this position for two years and has worked as an elementary school teacher six years prior to this. She is also currently working on a Master's in education for the Educational Leadership program with a project focusing on Foundational Indigenous Knowledge.

Erin is a settler teacher working as a middle school district teacher of Indigenous Education for an urban and public-school division. She has been working in this position for over a year and has worked as an elementary school teacher for four years prior to this.

Jenny is a Piikani teacher working as a high school district teacher of Indigenous Education for an urban and public-school division. She has just begun working in this position at the high school level but has also done work—with the same district—as a district teacher of Indigenous education and FNMI teacher at the middle school and elementary level.

My listing of these teachers is intentional to show the distinctiveness of this sample of teachers. These teachers compose a very particular and non-generalizable sample due, in part, to how they were recruited. Because these teachers are mostly teachers who my committee recommended to me, they are mostly MEd students—since that is who my committee would be familiar with. Many of them are also specifically interested in, and involved in, Indigenous education initiatives. This was likely due to a bias in who my committee recommended and also a response bias as interested and involved teachers would be more likely to respond. All of the teachers involved are also women which will additionally impact their positionality. I think pointing to the distinctiveness of this sample is very important because who these teachers are impacts how they interact with the world. This includes how they interacted with me during the interviews and collaborative sessions. This highly interested and female sample means that the conversations I had are not generalizable to teachers universally across southern Alberta. However, I am not concerned about this research being scalable or representative beyond anything that it is. This sample brought out particular themes surrounding expertise, relations, and emotions, that I potentially would not have had brought forward if it was not for this specific sample.

In these interviews, I asked teachers to talk about a resource that they have used in their instruction to respond to the TRC or TQS5. I purposefully kept the definition of resource vague to see what teachers would bring to the interview and allow what they think is important to drive our conversation. However I did use the prompt, "something like a lesson plan or activity that you see as relevant to your response to the TRC or TQS5". Using the resource as something to center the conversation, I talked with teachers about how they choose resources and how these resources play out in the classroom. Further, with this focus on resources, we spoke about what challenges and possibilities there are that are specific to subjects and grade levels, pedagogy and curriculum, and the TQS5 and TRC. These interviews, prior to the collaborative sessions, were also intended to help me facilitate the collaborative sessions as the participants and I were able to meet, more personally, and begin to develop a relationship prior to meeting in a group setting. It is worth mentioning that the interviews with the district teachers of Indigenous education were slightly different as they also provided context for the work that they do, in their specific positions, which includes the designing and collecting of resources. With this, we also spoke about the possibilities and challenges that they perceived in doing this designing and collecting work. These interviews, however, also focused on conversations surrounding previous classroom experiences, differences in grade levels and subjects, pedagogy, curriculum, the TQS5, and TRC, similar to the classroom teachers.

initial faculty of education instructor conversations

Finally, I additionally held initial "interviews" (which were really more conversations—particularly with the second instructor) with two Faculty of Education instructors. Like the teachers, these instructors were recommended to me by my committee. They were contacted personally (one directly by a committee member, and the other through me attending presentations and asking questions). These more personal forms of contact were followed up with emails or conversations providing them with information and asking them if they would be willing to be involved. These conversations were an hour to an hour and a half in length. One of the conversations occurred over Zoom while the other was in person. In this research, I will refer to them both by pseudonyms.[10]

These two instructors come from two different faculties, at different universities, but are both highly involved in the Indigenous education programs at their faculties. Dr. Corrigan is a settler instructor who works in an education faculty whose current approach to Indigenous education and Indigenous ways of knowing is primarily workshop and event-based (although she noted that there is an immense desire for a course to be implemented) with the expectation that individual instructors will take up these topics in their classes. Dr. Corrigan, herself, is highly involved in what the faculty currently has in place. Dr. Lewis, the second Faculty of Education instructor that I interviewed, is a Métis instructor who works at a university that uses a primarily course-based approach to Indigenous education and Indigenous ways of knowing. This approach is also supplemented by various events and the ongoing expectation that individual instructors are taking this up in their classes. Dr. Lewis is also involved in the courses and workshops in her faculty. Additionally, both Dr. Corrigan and Dr. Lewis have research interests surrounding Indigenous education. My intention behind speaking with instructors from different faculties in southern Alberta, rather than just one, was to see a wider range of perspectives in terms of what the possibilities and challenges are in doing this work.

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[10] Dr. Corrigan chose her pseudonym, and I chose Dr. Lewis' pseudonym as Dr. Lewis did not choose a name.

These conversations had two goals. The first was to provide context for understanding the system in which future teachers are being shaped and what changes Faculty of Education instructors are making in order to respond to the TRC and prepare teacher candidates for provincial accountability mandates like the TQS5. This was meant to provide some context for how these instructors are understanding their roles in all of this along with the challenges and possibilities they perceive. To achieve this, I focused my talks with the instructors around resources to center the conversation in something the instructors use in practice.

The second goal was to help me in my research design as I asked questions and received feedback on both the structure and content of my research. Given this, all of the interviews and design sessions that followed were shaped by what I learned in these two conversations.

stage two: collaborative sessions

Stage two involved two collaborative sessions. These sessions occurred over three months after my first interview with a teacher who came to a session and approximately one month after my last interview with a teacher who came to a session. Given this, the time it had been since I had seen each teacher varied. Originally, I had planned to have these sessions in person having two in two different locations—to accommodate teachers living in different cities. Due to the Covid pandemic we ended up having two sessions over Zoom. Two sessions were held, instead of one, because I could not find one time that worked for all of the teachers who were willing to meet. As mentioned before, these collaborative sessions did not involve the Faculty of Education instructors. Additionally, two of the district teachers of Indigenous education were interviewed after the sessions took place and therefore, they could not be invited to attend. All other teachers were sent an email inviting them to attend these collaborative sessions. However, not all teachers who were invited to attend did. Some did not respond to their emails or had things come up last minute. In the end, five—of the seven teachers invited— came to one of the two sessions.

The first session involved me, Carrie, and Marcela. These sessions were proposed to be an hour and a half to two hours and this one was 1 hour and 43 minutes. The second session involved me, Shea, Ava, and Jenny. This session was just over 1 hour and 17minutes. The intention of these collaborative sessions was to produce a shared space for considering the possibilities and challenges in responding to the TRC and TQS5. In these sessions, I brought forward sample lesson plans that I found on the Learn Alberta website that are sorted by grade and subject and are FNMI-focused. This website claims that:

> These sample lesson plans support Education for Reconciliation through the inclusion of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives; treaty education; and

> residential schools' experiences, with learning outcomes identified in the current Alberta programs of study.[11]

Because the teachers who attended did not teach the same grade levels, I used one or two resources that were outlined by the website to align with the particular grade and subject area that each teacher taught. The lesson plans were presented to the teachers using Google Jamboard to try to encourage collaborative annotation of the documents that I clipped to the boards. None of the teachers took me up on the physical annotation of the documents using the tools on the Jamboard; however, we did have great and detailed conversations using specific lines, words, and directions from the resources as prompts. The collaborative focus on this resource was intended to prompt conversation. The goal of this activity was to facilitate conversation between the educators about what they would and would not use from this lesson plan, how they would imagine this lesson playing out in a classroom, and how they might modify the lesson. This activity was designed for me to better understand how teachers translate resources into their own context and, through this, highlight differences and similarities in terms of the challenges and possibilities of different teaching contexts. I additionally planned for the teachers to have a conversation around how they would plan some kind of school assembly activity that responds to the TRC or TQS5. In the first session, after the first activity, the conversation between the teachers guided the focus of the session and this activity was never addressed. In the second session it was briefly addressed but the teachers noted that this has not been a recent reality because of Covid and that having serious conversations or conversations that they really want their students to engage with does not work over Teams. Although this was not the conversation

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[11] https://www.learnalberta.ca/content/fnmilp/index.html (date last accessed: December 9, 2022)

I was expecting, it was still productive and relevant, and I learned a lot from this unexpected response.

In general, the purpose of the collaborative sessions was to understand what teachers are looking for, and value, when it comes to resources that help them respond to the TRC and TQS5 and evoke a wider conversation about similarities and differences between grade levels and subject areas. This activity allowed for dialogue between educators which pointed towards a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities that teachers from different backgrounds, working in different settings, encounter and consider in doing this work. Further, the activity was also about the translational work that occurs when we are all talking and engaging with each other in this space and how the space itself is a translational space conducive to its own challenges and possibilities. I also hoped that this space would facilitate the opportunity for teachers to meet and build relations with other teachers that have similar interests to them. This is why I provided them with the opportunity to exchange contact information after these sessions.

stage three: follow-up interviews

In stage three I conducted follow-up semi-structured interviews with the classroom and district teachers of Indigenous education. I sent out an email inviting all the teachers that I had originally interviewed to participate, and four teachers agreed to a final interview with me. These teachers were Marcela, Ava, Shea, and Jenny. Notably, these were all teachers who also participated in the collaborative sessions.

These interviews all occurred in February and ranged from 38 minutes to over an hour and 17 minutes in length. The interview with Marcela was over the phone while she drove back home from work while my conversations with Ava, Shea, and Jenny all took place over Zoom.

These interviews were conversational as the main focus of the conversations was to talk about themes that came out of the research. With this, I introduced some of the ideas that I was finding while coding and asked the teachers for feedback, ideas, and things they thought I could add. This was not formal collaborative coding like scholars such as Mack and Newberry (2020) have engaged in. Although I am interested in such methods, such an approach was not part of the scope of my research.

A note on collaboration in these three stages

Because I wanted this research to be collaborative and reciprocal, I shared the resources that I brought forward in the design sessions with the teachers, and I also plan to share my thesis with those who are interested. Additionally, I provided teachers with the opportunity to exchange information or resources with each other's contacts.

stage 4: coding

To code, I read through all the interviews first, so I had an idea of what some of the major recurring ideas were. I then did a first round of coding where I coded for my three main questions looking at pieces of our conversation that addressed how teachers are responding, the challenges in responding, and the strengths or possibilities in responding. I also did more general thematic coding during this stage marking ideas like "personally meaningful", "relationship to land", or "talk about TQS5" for example. The purpose of employing both specific codes for my questions and more thematic codes was so I could see patterns in the themes which surrounded my questions. It is worth noting that I started my coding using NVivo, a formal coding software that I had used for past projects. However, for this project, I found that coding in this way was actually limiting. Instead of making the data more legible and interpretable to myself, I found it removed the ideas from the relations or contexts in which they were produced. Because of this abstraction, I ended up using the “comment” feature, on word documents, to code and followed the words of the teachers themselves within their full contexts.

This coding process was based on my own bias and positionality. I did this coding before I spoke with the teachers for the third time so I could bring forward some of the main ideas that I thought came forward as central in my research. I also did another round of coding after these final conversations to allow for this round of coding to be influenced by the conversations I had with the teachers about the original themes I was looking at. In the end though, the “answers” to my questions that I came to were a reflection of the teachers responses, my interpretation of their responses, the literature on Indigenous education practices in schools, and anthropological theory. I mention this to highlight that the “results” of this research come from my particular position and subjective understanding. There are practices of collaborative coding that try to mitigate this impact of everything being translated through the researchers’ lens, in more comprehensive ways, which I am interested in (Mack and Newberry 2020). However, as I mentioned, collaborative coding was not within the scope of this research program.

What does fall within this project is a critique of coding. Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández (2013; and see Riles 2006) highlight coding as part of the knowledge production process that is always a process of abstraction and translation where information is abstracted into a quantitative unit for the purposes of organizing ideas. In this way coding makes relations invisible to render standardizable and comparable units. I am making a note of this here as this idea, about abstraction, is one that I will return to. I will later argue that these kinds of abstraction processes are tied up with hegemonic Eurocentric conceptions of being. Noting that this was part of my methods shows how normalized abstraction is within the “academic” knowledge production process.

reflections on my methods

I believe that one of my biggest mistakes, but also something that I—importantly—learned from in doing this research, is how I submitted my ethics application. In submitting my ethics application, I was very concerned about it being approved and processed so I could start my research. Given this, I put together an ethics application that I thought would be recognized as standard and not cause an ethics committee to throw up any red flags. Because of this, I decided to make the identity of all of my participants anonymous and essentially deny my relations to the field of education by not interviewing anyone who know my parents or myself.

This also impacted how I recruited teachers to be involved in my research. Because both of my parents are teachers, I decided to recruit through my committee rather than my personal and family connections. Retrospectively, I think this decision mirrors the critique of Eurocentric notions of knowledge and education—that I will critique in this thesis—as my relations to the field, through this, are, not acknowledged and made invisible. The notion that I could only produce ethical data under such an abstracted model reflects a paradigm that fractures and denies relations in knowledge, as I describe in this thesis.

The decision to keep teachers anonymous also comes from an ethical model which is based in a Eurocentric frame that promotes objectivity and denies relations. This model is interesting because it is made to make the participants feel as though they can say whatever they want and not worry about being attached to it. It conceals their relation to the research and their own comments and words. Marcela, one of the teachers, did point to the merit in this, as it made her feel less restricted in making comments that go against the professional expectations of teachers and allowed her to express what she truly considers when she teaches.

Marcela: I—I mean, I'm not going to be identified. So I can openly say I don't take the curriculum as the bible. And I think a lot more as how I might—some of my motivation as a

> teacher is asking myself what do I need to take this child from where they are right now to who I would like to be living beside as a neighbor for the rest of my life as an adult.
> (Initial Interview, Zoom, 16 August 2021).

However, I do think that, in order to conceal their identity, I am operating under this same Eurocentric paradigm which denies and conceals relations as I am unable to fully contextualize who they are.

Both of these cases, highlight the contradictions I came across by producing a thesis that is centrally about relations while working within a knowledge system where it is most standard and, in fact, seen as ethical to deny these relations. Such a standard, points to how pervasive and underlying this notion is that "real knowledge" is knowledge that can be standardized and anonymized. Going along with this system, in my ethics, perpetuated these ideas and created many moments of felt contradiction in conducting my research. This tension, however, was a very important learning moment as it allowed for me to feel and experience the tension between the importance of relations that make up knowledge and making them invisible. The rest of my thesis will focus on this tension in particular.

Chapter 2: Relations and the production of knowledge

2.1 Expertise

Makita: So, when you're looking for resources, or like you're recommending—for others—how to look for resources. Do you recommend resources that specifically kind of have this outline? Or like what do you look for? Or what do you recommend? I guess is what I'm asking—
Dr. Corrigan: Yeah, that's a good question and it's tricky because I very often get emails from students in our program who I don't personally know, like I haven't taught them, and they'll just be like "oh". I got one of these emails just recently it was a student who graduated two years ago and they're teaching math, grade seven math[12]. And they said, "I want to include Indigenous perspectives of my grade seven math, what's a good resource, can you recommend anything?" And those are really hard emails to respond to actually. Like it seems very simple on the surface to just be like "here's the math resource I'd recommend" and send an email with it attached. Or the name of a book or something. So, in some ways it can be very easy. But I don't actually respond to those emails in that way because, like I said before, a resource is a tool and a tool in the wrong hands can be misused, um, and so unless the user of this resource has an understanding about why the resource is being used where it's positioned in the curriculum, is it appropriate or not, are they ready and prepared to utilize this resource are they comfortable with it? Is it situated alongside other complementary resources and approaches in their teaching? There's so many other pieces on a resource and I kind of equate it very simply to like, you know, you can give a hammer and a nail and a piece of wood to a journeyman carpenter or you can give a hammer and a nail and a piece of wood to a toddler and those tools are going to be used very differently between those two users. And by no means am I equating some teachers to toddlers and others to carpenters, but the training associated in the practice using particular resources does change how it sits within a learning environment and how students come to understand it. And I think this goes along with, you know, some common perspectives in education that, you know, a textbook is not a teacher.
Makita: Mmm.
Dr. Corrigan: And I think so many people have had experiences in school often in math where you start in chapter one and you do section 1.1, and then tomorrow you do 1.2 and you answer the questions, and the next day is 1.3 and that is not how resources ought to be used in an educational environment. They should be supplementary, they should be supportive, and they should be situated within a bigger approach to teaching and bigger approach to pedagogy um. So, when I get emails like that and say hey do you have a resource that you could recommend, I get really hesitant because to explain and have that conversation by email or when a student comes by my door and says "hey I'm doing grade six Social what do you recommend so I can include First Nations perspectives". So, it's tricky to navigate that because it comes from a good place it comes from a well-intentioned teacher wanting to do this and to do it well so they feel like they're asking someone who they think might know.
Makita: Mhm.
Dr. Corrigan: Um. So, I usually try to invite more conversation and reply with "oh how might you think about" like, "what unit are you using this in" or "why do you want to integrate an Indigenous perspective into grade seven math this year or in this unit." So, I try to kind of extend

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[12] I changed the grade level as this could be identifying.

the conversation, um. And then often I, you know—there are resource lists that get circulated. We have lists in our [resource center] here which are very useful for students.
Makita: Mm.
Dr. Corrigan: There's—we have a First Nation, Métis, Inuit curriculum collection which is a database with over a thousand lesson plans. At this point, some of them are quite dated and I'm considering how we might move forward with that resource, but.
Makita: Hum.
Dr. Corrigan: Yeah. So, I—it's tricky about the recommendation of resources. I'm quite hesitant to do that really flippantly and just like send an email and here's a list of my top 10 resources. Like that's not something I ever do—
Makita: Right.
Dr. Corrigan: —Or will do. Which I think probably frustrates some students a bit because they probably think "she's the Indigenous ed person the faculty and she's not sending me a list. I want a list of resources."
(Initial Interview, Zoom, 3 August 2021)

This response comes from a conversation with Dr. Corrigan who is a settler Faculty of Education instructor at a university in southern Alberta. In this portion of the conversation, I ask her about recommending resources and she outlines how she finds this process much more complicated than simply having a list of "good" resources on hand that she could send off at any time. Through her response to my question, Dr. Corrigan shows a mismatch between students' expectations of her and the framework that she comes from when she gets inquiries about resources. I am highlighting this mismatch here as it showcases a contrast between two forms of expertise that I want to focus on in this section.

In her response, Dr. Corrigan talks about how she often gets emails from current and former students asking her what a good resource would be to incorporate Indigenous perspectives into a subject that they are teaching. She notes how she has a difficult time responding to these emails. Dr. Corrigan details how she believes that students are often expecting a type of "top ten resources" recommendation in response to these emails but that she would feel uncomfortable providing this kind of response. This expectation of the students, that Dr. Corrigan perceives, points to the students seeing knowledge in a way that is disconnected from themselves and their lives. In other words, it is as if there could be a top ten resource list that could work universally for all teachers teaching grade seven math that would always be the best resource regardless of the teacher or their teaching context.

This lack of context seems to drive the discomfort for Dr. Corrigan who notes that she does not know what knowledge the student brings, their reasoning behind wanting to do this, where it fits into their pedagogical style, or where it fits in with other resources they use in their practice. Because of this, she notes that she will not provide this kind of response and instead often will try to extend the conversation to have the student provide her with more information about themselves and their context. Moreover, Dr. Corrigan later outlined that she more often provides guiding frameworks and principles, along with resource evaluation outlines, like the WNCP common tool[13], to start students in thinking critically and holistically about the resources that they could use in their teaching. This stance of not providing a top ten list and rather asking more questions (in order to understand the teacher, where they are coming from, and what might work for them), and providing a tool to encourage reflection allows her to develop a relationship with the students. Additionally, it allows the student to be able to make decisions about resources for themselves based on what works for them, their context, their practice, and their foundational knowledge allowing them to think about their practice more relationally.

I argue that the tension between the student's desire for a top ten resource list, or a quick "here's the best resource" response, and Dr. Corrigan's pedagogical philosophy that considers who the teacher is and the context that they are teaching in represents a tension between two forms of expertise—sanctioned expertise and relational expertise—that came up constantly throughout the course of research.

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[13] WNCP common tool link: https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/692ec824-7764-4863-8833-62568f74d5ab/resource/b57ddcc0-af7e-4020-a6f5-267dff61e89b/download/5461224-2011-wncp-common-tool-assessing-validating-teaching-learning-resources-first-nations-met.pdf (date last accessed: December 9, 2022)

2.2 Sanctioned expertise

The first form of expertise that I will explore is sanctioned expertise. Dr. Corrigan points to sanctioned expertise, I contend, through her description of a top ten resource list that could work in any setting and for any teacher. With sanctioned expertise, the teacher's expertise is seen and valued through their officially recognized or authoritative expertise in the curriculum (which is positioned as passive and unbiased) and their ability to deliver the curriculum "accurately". With sanctioned expertise, the teacher is seen as the ultimate knower in the classroom; however, the teacher is expected to deliver the material without bias or any personal relation to it. This process is passive because the teacher, student, and context are not supposed to influence how the material is delivered, or else it would become biased. Because of this, the teacher's expertise is impersonal and is derived from the curriculum or related materials. This form of expertise is characteristically mandated, prescribed, and authorized. In this model, once the teacher learns what they are supposed to teach, the knowledge is then relayed to students as facts. This model does not consider the teacher's own relation to the "facts", the students in relation to the "facts", the context in which the "facts" are being "delivered", or often the "facts" in relation to the context that produced them. It is the categories of teacher and student that matter and not their subjectivity or the lived contexts that they bring to any given interaction. With sanctioned expertise, the vision is that any teacher should be able to teach any class, in any setting, as long as they have a lesson that is based on the curriculum, to follow.

Of course, this is not how learning really happens and educational scholars (Eisner 2000) and critical educational ethnographers (Foley, Levinson, and Hurtig 2000) have pointed to how this vision of education is over-deterministic and discounts actors' agency. However, I am not arguing that this is how education works. Rather, I am describing a model of expertise which represents an approach to, or vision of, education that values objectivity and conceptualizes knowledge as discrete facts separated from the relations that shape them. Moreover, writing this in the context of a provincial government that wants to return to "fact-based learning" and has emphasized their interests in removing "bias" from educational practice, I argue that these ideas about schooling are very much alive.[14] There is a vision—that underlies this type of thinking (that believes that removing bias is possible)—that what is taught in classrooms can be objective knowledge that is objectively transferred to students who are also objective and passive in the process.

This vision of sanctioned expertise and how it positions teachers as detached experts—delivering objective knowledge—reflects and reproduces Eurocentric models of knowledge production that have laid the basis for authoritative models of Eurocentric science today. To provide context for this hegemonic model, I will go briefly into Strathern's (2020) analysis of this history of knowledge production and how it is tied to the idea of relations.

knowledge production and relations

Strathern, a British anthropologist who studies knowledges, outlines how both the English language and the change in social structure in seventeenth-century Europe brought forward a particular way of thinking about relations. In Strathern's work, she notes a kind of "conflation" between "social relations" and "knowledge relations" (2020, 29) due to the same

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[14] In a public address on August 6th, 2020, the Alberta Ministry of Education spoke about how they are dedicated, with the new curriculum, to remove the bias in education, particularly in Social Studies. When asked to give examples of this bias they spoke about how individual teachers are "utilizing the curriculum in a—in a way that creates bias in the classroom" (YourAlberta 2020, 22:00).

English terms used in both areas. She outlines that the terms—relations and relationships—were originally used primarily to refer to ideas about knowledge production or how things are known. She notes that the terms—relation and relationship—came to be additionally taken up vernacularly to speak about kinship in seventeenth-century England. Strathern notes that, during the seventeenth-century in England, there was a shift from a "bilateral cognatic kin system" to a "lineage system" that focused primarily on firstborn sons (2020, 30). She suggests that it was at this time that the terms "relation" and "relatives" came into the "pool of terms" used to define kin relations (2020, 31).

What also emerged, at this time, is what she calls "generics" (Strathern 2020, 27) such as mother, father, sister, brother, etc. These generics evoke that a person has kin without providing specifics on the relation (2020, 32). What became important with these generics was the categories; not the specific individuals that occupied these categories or the context of their specific relation. What is important is rather their "specific features *as* abstract forms" (Strathern 2020, 27). She argues that these generics became important with the shift in lineal descent specifically with tracking property and ownership for men (Strathern 2020, 39). Strathern notes that patrilineality and the associated family strategies and conceptions of kinship organization that came with it "acquired an almost constitutional status" (Sabean and Teuscher 2007, 15 as cited in Strathern 2020, 38). This constitutional status points to how this external and generic view of kinship relations became so naturalized, built-in, and seen as the legitimate form. With this, the generics, rather than the individuals who occupy them, became very important for property and ownership reinforcing their legitimate status through their legal importance. Social structure was seen to be built on relations, specifically, these categories which are seen as detached from, and overlook, the people who occupy them. The term relations at this time, then, was made to refer to these imposed and external categories and not the kind of everyday interactions between people or things that might be more context based, locally important, or individually experienced.

What is interesting about this is that Strathern notes that knowledge relations were being thought of similarly by seventeenth-century philosophers. She reports that seventeenth-century philosophers were reflecting on “not only government and sovereignty but also on the character of knowledge and human understanding, bound up with knowledge experiments that conceived nature as requiring explanation, and explanation requiring verification” (Strathern 2020, 34). Strathern argues that at this time, “description becomes a new object” (2020, 34). With this, descriptions of the “natural world” and the categories, and classifications, which came along with this description, became externally imposed. Further, because description is seen as objective, these categories become naturalized and not seen as a product of those who produced them.

In this model, there is the subject and the object that have been outlined by early philosophers who published about consciousness and knowledge production like Descartes and Kant (see Hekman 2015 for discussion). The subject is the knower who is able to know and act on what is “out there”—the object—but not the other way around. The object is then located outside and is knowable by the subject (Hekman 2015). In her description of seventeenth-century knowledge production, Strathern (2020) outlines how the object becomes knowable in the natural history approach through the subject’s interaction and description. She furthers too that the subject’s description of what is “out there” becomes the object detached from the subject. The description (or model produced from the description) then becomes detached as the relations of the subject(s) that produce the description become erased. This stands as the basis for the natural history approach to knowledge which relies on observation, collection, and description of the “natural world.” These ideas are also carried forward in Enlightenment ideas of scientific knowledge production which also relies on detaching the subject and object. This model is primarily based on looking at the correlation—or relation—between variables and then drawing conclusions to produce knowledge based on these relations. With hegemonic “scientific” knowledge production the relation *between* variables is considered and the relation the knower had to these variables is erased. The knowledge is acquired about the object, through a means that is seen as independent of the subject (such as the scientific method/experimentation) making the knowledge that is produced objective knowledge. This form of knowledge production similarly focuses on the relation between variables while ignoring the relation to the knowing subject. Strathern notes (drawing on Leach 2012, 255) that there are two assumptions made in hegemonic European knowledge production “first, that knowledge can be detached from those who produce it, to be circulated (as information) without reference to them; second, that its effect is not dependent on such persons, but on its correlation with apparently independently occurring phenomena” (2020, 104). The erasure of the relation of the knower to what is known produces something that is “detached” from their subjectivity.

Strathern argues that “this notion of an entity with (external) relations to others echoes some of the ways people of the time were coming to think about kin ties” (2020, 38). This is evident as the ideas of external generics in kinship classifications mirrors the idea of external description, categorization, and classification of the “natural world”. Strathern specifically argues that “one might wish to take the very implication of rendering relations external both to the individual organic being and to the conscious person or self *as* an emergent modeling of kinship” (2020, 38). What this suggests is that these ideas about kin relations and knowledge relations, connected by the term relations, seem to have been mutually influential in defining what relations meant in both circumstances. Both circumstances seem to produce a vision of relations that is external, detached, imposed, and naturalized.

Despite the specific context that produced this model of knowing, it is one that has become spread both throughout the world and throughout many disciplines. Colonization imperialism, and settler colonialism (Wolfe 2006) perpetuate the hierarchies of what is the "correct" way to know such that this mode of knowing has become the kind of gold standard for how to know (Brayboy and Castagno 2008; El-Hani, de Ferreira Bandeira, and Pedro 2008; Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández 2013). This model of knowledge production has been subjected to sustained critique because its standardization has erased other ways to know and its emphasis on "objective" knowledge erases the politics of who gets to know and who gets to produce knowledge (see, for example, Haraway 1988; Mitchell 1989; Sabzalian 2018; Tuck 2009; Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández 2013).

sanctioned expertise in schooling

This objective, detached, and impersonal scientific model is perpetuated in standardized hegemonic schooling. One of the ways it is perpetuated in schooling is through the idea of sanctioned expertise. Sanctioned expertise perpetuates a vision of knowledge that is detached, objective, and characteristically does not consider subjects' relations to the knowledge.

Scholars have noted that this detached objectivity underlies schooling in many ways but is specifically an issue when "othered" cultures are brought into the classroom. Sensoy et al. (2010) for example cites the multicultural zoo approach to bringing in cultures where the cultures are seen as "exhibits". In this zoo approach, the material is delivered in a way that is detached and objective. It replicates the natural history approach where the subject learns about the object which is the “natural world” that is “out there” and separate from the subject. This model of knowing was applied not only to understanding plants and animals, for example, but also to humans and cultures. Because Europeans saw themselves as “cultured”, they created a binary to define others as “uncultured”, “wild” or “natural” (Said 1979). This is why the natural history approach is also tied to Europeans (as subjects) understanding the non-European “other” (as objects). With this, the subject—the European—gets to know, define, and understand the object but the object—the non-European “other” is not given this agency (Deloria 1988; Marker 2004; Sabzalian 2018; Tuck 2009; Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández 2013). Further, much of the work under the natural history approach re-instated this kind of binary and otheredness. Much of what was produced was socio-cultural evolutionary hierarchies studying tool use (Morgan 1963), for example, to create a model of evolution placing non-European people and cultures as less evolved and Europeans at the pinnacle of modernity.

This carries through to the classroom through this zoo approach where the subject is the students and teachers, and the object is the “othered” culture. The students and teachers get to know and the “othered” culture gets to be explored, known, and defined on the subjects’ (students and teachers) terms. Indigenous education scholars, like Donald, have noted that, because these cultures are viewed as “less evolved” and “othered”, they are often used as an “example” which is “interpreted as scientific evidence and confirmation of Euro-western civilization and ascendancy” (Donald 2009a, 30). This shows how naturalized this natural history subject description of a model has become and shows how these evolutionary ideas are continually re-instated and replicated. Donald notes the issues of this “exhibition pedagogy” (2009a, 29) specifically in terms of Indigenous-focused topics or ways of knowing. Calling on Deloria (1998) he notes that “knowing *about* Indians through lectures, textbooks, history books, and films still has more intellectual authority than sustained social, political, and ethical engagement" (Donald 2009a, 29). These cultures, and ways of knowing, are presented as examples and not as legitimate ways to know in the world. Knowing othered cultures only through lectures, textbooks, history books, and films allows for a distanced approach requiring no engagement, direct experience, or understanding of how teachers or learners are connected with the material (Donald 2009a). This natural history approach to pedagogy additionally goes along with sanctioned expertise as it promotes an approach to education where teachers do not have to consider or bring forward their connection to the material or understand the context of the material as they can know the material through the narratives and in a model that they have been given.

What I have shown, in this section, is a model of expertise that is based on an objective and unbiased vision of schooling and an example of how this model is based, in part, in seventeenth century conceptualizations of knowledge production that reflects ideas of relations which were emerging in this time period. Further, I go on to speak about Indigenous scholarship to detail some of the implications of this model in education, particularly when it comes to Indigenous content. The sanctioned expert model provides the basis for understanding the tension that Dr. Corrigan describes when she is talking about not wanting to provide a top ten resource list or a resource without any context or relation to the student. This is the form of expertise—that is formulaic, standardizable, and objective—that Dr. Corrigan seems to be uncomfortable with. I will now outline the form of expertise, which I am calling relational expertise, which she seems to endorse.

2.3 Relational expertise

The other form of expertise, that the conversation with Dr. Corrigan outlines, is what I am calling relational expertise. Relational expertise reflects Dr. Corrigan's approach—that she outlines—which values, and takes into consideration, who the teacher is and the context in which they are teaching. Dr. Corrigan talks about how—without this information—she would not know how a resource would sit in a learning environment showing how she believes that these aspects are important and influence how knowledge is produced.

In talking about relational expertise, I will be using the term relation(s) but not in a way that reflects the detached, generic, and external Eurocentric views of kinship in which they were developed in seventeenth-century Europe. Instead, I am embracing a definition of relations as things that "have an effect on—and pose problems for actors far beyond the scope of their connections" (Strathern 2020, 8). This view of relations is a reflection of the turn, in anthropology, away from kinship models based on blood (Schneider 1968), external synoptic models more generally, and the rise of new kinship studies (Dorow and Swiffen 2009), feminist theories (Haraway 1988), encounter-based theories (Rabinow 2011; Tsing 2015), Indigenous ways of knowing based in relations and ecology (Little-Bear 2000; Sabzalian 2019; Simpson 2014; Stagg Peterson et al. 2018; Tuhiwai Smith et al. 2019), science and technology studies (Best and Walters 2013, Latour 1987), and the "ontological turn" (Kohn 2007, 2012, 2013; see Todd 2016 for critiques) which have posed more entangled ways to think about relations. The term relations, then, is about how all things, interactions, ideas, etc. are known through the numerous interactions which are entangled and networked together to produce them. This view of relations sees interactions, ideas, things, and individuals as not self-contained objects but rather intertwined with all the interactions or relations which compose them. In terms of education this means considering all of the aspects that come together to create a single interaction including the classroom context, the teacher, the students, the parents, the staff, the school board, the ministry of education, social political factors, social media, or underlying ideas about schooling just to name some.

Relations, as I am outlining them in talking about relational expertise, are not about fixed external categories but are rather derived from interaction and experience. They are about process and practice. This means that new relations are always being made and the identities of the individual, ideas, things, etc. are never fixed. What I am referring to here is the active process—or practice—of interacting with new materials, ideas, people, activities, etc. which creates new relations. Relational will be used as the adjective to describe this model of relations.

Relational expertise, I contend, is about the deliberate engagement in relations by engaging in, placing value on, and bringing forward the networks of relations both in terms of how teachers approach the production of knowledge and the interactions they take part in, in their practice. Relational expertise is about filling in, or making visible, the "relational deficit" (Strathern 2020, 139) in education. Strathern notes that the relational deficit is "created by the value being placed on interchangeability" and "the impersonal" (Strathern 2020, 140). In essence, the relational deficit deliberately devalues relations, as I have just outlined them, and places more value on interchangeable generics, like sanctioned expertise does. The relations of the content, how it was created, the teacher, the students, and their context are all overlooked with the relational deficit. In this way, relational expertise is a reaction against sanctioned expertise which, like the relational deficit, values the interchangeable and impersonal both through valuing categories more than individuals and through valuing knowledge that is "unbiased". By valuing this form of knowledge production, sanctioned expertise renders the relations engaged in the production of knowledge, along with the interactions and encounters that build them, invisible. By embracing and valuing relational expertise, teachers react against sanctioned expertise by caring about and highlighting the relations, subjectivities, and contexts that shape knowledge. For teachers it means, for example, valuing and playing into how the knowledge interacts with and is transformed by the teacher, the setting, the students, the school, and everything else that impacts how a lesson plays out. Further, it is about appreciating and valuing the relational character of knowledge as not objective and standardized but rather as subjective and personal.

With the concept of relational expertise, I am drawing on feminist theory surrounding knowledge production (Haraway 1988), anthropological encounter-based theories (Rabinow 2011; Tsing 2015), and Indigenous scholarship (Apffel-Marglin 2011; Augustine 2005; Tuhiwai Smith 2012).

Calling on feminist theories, I am theorizing relational expertise as something that sees knowledge as situated (Haraway 1988). Taking a relational expertise approach then involves valuing and noticing how knowledge is positional and intersubjective and seeing this as integral in the production of knowledge. This is about rejecting ideas of objectivity as this points to how the production of knowledge is always situated and thus subjective. Similarly, anthropologists (Rabinow 2011; Tsing 2015), science and technology study theorists (Best and Walters 2013; Latour 1987), and Indigenous scholars (Apffel-Marglin 2011; Augustine 1997; Tuhiwai Smith 2012; Todd 2016) have all also pointed to the partial and situated nature of knowledge.

I am also theorizing relational expertise as something that sees knowledge production as interactional, dynamic, multiple, and influenced by numerous scales at once as it is based on interactions but goes beyond this to notice everything that is happening in the network around it to impact any given interaction. Anthropologists (Rabinow 2011; Tsing 2015) and science and technology study scholars (Carr 2021; Latour 1987) have also pointed to this theorizing on the production of knowledge both methodologically and more generally, using a similar idea to interactional ethnography but using the term encounters instead of interactions. These scholars too have expressed the networked (Latour 1987), encounter (Tsing 2015), and assemblage (Rabinow 2011) based nature of phenomena generally and have suggested that these complex intertangled networks impact the knowledge that is produced in any interaction. Drawing on these theories, I suggest that relational expertise is about valuing and noticing all of the human and non-human actors that are working in relation to each other to produce knowledge in any interaction.

These theories of networked relations, that assemblage-based notions of knowledge center around seem to draw on Indigenous conceptions of knowledge which positions knowledge to be experiential, relational, and interactional. Bruchac (2014) suggests that Indigenous knowledges "are inherently holistic and integrative, being rooted in sensory awareness and human experience of the complex relationships among multiple organisms in distinct ecosystems" (Apffel-Marglin 2011; Augustine 1997; Tuhiwai Smith 2012). This holistic and relational view of Indigenous knowledge is one that has been emphasized by many scholars (Augustine 1997; Donald 2016; Fast and Kovach 2019; Fiola 2015; Harris and Wasilewski 2004; Kovach 2009; Little-Bear 2000; McGregor and Marker 2018; Sabzalian 2019; Simpson 2014; Stagg Peterson et al. 2018; Styres 2017; Tuhiwai Smith 2008, 2012; Tuhiwai Smith et al. 2019). Styres, specifically uses the concept "self-in-relationship" (2017, 56). She uses this concept to describe "interrelatedness… interdependence… and interconnectedness" (Styres 2017, 57 as cited in Arney 2021, 145) that is valued in Indigenous conceptions of knowledge, which similarly points to an entangled and ecological aspects of relations. This link to Indigenous conceptions of knowledge is important as it shows how these ideas which make up feminist, anthropological, and science and technology study theories are based on Indigenous expertise despite the frequent lack of citation (Todd 2016). This being said, I will continue to talk about relational expertise throughout my thesis and although these ideas are supported by and draw on Indigenous ways of knowing, I am not claiming that all moments of acting relationally or through relational expertise are teachers engaging in Indigenous ways of knowing.

The notion of relational expertise, I argue, reflects Dr. Corrigan's stance of not providing a standardized response to students' emails. Rather, by asking more questions to learn about the teacher to find out what kind of resource or practice would suit their learning environment and by providing a tool to encourage reflection (allowing students to consider their context, their practice, their subjectivities, and their foundational knowledge) shows how she values relational expertise in both her own approach to Indigenous-focused practices and how she is encouraging students to respond to mandates like the TQS5.

To be clear, I am not arguing that, based on our conversation, Dr. Corrigan is either a sanctioned or relational expert. What I am arguing is that the conversation I had with Dr. Corrigan shows the tension between sanctioned expertise and relational expertise as she seems to be resisting the former and promoting the latter. In the next chapter I will focus on these forms of expertise to explore how the teachers are responding to the TRC and TQS5.

Chapter 3: How are teachers responding?

In going into this research, my main question was: how are teachers responding to the TRC and TQS5 within their practice? As I mentioned, I used this as a framing question as I wanted to keep the framework generally vague so that I could learn about what teachers were doing. Were they reading books from Indigenous authors? Were they having conversations about race and inequality? Were they engaging in land-based learning? What I found is that the teachers I spoke to seemed to be doing all of these things. However, there seemed to be a common approach through which they were doing it. They were engaging in relational expertise. In this chapter, I will explore this approach.

To answer my main question of how teachers are responding to the TRC and TQS5, I used resources as a starting point for my conversations with the teachers with the idea that hearing about what they use, why they use it, and how it works for them would allow for an understanding of how they are responding. Through this, I was able to learn about what the teachers value in resources and in their responses to the TRC and TQS5 in general. For example, in my interview with Ashley, a fourth-year settler grade one teacher, she did not bring a resource to our interview, so I asked her if there was a particular resource, or kind of resource, that she uses to respond to the TRC or TQS5. She noted that she tends to use picture books. She also outlined why she prefers picture books to online resources.

Ashley: Definitely picture books, definitely. And I find like any online content is very like non-authentic or um like somebody has recorded a Pow-Wow from their iPhone and has put it on YouTube. So not great quality and then you—like it’s not, like, censored or you don't know what's going on. So definitely picture books are the easiest way because I don't find that there's a lot of online content. So, yeah, definitely picture books.
(Initial Interview, in person, 12 August 2021)

By describing a—potentially hypothetical[15]—example of something she would not use, Ashley provides an outline of some of the central criteria, or values, she has when responding to the TRC and TQS5 in terms of bringing in Indigenous-focused content. For example, Ashley talks about how the resource is not authentic and she does not know what is going on. This points to how she values the ability to know, or at least be able to trace, the context of the resources that she uses. Further, Ashley also seems to dislike the resource because it is an online resource which, from the wider context of our conversation, does not seem to match her or her teaching practice. In this way, she shows how she wants her response and the resources she uses to be compatible with her personally. Finally, her concern about the resource not being censored shows that she values her response and the resources and practices she uses to be contextually appropriate, as she would not want to use an uncensored resource in a grade one context. Here I will show that these ideas that Ashley brings forward, through the description of this online resource, speak to the central criteria and values that teachers who participated in this research highlighted in general.

These values that Ashley expresses seem to reflect Dr. Corrigan's concerns about sharing resources with students when she does not have the contextual knowledge of the student, their knowledge, or their practice. Similar to Dr. Corrigan, the teachers that I talked to seem to be deliberately going against standard Eurocentric ideas about knowledge production by developing and placing value on relations.

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[15] I never had another interview with Ashley and was not fast enough in this one to think to ask about whether this is a resource she has experienced or was just something she was describing as an example. Either way, it represents something that she is reacting against in order to display and confirm her values.

By relations, I do not necessarily mean Ashley has a relationship with Indigenous authors, communities, or stories in that she personally knows the author, for example. She might, and if she did this would be part of her relational expertise. Relational expertise is not necessarily about being an Indigenous content expert. It has to do more so with valuing the network of interactions which compose and interact with the knowledge that is produced in classrooms. Nevertheless, all of the teachers I worked with did seem to have some understanding of foundational knowledge, as I previously outlined, and this foundational knowledge likely influenced why they take this approach to responding to the TRC and TQS5.

The relational expert approach was reflected, in the responses of teachers, in three ways that I will touch on here. First, the teachers placed emphasis on knowing and valuing the relations that produce the lessons and resources they draw on, in their practice, to respond to the TRC and TQS5. Second, the teachers approached the TRC and TQS5 through their own subjective lens and valued this as part of the production of knowledge. Third, the teachers addressed the TRC and TQS5 through their contexts and, again, valued this as important in the production of knowledge in their classrooms.

3.1 Resources and relations

In Ashley's description of her example resource, she shows that she values relational expertise, through knowing the relations of the resource that she is using. She does this by suggesting that she would not want to use a resource if she does not know where it is coming from. Such a concern shows how she would want a resource that provides contextual information about how it has been created. The value of knowing the context—or relations—of the resource is something that all the teachers I spoke with talked about. Often, this value was expressed through a desire to know who created the resource and their relation to it.

This value became very apparent in the collaborative sessions when we went through sample lesson plans on the Learn Alberta website. Often these lesson plans had recommended resources (often a book) that went with the lessons. When I was playing with the idea of using these lesson plans, I saw the fact that the teachers might not be familiar with the accompanying resources as a potential issue. However, in practice, the unfamiliarity with the resources allowed me to understand what the teachers would want to know about a resource before they spent time contemplating using it in their practice. The concerns that they brought forward seemed to center around knowing the context, or relation, of the resources. For example, here is an interaction from the first collaborative session with Marcela and Carrie. Here we are discussing the first lesson plan that we looked at.

Marcela: My other thing is—like so when we, for our website, for our stuff that we share. I would like to see not just what the resource is, but—the name Amy Farrell does not necessarily mean she's not Indigenous, but you also can't suspect from the name. So, I would like to know that, if I'm spending time on this, I would like to know that this is either in consultation with Indigenous peoples—
Carrie: Yeah.
Marcela:—Or written by an Indigenous person themselves.
(Collaborative Session, Zoom, 25 November 2021)

In this discussion, Marcela—who is a settler grade four and five teacher who has been involved in curating FNMI-focused resources for teachers—notes how she finds it off-putting that the lesson plan does not provide contextual information about the resources that they recommend using. She shares that she would want to know the background of who wrote the resource and who was in consultation on the resource if she were to use it. This observation, of the lack of detail that the lesson plan has, shows how important knowing who the author is—to their work—and knowing who is in consultation—on the resource—is to Marcela. It allows her to know if the resource has been produced in connection to people who are connected with this knowledge.

Further, in a prior interview Carrie, who is a Métis grade nine Social and English teacher who has also worked with curating Indigenous resources, similarly talks about the importance of considering relations in terms of the author and furthers this idea by stressing the importance of considering the relation that community members and publishers have to resources.

Carrie: I'm part of the educator committee where we have representation from across the country and they take a look at different educational resources. And they're sort of like. It's called a "journey pack"[16] and they send it out to schools and then there's digital resources as well. So knowing that those have been vetted by community members is really important too, to make sure you're not using something that maybe isn't appropriate or anything like that. And then even we think about the text that we use on certain publishers. If they're more Indigenous specific like Good Minds or, something like that, making sure that we're honoring that.
(Initial Interview, Zoom, 27 August 2021)

Carrie shows another aspect of the value of knowing these relations in talking about how the group that she works with considers not just the author and, their relations, but also if the resource is in relation to and approved by community members and if the publisher is an "Indigenous-focused" publisher.

The first idea about community member approval speaks to the notion of authenticity that Ashley brings forward in talking about how her example video resource is "non-authentic". In talking about vetting, Carrie shows how this notion of authenticity, in terms of if a resource is "approved", is relational as it is about the process of making sure that the knowledge, presented in the resources, does have a relationship with the people who are associated with the knowledge. This question of whether a resource is approved, vetted, or authentic seems to be one of the main reasons that the teachers were interested in knowing the context of the resources they were using. Many of them would talk about how they do not want to use resources that are tokenistic, stereotypical, or harmful. Knowing that the resource is in relation to—rather than abstracted from—and approved by the people who have a relation to the knowledge, that the resource is drawing on, is used as a type of criteria to know if the resource is alright to use.

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[16] This is a pseudonym as the real name could have the potential to identify the teacher.

The second interest, in an Indigenous-focused publisher, touches on two of the other concerns that the teachers highlight through their interest in knowing the contexts of resources that they use. Although this is not something that either Marcela or Carrie directly touch on here, some of the teachers particularly noted that they wanted to be supporting Indigenous authors and publishers and talked about the issue of appropriation and non-Indigenous people claiming ownership over these resources. Such a concern shows interest in context and relations by making sure that any potential profits of the resource are going back to the communities that have a relation with the knowledge that the resource is drawing on. By knowing the author, publisher, and this wider relation or context it would allow for the teachers to have this information. Carrie's interest in the publisher reflects another question surrounding the production of knowledge that was central for many of the teachers. By talking about whether the publisher is Indigenous-focused, or not, Carrie seems to be pointing to the translation process that happens when resources go through publishing to make them more hegemonically "intelligible" (Dorow and Swiffen 2009) to a primarily settler teaching force. This concern shows how she values knowing the relations and contexts that went into the resources as she sees the context and relations as part of the knowledge that is produced in the resources. The teachers' interests, in general, in knowing who the resources were created by—and what relations they have—shows that they are valuing knowledge in terms of how it is situated and considers the positionality of the author in this way (Haraway 1988). The teachers deliberately are going against the notion of the "relational deficit" (Strathern 2020), or sanctioned expertise, as they want these relations to be made visible. Further, the concern about who the author is and who they are connected to, and specifically additional comments about community vetting and publishers, shows that teachers are valuing the contextual and relational nature of the knowledge in terms of the networks that have interacted to compose the resource (Riles 2006; Jiménez 2021). This is similar to the networks that compose any interaction or encounter as others have theorized (Latour 1987; Rabinow 2011; Tsing 2015).

These ideas were also articulated in terms of the relations that the teachers build with "guests" like Indigenous lead teachers, Elders, and community members who they ask to be involved in teaching their students. Ashley, for example, noted a "relationship divide" that could come with "bringing in" an Elder.

Ashley: And even bringing in an Elder like—yes, that incorporates it into your classroom. But it still almost has this like relationship divide.
(Initial Interview, in person, 12 August 2021)

The idea of this relational divide with guest speakers came up in many of the conversations that I had with the teachers, although it was never directly a question that I asked.

Part of this seems to be that guest speakers are "parachuted into the classroom" (Donald 2009a, 30) without knowing the context of the teacher and the students and what they are learning, which is an idea that I will return to. However, this "relationship divide" also seems to be about the teachers' relation to the guest speaker and how they are contextualized in the classroom. For example, a common phrase that would come up when teachers would talk about what has been recommended to them, in order to respond to the TQS5, is to "bring in an Elder" or "bring an Elder in". When it is framed in this way, it almost transforms Elders into an abstractable or exportable commodity that can be transported to drop into any classroom and give knowledge without the students fully knowing the Elder's context and without the Elder, or guest speaker, knowing the student's or teacher's context. This idea of how Indigenous knowledge "works", and by extension how Elders “work”, parallels sanctioned expertise which devalues the importance of context and perpetuates the idea that “facts” could be effectively transferred without context or relation. The Elder is merely needed as a token for the teacher to conduct what has been sanctioned of them. Additionally, although there is not the same concern of vetting, this discomfort that the teachers express, in this relational divide, is similar to the discomfort with using any resource that they do not know the relations of as both maintain a relational deficit.

Having said this, many teachers talked about how they value having guest speakers and Elders involved in their practice when this involvement is more substantial than just dropping in once a year or when they have a personal relation with them. Nevertheless, Carrie notes how even with a guest speaker she has a relationship with, and knows the relations of, she still wrestles with issues of contextualization and relations in her practice.

Carrie: I mean we have one person for our district who's the Indigenous education coordinator and he is responsible for the entire district. And you call him, and you book him months in advance to come speak with their classes. But he's run off his feet, right. Which is a good thing because he's coming in. But I don't know. I think this kind of piggybacks on the earlier conversation about at what point do teachers kind of start owning and taking some of that on. And I worry about that because even when I have him as a guest speaker that's his family's experience from a very particular location. Do you know what I mean? And so, I’m wrestling with that constantly. Um, trying to find a balance and we're in a weird spot because there is so much more Métis representation here.
(Collaborative Session, Zoom, 25 November 2021)

In this excerpt from one of the collaborative sessions, it was clear that Carrie actually did have a relationship with this guest speaker, knew his context, and would be able to talk about this—alongside him—with her class. Even so, she expressed a concern that the subjective, positional, and contextual particularity of knowledge that he shares might be overlooked and rather seen as a kind of single universal, or pan-Indigenous, tokenistic perspective in the eyes of her students. Further, this also seems to come from her own context as a Métis person who teaches in a region where the FNMI population is primarily Métis, and she wants the narratives she brings into the classroom to not overlook this context. The concern that Carrie has shows how much value she places on knowledge in terms of the subjectivities, relations, and contexts that shape it and that she does not want this to be lost on her students. Carries concern also speaks to why teachers might want to know the relations and contexts of the authors, publishers, creators, or resources they use because without this information these resources can become un-situated and turn into tokenistic universal representations of Indigeneity.

These examples have shown that teachers want to know the relations of what they are teaching when it comes to FNMI resources, so they know the knowledge is not abstracted from the people who are associated with this knowledge. Further, knowing these relations themselves allows for them to provide context to their students so it does not come across as tokenistic or pan-Indigenous knowledge and rather highlights how it is contextually situated. These cases show how the teachers are engaging in relational expertise by considering the situated nature of the knowledge produced and valuing knowledge in terms of its relations. The teachers I spoke to are responding to the TRC and TQS5 by looking at the requirements[17] of bringing in Indigenous resources, or Elders (for example), more relationally. Taking a relational stance is about not just considering Indigenous resources and Elders as categories of knowledge that can check the boxes of requirement for teachers. Rather, it is about considering and valuing these knowledges as situated and being aware of the knowledge production process that makes up any resource or lesson that they present in their class. Further, what is implicit here is the need for teachers to be engaging relationally with resources and foundational knowledge to be able to have any context for this themselves. The implication for personal engagement adds another aspect to the entangled relations of any lesson plan as the teacher, and how they filter the lesson through their own knowledge and interests, becomes a part of the life of the resource.

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[17] I am referring to the first Teaching Quality Standard which calls for "inviting First Nations, Métis and Inuit parents/guardians, Elders/knowledge keepers, cultural advisors and local community members into the school and classroom" (Alberta Education 2018, 4).

3.2 Personal relations

The second idea that Ashley pointed to, with her online example resource, speaks to this idea of more personal engagement with resources. This introduces the second way that the teachers were responding to the TRC and TQS5, more generally. They value their responses to the TRC and TQS5 to be deliberately based in their own relations. The idea of teaching style and interests in mediating her response is something that Ashley stressed throughout our conversation.

Ashley: Our district is called B23[18] and it's like a private, internet-based, and we have consultants in each subject area. And they, like, develop resources or find resources and put it on B23.
Makita: Oh, okay.
Ashley: So, like let's say if you're really stuck on something, you could go to the B23 and pull from what they've already found. Um, but again it's like pulling from a book of resources. Like it's like not yours until you make it yours. So, it is like—it is a really good thing to have. Especially for new teachers. But then again it sometimes comes off very surface level because it is a lot of paper or worksheets or those kind of activities because how else online are you supposed to really, like, engage in things.
(Initial Interview, in person, 12 August 2021)

In our conversation, Ashley notes how she dislikes using resource banks to find resources because they are not personalized or context specific. She notes the importance of spending time with a resource along with “making it your own”. This dislike for the resource bank appears to come from the fact that these resources are disconnected from a more personal process which seems to be important to how she responds to the TRC and TQS5. Beyond this, her comment about the resources being "surface level" because they are "a lot of paper or worksheets" shows that the resources, seem to be discontinuous with her own pedagogical style and practices. This conversation shows the importance that she places on making the resource she uses, in terms of FNMI resources specifically, her own. In this way, she shows that she values responding to the TRC and TQS5 in more personal ways.

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[18] This is a pseudonym as the real name could have the potential to identify the teacher.

In my initial interview with Marcela, this value of a more personal approach to responding to the TRC and TQS5 in terms of what is congruent with her knowledge, subjectivity, and interests was very evident. In our initial interview, Marcela brought numerous picture books and resources to show me, and she provided a personal story for almost all of the resources that she talked about. This contextualization of a resource with a personal story that Marcela engaged in throughout our conversation showcased how it is not just the resource that is important to her, but this personal connection and relation to it. In doing this, she shows how her response to the TRC and TQS5 is conducted in a very personal way as she displays how her response is intertwined with her personal practice and interests. For example, Marcela made these comments when we were talking about a picture book resource that she uses that centers around Salish knowledge, the Salish language, and language loss.

> Marcela: Um, and, in particular, I love Salish because I grew up in BC. And I find that if I can connect something to my life the kids are instantly into it, right away, because they have that emotional connection with me. So, I will one hundred percent exploit that emotional connection when I have to. … Also—because this has so many, um, non-English words in it I get to talk a lot about, like I said, language loss, language revitalization. My first degree was in linguistics, so it gave me a little bit of a background to be able to talk about more stuff.
> (Initial Interview, Zoom, 16 August 2021)

Here Marcela's connection to the material in terms of where she lived, her interests in linguistics, and her interests in language loss and revitalization play into why she uses this book in her practice. These stories that Marcela shares for each resource that we talked about shows how she places value on bringing who she is into her teaching to create a relation with the students. Later, she notes that this personal connection to her is an intentional part of her pedagogical practice as it allows her students to connect with her making it exciting and important to both her and her students. This kind of personal practice that Marcela displays is not about teachers only engaging in what they are “already doing”—which can be an issue when schools take this approach to Indigenous knowledge as it undermines the importance of the specific initiative of truth and reconciliation in schools (Kerr and Parent 2018)—but rather, this is about the importance of not denying who they are and their positional and relational knowledge or expertise as part of them taking on Indigenous education initiatives.

This value of personal relations to the teacher and their practice was something that Dr. Corrigan touched on in explaining why she would feel uncomfortable with sharing a resource with a teacher that she does not know without much thought or conversation. Dr. Corrigan would not know that Marcela was a linguistic major or where she lived and that a picture book that centered around the Salish language would work well for her in these ways. Further, this highlights how a sanctioned expert approach of a top ten resource list, which Dr. Corrigan took issue with, would make little sense to teachers who are placing value in their own relations to knowledge and resources. A standardized top ten list would not be able to know the nuances in terms of interest and practice of each teacher that it is hoping to reach. Teachers like Marcela, who place value on this personal practice and how their own positionality and relational networks influence their practice, exemplify the turn away from these ideas. This idea is something that the educational reform literature touches on as well noting that teacher’s responses to reform are mediated through their self-narratives, identities, interests, and teaching practices (Cohen and Mehta 2017, Drake and Sherin 2006, Eisner 2000, Hill et al. 2008, Sloan

2006) which is an idea that parallels how teachers seem to be responding to the mandated TQS5 and calls of the TRC.

Jenny, who is a Piikani district teacher of Indigenous education, who creates resources for teachers to use, also spoke about the importance of considering who the teacher is when responding to the TQS5. She spoke about how one of the challenges in her job is not knowing the teacher or how they will connect with the resource she produces.

Jenny: I was doing a lot of like lesson planning stuff, content building stuff, curriculum building stuff, but I found that to be hard actually. Really hard because I've really, I think come to believe, fundamentally, that a teacher needs to teach the content in their own authentic way. (Initial Interview, Zoom, 28 October 2021)

This excerpt comes from the very first conversation I had with Jenny where I asked her to tell me a bit about herself and her job. Almost immediately, she brought forward this relational challenge by bringing forward issues with lesson planning, content building, and curriculum building and how this more personal approach is something that she sees as very important, noting how important it is for teachers to teach the content in their own authentic way. Later in the interview, she furthers this idea by talking about how it is "absolutely necessary for them [teachers] to filter it [their responses] through their own lens" (Initial Interview, Zoom, 28 October 2021). She is speaking about how important this personalization is when it comes to teachers responding to the TQS5 and TRC and taking up Indigenous resources or practices in their practice.

Jenny: So that's part of almost, maybe, my hold up. Or my feelings towards making these very elaborate lesson plans—it's like, I could do that. We could create very elaborate in-depth lesson plans that are pages, pages long. And give it to another teacher but it's uh—it's like if they were to do that lesson plan exactly as it's laid out and almost word for word. Because, you know, they say in your lesson plans you even say write down what you want to say, um, so that it is scripted.
Makita: Yeah.
Jenny: But if I script a lesson plan for somebody else to say, it's just gonna lose so much of its heart. You know what I mean? The, the heart of the lesson. The heart of what they're trying to get at. And it's just not going to be as effective. Or it's not going to be as meaningful. In my

opinion anyway, and unless—so unless a teacher can take the general ideas of the lesson plan, make it their own. Almost like filter it through their own lens.
Makita: Yeah.
Jenny: And then be able to teach it but that's where I think the fear comes in. The fear is that—is in their own lens. Is that they think that their own lens is—it is inadequate.
Makita: Right, yeah.
Jenny: So, I guess part of my job too is this empowerment that you're using to tell—to try to reassure or to work with teachers.
Makita: Yeah. Yeah.
Jenny: To have them understand that it is necessary, it is absolutely necessary, for them to filter it through their own lens. And to get to their intended outcome through their own authentic—through their own teacher philosophy. All of that. Yeah. I think that that's almost like the point of the TQS5 too is that—
Makita: Yeah.
Jenny: And that's what some teachers miss when they read it. When they read TQS5 and they understand what they're being asked to—being told to do, but that's the part that they're missing. That's not explicit in there.
(Initial Interview, Zoom, 28 October 2021)

Here Jenny talks about her discomfort with "scripting" teachers. The notion of a scripted lesson plan parallels the idea of a "teacher-proof" (Sloan 2006, 123) reform which attempts to fix and control classroom practices from the top down. Sloan argues that these initiatives never work because teachers are not "passive receptacles" (Eisner 2000, 453) that simply fill up with information and transfer it to students. Rather, scholars like Sloan (2006) and Eisner (2000) suggest that teachers are always inevitably interacting with the materials that they are given. Jenny expresses discomfort with creating a scripted or "teacher proof" (Sloan 2006, 123) lesson as creating a very elaborate and scripted lesson plan would go against the principle that what is important and necessary is the teacher's connection and relation with the resource. This is specifically important for Jenny as she emphasizes teacher's connection and relation with the resource as part of the point of the TQS5 showing that this is centrally important to how she believes the TQS5 should be approached, practiced, and situated for teachers. Coming from the resource creator's perspective, she shows the discomfort in creating a resource that is personal to her, her knowledge, her relations, and her context and not knowing the teacher that will use it, the foundational knowledge they have, their subjectivity, or their pedagogical styles. To write a scripted lesson plan she would have to overlook these relations and essentially pretend as though the teachers do not have these relations in her lesson plans. She seems to hesitate to do so, and I argue that this is because she would be perpetuating the sanctioned expert model by writing a lesson as if these relations do not exist and as if the knowledge in a lesson plan can be prescribed in a one-size-fits-all-way. Jenny's concern shows that this hesitation, in terms of the disconnect in relation, can come from both the side of the teacher and the resource content creator. Further, it shows how this personal relation to the resource is also part of the production of knowledge. Additionally, emphasizing the importance of teachers taking things up in their own way is a deliberate stance that rejects the sanctioned expert approach and rather takes a relational expert understanding to knowledge. Jenny instead acknowledges the situated and interactional nature of knowledge as the teacher is a positioned subject (rather than a passive object) that is bringing relations and ideas to the knowledge and to their practice.

Because of this, Jenny talks about how she would like to partner with teachers in using resources in order to help them build connections to the knowledge that is in the resource and potentially think about their own connections to the ideas that the resource is drawing on as well. She notes how eventually, in this partnership, she would want to be able to step away and have the teacher teach the resource alone once they have developed a relation to the knowledge that the resource draws on and an understanding of their relations to this resource. Further, we also talked about how she has been unable to see how her lessons might play out in a classroom context. This is something she noted would be valuable for her to know and that she hopes this partnership alongside teachers would provide this contextual insight.

3.3 Contextual relations

The importance of being able to see how a lesson actually plays out in practice relates to the third way (that I want to focus on) that the teachers were approaching the TRC and TQS5. The teachers are engaging in relational expertise through their emphasis on considering the context in which they work when they are choosing resources, practices, and considering how they will respond to the TRC and TQS5 more generally. When Ashley spoke about the online video resource, she pointed to how she considers these relations by describing that the video that she would not use is not censored. Such description of lack of censorship, I interpret, as a concern for cursing in the video. A lack of censorship would not work contextually in her grade one Catholic school context as it would not be appropriate for the students or the setting. Although this might seem evident, in practice, the question of whether the resource, lesson plan, activity, topic, or practice is contextually appropriate perpetually came up in the interviews. This shows that context was central in impacting teachers' decisions in terms of how they respond to the TRC and TQS5 and what resources and practices they incorporate. Beyond choosing resources that are appropriate, teachers—in their responses—showed numerous ways that they consider and value the importance of context. Many of them spoke about context impacting how they approach the mandated curricular content through a different lens. Others spoke about how they consider context in approaching and incorporating Indigenous-specific content and how the teaching setting is important to how they respond. And others showed how they consider the context of what else the students have been learning (both inside and outside of the classroom) in their responses.

For example, Taylor, a fourth-year Piikani teacher who teaches high school on a reserve shows how she considers who the students are and their background when she is teaching. Taylor spoke about how teaching Shakespeare was something she originally felt less comfortable with and that her students are generally disinterested in the subject. She notes that she wanted to take this topic that she and her students find uninteresting and make it relevant to them based on things that are familiar to them. For example, because her students are primarily Indigenous students who live on the reserve, she notes that she uses this context to influence how she approaches teaching these lessons.

Taylor: How can I make my students connect to what is being talked about? So, for example, in Julius Caesar there was a part in there where the people come together—I kind of forget how it goes. But the people all came together and there was like—they were talking about, you know, who's going to be in power and then … I explained … what happens in the play but then in order for my students to connect to it I talked about what happens with us in our community how do we elect people into power how does that work when somebody acts out and somebody you know. Just like, you know, back and forth. And I try and connect it that way. Because I feel that as much of connection that I can build between the content that I'm sharing to our real life with my students that they're experiencing on our reserve. The more connection that will build and the better they understand the content that's being delivered right.
Makita: Right.
Taylor: Especially if I just, you know, explain it to them where they understand, right. Rather than being above them and being like "no this is Shakespeare (laughs) we're going to talk in old English. And we're not—" you know, you know, what I mean.
(Initial Interview, Zoom, 9 September 2021)

Here Taylor approaches Shakespeare in a way that is relevant and familiar to her students by bringing up how their community elects people and some of the policies that they have that could go along with the source. Clearly, however, approaching this content in this way would not work in other contexts as other students might not have the lived experience of how people are elected on the reserve and how this could be related to Julius Caesar. However, in this context, Taylor was able to account for the knowledge and the interests of her students by adding this to her lesson because it was contextually relevant to her teaching setting.

Marcela also spoke about context in terms of how she considers this when she is selecting and discussing Indigenous-focused resources. Specifically, she spoke about how it is important for her to keep the contexts of her students, and their trauma, in mind when selecting resources and considering what conversations she wants to have with her students. This is something that she comes to know by having a relation with, and acting in relation to, her students and knowing what is going on with them on any given day. She mentioned this specifically when she was talking about how she discusses residential schooling with her students.

Marcela: How you approach it needs to be done with a lot of thought and caring both for the stories that you're sharing. But also, for knowing your own class. Especially when you start to talk about trauma in different ways. You really need to be aware of what's going on with your own students and what trauma they are maybe have gone through or are going through and how conversation, either with the words that you say or when you open up to discussion the words that their classmates say, might affect them.
(Initial Interview, Zoom, 29 August 2021)

Along with this, Marcela and the other teachers spoke about the need for balancing "heavy" (Ashley, Initial Interview, in person, 12 August 2021) content, like residential schooling, with content about resilience, and balancing learning about history with contemporary issues and events. This also shows the importance of considering the full context of the class and what they have done, and what they have planned, when selecting resources.

The idea of knowing your students and their trauma in order to inform how to approach certain topics is also something that Carrie spoke about. Carrie also noted how the context of the pandemic and the reality of teaching in online contexts might also impact how she would approach these ideas. This suggests that what is happening both for the students and in the wider social context impacts how teachers are approaching topics and also responding to the TRC and TQS5 more specifically. For example, Carrie talked about how the context of teaching during the pandemic made her consider what topics she would go in-depth on if she were to switch to teaching online. Specifically, she mentions that she did not want to have conversations that could be serious or emotional while over a digital medium.

Carrie: But if we go online, of course, that will maybe change how it kind of rolls out just because there's certain conversations that would be too challenging, I think, to have online. I

certainly wouldn't want to talk about the difficulties for a residential school, for example, online I think that would be inappropriate. Because you can't always determine how kids are going to respond with their own trauma or different things that they've been through. And so that might be something for us to think about too.
(Initial Interview, Zoom, 27 August 2021)

This shows how important and central the context of the class and the teaching setting is in influencing teachers' responses and decisions. Carrie notes that she would find a conversation that goes into the details about the difficulties of residential schools to be inappropriate over a medium that felt disconnected and less personal as she might be less able to perceive the emotions of her students. With this, Carries shows how much she values being responsive to her context as she would switch her practice if she felt she was unable to be able to teach in relation to these emotions online. Further, she noted that after hearing about what happened to one of her friends, she thought more about self-monitoring and holding back perspectives, if she were to go online, as she knows that parents who disagree with her perspectives might be listening to what she is saying.

Carrie: She relayed to me an awful story because she taught all online last year in in another sch—like we had an online school. And it was even interesting being online because you have this transparency with parents. So a parent might be in the room while you're teaching, and she had like a racist altercation with the parents who because—she's also Indigenous self-identified her relationship to a community and, um the parent responded with racist language and she was having to shut down the meeting and those students had to be removed it was just a really awful story. And that's really an awful thing to think about and the trickiness of being online really changes how—how you might interact. And parents might be seeing things or responding in a way that they ordinarily wouldn't. Because in the classroom quite often there isn't that visibility. … If you already know you have a difficult parent or something like that maybe you would be cautious about approaching certain topics.
(Initial Interview, Zoom, 27 August 2021)

With this, Carrie talks about how she might change the content that she talks about depending on the context in order to be responsive to the situation rather than pushing content regardless of the setting. Knowing that parents might be listening in to conversations while school is happening online, and that the context might no longer be a safe space to have these conversations, shows how important considering context is—to her—as she would not want to put her or her students in an unsafe situation. Further, more generally, we also spoke about how, having the knowledge and awareness that some of her students come from racist households, that would disagree with the perspectives she presents, allows her to approach the material in a way that is specific to knowing that these ideas and patterns are prevalent in the area that she teaches rather than pretending that it does not exist. This is something Shea, a settler high school English teacher spoke about, as well, noting that she actually makes this context a preface to everything she teaches. In this way, she does not ignore this context and rather brings it in to how she approaches her practice.

Shea: I think it's harmful too. For us to pretend like we don't have kids who come from racist families or white supremacist families or kids who just like truly don't understand privilege or see it as an attack against their like whiteness to learn about things that aren't in line with keeping the systemic racism and keeping white people in power, right.
Makita: Right, yeah.
Shea: So something I'm to try this year, um, is teaching—like when I start my course, to say like we're going to talk about these things and they're difficult. … I've had parents be upset because I taught poems by immigrants about immigration. And so there's just like—. That is also something that we have to deal with is that—. Like-we're in southern Alberta and there are people who are who do not want any of this kind of learning.
(Initial Interview, In person, 16 August 2021)

This being said, both Carrie and Shea actually noted how they have noticed a shift in the narratives that students are bringing to their classroom because of social media. Carrie, for example, notes that because of movements like Black Lives Matter and the increasing conversations around topics of inequality and racism on social media, she is meeting students in the classroom with a greater awareness of these ideas.

Carrie: Maybe because it's the grade that we teach and the order we kind of talk about things. I feel like they're actually quite often—like really. Like they're upset. Like, "what can we do" and those sorts of things. And this past year in particular, I feel like because of Black Lives Matter and lots of other conversations that are happening, we have kids coming in that have a much

> greater awareness of human rights, gender diversity, and lots of those other pieces. And I think that helps them to see perspective. And honestly sounds ridiculous but some of the things you're seeing—you know. We often talk about millennials and how much—and gen z—and all the different ways that they use technology and we kind of dismiss it. But actually, they're learning some really cool powerful awesome stuff on things like TikTok, to be very honest. There's amazing cultural pieces and they're honestly—I can't tell you how many kids.
> (Initial Interview, Zoom, 27 August 2021)

To provide some context for this comment, throughout our conversation Carrie also spoke about how, because the students are bringing this with them, she is able to engage in these conversations in her lessons to make them contextually relevant and draw on what the students have been learning outside of the classroom context. She even spoke about the use of TikTok as a teaching tool noting how her humanities department uses TikTok's, like those from @notoriouscree[19], in their lessons. In this way, she is being adaptive to the contexts that students are bringing in with them. Further, Carrie seems to touch on the shift from seeing students and their relations with social media as deficit and rather interpreting the information the students are bringing in as funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al. 1995). This relates to Gonzalez et al.'s notion of "funds of knowledge" (1995). Gonzalez et al.'s argument is framed around talking about students that are specifically outside of white hegemonic norms and considers the learning that happens in their homes not as deficits (McDermott and Varenne 2006) but as important and valuable education that teachers should be attentive to. Here though I am using the term more broadly to speak about the students, more generally, to note how the teachers I worked with are engaging in important education that is happening outside of classrooms.[20]

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[19] https://www.tiktok.com/@notoriouscree?lang=en (date last accessed: December 9, 2022)

[20] I had conversations with many of the teachers about using social media in the classroom. Many of the teachers spoke about using this form of knowledge production, within their practice. We spoke about how using this knowledge, and valuing it, as a valuable form of knowledge, is important as it teaches their students that this too counts as real knowledge. We spoke about how this is in reaction to the white canon that schools reproduce. This rather positions young

The teachers' interest in having their responses reflect—and pay attention to—their context, in terms of both their specific settings and the knowledge students are engaging in outside of the classroom, shows how their responses are filtered through these contexts. By considering these contexts in their practice, the teachers show how relational expertise is central to their responses to the TRC and TQS5. Considering context shows how they value the situated nature of knowledge as they ensure their responses and the knowledge they produce is relationally relevant.

Further, responding to the wider context—such as the knowledge that students are bringing with them from TikTok—shows how networked this context really is as all of these levels (like TikTok, the pandemic, or parents' beliefs, for example), which might *seem* external to the interaction, are acting as a network of relations which impacts the knowledge that ends up being produced in the classroom (Carr 2010; Latour 1987). Additionally, by making lessons and practices congruent with the students and their relations and the context in which they teach, they also deliberately show how these students and relations/contexts are active agents in this knowledge production process.

This notion of teachers' responses to the TRC and TQS5 being mediated by context is an idea that is addressed by the reform literature as scholars note that reforms are almost inevitability taken up in this way. Educational scholars have pointed to how it is not just teachers' interests and positionality, as mentioned in the last section, that influence how they take up reform. They show that teachers are also navigating their classroom-specific pressures (Eisner

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Indigenous content creators—who have been historically placed as people who get to be known and are not the knowers (because they are young and Indigenous)—as knowledge producers.

2000; Kennedy 2004), school-specific contexts (Craig 2001), current social-political pressures (Cohen and Mehta 2017), and public values (Labaree 2008, 2012) while responding to reform.

Ng and Leicht (2019) show that teachers are experts in their situated contexts as they argue that reform initiatives that come from above often fail as they overlook teachers' day-to-day knowledge—such as these various pressures. Similarly, Kennedy (2004) argues that reforms often suffer because they overlook numerous other ideas that teachers care about in the classroom. Eisner (2000) notes that one of the issues with reforms is that they often do not align with the everyday practice and needs of classrooms and are often rather theoretical ideals of "experts" who have little experience with the classroom context. His point is that without the understanding of these pressures, firsthand, these theoretical reforms may make little sense in practice. In this way, it seems as though these reforms fail because they overlook the relations that teachers are deliberately attempting to pay attention to—and even incorporate—with relational expertise. This is similar to the disconnect that Jenny describes in making resources and lesson plans when she does not know the teacher or the classroom context. Because of this lack of relation, Jenny would likely not know the trauma of particular students, the outside knowledge students bring, the contexts of the students, or know how a teacher might want to approach information differently with a shift to online learning. I argue that Jenny feels disconnected because she lacks this relational expertise, not of classrooms in general because she does have experience in classrooms. However, she cannot know the specific network of relations that influence what is happening in each classroom on any given day. This shows how personal and situated—and contingent and partial—the embracing of relational expertise is and how approaching this material through a sanctioned expert lens would abstract (or make invisible) these rich and entangled networks of relations.

3.4 Why relational expertise

Throughout this, I have explored the criteria that Ashley outlined by describing a resource that she would not use and how her criteria are related to the ways in which the teachers spoke about responding to the TRC and TQS5 in their practice more generally. These criteria focus on relational expertise. With relational expertise, there is recognition that teachers' identity and experiences, the students' identity and experiences, and the context in which the knowledge is produced cannot be removed from them. Instead, these aspects are essential to, and entangled with, the knowledge that is produced.

The question of how the teachers I spoke with are responding to the TRC and TQS5 then can be answered in this way: the teachers are responding to the TRC and TQS5 by placing importance on relational expertise. I argue that the teachers are both engaging in relational expertise by making explicit and valuing the relations that come together to influence their practice and by valuing relational expertise in the resources and lessons that they choose.

With relational expertise, the teachers care about the relations of the resources they choose, teaching in a way that considers their own relations, and teaching in a way that considers the contextual networks of relations which impact their practice. All of this stands in stark contrast with sanctioned expertise as relational expertise is about embracing "bias" or subjectivities and embracing knowledge as encounter-based by noticing how networks of relations come together to produce any interaction. Sanctioned expertise, on the other hand, wants to make the bias and networks of relations invisible. The teachers' responses highlight how the knowledge that is produced in classrooms is—rather—partial, positional, and influenced by a network of relations that impacts what is produced.

I believe that all knowledge is partial, positional, and influenced by a network of relations and that this is how all knowledge is produced. Images of knowledge production, like sanctioned expertise, that claim that their knowledge is not produced in this way are merely overlooking these relations. These relations are always there, but they are denied by a hegemonic scientific viewpoint (Haraway 1988). Following this, I also believe that educational practices in schools also always inevitably operate in this way. Reform scholars have suggested that teachers are always teaching in relation to the entire "educational ecology" (Eisner 2000, 355) even if this is often overlooked (Cohen and Mehta 2017; Eisner 2000; Kennedy 2004). What I am arguing is that the teacher's response to the TRC and TQS5, through relational expertise, deliberately values these relations, engages in these relations, and makes these relations visible.

Moreover, the teachers' responses are specifically telling in terms of how they align with Indigenous scholarship that focuses on relations. For example, relations are often a key area of focus in scholarship on Indigenous methods and methodologies (Fast and Kovach 2019; Fiola 2015; Harris and Wasilewski 2004; Kovach 2009; McGregor and Marker 2018; Tuhiwai Smith 2008; 2012). Scholars who focus on Indigenous methods and methodologies have often talked about relationship building and reciprocity (Fast and Kovach 2019; McGregor and Marker 2018). Such scholarship shows how much value is placed on relations in terms of knowledge production. Although it is important to acknowledge that Indigenous knowledges are multiple and not all the same (Battsie 2008b; Kerr and Parent 2018; Stagg Peterson et al. 2018), scholars have noted that Indigenous knowledges do broadly rely on an understanding of knowledge production as experiential, relational, communal, and personal (Kerr and Parent 2018, Sabzalian 2019; Stagg Peterson et al. 2018). For example, Stagg Peterson et al. note that "Indigenous pedagogies can be characterized as global, simultaneous, and relational" and that "meanings are constructed by seeking relationships within whole contexts" (2018, 30). To be clear, I am not arguing that all forms of relational teaching are based on Indigenous forms of knowing. Rather, I am suggesting that relational expertise seems to support Indigenous forms of knowing. What I am arguing then is that the teachers I spoke with might have foundational knowledge which has informed them about the importance of relations in Indigenous ways of knowing which has led them to approach these the TRC and TQS5 through a relational, rather than a sanctioned approach.

Further, the education literature which focuses on Indigenous-focused reform—incorporating Indigenous content, along with ways of knowing, being, and doing—has also highlighted the importance of relations in numerous ways (Donald 2009a, 2009b Chew and Anthony-Stevens 2017; Kirkness and Barnhardt 1991; Kuokkanen 2007). Often this is talked about in terms of the need to develop and maintain good relationships and is often positioned as key in terms of taking up Indigenous-focused educational reform.

Indigenous scholars have focused on the importance of re-defining relations (Kuokkanen 2007) to mean more than what is typically thought of from a hegemonic Eurocentric perspective to be more dynamic (Chew and Anthony-Stevens 2017), less human-centered (Donald 2016; Harris and Wasilewski 2004), less about Eurocentric views of "blood" (Harris and Wasilewski 2004 see Schneider 1968 for description of the American use of "blood"), to produce a more holistic (Bruchac 2014) or ecological (Donald 2009b, 2012b, 2016) vision of relations. Donald's notion of ethical relationality (2009b, 2016) particularly draws on these ideas. With his notion of ethical relationality, Donald speaks about relations and proposes ethical relationality as a way to engage in Indigenous-focused pedagogy and curriculum. He notes:

> Ethical relationality is an ecological understanding of human relationality that does not deny difference, but rather seeks to more deeply understand how our

> different histories and experiences position us in relation to each other. This form of relationality is ethical because it does not overlook or invisibilize the particular historical, cultural, and social contexts from which a particular person understands and experiences living in the world. It puts these considerations at the forefront of engagements across frontiers of difference. (Donald 2009b, 6).

He also mentions in a later article:

> Ethical relationality is tied to a desire to acknowledge and honour the significance of the relationships we have with others, how our histories and experiences position us in relation to one another, and how our futures as people in the world are similarly tied together. It is an ethical imperative to remember that we as human beings live in the world together and also alongside our more-than-human relatives; we are called to constantly think and act with reference to those relationships. (Donald 2016, 11)

The teachers' responses to the TRC and TQS5, through relational expertise, seem to be a step towards Donald's description of ethical relationality. The teachers are valuing, considering, and acknowledging relations. The teachers are not holding these relations at a distance or responding through a detached approach. The teachers are responding in ways that render histories, experiences, differences, and social contexts visible. Additionally, they are acting in response to these relations. Although I will go into further detail to support this idea later, I wanted to note this idea here as it seems to show that teachers might be responding to more than the TRC and TQS5.

In my research, I placed the question "how are teachers responding to the TRC and TQS5" as central and throughout this chapter I used it as an anchor for my writing. However, I more so found that the TRC and TQS5 are just part of what the teachers are responding to. In fact, for many of the teachers the calls to action and mandated standards might not be the focal point for their "Indigenous focused" work. The teachers seem to be describing that they are responding to the TRC and TQS5 along with all of the other relations in which they are entangled in. Considering that many of the teachers I spoke to were Masters of Education students or were teachers who specifically do research or resource curation for Indigenous education, I wonder if they were also responding to Indigenous scholarship like Donald's notion of ethical relationality or foundational Indigenous knowledge. Such scholarship points to holistic notions of relations and could, perhaps, be more centrally influencing the responses of the teachers I spoke to. Of course, this would likely not be true for other teachers, more generally, as they may not be practicing and responding in relation to this literature or knowledge. However, because the teachers I spoke to were such a specific sample of teachers they might have different relations (that are engaged in foundational knowledge and scholarship) that could be more centrally influencing their work. Given this, it would be an interesting project to observe or talk about lessons with teachers and ask them what all of the components are that influence their lesson. Similar to Kennedy's (2004) research on educational reform, this method would engage in exploring and mapping the various levels of all of these relations along with relations that might have emerged during the lesson. Unfortunately, this was not the focus or format of my research so I cannot speak on this, but it could be an interesting project that would both map out teachers "why" and map out the network of relations impacting their practice. What I can piece together, however, is that teachers are responding to the TRC and TQS5 through relational expertise which seems to reflect Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing and recommendations from Indigenous scholars regarding Indigenous-focused reform in education. Responding to the TRC and TQS5 through relational expertise is congruent, then, in terms of how it aligns with both Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing and recommendations.

In their 2017 article, Cohen and Mehta note that not all attempts to change schooling fail and provide detail into the main aspects that successful reforms have in common. One of the aspects that they focus on is how successful reforms often coincide with the systems in which they are being implemented. Without this, they argue, that it is very difficult for reform to make any big change. This is an idea I will take up in the following chapter when I talk about the challenges that teachers highlight in doing this work. However, first, I will talk about the TQS5 in terms of relational and sanctioned expertise and how it embodies this kind of contradiction between these values in its structure and content.

3.4 The TQS5

I want to return to the conversation that Jenny and I had about the TQS5 that I presented in my introduction. In our conversation, Jenny outlined that the TQS5 can elicit very different responses. She noted that some teachers respond in a way that simply “checks the box” while others respond in more immersive ways which involve a greater understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing. This box checking approach was not one that I found with the teachers that I worked with. Most of the teachers directly highlighted that they see this box checking approach to TQS5 as an issue. For example, Shea noted this in our conversation as well.

Shea: How can I make this genuinely a part of my practice not just like “oh we're gonna, we're gonna read a novel by an Indigenous author and then good we're done.” We don't want it to be like that. We don't want to be checking boxes.
(Initial Interview, Zoom, 16 August 2021)

The teachers agreed that, because teachers can take this surface level approach, the mandate itself is actually “easy” (Marcela, Initial Interview, Zoom, 16 August 2021) to complete as teachers do not necessarily have to engage themselves in anything relational to check this box.[21]

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[21] There are TQS mandates that are not included in the fifth standard that are asking for an attention to relations specifically. With one standard focusing on relations and mentioning specifically: “inviting First Nations, Métis and Inuit parents/guardians, Elders/knowledge keepers, cultural advisors and local community members into the school and classroom” (Alberta Education 2018, 4) along with, more generally “honouring cultural diversity and promoting

Carrie: … And I know their attitudes didn't shift, and we're still seeing actually pretty awful things, right. And so that part always bothers me too. So even if that person, you know, TQS5 demands of us to work on these things but if their own mindset—right. I don't know.
Marcela: To actually fulfill the TQS though—
Carrie: Right.
Marcela: It's hard because technically you could do it for one time and you could be like—
Carrie: And check it off.
Marcela: Mm-hmm.
Carrie: Yeah, that's fair.
Marcela: So even those people could [inaudible] one time.
Carrie: Mm-hmm.
Marcela: But you bring—
Carrie: It's probably a guest speaker, yeah.
Marcela: Oh, that's even worse (laughs). I didn't think about that.
(Collaborative Session, Zoom, 25 November 2021)

This conversation comes from the first collaborative session with Carrie and Marcela. In this conversation, Marcela and Carrie express frustration at how teachers often take an approach to the TQS5 that does not change their practice or mindset in the way that Jenny described. They also point to how these "box checking" responses, in some way, go along with the structure of the TQS5. It allows for these "easy" forms of responses. The TQS5 is a standardized mandate that is sanctioned and authoritative. It is a top-down standard which provides a type of checklist for teachers to complete. In this way, it is unsurprising that many teachers respond to the standard in a "completing a check list" kind of way. The format of the mandate, in some sense, prompts this form of response. The format of the TQS5 is acting in a sanctioned expert model in which knowledge is seen as objective and distanced. With this, I (and seemingly the teachers I spoke to) question how much having a mandate—that asks for change but aligns with the hegemonic Eurocentric sanctioned expert way to know—allows for the appearance of change without disrupting the current structures. The way these standards are formatted is not

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intercultural understanding" (Alberta Education 2018, 4). This being said, these mandates could also be responded to in a surface level way that does not acknowledge or value relations.

particularly congruent with relational and holistic notions of Indigenous knowledge. This why, it seems, that the teachers that I spoke with are taking it on themselves to instead respond in a way that is personally, contextually, and locally meaningful.

Having said this, the teachers also particularly highlighted the importance of the TQS5 as a starting place for teachers and the value of having at least an awareness of Indigenous issues on the agenda for all teachers. This is an idea I will later return to when I speak about possibilities. For now, I want to explore the challenges that teachers brought forward in responding to the TRC and TQS5 particularly with their relational, rather than sanctioned, approach.

Chapter 4: Challenges: Standardization and invisible relations

4.1 Terra nullius

With the relational expert, there is recognition that teacher's identity and experiences, the student's identity and experiences, and the context in which the knowledge is produced cannot be removed from them but instead are the point. This markedly contrasts with sanctioned expertise which harkens back to seventeenth-century notions of relations, objectivity, and knowledge production (Strathern 2020). Additionally, the idea of sanctioned expertise draws on early European ideas of expansion, production, and colonialism which are based, in part, on the notion of "terra nullius"—land belonging to no one (as translated in Donald 2012a, 92)—or, as Tsing describes, "nature without entangling claims" (Tsing 2012, 513). Donald (2012a) points to the term terra nullius specifically in terms of how it drove European expansion. He noted that this terra nullius was the primary way in which settlers' viewed land they were colonizing as they saw it as belonging to no one and without entangled relationships (Donald 2012a). Of course, this is far from true and overlooks the living relations of the land and the Indigenous peoples in connection to it. Further, narratives of "the other" and "savageness" were produced to render Indigenous peoples as non-human or less than human (Deloria 1988, 1998; Sideris 2001) so their relations would not count (Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández 2013). This conception of the other became formally perpetuated by legislation like the Indian Act which specifically worked to erase identity and the ties Indigenous people have to each other and the land (Joseph 2018). Moreover, these ideas have continued through the work of settler colonialism which attempts to erase Indigenous peoples and their relations (Wolfe 2006). This erasure is perpetuated through everyday structures and practices including Eurocentric schooling and curricula.

In their work, Strathern (2020, drawing on Tsing 2015) and Tsing (2015) both speak about the term terra nullius specifically providing the example of how sugar cane plantations were set up to be scalable so that the crop was raised without companion species—or relations—so that the "same crop could be grown anywhere suitable" (Strathern 2020, 140). This supports how the notion of terra nullius is tied to erasure and the overlooking of relations. Terra nullius in terms of colonialism, production, and expansion is pointing to two things: first, the abstraction (or removal or erasure), of relationships and, second, through the abstraction of relations, the creation of scalability. Abstraction is this process of removing or making relations invisible in order to render something to be interchangeable, scalable, comparable, quantifiable, and knowable.

This idea is similar to Scott's (1988) analysis of German scientific forestry. He details that, with scientific forestry, forests were cut down and were replaced by a desired species of tree. These trees were removed from the brush, or entangled relations, which would typically be present. This includes plants, organism, and animals that would all be entangled and reliant on each other ecologically. With scientific forestry the trees are grown like a crop, in straight uniform lines, without this entangled ecology. Scott notes that this was part of the utilitarian states' industrialization process. Trees were planted in this way so they would be usable as units.

Strathern notes that scalability "points to process, typical of industrial production, that allow infinite expansion in the size of activities without transforming their object or product" (Strathern 2020, 139). In this system, "qualitatively unique relationships" (Strathern 2020, 139) are seen as an issue as their qualitatively unique features make them characteristically "nonscalable" (Strathern 2020, 139). Scalability is about legibility, reliability, and standardization. Taking Scott's (1988) case of scientific forestry, for example, these forests were wiped out and replanted without the webs of relations which would typically entangle them creating a standardizable units where all the products look the same. If one unit did not look the same, it would be deemed useless in this system. The forests, as they were, would have been unscalable as the entangled relations would have produced unstandardized or "qualitatively unique" units as their growth would be influenced and entangled with the organisms around them. The trees had to be abstracted from relations that can be interchangeable, comparable, scalable, legible, quantifiable

With scientific forestry, Scott was speaking primarily about industrialization process in terms of state revenue and relations being denied in terms of land and ecology. Additionally, he also mentions, from an anthropological perspective, that this outlook also overlooks all of the human interactions which are entangled with these forests (1988). There is a form of pretending that happens to imagine the land as though it did not formally have relations and that the trees that were planted were not formally entangled with other relations.

A similar kind of abstraction from relations is also present in the process of the creation of commodities more generally. With commodification, the commodity is produced through social relations, but the standardized form tells us it is not. The commodity, when abstracted from these relations, becomes a unit that does not show these relations and instead, the commodity form is produced. The commodity's' relation to its production in terms of how it was produced, who it was produced by, where it was produced, and the condition of this work are all made invisible with the final interchangeable, comparable, scalable, and quantifiable unit.

This idea of a scalable unit, that is taken out of relations, mirrors Strathern's concept of the generic, which I spoke about, in detailing how the category of relations, rather than individual relations themselves, became important in the seventeenth-century shift in understanding kinship. The generic terms she notes, "reinforces the observation that such notions are not reducible to individual instances of them: they have specific features as abstract forms" (Strathern 2020, 27). Strathern is arguing that these generics are useful in their abstract forms when they are removed from the individual instances or, essentially, when they are removed from their "qualitatively unique" relations. It is the category rather than the relation that is of importance. These categories can be used as quantifiable and intelligible units. Strathern notes that generics particularly held importance as units as they were used to claim and manage the claims on property ownership. This idea of property ownership is something that Scott (1988) specifically talks about in terms of scalability and legibility. He notes that the state operated by overlooking relations and rather placing value on the most objective and standardized forms in order to control, manage, compare, and keep track of property ownership.

Ideas about scalability and abstraction also apply to objective knowledge production. Mitchell speaks about the idea of making experts so knowledge can be compared (2002). This is an idea familiar to the scientific method which calls for detailed and objective methods so exact replication can occur in order to measure scientific reliability. These ideas of scalability, comparison, and reliability all go along with ideas of objectivity and standardization. Scientific knowledge needs to be seen as objective, and without entangled relations, so that it can be compared and confirmed. In fact, if the knowledge is found to be "qualitatively unique", or not replicable, it loses its value. This shows how much value is placed, in this system, on abstracting knowledge from its relations.

In chapter two, I outlined that the sanctioned expert model draws on both these ideas, of generics with relations and objectivity, that were emerging in the seventeenth century. The sanctioned expert model is also about this erasure, or abstraction, of relations. Similarly, then, the sanctioned expert model, as I outlined it, relies on a system where "objective" information is passed from curriculum to teacher, to student without entangled relations. This sanctioned expert model is premised on the notion that "qualitatively unique" relations are biased and are a problem. The hope of this model is that all teachers can teach the same thing and that any teacher (with a prescribed lesson plan based on the curriculum) can deliver knowledge and students can learn in the same way. The knowledge is a standardizable unit without relations. It is a conception of education that is "unbiased" and abstracted. Such abstraction would render this information quantifiable, scalable, and comparable. In some ways, the sanctioned expert system treats knowledge, students, and teachers similar to the premise of terra nullius—as though they have no entangling claims. By tracing these moments of abstraction with colonialism, plantations, forests, commodities, naming, and knowledge production I am attempting to showcase this common logic which is present in the sanctioned expert model.

In this section, I will explore these ideas of abstraction and scalability—which go along with sanctioned expertise—and how these ideas are central to the challenges that teachers spoke about in responding to the TRC and TQS5.

4.2 Challenges: Fractures

Going into this research, one of the main questions I had for teachers was: what do you find are the challenges and possibilities in responding to the TRC and TQS5? Here I will focus on the challenges that the teachers brought forward.

The challenges that teachers described varied given who they are and the context they work in. Elementary school teachers often noted that finding grade-level appropriate content was their main challenge or not being able to have more meta conversations about resources. Racism from students and parents was another challenge that many of the teachers highlighted across the board. However, I particularly found that higher-grade-level teachers more often brought racism forward as a challenge. Although these challenges are interesting and worthy of exploration, I am interested in exploring one challenge in particular that Shea, who is a settler, seventh-year high school English teacher, brought forward.

Shea: The one word that always comes to mind when I think about that is—that it's just so fractured, right. Like it's just splinters of learning. And I almost, not that I like it, but I appreciate the—like the sliver. Like it's painful. You don't see fractured as like “oh no this is totally great that you get to focus on these different things.” Even the connotation of fractured or splintered or split has like—it feels like you're missing parts or that it's damaging in some way. … I don't know if high schools will ever truly be able to like incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing and Indigenous learning with the current structure we have of schedules because how can you teach about this big idea, how all of these things are interconnected, when it's like “okay when the bell rings and now you're going to do something completely different in your math class.”
Makita: Right, right.
Shea: And even when high schools try to do more of the overlap, it's still like humanities which is Social Studies and English. And Math and Science are still very much paired off.
Makita: Right.
Shea: So even these, like, attempts to bring more unity still don't really—don't really hit the mark for what it means to actually have this like harmony and balance and learning…I just like keep coming back to this idea of like how fractured—how fractured it feels in a high school when you're trying to kind of take on some of this learning and even the idea of like, we have CALM class, but I think that we could do all kinds of like real life learning across the board. But it—we just are so drawn to the structure and organization of like you are learning this from 8:30 a.m. to 9:55 and then you're going to learn this from 10:05 to 11:30. Like all of these things are just so structured—so structured and then, in turn, so fractured. Because you never get to look at the bigger picture and how they're all, you know, in tune with each other and overlapping each other and can build off of each other.
(Follow-up Interview, Zoom, 14 February 2022)

The idea of fractures is important here. This idea, I will argue, seems to be a result of the process of abstraction which allows for scalability and perpetuates sanctioned expertise. Shea describes that fracturing is happening noting that there is a disconnect; there are parts that are missing, and that this is damaging. Shea seems to be describing an abstraction from relations in her working context. She notes for example, that relations between subjects are often made invisible, with subjects and bell times, or that students’ “real life” learning is made invisible because of this setup. The structure of subjects and bell times then fractures or abstracts relations in favour of knowledge and practices that are scalable.

Similar to what scholars from the educational reform literature describe (Cohen and Mehta 2017), Shea is noticing a kind of contradiction produced between reform: specifically, in this case, how she approaches the reform, and the structure in which she is trying to practice the reform. Inspired by this, I asked other teachers, in the follow-up interviews what else they see as contradicting—what they are trying to do—when they are addressing the TRC and TQS5 in their practice. I had this conversation with both Ava and Marcela and they both spoke about ideas that frequently came up in my other interviews. Ava noted that she finds standardised assessment to contradict her Indigenous-focused practices and fractures relationships with students and knowledge in a similar way. Marcela noted that she finds the lack of time and attention to emotional needs and knowledge for both teachers and students to similarly contradict her intentions in what she is trying to do in responding to the TRC and TQS5. These challenges seem logical as all of these teachers seem to be responding through a frame of relational expertise. Shea and Ava seem to be describing structures that contradict relational expertise by fracturing away relations. Marcela's contradiction also touches on this but more so shows the result of these fracturing structures. She shows that the forms of knowledge—that she values in responding to the TRC and TQS5—are being devalued because of these fracturing structures.

In this chapter I will talk about this process of abstraction by looking at the structures that fracture—that teachers brought forward, when we spoke about the challenges that they find in doing this work—and the kind of contradictions they produce. I will be looking at the structures of subjects and bell times and standardized assessment, that Shea and Ava brought forward, and explore how they derive from and reproduce abstracted relations. With this, I will argue that these structures, that shape schooling, go against relational expertise and rather suit sanctioned expertise displaying the contradictions in how teachers are responding to the TQS5 and TRC's calls to action. I will also discuss some of the everyday practice or talk, and the wider social narratives which act in conversation with and reproduce these structures. In doing this, I am taking up ideas from educational reform scholars who talk about what happens when schooling structures, everyday interactions—and the values that underly and reproduce the schooling structures—do not match the reform initiatives creating challenges for teachers who are trying to enact the reform initiatives and values (Cohen and Mehta 2017).

4.3 Bell times and subjects

In the excerpt from Shea's interview, where she talks about fractures, the main idea that she mentions is how subjects and bell times fracture her practice. In this conversation, she raised this as one of the biggest challenges for her—in her setting—in responding to the TRC and TQS5. She goes on to note that she finds subjects and bell times to be challenging because they fracture, or abstract, relations between the sanctioned subjects leaving little room for overlap. She also mentions that this structure fractures, or abstracts, "real-life" learning from the sanctioned lesson. She notes that this structure not only makes it hard for doing cross-curricular lessons, but it also makes it hard to tap into and be attentive to other things that students are learning.

Shea: I think—maybe more of a challenge that we have as high school teachers versus elementary, where you have like your homeroom kids you teach them for the whole day. It's easier to have like different moments in different subjects and in different contexts of like this is what it looks like. … And even like, we will have some kids—so I teach an English class second semester. Maybe a quarter of the kids did Social Studies first semester so I can be like "oh you learned about this in Social right" and a quarter of the kids are like "yes" and three quarters are like "no I'm in Social Studies right now."
(Initial Interview, in person, 16 August 2021)

In the collaborative session, she also notes that this structure makes it so she is less able to explore other pedagogical practices outside of what school is “supposed to be”.

Shea: That's definitely a challenge in high school. That the learning is so fractured. Like it's so fractured and its systems in place that fractured the learning too. So it's not that I can say like okay so we have this whole day that we're going to spend and we're going to do like some Science learning in this like in this sphere and then Social in this way and English in this way and we're going to have some Art to go with it. Because I get 85 minutes, and the grade nines that I teach right now, I have 85 minutes on Tuesdays and Thursdays and every other Friday and so even the structure of our schedule this year it's really hard to get any kind of like momentum to do some of the like cross-curricular things or maybe something that is less traditional for like what schooling is supposed to be—“supposed to be”. So next semester I teach them every day but it still is like—the bell rings and that's when they think English starts and then the bell rings again and that's when they think English ends so, um. The fractured nature of high school is it's a huge challenge. It's a huge challenge to teaching um, Indigenous content, and Indigenous ways of knowing in, like, an authentic way.
(Collaborative Session, Zoom, 28 November 2021)

Here Shea specifically notes subjects and bell times as a challenge to teaching Indigenous content and Indigenous ways of knowing in an “authentic way”. By this, I assume she means in a way that is relational and holistic that would both be more congruent with the content and her relational approach to the content (which values making relations visible), as I described in the past chapter. This structure denies her ability to take into consideration the context or relations of what else students are learning, how ideas she is presenting in her lessons might overlap with other subjects, or more “real-life” or less “traditional” ideas which might align with creating lessons which take into consideration students’ real-life context and relations. Shea’s limited ability to engage in these relations shows how subjects and bell times contradict her approach and structurally devalue relational expertise, as they structurally discourage her from engaging in more relational pedagogical practices.

4.4 Standardized assessment

Some of this conversation about subjects and bell times happened during the collaborative session. In this session, Ava, who teaches grade one was also present. Ava noted that she did not have the same issues with subjects and bell times as Shea does as Shea teaches in a high school where this structure is heightened. Ava noted that within her setting, rather, she has an ability to bend her schedule. However, in our follow up interview, Ava and I reflected on this moment where we found that she and Shea had different difficulties. With this, I asked Ava if she thinks there is anything similar to the structure of subjects and bell times that she encounters in the grade she teaches. Ava noted that standardized assessment seems to be similar, and she feels as though this contradicts her response to the TRC and TQS5.

Makita: I'm also curious if there's other ways that you think the structure of school—kind of like this western construct of the structure of school like the subjects, bell times, things like that might contradict with what you're trying to do when you're talking about or bringing in Indigenous ways of knowing in your classroom? Like is there anything in the elementary level that you're like oh this definitely feels like a kind of contradiction?
Ava: I think like, um, and this isn't like specific to my school, or anything, but I think just like in general I think like right now there are a lot of new government assessments coming out that we have to do. … So, I feel like that like—like it's hard to teach in a very like holistic way when the things that are like so mandatory to do like you have to do this type of assessment is like just the complete opposite…there's just no school that's the same and there's no classroom that's the same. And I see where it makes sense like that these are like the foundational skills that kids need to know, so we need to be able to assess them on this. But I just think there's so many better ways to do it like if I know that my student with high anxiety is gonna, like, lose it doing a timed math test like why would I assess her like that. Like I know that she can do all of those math questions, honestly probably in a minute, but when it's timed—like it like I think that it's like it isn't one size fits all like these kids learn differently and one—. And I think it's interesting too because one of the TQS ones is about like—like you meet all of the students' needs in different ways. Like differentiation is such a big thing, but then we're giving standardized tests.
Makita: Yeah yeah.
Ava: Standardized this—and it's like these kids don't learn that way. Like it's not paper pencil for everything anymore so like and—and like of course, like wherever you go like, there's going to be kids that are completely different so, that's right.
(Follow-up Interview, Zoom, 9 February 2022)

This structure of standardized assessment was also something that Shea spoke about in our follow up interview showing how this seems to be an issue at both grade levels.

Shea: It's just it's so difficult because we're kind of in this like weird grey area where we want to like—we don't want to traditionally assess kids. But they also have a diploma where they are literally a barcode in a booklet, right. So I was just having this conversation today with one of my colleagues where if we get a piece of writing from a kid that we have a relationship with, we

> know a bit about them, we know a bit about their lives, we're often able to see, maybe, what they're trying to do in their writing. But then on like are we giving that student a disadvantage by being like yes you're a good writer I see what you're doing here. Knowing that when they go into a diploma and there it's not even a name and technically you're not supposed to grade a student if you can recognize that as one of your students. If the writing isn't if the writing on its own isolated isn't up to provincial standards, you know, like how do we—how do we reconcile that. But also we're just like we don't—we want them to be good humans. We don't care if they're like checking off these boxes on a rubric. But, also, kids fail entire courses because they fail diploma exams.
> (Follow-up Interview, Zoom, 14 February 2022)

Both Ava and Shea point to how standardized tests overlook relations and rather support sanctioned expertise by prioritizing objectivity. Shea notes with standardized testing the student becomes a "barcode in a booklet" which deliberately erases their subjectivity, positionality, context, and relations. Ava also shows this when she talks about one student who would be able to do all of the math questions, probably, within the time that the standardized test provides. However, when the test is timed, like it is for these standardises tests, this student is unable to perform in the same way. This is information, which is relational (that is, it is knowledge built and shared between the student and teacher) becomes overlooked. Shea also shows how relations and situated forms of expertise are removed through the depersonalization that happens with standardized testing. Turning students into barcodes takes away the context of the class, the context of what else they have been working on, if this is really great work for them personally, the physical and emotional state they were in when writing, and all of the contextual and relational factors. These are all factors that the relational model of expertise tries to value as part of the production of knowledge which become erased and ignored. Standardized tests are not concerned with these relations, and they undermine relational expertise. These tests overlook the premise of relational expertise that they depend on to produce the knowledge they evaluate. The relationships built between teachers, their students, and their specific contexts are all overlooked in the end. The qualitative aspects of relationships that students have with the knowledge are fractured when knowledge is made scalable and quantifiable. Moreover, it ignores the relational expertise that the teachers have in knowing a student and how the work that they produce on a test relates to other factors that might be impacting them.

Like subjects and bell times, having standardized tests—and the pressure that Shea notes there is to teach towards these tests—discourages relational expertise by structurally telling teachers that this is not what is being valued which, in turn, reinforces that relational approaches to knowledge production are less valuable in schools.

4.5 Everyday talk

These institutionalized patterns of abstraction are also reproduced through everyday conversations which reinforce the importance, or status, of structures which abstract relations and devalue relational approaches. This idea of everyday interactions reinforcing these structures is, in a sense, what Shea was talking about when she notes that part of the difficulty comes from the expectation of what schooling is "supposed to be" that gets reinforced by students, teachers, and parents. This came up as, in my conversations with teachers, many of them spoke about comments that students have made related to these institutionalized structures. Both Shea and Jenny, for example noted that, in their high school settings, students would make comments when there was information that overlapped, or showed their relations, between subjects.

Shea: Sometimes kids are more vocal where they're "like yeah we know." "We—we're doing this in Social Studies" like "ugh we have to do this here too", right.
Makita: Right.
Shea: Where there's like a bit more pushback. But I think that that comes because English does its own thing, Social does its own thing, Science does its own, Math does its own thing, right.
Makita: Right.
Shea: That um it's a little bit more difficult to have it be just an overarching …
(Initial Interview, in person, 16 August 2021)

Jenny: There's very—very little communication between. So, it's like until your kids—until your students come in and are like "we're already learning, we already talked about this." You have no idea. You don't really know what the other conversations with the other classes are like.

(Follow-up Interview, Zoom, 17 February 2022)

This shows how the feedback that Shea and Jenny get from their students, and relay to me, is not students being excited by these connections but rather students seemingly dreading these connections by using expressions like “we're already learning, we already talked about this” or “ugh we have to do this here too”. In part, these responses might come from the disjointedness of the departments and departments not being able to coordinate to make a throughline and so they might be repeating things. However, I also contend that these expressions speak to how students are reinforcing the structures that fracture by articulating the expectation that what they are learning in different subjects should not overlap. This shows how students, through their everyday interactions, are upholding and reinforcing a fractured notion of schooling where relations between subjects and ideas are abstracted. I will detail why this might be below.

Further, Shea and Jenny also noted that students seem to express that they find knowledge and assessment forms that are less quantifiable, and standardizable—or that make relations more visible—to be less valuable. Shea, for example noted:

Shea: Yeah, yeah like it sometimes feels like Math and Science is taken more seriously than English class and like students feel like, like, they voice these opinions of like well I can come in and like write about my life and get a good mark on an essay. And they don't see that as a skill they don't see this, like, communication and being in touch with your life story as, like, an actual benefit. Versus I can do these equations in math and that means I’m smart.
(Follow-up Interview, Zoom, 14 February 2022)

Following this conversation with Shea, I also brought this idea forward when I was talking with Jenny.

Makita: —The students for some reason are devaluing it because it's not something that they need to memorize and repeat like they do in the Math, Science subjects which I think is interesting.
Jenny: I had one student that is exactly—was exactly as you described. But he was one of my favorites because he was very keen very smart about arguing that point and I’m saying like a

> self-evaluation. Holy smokes, to get him to do a self-evaluation was like pulling teeth but trying to get him to like—Why. Why are you so against this? Why? Well like, what is it? And literally what has happened to you in your life that makes you so, uh—like put up this huge wall up about a self-evaluation. And he had really good points about like this you know "how is my self-evaluation going to affect my mark", um, and "how does this have any place within English—how does this". And so, I did really enjoy actually, like, arguing with him on these points. (Follow-up Interview, Zoom, 17 February 2022)

Shea's comment shows how students seem to place more value on standardizable and quantifiable forms of knowledge rather ran relational forms of knowledge. She notes that students often prioritize and care more about subjects, like Math and Science, which have these quantifiable and sanctioned forms of assessment and knowledge. She also notes that students often do not value the subjective and relational forms of knowledge that English draws on noting how students overlook life stories and communication as important forms of knowing. These are the relational parts of knowledge which are present in all knowledge that students produce but it is interesting that a subject that makes these relations visible, instead of abstracting them, is looked down upon by students because of this. Jenny's comment also supports this idea as she shows how, even within her subject, a more relational and less objective assessment measure can be looked down upon as students seem to devalue more subjective or, in essence, relational practices like self-assessment.

What I am trying to show, with these comments about subjects and assessment, is that structures which fracture, or abstract, relations are not structures which are disconnected from everyday practice. These structures influence opinions on how schools should be run and what is considered real and important knowledge and, in turn, these ideas also reproduce and reinforce the structures which validate them. This shows how it is not just these structures, but people and ideas around the structures, which create this tension in teachers' responses to the TRC and

TQS5. As, in both cases, the students seem to be valuing and upholding an abstracted conception of schooling.

4.6 The commodity: Homo economicus

My analysis of the teachers' challenges shows how the structures, that teachers express as challenges, are structures that rely on sanctioned expertise as they support an abstracted model of schooling. It is unsurprising then that the teachers express that these structures are challenges because they work in opposition to the relational expert model which focuses on valuing relations.

These structures are rather related to processes of objectivity, legibility, quantification, and commodification. In her 2007 book, Kuokkanen specifically suggests that schooling (her work is on post-secondary education specifically) positions knowledge as a commodity and denies relations. The commodity is a unit abstracted from relations. Once knowledge is turned into a commodity it is abstracted from social relations making it generalizable and universal. It becomes a discrete and bounded unit of knowledge. Knowledge is now seen as an object or a thing that is separate from humans, or any relations, rather than entangled with them.

Scott (1988) notes how this commodification process is tied up with the state. Scott reports that, as the state emerged, there was a need for quantifiable units in order to keep track of and compare qualitative occurrences in daily life. Further, Scott notes that in order to keep track of ownership and private property the state became required. The role of the state in tracking ownership and private property shows how these seemingly contradictory notions of state control and capitalism are entangled (Scott 1988). Here I will argue that both of these ideas underly the process of abstraction which the teachers find to be a challenge to their response to the TRC and TQS5.

Standardized testing, for example, follows the abstraction process as it reduces students' work to "a barcode in a booklet". All of the relations are removed from it and the students' work becomes a thing that is quantifiable and legible (Scott 1988) in that their work—or product—is now able to be compared. Because students' work is quantifiable, legible, and comparable it allows for measures of accountability and achievement with teachers and schools as well. It becomes data that can be measured and recorded as a statistic for purposes of state control (Scott 1988). The statistics that are produced are used as commodities as, in order to obtain funding, schools need to be able to show, in this standardized format, that they are doing what they are "supposed to be doing". This comparison also plays out at individual levels as well. Especially when it comes to provincial achievement tests, students' individual achievements also become highlighted and there is an accountability aspect with students being able to claim—and own—their course credits after successfully completing these exams. This speaks to the centrality of the state (the provincial government). For this property ownership to work, there has to be a state to keep track of this ownership.

Subjects and bell times also follow this logic. Labelling a course English, for example, and knowing that what will happen within the time that is allotted for that course will all be English (and not cross-curricular activities) allows for a model where students need a certain number of English credits to graduate. This shows how relations are removed in order to make this a unit that can be owned and can be used transactionally as a form of property (for example, in applying to university or just in "achieving" the next grade level). Comparable to standardized testing, these *generic* units are also used by schools and the state for comparison and accountability.

These structures of legibility, ownership, and commodification, I argue, also go along with neoliberal social values which underly the structure of school (see Labaree 2008, 2012 for discussion). Similarly, Kuokkanen (2007) critiques the structure of schooling noting how the current structure of postsecondary education is based on notions of capitalism, competition, and individualism. In Donald's 2015 article, he notes that the notion of homo economicus seems to underlie many ideas present in schooling. He details that, under the premise of homo economicus, "faith in and worship of the market is considered the primary purpose of humankind" (Donald 2019, 111). He goes on to note that homo economicus "constitutes the most natural and most developed form of human being in evolutionary terms. Questions regarding the meaning and purpose of human being-ness are answered with direct reference to this market rationality" (Donald 2019, 111). With this, he argues, that this homo economicus being becomes the "rational" (Donald 2019) or "common sense" (Donald 2019, 113 who is drawing on Keil 2002) model for being. He contends that these ideas of how to best be a human are "largely derived from neoliberal understandings of innovation, progress entrepreneurship, competition, success, and well-being in the interests of building an economy" (Donald 2019, 113).

What I am suggesting is that these structures of abstraction which allow for legibility and commodification in schooling are supporting these underlying homo economicus narratives about how to be a human. These narratives would similarly overlook relations and value knowledge in its generic and scalable form. Having knowledge that can be commodifiable and legible to the state supports narratives of progress, competition, success, and economy. Knowledge is only important, under this logic, if it is a transactional unit that can be used or mobilized in the name of progress or economic gain. Knowledge that is relational would then be irrational, under the logic of homo economicus, as it cannot be quantified or made legible and thus cannot support economic gain.

The students' comments around the structures of subjects and bell times and standardized assessment particularly show this value system being played out. Both the comments that Shea and Jenny shared about overlapping material in classes and assessment show that the students are placing value and reinforcing a market logic of schooling. When the students complain about the overlap between subjects it "makes sense" under a homo economicus logic. If a unit is supposed to be "English", learning something in two places would be a waste of time and not what the teacher is "supposed to be doing" when school is conceptualized in this way. Additionally, these more personal or cross-curricular connections would not be tested on a standardized test so this practice would not be congruent with this either. This practice would be irrational if students are working toward their standardizable unit in English.

The students' comments on knowledge and forms of assessment that are more relational also support, and are supported by, this logic as any assessment or practice that is not standardizable would not be "rational" under a homo economicus lens. It would not be of any use in terms of property, ownership, or capital gain to place value on subjective measures that cannot be quantified, scaled, and compared. Instead, they place more value on knowledge and forms of assessment which are more scalable and can be more clearly used transactionally.

This shows how the challenges that teachers are describing have to do with these institutionalised structures (like subjects, bell times, and assessment) which deny relational expertise but also everyday interactions, and bigger social narratives that underly hegemonic views on the best way to be a human. All of these aspects mutually reinforce and validate each other and maintain a conception that the right way to live is one based on market conceptions and abstracted relations.

4.7 Emotional knowledge and labour

At the start of this chapter, I mentioned that three teachers spoke to me about the contradictions that they see in responding to the TRC and TQS5. I have talked about both the idea that Shea raised about subjects and bell times and what Ava mentioned about standardized assessment. Here, I want to touch on Marcela's comment that the lack of space given for emotional knowledge also seems to contradict what she is trying to do in responding to the TRC and TQS5. This contradiction seems to be a product of these structures, the everyday talk, and bigger social narratives which reproduce them.

Marcela: I get very—very frustrated when the only part of my job that I feel like is acknowledged, or is seen as worthy, is the academic side of it. And the social-emotional, the kind of parenting side that I have to do. And it's not even optional. Like if you try to not do those things, not only will your classroom implode—because you're not really leading them and they're children. ... And that has a lot of emotional learning and coaching in it. So that is—a large part of my labor that goes into my job and also is some of the really important parts of my job. Because if I were to truly only teach curriculum, first of all I don't know how I would do that, but if I were to only do that I feel like you'd be getting—you wouldn't be getting mature well-rounded individuals.
Makita: Yeah.
Marcela: —Out of my classroom. And so that is an insane amount of what drains me every day and what I know is very important work that I do, but then it feels very disjointed because it's not acknowledged.
Makita: Yeah.
Marcela: —On like a greater scale. Other teachers see it, your spouse sees it,—because they see how drained you are—,and your friends might know because you tell stories—and they realize how much you care. But sometimes parents don't necessarily realize how much you parent their child. And society, as a whole, doesn't really realize that effect. And then governmentally, it's not given time and energy and support. There's still a surprising amount of people who ask me…they'll go "well didn't you just like send them to the school counselor". I'm like "we don't have a school counselor". You're like "wait there's no—there's no school counselor?" "There's no school psychologist?" And I was like. "No"…So, there's—it's me. I'm like, "guys, I am the counselor."
Makita: Yeah.
Marcela: I am also the nurse in case you chop your finger off. So the fact that I am the counselor, and that I am the nurse, and that I am the emotional support therapy dog of the

> classroom—is not acknowledged which makes me feel like my role, in terms of my job, on paper different than it really is. So that—that kind of feels disjointed. … I have one little dude who the main thing that I need to do with him in a day is get him to name, acknowledge, and manage his emotions. And it's not actually in the cards about whether or not he finishes an academic task.
> (Follow-up Interview, phone call, 6 February 2022)

Dr. Lewis, who is a Métis Faculty of Education instructor at a university in Southern Alberta, also talked about this during our conversation.

> **Dr. Lewis:** So in relationships and dealing with, you know, how to be happy, or what to do when … your peer groups change—that sort of thing. And your support systems change. What to do for that fulfillment and not—to just have to feel that like fulfillment in life. So, I'm not saying that that's necessarily spiritual. But just—the other things that don't get addressed as much in our education system are all—they are the areas where challenges exist, right. Because we don't have that learning for, necessarily, emotional needs.
> **Makita:** Mhm. Yeah.
> **Dr. Lewis:** I mean it's done peripherally. It's done as part of like Health curriculum. And teachers do it because they recognize that students need it. So they—it's like that hidden curriculum is the part that they—that they do because—. But it's not evaluated. It's not necessarily valued either within that curriculum or within our education system it's just, you know, just like that piece that the good teachers do.
> (Initial Interview, in person, 13 September 2021)

Together, Marcela and Dr. Lewis point to issues in how emotional knowledge and learning are overlooked and not supported and valued and how the emotional and care labour, that goes along with it, is also overlooked and not supported and valued. This devalued knowledge—emotional knowledge—would be "qualitatively unique" and not align with the structure, everyday conversations, and the wider ideology which lays the basis for what is prioritized in schools. What is prioritized in schools are structures and ideas which go along with homo economicus narratives. Along with this, the emotional and care labour work that Marcela outlines would be overlooked as well. This is emotional and care labour is feminized work, which is devalued both in general (Berg 1992; Clawson and Gerstel 2014; Collins 2019 Grimshaw and Rubery 2007) and in schools (Modigliani 1986; Priegert Coulter and McNay 1993; Teo 2022).

This points to Eurocentric binary thinking, that goes along with homo economicus, which positions objective, theoretical, capitalist, and male forms of work and knowledge on one side of the binary and subjective, experiential[22], relational, and female forms of work and knowledge on the other. The objective, or "Euro-western" side of this binary is positioned as the most rational and highest form of knowledge while the subjective side of the binary is positioned as less valuable and is often positioned in relation to all "othered" or "non-Euro-western" cultures. Because this subjective, practical, relational, and female side is not standardizable and quantifiable—and therefore cannot be used as a transactional unit—there is structurally less room for these forms of knowledge and this knowledge is cared about less as it does not go along with homo economicus values.

It is no wonder that the teachers see the fracturing, and devaluing, of this knowledge—and these spaces or moments where this knowledge happens—as a challenge to their response to the TRC and TQS5. They value relational expertise, in their response, which relies on the subjective, practical, relational, feminine side of the binary which gets positioned as irrational and unimportant.

4.8 Indigenous notions of holism, relations, and the gift

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[22] With this binary, there is the incorrect assumption that knowledge that is experiential is non-theoretical. It is this assumption, guided by Eurocentrism, which places experiential and theorical knowledge as though they are on separate sides of the binary. It is also notable that this is often how knowledge from "othered" cultures is understood as relational, experiential, and practical and thus non-theoretical (Kuokkanen 2007 drawing on hooks). These ideas draw on ideas about culture from German Romanticism and the French Enlightenment which lead into ideas of low and high culture, respectively, which are reproduced today (see Kuper 2000). Further, these ideas are also tied to colonialism and how the "west" has come to understand the "other" (Said 1979) pointing to how non-Europeans and women are always the object of study which are theorized about and the Euro-western male always does the theorizing (Behar 1993; Deloria 1988; Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández 2013). With this, it is unsurprising that work that is associated with the "other" and women are realms of work that do not get to be seen as producing real or valuable knowledge.

> The fact that Native science is not fragmented into specialized compartments does not mean that it is not based on rational thinking, but that it is based on the belief that all things are connected and must be considered within the context of that interrelationship. (Augustine 1997, 1)

What this quotation from Augustine points to is how devaluing and fracturing relational knowledge goes against Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing which are the very things, the teachers I spoke to, are ultimately trying to be responsive to.

Educational scholars have noted that Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing emphasize principles of holism which consider physical, social, and emotional wellness and intelligence (Katz 2018; Lee 2015; Moon and Berger 2016; Toulouse 2016, Wildcat et al. 2014), practice-based learning (Arney 2021; Battiste 2013; Bigknife Antonio 2006; Brayboy 2014; Bigknife Antonio 2006, Cajete 2005; Katz 2018; Marule 2012), specifically land-based learning (Betasamosake Simpson 2014; Lee Ormiston 2019; Styres 2019), cyclical learning (Akan 1999; Arney 2021; Battiste 2013), and the role of community in learning (Arnie 2021; Cajete 2016; Toulouse 2016) as important forms of education. All of these forms of education depend on relational forms of knowledge.

Given this, it is unsurprising that the teachers express that institutional educational structures, which deny and devalue these ways of knowing, are a challenge. Both the teachers' approach to, and the wider context of the content they are trying to convey, do not match the structures in which the teachers are working (Cohen and Mehta 2017). By pointing to issues like subjects, bell times, and the devaluing of emotional knowledge as the main challenges in responding to the TRC and TQS5, the teachers are really pointing to structures of "ontological violence" (Kuokkanen 2007) embedded in schooling that promote the Eurocentric logic of homo economicus (Donald 2019) as the unquestioned and legitimate way to be and know (Donald 2019; Kuokkanen 2007). These structures of formal education are a part of this violence as they keep these ways of knowing that do not follow a Eurocentric ontology (based on the logic of homo economicus) separated and understood as irrational and not valuable.[23]

Kuokkanen (2007) specifically suggests that Indigenous ways of knowing counter the standardizable, quantifiable, and commodified form of knowledge that homo economicus and schooling support. She argues that Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing, resemble a gift rather than a commodity. Both the gift and the commodity are embedded in social relations; however, with the rise of commodity capitalism, the social relations that produce the commodity are denied and made invisible. This abstraction from the social relations of the production of the commodity parallels what happens to relational knowledge in schools. Kuokkanen suggest that Indigenous ways of knowing more so align with ideas of relations and reciprocity rather than homo economicus ideas of personal achievement, progress, and linearity. The gift, she suggests, is recognized and valued through all of the relations which compose it along with a sense of responsibility to these relations that evoke a sense of reciprocity (Kuokkanen 2007, 2). With this sense of responsibility and reciprocity, Kuokkanen suggests a reform of schooling where knowledge and education can be understood as gifts rather than as commodities—particularly when it comes to taking up Indigenous ways of knowing. Such an approach could have particular impacts in terms of reconciliation. By valuing and bringing forward relations as central to the production of knowledge, students and teachers are no longer able to hold these relations at arm's length. These are moments where students and teachers can see their relational obligation and their implication (Donald 2009b, 2012). The gift is about recognizing relations and being responsible by not taking these relations for granted (Kuokkanen 2007, 3-4).

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[23] I want to emphasize that I am not arguing that simply any attempt to engage in relations represent teachers engaging in Indigenous ways of knowing. The teachers are not claiming this either. Rather they are noticing structures of schooling that challenge how they are responding through relational expertise. In having this section about Indigenous aspects of relationality, I want to point to the literature which highlights how Indigenous ways of knowing also value relations. I am not arguing that—by merely engaging in *any* relations—teachers are engaging in Indigenous ways of knowing.

Kuokkanen's notion of the gift contrasts the objectification, quantification, and standardisation processes of subjects, bell times, and standardized testing that the teachers are struggling against. Institutional structures like subjects, bell times, and standardized testing counter the TRC's calls to action and TQS5 mandate as these calls and mandates generally convey ideas about reconciliation and responsibility. Institutional structures that endorse homo economicus, rather, structurally remove responsibility to these relations and structurally devalue the importance of staying in (Haraway 2016) and being responsible to relations (Donald 2009a, 2009b; Korteweg and Fiddler 2018) as they make relations invisible.

In this chapter, I have outlined how the challenges that teachers brought forward are about institutional structures and wider narratives which contrast with how they are responding in their actual teaching practice through relational expertise. The invisibility and erasure of these forms of expertise in schools—that the teachers are trying to highlight—mirrors the invisibility and erasure of Indigenous ways of knowing, in schools, which actually value such relations and holism. In essence, these structures and narratives discount the forms of knowing, being, and doing which entangle students and teachers in responsibilities to relations and reciprocity, thereby going against initiatives aimed at being responsible for and recognizing relations, as the TRC (directly) and TQS5 (less directly) promote.

Chapter 5: Relations and possibilities

5.1 The contradiction of non-scalable space

In the last chapter, I spoke about the challenges that teachers brought forward when I asked them about the challenges in responding to the TRC and TQS5. I discussed how their challenges are embedded in wider social narratives which support standardized, sanctioned, capitalist, and objective conception of schooling. This seemed to clearly be a challenge as teachers were interested in engaging with the TRC and TQS5 in more subjective and relational ways as this better suited them and the content. With all this said, it would be overly simplistic, and rather unproductive, to look at schooling as only supporting homo economicus ways of knowing and being while viewing the incorporation of Indigenous ways of knowing, or relational practices, as entirely incompatible with what happens in schools. In fact, what the challenges teachers brought forward point to is the idea that teachers are engaged in relations and that relationality is produced in school, it is just overlooked and devalued. Because I have talked about the challenges, I now will talk about the possibilities, or strengths, that the teachers brought forward.

When I asked about strengths in their teaching settings, which help them respond to the TRC or TQS5, the teachers noted that they see spaces, moments, and parts of their practice within schooling that support their engagement with relations to be the strengths. Shea, for example, noted that, in her English class, the ability to talk about feelings and have conversations that relate to students' lives is a strength in her setting, in general, and for responding to the TQS5 specifically.

Shea: The great thing about teaching English is that you get to talk about your feelings.
Makita: Nice.
Shea: Like really, there's no—if you look at like the program of studies, it's not like, here are all the different facts that you have to know. It's more about like, can you understand like character

> motivation … what is your perspective on this, how did you interpret this, why do you think this character is saying or doing this, why do you think that this item or theme or whatever this motif shows up again and again why is that important? And so, you get to see how the kids are thinking. And, also, they get to pair their own life experience with what they're learning in an English classroom. Like we always, always, always encourage kids to do that. Like what experiences what people in your life—or even if it's not your experience like what stories have you heard that you've held on to that are meaningful for this moment.
> (Initial Interview, in person, 16 August 2021)

Along with this, Shea also noted having staff and administrators who support relational and personal grading initiatives as a strength in her setting. Additionally, many of the elementary teachers, like Ava, noted that the ability to engage in cross-curricular connections and the ability to have students for, essentially, an entire day was a strength of their settings when it came to incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing as they have a greater ability to engage in and tailor their lessons to their students and setting.

> **Ava:** I think it's interesting to, like—talking to people who don't teach elementary … it's interesting because like we both have these different struggles of how to do this the right way. …You're right like, for me, I can so easily like—we have a talking circle once a week outside and we do our land acknowledgement every single morning. Like these are things that are so easy to do because the majority of the teaching that I do is—I have them on the ground with me and we're in a circle and we're like that's how we learn and it's a lot more hands-on and like I've always like and honestly, like, until now—I've said like high school teachers maybe it is easier. …But yeah, like how do you just not say okay well we're reading this it's by an Indigenous author we're going to do two weeks of learning this kay I've done my TQS5 see you later. Like I've never really thought about it like that. …
> **Shea:** That's definitely a challenge in high school is that the learning is so fractured like it's so fractured and it's systems in place that fractured the learning too so it's not that I can say like okay so we have this whole day that we're going to spend and we're going to do like some Science learning in this like in this sphere and then Social in this way and English in this way and we're going to have some Art to go with it. Because I get 85 minutes. …
> **Ava:** The fact that you and I'm assuming that you do only English right? Yeah, so and again. Like for me like I do every subject like it's so easy for me to say okay like we're going to do Social Studies which also links with Science because we're going to be going outside and we're going to be talking about the seasons which is like there's Social and Science. Boom. Like it's easier for me to make those cross-curricular connections and make it meaningful. But for you, you are the only person who's teaching English. …Yeah, that's a whole other challenge that I never even really thought about.
> (Collaborative Session, Zoom, 28 November 2021)

The teachers are valuing practices, settings, spaces, and moments that are congruent with these relational understandings of knowledge even if relational understandings of knowledge are structurally devalued.

This contrasts with standardized spaces, of abstraction, where knowledge is valued for its objectivity and scalability and thus is taught in this way. Having a non-scalable space that is not valued or cared about by the homo economicus logic—where lessons and knowledge do not have to be structured objectively (because they will not be scaled up)—could be seen as a strength as it gives teachers the ability to explore and value these relations.

> Today I was talking about how different subjects might be seen as more masculine and more feminine with a teacher[24] and how these spaces are, respectively, valued and devalued because of the association maleness has with science and ideas of progress and how the latter is seen as less important and backwards because it does not have the same connotation. I proposed that his work as a Drama teacher falls into the latter and he mentioned that that's what makes the space that he works in so enjoyable. He said "no one cares what I'm doing in Drama" and spoke about his ability to create connections with students and explore ideas, topics, and techniques that are important or of interest to them. This makes me wonder if these spaces which are generally seen as less than and devalued are spaces of opportunity for incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing because they are spaces that are overlooked and do not have to produce scalable knowledge. At least until they have to give a grade at the end. So, structure agency circle. But there is something about the space itself not operating in this way in terms of everyday practice that makes it feel different?
> (Fieldnotes, 16 May 2022)

This fieldnote provides the basis for how I began to think about the comments that teachers were making in terms of preferring English because they are able to talk about feelings or valuing the non-scalable moments in their practice which they do not need to make legible or intelligible to the curriculum or to an administrator. Marcela, for example, when I asked her about possibilities of responding to the TRC and TQS5 in an elementary school, compared to other grades, spoke about this strength in not having to make what she is doing all the time intelligible or scalable.

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[24] I have removed what I had originally written in my fieldnotes and replaced it with "a teacher".

Marcela: One of the blessings of being a generalist in an elementary school, and an elementary school also, like mine, where I am given a lot of room to do what I want to do. And I'm not asked constantly "okay what curriculum does that fulfill or, um, how long is this going to take you." I don't—sometimes I don't know the answers to those. I could figure out the answers to those—I could make the answers for those…but also those are not the things that drive what I do either.
(Follow-up Interview, phone call, 3 February 2022)

Marcela also noted—when I asked her if there are specific possibilities with regard to addressing the TQS5 or TRC in certain subjects—that English was particularly wonderful because it provides her with space to do (what I would argue is) more relational work.

Marcela: English, of course, is a wonderful subject because you can do almost anything you ever wanted under the umbrella of English. And so, it's really easy. Even just like reading a book and talking about it is our LA curriculum.
Makita: Right.
Marcela: So, I can pick any book I want, even if I can't tell you where else in the curriculum it fits, and I'd say "oh this is responding to text" and then we just have a discussion about it.
Makita: Mmm.
Marcela: And then learn things that are not explicitly mentioned in the curriculum.
(Initial Interview, Zoom, 16 August 2021)

Her comments show how much she values these non-scalable spaces that do exist in schooling. Specifically, she notes that the structure of elementary schools, which is often looked down upon for being too feminine, relational and—because of this not producing real knowledge (Priegert Coulter and McNay 1993[25])—is valuable to her in responding to the TRC and TQS5 as it provides her space to do what she wants. Further when it came to subjects, she notes that she values English as it gives her the opportunity to point to the criteria of "responding to text". This allows her to address topics and have conversations that she believes are important and are relevant to her and her students. This shows how these non-scalable spaces and moments—although they are challenging because there is not much space or value in education given to them—can be spaces of possibilities. These are the moments of knowledge production which are made invisible when knowledge gets commodified and thus they are non-valuable from a homo economicus perspective. However, teachers seem to find great value in these spaces because they are not being scaled up. Because of this, non-scalable moments where teachers can "do what they want" allow them to address relations of students, relations of resources, and their own relations. These non-scalable spaces and moments are the relational spaces and moments. This shows that there are structures and outcomes in school which support relational learning, it is just these structures and outcomes are the ones that are overlooked and devalued by homo economicus narratives. However, they do exist in schools and allow for these possibilities for teachers. Of course, there is a kind of contradiction here because these spaces are devalued and looked down upon because they are not producing scalable knowledge and so they are not given time, space, or proper credibility. Yet, because they are "left behind" in this capitalist framework it allows for possibilities.

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[25] In this article Priegert Coulter and McNay speak about the call to have more men in elementary school and how this is related to both the devaluing of women's work and, essentially (in my words) the more relational and subjective practices which take place in elementary schools that focus on learning—like emotional learning—that cannot be standardized.

5.2 The TQS5: Contradictions

Before I speak about other possibilities, that these relational spaces and moments have, I want to go back to an earlier conversation on the TQS5. In an earlier chapter, I asked if the TQS5 is just a way to deliver an appearance of change without really changing as its format reproduces sanctioned expertise as it is a standardized mandate. Further, many of the teachers expressed frustration as it allows teachers to check a box without making any real change to their practice or without really engaging in and entangling themselves in relations of Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing. Despite the TQS being a standardized mandate, the criteria that it lists, to complete the standard, is not overly quantifiable. The standard does not include objective and quantifiable criteria rendering the TQS5 mandates as not entirely standardizable. This is one of the reason that the standard has been critiqued as there is no quantifiable or standardized way to determine if teachers are really engaging in the TQS5 in a way that is meaningful. This being said, many of the teachers noted that they think the TQS5 is important because it puts it on the agenda of all teachers and provides a starting point. This lack of standardization then might also be the reason that teachers appreciate the TQS5 as it deliberately outlines the possibility for engaging in non-scalable or relational practices and knowledge. Because the teachers are mandated to respond to the TQS5, similar to the criteria of "responding to text", the TQS5 gives teachers something to point to. When teachers want to engage in a relational space and explore ways of knowing that are more relational, and might fall beyond the homo economicus commodity rationalities, they can refence this standard. The TQS5 does an interesting thing then as it is presented as a sanctioned standard which is legible to teachers and homo economicus rationalities (in the sense that teachers might need to meet this standard to get a permanent contract). However, it also provides space for teachers who want to engage in relational or un-scalable moments.

5.3 Possibilities: Engaging in struggles

I want to make a connection to an idea, and possibility, that comes from the educational reform literature called "struggles as engagement" (Ng and Leicht 2019). Ng and Leicht suggest that a kind of active engagement in the struggle or difficulty that is experienced between a new activity system (or reform initiative) and the one that is already in place (the way school is operating prior to the reform) could be a productive moment of engagement. I contend that the teachers' articulation of the devaluing—or fracturing—of subjective and relational forms of knowledge (while objective, scalable, and capitalist forms of knowledge are being valued by the school system) provides the basis for this "struggle as engagement" as they are showcasing a struggle between two activity systems. This active engagement model requires instructors to confront their relations by naming and articulating why they are struggling to do this work within their current structure.

Ng and Leicht (2019) originally used the idea of struggles as engagement for talking about teachers interacting with reforms, in order to understand the teachers' process in these struggles as important moments of knowledge production. However, this concept could be seen as doubly important when it comes to reform surrounding Indigenous knowledge as many (Gebhard 2018; Kitchen and Raynor 2013; Marker 1998; Yeo et al. 2019) believe that both the instructors implementing this reform and the students who are involved in these classes should be necessarily implicated in these struggles and that important knowledge emerges through these struggles.

In my interviews and collaborative sessions, I was able to engage teachers in these moments of struggles as engagements by talking about—and articulating with them—the struggles and possibilities in responding to the TQS5 and TRC. As a consequence, we were able to talk about the contradictions in doing this work. However, I agree that these struggles could also be made part of the lesson with students. For example, the fact relational subjects or moments are devalued or the fact that relational knowledge will be translated to a grade to become intelligible in a standardized way could be made part of the lesson.

In fact, I propose that the non-scalable left-behind spaces—which are left-behind in the sense that the logic of homo economicus does not care about them because they do not have legible value in terms of capital gain—are ideal spaces for teachers to explore these struggles as engagement. I will now simply refer to these left-behind spaces as relational spaces. These relational spaces are ideal spaces for two reasons. First, because there is a felt contradiction between how they value and prioritize these relational spaces and how they are structurally devalued. Second, because it is a space which values making relations visible, engaging in and talking about relations of power and inequality and contradictions would be congruent with what relational spaces are about in the first place.

The teachers I worked with mentioned that they do have meta-type conversations in relational spaces with students about things like devaluing certain forms of knowledge. For example, Jenny mentioned that she would engage in conversations and try to challenge the student who refused and devalued her self-assessment practices. This shows how she used this contradiction between her relational approach and the students' standardized conception of schooling as a moment to struggle with the student and challenge their hegemonic ideas about what assessment "should" look like. Or, for example, Shea mentioned she would bring up the wider capitalist structures with some of her older students when I asked her how she navigates working within structures of whiteness.

Makita: That's a white way of knowing, essentially.
Shea: Yes.
Makita: So how, like, how can you navigate that? Is there anything that you try to do to specifically navigate that as a teacher or is that something that, like, is still in the future of how teachers can figure out how to do that?
Shea: It depends. So, I really—one of my favorite courses to teach is 30-2 because that's like grade 12, they have to have it to graduate, and so there is just—I hate the buy-in that comes from "you have to have this" but it's there, it exists. So I'm going to use it to my advantage type thing. Because you can have those conversations … like—I know this is a big system and we're all just working—we're all just cogs in this machine right now. And it's actually really interesting to see the shifts of like what's trending. Like this idea of capitalism and like anti-capitalism is—it's on TikTok, it's on Instagram, all these things, right. So like older kids kind of get how all of the pieces work together.
Makita: Right.

Shea: In this like bare capitalistic society. So that's really cool to have those conversations. Even if they don't like fully truly understand all the pieces they have the knowledge and like the means of it.
Shea: Um, so we have those conversations, but it really is like—I like I fully acknowledge that education as it stands is—is racist and it's meant to cater to one group of people.
Makita: Yeah.
Shea: But do I leave it because of that or do I try and make change within the system.
Makita: Yeah.
Shea: Knowing that trying to make change within the system and particularly in this government is nearly impossible because no one is listening to my voice.
Makita: Yeah.
Shea: Right. So, it's just like. Uh, it just keeps me up at night sometimes.
(Initial Interview, in person, 16 August 2021)

This conversation shows how Shea engages in meta conversations with her students about the structure that they are working in as part of how she navigates working in a structure of whiteness. She details how she will speak about capitalist structures with the students which does engage them in meta conversations about the space that they are occupying.

These kinds of conversations, that are meant to challenge students and bring to light the relations of power and inequality are both using relational space and engaging in valuing relations to engage in these struggles. When they engage in these conversations the teachers are not letting themselves or their students keep these struggles distant from themselves and are rather implicating them in these relations of inequality. These encounters, suggest that teachers are starting to take up these struggles as engagements with their students. This might not be happening in the most direct ways or the most theoretical ways. For example, teachers might not always be talking about capitalism or speaking about the homo economicus narratives that structure the “right” way of being (Donald 2019), but they are using the overlooked relational spaces, and their emphasis on building relational knowledge, to start having these conversations.

Scholars who have worked on incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing in schooling have specifically suggested having these kinds of conversations. In their 2020 article, Douglas, Purton, and Bascuñán provide an example of how this kind of "generative" (Ng and Leicht 2019, 317) contradiction, that Ng and Leicht suggest, can happen in K-12 classes as they "explore how students take up difficulty as a possibility" (2019, 314). In this article, Douglas, Purton, and Bascuñán report on practitioner inquiry projects (that were conducted in both high school and early elementary setting) that used literature, poetry, land, guest lectures/visits with Elders, and survivor testimony as part of this program. Alongside this, they note that, critical questioning of settler-hood and identity was used as an "entry point for resisting colonial logics" and that "issues of race, difference, privilege, and power" were put at the forefront in this project (2020, 314). Douglas, Purton, and Bascuñán argue that through engaging in these contradictions, in this setting, students moved from "nuanced disruptions to renegotiation" (2020, 314). For example, Douglas, Purton, and Bascuñán note that students in grade three, that were involved in this project, were able to come to an understanding of themselves as part of "interrelated webs that linked them and their lived experiences to those of other communities, past and present" (2020, 320). They note that "these renegotiated relationships—instead of revolving around the student— centre relationships, interconnections, and relationality" (Douglas, Purton, and Bascuñán 2020, 320). Douglas, Purton, and Bascuñán argue that this program created a space for students to engage in the "difficult knowledge" through experiencing the clash between systems. Through this, students were able to learn through experience, relations, and interactions and were able to "peel off distancing behaviours and place themselves in context with what they are learning" essentially renegotiating their understanding of the self (2020, 320). Douglas, Purton, and Bascuñán's case shows both the potential of having pedagogical methods that match the content and space for "difficulties", or contradictions, to be explored. This is comparable to how the relational spaces provide the opportunity to produce and value these forms of subjective, practical, and relational knowledge that resemble the values embedded in Indigenous forms of knowledge. Such spaces provide the opportunity to explore the contradictions in doing this work. This approach allows for students to develop this personal and relational understanding through considering their relations to the knowledge.

Other scholars have come up with similar ideas noting “sticky points” or “shifting points” (Korteweg and Fiddler 2018, 261) as important moments in instruction when incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing in schooling. Educators and student teams at universities who have conducted research and written about their education graduate programs seem to agree that providing a space for vulnerability (MacDonald and Markides 2018; Poitras Pratt et al. 2017), personal relations (Yeo et al. 2019), and a supportive learning community (Poitras Pratt et al. 2017; Yeo et al. 2019) is important for incorporating Indigenous knowledge into education programs. Kearns, Tompkins, and Borden (2018) specifically note that they found, in a program of graduate educators at Saint Francis Xavier University, that the teachers’ sense of agency in their ability to change their practice increased with the support of a critical and caring learning community that provided them the space to understand and unlearn the legacy of colonialism.

5.4 Relational spaces and possibilities

I too am suggesting that relational spaces, where there is room for contradiction, could have the potential to be spaces where the legacy of colonialism and structures of inequality can be brought in as part of the relations that need to be addressed. Relational spaces are well suited for this work as they are a spaces where contradiction is felt because teachers can see and feel that relational knowledge is abstracted on a wider scale and that the space they are working in are structurally devalued. Further, because they are spaces of relational expertise, they also provide the space to act through and value relations. Because relational expertise is about bringing relations that are normally hidden to the fore, it has the potential to create a space for articulation or enunciation (Bhabha 1994) of these relations, that influence the space and how it is perceived, and the felt contraction that comes with them. Bhabha's (1994) notion of enunciation is helpful in how he emphasizes the importance of the enunciation of difference as central to the ability for coming to possibilities.

> The revision of the history of critical theory rests, I have said, on the notion of cultural difference, not cultural diversity. Cultural diversity is an epistemological object - culture as an object of empirical knowledge - whereas cultural difference is the process of the enunciation of culture as 'knowledgeable', authoritative, adequate to the construction of systems of cultural identification. (Bhabha 1994, 34)

The above quote comes from Bhabha's work in which he outlines his theory of the third space. Relational spaces could be seen as being like third spaces (Bhabha 1994). However, as Donald (2012a) notes the ideas of hybridity that Bhabha, later, brings forward in this theory endorses a sense of "placelessness" which goes against Indigenous notion of locality (540). By overlooking locality, this kind of hybridity (that Bhabha suggests a third space could create) essentially does away with the network of relations which compose the spaces. Donald notes that such "postcolonial theory suggests that hybrid acts are occurring in various places all over the world, but that the specifics of these locales are unimportant" (Donald, 540). This suggests is that these kinds of conceptualizations of hybrid spaces are conceptions which render these spaces as characteristically abstracted (as they are denying relations). This, in essence, goes against principles of relational expertise which place value on making these localities visible. Such theoretical formulations then would run the risk of neglecting a more grounded approach to social power and difference. Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández (2013) note how structures of power and inequality, colonialism, and whiteness structure even meta-enunciations and conversations as they influence what can be produced. Their argument reflects the well-known structure agency issue which shows how all enunciations or possibilities that we could come up with are structured by the same structures of power and inequality that we are reacting against (Lorde 1984; Foley et al. 2000).

Donald suggests a method that is deliberately engaged in these localities, relations, and structures called ethical relationality (2009b, 2012a, 2012b, 2016). This model he notes is, in part, inspired by Ermine's notion of the ethical space (2007).[26]

In his theory of ethical space, Ermine discusses the importance of dialogue and focuses on possibilities (2007) for how to produce this space. His original work (2007) on ethical space specifically looks at space between worldviews and the possibilities in Indigenous law for focusing on using strengths from both "Euro-western" and Indigenous world views. However, in a 2011 interview he speaks about how the conceptualization of this space was specifically inspired by his experience of unethical structures when he was in university. Ermine outlines that the university is embedded in an unethical colonial system (Ermine 2011). In this interview, he describes how it is convenient to hide behind these colonial structures and so it is important to have an ethical space to be able to point to these unethical systems. He notes that these are systems in which we are all embedded as we are all caught in these structures of colonialism. He argues that the ethical space is a space for dialogue where "we take control of our humanity again" (Ermine 2011, 5:54), a process that provides opportunities to conceive of a vision based on our humanness and not a vision from the institutions that "try to run our lives" (Ermine 2011, 6:19). He argues for the importance of making relations of inequality visible in order to come to such new possibilities.

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[26] There are other similar Indigenous theorical frameworks to Ermine's that are often cited such as Two-Eyed Seeing (Bartlett, Marshall, and Marshall 2012; Hatcher et al. 2009; Hogue and Bartlett 2014; McKeon 2012; Meyer and Aikenhead 2021) or braiding (Donald 2012b; Kimmerer 2013). Although the terms Two-Eyed Seeing and braiding are often used differently from article to article (see Dion's 2009 version on braiding and see Wright et al. 2019 for review on some of the usage of Two-Eyed Seeing), these approaches most often refer to working with two different viewpoints (often, but not always, referring to Indigenous and non-Indigenous) and how these perspectives can be brought together to potentially produce something new or come to a greater understanding.

Donald's notion of ethical relationality (2009b, 2012a, 2012b, 2016) specifically talks about this idea and centers the idea of relations. Donald notes that ethical relationality "does not deny difference, but rather seeks to more deeply understand how our different histories and experiences position us in relation to each other" (2009b, 6). He notes:

> This ethic holds that the past occurs simultaneously in the present and influences how we conceptualize the future. It requires that we see ourselves related to, and implicated in, the lives of those who have gone before us and those yet to come. It is an ethical imperative to recognize the significance of the relationships we have with others, how our histories and experiences are layered and position us in relation to each other, and how our futures as people similarly are tied together. It is also an ethical imperative to see that, despite our varied place-based cultures and knowledge systems, we live in the world together with others and must constantly think and act with reference to these relationships. Any knowledge we gain about the world interweaves us more deeply with these relationships and gives us life. (Donald 2009a, 7)

His notion of ethical relationality calls for making these relations visible. Donald notes how implication is key, noting that the ability to consider and act in relation to our relations is centrally important. Donald points to how important an emphasis on Indigenous philosophies would be in this space (2012a, 2012b) as these philosophies have been overlooked and made invisible. This process does not claim to be devoid of power and it also does not claim to be a utopic conception of hybridity (Donald 2009b, 45; 2012a, 540). Rather, it is about active struggle and engagement with this issue of power to try to produce a better understanding of these relations. Donald notes that the ability to see and consider these relations, like the unethical structures Ermine talks about, provides a more ethical ground for possibilities (2009a).

These theories point to how engaging in relational spaces of contradiction could have the potential to create the possibility of stepping towards a more ethical ground to work from, specifically, by not denying relations of power and inequality and always acting in relation to these relations.

One of the teachers I worked with similarly argued the importance of taking a grounded approach by pointing to how pointless it is to feel stuck by these bigger structures. She suggests that noticing structures of inequality that keep things the way they are without trying to change things is just an “easy out”.

Makita: Especially because like the diplomas are such a determiner for universities and stuff. … I think that's the really hard part of it because it's like the universities need high schools to be able to articulate to them and it's like a whole system. ...
Shea: Yeah, we talk about that a lot too where we're like “we'd love to go gradeless but then how does the student apply for university?” So do we have to wait for universities to change for us to be able to change? And then, in that turn, like then junior high would be able to change and if junior high changed so would elementary. Like it's this like drop-down effect. But also is that just an excuse to not do the work?
Makita: Right.
Shea: Like I think that that's an easy out to be like “well we can't because universities need it”. (Follow-up Interview, Zoom, 14 February 2022)

In this conversation, I mention universities as one of the many spaces structured by the logic of homo economicus that students may encounter after their K-12 education, rendering post-secondary education itself as a challenge in doing this work of reconciliation. Shea challenges me and expresses how this kind of defeatist conversation is unproductive and merely allows for the structures to keep maintaining themselves and for teachers not to do the work. This conversation, I believe, is hopeful. It points more generally, I contend, to the will that the teachers I spoke to have in taking a grounded approach that considers locality and bringing relations of power and inequality to the fore in their practice. This shows the teachers desire to actively work from structures of inequality to engaged in and deliberately implicate themselves and their students in these issues. This will to engage, in deliberately relational ways, could start to set the stage for moments of more ethical relations.

MacDonald and Spring's (2021) citation of Paulette Regan's (2010) work also brings a sense of hopefulness by pointing to how such active engagement in grounded approaches (this quote speaks about settler engagement specifically) could impact our understanding of our own humanity.

> What is required for truth-telling and reconciliation, she suggests, is for non-Indigenous peoples to constantly disrupt what we know to be true, to examine collective identity, and to "[connect] head, heart, and spirit in ways that value vulnerability and humility [to] enable us to accept harsh truths and to use our moral imagination in order to reclaim our own humanity. (MacDonald and Spring 2021, 216 citing Regan 2010, 237)

Chapter 6: Conclusions, recommendations, and limitations

6.1 Curriculum and the fear of closing off of relational space

The topic of the 2021 proposed K-6 curriculum in Alberta is one that came up with the first few teachers I spoke with and, eventually, turned into a question that I asked. The teachers I spoke with generally expressed concern about the proposed curriculum. I found that many of the fears that teachers were worried about with the new curriculum, for those who teach higher grades, and issues that younger grade teachers pointed out were often centered around issues of these relational spaces and moments that teachers have created being taken away. For example, many of the high school and middle school teachers spoke about the fear of sanctioned reading lists or the implementation of authorized resources.

Shea: We are super concerned. And we are also very—very nervous that the, like, approved text list won't be, optional. We are worried that they're going to be like "you have to teach a novel from this list that we've created for you."
Makita: Huh, yeah.
Shea: That's our biggest fear right now because then that—Marrow Thieves is gone like, Homes, a book about a refugee who moved from Syria to Edmonton, gone. All the work that we've done to create these like culturally responsive and, as much as possible, like representations of different communities in our school. That will all be gone. And because we are like already talking about how—like creating hypotheticals of like "okay if this is what they tell us to do what—Maybe we'll try this where we like teach a section of the novel that they have said we have to teach but then we boost it with all the stuff that we think is actually important and the stuff that we find to teach". We're having these conversations already. What do we do if we're told like "no you can't teach this novel anymore, no you can't teach this one anymore." (Initial Interview, in person, 16 August 2021)

Although at this time the 7-12 curriculum had not been released, in this conversation, Shea talks with me about her fears that a reading list might become sanctioned which would remove any of the work that they have done in reading texts by Indigenous authors, or other work to break up the white canon. She expresses that this would essentially take away their agency to choose texts that are contextually meaningful to them. Moreover, it would clearly be promoting a specific canon with specific values as we spoke about how narratives of whiteness have historically been promoted through reading lists. However, making it mandatory would limit teachers' agency in working against these narratives. This is something I brought up in my conversation with Carrie as well.

Makita: I was talking to another grade nine English teacher, and she was saying that, like, the draft isn't for grade nine, but what she's really worried about is that a reading list is going to become kind of sanctioned.
Carrie: Mhm.
Makita: And then that will kind of take away her latitude to be able to teach Indigenous literature.
Carrie: Absolutely.
Makita:—that she is doing right now, so.
Carrie: Absolutely and I think that's one of our biggest concerns because even if you have a flawed curriculum, what are the ways you can disrupt it then in the classroom, right. …Like there's so many layers and I think that authorized list is the one I would be the most worried about, actually, because even if a curriculum is flawed you can find ways to, you know, ethically and morally do a good job. But if we have mandated resources and, I mean, historically we have had that happening. You can't—in the 80s it was the Canada kits. And you're supposed to use these authorized resources and all through the implementation phase and so that really did reduce teacher autonomy and so that is deeply concerning because we—it's happened before. (Initial Interview, Zoom, 27 August 2022)

In speaking with Carrie, she shows that authorized lists are also a fear of hers. Further, her knowledge of the curriculum shows how this fear is a historical reality in Alberta. Carrie speaks about how she sees this as an issue in autonomy as she would be less able to disrupt the flaws in the curriculum. She notes that even if the curriculum is flawed there are ways to do a good job but the autonomy to do this would decrease if resources became mandated. Carrie and Marcela also noted that they found that the K-6 draft overlooks the context of teachers and their teaching settings as they noted that the curricular material itself overlooks non-white perspectives.

Carrie: And I'd say Social Studies is the most susceptible to ideology, right. And so, it's actually scary. And I don't know what it would look like for the middle school. They spend so much time like ancient times at, like, a really young age and then it isn't contextual at all. Like it's not age appropriate in any way, or developmentally appropriate, but there isn't that acknowledgement of

your local context at all, right. And so that would be the concern, right. How do people see themselves represented in this? Especially if you're non—like if you come from a non-western perspective, you're completely excluded in this curriculum. Although they say that they've added these things and it's—it's—I mean this—I don't know, I'm pretty biased. I think it's tokenistic in how it's represented. And I think often it just perpetuates stereotypes from what I've—I've looked quite closely at it.
(Initial Interview, Zoom, 27 August 2022)

Marcela: Never mind the fact that it's not—it doesn't take into account what an Albertan learner really looks like. Which is, we have a lot of immigrant population a lot of low socioeconomic status children, a lot of struggles in this way and that, and this is not addressing or leaving room for teachers to address those needs.
(Initial Interview, Zoom, 16 August 2022)

Carrie and Marcela note that the curriculum does not seem to represent what learners really look like and takes an approach that overlooks the context of students, particularly students that are not white. This is an issue of the curriculum not being relationally appropriate to the teachers and students who are taking it up. It is these kinds of issues that Carrie and Shea point to that they fear could be amplified if they no longer are given the space to counter these flaws.

Additionally, some of the teachers were also concerned about their agency being limited by the way that certain sections of the draft curriculum were written. Marcela explained this to me in our conversation about the new curriculum.

Marcela: Um so there's just a lot of really … troubling things in—including it's dictating how I'm supposed to teach.
Makita: Oh.
Marcela: It's curriculum is not supposed to dictate how you teach it's not supposed to tell you-
Makita: And how is it doing that? I'm—I'm not sure.
Marcela: Not everywhere, but there are a number of pieces in it that say things like "do a project on."
Makita: Oh!
Marcela: And curriculum is supposed to be strictly what. Not how, right. And I developed expertise to do the how. You get to tell me the what and then according to time constraints, material constraints, um the children I have in front of me. I get to use my professional capacity to determine the how.
Makita: Right.

Marcela: Um, and so it just shows a great neglect for even realizing what curriculum is.
Makita: Right.
Marcela: When they write things like that.
(Initial Interview, Zoom, 16 August 2022)

Here Marcela takes issue with the choice of certain sections dictating how to teach something. She notes that this overlooks her expertise as an educator and the contextual expertise she has in knowing the constraints and context of her classroom. Telling teachers how to teach removes the space for them to respond through relational expertise and consider who they are, their context, or any relational work they might have done along with the project. Marcela's issue reflects a kind of reduction in space or agency to be able to consider relations pedagogically. Along with this, both Marcela and Ava noted that they have an issue with the density of the curriculum draft that they saw.

Marcela: I don't have it all memorized but I do remember that there were so few pieces included that involved anything Indigenous. And the ones that were there were troubling and trivializing and not very nuanced. … Which we're kind of sad because that's what we had before. And then teachers just kind of like added more. And figured out other places to put it. But if you're loading up the docket, with as much as they have, it leaves me virtually—I mean it leaves me no room to do a lot of the work that I've been doing already.
(Initial Interview, Zoom, 16 August 2022)

Ava: There's a lot of opportunities with like TQS5 and the curriculum that we have. It is very open-ended. And you can do a lot with it. And I do worry that with the new one—that especially in the early grades there's so much to cover. Like the Social Studies. The things that we're expected to cover is so much that I worry that the—that, like, the Indigenous aspects of it might get lost.
(Initial Interview, Zoom, 29 August 2022)

Here Ava and Marcela both talk about how they see this density as limiting their agency and ability to be able to create important spaces for conversations because they are expected to cover so much. This points to the fear of relational learning being lost both in general and specifically, as Ava points out, in terms of the TRC or TQS5.

Collectively, the teachers' comments about the draft curriculum show how important these relational spaces are to teachers because they are so worried about them being taken away. A reoccurring theme in the teachers' comments is the idea of space, or room, to be able to do this relational work. Their comments show that they want to be able to consider Indigenous ways of knowing in thoughtful and relational ways, they want to be able to engage in practices that speak to their settings and relations, and they want to have the room to be able to challenge hegemonic narratives of whiteness. If the space to do this is taken away by authorized reading, excessive and irrelevant curricular material, and pedagogical practices that do not speak to their contexts, they would lose the chance to practice relational expertise to the sanctioned expert model. This could close off the potential for relational spaces to be used both for engaging in Indigenous ways of knowing and for potentially taking part in struggles as engagement.

This erasure, or filling in, of relational moments is something that is tangible as the Ministry of Education in Alberta has made clear that they want to "remove the bias" and get back to "facts". I am referencing the idea of "fact-based learning" that the Ministry of Education in Alberta is promoting along with their pubic address on August 6th, 2020 where they very directly noted that it is "through a very detailed curriculum, that looks to avoid the opportunity for bias to be implemented in it, that we can get away from biases being put out there" (YourAlberta 2020, 22:00). What is interesting with this, more broadly, is how bias is only named and made visible when it is going against capitalist structures of inequality. By supporting "unbiased" education the Ministry of Education is bringing in the bias of capitalist structures—which support homo economicus—which sees unbiased, scalable, abstractable and standardizable forms of knowing and being as the most valuable and right forms of knowing and being. The issue with the conception of an unbiased education—or a sanctioned expert form of education—that the Ministry of Education is promoting is that it is only a conception. Similar to Eurocentric scientific knowledge production, when it comes to "unbiased" education, there is a knower that has a subjective relationship to the knowledge that is produced. However, this relation is just denied. Similar to the commodity, "unbiased" education or sanctioned expertise is based on relations. It is just that these relations are made to be invisible.

One of the features of the commodity form is that it has relations. These relations, however, are ugly relations of exploitation and inequality, so people want to hide them. Is this the same with capitalist structures of schools? What would happen if these relations were seen? By claiming this very biased system is unbiased it hides these ugly—or unethical (Ermine 2011)—relations. Adding these relations back in makes the structures of inequality, which schooling is built upon, visible. Is this why bias is ignored and positioned as not "real" knowledge? As Ermine said, in his interview about ethical relationality, it is convenient to hide behind these systems (Ermine 2011). If the bias were visible, people would be able to see this "ugly", or the systems of power, that keep people in power that are embedded within curriculum and school structures. There is a denial that sanctioned expertise, the curriculum, and the school structure is biased. This is a denial of relationality. If teachers are able to have spaces for naming and actively struggling with these structures, it would make these structures of power and inequality visible. Relational expertise, the process of valuing and making relations visible and part of the process of knowledge production, could be seen as a threat to these structures of power, along with the people who "benefit" within them, that cling to this abstracted homo economicus model of being. Alternatively, it could be embraced as a step towards the possibilities of engaging in more ethical relations which implicates teachers and students in relations of responsibility and reciprocity.

6.2 Recommendations

My research has been driven by theories and ideas from anthropology, and my conclusions and ideas that I have shared throughout this thesis are based on what I learned from an anthropological perspective. I am aware that educators may be interested in how what I learned can help them approach the TRC and TQS5 in their practice. My central recommendation is to make space for building relations. It seems that the teachers I worked with all had built some relation to traditional Indigenous foundational knowledge that was relevant to their teaching setting, and they were able to draw on this. Many of the teachers also described personally developing relations with Indigenous district teachers or Indigenous communities who have supported them. Further, they also spoke about building relational spaces in their practice where relations of the resources they draw on, their own relations, and the relations of their students, and contexts can be brought forward and valued instead of overlooked. Creating and valuing spaces where this kind of relational learning can happen then would be key to engaging in knowledge through relations rather than through sanctioned expertise. The forms of relationality that I saw teachers practice were not based on Indigenous ways of knowing in many cases, but even so, they support the importance of relations to those ways of knowing.

Additionally, given the recommendations from scholars who work on Indigenous education in schooling (Donald 2009a, 2009b, 2012a, 2012b; Douglas, Purton, and Bascuñán 2020; Korteweg and Fiddler 2018; Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández 2013), I would recommend embracing, articulating, and engaging in the struggles and contradictions that come up while responding. These scholars, and the conversations I had with teachers in my research, suggests that struggles or contradictions will happen, but these moments could be productive and generative.

If my audience for this thesis were the Ministry of Education in Alberta, I would recommend changes to the new K-6 curriculum, and curricula to come that would provide more space to build and engage in relations. These could be outcomes, but they would have to be flexible to allow for space for what is contextually, and personally important for schools, students, and teachers to be put at the fore. What might be more effective is ensuring that teachers are not overwhelmed with content that is not contextually meaningful.

Along with this, I would recommend keeping the TQS5 as it provides teachers with something to point to, which enables them to engage in Indigenous ways of knowing, and many of the teachers who I spoke to value this. However, I would recommend possibly implementing something additional which calls for specific school districts and schools to work with teachers to create responses that are relationally meaningful to them, their students, and their context. This is something Shea and I spoke about when we were talking about the benefits and contradictions of the TQS5. In terms of contradictions, we spoke about how, although the TQS5 brings issues of Indigenous education to the attention of all teachers, it overlooks the importance of what is relationally meaningful. Shea suggests this more localized approach as a possibility to overcome this.

Makita: But also I don't know if they could word it any other way because, like for things to be meaningful, they kind of need to be locally meaningful and personally meaningful. So to have something that like to have a box to check that is locally and personally meaningful to each person—I think it would be impossible.
Shea: Yes.
Makita: Yeah, I don't really know how they could make it better but I—I'm sure it could be made better, but I just don't know how.
Shea: Yes, and that could even just come down like, you say, for it to be locally meaningful—could come down to like school districts saying "hey this is what we want this—like this is how we want this to feel or look like in our buildings." And then administrators take that and bring it to their building. Like "okay but now how does this apply to our specific group of kids" because it's different from every school what the kids are like as well and what needs they have, yeah. So, you're right there's no way that they could be like you need to do x, y, and z.
(Initial Interview, Zoom, 16 August 2022)

Additionally, I think adding a component to the TQS5 which asks teachers to reflect on and locate themselves and their practice in relation to settler colonialism might be impactful. Such an outcome might be considered abstract as it does not necessarily produce a measurable outcome that ensures teachers are doing this. However, I argue that this character of non-quantifiable outcome is true for many of the outcomes in the TQS. Further, producing something quantifiable would not be the point of such an outcome. I am emphasising the importance of this as it is based on what I learned in my research about the significance of relations that are not scale-able, quantifiable, and measured. Rather, having an outcome that asks teachers to reflect on and locate themselves and their practice in relation to settler colonialism would be an intentional step towards bringing these ideas into the professional awareness of all teachers. My thought is that asking teachers to understand and consider settler colonialism might help teachers (particularly those who have not considered this) to see how they are implicated in these past, present, and future structures—of settler colonialism—potentially evoking a sense of responsibility and care for these relations in which they are entangled.

6.3 Limitations

It is worth mentioning that this research is limited as it is not representative of all teachers in southern Alberta, and it rather reflects the specific perspectives of teachers who are generally engaged and involved in Indigenous ways of knowing projects. Talking to teachers who are not as involved or interested in implementing the TQS5 or responding to the TRC Calls would have, I am sure, provided different results and different conversations. This would have been particularly interesting in the collaborative sessions where teachers, with very different engagement levels, would have been talking to each other. In these sessions, they would have had to consider and talk through points of difference and different perspectives in ways that having teachers who were all engaged and interested did not address. Even so, one of my findings supports the importance of relations and the teachers who were involved were those building and engaging in such relations. How to invite other teachers into those relations and the obstacles to that are questions needing further research.

This research is also limited as I did not observe teachers responding to the TRC and TQS5 in practice in their classes. This was due to issues in access due to the Covid pandemic. If I were to re-do this research, I think an interesting format would be something like how Kennedy (2004) carried out their research on teachers taking up a reform initiative. Kennedy's (2004) method involved the recording of a lesson and listening back to this lesson alongside the teacher so they can point out what they are trying to do. Although I would additionally want to be engaged in participant observation during the portion where Kennedy recorded and observed the classroom, I think this method of looking at a recording of their lesson would allow for them to point out portions that they see as particularly important. I also did not pay particular attention to whether specific responses were directly in response to the TQS5 or TRC and such a reflective method, where teachers can reflect on a lesson after it happened, could allow for teachers to really explain what they were responding to in any given moment in more specific and direct ways. Such responses would be better explored through this method.

Finally, I believe that my concerns about my own relations to the field was another limitation. In my research, I decided to not talk to any teachers who knew my teacher parents or myself. Such an approach now seems very counterproductive after doing this research. Throughout this thesis, I have argued for making relations visible and valuing these relations rather than denying relations to render knowledge more objective, scalable, and legible. Denying my familial relations to the field is just one way I made relations invisible to make my work more legible in terms of hegemonic Euro-scientific norms. For example, anonymizing participants removed their relations, coding teachers’ responses into themes removes relations, and even creating suggestions and limitations is about removing relations to create something that is legible and scalable, detached from the data which produced it. These are just a few of the many examples of the many contradictions I encountered while conducting this research, which were evidence for my argument about the erasure of relations through the extension of the logic of homo economicus.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW AND COLLABORATIVE SESSION OUTLINES/PROTOCOLS

This appendix provides a description of each research stage that involved the teachers and teacher educators along with a general outline for each stage. These outlines were my personal guides during each stage. When the sessions or interviews were over Zoom, I had an outline open on my screen for me to reference throughout. When the interviews were in person, I wrote out an outline in the notebook I brought along to have available for me to reference. I tailored these general guides, for each interview or collaborative session, to suit the educator(s) with which I was speaking. Although I had these questions, I wanted to follow ideas that came up to value and explore the ideas that the teachers brought forward. With this, the order of questions and the contents of the interviews shifted as I was trying to be attentive to these ideas as they came up. I used my protocols more as a guide than a standardized set of ordered questions that had to be asked in order. This was an intentional effort to make the interviews and collaborative sessions more conversational and open-ended.

Faculty of Education instructor conversations protocol/outline/questions:

Talk about your research

- Talk about the consent form and ask about recording.
- Talk about your research plan and ask what she thinks about it.
    - Ask if there are recommended ways to talk to teachers about this (things I wouldn't know as an outsider)
    - Ask what she thinks of the collaborative session setup

Questions

- What changes have you noticed in teacher education since the publication of the TRC and the implementation of the TQS5?
- Ask for thoughts on the TRC and TQS5.
- Tell me about this resource (if they have a resource)
    - is there a specific part of it that you have used that you think was particularly interesting when you used it? Useful? Not useful?
- How do you find resources?
- How do you recommend that others find resources?

- What are the challenges and possibilities that come with passing this information along to students?
- How do you find that students generally respond to these initiatives (like TQS5)?
    - What do students usually want to know in regard to responding to the TRC and TQS5?
    - What do you find inhibits the teacher candidates?
- Are there differences between settler and Indigenous student responses?
- What would you recommend to others trying to respond to the TRC and TQS5?
- Are there spaces in faculties of education or professional development spaces, that you know of, that encourage settler and Indigenous teacher candidates or teachers to work collaboratively on these topics?

K-12 teacher initial interview protocol/outline/questions:

- Ask them about themselves (what do they teach)
    - (note that you won't be disclosing any personal information in your write-up).
- Talk about ethics and ask about recording.
- Explain the research project. Ex. "this research is about seeing how teachers are changing their modes of instruction to respond to the TRC and TQS5"

- Tell me about your resource. OR is there a particular resource that you tend to use in your classroom that you use to reflect the calls of the TRC or respond to the TQS5? (depending on if they brought a resource or not)
    - Why did you choose it? How did find it?
    - What didn't you like?

- Do you typically focus on a subject when you are responding to the TRC and TQS5?
- How do you think doing this work in this grade level is different than in other grade levels?
- What are the challenges and what are the possibilities in responding to the TRC and TQS5?
- How does the curriculum constrict or provide possibilities for you?
    - Thoughts on curricular changes?
- How are you adapting your modes of instruction and assignments around the TRC and TQS5?
- What would you like to do next in your classroom in terms of this work?

- What drives you to do this work?
    - What do you think of the TRC and TQS5?
        - How do you engage?
        - Do you engage as a school?

- What would you like to have in terms of professional development?

- How do you become aware of what other teachers are doing in their classrooms on this topic?
    - How do you share information with other teachers?
    - What was your education on this topic like as a teacher candidate?

- Talk about design sessions and ask if they want to attend.

Collaborative session protocol/outline:

Pull up all Jamboards and materials before they get there

Land acknowledgment

Ethics

- Talk about confidentiality, recording, and rights as participants.

Introductions

- Have everyone introduce themselves.

Activity 1

- Bring up lesson plans (one at a time)
- Note that you're interested in their thoughts on the lesson plans and invite them to annotate the document.
- See if this is similar or different to how they are responding to the TRC and TQS5.

Activity 2

- "We are planning an activity for a school assembly that is intended to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action and/or TQS5"

Wrapping up

- Ask if there are questions or other thoughts on the activities or research in general.
- Talk about sharing information and if they would be interested or what makes sense.

Follow-up interview protocol/outline/questions:

Ethics and ask about recording

Ask if there is anything they want to talk about that they've been thinking of since we last met, or if they want to talk about the themes and ideas that you've been working with from the interviews so far.

Ideas to talk about:

- Talk about relationships as a central theme and ask if they think this is right and what else they see as important here.

- Talk about the conversation with the high school and elementary teacher from the second collaborative session about subjects and bell times and ask what they think about this.
- Ask if they too think this is relevant for work with Indigenous ways of knowing.
- Ask about what else fractures or contradicts the work they are doing with the TRC and TQS5.
- Ask about what structures support and complement Indigenous ways of knowing or ways they want to teach in response to it

Questions:

- Ask teachers about the phrase that came up: “not wanting work to feel surface level”
- Why do teachers start doing this work and others table it? What made you take this up?
- Do you think certain subjects or grade levels are seen as more valuable?
- Follow up on conversation about care labour and if work is feminized.

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW AND COLLABORATIVE SESSION INFORMATION

K-12 teacher initial interview information

Teacher	Location of interview	Date	Interview recoding length
Ashley	In person (outside of a coffee shop)	Aug 12, 2021	0:50:52
Shea	In person (at the university library)	Aug 16, 2021	1:01:02
Carrie	Over Zoom (Makita from her room and Carrie from her classroom)	Aug 27, 2021	1:06:07
Ava	Over Zoom (Makita from her room and Ava from a room in her house)	Aug 29, 2021	38:11:00
Marcela	Over Zoom (Makita from her room and Marcela from a room in her house)	Aug 16, 2021	1:07:32
Taylor	Over Zoom (Makita from her room and Taylor form a room in her house)	Sept 09, 2021	1:01:50
Jenny	Over Zoom (Makita from her room and Jenny from a room in her house)	Oct 28 and 29 2021	41:37 and 1:08:58
Megan	In person (at their shared office)	Dec 10, 2021	1:14:56
Erin	In person (at their shared office)	Dec 10, 2021	1:14:56

Faculty of Education instructor conversations information

Instructor	Location of conversation	Date	Conversation recording length
Dr. Corrigan	Zoom (Makita from her room and Dr. Corrigan from her office at the university)	Aug 05, 2021	1:04:54
Dr. Lewis	In person (at a public library)	Sept 13, 2021	1:20:04

Collaborative session information

Session #	Teachers involved	Location of session	Date	Session recording length
Session 1	Carrie Marcela	Zoom (Makita from her room and Carrie and Marcela both from rooms in their houses)	Nov 25, 2021	1:43:00
Session 2	Ava Jenny Shea	Zoom (Makita from her room and Ave, Jenny, and Shea all from rooms in their houses)	Nov 28, 2021	1:17:50

Follow-up interview information

Instructor	Medium of conversation	Date	Interview recording length
Marcela	Phone (Makita from her room and Marcela in the car on the drove home from work)	Feb 03 2022	41m 18s
Ava	Zoom (Makita from her room and Ava in a room in her house)	Feb 09 2022	38m 01s
Shea	Zoom (Makita from her room and Shea from her desk at school)	Feb 14 2022	39m 25s
Jenny	Zoom Makita from her room and Jenny from her desk at her shared office)	Feb 17 2022	1hr 17m 16s