LEARNINGS FROM LAND:
A BRAIDED ECOPORTRAIT OF MEANING-FULL LEARNING OUTDOORS

SYLVIE DE GRANDPRÉ
Master of Education, University of Lethbridge, 2010

A thesis submitted
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

EDUCATION

Faculty of Education
University of Lethbridge
LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA, CANADA

© Sylvie de Grandpré, 2023

LEARNINGS FROM LAND:
A BRAIDED ECOPORTRAIT OF MEANING-FULL LEARNING OUTDOORS

SYLVIE DE GRANDPRE

Date of Defence: March 2, 2023

Dr. Blythe Shepard Thesis Supervisor	Professor Emerita	Ph.D.
Dr. Leah Fowler Thesis Examination Committee Member	Professor Emerita	Ph.D.
Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre Jr. Thesis Examination Committee Member	Elected Chief, Community of ʔaq'am Ktunaxa Nation	
Dr. Dawn Burleigh Thesis Examination Committee Member	Associate Professor	Ph.D.
Dr. Sharon Pelech Internal External Examiner	Associate Professor	Ph.D.
Dr. Wanda Hurren External Examiner	Professor	Ph.D.
Dr. David Slomp Chair, Thesis Examination Committee	Associate Dean, School of Graduate Studies	Ph.D.

DEDICATION

Pour Michel de Grandpré

Abstract

In British Columbia (BC), educators are increasingly interested in learning outdoors, learning in place. However, place is a colonized space. Educators, then, must reassess their relationships and habits regarding place, Indigenous knowledges, stories, and histories, and confront their own deeply ingrained colonial-*isms*. Constructed on Styres' (2017) assertion that anyone can develop a reflexive relationship with Land, this doctoral thesis asks: In what ways does Land inform educators' own learning, relationships, and professional practice, while working and living on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa? Listening and learning with relationships –human and more-than-humans– encompassed in Land is achieved through the methodology of ecoportraiture. Braided ecoportraits highlight experiences from a middle school Outdoor Program (OP), the 2020 pandemic, and connections in the forest. They offer differentiated perspectives relating to practice, identity, and place, which inform teaching but, as Styres (2017) stresses, shift the way "we think about and *do* education" (p. 195).

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge with respect

the homelands of the Ktunaxa Peoples where

this doctoral work was co-created,

and that this work represents learning with, and from,

ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa.

I continue to learn and I am grateful to be doing this in such a meaningful place.

*

kławła. You have been appearing in my dreams ever since I moved to ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, never threatening but making your presence known. In June 2021, you appeared once more but this time we locked eyes. I was taught that you knew and understood what this work was. I have felt greatly accountable to you, and I have also felt supported. I have deep respect for you.

yamakpaɬ. You welcomed me in your home and, with keen senses and an open heart, I continue to meet the beautiful kins with whom you share the forest. Your calls have often guided me back to the work. On the hardest days you manifested, lifting my spirit, brightening my thoughts, and duly teaching me to be resilient and to carry on. One early September morning, I watched you being still in the sun. Sometimes, the best thoughts come from being still. I continue to be in awe of you.

To all relationships who walked along with me throughout this journey, many for the duration and some for a meaningful portion, I express gratitude. Thank you for investing all this time and providing kind listening, support, insights, and guidance.

Dr. Blythe Shepard, committee supervisor, thank you so much for your dedicated support throughout these six years. I value your wealth of knowledge, the countless chats, meetings, and visits, the laughs, and our relationship. Dr. Leah Fowler, committee member, thank you for your guidance from the start of this adventure, and for your continuous mentoring wisdom as we have moved forward. You are une sage que j'admire et respecte énormément. Dr. Dawn Burleigh, committee member, thank you for your kind support, for bringing critical reflections to the process, and your magnificent ability to put everything into perspective. I have always appreciated when we connect. Nasuʔkin (Chief) Joe Pierre Jr., committee member, thank you for accepting to join the committee and for always teaching me. Hu sukiⱡq̓ ukni Niȼtahałʔana. I continue to value this fabulous relationship my friend. To Dr. Wanda Hurren, external defense committee member, and Dr. Sharon Pelech, internal external examiner, thank you for coming together and investing time towards the finale. This sentiment extends to Dr. David Slomp, defense chair. In addition, a note from you written at the back of our very first assignment as PhD students encouraged me to persevere. Thank you.

Thank you to Dr. Robin Bright who said: "You are a teacher, put the teacher in your thesis!" To Dr. Chris Mattatal, thank you for being there at the right time, every time. To Dr. Mark Fettes, mi lernis esperanton nur por danki vin. Thank you for introducing me to your original methodology, and for expressing your confidence in my ability to speak knowledgeably about ecoportraiture. To Dr. Keith Regular, your continuous support and critical eye have certainly kept me on my toes. I have appreciated

the enormous amount of time you have dedicated to support me. Merci mille fois! Finally, to Dr. Doug Checkley, Dr. Kevin Wood, Len, and Lorne, huge hugs.

To my maman, the artist, for her lifelong curiosity and loving support. Merci! I know dad would be rather impressed. To my partner Dave, thank you for your unwavering support through the mountains and valleys of this work, and the life changes it has brought about. Your care and patience are legendary. Will, Cheyenne, Maddie, and Jesse, a heartfelt thank you for the support and for being so encouraging. You are all fabulous with this planet and very respectful of ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. À Katy et Luc, merciiiiiii, and to Barb, thank you.

To Elder Joan O'Neil, it has been a pleasure to meet you, listen to you, and laugh with you. To Faye, Bonnie, and Joe, I learn so much when we meet. I feel privileged to be able to count you among my meaningful relationships.

Finally, thank you to Valley School District for the trust and the support all along this journey. To all the colleagues at Bear Mountain Middle School, thank you for including me in your environment for this lengthy adventure. Your thoughts, comments, and ability to share openly and readily have contributed greatly to this project. Jody and Rhett, this would not have happened without you. Keep forging ahead, you are role models.

To the forest(s) who welcomed me with open branches, I am in awe of you. I continue to learn immensely with every visit. I read every heart you put on my path as a poetic expression. As an educator I hope to teach others to learn from you and to thank you, meaningfully.

Table of Contents

Abstract....iv
Acknowledgements....v
Table of Contents....viii
List of Tables....xiv
List of Figures....xv
Chapter 1: Beings Outdoors....1
Being in this Research....5
Truth and Decolonization....5
Being on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa....8
Being in Pandemic Times....10
The Outdoor Experience....11
Towards Learning From Land....12
Language Choices....14
The FPPL in the BC Curriculum....15
Becoming Purposeful....17
Chapter 2: A Journey In The Circle....20
A Kin-Kin Relationship....22
Circularness....24
Circularity....26
Circles....28
Into a Circular Journey....29
Journeying....31
Connecting to the BC Curriculum....32
A Growing Awareness....34
A Ninth Standard....37
Barriers to Truths....38
Deficit Thinking....41
Decolonization....44
Relationships Within Land....47
Anchored in Colonialism....48
A Purposeful Goal of Decolonization....50
Resource Extraction....53
Erasing Mechanisms....54
Decolonizing Purposefully....56
Decolonizing one's Practice....56
Land in the Curriculum....57
PBE and the FPPL....58
The Concept of Place....59
Curriculum Language....60
Colonialism as Past Event....61
Settlered Imagination....62

Reciprocity 64
Chapter 3: Ecoportraiture 68
Imagination and Reciprocity 69
Honouring That Which is Received 70
Linking to the FPPL 72
Intersecting With Ecoportraiture 73
Listening 74
Shifting Perspectives Slightly 75
Shifting Acknowledgement 76
Shifting Perspective on Participants 76
Ecoportraiture 78
An Ecoportrait 79
From Portraiture to Ecoportraiture 80
Ecoportraiture Rationale 82
The Positioning of Land 83
My Committment 84
Research Questions 85
Environments 86
ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa 87
Bear Mountain Middle School 87
The OP Environment 88
OP Locations 89
The Pandemic Effect 89
This City 91
Relationships and Conversations 92
ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa Relationship 92
More-than-Human Relationships 93
Valley School District Relationships 95
Meeting Bonnie 98
Conversations and Experiences 100
A Different Kind of Listening 102
Gathering Conversations and Experiences 104
Anticipatory Schema and Interviews 105
Gathering Information Throughout the Research 109
Table 6 116
Making Sense of the Information 117
Braiding Information 118
Braiding Head and Heart 119
Becoming a Bricoleuse 120
Braiding Pattern 121
Several Ecoportraits, One Ecoportrait 122
Being Immersed in the Experience 123
Interconnecting Ecoportraits 123

Chapter 4: Purpose In Practice 125
Coeur et Esprit Ouvert 126
Openness 126
Avoiding Hastiness 128
Empathy 128
Purpose in practice 129
Conscious Comfortable 130
Understanding one’s own Pedagogical Choices 131
Structure within Purpose 132
Protocols 133
Reciprocity Within the Braids 135
Chapter 4 Braided Ecoportraits 137
Braid 1: Welcoming Relationships 139
Strand 1: Circles 139
Braid 1: Welcoming Relationships 143
Strand 2: Kiʔsuʔk kyukyit Circle (Good afternoon, I’m happy to see you) 143
Braid 1: Welcoming Relationships 144
Strand 3: tak̓a¢ (squirrel) and one Circle 144
Discussion: Braid 1 Welcoming Relationships 145
Circles 145
Kiʔsuʔk kyukyit Circle (Good afternoon, I’m happy to see you) 147
Purpose in Circles 149
Braid 2: (Re)Learning to Learn 149
Strand 1: Senses 149
Braid 2: (Re)Learning to Learn 151
Strand 2: Ktunaxa Calendar 151
Braid 2: (Re)Learning to Learn 152
Strand 3: Modelling 152
Discussion: Braid 2 (Re)Learning to Learn 155
Senses 155
Ktunaxa Calendar 156
Modelling 156
Braid 3: Preparedness 159
Strand 1: In Someone’s Home 159
Braid 3: Preparedness 161
Strand 2: Share 161
Braid 3: Preparedness 162
Strand 3: A Ready Mindset 162
Discussion: Braid 3 Preparedness 164
In Someone’s Home 164
Share 167
A Ready Mindset 168
Concluding Words 169

Chapter 5: A Sense of Identity 172
Assigning Identities 173
Unlearning.. 174
Assigned Identities.. 175
Self-Identity 177
A Shift in Identities: The Pandemic 178
Many Selves.. 179
A Concert of Kinships.. 181
More-than-humans Identities 182
Chapter 5 Braided Ecoportraits.. 183
Braid 4: Advocacy.. 185
Strand 1: Your …ness 185
Braid 4: Advocacy.. 187
Strand 2: k̓ustit̓ (Larch) 187
Braid 4: Advocacy.. 190
Strand 3: Zoom 190
Discussion: Braid 4 Advocacy 192
Your…ness.. 192
k̓ustit̓'s (Larch).. 194
Zoom.. 196
Braid 5: Meeting Beings 198
Strand 1: Acquaintance with kyanǂakǂiquǂaqpik (heartleaf arnica) 198
Braid 5: Meeting Beings 201
Strand 2: Smellscaping 201
Braid 5: Meeting Beings 202
Strand 3: Taking 202
Discussion: Braid 5 Meeting Beings.. 204
Acquaintance with kyanǂakǂiquǂaqpik (heartleaf arnica) 204
Smellscaping 207
Taking 208
Braid 6: (Re)Centering Identity 209
Strand 1: Place Knowing 209
Braid 6: (Re)Centering Identity 210
Strand 2: Cattails.. 210
Braid 6: (Re)Centering Identity 212
Strand 3: Conflicting Identities.. 212
Discussion: Braid 6 (Re)Centering Identity.. 213
Place Knowing 213
Cattails 215
Conflicting Identities 216
Concluding Words.. 217
Chapter 6: A Sense of Place 219
Place Naming 220

Land Acknowledgements....221
Learnings Within Place Names....222
A Sense of Place....223
Place as a Commodity....223
Depth and …ness....224
Connecting to Place....226
Place as Relationships....226
Place and Imagination....227
Scaffolding Learning....228
General to Particular to General....229
Photography as Antagonistic....229
Seeking the Gestalt....229
Gaining a Sense of Place....230
Chapter 6 Braided Ecoportraits....232
Braid 7: Transforming Approaches....234
Strand 1: Things in Nature....234
Braid 7: Transforming Approaches....235
Strand 2: Above the Tree Line....235
Braid 7: Transforming Approaches....236
Strand 3: Being in Place....236
Discussion: Braid 7 Transforming Approaches....239
Things in Nature....239
Above the Tree Line....240
Being in Place....242
Braid 8: Creating Connections....245
Strand 1: Creating Connections....245
Braid 8: Creating Connections....247
Strand 2: Bear Feet, Bare Feet, Bear Feat....247
Braid 8: Creating Connections....251
Strand 3: Signs....251
Braid 8: Creating Connections....252
Extra Strand: Stories....252
Discussion: Braid 8 Creating Connections....254
Creating Connections....254
Bear Feet, Bare Feet, Bear Feat....256
Signs....259
Stories....260
Braid 9: Taking Time....261
Strand 1: Facets of Time....261
Braid 9: Taking Time....264
Strand 2: (Re)visiting Place....264
Braid 9: Taking Time....267
Strand 3: Thanking....267

Discussion: Braid 9 Taking Time....269
Facets of Time....269
(Re)visiting Place....271
Thanking....272
Concluding Words....274
Chapter 7: Perspectives And Paths....278
Unquestioned Answers....279
Entering in Relationship....279
A Path Forward for Outdoor Learning....280
The Challenge of Future Research....280
Engaging the Reflexive Selves....281
Engaging Policies....282
Engaging Professional Development....283
A Path Forward With the FPPL....284
Commitments to Learning....285
A Path Forward for Ecoportraiture....288
Revisiting Anthropomorphism....289
Embracing Indigenous Perspectives....290
Decolonizing Speak....291
Bending Time....293
Beauty in Limitations....295
Final Perspective....296
References....298
Appendix A: First Peoples Principles of Learning....315
Appendix B: Use of Terms....316
Appendix C: Ktunaxa Language Guide....321
Appendix D: Ktunaxa Creation Story....323
Appendix E: Guiding Questions....324

List of Tables

Table 1: Learning locations for the OP 90
Table 2: Relationships Within the Project 97
Table 3: Timeline of the Project 101
Table 4: Anticipatory Schema and Particular Focuses 107
Table 5: Types of Interviews and When They Occurred 111
Table 6: Information Gathering Through the Project 116
Table 7: Structure for Braided Ecoportraits 124
Table 8: Chapter 4 Braided Ecoportraits 138
Table 9: Chapter 5 Braided Ecoportraits 184
Table 10: Chapter 6 Braided Ecoportraits 233

List of Figures

Figure 1: Circularity 27
Figure 2: A Circular Journey 30
Figure 3: A Visual Representation of the Literature Review 67
Figure 4: The Interconnectedness Within the Project. 96

"…anyone can and should live in reflexive relationship to land (lower-case l)…"
(Styres, 2017, p. 55)

Chapter 1: Beings Outdoors

The mountain who shaped my upbringing has been patiently waiting for me to come to my senses. My learning, travelling a meandering path, continues to broaden. The mountain, a longtime second home, already knows how "learning involves patience and time" (First Nations Education Steering Committee [FNESC], 2015). Confronting my own settler colonial thought patterns and behaviours is an ongoing process.

Wigwômadenizibo, the Abenaki name, meaning "à la petite montagne en forme de maison," "to the small mountain shaped like a house," reveals only a sliver of the mountain's story (Paré, 1985, p. 62). The Algonquin name, Wigwomadensis, denotes an overlapping, or change, in land ownership between the Abenaki, the Algonquin, and eventually the Iroquois (McGill University Gault Nature Reserve, 2017). Like most other places in Québec, Wigwômadenizibo has a Westernized name, Mont St-Hilaire, and a Westernized history. Already thousands of years old when we first met, I was six.

Wigwômadenizibo gives the impression of a dormant volcano, but it isn't. The mountain was bequeathed to McGill University in 1957 by Brigadier Andrew H. Gault (McGill University Gault Nature Reserve, 2017) with strict instructions. The west half shall be designated for public hikes and enjoyment, and the east half and lake left mostly untouched, except for occasional research projects. The lake, a short but steep climb from the parking lot, is a picnic site and the trail head to the five public summits which offer a view of Montréal on a clear day.

Throughout my youth, I have made the most of what Wigwômadenizibo has offered while slowly growing into understanding the magnitude of the privilege.

By the mid-seventies, Wigwômadenizibo was already a protected area owned by McGill University. The mountain was a backdrop to activities that either pertained to natural sciences or to my being a kid. I learned about the space and, over time, the fauna and the flora from naturalists who worked there. Each season brought its own highlights, and our family picnicked by the lake regularly. My mom packed picnics perfectly.

As children we would often conquer the boulder with the Gault commemorative plaque that still welcomes visitors to the lake. We climbed every large rock on our path, played with dead branches, and scoured the base of trees and the sandy shore for flat rocks to skip. Sometimes, bouquets of flowers and green leaves would embellish the picnic table. Finding acorns was a priority. Cuteness factor aside, a cap could easily become a piercing whistle. Acorns would thus accumulate alongside sticks, rocks, and flowers. We seldom returned home without a small trove of these treasures, which would soon be forgotten, then discarded. On one adventure, we met a new friend equipped with

gear we had never seen. For all the taking we did, our mom fiercely frowned upon catching and releasing squirrels with a trap, even for entertainment.

The mid-eighties saw a rapid increase in changes towards conservation and education. Our family life became closely intertwined with the happenings of the newly opened *Centre de la Nature*. Countless hikes, excursions, and workshops taught me how to be more attuned to ecology, to become a bird watcher, and to make snowshoes from sinew. A true teenager, I often hiked with a walkman. The sentiment of being physically in place with more-than-humans (trees, plants, animals, soil, and rocks) was eclipsed by the urge to keep "tethered to [my] [then] device" (Turkle, 2011, p. 14). Catching any animal was prohibited although feeding peanuts to squirrels and chipmunks was still acceptable.

I worked at the *Centre de la Nature* on weekends. I could point to the exact spot on the map where avid birdwatchers could catch a glimpse of Wigwômadenizibo's elusive pileated woodpecker. Part of my job was to prepare the didactic materials naturalists needed for group lessons. I learned about the value of learning in-situ and that taking or borrowing samples from nature for educational purposes was justified. So, as the ecology person for week-long day camps, I too became a purposeful, justified, taker. Wigwômadenizibo, still a backdrop for my growing and learning, also became a source of supplemental educational materials. Wigwômadenizibo offered a wide variety of specimens: live, preserved, stuffed, and duly catalogued.

One warm morning during my last summer of work, my dad dropped me off in the parking lot at seven in the morning. I hiked to the lake and sat on a large rock. I

listened to the water, the early morning chatter of birds, and the occasional rustle of leaves. Alone with Wigwômadenizibo, I *felt* what 'scenic' meant.

After moving away from home, visits with Wigwômadenizibo have continued to generate as much anticipation and delight as visiting friends and relatives (Chambers, 2006). Wigwômadenizibo's status as a Biosphere Reserve, recognized by the United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1978, has been foregrounded at the *Centre de la Nature.* Educational programs and public signage advocate for being in nature, observation, and conservation. With such guidance the habit of picking up rocks, twigs, and especially flowers, has all but disappeared.

In the mid-nineties, it is only with very special permission that my brother and I were able to walk onto the forest floor to pick trilliums for our dad's funeral. The spring flowers wilted within a short time that day. This lesson stayed with me. My teaching expectations with students shifted to an ongoing reminder of the need to be mindful and gentler with nature.

My own two young children have met Wigwômadenizibo many times. Little, they climbed the large grandfather rock at the beginning of the green trail, hands and feet carefully avoiding the moss and lichens who were already sharing the space. Tiny fingers used to carefully jostled leaves on the side of a trail to create hiding spots for small insects. Acorns became essential to a squirrel's pantry. Even though we had not seen frogs by the pond near the summit, they would describe them and explain why it was imperative to step away from the swampy mud. The 'scenic' aspect of the place lay in the particularities of the forest and their imagination.

Being in this Research

I am a learner at the beginning of this journey. I am Québécoise, French speaking, and a white settler. I cherish my heritage, yet I am cognizant that my own thought patterns, infused with colonialism, must continue to be challenged and transformed. Gehl (2011) stresses the responsibility for allies to be "fully grounded in their own ancestral history and culture. Effective allies must sit in this knowledge with pride; otherwise, the "wannabe syndrome" could merely undermine the Indigenous people's efforts" (para. 3).

Through this introduction, alluding to my whiteness reflects a specifically Western European colonial background and education (Belczewski, 2009), of which I shared a glimpse of in the first few pages. bell hooks (1990, as cited in Bishop, 2015) argues that this practice is lacking in depth and cautions that self-identifying as white does not absolve from rigorous oppressor self-reflection or clarify who the person is exactly and what purposes inhabits them. Allyship, being strongly contested, should make way for an accomplice mindset (Indigenous Action, 2014). Being an accomplice should reflect the propensity to confront and unsettle colonialism within one's own space (Indigenous Action, 2014). I intend for this work to contribute to confronting and unsettling colonialism within education, and encourage reflexivity.

Truth and Decolonization

Revisiting my upbringing with Wigwômadenizibo, unearthed deeply ingrained and dormant assumptions relating to an innate Westernized positioning, which influenced how I approach teaching. The relationship is predominantly one-sided, lacking reciprocity, and Indigenous knowledge mostly absent. More-than-humans are "things,"

often in the background of human life, and generally referred to as greenery rustling in the wind, or part of a scenic place (Datura, 2022; Fettes et al., 2022). These assumptions towards the more-than-human world resemble Donald's (2009) truths, "idealized versions of history" that have become "hegemonic expressions of existing value structures and worldviews of dominant groups in a society" (p. 3). Nestled in the relationship with more-than-humans are truths and values which continue to be communicated through the education system (Blenkinsop & Fettes, 2020; Donald, 2009). They've become, to borrow S. Wilson's (2008) expression, "our unquestioned answers" (p. 6).

Caring and well-meaning, nature-loving Western-European educators continue to perpetuate colonialism, often unwittingly. Unquestioned answers, those deeply ingrained beliefs which make up our perceived "normal behaviour patterns," permeate knowledge and behaviours. Louie (2021) asserts the existence of these behaviours and attitudes regardless of how far one views themselves along the decolonizing process: "Yes, even you!"

As being and learning outdoors increasingly becomes practice, it is imperative for educators to identify, acknowledge, and transform personal and professional habits and behaviours that maintain colonialism in place. Learning outdoors means entering into a relationship with the more-than-human world whether one notices or not. This relationship becomes more purposeful as educators increasingly embed Indigenous knowledge within their practice. By undertaking the latter, they open themselves further towards an emergent relationship with Land, and towards more refined reciprocity.

This research seeks to highlight learning that emerges from paying attention to the relationship with Land by asking: In what ways does Land inform educators' own learning, relationships, and professional practice, while working and living on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa? Learning from Land can offer lessons relating to knowledge acquisition however this relationship also yields values tied to ways of doing. These lessons have the potential to disrupt "normal" by pointing to unquestioned answers.

Nasuʔkin (Chief) Joe Pierre Jr., who belongs to a family of hereditary chiefs and is the elected Chief of the Ktunaxa community of Aq'am, stresses the inherent responsibilities for educators who work on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa (homelands of the Ktunaxa): "I think that where we've arrived in our country is an understanding that there needs to be truth and reconciliation. […] And not just the reconciliation part, that truth part…". One of two Aboriginal Education Coordinators for Valley School District, he is adamant that "if we are truly embracing, supporting, and promoting lifelong learning, then it's got to be done by the self too." Addressing truth involves recognizing the past and resisting present dominant society's systemic structures (L. T. Smith, 2012; Tuck & Yang, 2012), as well as values, expressed through words and actions, that reside within ourselves (Blenkinsop & Fettes, 2020). The investment of the self towards "our unquestioned answers" demands a significant, conscious, and ongoing commitment. This means accepting that lessons will manifest in a variety of forms, take many differing paths, and be uncomfortable.

Being on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa

ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, where I moved to work mostly as a French Immersion teacher for the past thirty years, has played a significant role in teaching me, and continues to nurture an emergent maturing. In early years, I sometimes drove past the dilapidated residential school without knowing of the deep hurt that occurred there. I interacted with parents who were Indigenous without really understanding who they were. My understanding of Indigeneity has paralleled my classroom learning, reflecting a slow, highly Westernized, process. Learning and teaching were initially *about* Indigenous Peoples through content set within the social studies curriculum.

The creation of Valley School District's first Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement (AEEA) in 2005 introduced working alongside Aboriginal Education Support Worker (AESW) who facilitated the inclusion of local Indigenous knowledge into lessons and guided how to best support Indigenous students. This collaborative work increased significantly during my last five years in the classroom, at the middle school level. The Aboriginal Education (AbEd) department continuously worked with Humanities teachers to share and design lessons highlighting Indigenous knowledge. Indigenous students transitioned from elementary school into the English stream of the school. My newest teaching assignment coincided with the implementation of British Columbia's (BC) latest curriculum. Teaching in the English stream prompted reflexion and required a heightened awareness of Indigenous ways of learning and a deeper understanding of Indigenous worldviews. This learning enhanced my growth as a teacher and my own personal outlook.

Ktunaxa Elder Joan O'Neil works as an Elder in residence in Valley School District. She regularly asks students: "Have you ever talked to an Indigenous person?" The first Indigenous person with whom I had a conversation about Indigeneity was an acquaintance before he became a colleague, and long before he was elected Chief. When Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre started working for the school district as the Aboriginal Education Coordinator, learning grew exponentially for myself, and many non-Indigenous educators. His sharing of the Ktunaxa Creation story brought context and meaning to places I know from a Westernized perspective. I often think of the Creation story when driving by these specific landmarks!

There has been much to be enjoyed in terms of outdoor activities and experiencing nature where Valley School District is located. ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa is home to some more-than-human beings I only read about while growing up with Wigwômadenizibo. Over the years I have strived to model care for the environment with my students and my own children. Care has often grown into empathy for more-than-humans, but the anthropocentricity of the relationship has remained squarely as a backdrop. To reprise Elder Joan O'Neil's question, understanding that talking implies listening, have I also ever listened closely to more-than-humans?

During this project, yamakpaɬ (pileated woodpecker) caught my attention and invited me back into the forest as a listener. I met yamakpaɬ early on in my life in the Kootenays, they always reminded me of home.

Being in Pandemic Times

Looking at ways Land, ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, informs educators involved collaboration with two middle school educators who designed and implemented an outdoor program in Valley School District.

The project initially sought to document the OP educators' reflexive journey as they were mindful of, and experienced, relationships while on land, with Land, and learned from Land, over the 2019-2020 school year. However, the Covid-19 global pandemic unravelled in the middle of the research project first causing angst, then yielding surprising and serendipitous shifts. Developing a reflexive relationship with land, in Styres' words (2017), extended beyond the OP educators, to students (and their families) via Zoom, and to myself as a researcher and educator living on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. The focus eventually shifted completely towards the more-than-human world and connections with Land. My own relationship with a nearby forest was transformed.

The pandemic encouraged many to reconsider the outdoors altogether. What the pandemic did not change is our being on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre suggested often to go hug trees as they were virus-free. This brought to mind Kimmerer (2013), who says that if you love the land in seeds it will reciprocate in beans. On ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, during a worldwide pandemic, I went into the forest daily and offered heartfelt hugs. The forest responded with hearts and deeply touched mine. Teasing out the experiences included in the braided ecoportraits presented in chapters 4, 5, and 6, has lead to thinking about outdoor education differently.

The Outdoor Experience

BC schools are increasingly favouring students learning outdoors, focusing on experiential learning, and seeking to include Indigenous knowledge. The BC curriculum is promoting teaching practices, such as place-based/conscious education (PBE), that emphasize contacts and connections with the local environment, outside the classroom and school (BC MoE, 2015c). Place is defined by the BC MoE as "any environment, locality, or context with which people interact to learn, create memory, reflect on history, connect with culture, and establish identity" and recognizes that "the connection between people and place is foundational to First Peoples perspectives of the world" (BC MoE, 2016, p. 8). Place is not limited to outside, however outdoors constitutes a favoured option.

John Dewey (1915) understood the vital need for broad experiential learning and advocated for its inclusion in schooling. He argued for the potential benefits of paying attention to aspects neglected by school; social interactions, daily and current life experiences, and applicability to real life (Dewey, 1915). Here, he responds to concerns that students' learning may suffer :

> …it is possible to lay hold upon the rudimentary instincts of human nature, and, by supplying a proper medium, so to control their expression as not only to facilitate and enrich the growth of the individual child, but also to supply the same results, and far more, of technical information and discipline that have been the ideals of education in the past. (p. 53-54)

Although “proper medium” is not elaborated on, being outdoors seems an appropriate fit within the current context and offers a wide variety of experiential possibilities for educators.

Dewey’s philosophy, Jayanandhan (2009) argues, “is richly intertwined with the dimensions of place and the concerns of place-based education” however there is a need for depth that goes further than the notion of place (pp. 105–108). Much can be gained by considering the depth of the First Peoples Principles of Learning (FPPL; Appendix A) which represent ways of being, learning, and knowing. Though they are “paralleled by some other non-Indigenous education theory” (Chrona, 2016a, para.12), the FPPL surpass those theories and Dewey’s vision by thousands of years and transcend an academically constructed concept of place.

As outdoor teaching initiatives continue to flourish across BC, becoming purposeful in one’s teaching practice can contribute positively to the “…and far more…” mentioned in Dewey’s quote above. Paying close attention to the FPPL holds this potential as they state the need for learning to be both experiential, and supporting the well-being of the self (FNESC, 2015).

Towards Learning From Land

The concept of localized knowledge, central to the FPPL, forms the basis for the BC curriculum. In her work focused on the FPPL, Chrona (2016c) notes how “context is paramount” to the FPPL (para. 4). Place-based education is positioned as a pedagogy complementary to the FPPL, as the connecting conduit. Yet, an underlying distinction exists in that PBE is focused on the local *place,* whereas the localized knowledge that is

central to the FPPL is grounded in land, and *Land*. Moving towards a better understanding of the FPPL and their context can enable the shift from PBE to learning from land.

In *Aboriginal Worldviews and Perspectives in the Classroom: Moving Forward* (BC Ministry of Education [MoE], 2015a), PBE is suggested as an approach that supports "students [getting] interested in and engaged with the natural world immediately available" (p. 24). However, ?Aq'am and Tsaxis round table participants note how we must question relationships, influence, and decisions, with and on the land, by explaining that "for many people, this seems philosophical, but it is very pragmatic, it's your every day, it's practical" (BC MoE, 2015c, p. 24). This distinction highlights the importance of understanding *Land.* Land education is anchored in the ability to be reflexive (Styres, 2017), and deepening one's understanding of the meaning of reciprocity. In order to embed the FPPL more meaningfully, being outdoors demands a more profound understanding of the environment, in this instance, ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa.

Styres (2017) explains that "[Land] as an Indigenous philosophy of education has significance for all teachers and students […] it is not just an *Indigenous thing"* (p. 25). The caution is to resist the inclination to sweep over the FPPL with Eurocentric pedagogies deemed compatible as it is currently done. This, in itself, perpetuates colonialism.

Land is not conceived uniquely as a set of relationships towards *nature*. To make such an assumption also reflects a predominantly white Eurocentric perception of

Indigeneity (Friedel, 2011). Awakening the senses (Louv, 2008) can happen in an urban setting as well as in nature. Styres and Zinga (2013) clarify that the environment is not a limited space; "First Nation communities are woven into a complex web of historical and contemporary relationships with urban and rural landscapes" (p. 301). The braided ecoportraits encompass relationality held in learnings experienced as much while in nature as within the school.

Literature involving the FPPL is scarce, but there is an abundance of FPPL evoked within Ktunaxa values and oral stories. Land experienced through a Ktunaxa lens holds a meaning particular to Ktunaxa Peoples, present in the isolate language spoken, stories, places, and the relationships to peoples. The land is "a natural context" to tell stories –about the land, and on the land– and holds much meaning when told by its peoples (Archibald, 2008). While always on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, being *in place* is not always possible, or prioritized, within an educational context. Ktunaxa Knowledge Holder Bonnie Harvey's alternative is to "bring them [students] on a journey with me by imagining where we are or I want us to go…." Imagination proves an essential and powerful means to convey learning (Egan, 2005), and plays an intricate role in learning from Land.

Language Choices

Inspired by Styres and Zinga (2013), I have chosen to use the word Land throughout this thesis from this point on, to acknowledge the difference between Land as a relationship and land as place (p. 301). Styres and Zinga (2013), distinguishing *Land* and land, emphasize the relational depth contained within the meaning of land:

> We have chosen to capitalize Land when we are referring to it as a proper name indicating a primary relationship rather than when used in a more general sense. For us, land (the more general term) refers to landscapes as a fixed geographical and physical space that includes earth, rocks, and waterways: whereas, "Land" (the proper name) extends beyond a material fixed space. (p. 301)

Meanings held within a language can, at times, be challenging to convey when translated into English. Attending to subtleties, such as capital letters and lower case spelling, using Ktunaxa words and spelling, or French expressions, signals an intention to more precisely reflect identity and ideas. More-than-humans' Ktunaxa names –which do not include articles– emphasize "beinghood," and French words and expressions allow me, the author, to attend to the profoundness of what is shared with more specificity. A list clarifying the use of terms throughout this work is included in Appendix B, along with pronunciation for Ktunaxa words in Appendix C. French is clarified within text.

The FPPL in the BC Curriculum

Battiste (2013) values educators who recognize the benefits of decolonizing education for everyone, not just Indigenous peoples. The FPPL offer such an opportunity. Through embedding the principles in the curriculum, the BC MoE's acknowledges the benefit for all students (Chrona, 2016a).

The FPPL were created in 2006-2007 by the BC MoE and the FNESC as part of the development of BC's English First Peoples 12 curriculum (Chrona, 2016a). The nine Principles reflect Indigenous "experiences, values, beliefs and lived realities […] specific

to First peoples" (Chrona, 2016a, para.2). Over the span of the past decade, the FPPL have transcended the initial curriculum in which they were included. Taken from the course, a poster stating the nine Principles was designed and started appearing in schools and classrooms in BC. As they have become more widely known and promoted by districts and schools' AbEd departments, a growing number of educators across grades and subjects have become mindful of them. The FPPL were made more prominent when the BC MoE's (2015c) embedded them throughout the curriculum as of September 2016. They may be less known than the poster on which they are stated. Therein lies the work ahead: moving the poster's words into teaching practice.

The FPPL are part of larger value systems however they are more often taken as objectives or learning intentions to be stated at the beginning of class. Chrona (2016c) acknowledges the tendency to want objective-like statements that could easily be inserted into lessons. The principles, general in scope and representation, should be cross-checked against local Indigenous communities' knowledge, traditions, and beliefs, as nations will have their own more specific set of guidelines (Chrona, 2016a; FNESC, 2015). Though they are mentioned in main areas of the curriculum, direct support with embedding the FPPL can be sought from AbEd departments.

The design of the curriculum, for all its changes, represents a caveat to embedding the FPPL effectively. The openness of the structure makes it possible circumvent the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and ways of learning altogether, too often allowing an "after the fact" justification. Embedding the FPPL is a professional and personal responsibility that entails shifting the lens through which teaching is

approached. Transforming practice demands deep introspection to address unquestioned answers: (a) by reckoning with one's own perceptions towards Indigenous culture, (b) by extending one's understandings of the FPPL and Indigenous epistemologies, and (c) by understanding the continuous effects of colonialism (de Grandpré, 2017).

Becoming Purposeful

The chapter opens with a quote drawing attention to the relationship to land, for land is indissociable from Indigenous knowledge. There is much to learn from the relationship with land and Styres (2017) advocates for such a consideration: "…anyone can and should live in reflexive relationship to land (lower-case l)" (p. 55). The key, in a relationship where land/Land informs practice, is learning *to be* reflexive.

Probst (2015) describes reflexivity "as a process of self-examination (exploring one's assumptions, emotional reactions, cultural positioning) through specific actions (keeping a journal, debriefing with others, and so on)" (p. 38). By stressing "can and should," Styres (2017, p. 55) signals how being reflexive is necessary as well as intentional, thus indicating a need to be purposeful. The act of being reflexive demands bringing ourselves into conscious and deliberate interactions with research, in this context the relationship to land, and, more specifically, that we bring *our selves* (Castell et al., 2018; Chilisa, 2012; Cohen et al., 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). By stating that **anyone** can be reflexive, Styres (2017) goes beyond academia and calls for a willful decision from the encompassing selves (personal, professional, social, etc.), from everyone, echoing Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre's belief that learning ought to be done by self too.

A critical approach to reflexivity foregrounds "legitimacy, power, values in society, and domination and oppression" (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 295); and, within postcolonial indigenous research, calls on researchers to "reflect on self as knower, redeemer, colonizer, and transformative healer" (Chilisa, 2012, p. 174). Critical reflexivity recognizes, and aspires to challenge, not only assumptions and myths but the unquestioned selves. Self-work can be uncomfortable. Styres (2017) draws attention to the challenge of being reflexive in relation to land, as capital L Land deepens the reflexive process (p. 55). A relationship with land/Land is complex and layered and goes far beyond establishing a connection with place.

Styres's (2017) quote suggests a starting point for reflexivity, but simultaneously draws attention to the specificity of *l*and. *Lower-case l* land may evoke a concrete construct relating more to that which is connected with landscapes and in some sense "external to us" (p. 48). However, lower-case *l* land is the place where relationships start before all else: "for Indigenous people land comes first" (Styres, 2017, p. 48). A reflexive relationship with land may initially position place as physical/material, but it calls for considering the deeper implications of being on land, interacting with land, and how land contributes to the self (Styres, 2017). Such relationship involves being attentive to more-than-humans (plants, animals, rocks, water, soil, etc.) who embody the web of relationships and connections that exist. Engaging in this way distinguishes land from place while insisting on an investment of the self towards the more-than-human world.

Listening and interacting with the more-than-human world as means for learning transcends the status quo of noticing disconnected (from humans) beings around, to

favour developing an acute comprehension of mutual interconnectedness. This task represents a compounded challenge as industrialized educational systems have disrupted relationships with land, and lead to the loss of "intentional relationality" with more-than-humans (Fettes et al., 2022, p. 1). Being reflexive towards land and more-than-humans becomes twofold: a) to recapture intentionality, thus reinforcing the need to be purposeful, and b) to become attuned to the more-than-human "as kin, interlocutor, teacher and guide" (Fettes et al., 2022, p. 2). Considering more-than-humans in this manner entails shifting perspectives such that a more-than-human world influences and guides humans, and within this project: methodology, teaching, and being (Fettes et al., 2022). This shift repositions the self as perpetual learner within a much broader and intricate web of relationships: being *one of*, rather than consciously or unconsciously emanating dominant colonial positioning. The idea of where, or when, to start being in a reflexive relationship to land appears within the wisdom, comments, experiences, and encounters shared during this research project, but it is seldom definitive.

"…anyone can and should live in reflexive relationship to land (lower-case l); they often do so without even understanding or acknowledging the fundamental being and philosophical nature of Land (capital L) or the intimate sacredness of the relationships Indigenous peoples have not only to their places but also to Land."

(*Styres, 2017, p.55)*

Chapter 2: A Journey In The Circle

Clusters of pinecone bird feeders often elicit a smile, low on the branches of trees, betraying the unmistakable passage of primary students. The learning experience is deemed environmentally and educationally sound, and, as most classes would confirm, helpful for the birds. Though borne out of well-meaning pedagogical intentions, this activity remains linear, unidirectional, and "feel good" work lacking in depth.

Learning is a reflective process (FNESC, 2015) demanding educators go beyond an all too common tree-pinecone-teacher-student-feeder-birds-happy environment sequence. Reflection, as Chrona (2016b) notes, is key to learning and contributes to making sense of new information by connecting to previous knowledge; it is a recurring

process. The type of sequencing above tends to replicate similar thinking and learning patterns over time. Embedding Indigenous knowledge into teaching brings alternate perspectives along with the possibility of transforming how educators and students reflect daily.

In the opening quote, Styres (2017) emphasizes the need to attend to much deeper knowledges, more revealing of a reflexive relationship to land. Indigenous knowledge is relational and this knowledge, observes Chung (2019), transcends books and reading. Learning should be a lived relational experience, the same way relationships are a lived experience. The FPPL emphasize this focus on connectedness, reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place, embedded in relational and experiential learning (FENSC, 2015). A relationship with land is organic, storied, ever shifting, and "engages with spiritual and natural worlds on a consistent daily basis" (Styres, 2017, p. 51). Thus, being in relationships *is* learning (S. Wilson, 2008) [Italics mine]. The key becomes to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the interconnectedness of relationships.

This chapter introduces the breadth and significance of relationships with Land (capital L). I turn to pinecone to help visualize and imagine the intricacies of a reflexive relationship with more-than-humans. Lessons from pinecone aim to contrast colonial habits with an alternate way of viewing human connections with more-than-humans, and Land. They emphasize my interpretation of the methodology of ecoportraiture as a lived methodology. A circular journey highlighting personal growth towards Indigenous knowledge and relationship with Land follows this illustration of the nature of relationships with more-than-humans.

A reflexive relationship to Land exposes differences between **a** context which seeks to positively foster this relationship, and **the** context(s), contradictory and colonial, in which the relationship is currently solidly anchored. The chapter also presents an overview of these dichotomous contexts and the movement towards learning how to listen to Land, to the more-than-human world; moving from **the** pervasive current context that exist towards **a** context of truth and recognition, awareness and growth.

Reflexivity demands in-depth work towards understanding connections as relational and, along with ongoing reflection, yields new understandings (Chrona, 2016b; Styres, 2017). The process is purposeful and ongoing, and can also be thought of as experiential. Chung (2019) hints at how consequent actions are embedded in Indigenous knowledge which "is so not about thinking," as he notes "thinking will not get you home" (p. 21). Reflexivity reaches beyond the thought process, and demands an action "direct[ing] attention back to the self and foster[ing] a circular relationship between subject and object" (Probst, 2015, p. 37). From new understandings, an organic response can, and likely should, ensue upon which reflexivity then continues to scaffold. Those responses will vary in forms and ultimately lead towards one's propensity to knowingly enter into purposeful reciprocal relationships.

A Kin-Kin Relationship

Learning from Land disrupts common interpretations of a circular reflexive movement. The belief that a subject enters in relationship with an object is problematic. Circular relationships occur between subject and subject or, to be more precise, kin and kin, or family (Chambers, 2006; Kimmerer, 2013). When pinecone enters in relationship

with a class, other relationships are inevitably involved. tak̓a¢ (squirrel), whose presence is ignored in the above sequence, is central in this relationship. In tak̓a¢ is a relationship among beings within a complex web of relations and stories in which educator and students belong as well. Taking pinecone for a bird feeder takes pinecone out of tak̓a¢'s web of connectedness. These new relationships are of value but tend to be dismissed in favour of habitual experiences (Jardine, 2006). The business of school often takes over at the expense of extending reflections past the immediacy of completing a pinecone bird feeder.

This lost habit of factoring in relationality is anchored in the way we justify rational thought. The disconnect between Westerners and the natural world is rooted in Cartesian logic of objectification, and objectification itself (Abram, 1996/2017; Evernden, 1993). Two concepts are at work, severance and saturation, both stemming from the idea of objectification (Jardine, 2006). Severance refers to the isolation of lived instances "not as something to which we belong and have a kinship or relation, but as something standing over against us," as an object (Jardine, 2006, p. 303). We position ourselves outside the lived experience as all-knowing subjects, abstracting our own connections to it. Saturation ensues as a result of repeating the severing process, and as a means to provide significance through recurrences (Jardine, 2006). Although this process pertains to many research methodologies, such as hermeneutics, it has infiltrated the manner in which we conduct our every day life.

Thomas (2007) laments that "a certain kind of rationality […] legitimates a certain kind of knowledge" while being restrictive towards to other less conventional

knowledges and ideas (p. 78). Jardine (2006) distinguishes having experiences (counting them) versus being *had* by experiences (undergoing them). Educators who see similar experiences year to year are ever in danger of becoming “more and more impervious to being interrupted” (Jardine, 2006, p. 313). Picking a pinecone in the woods becomes a motion which, no matter how well-intended, feeds into a linear sequence. It omits the acknowledgment, and significance, of the action itself, and its connection to other relationships such as tak̓a¢, ʔiɨti·t̓ (lodgepole pine), and the self. This is how being reflexive remains incomplete; it encounters a repetitive linear sequence rather than circular relationships.

Circularness

Severance causes an instance to become an object that “now no longer draws us into a world” (Jardine, 2006, p. 303). Instances can be any happening where the receiver is detached from the event and its context. A walk through the woods is only a passage through when the web of connections has faded from consciousness. Jardine (2006) posits that objectification nulls relationships by creating distancing from an object that should be “drawing me into *its* orbit” (p. 303). Relationality is more complex than the connections experienced with more-than-humans on a regular basis. Relationally involves circularness.

Indigenous knowledge *emanates from* an experience rather than being *contained in* within it. In *Look to the Mountain: An Ecology of Indigenous Education*, Cajete (1994) describes concentric circles as “a visual symbol of relationships” to show “how all processes radiate concentric rings, which in turn affect other rings of other processes” (p.

119). Through the metaphor of tracking, a highly refined skill of hunter/gatherer Peoples, Cajete (1994) explains that “everything leaves a track, and in the track is the story: the state of being of each thing in its interaction with everything else” (pp. 55–56). The connectedness of these relationships is like a fruit tree whose character is understood only in relation “to the others of its species, to the insects that fertilize it and to the animals that consume its fruits and so disperse its seeds” (Abram, 1996/2017, p. 85). Applying the same consideration to any one animal in relationship with the tree yields a further web of its own, yet also connected to the tree’s web. Taking a pinecone, then, tugs at a web of relationships.

Concentric circles further represent knowledge that resides in lived experience with all beings in nature and landscapes, knowledge left by ancestors, and connections with spirits; an ongoing process of living and learning (Cajete, 1994). As concentric circles emanate from one being they intersect with those of all surrounding beings contributing to a simultaneous “drawing into” of all other worlds and orbits. Envisioning the pattern of these continuously intersecting rings reveals the complexity of a web of relationships. Though Cajete's (1994) tracking metaphor is multilayered and intricate, “the literal sense involves observing the rings that are coming into you and quieting the rings that are going out from you” (p. 118). A reflexive relationship to Land asks for recognizing our being within the interconnecting web and to humbly assume the position of receiver.

Concentric circles yield a “manuscript of existence in a place and through time” (Cajete, 1994, p. 56). Tracks may initially be perceived through observable physical

experiences, using all senses, but are also felt through social dimensions and art; stories, dance, songs, and the invisible such as metaphysical dimensions; psychological, spiritual (Abram, 1996/2017; Cajete, 1994). The image of concentric circles emanating may reflect the concrete closeness of experiences with nature towards the more abstract aspects also held within knowledge. Each experience with nature, as is knowledge and as is learning, is holistic (Cajete, 1994; FNESC, 2015).

Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre offers yet another perspective on knowledge held within concentric circles, by sharing thoughts expressed by his grandpa. When teaching educators and students, he notes that while being with ʔa·q̓ank̓ɫaʔin (among trees), or other more-than-humans, people may interpret their thinking as random thoughts but his grandpa would say ʔa·q̓ank̓ɫaʔin may actually be the ones passing on ideas.

Circularity

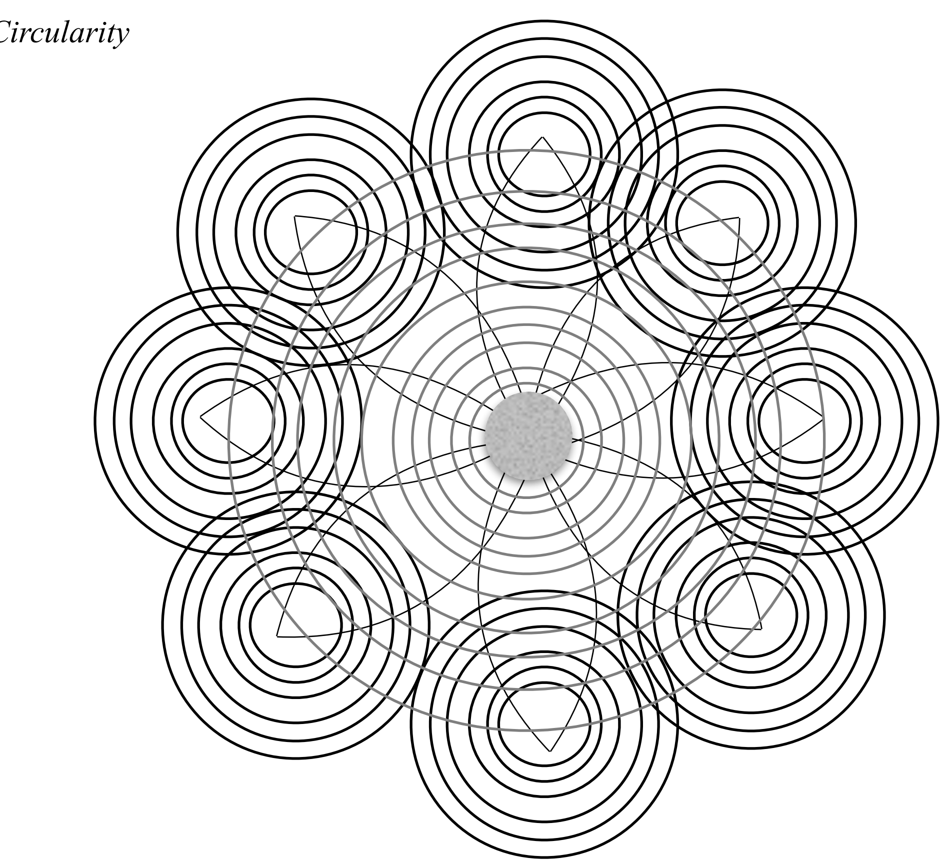
Knowledge emanates from all beings and is gained through a circular process. A reflexive relationship to Land involves an awareness of this movement of learning towards the self.

Intersecting concentric circles and the back and forth movement within reflexivity can demonstrate the complexity of relationality. Concentric circles and this circular movement represent the wholeness of interconnectedness and interrelatedness (Cajete, 1994; Styres, 2017). They are expressed through, and form, the profoundly foundational concept of circularity. Figure 1 shows a formulation of the positioning and movements within circularity. Shared by many Indigenous peoples “circularity allows for dynamic synergic movement that is culturally responsive and emergent” (Styres, 2017, p. 30).

Synergy felt through circularity echoes the scaffolding held within reflexivity. Circularity, however, encompasses relationality (S. Wilson, 2008) and “the journeying within the circle in both spiritual and natural worlds” (Styres, 2017, p. 31). Abram (1996/2017) observes how the world is explicitly circular “whenever we climb to a prominent vantage point” (p. 189) reinforcing the idea that we are inside the circle. Climbing atop a pinecone can yield a different perspective towards learning!

Figure 1

Circularity



Note: Quieting your own circles (in grey), paying attention to circles emanating towards you from the more-than-human world (around), and reflexive actions (ellipses).

For many (Indigenous) societies the circle is the foundation upon which values and beliefs are grounded (S. Wilson, 2008). The shape of a circle stands in sharp contrast to western societal hierarchal models and instead fosters inclusivity, equality, and relational values as the preferred social paradigm (S. Wilson, 2008). Circularity is achieved through ongoing revolution around the circle, each new movement scaffolding on previous learning. Styres (2017) acknowledges that circularity may seem repetitive but it is this continuous revisiting which "adds dimension to the concepts as they are examined, explored, and connected across contexts" (p. 31). As one journeys around the circle they will "begin to see or understand something that was previously hidden" (p. 31). Movement within circularity isn't unidirectional but rather an in and around motion (Styres, 2017) similar to a reflexive "*way of looking* that gazes outward at what is taking place while sustaining an inward gaze" (Probst, 2015, p. 46). Circularity invites, and features, reflexivity within its process.

Circles

Circles and circularity are often used to show ways of proceeding with educational or social programs, or to form theoretical paradigms. S. Wilson (2008) warns of the dogmatic trappings of keeping to a set structure, which can arise when using medicine wheel, hinting that there are several ways to use circles. A circular framework is "culturally and epistemically responsive and emergent according to shared themes and place-specific epistemologies" (Styres, 2017, p. 31). While the elements in the circle may be more general, they are enriched by local knowledge, stories, and traditions. Using a circle and circularity as a framework enables featuring this local aspect, and reiterates

connectedness and how elements within the circle affect and influence each other (Styres, 2017; S. Wilson, 2008). Though not visually presented in a circular format, circularity evidently forms the core of the FPPL. Local knowledge refines the meaning of each principle while it is understood that the principles work as a whole continuously impacting one another (Chrona, 2016b; de Grandpré, 2017; FNESC, 2015).

Circles and circularity are evident in all aspects of Ktunaxa life; from the structure of the recent Nation's Social Framework to meanings embedded in stories, drumming circles, teepee constructions, and the symbolism within the newly designed Nation's logo. Quite significant, fire pit circles are undeniable proof that the Ktunaxa Peoples have been here all along (Faye O'Neil, Aboriginal Education Coordinator, personal communication, June, 2021; Nasukin Joe Pierre, personal communication, Feb., 2021). In Valley School District, schools feature outdoor circles of rocks –often the only intentional and permanent circular gathering place at the school– a modern day representation of ancient fire pit circles; boulders/grandfathers from the mountains in the area blessed into a new role through a thanking ceremony (Nasukin Joe Pierre, personal communication, Feb, 2021). As much as possible, indoor space is reorganized into circle seating when guests, Elders or Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre, visit classes.

Into a Circular Journey

Being on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, I chose to use a circle to highlight the reflexive process in relationship to land (lower-case l) and the continuous journeying towards Land (capital L). The intention has been to design a circular journey pertaining to this research project, that does not impose itself on Ktunaxa ways or seek to reorganize the FPPL; yet

includes input from Ktunaxa Knowledge Holders and co-researchers, and reiterates circularity within the FPPL. Figure 2 represents this circular journey.

k̓isɨuɨaɨ's (spruce) cross-section offers a visual reminder of the concentric rings emanating from all beings with whom we are in relationship. k̓isɨuɨaɨ's growth rings *are* Indigenous knowledge, it is "alive, it has agency, it moves" (Wilson & Hughes, 2019, p. 9). Paradoxically, those rings are clearly distinguishable because of a chainsaw cut; conspicuously reiterating how deep-seated colonial truths remain a current backdrop in education.

Figure 2

A Circular Journey

The splits on k̓isǂuǂaǂ’s cross-section bring to mind a familiar medicine wheel structure which I chose to keep, as this design is present in Ktunaxa ways of doing. Organizing elements into the circle has meant recognizing their interrelatedness, how they blend and flow into each other in a cyclical manner (S. Wilson, 2008). Styres’ (2017) circular framework inspired this circular journey circle and though headings are similar, concepts reflect my conversations with Faye O’Neil, reflexivity, and foundational structures from the BC curriculum and Core Competencies.

Journeying

The journey around the circle features the reflexive “thought to action” process, described in chapter one and earlier in this chapter, which includes acknowledging ourselves, reflecting, and becoming purposeful within the process. In Iszatt-White et al. (2017), the reflexive journey is characterized by this same need for educators to commit to reflexivity while recognizing “movement from institutionalised ‘power over’ to personal ‘power to’” leading to “unpacking their own relationship with power” (p. 594). In other words, evolving from an awareness of truths and unquestioned answers reflected in the way educators talk and act to purposefulness of words spoken and actions taken.

A “talk to action” journey simultaneously reflects perceptions with regards to embedding the FPPL within teaching. Faye O’Neil comments on the process of working with the FPPL by observing the need to be purposeful and ultimately aiming for actions that become second-nature: “We are not purposeful with the FPPL, right now we are at the conscious level, we should come to a level where its subconscious and you’re just doing it.” Faye stresses the importance of *being* the FPPL, and *rooting* the FPPL:

> We are aware of the FPPL, we need to move to taking action as a next level. It is our job, we need to move forward in the circle. There is always something missing, something from which will we grow. The circle is never ending.

She identifies a progression moving from gaining an awareness of meanings relating to the FPPL, to becoming purposeful in incorporating them into our lives, to striving to reach a subconscious level where we embody the FPPL, and they are rooted in everything we do. Presently, at the conscious level, Faye sees a need to acknowledge the undeniable connection to nature and the understanding that everything in nature is a being. In order to embrace and embed the FPPL and the connection to nature, she suggests seeking advice by getting people in. Hannah, the school's ABED worker, tactfully explains that this means seeking authentic Ktunaxa knowledge shared by Ktunaxa Knowledge Holders, Elders, and community members involved in education. Despite potential challenges at the school level due to varying perspectives among community members regarding information/knowledge to be shared, there is an imperative to ensure that permissions are verified, and that sources are duly acknowledged. For all educators, the relationship with, and guidance from, AbEd constitutes an ongoing must throughout the journeying.

Connecting to the BC Curriculum

The BC curriculum model is constructed to include "three elements, the Content (Know), Curricular Competencies (Do), and Big Ideas (Understand) all work[ing] together to support deeper learning" (BC MoE, 2015c, para. 13). These learning processes connect with Styres' (2017) original framework; vision-relationships-

knowledge-action. Including elements from the curriculum into the circle is twofold; 1) to bring into consideration how learning involves the teaching self and that a curricular learning journey is not limited to students, and 2) to blend educators' perceived purpose and reflexivity into this continuous circular journey which includes thought, talk, and awareness, but also progresses through the circle.

The BC Core Competencies growth sequence resembles k̓isǂuǂaǂ's growth rings, projecting outwards towards yet new skills, abilities, and knowledge; as well as new relationships with the self and others. The Core Competencies, organized in a set of six expanding profiles, are short metacognitive statements around "intellectual, personal, and social and emotional proficiencies that all students need in order to engage in deep, lifelong learning" (BC MoE, 2019, para. 1). k̓isǂuǂaǂ's growth rings evoke the growth within the Core Competencies which "manifest themselves uniquely in each area of learning […], [and] are often interconnected and are foundational to all learning" (BC MoE, 2019, para. 2).

k̓isǂuǂaǂ's growth rings can be viewed as time, each school year of a learning journey with the FPPL; a journey through which depth gained through new experiences and new knowledge contributes to new meanings, new learning, and new growing rings. Each encompassing ring can also be interpreted as a metaphorical "holding environment," a space where one takes time, adjusts to changes that occur with their own identity, with the self, as a result of the reflexive process (Iszatt-White et al., 2017, p. 594). This space/time environment, always including all four quadrants, serves as a

reminder that movement within the circle is fluid but particular to each individual; fluidity being expressed as in Cajete's term "coming to know" (Cajete, 1994).

A Growing Awareness

For many educators today "learning recognizes the role of indigenous knowledge" (FNESC, 2015, para. 5). First generated for specific high school courses, the FPPL have transcended their original purpose. More educators have started to work with the principles while the BC MoE has committed to embedding them in all parts of the curriculum (Chrona, 2016a). Improving the educational experiences of Indigenous students however has been underway well prior to the creation of the FPPL.

In 1999, a Memorandum of Understanding aimed to improve education for Indigenous students. This eventually led to the creation of AEEA, particular to local Indigenous communities, which include educational goals and objectives to improve student success. The AEEA signed between the Ktunaxa Nation and Valley School District in 2005, and updated every five years, stands as an example. Promoting the FPPL falls under the responsibility of schools' AbEd departments who are directly connected with the AEEA.

Since the creation of the FPPL, the United Nations has issued the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in 2007, BC renewed, and signed, the Tripartite Education Agreement (TEA) in 2018, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) published the Calls to Action in 2015. Embedding the FPPL within the BC curriculum aligns with recommendations from these documents.

These recent policy documents and recommendations attest to a growing awareness and will towards Indigenous education and the inclusion of Indigenous knowledges within pedagogies. As the interest also continues to reach more educators, DuPré (2019) warns of the caveats and potential for continued “colonial paternalism” that can result from wanting to act too fast (p. 3). She reaffirms how Indigenous peoples “are still in a time of healing and resurgence,” herself still sorting out what knowledges should be shared, and what knowledges can and may be shared (p. 3). This echoes the FPPL which teaches how “learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations” (FNESC, 2015). In the circular journey, one’s own positioning, and frequent return, to an awareness stage may serve to alleviate “tokenism and oversimplified pan-Indigenous understandings of Indigeneity” that persists in institutions – such as education (DuPré, 2019, p. 3).

Through their recommendations for Indigenous education, the TRC Calls to Action (2015) and the BC TEA (FNESC, 2018) more specifically address the achievement gap that exists for Indigenous students. But at the core of the recommendations on education, all three policy documents (including UNDRIP) repeatedly stress and emphasize the importance of revitalizing cultures and languages, ways of doing, and the relationship to land.

The TRC Calls to Action (2015) for example, advocate for “culturally appropriate curricula” (p. 2) and for the education of teachers on “how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms” (p. 7). Though this last call to action is directed at teacher education in general, BC’s current context identifies this as a need for

current classroom teachers as well. Valley School District, as per the TEA, ensures that "one non-instructional day per school year is focused on enhancing First Nation student learning outcomes," where all district educators and staff are in attendance (FNESC, 2018, p.9).

Article 15 of the UNDRIP (United Nations, 2007) emphasizes "the right to the dignity and diversity of [Indigenous] cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education", and article 25 acknowledges "the distinctive spiritual relationship with […] traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources…" Though the term *Land* with a capital "L" is not used, relationships and connectedness are highlighted throughout the document.

The distinctiveness of Indigenous worldviews is a recurrent theme within the UNDRIP and in any subsequent document/statement endorsing the Declaration, including the TRC Calls to Action (2015) and the latest BC TEA (FNESC, 2018). Much like the FPPL, each article within the UNDRIP requires in-depth consideration. Styres (2017) reinforces the inseparability of languages and culture, as well as Land, as inclusive of all relationships:

> Understanding the contemporary and historical relationships with Land and the ways Indigenous peoples continue to exist in respectful relationships to Land, one another, and indeed to all relations (animate and inanimate, human and non-human) is the key to success for all students as participants in their own place, as well as in the wider global community (p. 25).

Within the BC TEA (FNESC, 2018), similar recommendations are made with regards to the importance of language and the all-encompassing nature of culture. The focus is on Indigenous students "having access to and receiving quality education that is respectful and reflective of their unique culture and history" (p. 6). Land constitutes this uniqueness. Indigenous knowledges has been tied to lands since time immemorial and will persist long after "the current buzz and definition of reconciliation dies out" (DuPré, 2019, p. 3).

A Ninth Standard

In 2019, the BC Teachers' Council (BCTC), updated its list of Professional Standards for BC Educators with a new ninth standard focused on a requirement for teachers to "foster a deeper understanding of ways of knowing and being, histories, and cultures of First Nations, Inuit and Métis" (p. 5). Setting educators on a reflexive path, the new ninth standard calls for educators to be mindful of both their personal and professional "selves," as they work towards refining their practice; "Educators critically examine their own biases, attitudes, beliefs, values and practices to facilitate change" (p. 3). Similarly to the policy documents above, the ninth standard further emphasizes the need for educators to "value and respect the languages, heritages, cultures, and ways of knowing and being" and integrate "worldviews and perspectives into learning environments" (p. 5). Comparing the new ninth standard in relation to the FPPL highlights their affinity. The latest BCTC standards (2019) (re)positions the FPPL as more than an inclusion in the curriculum but as a professional expectation of practice for BC educators. Personal and professional responsibility for understanding ways of

knowing, relationships, and embedding Indigenous worldviews and perspectives, has now been placed at the forefront of classroom pedagogical practice.

The BCTC (2019) Standards invites educators towards reflexivity by "understand[ing] the power of focusing on connectedness and relationships to oneself, family, community and the natural world" (p. 5). The standard parallels the FPPL's "learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors" (FNESC, 2015). Less explicit in the standard however, is the relationship between self, spirit and ancestors, that forms part of the philosophy and sacredness that Styres (2017) alludes to when describing capital L Land. A focus on the power and significance of relationships between self and the natural world, especially in a reflexive context, offers one way to begin developing a better understanding of capital L Land.

Barriers to Truths

Educators need to develop a better understanding of Aboriginal cultures, history, and perspectives (Battiste, 2013). Part of the reflexive journey educators must undertake involves developing an awareness of nuances within worldviews, and viewing history from a different standpoint.

Embedding Indigenous ways of learning into a Eurocentric system requires a two-prong, deeply connected, approach: educators' own personal evolving learning, and daily classroom life. Battiste (2013) recognizes that "efforts have been made to sensitize teachers to part of the cultural and psychological context of Indigenous pupils through in-service programs" but deplores that "little has yet been done to include a realistic

portrayal of their knowledge, language, heritages, or governments into the standard curricula" (p. 31). The BC curriculum embedding of the FPPL represents a step forward however, other than one district day per school year, as per the BC TEA (FNESC, 2018), furthering their knowledge is left to educators' personal choice.

The reflexive work awaiting educators is uncomfortable and difficult. Pedagogical discomfort reflects one's uneasy learning from others, and emerges as a necessary process in order to generate action(s) (Zembylas, 2017). The turmoil potentially faced by educators accepting challenges to their own view of the historical narrative likely resembles that of researchers for whom "confronting one's limitations, vulnerabilities, and mistakes is not an easy task, even for the most sincere researcher" (Probst, 2015, p. 38). The disruption of one's perceptions is a disruption of habits of thought, of behaviours, in favour of a different way of proceeding. Rethinking the modalities around a pinecone bird feeders, for example, can be upsetting if an educator is strongly attached to building them every year. Thinking of pinecones as part of an interconnected web, or through a resource taking lens, affects how learning is justified.

Beliefs held as profound truths, belonging to "Canada's grand narrative," come to be challenged, and challenging to transform (den Heyer, 2011, p. 158; Donald, 2009). den Heyer's (2011) detailed account of English Canada's official narrative exposes a history plagued by racism. He calls for in-depth introspection, akin to reflexivity, on the part of educators, with an aim to transform students' experiences and beliefs. As the FPPL state "learning is embedded in memory, history, and story" (FNESC, 2015); memories, histories, and stories anchored in each Nation rather than the grand narrative.

den Heyer (2011) proposes a realignment of best-practices, through an ethic of truths that challenges the grand narrative, by including critical scenarios in the teaching of history, as well as hold a critical focus towards the future. Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre weighs in on how truths influence educators' teaching perspectives, and how this should happen knowing they are on Ktunaxa land:

> **…**in our country, there's going to be what European academia wants to call pre-history, as opposed to history of the place, because pre-history is before Europeans showed up. History starts with the arrival of Europeans. But, I think that if you are mindful of that mandate to create citizens for this country, I think that where we've arrived in our country is an understanding that there needs to be truth and reconciliation. To be creating Canadian citizens for the future of Canada, I think the country has realized that we need citizens who understand truth and reconciliation… And not just the reconciliation part, that truth part. So, how can I truthfully be teaching about Canada as it is here in the Kootenays? What does Canada mean here in the Kootenays? For a lot of people, Canada here in the Kootenays starts with David Thompson. That's Canada here in the Kootenays. But I think that Canada as an entire nation is wanting more than just that, as a nation it is wanting to understand more than just a name like Cabot. There's so much history and story here that exists, I do think that a teacher here in ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa needs to be mindful of Ktunaxa. It **is** what is unique to this part of the world… because there's pine trees in other parts of the world, there's rivers, there's trout, there's grizzly bears, there's mountains, there's snow, I can go

> on… But there’s only Ktunaxa here. So if any teacher is forgetting Ktunaxa, well they’re forgetting the uniqueness of where they’re working. They’re not even acknowledging the home to the people they’ve come into to work. I’ve come in to occupy Ktunaxa space, but I’m not going to acknowledge Ktunaxa. I’ve come in to occupy Ktunaxa space and I’m going to raise my family here, my children here, and I’m going to teach other children, other peoples’ children while I’m here… but I’m not going to acknowledge the home that I'm in… or the people whose home that I’m in. That is Canadian education up until very recently.

Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre demonstrates that truths pertaining to the grand narrative take root in the past, but remain current and intrinsic; exemplifying S. Wilson’s (2008) unquestioned answers. To acknowledge Ktunaxa, is to attend to the whole truth.

Deficit Thinking

The approach to Indigenous education within research too often stems from a deficit perspective. As Zinga (2017) observes, there has been a propensity to position Indigenous education as a problem or crisis, and a failure “to take into account the complex histories that have brought us collectively to this point in education” (p. ix). Posing a problem that requires a solution seems more in line with contemporary practices especially in regards to Indigenous education. L. T. Smith (2012) characterizes these deficit-based approaches as harmful:

> The continuing legacy of what has come to be taken for granted as a natural link between the term ‘indigenous’ (or its substitute) and ‘problem’ is that many researchers, even those with the best intentions, frame their research in ways that

> assume that the locus of a particular research problem lies with the indigenous individual or community rather than with other social or structural issues. (p. 95)

Working with the FPPL does not eliminate the above tendency but surely redirects the focus “as educators are recognizing that they promote educational practices that are also powerfully effective for non-Indigenous learners” (Chrona, 2016a, para.12). In addition to addressing all students, and as per the BCTC’s (2019) ninth standard, all educators are called upon to undertake a personal and professional journey where reflexivity and pedagogy have become central; leading to both personal and professional growth. Social and structural issues nestled within education then become the focus.

Unquestioned answers, firmly anchored in colonialism, continue to be pervasive in education. The FPPL bring forward a “who,” that is taken for granted, who is at the receiving end of much, at times very subtle, deficit thinking: ’?a-kxam̓is q̓api qapsin’ (all living things), inclusive of ʔamak (ground, earth; one could think of land) and more-than-humans. Deficit thinking permeates through most aspects of daily school life, found in the way educators organize, teach, and deliver curriculum. The pinecone bird feeder offers one more lesson. Blenkinsop et al. (2017) speak of “colonial habituations” which consist of attitudes and beliefs that see the natural world as inferior, fragile, unintelligent, and voiceless (p. 354). In addition to negating tak̓a¢ out of pinecone’s web of connections, ¢u·¢u (chickadee) factors in as helpless. What is the reason for the pinecone bird feeder? Whether it is “for the birds” or “helping the birds,” the intention denotes a normalization of deficit thinking. Blenkinsop et al. (2017) point out how the perspective of specific more-than-humans, in this case tak̓a¢ and ¢u·¢u, is seldom taken into account

particularly in an educational context. These examples reaffirm the need for professional reflexivity that addresses pedagogical habits.

Deficit thinking is evident in the fabric of society and easily perpetuated once students start attending school. North America has a habit of creating its own problems which, viewed through the lens described above, then call for intervention measures further hindering the natural world (Blenkinsop et al., 2017). Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre reacts to the one-sided reporting of bisons, grizzly bears, and deer, feeding into Blenkinsop et al.'s (2017) manufactured colonialism:

> It pisses me off that thing with the woman and the buffalo […] it was already part of a news story, and the headline already said: "Bison attacks woman"… As opposed to "Bison protects itself from human beings"… because that's what it was doing, that's the actual headline…
>
> I've heard about the 'deer problem' in town, but I continually say it's not a deer problem. The deer, they don't have any problems, the deer have no problems. It's the humans that have the problems. So if we actually ask ourselves: What's the human problem in town? How can we fix the human problem so that the humans and the deer can coexist?

He recognizes that some attempts are made:

> That's the attitude… […] A lot of the headlines are 'the bear problem in the city of…' but I think what [this city] actually did is go "Wait a second, it's not a bear problem, it's human problem! What are these humans doing that's causing this

> problem? Let’s solve what the humans are doing…” and that’s what [this city] did.

A reflexive process holds decolonizing potential and a way to acknowledge ’?a-kxam̓is q̓api qapsin’ and their many forms of communication rather than subject them to unquestioned answers, unquestioned intentions, and unquestioned assumptions. For a pedagogical shift to take place, leading to living and embedding the FPPL meaningfully and curbing deficit thinking, beginning a process of decolonization is necessary.

Decolonization

Multilayered, multifaceted, with academic, environmental, cultural, and political ramifications, decolonization finds its context within Land education. To speak of decolonization implies an initial awareness of the implications of colonialism. Chung’s (2019) own reflections about identity and allyship lead him to remark that “colonization, even with the best of intentions, creates a system of oppression where non-consent and inequity are *normal”* (p. 16). He invites the reader to think about how colonization “remains the hidden backbone of our education, justice, and health systems where teachers, judges, and doctors know best” (p. 16). His look at decolonization exposes a tendency similar to the do-gooding Breen et al. (2019) observe in relation to reconciliation (p. xiii):

> Decolonization attempts to reverse colonization and assist those who were harmed. Non-Indigenous people are often anxious for action: They want to do *for* Indigenous people.

> Part of the non-Indigenous response is becoming an ally who listens first, accepts the responsibility of learning, and has the courage to be altered. If so, what does decolonization require of me? (Chung, 2019, p. 17)

Listening, here, implies listening to all kins we are in relationships with (Blenkinsop et al., 2017; Chung, 2019; Kimmerer, 2013; O'Gorman & Gaynor, 2020). Chung's (2019) suggestion to listen first, learn, and accept to undergo a transformation is reflected in the circular journey educators must take in order to keep the decolonization process going. If actions seem to come last, actions also lead into new awarenesses, and yet another learning journey around the circle.

Decolonizing is about holding a different view of history and thus, holding different knowledges (L. T. Smith, 2012). L. T. Smith (2012) explains, "the pedagogical implication of this access to alternative knowledges is that they can form the basis of alternative ways of doing things" (p. 36). Different historical perspectives can provide the foundation for renewed pedagogical approaches. Battiste (2013) describes decolonization as a process of changing what currently exist in classrooms including "… its powerful Eurocentric assumptions of education, its narratives of race and difference in curriculum and pedagogy, its establishing culturalism or cultural racism as a justification for the status quo, and the advocacy for Indigenous knowledge as a legitimate education topic" (p. 107). Decolonizing therefore acknowledges historical biases and provides the imperative for changes.

Holding a different historical view inevitably brings Land to the forefront. As a means to transform those colonial relationships, Blenkinsop et al. (2017) strongly

advocate for listening first paired with “the deferential practice of “shutting up”” (p. 351). Decolonizing is a process of humility.

Through the discussion and critique of anti-colonial views and behaviours, Blenkinsop et al. (2017) directly address educators’ relationships with the natural world. They propose a process of recognition and resistance, focusing on the awareness of colonialism permeating all levels of the teaching environment and working to counter such attitudes by actively transforming practices. The many suggestions made, ranging from noticing educator and student behaviours and language, to noticing colonial structures in the physical, curricular, and systemic organization within education can serve as a catalyst to ignite the reflexive self. In that sense, Blenskinsop and Fettes (2020) forewarn of the shortcomings that can arise from a failure to revisit what could be termed “unquestioned” language:

> Until we can work at the level of story, examining those that remain embedded in the psyche of most Canadians (materialist, colonialist, anthropocentric etc.), and offering different stories to be taken up and retold, the process of reconciliation with land risks remaining token and superficial. (p. 1039)

As a means to experience the natural world in a manner that fosters kin to kin relationships and chips away at colonial foundations, spending as much time being outdoors, on land, learning with and from the land is strongly advocated (Blenkinsop et al., 2017; Blenkinsop & Fettes, 2020). The BC MoE’s latest curricular changes, translating into a localized emphasis of the curriculum, have seen a panoply of pedagogical opportunities, curricular designs, and alternate physical structures

encouraging educators to take learning outdoors. Consequently, PBE has become more mainstream. Whether PBE and other pedagogies taking place outdoors, infused with Indigenous knowledges, are sufficient to promulgate decoloniality demands a reflexive journey in itself. The key lies with the investment of educators towards their own reflexive relationship to Land.

Relationships Within Land

In any discussion regarding Land education it is understood that, according to local epistemologies, Land is considered a living being. This perspective reveals how Land education can and should feature within the school curriculum.

Land holds deep grounding connections integral to a person's constitution. "Land moves beyond concrete connections to place," notes Styres (2011), it is "an expression of space that exists in dynamic storied relationships that are always shifting, evolving, struggling and transforming" (p. 728). Space, for Indigenous peoples, is of greater importance than time (as understood by Westerners), so the relationship to land is not only sacred, it is also paramount (S. Wilson, 2008). It is a web of inseparable relationships that includes spiritual, emotional and cosmic energy (Datta, 2015; Doucet, 2018; Hatcher et al., 2009; Sutherland & Henning, 2009; Tuck et al., 2014).

In describing his relationship to land, Datta (2018) differentiates *land* from *place* and recalls two conversations with Elders, where the distinction is made that *place* offers no tangible referent; whereas *land* evokes an organic all-encompassing set of relationships inclusive of more-than-humans and reaching as far as cosmic beings, as well as holding deep cultural association. Indigenous languages describe the nature of

these relationships, being *verb focused* rather than *noun focused*, and encode the information necessary to understand the web of relationships whether it is about objects, peoples, or concepts (Bang et al., 2014; Styres, 2011; Tuck et al., 2014; S. Wilson, 2008; Zinga & Styres, 2011). ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa is much more than a place defined by its current temporality, it is rather fundamentally tied to an individual in relationship. Ktunaxa Knowledge Holder Bonnie Harvey shares how Land is a relation: “I was born here and I will die here. In that time it is my responsibility to honour the animals, the land, the water, because without that then I wouldn’t be who I am. I wouldn’t *be.*”

Datta (2018) remarks that “land-based education encompasses all activities that are intimately tied to our peoples and cannot be practiced without the land” (p. 54). Land **is** the first teacher, and learning is drawn from Land (Zinga & Styres, 2011). Land education is not a separate concept from Land, and one is not contained in the other. Earlier in this chapter, when Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre talks about being Ktunaxa, he does not differentiate Ktunaxa education from ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. To be on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa is to be learning.

Anchored in Colonialism

The goal of Land education is to bring attention to the structures and behaviours that exist within institutions, such as the education system, to subvert Indigenous sovereignty. Land education starts with the notion that colonialism is central (Tuck et al., 2014; Whitehouse et al., 2014). More specifically, it addresses the usurpation of Indigenous land through settler colonialism and the persistence of settler colonialism and its ideologies and behaviours within *place* -conveyed through education (Calderon, 2014;

Tuck et al., 2014). Land education challenges structures in which settlers' positioning remains undisturbed (Tuck et al., 2014). It also seeks to contradict the belief that land is no longer Indigenous and the ensuing notion of distancing that erases presence, knowledge, stories, and histories (Bang et al., 2014; Engel-Di Mauro & Carroll, 2014; Korteweg & Oakley, 2014). Often, Indigenous land is understood as historical rather than in the present. Each *place* has become a place because of such behaviours and ideologies and must therefore be reframed within a much longer and deeper historical context.

Place is a colonial construct that requires a deep inquiry into how it, the place, came to be and how it has changed, more often than not at risk of perpetuating a "culture-nature dichotomy typical of settler colonial ideologies" (Engel-Di Mauro & Carroll, 2014, p. 72). Often, the history of a place does not take into account violent actions perpetrated in order for that place to take shape. The displacement of Ktunaxa people into a nearby reserve to establish the colonial community where Bear Mountain Middle School is located, is an example. What was Ktunaxa's, the largest bustling and intricate ranching operation in the area, became a westernized city while the reserve became the new place –a place mimicking the colonial settlement nearby, with houses and picket fences, as a means to fit into this new paradigm (Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre, in conversation, August 2018).

History sees settlements rather than destruction of natural habitats and peoples. Colonialism established a dichotomy where culture and nature, or people and environment, are separated and continues in the manner in which ecosystems are taught to students, devoid of human presence (Bang et al., 2014). Land education that

emphasizes people-natural world unity and keeps the focus on the ongoing mechanisms aimed at maintaining a settler status quo possesses the potential to halt this process.

Indigenous knowledge is also continuously disparaged, and positioned against Westernized knowledge, itself viewed as "acultural" and thus presented as more reliable (McGinty & Bang, 2016, p. 472). Through school processes Indigenous knowledge is either omitted, co-opted -like in PBE, or both, which leads to concerns that this inclusion becomes a checkmark on a list (Calderon, 2014). Sharing, within a Land education model must be done by Indigenous peoples (Calderon, 2014). Protocols exist as to who can share and how the knowledge will be shared. For example, in the Ktunaxa Nation, Elders cannot be requested to come in to talk about a topic that matches what someone is doing in their class. Instead, a story is shared and, through questions to students, the Elder will gather information and respond accordingly.

A Purposeful Goal of Decolonization

Through its purposeful goal of decolonization, Land education draws the learner into deeper realizations, supports the goal of decolonization and counters the tokenizing of Indigenous knowledge caused by a colonialist structured educational system. (Belczewski, 2009; Datta, 2018; Hampton & DeMartini, 2017; Whitehouse et al., 2014). Land education ensures there is a process for decolonization of the "local", a process that acknowledges the past and present impacts of settler colonialism (Calderon, 2014, p. 28). Connecting with Elders and knowledge keepers provides opportunities for learners to "live" knowledge, to experience the Land as first teacher, and go beyond books designed to promote the continuation of a colonialist perspective (Bang et al. 2014; Belczewski,

2009; Hatcher et al., 2009; Styres, 2011). Battiste and Henderson (2009) highlight the value of knowledge sharing for both Indigenous communities and recipients:

> By animating the voices and experiences of the cognitive *other* and integrating them into the educational process, it creates a new, balanced center and a fresh vantage point from which to enhance Indigenous communities' capacities. I[ndigenous] K[nowledge] reconceptualizes the resilience and self-reliance of Indigenous peoples and underscores the importance of their own philosophies, heritage, and educational processes. (p. 7)

The way in which language is used is just as important in the decolonizing process. Bang et al. (2014) bring the practice of naming to attention, as Indigenous names of places and non-humans carry different meanings and relationships than Westernized names. Naming, or rather re-naming, is another means through which settler colonialism erasing practices are evident (L.T. Smith, 2012). Recently, a community on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa revised the naming of a school to transform such erasure. Bang et al. (2014) recount the conscious work done to reclaim knowledge and reset colonial practices, as well as the influence naming invasive plants had on their own work, taking them directly to the Land. Clearly, Land education thus pays attention to the way in which Indigenous knowledge is sought and shared, while settler colonialism remains a central concern.

In *Braiding Sweetgrass*, Kimmerer (2013) uses languages to demonstrate the impact of different meanings of Land in contrast to an "ours to take" perspective:

> In Potawatomi, we speak of the lands as *emingoyak*: that which has been given

> to us. In English, we speak of the land as "natural resources" or "ecosystems services," as if the lives of other beings were our property. As if the earth were not a bowl of berries, but an open pit mine, and the spoon a gouging shovel. (p. 383)

Settler colonialism reallocates land into something to be owned. The idea of "private property" is not a construct shared by Indigenous peoples, as it is part of a larger capitalistic and market-oriented agenda (Simpson, 2017). Through settler colonialism, Land becomes a set of properties that are up for ownership regardless of any pre-existing knowledge and traditions, and relationships are lost. Paperson (2014) contrasts the concept of place which can be segmented and owned, to Land which is not generalizable as it *is* both *people* and *place* at the same time (p. 124). Place being more tangible can therefore be re-storied and re-inhabited after being rescued through various projects; a park, a new tree, a pinecone bird feeders, etc. Land education is concerned with repatriation, as Land, having been erased from the collective memory, becomes something that *used to be* Indigenous (Paperson, 2014). Chambers (2006) describes repatriation as "not simply the return of objects to their original owners; it is the reclamation of the past; it is the place where history and memory meet and makes a less precarious future possible" (p. 31). It is worth noting that the act of repatriation is viewed as an actual rematriation, as Land is feminine (DuPré, 2019; Styres, 2017).

Settler Colonialism

All efforts to reconcile, decolonize, or acknowledge territories can remain futile without a committed investment to move beyond the surface in a substantive way (Blenkinsop & Fettes, 2020; Breen et al., 2019). Tuck and Yang (2012) discuss the

tendency to use the concept of decolonization as metaphor, and the use of the term "decolonization" as part of educational "lingo" (p. 2). Becoming critical of one's own relation and responsibility to the land should be experienced as highly uncomfortable, while being uncomfortable is highly important (Breen et al., 2019; Zembylas, 2017). Decolonization, colonialism, reconciliation, truth, and land acknowledgements are commonly used and interpreted broadly without considering their full extent and the impact of their meaning by "box-tickers engaging in a bullshit way" (Breen et al., 2019, p. xiii). This is an act of settler colonialism, even done unknowingly, leaving the status quo unchallenged.

Resource Extraction

The goal of settler colonialism has been the mass extraction of resources requiring the appropriation of land, and specifically and tragically for Indigenous peoples, the Land. Any form of colonialism pursues the extraction of resources, humans and more-than-humans, as a main goal for enrichment purposes of the dominating population (Tuck et al., 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Colonialism differs depending on the context but carelessly inflict considerable environmental and social damages to colonized populations nonetheless (Engel-Di Mauro & Carroll, 2014; Korteweg & Oakley, 2014). The contemporary push for modernization attests to the continued existence of colonialism (Sato et al., 2014). These extended forms of colonialism reside in neoliberalism and "market" thinking (Hursh et al., 2015). The act of extracting resources (or capital) for the growth of current markets is an act of colonialism impacting Land. Pointing to globalization, L. T. Smith (2012) notes the affect, "being on the margins of

the world has had dire consequences, being incorporated within the world's marketplace has different implications and in turn requires the mounting of new forms of resistance" (p. 25). In North America, the resource targeted was, and continues to be, the land for the purpose of expansion, among other goals (Tuck et al., 2014). This is yet another facet of settler colonialism deeply connected to colonialism.

Tuck and Yang (2012) specify that settler colonialism "is a structure not an event" (p. 5). Land becomes property and more than just resources are sought, as settlers intend to make a new home and exert control through the enforcement of their own laws and traditions (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Because settlers plan to stay, they aggressively challenged the cultural customs already in place through the enforcement of their own social customs and legal traditions. The North West Mounted Police are a classic example of this in operation in Southeastern BC. This challenges the social order that exists already as settlers are on the land to stay. Engel-Di Mauro and Carroll (2014) describe settlers in Africa viewing Indigenous peoples "as pests" (p. 72). The implication that the land must be vacated for settlers to make a home, effectively erasing Land, is clear.

Erasing Mechanisms

Colonists' references to "wilderness" or "terra nullius", meaning empty land, is an example of the erasure process applied against Indigenous peoples who were regarded as "savage" and were therefore considered inferior and disposable (Korteweg & Oakley, 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Whitehouse et al., 2014; M. C. Wilson, 2005). The distancing is furthered by the negation of relationships encompassed in Land, positioning the natural world as ontologically distinct and being in the service of colonizing humans (Blenkinsop

et al., 2017; O'Gorman & Gaynor, 2020). These views create the setting for a triad in settler colonialism composed of the settler (benefitting), the slaves (providing the labour), and the Indigenous peoples (to be eliminated); where Indigenous peoples may very well fill both the "labour" and "to be eliminated" categories (Paperson, 2014; Tuck et al., 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Relationships with Land no longer exist in a settler colonial structure. Picking twenty pinecones to make bird feeders becomes innate and gratuitous.

Settler colonialism is long-lasting and "changing any parts of the whole colonial structure does not come easily" (Whitehouse et al., 2014, p. 61). As time progresses, justification systems formulated to lessen the gravity of settler colonialism emerge. Tuck and Yang (2012) call these "settler moves to innocence" (p. 10). These thought systems used today allow settlers to "reconcile settler guilt and complicity, and rescue settler futurity" (p. 3). Along with moves to innocence (e.g.: settler nativism, settler adoption fantasies, labelling Indigenous communities "at risk"), other terms become part of the settler colonial-decolonization discourse. *Settler emplacement* and *settler replacement* adhere to a very similar set of sentiments, to alleviate guilt from the fact that land was taken and espouse a more redemptive stance. Tuck et al. (2014) discuss settler emplacement as an attempt to want to live "like" Indigenous peoples, and settler replacement which essentially means they used to be here, but now we are here. The term "settler futurity" attends to the idea that what is enacted in terms of initiative, ultimately improves the life of the settler and maintains the schema that settler worldview is prioritized (p. 16). Alternatively, Indigenous futurity pertains to the future of Indigenous peoples through actions that contribute to countering the perpetuation of settler futurity.

Decolonizing Purposefully

Initiating the process of decolonization requires the internal integration of the structures defined and discussed previously. It demands close attention and conscious deconstruction of endeavours undertaken within education to ensure that Indigenous futurity is at the forefront (McCoy, 2014). The tendency to group together decolonization with human-rights groups or social justice, diminishes the distinctive character of decolonization and of Indigenous peoples' struggles (Bishop, 2015; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Confronting the process of decolonization is uncomfortable and, as Paperson (2014) notes, "this is the rub about decolonization; it forces people to confront their complicity in settler colonialism and the ongoing violence of empire" (p. 123). Decolonization is not accomplished by just naming it so, or by including Indigenous knowledge within the curriculum for example, while maintaining the settler status quo, without duly undertaking the process of clearly addressing settler colonialism.

Decolonizing one's Practice

Land is a storied landscape filled with meanings; a relationship, never severed, Indigenous peoples continue to maintain (Calderon, 2014; Johnson, 2012; Korteweg & Oakley, 2014; Paperson, 2014; M. C. Wilson, 2005). The relationality embedded in Land education extends to decolonization. In conceiving projects educators must question whether they continue the erasure of Indigenous peoples through settler colonial moves or contribute to shifting settler thinking (Bang et al., 2014; Calderon, 2014). Decolonization must be purposefully developed. In class decolonization may look like "uncovering how settler colonial projects are maintained and reproduced, with

understandings of land being one of the primary ways such identities are formed" (Calderon, 2014, p. 28). Land education carefully considers the social and political structures on which settler colonialism is based and which ensures its persistence.

Figure 3, set at the very end of the chapter, shows the permeation of colonialism across all distinct parts of this literature review, and how these parts interact. Colonialism not only act as the anchor to contemporary thinking, but it also markedly impacts a reflexive relationship to Land. Figure 3 identifies areas where decolonization work is focused, within the colonial structure.

Land in the Curriculum

The commitment of the MoE towards Indigenous perspectives is made evident in the introduction, goals, and overview of every subject as displayed in the Socials Studies introduction:

> In order to build greater understanding of First Peoples history and culture, the study of these important topics and perspectives is embedded throughout all grades. The Curricular Competencies also ensure that students consider topics from multiple perspectives and are constantly able to question the justification and evidence for interpretations of events and issues. (BC MoE, 2018b, para. 8)

The FPPL are also embedded in the introductory sections of the curriculum and initial guidance is provided for working with Indigenous communities. AbEd departments further assist educators by acting as the liaison with Indigenous community members, as well as organizing grade specific activities.

Though the BC curriculum embeds the FPPL and Indigenous knowledge into its existing structure, it is done without overtly addressing systemic colonialism. Opportunities to work with the FPPL and Indigenous knowledge take on different format depending on curricular subjects, grades, and investment of educators to shape learning accordingly. Two decades ago, Smith (2002) was already foreseeing the need for educators to espouse a role as "creators of curriculum rather than the dispensers of curriculum developed by others" (p. 42). To work around the current status quo, where deep curricular structures remain attached to the dominant society, demands determination.

PBE and the FPPL

PBE, the FPPL, and Indigenous knowledges are organized in a manner that sees them more prominent where they were deemed to fit best by curriculum designers. This approach maintains Westernized structures as the predominant model. Styres (2017) defines integration as "the bringing together of two forms of thoughts, ideas, individuals or groups of people in an egalitarian relationship based on mutual and equal partnerships and membership to bring balance and wholeness" (p. 134). Embedding the FPPL within one's practice can contribute to this end by being set purposefully as forethought in addition to the integration of Indigenous knowledges across the curriculum. Westernized pedagogies and Indigenous ways of learning can co-exist without being in opposition of each other (Styres, 2017).

The amalgamation of PBE and the FPPL is misleading for educators. The BC's redesigned curriculum orientation guide stresses the integration of Indigenous

perspectives and adds "place-based learning and emphasis on indigenous ways of knowing reflect the First Peoples Principles of Learning in the curriculum" (BC MoE, 2015d, p.1). An in-depth look at the positioning of PBE and Indigenous knowledges reveals the prevalence of the Eurocentric predominance. Embedding the FPPL may not be as easily solved as "doing" PBE, or including Indigenous knowledge, especially in a curriculum badly in need of addressing colonial influences.

The Concept of Place

The pairing of flexible learning environments with PBE leads to varied interpretations of *place*. In the curriculum, flexible learning environments are presented as an open ended option where learning can go beyond the classroom and where "schools and teachers create learning environments that explore the use of time and space in creative ways" (BC MoE, 2015f, para. 22). This openness in MoE documents tends to dilute *place* into an alternate learning *space.* Though learning standards from kindergarten to grade 9 specifically encourage reflections on the concept of *place* with the intent "to develop environmental awareness and a deep understanding of ecological concepts" (BC MoE, 2018a, para. 23), the challenge, for educators and for PBE, is that these reflections can be done without leaving the classroom. Land education brings purpose to disconnected learning spaces and reclaims them as teaching places, and teachers. Land education as it is meant to be, with a central core based on the understanding of colonialism and settler colonialism, remains a goal.

Curriculum Language

The language used in some sections of the curriculum carry a colonialist driven vocabulary that maintain the status quo, by implying that some Indigenous traditions are a thing of the past. Whitehouse et al. (2014) note the good intentions of curriculum writers who "compromised the pervasive effect of (almost) unconscious colonist thinking" (p. 65). At times, the issues lay in details such as the manner in which language is used (Harrison & Greenfield, 2011; Whitehouse et al., 2014). For example, the grade six English curricular competencies (and every other grade) offer an elaboration for "oral tradition" setting it in the past "The oral tradition was once integrated into every facet of life of First Peoples and was the basis of the education system" (BC MoE, 2015b, 12th bullet). In the science curriculum, Indigenous knowledge is positioned as additional to all other knowledge for grade seven to nine (BC MoE, 2013b). Through an ecocritical lens, Derby (2015) points out curriculum flaws that seem to persist. Here, he offers a scathing analysis of BC's previous grade ten science curriculum:

> Despite the surface challenge to human exceptionalism and lip services to Indigenous knowledge (in the service of resource management), the authority of Eurowestern modernity as a way of knowing remains beyond question: the inevitability of technology and its patent compatibility with wisdom, traditional knowledge, as a "subset" of the sciences, specialization, individualism, discourses of sustainability, discourses of resources management, etc. (p. 127)

In the early grades, kindergarten to grade six, Indigenous knowledge is identified as a secondary source, anthropological and contemporary (BC MoE, 2013a). Fettes and

Judson (2010) observe these tensions and the tendency to downplay “the local and particular nature of ecological experience” (p. 133). Through the science curriculum there is a sense that Indigenous knowledge is valued as a complement to Westernized knowledge rather than viewed as equally valuable.

Colonialism as Past Event

The Social Studies curriculum addresses colonialism at three grade levels: grade four, grade eight, and grade nine. Calderon (2014) stresses the importance of the socials studies curriculum for teachers of environmental studies, “because it is one of the primary ways a land ethic is created, especially through dominant paradigms related to how national identity and citizenship help construct damaging and unsustainable relationship to land” (p. 29). Colonialism is addressed mainly as an event of the past; except in grade nine where key questions are asked about its lasting impact. The numerous sample topics and the breadth of the historical period studied (1750-1919) for grade 9 however, reduce colonialism to one of many topics competing for teacher and student attention (BC MoE, 2015c). AbEd departments in Valley School District, invite grade nine students to tour the nearby residential school, guided by a survivor. Educators also have access to additional resources and projects if they choose to follow up. Despite these efforts, colonialism remains set in the past as the ongoing effects are not clearly addressed. Addressing colonialism is still possible, indirectly, through the curriculum’s inclusion of Indigenous perspectives.

Settlered Imagination

The curriculum tends to place Indigenous knowledges and the FPPL away from central focal points in each subject, at every grade level from kindergarten to grade 9. Despite espousing more progressive pedagogies, positivists truths continue to be reflected in prescriptive learning objectives (Castell et al., 2018). It is not difficult for educators to avoid Indigenous knowledge and still meet curricular objectives and goals. The decision to embed Indigenous knowledge in lesson planning rests with educators and their propensity to (re)imagine ways of conveying the curriculum. Activating imagination goes beyond creative teaching designs to deepen understandings of Indigenous perspectives and repositioning ways of learning. Imagination has been heavily settlered, has undergone a lengthy appropriation and continues to serve a specific overpowering agenda (Alfred, 2010).

The inner workings of imagination are rather intricate. Through educational and psychological lenses (and an impossibly condensed explanation) imagination is viewed as a defining and uniquely human quality featuring abilities relating to the mind and consciousness, such as processing objects in isolation (Gozli, 2020; Weible, 2015). Imagination figures as one of the desired qualities confirming "the colonialist as exceptional" (Blenkinsop et al., 2017, p. 356), and a mark of "the interior sources of their intelligence" (Sheridan & Longboat, 2006, p. 366). Neil Evernden's (1993) observations of man's self-declared importance, with whom truth lies, seems fitting and appropriate as he states, "once meaning is confiscated by a single source, the world is devaluated, transformed into an empty vessel containing materials for human use" (p. 85).

"Imagination", Sheridan and Longboat (2006) point out, "did not become a quality of a singularly human mind until mind severed itself from landscape and the depths of time" (p. 370). Abstracted and objectified, imagination is left out of context.

In defining what radical imagination entails Alfred (2010) dissociates it from creativity and asks "to leave the old visions of conquest and privileges of empire behind" in order to focus on "responsibilities as human beings today" (p. 8). He advises to do away with conventional "dreamy" perceptions around imagination:

> Learn the history of this land. Find your own place and that of your family in the story of North American colonization. This will tell you what you need to do to make amends for that history and point the way to grounding yourself as a true person of this place. (Alfred, 2010, p. 8)

A reflexive self must strive to transform practice and resist "structures we are embedded within, [which] have the potential to place parameters around the decolonial stance" (Castell et al., 2018, p. 269). Cartesianism –civilized thought and reason, the subject versus objects (anything perceived as unable to reason)– continues to be pervasive in Westernized education systems making imagination, among many other ways of being, a casualty (Abram, 1996/2017; Evernden, 1993; Jardine, 2006; Sheridan & Longboat, 2006). Schooling following the scripted Eurocentric model stifles imagination (Fettes & Judson, 2010). The educational cycle, where students grow into functioning adults, perpetuates beliefs and truths that maintain parameters in place. Educators must work to ignite their own stifled imagination.

Egan (2005) identifies imagination as the best way to bring meaning to knowledge. He recognizes the wholeness of the mind "as its whole includes our bodies, and our emotions, and imaginations" rather than issuing solely out of reason and rationality (p. 99). The former fills our experience thus, for Egan (2005), narratives hold enormous value as this is how we recall experiences. Imagination goes further and is twofold, both happening in the moment and "taking us beyond the limits of available experience" (Gozli, 2020, p. 922). Experiences and knowledge feed imagination, while imagination allows knowledge, or learning, to migrate contexts (Egan, 2005; Gozli, 2020). Imagination can also be enhanced by conscious "being-in-environment," being fully attuned to place (Fettes & Judson, 2010, p. 125). In order to understand and educate imagination, "an appreciation of its place within society and culture" has to occur (Gozli, 2020, p. 929). As educators work to stimulate imagination much more extensively, a key learning to be internalized recognizes that imagination already has a place: Land.

Reciprocity

Sheridan and Longboat (2006) squarely reposition imagination where it originates, and clarify what imagination entails: "Like everything Haudenosaunee, imagination has a place because *imagination is a place*, and because everything is connected to everything else, the encounter with imagination is a living communication within a sentient landscape" (p. 369). Imagination, therefore, involves interactions with other beings; a "gregarious" participation made fuller through the imaginative experience (Abram, 1996/2017, p. 58). These two aspects, communication and gregarious participation, suggest intentionality which would indicate, according to Gozli (2020),

“that imagination is purposeful” and that initial and/or responsive actions include the imagined perspectives of others (pp. 926–927). This purposefulness however, does not assign authority as “imagination is the spiritual medium of those powers that engage humans without humans being the prime movers of the act” (Sheridan & Longboat, 2006, p. 370). Circling back to the beginning of this chapter, a reflexive relationship to Land calls to humbly assume the position of receiver, but in an engaged manner through which reciprocal actions should factor in the perspective of others. Imagination shares commonality with reflexivity such as intentionality, purposefulness, and actions. Imagination and reflexivity both funnel into reciprocity.

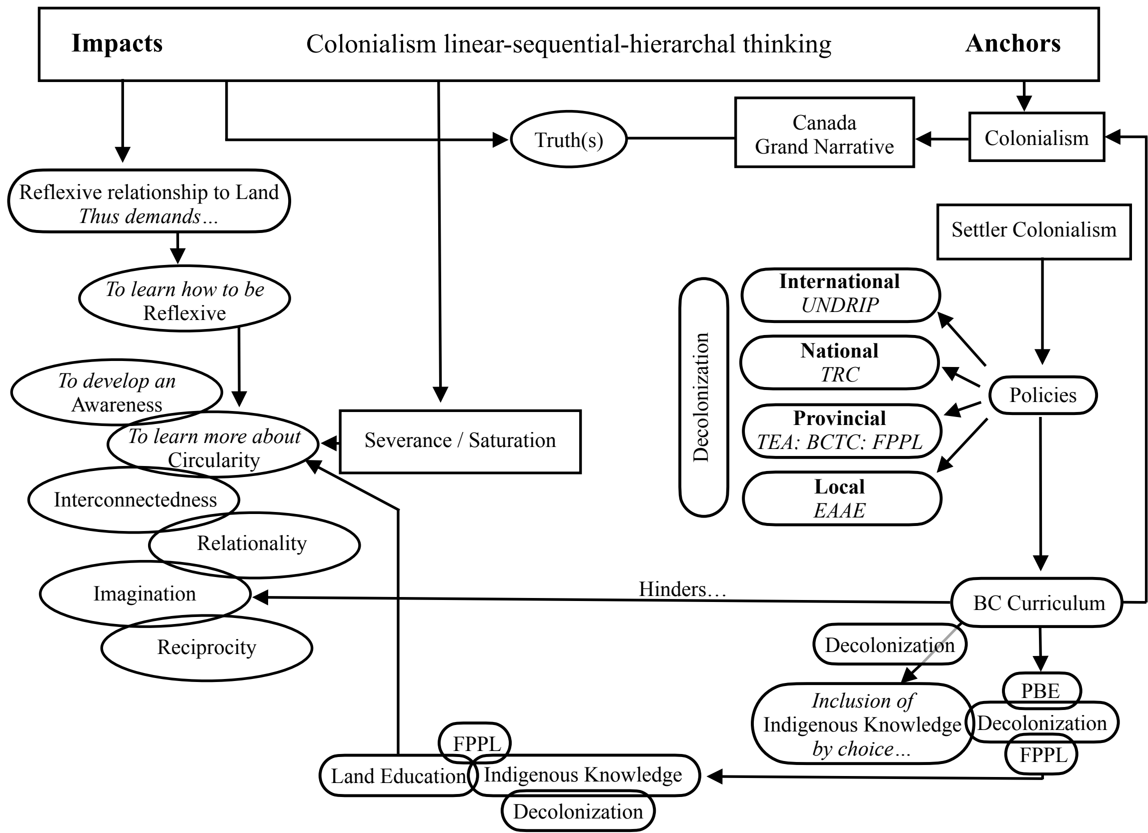
Through Haudenosaunee and Mohawk perspectives, Sheridan and Longboat (2006) realign the source of knowledge as being more than human: “Native American intellectual tradition still continues to express the North American landscape in intellectual and spiritual reciprocity, where the more-than-human grants qualities of mind to the human” (p. 368). Reference to “more-than-human[s]” does not mean “nature” or “nonhuman[s]” but “highlights the primacy of relations over entities (including the “human”)” (O’Gorman & Gaynor, 2020, p. 717). These reciprocal relationships are the type of relationships Evernden (1993) describes as “a very complete interrelation of self and world, so complete that the world could serve as definition of the self” (p. 81). Thus, developing the skills to imagine, sense, and learn from animal teachers and spiritual helpers, and from our oldest teachers –plants–, who reside and interact in a place, allows humans to understand ways of being of that place (Kimmerer, 2013; Sheridan & Longboat, 2006). Ktunaxa knowledge, Dwayne Donald (2009), and many others, include

rocks as spiritual guides as well. “Learning [is] focused on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place” (FNESC, 2015), and such reciprocity invites to view the world through more-than-human perspectives, experiencing being their way rather than focusing on their purpose (Jukes & Reeves, 2020). Revisiting the beginning of this chapter again, who is pinecone and what does it mean to be pinecone before the bird feeder? The question goes further: What does reciprocity look like as pinecone becomes a bird feeder? (It’s a trick question…)

The resistance to knowledge embedded in the Creation stories, Land, protocols, and the discarding of “intergenerational truths” has contributed negatively to understanding North America (Sheridan & Longboat, 2006). Sheridan and Longboat (2006) realize the disconnect noting “what is dismissed as primitive imagination by dominant culture is to Indigenous traditions reality’s only viable description” (p. 369) which, “properly understood, […] is a homing device for finding a way into the sacred unity of time, mind, spirit, and place” (p. 375). A reflexive relationship to land, to Land, starts with the acknowledgment of the land (stories, histories, memories) and its colonial reality, and the purposeful learning from more-than-human relationships. Entering into reciprocity with the more-than-human world is a responsibility humans should uphold (Kimmerer, 2013). Reciprocity can be about giving and taking, but it is also about being taught, guided, and being appreciative. Kimmerer (2013) suggests showing reciprocity “through gratitude, through ceremony, through land stewardship, science, art, and through everyday acts of practical reverence” (p. 390). Through the next few chapters, I hope to convey humble efforts to live meaningful reciprocal relationships.

Figure 3

A Visual Representation of the Literature Review



"The province of B.C. is once again restricting commercial-sale huckleberry harvesting in an effort to protect grizzly bear habitat in the […] region. The province is working together with the Ktunaxa Nation Council to conserve wild huckleberry, which is an important food source for grizzly bears."

(Bullock, 2020, para. 1)

"They're not from here, they come to pick huckleberries. They drop some on the ground and they don't even pick them up!"

(Nasuʔkin (Chief) Joe Pierre Jr.)

Chapter 3: Ecoportraiture

The relationship between imagination and reciprocity is profound and transcends time and space. Yet this connection, as for imagination and reciprocity, has been greatly impacted by colonialism. The discussion below establishes foundational aspects aiming to connect the methodology of ecoportraiture to Indigenous thoughts and ways of doing. Delving into the interconnectedness surrounding the act of reciprocating sharpens the notion of *listening* in relation to Land, to the more-than-human world; a core element of ecoportraiture.

Chapter 3 explores how reciprocity further arises from imagination, before considering how this relationship influences listening as a reciprocal act. The relationship(s) with, and surrounding, ƚawiyaƚ (huckleberry) help demonstrate how

imagination, reciprocity, and listening can be connected. As ecoportraiture is introduced, a few suggestions for the methodology to work harmoniously in conjunction with Land are offered by way of critical kindness. A brief history of how ecoportraiture grew from Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis' (1997) methodology of portraiture follows. The project's structure is then presented, as well as how it unfolded as a result of being interrupted by the pandemic of 2020. The final direction emerges from the sound advice of Knowledge Holder Bonnie Harvey who taught me how seemingly disparate experiences can come together to form a whole.

Imagination and Reciprocity

Styres (2018) notes, "indigeneity and working within Indigenous contexts is first and foremost about reciprocity and relationships" (p. 24). Land, therefore, is first and foremost about reciprocity and relationships. Reciprocity, involving an interaction leading to a responsive action, can thus be issued from an imagined perspective of Land.

Imagination is to experience Land. But Sheridan and Longboat (2006) clearly distinguish pre and post Columbian imagination; the latter being a contemporary definition often stripped of context coinciding with the arrival of Columbus. Pre-Columbian "imagination" accepts Land's sentience and her capacity to communicate to humans and more-than-humans as a reality, not something imagined. Imagination links to a cosmology that encompasses past, present and future, grounding knowledge and experience into the landscape (Sheridan & Longboat, 2006). To reciprocate, then, involves being cognizant of sentient relationships, beyond the Westernized conception of time and space.

Reciprocal gestures can be previously agreed upon by parties involved (Merriam-Webster, n.d.), and can be in accordance with a variety of cultural traditions. Entering into a reciprocal relationship involves responsibility on the part of the receiving party. The meaning involved in the reciprocation of wampum belts, for example, is far greater than an exchange of artifacts; wampum belts hold memories of agreements, and accepting one signals an understanding of its meaning and a commitment to honour its intent (Morcom, 2017). Reciprocity in a relationship with Land takes on many forms, and the responsive action will likely differ from the initial action. However, as receivers – which is the position we, current Westerners, start in– there is an underlying expectations to reciprocate, to do it responsibly, and to understand this responsibility.

Honouring That Which is Received

Reciprocity can augment the quality of the relationships in which we engage, even when they are short passages on one's life path. In the forest, how does one recognize an initial action? How does one honour gifts? ǂawiyaǂ (huckleberry) helps facilitate this understanding.

Humans' initial positioning as receivers in a reciprocal relationship with Land is determined by Land having been there since time immemorial (Sheridan & Longboat, 2006; Styres et al., 2013). This standpoint matters greatly. For example, when I meet ǂawiyaǂ in the forest there is the temptation to consider ǂawiyaǂ new to this season. Such is not the case, however, because ǂawiyaǂ is the manifestation of ancestors before them (Kimmerer, 2013), and how they have also worked hard all season to produce fruit. By the time we meet, ǂawiyaǂ has already been there, at work producing knowledge since

time immemorial. Being there and offering fruit, those are initial actions towards kin, in the web of relationships. This is how the reciprocal relationship between human receivers and Land begins. The imaginative receiver comes to understand how ⱡawiyaⱡ has been there all along. Imagination affords the possibility to envision the web of relationships we have entered into, the living representations of past, present, and future.

Let’s reiterate here Sheridan and Longboat’s (2006) assertion: that imagination is a place, and to focus on the connectedness of every being with every other being; that imagination is communication with a sentient landscape, and that this is contained in Creation. In a reciprocating relationship, there is rarely a one to one action. With Land, reciprocity can be far reaching and affect ⱡawiyaⱡ’s web of relationships. My actions, whether positive or negative, towards ⱡawiyaⱡ will have an impact on other beings simultaneously: kławła (Grizzly bear), nupqu (Black bear), ʔin¢uk̓ (mouse), and namqatku (racoon) to name a few.

Ktunaxa Knowledge Holder Bonnie Harvey provides an example of how imagining and knowledge are tied to the Creation Story as discussed by Sheridan and Longboat (2006), and imagining the web of connections related to mi¢kik (maple tree):

> You know, I’ve seen land before where it was breathing. We tend to think that they're not living but yet why do we speak to them? They make us feel better! Because we have plants, and we have shrubs, and food that sustains us, we forget that it is its own being, [and] that everything has a spirit. That brings us to ’?a-kxam̓is q̓api qapsin’ all living things, and all living things are connected.

> So, we cut down that tree because we want more sun. Well, then all the birds and the animals that live there won't have anywhere to live. Or, we have to cut it down because it's ruining our pipes, but what [can] we do instead? How do we ensure that we look after those animals who live in it? [How do we] protect everything else underneath it that benefit from the shade?

Gathering ǂawiyaǂ fruit is labour intensive. Wake up early to beat the summer heat, find them in the alpine landscape, and share the space with nupqu, or kławła, and many others. It is a labour of love. Tasting ǂawiyaǂ is generous because ǂawiyaǂ does not exist in grocery stores. From my own experience, ǂawiyaǂ is also extremely reluctant to being part of a garden. They are partial to their own preferred hard to reach, secluded, and highly coveted spots. As a result, every berry matters. So, when one slips through inattentive fingers and falls to the ground, respect dictates that much effort should be invested towards them because this is ǂawiyaǂ's labour of love. Imagination allows to feel ǂawiyaǂ's lineage and ǂawiyaǂ's web of relationships, and packages it into one tiny gesture: Pick. Them. Up. That moment, that action right there, is reciprocity.

Linking to the FPPL

Expanding on reciprocity in the manner above only peers lightly into the depth of the philosophy and spirituality contained in Land, capital L. Still, a sense of the relationality that exist with, and between, all beings including humans, emerges. The FPPL stress the importance of relationships, which leads to a sense of place and belonging, and remind educators that learning supports the well-being of the land, the spirits, and the ancestors (FNESC, 2015).

Human relationships with the more-than-human world are not distinct from those established with other humans, and, as well, they are sacred (S. Wilson, 2008). In her work describing the FPPL for educators Chrona (2016b) stresses, “living and learning is inextricably tied to sense of place and connection to the land” (para. 14). She draws from Kirkness who brings the reader back to a time when “the community and the environment were the classroom, and the land was regarded as the mother of the people” (p. 10). Land and learning are indissoluble (Chrona, 2016b). Reciprocity allows to visualize how the FPPL (learnings) are grounded in Land. The FPPL, in turn, help understand how learning (from ancestors, from Land) contribute to the health of both humans and more-than-humans because of their interdependency (Chrona, 2016b). Reciprocity sees to the well-being of the Land.

Intersecting With Ecoportraiture

My “envolée” with reciprocity is twofold. In a reflexive relationship to Land, an action will be one of reciprocal nature. As discussed above, the reciprocity demonstrated through a relationship with ɫawiyaɫ (huckleberry) offers an example of what “grounded in Land” can mean. Ecoportraiture’s explicit attention to the more-than-human world suggests a methodological openness that aligns with Indigenous ways of knowing. As Wilson and Hughes (2019) insist, “we must attend to how we fit into the web of relationships that make up our own research context” (p. 8). Ecoportraiture’s consideration of “an approach to relationship that is more Earthly and humble…” (Fettes et al., 2022, p. 14) hints at the desire to genuinely meet kins belonging in the web of relationships, those we see, and those who are not visible yet very much connected.

Relationships with place thus translate into interconnectedness, and within these relationships more-than-humans possess their own value and display their own agency (Keena 2022; Piersol, 2022).

Delving into reciprocity further reinforces the *receiving* positionality of humans and the kinship in relationships. According to Knowledge Holder Bonnie Harvey, humans, who belong with ’ʔa-kxam̓is q̓api qapsin’ (all living things), are indebted to Land. A similar sense of indebtedness, drawn from hermeneutics, is present in Fettes et al.’s (2022) intention for ecoportraiture. “True thinking” (Jardine, 1998, as cited in Fettes et al. 2022, p. 14) enables understanding of this stance; true thinking perhaps can be interpreted as an alternate way to describe a reflexive process. Wilson and Hughes (2019) remind researchers, “we are relationships” and that “make[s] us who we are and locate[s] us within a whole system” (p. 8). Entering in relationships with Land, with the more-than-human world, inevitably enters the researcher into a reciprocal system of relationships, where imagination will account for additional relationships that may not be visible but are nonetheless present.

Listening

Fettes et al. (2022) envision ecoportraiture as fostering “deep ethical relationality” with the more-than-human world, encompassing transformative self-understandings on the part of the researcher (p. 15). Ecoportraiture, they note, “invites a substantial shift in perspective, a different quality of gaze” towards the more-than-human world (Fettes et al., 2022, p. 15). The gaze predominantly features the initial act of listening (Fettes et al., 2022; Piersol, 2022), a careful act of responsibility and reciprocity (Archibald, 2008). In

French, to stress the need to think as well as listen, we say "écoute avec tes deux oreilles," listen with your two ears; one hearing, one thinking (de Grandpré, 2022).

Listening, in addition to being reciprocal, includes imaginative and reflexive elements. Listening engages the mind through visualization, awakens emotions and, as Elders in Archibald (2008) relay, "it is important to listen with "three ears: two on the side of our head and the one that is in our heart" (p. 8). Akin to being reflexive, listening warrants a careful thought process because the response, once formulated and acted upon, will be impactful for those who provide it and to those who receive it (Archibald, 2008). To start as a receiver binds humans, researchers included, to a reverential contract with Land where time is immaterial, and where being in such a position is a given. Thus indebted to Land, there exists a duty and responsibility to reciprocate.

Shifting Perspectives Slightly

Concerned with the intention for ecoportraiture to be a decolonized methodology, Fettes et al. (2022) stress the necessity to acknowledge colonialism and its ongoing consequence on Indigenous Peoples and Land. They express a need for ecoportaiture researchers "to deepen their awareness of this history […] and the intersections of their work with local, regional and global struggles for justice and Indigenous resurgence," and learn "*about how to listen*" from Knowledge Holders (Fettes et al., 2022, p. 16). Fettes et al. (2022) address some aspects of ecoportraiture's understanding of "what must be done" (p. 16), however the methodology can gain from being more firmly grounded in Indigenous knowledge. The following sections gently guide ecoportraiture into this compatibility, especially by reconsidering the kinship of more-than-humans.

Shifting Acknowledgement

Styres (2018) promotes going beyond land acknowledgments as an imperative: “to be in good relationship with one another requires a critical conscious awareness and an acknowledgment of whose traditional lands we are now on as well as the historical and contemporary realities of those relationships” (p. 32). Ecoportraiture’s intention to be mindful of decolonization aligns with Styres' (2018) call for a committed and purposeful acknowledgement. But, a gentle additional shift in perspectives can yield to the consideration and acknowledgement of *whose* land one occupies to also mean more-than-human kins. Ecoportraiture recognizes how the consequences of colonialism equally impact humans and the more-than-human world (Fettes et al., 2022). Given the intertwined relationship Indigenous Peoples have with Land –Land defining identity– (DuPré, 2019; Sheridan & Longboat, 2006; Styres, 2018), to neglect one is to neglect the other, to nurture one is to nurture the other. The positioning in the web of relationship is one of interconnectedness, thus acknowledging relationships recognizes all beings in that place equally.

Shifting Perspective on Participants

Ecoportraiture insists upon decolonization “even when ecoportraiture does not directly involve Indigenous participants” (Fettes et al., 2022, p. 16). If we are to consider *whose* land to also mean more-than-humans, the perception of “participants” within the research can be looked at differently. This in turn shifts how decolonizing ought to be conceptualized.

At this time of healing and resurgence (DuPré, 2019), ecoportraiture can explicitly embrace the responsibility of reciprocity along with the understanding that connecting and interacting with the more-than-human world is grounded in Land. This evidence is contained in Indigenous knowledge, stories, ways of doing and being. But Land has been, and is still, colonized. From this perspective, ecoportraiture's decolonizing intention can occur independently from human participants involved in the research and whether they are Indigenous or not, as Land herself warrants decolonizing intentions.

Faye O'Neil points out that the term "Indigenous" is still an expression of colonialism. She redirects the focus on the interconnectedness of everything –Land, body, and spirit– (personal communication, July 6, 2021). These relationships exist beyond Westernized conceptions of connectedness as they are reality, reality that represents an Indigenist ontology and epistemology (Wilson & Hughes, 2019). Faye provides a glimpse of such reality through her learning of the Ktunaxa language:

> What does Indigenous mean to you? What does that term mean? In my class with Alfred Joseph (Ktunaxa Elder, Language Speaker, Former Nasuʔkin), my language class… I'm learning too. We are learning about words, and how parts of words connect to land, like prefixes and suffixes relate to parts of words for the body. It's all interconnected that way. You say words like himu (ponderosa pine) but parts of that word connects with the body. So, it's our spirit too…

As Styres (2018) stresses "whether someone chooses to acknowledge it or not we all exist in relationship to each other and to this land—a land that has and still does exist first and foremost in relationship to Indigenous people" (p. 28).

Ecoportraiture, then, would benefit from broadening its interpretation of participants. The interconnected relationships that exist already with '?a-kxam̓is q̓api qapsin' (all living things) commands decolonization by virtue of *being* in relationship with '?a-kxam̓is q̓api qapsin' – a reciprocal relationship on Ktunaxa Land (or other territories).

Derby (2015, as cited in Fettes et al., 2022), posits that deep relationships with more-than-human kins go beyond seeing-as and require the "will and the psychological strength to consider what a tree means" (p. 15). Scaffolding on Derby's thoughts, Land calls on ecoportraitists to exhibit this same will and psychological strength, but also heart, soul, and feelings (Wilson & Hughes, 2019), to consider *who* yamakpaɫ (pileated woodpecker) *is, who* himu (ponderosa pine) *is,* and *who* ɫawiyaɫ (hucklebery) *is*. Keena (2022) considers how Gruenewald and Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) encourage to "probe deeply into places and the human relationships with and in them, because inhabitants of places are inextricably linked to those places" (p. 51). In addition to wondering what happens in a place, it means asking "*Who* happens here, and how?"

Ecoportraiture

A main feature of the methodology of ecoportraiture is the prominence of the more-than-human world. Ecoportraiture involves "the embeddedness of human beings and doings in a more-than-human world" working through processes that are "responsive and guided by that world in significant ways" (Fettes et al., 2022, p. 15). The growing interest and focus on being in place and being outdoors in schools seems to demand that research be co-created through ecoportraiture.

An Ecoportrait

Grounded in the methodology of portraiture, ecoportraiture entails the creation of written, and maybe photographic portraits (for this project) which relay experiences and learning with, and from, place, and include humans and more-than-humans. Through an ecological lens, the *eco*portraits are the result of research situated mostly outdoors foregrounding interactions with the more-than-human world. The ecoportraits seek to communicate as much of the essence of place and encounters, while also accounting for the lived experience, thus bringing phenomenology and hermeneutics together. Portraits are borne out of a variety of data gathering methods, over a significant period of time, and co-created with participants involved in the research project. The presence of the researcher is evident and the voice and input of the participants sought out. Ecoportraiture is less concerned with the urgency of "a pathology to fix" but turns towards a search for goodness and how it is represented by actors within their own setting(s) (Keena, 2022, p. 48). Key to the process is the researcher's focus on listening and noticing.

In asking how Land informs educators while on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, I am seeking lessons from Land that will provide guidance with embedding the FPPL into the curriculum. This research project is less about a problem which exists in the form of non-involvement with the FPPL by way of assuming the curriculum is taking care of this aspect already. A list of strategies is not what is sought. Rather, in looking at how the search for goodness is expressed by all the actors in the project, elements that can inform a better understanding of the FPPL by educators as they are working and living on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa are introduced.

The section below provides a brief overview of the development of the methodology of ecoportraiture. How Land intersects with ecoportraiture is then addressed as a means to demonstrates points of connections, and to open the way for adjustments with the manner in which sites, participants, and data gathering were considered.

From Portraiture to Ecoportraiture

Portraiture, an art-based methodology forty years young, brings together salient elements from ethnography, phenomenology, case studies, the visual arts, and science into a search for goodness. Within the qualitative research field, portraiture remains little known and less utilized (Muccio et al., 2015; Quigley et al., 2015). Through the creation of a carefully crafted narrative, a "thick description" (Geertz, 1973, as cited in Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997), portraiture reflects the essence of experiences emanating from context, relationships, voices, and the process of working through the research itself.

Capturing the essence of the experiences is a significant aspect of portraiture. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) see essence as rendering that which is visible and that which is more abstract in nature, including the interpretation of the developing relationship between the portraitist and the subject. The portrait is a rendition made richer by emphasizing the relationship between both the physically noticeable and impalpable subtleties; the "feel." A relatable, artistic portrait conveys the experiences of those involved in the research; researchers, participants, and eventual readers alike, "in one fluid vision" (Chapman, 2007, p. 157). Readers will feel transported, as if they were there (Lawrence-Lighfoot & Davis, 1997).

Attending to the essence of experiences, more aligned with phenomenology, is influenced by the positionality of the researcher who is observant and reflective simultaneously: "the portraitist knows her own experience from the inside, but that of her subjects only through a kind of empathetic, imaginative resonance" (Fettes et al., 2022, p. 9). Fettes et al. (2022) bridge phenomenology and hermeneutics via Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis' (1997) view of positionality as one where the portraiture researcher is both experienced in their own knowledge, and a learner relying on the "actors in the setting as guides, as authorities, as knowledge bearers" (p. 43).

In formulating ecoportraiture, Fettes et al. (2022) connect portraiture to hermeneutics through the way meaning is approached, where researchers ask as much of themselves as they do actors:

> …meaning in portraiture emerges *intersubjectively*: not simply in relation to another person (say, the subject of an interview), but in relation to a complex context in which both portraitist and portraitee are embedded, but differently situated. It is this reliance of understanding on our embeddedness in the life-world, a relationality-in-context that is *always already* in existence prior to any encounter with the Other, that marks a shift in emphasis between phenomenology and hermeneutics. (pp. 9–10)

The relational context, not as being probed by the researcher, but experienced by understanding its permanency as inclusive of the Other, brings to mind the more-than-human world.

Hermeneutics allow Fettes et al. (2022) to set the researcher as learning lessons from the more-than-human world. Here, they borrow from Jardine (1998) to illustrate the perspective:

> Suddenly, I *belong* here. I *live* here.… I am no longer the judge posing questions and demanding silence. I can begin, as ecology suggests, to become deeply conversant with things, listening, asking, responding, inhaling, and exhaling. Such conversation is only possible insofar as it issues up out of a sense of the integrity of my interlocutor— the Earth in all its wondrous articulations. (p. 13)

Resisting the objectification of the more-than-human world becomes an imperative, "a kind of epistemic reciprocity," out of the search for goodness characteristic of the methodology (Datura, 2022, p. 129). Phenomenological connections remain, as Keena (2022) notes, ecoportraiture's intention to "find the essence of the experience" as well as including actors in the stories "to become co-creators of the narrative" (p. 52).

Ecoportraiture Rationale

My methodology choice had to connect with, and articulate respect for, the FPPL and Indigenous ways of knowing. It was equally important to respect tenets of both research paradigms avoiding comparisons, and recognizing their distinctive characters (Belczewski, 2009; S. Wilson, 2008). Highlighting points of connections between Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis' (1997) portraiture and S. Wilson's (2008) elaboration of an Indigenous research paradigm, led to viewing ecoportraiture as a methodology well-suited to listening for stories from a sentient Land.

The Positioning of Land

Land seems a natural extension of portraiture's in-situ core component, with the distinction that Land holds much depth being more than a background environment. Land, in effect, should be (re)positioned at the forefront. Moules (2002) says of truth "that it always lies in the fact that a community of interpreters has accepted it as such" (p. 35). Failure to challenge such meanings "perpetuate(s) the myth that Canada has no history of colonialism and, further, that we have all arrived unscathed by this colonial legacy" (Styres, 2018, p. 31). Colonialism causes significant knowledge to be "displaced by a thin layer of meaning" (Johnson, 2012, p. 3), a layer anchored in the grand narrative, which contributes to "place-blindness" (Louv, 2008, p. 102). To rekindle a relationship with place entails the acknowledgement of the more-than-human world.

Stories from Land

Ecoportraiture's propensity towards poetic works and a "language more deeply resonant with the more-than-human" (Fettes et al., 2022, p. 15), creates a welcoming pathway for stories held within a landscape. Oral stories are as aesthetic a resonant language to express culture. Sensibility, which transcends the poetic realm, finds expression through various mediums which hold deep meaning for both producers and receivers of knowledge. Heeding Indigenous oral stories and knowledge "may serve to disrupt dominant Western conceptualizations and re-tellings of the tangled histories of colonial relations" (Styres, 2018, p. 28). Though some stories, shared in specific circumstances and for select audiences, may not be intended for, nor appropriate, to

disclose broadly (FNESC, 2015; S. Wilson, 2008), those that are shared attest to the presence of the more-than-human world.

Reverence

Creativity facilitates ecoportraiture's potential ability to attend to connections with Land that are more spiritual in nature. But this remains "a tricky area for non-Indigenous researchers to tackle" (de Grandpré, 2022, p. 105). As such, the likeness of these connections might be respectfully referred to as experiencing *reverence.* In addition to the intersection of human doings in a more-than-human world (Keena, 2022), ecoportraiture can incorporate these moments of reverence emanating from Land; the type of reciprocal moments, deepened by imagination, that would incite, for example, one to pick up a single huckleberry dropped on a mountain slope.

There is a deep spiritual connection between knowledges and land, and relationships to more-than-humans (Datta, 2015, 2018; Styres, 2018). The relationship with Land is brought into view through a combination of different senses, actions, stories, and ways of being/doing. In BC, the FPPL provide an opening towards developing a more informed awareness of the spirituality of place, languages, and relationships. Such awareness is accompanied with moments, or meetings, that may leave one not silent, but speechless.

My Committment

Fettes et al. (2022) observe how "education itself, that uncertain and emergent enterprise filled with a diversity of voices and experiences, human and more-than-human, is rarely portrayed" (p. 3). Ecoportraiture opens a research space where the more-than-

human world is involved in a "radical inclusivity" and voices "are brought to the fore" along with "*their* "search for goodness"" the central element of the methodology (Fettes et al., 2022, p. 14). Such a diversity, rarely undertaken in Westernized research but passed along generations through knowledge and stories since time immemorial for Indigenous peoples, made choosing ecoportraiture equally intimidating and challenging, yet enthralling while calling for much reverence.

My efforts to live the FPPL more meaningfully as an educator influenced my work with ecoportraiture and generated the commitment to embrace ecoportraiture as a *lived* methodology.

Research Questions

Co-educators designed an integrated OP bringing together three required classes and one elective class: English, math, physical and health education, and outdoor education, which also included Indigenous knowledge and experiences. Teachings from Land, being on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, and how relationships can be approached became central to the research to learn how to embed the FPPL more effectively. The question reflects how Land can envelop humans and teach educators how to go about their practice. The main question thus asks:

In what ways does Land inform educators' own learning, relationships, and professional practice while working and living on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa?

The purpose of the research is to work towards building what Styres (2017) calls "bridges of understanding." Styres (2017) acknowledges the oppositional nature and disconnectedness of Western and Indigenous educational philosophies. The key is to

develop bridges of understanding that encourage relationships of equality and facilitate a connectedness that reaches beyond the colonial perceptions attached to each of the two educational philosophies. The FPPL, by bringing into the classroom a set of principles focused on ways of learning, hold the potential to act as bridges of understanding and prompt consideration of the following:

- How can teaching practice be influenced when educators consciously acknowledge being on Ktunaxa Land?
- How does Land influence the learning journey in the process of building bridges of understanding between Indigenous and Western philosophies?
- How can Land be purposefully re-centred through the building of bridges of understanding?

As Styres (2017) points out, "not attempting to reach those connections would be to perpetuate the perception of a completely dichotomous and oppositional relationships between Indigenous and dominant Western philosophies" (p. 127). The main objective is not to offer generalizations. Instead, and hopefully, the OP experiences, the pandemic online delivery mode, and my own experiences in the forest will resonate with colleagues who are themselves looking for ways to build bridges of understanding. Indigenous stories, knowledge, and the Land have much to offer to facilitate this endeavour.

Environments

I chose to present where the research took place as environments, locations, and places. Westernized conceptions of space, and arrangement of spaces, have colonized

Indigenous spaces (L.T. Smith, 2012). To use “sites” denotes Westernized academic habits towards places which borderline on erasure.

The next few sections elaborate on the different research environments and how the pandemic eventually affected where the project occurred.

ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa

The research took place on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. Ideally, ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa ought to experienced by listening to the Creation Story. Appendix D offers this opportunity for interested readers.

The Ktunaxa Nation website further describes ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa: “the Traditional Territory of the Ktunaxa Nation covers approximately 70,000 square kilometres (27,000 square miles) within the Kootenay region of south-eastern British Columbia and historically included parts of Alberta, Montana, Washington and Idaho” (Ktunaxa Nation, 2019). The Ktunaxa Peoples have lived on their land for thousands of years and encountered the first Europeans in the late 1800s. The Ktunaxa Nation encompasses six different Bands. There are five Bands in BC, and there are two Bands in the United States. Many of the Ktunaxa Peoples live in urban and rural areas “off reserve” (Ktunaxa Nation, 2019). Valley School District is situated on two of the Bands’ land, the Tobacco Plains Band and St-Mary’s Band /ʔAq’am, and is working with both Bands through the AEEA.

Bear Mountain Middle School

Bear Mountain Middle School is in close proximity to the city centre and in a community of about twenty thousand people located in the southeastern corner of BC.

Vast forests, lakes, rivers, mountains, and open grassland surround the community and are occupied by more-than-human beings clearly outnumbering their human counterparts. The school's neighbourhood consists of a mix of residential and commercial streets, and middle class to low income housing. The schoolyard, elevated above the city centre, showcases the Rocky Mountains, and includes an Indigenous gathering place: large rocks placed in a circle. This feature is found at all schools in Valley School District. The school welcomes approximately four hundred students in grade seven, eight, and nine.

The OP Environment

The OP combines one group each of grade eight and nine students, for a total of around forty four students, though this number fluctuates slightly. The OP is led by two educators who share four courses. They are assigned two specific courses each (English, physical/health education for Jody; math, and outdoor education for Rhett) but attend to all classes throughout the day.

The OP group comes together twice a week, on Tuesday and Thursday, and intermittently on Fridays. The school schedule is built on a four-day week, eight day (two weeks) rotation, with any Friday in session rotating as one of the eight days. In this way, some weeks the OP would be in session for three days whereas most weeks the OP will be in session two days a week. The OP educators work from the same curriculum, guidelines, FPPL, and have access to the AESW, as does the rest of the school. At the time of this project, the OP is in its second year of implementation.

OP Locations

The first four months in-situ (November-February/March) brought the OP to nine different learning locations aside from the classroom. I purposely use the term "learning location" to highlight a viewpoint expressed by educator Rhett, who wished to expose the students to as many parts of the area as possible. The multiplicity of learning locations made sense as experiencing the outdoors is a main goal of the OP. A challenge arose, however, with how to develop beginning relationships with places in addition to developing relationships within a place. Dramatic temperature fluctuations, an exceptionally warm fall and late winter allowed for some locations to be visited twice or more, enabling the process of getting to know a place. The winter months favoured indoor activities with the exception of snowshoeing adventures to two of the community's forested areas, and two downhill skiing trips. Table 1 lists locations, number of visits, and general purposes for trips.

The Pandemic Effect

The research project was to occur over the span of a school year from November 2019 to June 2020 at Bear Mountain Middle School, in Valley School District, on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. The effect of the pandemic was immediately felt on this research, cutting short the in-situ residency and eliminating all possibilities for implementing the learning and plans that were being formulated and developed for after Spring Break.

Table 1

Learning Locations for the OP

Learning Locations November (2019)- December (2020)		
Locations	**Visits**	**Purpose**
By the Lake	**2** (Nov. 5th; Nov. 12th)	Shelter Building; Reflections work
Schoolyard	As often as weather permitted, when working at school.	Used as working space; Games; Collecting garbage; Meeting at the circle of rocks
Community Trails	**4** (Nov. 21st; Dec. 3rd; Jan. 30th; Feb. 18th)	Buddy Activities; Walk/ Journaling; Snowshoeing/ Journaling
City Park	**1** (Dec. 10th)	Interlude between the end of buddy activity and return to school
Ski Hill #1 + **Camp**	**2-3** (Jan. 23rd; March 5th) (Jan. 24th)	Outdoor exercise; Relationship Building; Part of winter overnight (Jan. 23rd).
South Trails	**1** (Feb. 6th)	Snowshoeing; Journaling
Ski Hill #2	**1** (Feb. 21st)	Outdoor exercise; Relationship Building
Classroom(s); Gymnasium	Ongoing November 2019-March 2020	English; math; physical education; Guests
Zoom	April-May 2020 Weekly meeting: (a) OP educators, (b) OP students	
Teams	April-May 2020 Posting assignments/Communication	
District E-Portfolios	May-June 2020 Uploading/Tracking student work	
This City trails	4 times a week to everyday March 31st-December 18th 2020	Connecting with the more-than-human world

In March 2020, learning environments transferred to Zoom, Teams, and eventually to digital portfolios on Valley School District's website portal. Online learning environments took over and this posed some unexpected challenges for outdoor education. Zoom meetings permitted students and educators to keep connected. The OP

opted to set up two Zoom meetings a week between April 2020 to the end of May 2020; one for educators and adults involved in the program for organizational purposes, and one with students later in the same week. The platform Teams was used to post and communicate times for meetings and learning opportunities for students. By the end of April 2020, Bear Mountain Middle School set up digital portfolios to collect students' responses to learning opportunities. School resumed in an altered format in June 2020 with the new circumstances prohibiting any groupings, even outdoors. Table 1 shows this section of the school year, and chapter 5 addresses outdoor learning while on digital platforms.

This City

With in-situ participation with the OP no longer an option, I turned to forests in my own community –This City, on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa– in order to prepare outdoor suggestions to be shared digitally with the OP. This City is a small community nestled in alpine landscapes. An impressive network of hiking trails surrounds This City, extending well beyond residential neighbourhoods. In This City, one is practically in the forest except for the city center. Trails near my home loop as far as ten kilometres into alpine terrain; gullies, creeks, boulders, steep hills, ridges, lakes, and meadows.

While working on digital platforms, I also started spending an increasing amount of time outdoors between March 2020 and December 2020. The in-situ project with Bear Mountain Middle School ended in June 2020, but my own in-situ learning, including work with Knowledge Holder Bonnie Harvey, took place at my home and carried on in This City's trails until December 2020 when the research project officially concluded.

Relationships and Conversations

Participation in the project involved Land, humans, and more-than-human beings. To call beings I met and opened relationships with "participants" would not give justice to who they are, even when the relationship was ephemeral. Building relationships is a connecting point between portraiture and Indigenous approaches to research which sees actors or relationships rather than participants (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997; S. Wilson, 2008). A consultation with Faye O'Neil further confirmed that using *relationship(s)* would be an appropriate word choice. The decision to refrain from calling beings *participant(s)* is a small gesture of resistance challenging unquestioned answers such as assigned identity.

The sections below address how Land is included in the project and how more-than-humans were considered. Participation, consent, and anthropomorphism are discussed in order to demonstrate how ethical care was, and continues to be, enacted towards more-than-humans involved in the research. Human relationships connected to Valley School District and stemming from the OP are then introduced. A concluding section finally depicts my first meeting with Knowledge Holder Bonnie Harvey, who verbalized the reciprocal process of choosing each other, rather than entering into a researcher-participant transaction.

ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa Relationship

Categorizing Land as either a place or a participant in the research is incongruent with her very nature as "a conscious being that has the ability to sense, experience, and be aware" (Styres, 2017, p. 124), and reflects underlying colonialism. Ahenakew (2017; as

cited in Fettes et al., 2022), sees a conundrum where (re)engaging with Land still comes short of addressing how she teaches through being herself. As such, ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa is is an all encompassing relationship.

The nature of the OP as well as shortened timeline and changes imposed by the pandemic delineated learning locations into spaces and places. Each holds a meaning in relation to Land. Styres (2017) views space as a general empty reference, whereas places are storied and experienced. She (2018) further develops the meaning of Land:

> Placefulness is not something independent from Land but exists *within* the nuanced contexts of Land. Land reaches boundaries of place by embodying the principles, philosophies, and ontologies that transcend the material geography of land and the making of place or placefulness. (p. 27)

Land can inform the placefulness of learning locations, and lead into the circular journey towards seeking more of the richness held in these locations.

More-than-Human Relationships

Encounters, relationships, and connections with more-than-humans, being part of placefulness, bring attention to participation in the project. Datura (2022) considers "what it would mean to conduct research *with* place" and suggests drawing guidance from the more-than-human world, to let this guidance come to us (p. 142). Throughout this project, connections and relationships with more-than-humans occurred in this serendipitous fashion with varying amounts of repeated encounters. More-than-humans dwelling in learning locations either entered into relationships or chose not to (Noorani & Brigstocke, 2018), or experienced us (Fettes et al., 2022). Some relationships were

fleeting while others last the length of their season. To chart more-than-human encounters would take away from experiencing them as they emerged. I chose for the reader to meet who offered guidance with similar intrigue.

Noorani and Brigstocke (2018) raise the notion of more-than-humans' consent in participatory research as central yet requiring new ethical frameworks as to prevent lapsing into anthropocentric research tendencies. They give an example of how willing participation can be interpreted:

> In terms of participation, Taylor [2016] gives examples of birds declining to participate. She was attacked by a 'bird-musician' twice during nesting season and, concluding that the bird was quitting the project, no longer recorded there. Similarly, on one occasion eight pied butcherbirds evicted her from their territory via harsh calls and beak claps. Taylor suggests that the birds both were fully involved in the co-production of key project outputs, namely the music, and also had a genuine choice to decline to participate. (p. 29)

Conscious that this way of thinking is out of norms, Bastian et al. (2017) acknowledge the issue of anthropomorphism but remind the reader of the redundancy in addressing this topic in research:

> One response to anxieties about anthropomorphism is to point to the huge amount of research that has shown that nonhumans are capable of a much wider range of cognitive, emotional and symbolic behaviours than they have traditionally been given credit for in Western cultures. (p. 7)

Their concern is that attention is diverted back to this notion having to be proven over and over rather than focusing on the FPPL and connections with the more-than-human world for example. Noorani and Brigstocke (2018), and Piersol (2022), see agency as relevant to the more-than-human world. This parallels how Land herself has agency, being a relation (Chambers, 2006; Kimmerer 2013).

Considerations around consent from the more-than-human world went beyond the acknowledgement of ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. They were derived from learnings shared by Indigenous colleagues and the r's of Indigenous research: respect, responsibility, and reciprocity. Consequently, I respected the environment and especially messages from more-than-humans, was conscious of reciprocity by thanking and bringing offerings, acted as a steward, modelled safety for both more-than-humans and myself, and behaved in a manner to keep disturbances to a minimum. Concrete examples of these actions come to light in the ecoportraits.

Valley School District Relationships

Two relationships were initially sought for this project: team of educators who were implementing an outdoor program in a middle school setting, mindful of Indigenous knowledge. I had worked with one of the educators, Jody, at a different school, and my relationship with the OP educators was as a colleague in Valley School District.

Qualitative sampling would label approaching Jody and Rhett (pseudonyms) as convenience sampling (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The choice, however, reflects portraiture's appreciation of pre-existing relationships (Chapman, 2005; Ingman, 2017), and S. Wilson's (2008) emphasis on the special significance of relationships and

community. I looked to my professional Valley School District's education community for relationships on which to scaffold experiences and knowledge.

The circle of relationships was extended to include additional colleagues similar to qualitative research's snowball sampling (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). In both portraiture and an Indigenous paradigm, relationships grow to include connections with other people who can provide input into the project (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997; S. Wilson, 2008). Six colleagues working with either Bear Mountain Middle School or Valley School District were recruited by word of mouth or through people already connected to the research. Written or oral consent was obtained prior to any meeting or conversation/interview. Table 2 provides an overview of the relationships formed during the project while Figure 4 indicate how these relationships were interconnected.

Figure 4

The Interconnectedness Within the Project

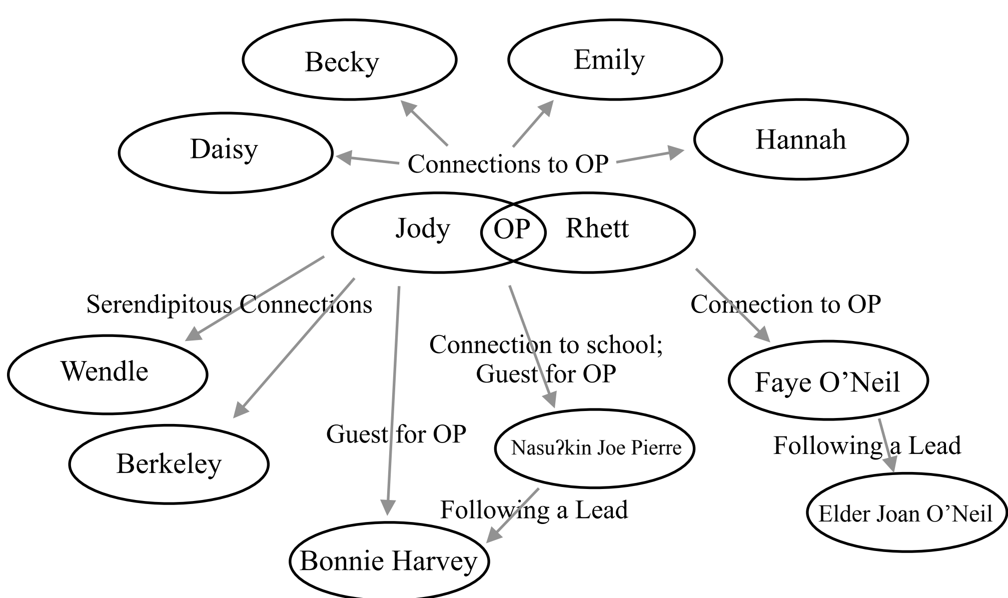


Table 2

Relationships Within the Project.

Relationships Within the Project November 2019- September 2020			
Name	Pronoun	Consent	Sampling Portraiture-Indigenous/Qualitative
Jody (P)	She/Her	Written	Pre-established relationship/ Convenient
Rhett (P)	He/Him	Written	Pre-established relationship/ Convenient
Hannah (P)	She/Her	Written	Connections/Snowball
Daisy (P)	She/Her	Written	Connections/Snowball
Becky (P)	She/Her	Written	Pre-established relationship Connections/Snowball
Emily (P)	She/Her	Written	Pre-established relationship Connections/Snowball
Faye O'Neil (Ktunaxa)	She/Her	Written	Connections/Snowball
Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre (Ktunaxa)	He/Him	Written	Pre-established relationship Connections/Snowball
Berkeley (P)	She/Her	Written	Serendipitous/Opportunistic
Wendle (P)	He/Him	Written	Pre-established relationship Serendipitous/Opportunistic
Bonnie Harvey (Ktunaxa Knowledge Holder)	She/Her	Written & Oral	Pursuing Lead/Opportunistic Connection through Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre
Joan O'Neil (Ktunaxa Elder)	She/Her	Written & Oral	Pursuing Lead/Opportunistic Connection through Faye O'Neil

Note. (P) Pseudonym

Finally, Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) suggest "to roam the halls and speak spontaneously with actors on the scene," being ready for the unexpected,

serendipity, and being willing to pursue those leads by considering "each individual as a resource" (p. 166). Such an opportunity presented itself twice while at Bear Mountain Middle School, where comments expressed during casual conversations led to connecting formally within the boundaries of the project. These connections were not recruited but happened fortuitously. The relationships with Knowledge Holder Bonnie Harvey and Elder Joan O'Neil, with whom I connected at the end of the project, were opportunistic in nature as I chose to intuitively follow these leads (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). To recruit Bonnie, I requested the support of Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre, and to recruit Joan I requested the support of her daughter Faye O'Neil.

Meeting Bonnie

The presence of the researcher within the project demands a similar reciprocal approach to human relationships as the reciprocal positioning of *receiver* embedded in Indigenous ways of being. Through common experiences, the voice of the researcher is discernible although her presence is increasingly subdued as it is renegotiated (Chapman, 2005; Gaztambide-Fernández et al., 2011; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Relationships formed throughout the project are visible, valued, and highlight the researcher's non-expertise (Doucet, 2018; Styres & Zinga, 2013; S. Wilson, 2008). To be a humble learner and to recognize that relationships are experts and leaders in their environments is central to the research. Timmerman (2022) shares her own approach to relationships "as leaders, as whole human beings with faults, but as exemplars, mentors, people from whom I had something to learn" (p. 32).

Knowledge Holder Bonnie Harvey joined the project as teacher. During our first meeting, she expressed her willingness to participate in the research as a choice based on her impression of both researcher and project: "You know, if I had felt that… Er, maybe she's a little flaky, I wouldn't have been like let's go outside. I would have been like: Okay let's do these questions, I have somewhere I need to be" (Bonnie Harvey, August 10, 2020).

A journaling excerpt reflects the same meeting where Bonnie also recognizes that our work will take time:

> Today, Bonnie Harvey came to my house. Still in pandemic times, I had rigorously sanitized everywhere, treats and tea were ready. I thought it would be a short interview but from the moment Bonnie arrived, I knew we would be meeting for longer than 20-30 minutes.
>
> I had only jotted down three questions, one of them about her ribs recipe which made her laugh. I was concerned with taking up too much of her time. We'd never met. Bonnie is very jovial, friendly, and gregarious. We are both very energetic, I can tell.
>
> […] We took the time to chat and I talked about my journey through the PhD. I asked if Joe had told her what I was doing, she replied in the negative. I explained my project in as much details as I could. She took notes and listened quietly. Then she exclaimed: "Let's go outside!" Almost two hours later, at the end of our meeting, opening her agenda, she says "Let's pick another date, we're going to work together." (Journal entry, August 10, 2020)

“Part of being in a meaningful relationship with another human being,” Simpson (2017) contends “is recognizing who they are, it is reflecting back to them their essence and worth as a being, it is a mirroring ” (p. 180). Reciprocity within a research context can take an explicit or implicit form as the project progresses but ultimately values relationships (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). As such, naming relationships, like Bonnie’s, respects her wishes and demonstrates consistency with an Indigenous approach to sharing knowledge (S. Wilson, 2008). Ecoportraiture values and expands reciprocity to all beings and can echo Simpson’s (2017) question “what do I mirror back to my kin?” (p. 181). A reflexive relationship to Land understands the profound impact of reciprocity for humans and more-than-humans alike.

Conversations and Experiences

Styres (2017) states that “we feel Land’s rhythms” whether we choose to acknowledge it or not (p. 155). In other words, Land does not end where concrete begins. Bitingly cold temperatures, pedagogical choices, and the pandemic, influenced where the OP experiences took place. Thus, experiences often occurred indoors or about the town.

The nature of the experiences transformed according to the setting although each not exclusive to indoors or outdoors. Often, being outdoors translated into direct contact with more-than-humans (including when in town), and being indoors meant experiences through stories, and continuous steps towards a pedagogy of Land.

Styres et al. (2013) stress the importance of avoiding the nature/city dichotomy and I make the distinction here because of the 2020 pandemic. Confinement altered and hindered the OP’s opportunities to expand outdoors on learning experiences that had

occurred mainly indoors throughout late fall and winter; an educational extension the OP educators had counted on in their long-range plan. Table 3 shows the original project timeline along with the extended deadline approved by the university when the pandemic transformed daily life. Time spent outdoors, for myself as a researcher, shifted from working along the OP at Bear Mountain Middle School to This City's forest trails.

Table 3

Timeline of the Project

<table>
<tr><th colspan="5">Project Timeline
2019-2020</th></tr>
<tr><td>Sept.- Oct. 2019</td><td>Nov.2019 - March 2020</td><td>April 2020- May 2020</td><td>June 2020</td><td>June 2020- Dec. 2020</td></tr>
<tr><td>Pre-Research visits (3) to Bear Mountain Middle School</td><td colspan="4"></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td><u>In-situ with the OP:</u>
a)Bear Mountain Middle School/ Classrooms (27 days)
b)Learning Locations visits (12)
c) Guests coming to the OP (2)</td><td colspan="2">Initial in-situ project length
→</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>Online Learning
Zoom - TEAMS
Home
(15)</td><td>** June 1st 2020, school resumed in an altered format which did not include the OP.</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td colspan="3"><u>Switching to This City's trails to:</u>
a) develop learning activities for the OP: April - May 2020.
b) spend time focusing on the more-than-human world in this particular place April 2020-Dec. 2020.
c) increments of time spent in the trails coincide with the bear
season, and whether it was safe to be in the woods alone:
starting with four times a week from March to mid-November;
every day from mid-November until Dec. 2020 (and until spring).</td></tr>
</table>

A Different Kind of Listening

Due to COVID-19 and the isolation regulations imposed by the BC Health authorities much of the learning with the OP took place indoors. Assembling an ecoportrait focused on encounters with the more-than-human demanded a different view and interpretation of listening.

Listening, as integral to ecoportraiture, can already take many forms. Yet, another form calls on researchers to learn "to recognize, and be interrupted by, non-human agencies, forces and forms, and note the role that they are already playing in the constructions and disruptions of publics" (Noorani & Brigstocke, 2018, p. 24). Publics, in Noorani and Brigstocke's (2018) work, recognize the agency of more-than-humans and, in this instance, mean more-than-humans. If paying attention to sounds and other senses plays a central role (Abram, 1996/2017; Noorani & Brigstocke, 2018), listening, as Fettes et al. (2022) observe above, can benefit from being informed by Indigenous ways of doing.

Wilson and Hughes' (2019) "methodology of attending" which involves gaining knowledge through one's whole attentive being, suggests ways such listening may be extended (p. 11). These ways, representing an Indigenist epistemology, are summarized as follow, "Indigenist epistemology includes cognitive knowing as well as experiential understanding; sensory, emotional, and spiritual knowing; intuition; dreams; and cultural knowing" (Wilson & Hughes, 2019, p. 11). By carefully *attending* to stories these connections can be felt.

Archibald (2008) attests to the power of stories to help Indigenous peoples in urban areas attend to “emotional, healing, and spiritual aspects” (p. 100). Stories also have the power to be interrelational, fostering a synergy capable of infusing life into them, bringing them “to life” (Archibald, 2008, p. 100). When Styres et al. (2013) reaffirm how “*Land* in cities speaks to us too– whether we choose to listen or not” (p. 39), this not only means through stories but also perhaps indoors. Thus, indoors, where Archibald (2008) tells some of her stories, can be a place where imagination as well as stories relaying more-than-humans connections can elicit a strong sense of interaction and connections for listeners. Styres et al. (2013) recognize how modern urban landscapes are perceived as erasing both Indigenous histories and the relationship to land, “but the stories remain, carried forward from beneath the concrete to inform urban landscapes for those who take the time to explore and listen” (p. 45).

The pandemic propelled ecoportraiture into unanticipated directions. The intent for ecoportraiture to “become a broad and varied field of inquiry” (Fettes et al., 2022, p. 4), creates a space where connections with the more-than-human world can manifest differently (indoors for example), remotely (via digital platforms), and not necessarily in temporal and spacial alignment (like hearing stories and experiencing place/more-than-human at a different time). Much like portraiture, ecoportraiture is malleable and its willingness to *go there* through “metaphors and other signs linked to encoded memories opens the door to multiple modes of knowledge transmission and data collection for interpretation” (de Grandpré, 2022, p. 108).

Gathering Conversations and Experiences

Both portraiture and Indigenous researchers fundamentally reject dismissive and diminutive views of relationships found in research (Chilisa, 2012; L.T. Smith, 2012; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Research involving Indigenous Peoples increasingly seeks to "explicitly mov[e] away from deficit-based models and towards a consciously positive stance," evidenced by ensuring projects are undertaken *with* them (de Grandpré, 2022, p. 103). Research language must actively curb colonialism expressed through references such as *on*, *for*, or *about*, Indigenous peoples (Chilisa, 2012; Coburn, 2013; Longboat, 2008; McGregor et al., 2018; S. Wilson, 2008). A similar view is emerging in research concerning more-than-humans who are sought to take part in projects, whether *who* participates is known or unknown prior to the research, or as Land informs inquiries. The intention is to avoid situating more-than-humans as "mere resource for human society" and to truly consider the relationship with humans (Bastian et al., 2017; Noorani & Brigstocke, 2018, p. 10).

For some research methodologies, the involvement of more-than-humans is shifting from doing research *on* to doing research *with,* and strives for "the same kind of relation of care, collaboration and mutual respect that characterizes human research at its best and most ethical" (Noorani & Brigstocke, 2018, p. 10). Participatory Research (PR), in particular, explores the coproduction of knowledge working *with* more-than-humans as "fellow enquirers" (Bastian et al., 2017, p. 7). The methodology recognizes their "agential capacities" and willingly looks to formulate ways to "enable their active participation in research processes" (Bastian et al., 2017, p. 12). Attending to this sense of

agency is another foundational tenet of ecoportraiture expressed in the motivation to "understand how others live meaningful lives *on their terms*" (Fettes et al., 2022, p. 12).

Acknowledging more-than-humans' agency is a fairly recent methodological stance that has otherwise been long held Indigenous knowledge. Thus, while gathering conversations and experiences, I recognized Land's agency through two observations shared by Kimmerer (2013): (a) intelligences other than our own exists; learning the grammar of animacy, and (b) plants – I contend this can be extended to all more-than-humans– tell stories by what they do.

Anticipatory Schema and Interviews

The gathering of conversations and experiences during this project happened in three stages: (a) pre-research visits to Bear Mountain Middle School, (b) the ongoing in-situ research with the OP, during the pandemic, and in This City's forest trails, and (c) post-research work and member-checking.

Preparatory work for the project involved building an anticipatory schema –a framework that includes a set of guiding questions– "usually the result of a review of relevant literature, prior experience in similar settings, and a general knowledge of the field of inquiry" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 185). Through this phase the researcher, in self-reflection about the work to be undertaken, records thoughts about anticipatory themes. The framework is part of an "iterative and generative process" and is a flexible tool where aspects "are immediately transformed to match the realities of the setting" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, pp. 185–186). In the process of building the anticipatory schema, I familiarized myself with both indoor and outdoor environments at

Bear Mountain Middle School. I reconnected with pre-existing relationships and initiated new ones with colleagues, and with more-than-human kins.

I organized overarching themes according to the literature review, my experience as a researcher and middle school educator, and based on a previous research project looking into experienced educators' work with bringing the FPPL into their practice. Interviews were designed in relation to the themes: (a) describing the journey to the current OP (Journey), (b) describing relationships with Land considering the OP had readjusted their focus to include Indigenous thought (Relationships), (c) familiarity and embedding the FPPL (FPPL), and (d) the meaning of teaching while on Ktunaxa Territory (Land Education).

Questions were piloted with three colleagues who have extensive experience with Indigenous education in Valley School District, to determine soundness and coherence (Appendix E). Piloting contributes to the validity of a study and serves as a tool to to refine questions (Cohen et al., 2018; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). But, as Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) recognize, questions may change once in the environment, the result of an attentive and organic process. Pre-research visits confirmed the initial anticipatory schema while emphasizing particular questions and specific themes. Table 4 shows the anticipatory schema in relation to the research questions, where pre-research visits oriented the research's focus initially (in grey), as well as how information was gathered during those three days.

Table 4

Anticipatory Schema and Particular Focuses

Research Questions	Anticipatory Schema -Guiding Questions-	Overarching Theme(s)
Research Question: In what ways does Land inform educators' own learning, relationships, and professional practice while working and living on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa ?		• FPPL • Journey • Land Education • Relationships The FPPL and Relationships themes stood out, as they were more readily connected to school life and were observable during the first three visits.
Sub-Question 1: How can teaching practice be influenced when educators consciously acknowledge being on Ktunaxa Land?	- How has the OP changed the way you are teaching? - We acknowledge our presence on the land, and we connect with the land. Has there been a time when you learned from the land? - How does that experience, and others, lead what you do as an educator, your approach to the land? - What does it mean to teach on Ktunaxa land?	• Relationships • Journey • Land Education
Sub-Question 2: How does Land influence the learning journey in the process of building bridges of understanding between Indigenous and Western philosophies?	- What thinking process did you go through in creating the OP? What was your purpose at first? - How can teachers re-educate themselves to start decolonizing their teaching? - What is important to understand about the FPPL as a whole? - What are some of the teachings you have learned from being on Ktunaxa Territory?	• Journey • Relationships • FPPL
Sub-Question 3: How can Land be purposefully re-centred through the building of bridges of understanding?	- Tell me a meaningful story about connecting with Land? - Knowing that you are on Ktunaxa Territory, what guides your planning? - What does land mean to you? - Can you describe a moment, a time, an event, when Land and the FPPL connected for you?	• FPPL • Land Education • Relationships
Information collection: • Descriptive notes regarding the environments • Impressionistic record • Photographs • School and OP information materials		

Four initial interviews were conducted with Jody, Rhett, Becky, and Emily. Extra time and a process check were included at the end of the interview process, to allow reflection on the interview process itself, to address additional questions, and finally for casual conversations. Interview questions were shared prior to meeting. They were then recorded (audio and video) on a computer while I took notes. Interviews varied in length between thirty and sixty minutes. They were approached as conversations where questions blended together and answers could apply to more than one question. This process allowed for flexibility consistent with Kvale's (1996) traveler metaphor, where the researcher "wanders through the landscape and enters into conversations with the people encountered" (p. 4). At times, this was done literally! This provided an opportunity for relationships to share stories, a process that is consistent with Indigenous worldviews and the FPPL, and a way for me, the researcher, the traveler, to learn through others' stories.

Interviews were conducted in each relationships' preferred school environment. Kvale (1996) suggests that being in one's environment provides additional information such as localized aspects of how things are done. Marshall and Rossman (2016) refer to the concept of "mobile interview," allowing relationships to move in their own space by pointing to specific things in the room, reaching for materials and showing what is meant, thus clarifying discussions (p. 148). Once interviews were completed, they were transcribed verbatim, by myself, the researcher. I was the only person transcribing and each interview was reviewed extensively. Transcribing is not an infallible task and may be subject to varied perceptions depending on the transcriber (Kvale, 1996). Each

transcription was sent back to the co-researchers to confirm, adjust, or make changes. Relationships responded to confirm their stories and words. Relationships who worked under anonymity were informed that anything identifying them would be changed or removed.

Gathering Information Throughout the Research

A collection of additional interviews, focused follow-ups, chats, impressionistic records, sticky notes and memos, photographs, school and classroom materials were part of the gathering process, and were impacted, altered, and transformed as a result of isolation and social distancing. "Extra-intellectual" sensing (S. Wilson, 2008, p. 111) and stories (oral and printed) were also ways of gathering informations, at times, woven into other methods.

Semi-structured Interviews. Three types of in-situ interviews took place: (a) meeting with additional relationships as a result of the anticipatory schema, (b) following up on some relationships with smaller adjusted interviews serving as member-checking and pursuing themes, and (c) following up on serendipitous encounters. Interviews varied in length from twenty to ninety minutes on one occasion.

Relationships connected to the OP (Hannah, Daisy, and Faye), were sought as a result of conversations from the anticipatory schema. Hannah and Daisy's interviews were designed as conversations focused on perspectives and experiences with the OP. With Faye, the unstructured conversation influenced all Indigenous relationships, as well as all subsequent OP educators' interviews. Conversations took the direction they needed to take, without an imposed a set of questions as to be open to conversations generated in

context while relationships were being built (S. Wilson, 2008). In this co-learning position S. Wilson (2008) stresses the importance of the ability to “still your own thoughts for a moment to really understand where the other person or thing is coming from, to be able to put ideas in their context” (pp. 113–114). I usually brought an initial thought to conversations but was not committed to a particular direction.

Three interviews (Knowledge Holder Bonnie Harvey, Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre, and Elder Joan O’Neil) took place during the pandemic, socially distanced. Each of these interviews was an unstructured conversation relating to the relationships with Land. Two of these interviews were recorded and one relationship declined to be recorded.

Four relationships included follow-up interviews. Two, with Jody and Rhett, were regular monthly conversations in addition to our every day chats. Two other follow-up conversations, Faye and Bonnie, were unstructured conversations based on either the OP, the FPPL, or experiences in This City's forest. Conversations occurred in person, and on Zoom. Two were walks in the forest.

Two interviews were the result of serendipitous chats (Wendle, and Berkeley). I met with Berkley prior to the pandemic, in person, at school. The interview with Wendle was conducted via Zoom. Both of these interviews connected to a sense of place.

During the pandemic, interviews occurring in person were recorded, however, interviews conducted via Zoom were not. Unable to guarantee anonymity or safeguarding of the information, I chose to take notes during all interviews conducted on Zoom. Table 5 provides a summary of the interviews as they occurred during the research.

Table 5

Types of Interviews and When They Occurred

Conversations and Experiences Collection Over Time			
Ways of Collecting	**In-Situ** **Bear Mountain** **Middle School** Nov. 2019 - March 2020	**Pandemic** **Zoom-TEAMS** March - June 1st, 2020	**In-Situ** **This City's Forest** March - Dec. 18th, 2020
Anticipatory Schema	November 2019: Jody Rhett Becky Emily	N/A	N/A
Additional Interviews	December 2019: Hannah (Relating to OP) January 2020: Daisy (Relating to OP) February 2020: Faye (1st) (Discussing FPPL)		August 2020: Joe Pierre (Ask about the stars) Bonnie Harvey (1st) (Sharing a story in place) September 2020: Joan O'Neil
Follow-up Interviews	Once a month: Jody Rhett (FPPL check ins, personal check ins)	ongoing →	Once in June 2020 Once in late August 2020 (Walking Interview for each Jody and Rhett.) Once in December 2020 (Zoom interview each with Jody and Rhett -reflecting on working online.) June 2020: Faye (2nd - 3rd) September 2020: Bonnie (2nd - 3rd)
Serendipitous Interviews	December 2019: Berkeley (Relating to OP)		May 2020: Wendle (School as place)

Impressionistic Records. At the end of my visits with the OP, and after Zoom meetings during the pandemic, I worked on impressionistic records that served as a tool to confirm, redirect, or explore themes further. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) describe the impressionistic record as "a ruminative, thoughtful piece that identifies emerging hypotheses, suggests interpretations, describe shifts in perspectives, points to puzzle and dilemmas […] that need attention" (p. 188). Generating records works in conjunction with all other methods in a complex system of interconnection, analysis, reformulation, and confirmation. The hope is to generate theory which will be continuously revisited as it becomes more grounded throughout the project (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Impressionistic records were also generated through my evolving relationship with This City's forest trails.

Sticky Notes, Memos, Notes. Knowledge comes in different ways, sometimes from a "flash of inspiration" says S. Wilson (2008, p. 111). These methods were used on an ongoing basis, especially while on outings, to catch *on the spot thoughts*. Quick notes served to confirm previous thinking expressed in the impressionistic records, or allowed to catch otherwise fleeting feelings, emotions, new questions, and new ideas.

Note taking was privileged on two specific occasions during the research project: through Zoom meetings and for many interviews during the pandemic, (April-December 2020). Although Zoom platforms allowed for meetings to be recorded, I was unable to guarantee anonymity and the safeguarding of the information as per the consent form that were agreed upon and signed earlier in the project.

S. Wilson (2008) notes that when you enter into a conversation with an Elder, chances are relying on your memory is the protocol that is going to be adopted and work, as recordings and note taking may be viewed as invasive. I had started taking some notes during my conversation with Elder Joan O'Neil, but ended up stuffing pencil and notepad back in my bag to instead go with the flow. S. Wilson (2008) recognizes that thoughts will come, and thoughts may be extrapolated upon, but overall these are valid conversations, contextual, and relational.

Photography. I drew inspiration from Keena (2022) and Piersol (2022) who used photographs as part of their ecoportraiture projects. The intent in my project was to use photography primarily as a documenting medium. I eventually started taking pictures to bring attention to the more-than-human world to the class. Prior to spring break, a picture corner was established In Jody's classroom, in preparation for outings come spring time. Anyone could post pictures of more-than-humans and either tell the story, or tell about relationships.

Throughout the pandemic, I used photography to organize and communicate OP learning opportunities through online portfolios. In April 2020, photography became a means to develop and share connections with the more-than-human world. The change in approach reignited my own passion for photography and became central in connecting and entering into relationships with the more-than-human world. This foray into an art-based method further influenced my formulation of ecoportraiture and how I experienced "engagements with non-humans that may otherwise remain unnoticed" (Alam et al., 2017, p. 260).

Graham (2007) wonders "what kind of art can be made about the places we inhabit" considering the coming together of cultural traditions in conjunction with relationships to the environment (p. 385). This is perhaps one of the high points of this doctoral research, having been asked many times what wondrous being I was preoccupied with while lying down on the forest floor. "Not a what, a Who!" If my passionate experience was purposeful, critical, and aesthetic for me, maybe it could be somewhat similar for those experiencing the pictures as I tell the story.

Additional Written Materials. Written materials were created and/or collected on a regular basis from the OP educators' goals and projects, and once from AbEd. During the pandemic, written materials were created and collected systematically on a weekly basis, from the beginning of April until June 1st when school resumed in an altered format.

One specific document created by the Aboriginal Nations Education Division (ANED) of School District #61 Greater Victoria, *The First Peoples Principles of Learning for Teachers* (ANED, 2017), was shared by Jody in January 2020, and prompted a small restructure of the follow-up interviews for the OP educators. In order to use this document, permission was requested from Valley School District Aboriginal Education Coordinators. Jody's sharing was an added resource for the school district. The FPPL for Teachers document was used as an additional way to reflect on the manner in which the FPPL are embedded into one's practice and was used monthly by Jody, Rhett, and myself, as was possible throughout the school year and the pandemic.

Sensing and Stories. Listening, as presented in this thesis, has transcended conventional ways of doing. To reiterate how whole body listening, and more, is viewed as a valid way of gathering information, I have added *sensing* –my own designation– as a method of gathering information. S. Wilson (2008) sees as much validity in intuitive knowledge yielded by "the universe around us" as that gained through the five senses; both are valuable and should be used in conjunction with each other (p. 111). Sensing, expressed through sudden flashes as mentioned by S. Wilson (2008) above, or as spur of the moment thoughts communicated by beings around us as Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre shares, is included in this project.

S. Wilson (2008) warns that nowadays "knowledge is being stripped of its relationships and being used without accountability" (p. 114). Ktunaxa stories were shared during this project. I, however, drew on them lightly, with permission, because the goal of this work is to grow from the lessons learned rather than to relay the stories themselves. I was guided by both the protocols laid out in the FPPL and the common respect that exists in Valley School District about stories being shared by Ktunaxa Peoples. The stories were not recorded; for two stories I took notes relating to my own thoughts, and for two other stories I was the audience and took no notes. I include the story *Shi-shi-etko,* by Nicole I. Campbell (2005), as source of relevant knowledge. This is a FNESC and Valley School District approved resource available to teachers in BC. Shi-shi-etko helped demonstrate how stories contribute to connection with the more-than-human world.

Table 6 summarizes information about gathering methods used during the research project and how they transformed as the school year and project evolved.

Table 6

Information Gathering Through the Project

Conversations and Experiences Gathering Over Time			
Ways of Collecting	**In-Situ** **Bear Mountain School** Nov. 2020 - March 2021	**Pandemic** **Zoom-TEAMS** March - June 1st 2021	**In-Situ** **This City's Forest** March - Dec. 18th 2021
Impressionistic Records	Every OP day (39) →	Every OP Meeting (15) →	Once a week to twice a week as time in the forest increased
Memos - Notes	→	Ongoing Notes were the privileged method during the Zoom meetings (15) and 3 interviews (April-May).	Notes were the privileged method for 2 interviews in June 2020, and 2 interviews in December 2020.
Photography	• Documenting Bear Mountain Middle School environments. • Documenting learning locations. • Starting picture board in Jody's classroom.	• Using photography to create online outdoor learning activities • Using photography to communicate/record encounters with the more-than-human world for the OP. • Turning to photography as an art-based method to convey relationships with the more-than-human world.	• Photography as art-based method to convey relationships with the more-than-human world, increasingly focusing solely on regular weekly to daily visits in This City's forest trails.
Additional Written Materials	• ABED:Talking Earth January 2020 • Jody: SD#61 (ANED) FPPL for Teachers document. January 2020	Monthly revising of the document until the end of June 2020.	

Making Sense of the Information

Gathering information was a continuous process defined by its organic, fluid, and disparate nature. I looked at information through portraiture's five ways of constructing themes: (a) paying attention to repetitive refrains, (b) noticing resonant metaphors, (c) noting institutional and cultural rituals, (d) using voice-factual information-observations triangulation, and (e) revealing patterns (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Early in the process however, I faced making sense of encounters with ʔa·knuqǂuǂam̓ (bald eagle) or ʔak̓is hanq̓u (cattail), for example, whom we had only met once or twice with the OP.

Lived ecoportraiture entails emphasizing more-than-humans' agency. I realized the need to go beyond specific themes as, often, subtle lessons manifested which did not seem to connect easily to other OP information. Indigenous relationships, who shared of themselves through stories, also caused reflection as to whether I should break down information into a thematic analysis. Further, as the pandemic continued, a substantial amount of diverse and eclectic information accumulated from: the OP months (5), the Zoom months (2), and time in This City's forest (10 months). Although overarching themes emerged stories needed be told rather than broken down. Knowledge Holder Bonnie Harvey shared with me a lesson learned from Elders which represented well my questions surrounding the organization of the information: "You may not get your answer right away."

As Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) emphasize, I had to set aside a need for order and stability. Sometimes the answers we seek will not manifest themselves in the manner we expect (S. Wilson, 2008). It is while rereading Bonnie's second conversation

that the way to make sense of the research information occurred to me. She suggests to educators to include Ktunaxa knowledge into teaching in this way: "You could braid it. […] One strand of hair is not as strong as (she reaches for her long braid), as it being braided together. […] let's take what we have and use that strength instead of looking at everything as a weakness. How can we strengthen it?"

Braiding permitted me to work with those tensions that had become tricky to reconcile. The portraitist must "embrace tensions" that arise, "between organization and classification on one hand and maintaining the rich complexity of human experience on the other" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 192). Within ecoportraiture, these tensions include more-than-human experiences, and experiencing the more-than-human world. By braiding information as Bonnie suggested, I was able to draw from the three "strands" of time imposed by the pandemic to bring meaning into perspective. Suitably, the time barriers faded to the background in favour of the experiences.

Braiding Information

In order for the (eco)portrait to become whole, a search for themes occurs through a disassembling process; which seems counterintuitive considering the intensive work of bringing all parts together (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). The tensions the ecoportraitist must embrace, within the methodology's own workings, are tensions S. Wilson (2008) and colleagues negotiate from a different standpoint. For them, the importance of relationships takes precedence, as the intent is for the reader to experience relationality.

Braiding allows for different methodologies and ways of making sense of information to hold simultaneous value in the desire to present a unified whole. Donald's (2012) description of the work involved in braiding echos that of the portraitist:

> The textual quality of the braid emerges as the researcher engages with the artifact and place that inform the inquiry, makes decisions on issues that need closer attention, and decides how best to interpret the significance of the character of the inquiry to the interests of ethical relationality. (p. 544)

Braiding brings information together making tensions known to the reader while respecting all those who contributed to the research.

Braiding Head and Heart

Resisting the Westernized tendency to break down interviews, reflections, and experiences, S. Wilson (2008) and Kovach (2018) advocate making sense of information by keeping relationships intact. The key is to recognize existing relationships, which would be lost in a process that separates or classifies information and knowledge. The pinecone bird feeder activity, which makes abstraction of the web of relationships pinecone belongs to, comes to mind.

It is not only the head that processes information but the heart as well. In this way, seeing relationships is not about teasing out the themes within, rather it is about seeing the relations as a whole. There is a need to "hook those lines of communication up," the heart and the head, and work from an "intuitive logic" (S. Wilson, 2008, p. 119). Work of this nature is complex and I remain a learner in regards to learning intuitive logic. Bringing heart into my research appealed greatly to me so I tempered the volition to

classify and organize all information, and kept some communications and experiences intact.

Becoming a Bricoleuse

Experiences with more-than-humans in This City's forest and learning locations are relayed as they happened, braided with connections from conversations and themes that arose while with the OP. In their work, Hasebe-Ludt et al. (2009) view braiding as "a kind of visiting with the two other people in the circle" (p.11); I sought to emulate this by bringing three different settings together and convey connections with places, peoples, and Land. The panoply of methods has meant that these experiences were represented in various forms. Kincheloe et al. (2018) explain how bricoleurs –or bricoleuses like me– understand these methods not only as a procedural means but also as "a technology of justification, meaning a way of defending what we assert [they] know and the process by which [they] know" (p. 246). Hasebe-Ludt et al. (2009) admit to disrupting written text with images, presented as "life writing texts" (p. 11). This is what I've leaned towards by braiding Indigenous and non-Indigenous stories, photography, sensing and conversations with themes. Bricoleuses challenge the status quo with regards to knowledge and ways of knowing in what Kincheloe et al. (2018) call a "countercolonial move" (p. 253).

Conversations with Indigenous relationships informed and influenced this research project as a whole. Words flowed into all parts of the thesis and I have repeated them again where they provided a new perspective. Kovach (2018) identifies one's belief in an Indigenous epistemology as "knowledge being animate and fluid" (p. 218). This is perhaps an example of how classifying ideas may deprive the reader of lessons shared

and the reflections they may engender, and the significance of relationships with ideas (Kovach, 2018; S. Wilson, 2008). Knowledge and information from those conversations were braided when appropriate as per who it was shared from. Knowledge is a common construction S. Wilson (2008) states, “you’re not just gaining information from people; you’re sharing as well. You’re analyzing and you’re building it as well. It’s not just something that’s out there; it’s something that you’re building for you” (p. 122). Braiding information, then, represents the *heads* and the *hearts* involved in the project whether the information came from Indigenous ways of doing and being, from ecoportraiture, or from Land herself.

Braiding Pattern

Hasebe-Ludt et al. (2009) elaborate their own way of braiding and admit “there is no formula for the mixing” (p. 13). They created their braiding under *Métissage* headings, and worked with a rule of three: three braids of three strands each for each Métissage. The fluidity in creating patterns can be enticing but key to braiding is “the weaver of the braid must remain mindful that each research context must be explored and evaluated based on the particular character of the situation” (Donald, 2012, p. 544). Similarly to ecoportraiture, the essence of the braided contexts are experienced and palpable for the reader, whether they are spatial, temporal, ideas, senses, feelings, or stories. I followed a similar braiding pattern as Hasebe-Ludt et al. (2009) as well as portraiture’s structure. I included portraiture’s attention to dissonance and left room for loose information, extra information, or contradictory information, as it emerged.

Several Ecoportraits, One Ecoportrait

Through the (eco)portrait, a narrative, representative and truthful, is conveyed leading actors involved in the process, including the audience, to utter the "yes, of course" Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) aim for. The uniqueness of the experience depicted in the (eco)portrait is tied to the understanding that only one perspective out of many is represented (Anderson, 2011; Chapman, 2005; Gaztambide-Fernández et al., 2011). Lawrence-Lightfoot (2005) reiterates this fundamental element, "there is never a single story; many could be told" (p. 10). The researcher experiences her own conscious processes at all stages of the research. Thus, creating a deep connection with the readership, the portrait reflects aspects of the researcher's transformative experience. A transformation may also follow for the relationships involved in the project, as well as the audience, as they themselves connect with the perspective represented.

Indigenous research recognizes the presence of multiple perspectives as each person who takes part in the research brings their own knowledge, thus perspective(s), to the discussions (Belczewski, 2009; Datta, 2018; Doucet, 2018; McGregor et al., 2018; S. Wilson, 2008). The researcher, as storyteller, puts all elements of the research in place, based on an awareness of the listener (audience), and lets the listener make their own connections (Hatcher et al., 2009; S. Wilson, 2008). Portraiture shares a similar desired outome. It is understood that what works in one community cannot be assumed to apply in another, as each Indigenous community holds its own knowledge (L.T. Smith, 2012; S. Wilson, 2008). Knowledge is shared but never imposed. The audience, each in their own time, will make the connections they need.

Being Immersed in the Experience

Ecoportraiture entails living immersive experiences. It is about communicating this experience such that it is *felt,* and having the audience experience the ecoportrait(s) in an interactive manner (de Grandpré, 2022). A critical perspective of the ecoportrait(s) aims to "seduce" readers to "think more deeply about issues that concern them" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis,1997, p. 10). I tweaked this perspective slightly and encourage the reader to live an experience as a path to reflexivity rather than seduce the reader into reflection (Datura, 2022; Fettes et al., 2022; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). The educator in me wants the reader to experience what more-than-humans, humans, and Land have scaffolded along the way, and connect with some, or all, parts of the project. Hasebe-Ludt et al.'s (2009) observe about their braided collective effort; "as with any work of art the effect is unknown until it occurs" (p. 10). A reflexive relationship to Land can yield the same result.

Interconnecting Ecoportraits

An interconnected structural design features three themes throughout the braided ecoportraits: practices, identity, and place. In a previous research regarding the FPPL, results yielded the intricate manner in which they are connected and complement to one another (de Grandpré, 2017). Much like the challenge and incongruence in separating the FPPL into individualized topics, stories and experiences can pertain to various themes and are interconnected. Consequently I opted for a chaptered, as well as a lateral, assemblage honouring the presence of ideas in each braids and across braids. Each braid is constructed from one or more short tableaux which reflect experiences, discussions,

and thoughts.The three braids are connected to the research’s sub-questions. Ideas prevailed over a chronological assemblage of the braided ecoportraits to explore variations on each main theme. Table 7 indicates how the ecoportraits are structured and connected, and includes the occasional extra strand.

Table 7

Structure for Braided Ecoportraits

Braided Ecoportraits			
Ecoportait Themes	Chapter 4 **Purpose in Practice**	Chapter 5 **A Sense of Identity**	Chapter 6 **A Sense of Place**
Purpose in Practice In addition to chapter 4 the first braid of chapter 5 and 6 relates to purpose in practice.	Braid 1 Welcoming Relationships - **Strand one:** Circles - **Strand two:** Kiʔsuʔk kyukyit (Greeting) Circle - **Strand three:** tak̓a¢ (squirrel) and one Circle	Braid 4 Advocacy - **Strand one:** Your … ness - **Strand two:** k̓ustit̓ (Larch) - **Strand three:** Zoom	Braid 7 Transforming Approaches - **Strand one:** Things in Nature - **Strand two:** Above the Tree Line - **Strand three:** Being in Place
A Sense of Identity In addition to chapter 5 the second braid of chapter 4 and 6 relates to a sense of identity.	Braid 2 (Re)Learning to Lean - **Strand one:** Senses - **Strand two:** Ktunaxa Calendar - **Strand three:** Modelling	Braid 5 Meeting Beings - **Strand one:** kyanɨakɨiquɨaqpik (heartleaf arnica) - **Strand two:** Smellscaping - **Strand three:** Taking	Braid 8 Creating Connections - **Strand one:** Creating Connections - **Strand two:** Bear Feet, Bare Feet, Bear Feat - **Strand three:** Signs - **Extra Strand:** Stories
A Sense of Place In addition to chapter 6 the third braid of chapter 4 and 5 relates to a sense of place.	Braid 3 Preparedness - **Strand one:** In Someone’s Home - **Strand two:** Share - **Strand three:** A Ready Mindset	Braid 6 (Re)Centering Identity - **Strand one:** Place Knowing - **Strand two:** Cattails - **Strand three:** Conflicting Identities	Braid 9 Taking Time - **Strand one:** Facets of Time - **Strand two:** (Re)visiting Place - **Strand three:** Thanking

"Paying attention is a form of reciprocity with the living world, receiving gifts with open eyes and open heart."

(Kimmerer, 2013, p. 222)

Chapter 4: Purpose In Practice

Braided ecoportraits in this chapter connect to sub-question one: *How can teaching practice be influenced when educators consciously acknowledge being on Ktunaxa Land?*

The structure of the text carefully pieced together in Hasebe-Ludt et al.'s (2009) braided collection, *Life Writing and Literary Métissage as an Ethos of Our Times,* influenced the organization of this chapter, as well as chapters 5 and 6. For each chapter I introduce how key elements within the sub-questions are interpreted in relation to the overarching idea guiding the braiding of ecoportraits.

In chapter 4, a short discussion first highlights the place and validity of heart listening within the research. Consciously acknowledging being on Land is a matter of heart, mind, and openness. Learning from Land can yield lessons about foundational aspects of teaching. Thus, the discussion then delves deeper into perspectives around the notions of purpose and practice and how they relate to teaching. A meaningful nod to reciprocity follows as it is evidenced throughout the braids, and is an integral aspect of

the connection with more-than-humans, and with Land. Braided ecoportraits, discussions, and implications close the chapter.

Coeur et Esprit Ouvert

"Listening respectfully," S. Wilson (2008) notes, "requires suspension of judgment on your part" (p. 134). Key to his argument is how one's aptitude to generate conclusions should be flexible enough to take into account new information contributing to the development of a different point of view. Suspending judgement describes *how to be* as a receiver of information, how to listen, *because* new information will continue to grow one's knowledge. In order to listen respectfully, an investment of the self comes into play. Thus, purpose lies at the heart of both listening respectfully and suspending judgement in the form of deeply ingrained ways of doing. A genuine reflexive process begins with how existing and new knowledge are eventually brought together.

New knowledge manifests in many forms and is best received *avec un coeur et un esprit ouvert*; an open heart, and an open mind (Kimmerer, 2013). ʔa·kiɬwiy (coeur-heart) invites compassion and generosity, assisting in decolonizing the belief that mind conclusions hold more validity; for the researcher, for the receiver of information, and in one's life in general.

Openness

L'esprit ouvert, as we say in French, demonstrates openness. In *Braiding Sweetgrass,* Kimmerer (2013) often refers to the mind-heart combination and connection. It is not only about the open mind but an open soul, a whole internal openness. A further action would be to *garder* (keep) *l'esprit ouvert*; to be opened towards other ways of

viewing one's proximate world, others' world, and other worlds. *Garder l'esprit ouvert* is easier said than done as evidenced in Sheridan and Longboat's (2006) acknowledgement of the long disconnect with an ontological understanding of Land:

> Exactly how many generations settlers take to naturalize their cultural identity to Turtle Island is beyond us, but when the transformative powers of the land speak, we recommend opening the heart and mind to the timeless, living ontology that lives on the very land that crafts Indigenous mind and Haudenosaunee imagination alike. (p. 367)

Relevant and meaningful learning can be missed by foregoing ʔa·kiɨwiy, *le coeur*, in particular. To open one's own heart does not uniquely focus on love but is rather inclusive of more wide-ranging heart states such as being altruistic, compassionate, and generous (Chambers, 2004); seeking to understand the profoundness of the self, and of others, humans and more-than-humans alike.

Gehl (2012) documents a heart-mind methodology –Debwewin Journey– where she identifies both heart and mind knowledges as being each encircled; "where the two circles connect is where debwewin is located" (p. 60). She emphasizes the journey involved in connecting knowledge from mind to heart, heart to mind, sometimes simultaneously. A key element lies in the point of connection that occurs between the heart and the mind. This connection is also evident in Ktunaxa values. In Valley School District, the AbEd Department's logo features a dark silhouette against mountains and the sunny horizon. The silouhette's ʔa·kiɨwiy (coeur) and their fire within are at the core of a red conifer with strong roots. The crowning branch reaches upwards towards the head

represented by a red ovoid shape. Held within: strong roots, life, fire, heart, and mind, all featured distinctly as part of the self.

Avoiding Hastiness

Limited and hasty conclusions are detrimental to building or maintaining relationships and can profoundly affect and alter them. Assumptions, or those unquestioned answers held dear, cloud perceptions (S. Wilson, 2008). As Moules (2002) observes, "when we think we already know, we stop paying attention to what comes to meet us" (p. 23). Dealing with nupqu as a "bear problem" for example (see chapter 2) eventually means loss of life for nupqu; the loss of a relationship. S. Wilson (2008) reminds listeners, as receivers of information, of the responsibility to treat information to "learn and grow, as [they] too are accountable to all our relations" (p. 135). To keep un coeur et un esprit ouvert towards all relations, kin to kin, where all are part of the web of relationships on equal footing, is responsible, reciprocal, respectful, and relational.

Empathy

The portraitist demonstrates an opened *coeur* and *esprit* through the search for goodness. She approaches relationships with an empathetic regard and welcomes how each of them interpret and live their goodness (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Her work is to identify research relationships' versions of goodness and document those perspectives; understanding that goodness is "laced with imperfections" (p. 9). The portraitist concedes that goodness is particular to each relationship (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

The work of an ecoportraitist extends to the more-than-human world, seeking to bring into view these diverse perspectives. Displaying empathy enables the researcher to connect with relationships by “imaginatively put[ting] herself in the [relationships’] place” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 146). Empathy is seen as “the vehicle for gaining a deep understanding,” of research relationships; their feelings, thoughts, and motivations (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 147).

Maintaining open ʔa·kiɨwiy (coeur), mind, and esprit addresses in part *how* to be empathetic; decolonizing a westernized way of imagining by investing efforts into imagination as “minding nature” (Sheridan & Longboat, 2006, p. 379). In other words, the ecoportaitist's empathetic regard is, and ought to be, one that includes ʔa·kiɨwiy (le coeur), especially as she knowingly pays attention to Land. In this reflexive relationship to Land, suspending judgment represents another action to be undertaken. Pieces of information filter through at different times, and insights are thus transformed. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 present braided ecoportraits that are carefully organized into an “assemblage” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 245) that continuously (re)emphasizes three main overarching themes from different perspectives, where ʔa·kiɨwiy (le coeur), mind, and esprit intertwine.

Purpose in practice

Moving along the talk to action journey (chapter 2) is achieved more fluidly by displaying ʔa·kiɨwiy (le coeur), mind, and esprit openness. But if this openness prepares for how to listen and be empathetic, undertaking the journey requires a willingness and ability to revisit our own epistemologies and ontology; to start uncovering the

unquestioned answers that permeate our own educational and personal practices. For practice is to be influenced by Land, understanding meanings behind purpose and practice become essential.

Conscious Comfortable

A first step is to activate critical self-awareness and (re)examine the reasons, motivations, and self-justifications in which these practices are grounded. Styres (2018) explains the inner workings of taking initial steps towards transforming one's own learning:

> Journeying is a process of coming to know. It is essentially learning through the chaos of moving from the familiar through to the unfamiliar while maintaining and observing a reflective frame of mind. It is as if the learner is on the bank of one side of a river—the side s/he is on is familiar and the learner feels comfortable there. However, the learner has to come to the edge of what s/he knows and what is familiar. (p. 29)

Building Styres' (2017) bridges of understanding is a process that begins with the self(ves). The journey, Styres (2018) continues, is certain to unsettle the learner although it ultimately remains a choice; but a choice where enriching growth awaits.

The familiar resides in as much of the daily routines educators accomplish almost subconsciously, as in the more obvious and overt planning and curriculum choices. By willingly challenging the comfortable, educators make a conscious choice. Eventually, as Faye O'Neil points out in chapter 2, this new *conscious comfortable* needs to become something that is internal to one's practice; part of the subconscious way we teach. This

project's circular journey aims to encourage the educator to reflect on, and challenge, one's own pedagogical practice.

Understanding one's own Pedagogical Choices

Styres (2018) identifies being mindful, having a purposeful praxis, and paying attention to course content as key elements in the journey of embedding Land into learning (p. 29). *Purpose in practice* thus represents a bridge of understanding: the need to operate from a place of purposefulness, to practice purpose, along with demonstrating purpose in one's practice, to be able to (re)adjust or (re)formulate the raison d'être of one's routines and curricular choices.

At Bear Mountain Middle School, Hannah (AESW) recounts following protocol and seeing educators being questioned over the creation of a new project relating to residential schools:

> If it's something I don't know, and it isn't already curriculum, run through FNESC –it's already been approved– I will go to the Elders. They will want to know why they (teachers) want to do that. […] There's purpose behind everything. It's not just about "Oh we did this now let's move on…"

Through my experiences working with future educators, I insist they get in the habit of explaining to their students why they do the lessons or activities they do, and why in the particular environment they've chosen. To justify one's practice in the smallest details may be uncomfortable, but necessary to decolonize the educator. Styres' (2018) key elements above can be viewed as perpetual initiators in the continuous process of a reflexive relationship to Land.

Structure within Purpose

Acting with purpose involves acting knowingly. For educators this may translate into foresight, or knowing the long-term impact or effect of one's pedagogical choices, or one's structural organization. The FPPL highlight how "learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions" (FNESC, 2015) and these actions, from an educator's perspective, can pertain to all aspects of teaching. Hannah's example above offers a perspective focused on curricular choices and the awareness of potential consequences. In the following story Knowledge Holder Bonnie Harvey points to the ramifications of personal pedagogical choices:

> I prefer the teacher, the educator, stays in the classroom if I'm there presenting to students. For one, classroom control. Classroom management for Knowledge Holders is really important. The educator needs to have that classroom management. You know, grade 3s behave more accordingly than a [much higher grade] class in one month that I was there. It was two different classes. I was like, wow! And, the teacher was there, and that teacher did not have classroom management, and I just thought wow! That's unfortunate for the students, and the teacher. This is well into the year, and this is how this classroom is being managed: not managed.
>
> I need to know how the classroom is and what that atmosphere is so that I can prepare another Knowledge Holder to come in. I need to protect somebody else in case I'm not available. I can kind of handle it, you know, I can be tough, and I can give "the look" as well, I'll wait, but I don't ever want to put a

Knowledge Holder in that predicament. Educators need to ensure they are in that classroom and that their responsibility is to protect the guest who's coming in.

Bonnie's experience reinforces the importance of establishing routines and structures with students. An issue that arises lies in the choice of vocabulary. Classroom control and management, and the image they generate, are not representative of 21st century pedagogies though the essence, such as developing a respectful, cohesive, and engaged group dynamic, perdure. The consequences, from Bonnie's perspective, remains centred on respect for the guest.

"You know what, maybe the wrong word is 'structure'" says Faye O'Neil, "I think if you use the word 'protocol' it's not such a harsh word."

Protocols

Protocols are rather set rules and procedures, within and between organizations; broadly defined, between Indigenous communities (Simpson, 2017; Styres, 2017). Since the first Enhancement Agreements in Valley School District, a growing number of educators have come to understand protocols as specific processes relating to Indigenous ways of doing.

Simpson (2017) and Styres (2017) identify relationship and practice elements in protocols and their views also connect to "why" of ways of doing. Simpson (2017) opts for a more appropriate term than protocols: practices. She thinks critically about practices held within her community, and sees relationships bound by a strong sense of belonging. She simultaneously questions her own community; a reminder to question the self(ves) rather than others. Styres (2017) refers to protocols as "the process of respectfully

adhering to cultural practices;" a process , along with building relationships, that takes time and is a "critical part of *doing* the *real* work" in academia (p. 169), and by extension education. She openly challenges educators who fail to see value in adhering to protocols, or practices. The work is to resist treating Indigenous knowledge and protocols as objectives to be ticked off a list, a century old habit engrained in educators at all levels of schooling, from kindergarten to doctoral studies.

Common to both Simpson (2017) and Styres (2017) is the notion of revisiting one's own practice; to discern how and why things are done. The choice of the word *practice* represents a bridge of understanding, a common starting point between two differing perspectives on ways of doing. Common to both as well is the notion that there are systems in place, there is structure. Faye O'Neil explains:

> That's it, we had protocols. Everything we did was structured, it was calculated. We worked, but our structure, our protocols… We had to work around the seasons right… If you didn't gather those berries, or you didn't gather naqam¢u, which is bitterroot, in April, you're not getting your first roots, your first vegetables. That can have a consequence on your health. So, all those little things build up to us being able to exist. And that's the same with kids, if you are not getting these teachings, there are going to be consequences later on.

Faye emphasizes the strong sense of purpose that existed, and continues to exist, in protocols, stories, ways of doing and being, and rejects a common perception of Indigenous communities as not having much structure.

The need for purpose is evident in Bonnie's experience with the grade 9 class. Developing attending skills in students not only teaches them how to be respectful, but contributes to making Bonnie feel a sense of safety for her own peers. Simpson's (2017) deep thinking about her own, and her community's, practices along with her choice to question, or challenge, the way things are done serves as an example of how reflexivity can work for educators. A deep reflexive approach can question *why* one's pedagogical doings are such. The purpose that exists for the educator is ultimately an act of reciprocity towards Bonnie, and her community. Reciprocity may not happen in the immediate, so imagination becomes an essential medium to strengthen the sense of purpose in one's practice; not to envision imaginary relationships –though this can be a great pedagogical tool– but to imagine relationships to come. This exemplifies one way "learning ultimately supports the well-being of the community" (FNESC, 2015).

Reciprocity Within the Braids

In academic literature reciprocity is regularly mentioned but seldom elaborated on; ever so in danger of being used as a decolonizing buzzword, especially in education circles. Kimmerer (2013) posits that reciprocity remains a challenge, "beautiful in the abstract, but the practical is harder" (p. 238). The word may add pizzaz but reciprocity left undeveloped nullifies its intended purpose. Identifying expressions of reciprocity while being attentive to its possible ramifications can inform practice, and spur reflexivity.

As discussed above, Bonnie Harvey stresses the urgency to establish behaviour parameters. The need for teaching expectations can be felt. Learning "focused on

reciprocal relationships" (FNESC, 2015), is multidirectional. Bonnie deems it her responsibility to protect other Knowledge Holders as a result of her own immediate experience. Her sense of responsibility translates into reciprocity towards her peers who may, or would, have to replace her if she cannot fill an engagement. Reciprocity also resides in the respect she has for other Knowledge Holders, and the respect she ultimately holds for her Ktunaxa Knowledge. She protects the Knowledge.

Donald (2009) views reciprocity as permeating all relationships and interconnectedness. Describing his methodology of métissage, he reminds weavers of braids of the responsibility for attentiveness in bringing together diverse perspectives:

> We must pay closer attention to the multiple ways our human sense of living together is constructed through the minutiae of day-to-day events, through the stories and interactions which always are imbued with a living principle of reciprocity, and hence moral responsibility for a shared future. (pp. 8–9)

In this instance, Donald's view is grounded in a political and colonial reality focusing on the complexity of human connectivity. However, his writings attest to the complexity of connectivity to Land, to more-than-humans. In Westernized thought this reality seldom includes more-than-humans as fully functioning members of the collectivity. Reciprocity occurs in the very minutiae of one's receptivity to even the most subtle of interactions with the more-than-human world (Abram, 1996/2017). Our human work becomes to notice relationships nestled in these interactions, to heighten our awareness of Land. This is perhaps a very good reason to quiet the rings that emanate from our own center (chapter 2).

Chapter 4 Braided Ecoportraits

The braided ecoportraits in *Purpose in Practice* highlight complexities which may initially seem mundane. Subtly, they emphasize where expressions of reciprocity may reside and gently point to unquestioned colonial answers often bestowed upon more-than-humans. At times, they point to habits anchored in a Westernized educational fabric resulting from social and political contexts. Through a reflexive lens however, they hold the potential to move learning from a comfortable educational place towards becoming more conscious of being with Land.

The braids open with circles and layers held within metaphorical circles. Through encounters with the more-than-human world and Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre's introductory activity, themes such as inferring needs, acknowledgement, and the sense of belonging arise to offer a different perspective on relationships, edging closer to purposeful interconnectedness.

The second braid considers learning differently by being purposeful in the way teaching is structured. The braid interconnects with the importance of identity. Mama nupqu (black bear) models survival skills for her cubs but also offers a very important lesson for one's approach to teaching which connects with the BC curriculum.

Braid 3 explores facets of preparedness ranging from being practical to becoming mindful of one's mind-heart approach to place. In the context of education, preparedness enhances one's positive experience and relationship with place, opening a space for further considerations such as those Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre encourages to ponder.

The braided ecoportraits are assembled together to feature the interconnectedness of the overarching themes. Table 8 indicate the braided ecoportraits for this chapter as well as where *Purpose in Practice* is intertwined in subsequent chapters (in green). The overarching theme connects with identity in braid 4 (Advocacy), with place in braid 7 (Transforming Approaches), in the strands Taking (chap. 5, braid 5, strand 3) and Thanking (chap. 6, braid 9, strand 3). This interconnectedness is reiterated as each braid is introduced.

Table 8

Chapter 4 Braided Ecoportraits

Braided Ecoportraits			
Themes & Questions	Chapter 4 **Purpose in Practice**	Chapter 5 **A Sense of Identity**	Chapter 6 **A Sense of Place**
Purpose in Practice How can teaching practice be influenced when educators consciously acknowledge being on Ktunaxa Land?	Braid 1 Welcoming Relationships - **Strand one:** Circles - **Strand two:** Kiʔsuʔk kyukyit (Greeting) Circle - **Strand three:** tak̓a¢ (squirrel) and one Circle	Braid 4 Advocacy - **Strand one:** Your … ness - **Strand two:** k̓ustit̓ (Larch) - **Strand three:** Zoom	Braid 7 Transforming Approaches - **Strand one:** Things in Nature - **Strand two:** Above the Tree Line - **Strand three:** Being in Place
A Sense of Identity How does Land influence the learning journey in the process of building bridges of understanding between Indigenous and Western philosophies?	Braid 2 (Re)Learning to Learn - **Strand one:** Senses - **Strand two:** Ktunaxa Calendar - **Strand three:** Modelling	Braid 5 Meeting Beings - **Strand one:** kyanɨakɨiquɨaqpik (heartleaf arnica) - **Strand two:** Smellscaping - **Strand three:** Taking	Braid 8 Creating Connections - **Strand one:** Creating Connections - **Strand two:** Bear Feet, Bare Feet, Bear Feat - **Strand three:** Signs - **Extra Strand:** Stories
A Sense of Place How can Land be purposefully re-centred through the building of bridges of understanding?	Braid 3 Preparedness - **Strand one:** In Someone's Home - **Strand two:** Share - **Strand three:** A Ready Mindset	Braid 6 (Re)Centering Identity - **Strand one:** Place Knowing - **Strand two:** Cattails - **Strand three:** Conflicting Identities	Braid 9 Taking Time - **Strand one:** Facets of Time - **Strand two:** (Re)visiting Place - **Strand three:** Thanking

Purpose in Practice: Braid 1 focuses on purpose in practice.
Braid 1: Welcoming Relationships
Strand 1: Circles

Perched on the roof right above the rainbow entrance, three xa·xa· (crows) hop along the lower ledge, the click-a-dee of their feet barely perceptible amidst the waking city bustle. The rising sun slowly reveals a thin layer of frost. They jostle and scooch in each other's way, a volley of sharp cawing "k" sounds sometimes softened by a series of "rrrr" accompanying the goings on. Intertwined wings continuously adjust to the displacements, maintaining a fragile balance; comedic funambulists involved in an active game of shell. xa·xa· fly between this habitual morning spot and ɨu (douglas-fir) nearby. Clearly, the ledge is preferred. They settle and caw… caw…. caw…

Hmm, they're after food. What better place than a middle school to find some!

xa·xa· gauge incomers tilting as far down as equipoise will allow before resuming shuffles for positioning. Heads, hats, and hair, funnel past the point of vision into the building. Below, students, parents, and staff walk into Bear Mountain Middle School in a steady flow. Becky, one of the school administrators stands in the middle of the entrance greeting as many as her eye can catch with a jovial "Good Morning!"

Outside, xa·xa· caw.

A slight shift of the head, up for incomers and sideways for xa·xa·, rare, connects gazes.

xa·xa· become silent.

*

Knowledge Holder Bonnie Harvey, energetic and animated, is in the middle of performing the story of ʔakinmi. With pandemic restrictions having relaxed lightly, she is the first visitor in months welcomed into our precautiously sanitized vintage family home.

She has amassed a few props before we head outside: a blanket, the drum that hung on the wall facing the front door, and a stick of wood. The audience comprises a multitude of more-than-humans and one human filling the backyard. Bonnie acknowledged everyone, and tells the story to everyone, the garden flowers, the hedge, the poplar, the grass, and with every new Ktunaxa word, she acts, repeats, and expectedly turns towards me: "ʔak̓, arrow." Say it and mean it.

"ʔak̓" I execute, in complete awe of what I'm living. Bonnie is here, in my backyard, telling the very story she told the OP. A highlight of the summer.

Additional props are picked up as the story evolves. The fallen poplar branch, green leaves still attached, is borrowed from the grass and carefully returned. Bonnie carries the story from one side of the yard to the other, here using loud calls, there, involved in the discussion taking place between animals.

"…and the animals are talking…" Bonnie tells their names in Ktunaxa adding "… is talking" after each.

The unmistakable phwip phwip phwip of flapping wings suddenly comes within earshot as Bonnie turns away from the drooping branches of the poplar to tell about another animal talking. Three xa·xa· appear from around the corner of the house. Flying quite low, one xa·xa· looks down at Bonnie and caws. Bonnie sees xa·xa·, points to them,

and immediately adds “yes, and they were talking too!” then carries on with the story of ʔakinmi. I am speechless.

*

The feel within the circle has shifted. It is palpable. Rhett, one of the OP educators is going over the guidelines for shelter building up the embankment in the forested area behind him. The location by the lake is a favoured learning environment for the OP. Situated at the western most tip of a popular lake in the area, the steep embankment is home to the previous year’s shelters. The amount of fallen trees create a treacherous obstacle course: over and under, improvised balance beams, and unexpected drops. The terrain demands attentive agility.

On the opposite side of the circle, the lake is buffered by cattails forming a thick belt around most of the perimeter. Rhett and Jody have gathered the group back into a circle for the second part of the morning, after a break by the fire. Fall has been unusually warm but on the occasional day, like today, it’s a little chilly despite an increasingly warming sun.

The circle is large and fits perfectly in between the lake and the forest. Through a small passageway between the cattails, three kyaq̓ɨa (ducks; mallard) come from the water and waddle their way to the circle. Aww, habituated to humans, obviously, from the beach area further along.

kyaq̓ɨa comfortably promenade nearby just outside grasping fingertips distance. Already, a few students subtly shift body weight enough to alter their path. kyaq̓ɨa respond accordingly by maintaining a measured distance. Invisible circles are slowly

forming. Furtive looks and lightly jostling bodies reveal a first circle. Unmoved, kyaq̓ǂa continue trotting close to the group. Rhett's voice comes back into focus as he calls for questions. Some students are wondering about building strategies and time: circle two. A few students are focused on each other: circle three. I should say something but I'm hesitant. On this first day with the OP, I am a guest. To be in a circle, yet not quite *be* in that circle…

The dismissal of the group is imminent.

kyaq̓ǂa leisurely make their way to the woods when everyone is encouraged to finish building their shelters. The bulk of forty students simultaneously dart towards the forest, in kyaq̓ǂa's path. Oh no… I whisper.

The sound alone, from nearly silent to suddenly tumultuous, could be cause for concern for any more-than-human. Above the initial rush towards the trees, qaǂsa (three) kyaq̓ǂa arose with equally noisy flaps. A few hands reached up to touch, without succeeding. kyaq̓ǂa lept just far enough from fingertips.

*

Circle four. A month later.

It's been unusual in Valley School District, to experience relatively warm weather and no snow by mid-December. By lunch time, the OP is saying goodbye to their kindergarten buddy classes. Left with extra time before the middle school lunch hour, the OP educators detour to one of the City's Parks. Most students chose to play grounders on the play structure. It is busy, noisy, fast, and acrobatic.

Jody taps me on he shoulder then points to a small group of students sitting on the other side of the play structure a few meters away from the creek. Rhett notices the scene as well. We exchange looks, Rhett and Jody smile.

On the grass, near the creek, kyaq̓ⱡa have come to join students who are sitting silently.

Circle four: those who would have welcomed the connection that day by the lake.

Purpose in Practice: Braid 1 focuses on purpose in practice.
Braid 1: Welcoming Relationships
Strand 2: *KiʔsuʔK kyukyit Circle (Good afternoon, I'm happy to see you)*

January 7th, 2020. Snowy day today.

Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre speaks to the OP about Qat'muk this afternoon; "a very special place where the Grizzly Bear Spirit was born, goes to heal itself, and returns to the spirit world" (Ktunaxa Nation, 2022). Bear Mountain Middle School is at least an hour away from Qat'muk, however an impeding downhill ski trip is aimed at getting everyone to connect meaning to place.

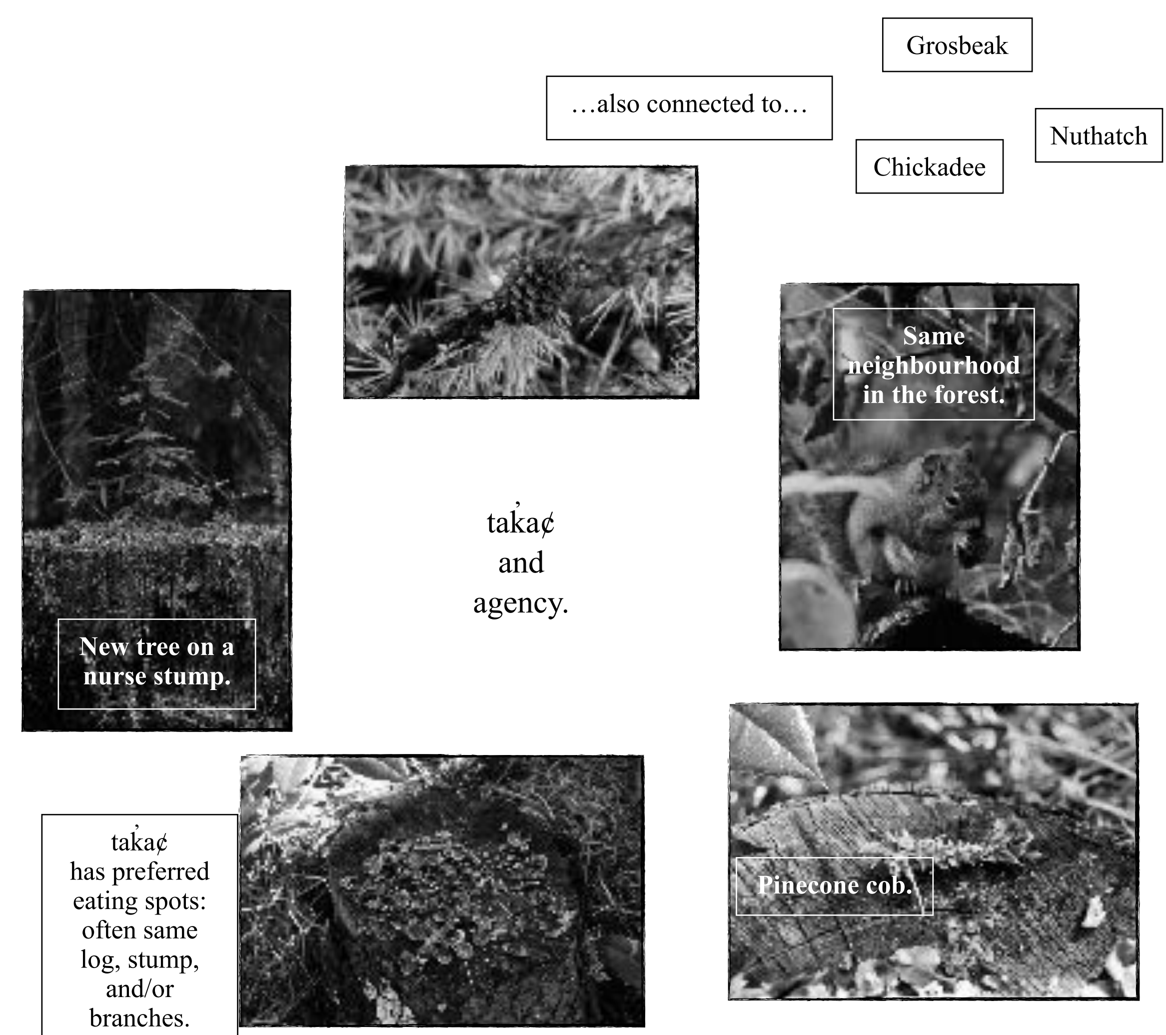
As per protocol, Jody, Rhett, and the OP group have organized into a circle in the cozy "green" classroom, comfortably nestled in foldable camping seats.

Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre looks at everyone and asks: "Stand up, it's the first time I see you this new year! Let's do New Year's greetings. You follow me and say, kiʔsuʔk kyukyit (I'm happy to see you)." Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre turns towards the student to his left, shakes hands, and says kiʔsuʔk kyukyit. He instructs the group that this is a "follow the leader" activity. The student he just shook hands with will follow him, and so on, and in turn also shake hands and say kiʔsuʔk kyukyit to every new person as they proceed

around the circle. “Oh! And smile!” reminds Nasuʔkin. Pretty soon greetings come from everywhere accompanied by much giggles and laughter.

Once the OP group is back into their original sitting spots, Nasuʔkin’s deep laugh fills the classroom. “Your cheeks will be sore from shaking hands and smiling so much! This was important. Each person **received** a greeting but also **gave** a greeting as we went around the circle.”

Purpose in Practice: Braid 1 focuses on purpose in practice.
<u>Braid 1: Welcoming Relationships</u>
Strand 3: *tak̓a¢ (squirrel) and one Circle*



tak̓a¢ regularly asserts their presence in the neighbourhood, through an array of loud vocalizations that can irritate even the most fervent nature lover.

I shouldn't complain since my own noisy self regularly alerts more-than-humans of my presence every time I enter This City's forest trails, just a few streets over. I had never really paid attention to the way sound carries in a forest of larches and spruces; almost as clearly as on a small lake. Hiking the trails daily, I've come to understand that when I feel put on notice by tak̓a¢, they perhaps address themselves to me but simultaneously message inhabitants of This City's trails. tak̓a¢'s communication reaches the whole community. "I come with respect."

Discussion: Braid 1 Welcoming Relationships

Circles

A familiar teaching strategy, circles are often used as a sharing space, and to enable effective communication; everyone can see and hear better. Burkhart (2016) attributes sharing circles as "foundational to most experiential education models and thus often used in environmental education" (p. 85). Outdoor education easily matches this description. In relation to the FPPL, particularly learning being experiential, circles are viewed as a purposeful classroom strategy that "ensure[s] equity in student voice" (ANED, 2017). A circle should allow members to feel seen and heard. Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre's greeting activity in braid 1 demonstrates an epistemological shift from seeing and hearing others to being part of the circle, being seen and heard. His greeting activity denotes a purposeful approach to being in a circle. A circular space can fosters respect, reflectivity, reciprocity, depth, and growth (Burkhart, 2016). However, considerations in

regards to the manner in which circles are approached as a teaching tool become key in order to move towards epistemological and ontological shifts.

Purpose in Circles. Styres (2017) and Archibald (2008) address the focused and purposeful aspects held within circles. Archibald's (2008) experience with Elders' circles highlights the idea of equal treatment, and the opportunity the circle offers for everyone to be heard uninterrupted, independent of others' agreement or not. There are agreed upon codes to keep discussions on track (Archibald, 2008). Styres (2017) stresses "certain generally shared protocols to adhere to" and is more specific in the advice she gives (p. 185). She also emphasizes the equal opportunity to speak uninterrupted along with ways to proceed –using a rock, or other– in order for the learning and sharing to deepen (Styres, 2017). Pre-established guidelines and knowledge characterize the approaches from both authors and are reflected in Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre's greeting activity. How to *be* and *be*have in a circle is taught and learned. (Re)teaching general expectations such as how and when to speak in a circle, how to listen, or how to welcome others extends circles as a teaching tool beyond simply forming a convenient shape and reaches towards learnings such as Burkhart's (2016) qualities mentioned above.

More-than-humans in the Circle. Equity of voices around a circle can include more-than-humans. The tricky part is that a talking stick cannot be assigned as 'your turn!' When a turn is manifested towards humans as receivers –in the reciprocal relationship with Land– a responsibility to acknowledge emerges. The same shift to being seen and heard can become ontological in nature as subtly demonstrated through the first few strands in braid 1. More-than-humans' agency exists as "an outcome of the relations

between all kinds of different social and material entities” (Noorani & Brigstocke, 2018, p. 17). Agency, ever-present throughout the ecoportraits, becomes more perceptible at that moment when human eyes meet those of xa·xa· (crows) for example, or when xa·xa· adds to Bonnie’s story. tak̓a¢’s (squirrel) voice, in the third strand of braid one, may not be directed at human ears, but could rather be a self-expression within their circle of relations to which human ears are privy to. nupqu’s (black bear) enveloping tree, in braid 2, was probably carefully selected to safely house two young ones. Blenkinsop and Piersol (2013) recommend “re-orienting ourselves in our positions as educators to become humble listeners and learners when it comes to all things winding, whirling and wild” (p. 57). This reorientation in positioning should include the need for educators to model being humble welcomers/receivers (safety considered) in the same way Bonnie instinctively includes xa·xa· in her storytelling.

Kiʔsuʔk kyukyit Circle (Good afternoon, I’m happy to see you)

Being Seen and Heard. In Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre’s greeting activity acknowledgement is central and purposeful –beyond getting smiling cheeks tired! Transposing acknowledgement to beings in place requires to first be purposely noticing. The opening strand relays how xa·xa·’s presence goes practically unnoticed and how the larger metaphorical circle of belonging remains invisible. xa·xa·’s caws are juxtaposed with a warm ‘Good Morning!’ systematically greeting all those who enter the school. Human ears often cast more-than-humans’ voices as background sounds (Abram, 1996/2017; Blenkinsop & Piersol, 2013). In her Nishnaabewin language, Simpson (2017) explains, their greeting word goes beyond meaning hello, well into the acknowledgement

of one's identity as in seeing *you*. Simpson has dedicated herself to the practice of "seeing the unique value in the other life," as "Aaniin isn't an observation but a continual process of unfolding" (p. 181). An unfolding movement takes place during the greeting activity and seems finally visible when *circle four* students break from the OP group to quietly greet kyaq̓ɨa (ducks; mallard).

Inferring Intentions. Acknowledgement and belonging get interrupted by how humans infer intentions and needs. Snap interpretations of more-than-humans' intentions point to a colonial unquestioned answer where assigning intentions happens almost automatically. xa·xa· at a middle school where teenagers throw food on the ground, or kyaq̓ɨa coming to investigate as they regularly do at the beach section of the lake belong to what Blenkinsop and Piersol (2013) call the "direct encounter and interpretation" (p. 57). I caught myself defaulting to thinking xa·xa· and kyaq̓ɨa needed food!

Anthropomorphism develops in children as imaginary play but is also conveyed through adult modelling, thus deeply anchored in humans (Airenti, 2018). When more-than-humans' intentions are verbalized for them this "replicate an implicit hierarchy regarding who is able to communicate and the range of any possible communication" (Blenkinsop & Piersol, 2013, p. 46). The propensity to infer intentions is evidenced in the OP educators' dismissal of kyaq̓ɨa during the initial encounter, and other instances throughout the braids. Contrasting encounters with xa·xa· and kyaq̓ɨa illustrates the difference when the focus shifts to acknowledging agency, even subtly.

Purpose in Circles

There is much fluidity to circles when purpose works to refine their use as pedagogical tools, and when expectations extend to acknowledging more-than-humans' presence. An epistemological shift can serve to enhance one's understanding of positioning along side others in a much wider metaphorical/figurative circle of connectivity. As such, when a turn is taken and a voice or presence arises, acknowledging this as an opportunity to be seen and heard is a first ontological step in a direction holding the possibility to alter dominant culture's innate habits of readily assigning intention.

Purpose in Practice: Braid 2 intertwines purpose in practice and a sense of identity.

<u>Braid 2: (Re)Learning to Learn</u>

Strand 1: *Senses*

kławła (grizzly bears) can hear the songs and dances of the Ktunaxa Peoples. "Qat'muk," says Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre, "is so important, it is a sacred place." The OP group remains silent as Nasuʔkin tells the Bear story and connects Qat'muk to breathtaking, pristine, mountains, forests, alpine meadows and lakes, up the valley. kławła go to Qat'muk for their dances. He recounts the battles surrounding past plans for an imposing winter resort where Qat'muk is situated. "Imagine a five thousand bed resort… five thousand toilets… where does that go? Look up the word *sacred*."

Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre invites the OP to pay attention to Qat'muk Declaration –a covenant towards the place and the spirit of kławła. "Close your eyes."

He emphasizes each word: "…*Recognize*s that the Ktunaxa language does not translate well into other languages and consequently our spiritual relationship with

Qat’muk may not be fully understood by others” (Ktunaxa Nation Executive Council, 2010).

“What did you hear when your eyes were closed? Something important in this course is the ability to trust **all** of your senses. I removed one sense and encouraged you to hear. It’s important to **feel**. Sometimes, walk somewhere with your eyes closed.

When you are in nature, if you have a thought, maybe the tree, or the creek, or the grass gave it to you. We tend to think we are the only ones who think or communicate. It’s important to listen, with all your senses.”

*

It’s a trek uphill, fairly steep for short kindergarten legs, but excitement compensates through copious amounts of energy. Most run the trail, big OP buddy in tow, some zigzag in between trees and back to the path swinging dead branches wildly. This is the inaugural adventure of a fun-filled partnership to last until June. Today’s goal: getting to know each other.

himu (ponderosa pine), ʔiɫti·t̓ (lodgepole pine), ɫu (douglas-fir), and k̓ustit̓ (larch) grow and live in Community Trails’ forest. At times a few centimetres off the trail, their presence in such close proximity provides much needed support to get up past roots and rocks which, incidentally, work as steps. It feels safe next to himu, the same type of safe as when one sits next to a favourite friend. himu smells safe: fresh earthy tones and deep pine needles. *Enveloped* seems to best translate this closeness, where palm and bark instinctively blend into contact, as one would towards a helping hand. Enveloped by presence… but rather not present enough to acknowledge the gesture. A lingering hand

realizes how the bark is neither cold nor hot but perfect, even in November; how the bark may be a little prickly, scaly, or rough, without scratching; how a determined sturdiness remains in the conscious mind a few second beyond the last brush. A tiny speck of sap on a knuckle will rekindle the encounter. An arm may embrace more meaningfully, a rosy cheek resting on a trunk. Enveloping back.

I came across nupqu (black bear) a few months later, leaning against their enveloping tree, a cottonwood, while nupqu's cubs sought refuge up the branches. Cottonwood calm.

The OP buddies could be heard reminding each other to focus on dead logs this time, for fort building. Their attention was held elsewhere. They were sprinkled through the forest, piggybacking little ones, some of them swinging dead sticks wildly at himu, ʔiɬti·t̓, ɬu, and k̓ustit̓. They said it was okay. The moment passed. A very successful morning. Yet, the moment stayed.

Purpose in Practice: Braid 2 intertwines purpose in practice and a sense of identity.
<u>Braid 2: (Re)Learning to Learn</u>
Strand 2: *Ktunaxa Calendar*

The Ktunaxa calendar presentation Knowledge Holder Bonnie Harvey shares with students and adults breathes circularity. Each month is named to reflect events in Land's life at that time, and foregrounds that which requires attention (gathering food, hunting, safety around water) and readying.

Naktaʔsuk, January: "It's when we have our winter dances. It could last, one of our leaders says, as long as there's snow on the mountains… you can still have dances. That's when we dance and party, and share food and love with one another so that we can

have health, a healthy wealthy year. Everything we do for the rest of the year leads up to ensuring we have everything we need in January. That sets the stage for the rest of the year."

"February is Nupqu (black bear). This is when mama bears wake up the cubs and tell them it's time to fix your moccasins, to fix your paws. Bears have a film on their paws. They need to get it off like that (mimes eating her hands; rubbing them) in order to get out into the world. They need to ensure that they are able to (mimicking walking) go out into the world, harvest and eat, play and explore, and be able to come back to their den. They need to prepare. They're preparing their paws so mama can bring them on their journey to show everything that she knows. They need to go and do their work, be fed, and learn, love the land and go play, eat, and roll around. Learn how to be. Learn where mama is showing you, where to go, because you're going to have to remember that; they get ready to meet what the world has to offer them. They need to do that in order to be able to survive so that they can come back full circle and they can do it all over again."

Nupqu, cubs, and cottonwood happened during Kuq̓ukupku: the ripening of strawberries, in June. Mama (re)teaches nupqu cubs for two summer seasons.

Purpose in Practice: Braid 2 intertwines purpose in practice and a sense of identity.

Braid 2: (Re)Learning to Learn

Strand 3: *Modelling*

Snuggled into a buffalo plaid Lululemon hoody and sunk into the green classroom's prized couch, Jody shares : "The FPPL are for all of us, whole self learning. All of them kind of stem from this idea of patience which sometimes is tricky to do when you have middle schoolers (she laughs). Sometimes it works for me, but sometimes I

loose my patience" she admits. Jody's assertiveness shines through during one-on-one basketball games against any of the boys. She wins. Her smile and stature do not announce the occasional booming tone calling the OP group to order. Her expectations circle back to an idea she often repeats: students should know.

*

"I'm trying to get kids to be more aware of the FPPL, it's a step in the right direction."

She reflects on the day's events at the lake location: "I'd like kids to understand the idea of sustainability. They're out there beating down a tree today, and I'm thinking okay, we're missing something. We're bringing you out in nature to appreciate it, not to destroy it. Those things definitely make me more aware of putting that into my planning. Sometimes we just go out and assume they're going to know these things, but they don't." She points out the idea of generational roles and the influence of families who spend time outdoors. "I see a huge difference in their behaviour." Jody sees herself as mom who, at times, needs to "get things going." Once having entered motherhood, the fibre easily infiltrates one's educational practice.

*

Faye O'Neil's windowless office is situated inside Bear Mountain Middle School's equivalent of nesting dolls. The restrained space offers a trendy decor reflecting pride and care; light grey walls, wooden shelves, and stylish folder boxes. She has created a welcoming place reflecting her own Ktunaxa culture, and artwork from the Coast of BC. The standard classroom clock, looking almost seems oversized, reminds us

that our time together is reaching a close. Faye has introduced the word protocol instead of structure. She raises the point that for the Ktunaxa to exist up to 13 000 years there was structure and they had protocols. She identifies a similar need in students today, but differentiates between harsh consequences and guidance.

*

January 30th, 2020: Snowshoes planted in the icy snowbank, Jody comments jokingly on the quality of the responses she is seeing in the grade 8's journals. "Fast and sloppy work…" sums up her disappointment. Mama teaches nupqu cubs to prepare, ahead of meeting the world.

November 5th, 2019: Going to the lake location. The OP group, gathered on the stage, listens to Jody going over expectations regarding the reflective work to be completed later this morning. Response journals are then stuffed into backpacks and the group heads to the bus.

February 27th, 2020: While debriefing after school, Jody mentions that she keeps going back to me saying that educators assume students will know how to organize themselves but they don't know; everything needs to be taught in addition to lessons. Educators put all this work in, and would like to reap the benefits immediately, but learning takes time, as frustrating as it is. Jody's words about *knowing* outdoors, apply to the classroom. Our common mother-*ness* allowed for her words to be shared with her. She intrinsically knew in the fall.. All month long, Jody modelled with precision **how** to set up and organize journals and assignments. February: Nupqu.

Discussion: Braid 2 (Re)Learning to Learn

Senses

Learning Differently. More-than-humans' ability to communicate can translate into an idea or a thought that pops into one's mind while in proximity –to a tree, or grasses. To the colonizing mind, this would seem to come from nowhere. Yet, ideas may have very well been shared by more-than-humans nearby while out in nature. In the opening tableau of braid 2, Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre emphasizes how much can be learned when one is using all senses, and how important it is to feel. This is not only to notice how Land can contribute to one's mind, but also to emphasize how connections can be better understood with heart, with overall sensing. Cajete (1994) places learning with one's heart on the same level as learning with one's mind. Learning in this manner can enable interlocutors to connect differently when language, such as Ktunaxa for example, does not translate well to convey the importance of relationships, of kinships.

Heart Learning. Recalling his own profound connecting back with place, Donald (2021) learned through stories which consider places as "living relatives, who offer wisdom on how to live a good life" (p. 55). His learning extended to understanding the intimate interconnectedness between Indigenous peoples' identities and sacred places (Donald, 2021). While addressing the OP about Qat'muk –where kławła's (grizzly bears) spirit goes– Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre conveys a similar sentiment albeit through an image teenagers can readily relate to, and imagine. Heart learning opens the path to understanding meanings of *sacred*, when "looking it up" as Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre says, takes care of the cognitive part. This same cognitive part is challenged when a brief

encounter with himu (ponderosa pine) notices *feels,* and the possible heart learning contained within physical contact, while students are out among trees.

Ktunaxa Calendar

An extended meaning of the FPPL focused on experiential learning specifies how pedagogies are found in cultural practices that involve observation and modelling (ANED, 2017). This is not limited to human knowledge and skills. Lessons, in an educator's reflexive relationship to Land, can lead to adjusting or transforming practice and come from beings who best know place. In her keynote address with the Community to Classroom conference in October 2021, Dr. Lorna Williams noted that if we pay attention to which berries a bear eats, we'll know the berries to eat (Williams, 2021)! In the second strand of braid 2, mama nupqu (black bear) teaches knowledge necessary to survive. In addition, mama nupqu passes on indispensable skills about how to go about food finding for example, or how to find and rely on a nurse tree –enveloping trees– for safety. There is much to gain from paying attention to all parts of nupqu's identity which includes teaching lifelong skills. Teachings go on for two years which represent birth to adulthood.

Modelling

The third strand of braid 2 stems from words often uttered by educators: *students should know*! Cajete (1994) reminds how processes involved in learning are equally crucial in one's learning journey:

> One of the most important elements of Indigenous teaching and learning revolves around "learning how to learn." Learning how to learn is a key element in every

> approach to education. Therefore, the cultivation of the human capacities – listening, observing, experiencing with all one's senses, developing intuitive understanding, and respecting time-tested traditions of learning– naturally formed the basis for skills used in every process of Indigenous learning and teaching. (p. 222)

As Knowledge Holder Bonnie Harvey tells while describing the month of February, mama nupqu diligently (re)models skill learning into adulthood. (Re)teaching learning skills is a step that can often become taken for granted in the world of education. In strand 3, OP educator Jody comes to this realization after first being diligent herself. This is a lesson for educators who share this task on the longer journey from kindergarten to grade 12.

Following mama nupqu along for two years entails repeating previous skills to which new ones are also added in order to bring depth to knowledge. Learning resides as much in seemingly tedious skills, such as setting behaviour and work expectations, as in the content, or the experience. The idea of structure appears through a very short observation by Faye O'Neil who notes its long-term benefits for the Ktunaxa peoples, a point introduced earlier in the chapter. Structure in the context of learning from mama nupqu, Faye's thoughts, and processes tied to learning to learn, can pertain to purposeful scaffolding.

Scaffolding Learning. Shvarts and Bakker (2019) explore the roots of scaffolding and possible ties to Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD). They contend that scaffolding, which should be characterized by "a temporary adaptive support

that forms a functional system with the learner," can apply to other fields relating to education (p. 18). They further suggest scaffolding could lead to changes later in a learning process, "We also claim that scaffolding within ZPD may trigger the developmental process and lead to qualitative change much later, when a skill or a concept acquired through teaching/learning would undergo a further developmental change" (p. 19).

Skills continuously retaught as part of the learning process will likely be integrated over a long period of time. Though students should know, they will better develop and grow skills taught over the span of a schooling journey, rather than a school year. Multiple journeys around a circle strengthen and deepen learning (ANED, 2017; Archibald, 2008; Styres, 2017; S.Wilson, 2008). Precisions to the FPPL suggest the use of scaffolding strategies to deepen understanding experiential learning (ANED, 2017).

Two areas in the BC curriculum feature skills focused on learning processes: curricular competencies and core competencies. The opportunity to implement learning skills, in addition to content and experiences, is thus mandated. Key to learning is the ability to build on previously established knowledge. James and Williams (2017) view scaffolding as intrinsic to the success of outdoor education (p. 61). Engagement, motivation, and effective knowledge acquisition result from well constructed bridges between the classroom and the outdoors (James & Williams, 2017). The OP often followed a similar pattern that bridged classroom and outdoors. Classroom learning could be thought of as skill learning, though skill learning could be taught in various environments. Scaffolding concepts and skills, learned indoors or outdoors, becomes

intrinsic to outdoor experiences. The lesson from mama nupqu lies in the repetitive teaching of readily applicable skills.

Purpose in Practice: Braid 3 intertwines purpose in practice and a sense of place.

<u>Braid 3: Preparedness</u>

Strand 1: *In Someone's Home*

Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre on how to enter a place:

"It's the same protocol as going over to somebody else's house. It's not your house, it's not your space. When you visit someone else's space, we kind of have an understanding. Our North American understanding of going to someone else's home is probably a little different than other parts of the world but there's probably still [a] very human kind of understanding about going to someone else's home, common across languages and cultures.

Probably there are some cultures in the world where just walking in someone else's space is fine. But I think as human beings, and just the nature of protecting our families, I would speculate that the protocol in most of the world is that you alert the person that you have arrived at their home, that you would like to come in to their home.

It's that kind of Western attitude of the human being, being at the top of the hierarchy. If I'm going out into the bush, I'm still the top of the hierarchy. There may be a lot of people who don't even consider that they're going into someone else's home when they go into the bush, into the forest, into the mountains. You have to let them know that you're there, that you would like to come in.

If you've been in somebody's else's home for a period of time, and they've hosted you and you've used their home in those human ways: you've been in the home and

you've consumed some food with your host, and maybe in that visit you had to release some of that stuff, because it's human nature… Upon leaving that person's home you would be very grateful towards your host.

If I've gone into the back country, that forest space that is not my home but the home of those other creatures, and I've received some food from their home, and I've also left some waste in their home, then I should probably be grateful about that. I should probably acknowledge that as I would be doing leaving someone's home. Thank you for having me over I really appreciated the lunch. Those are protocols that someone would maybe utilize when they are not considering themselves at the top of the hierarchy.

If you're a human being who absolutely has that Western view of human beings at the top, you're probably just going in, and taking, and heading back out. You're not even thinking about it, because you're at the top of the hierarchy and it's your privilege to do that. Because I'm a human being, I can come and shoot that bear, take its hide and leave everything else… (opens his hands) and have I even said thank you? Have I even let them know I was coming?

That's part of ceremony before you actually go. You're preparing yourself for the hunt, yes, but you're also preparing them and letting them know that you are coming. Then you're saying thank you because you're actually taking something from the home. You might be taking a relative from the home. (Nodding his heads from side to side…)

I know there are people… human beings at the top of the pile, we don't have to do that."

Purpose in Practice: Braid 3 intertwines purpose in practice and a sense of place.
Braid 3: Preparedness
Strand 2: *Share*

In that corner of the schoolyard trees just outside the chainlink fence give the impression of a forested area. Despite the short distance they still feel enveloping. Snow from previous weeks has melted but the grass is slightly frozen, despite another sunny and abnormally warm fall day. The giant tarp Rhett has set up allows the OP group to play a quirky version of Duck Duck Goose called Duck Duck Animal. Jolts of screams and laughter erupt every time new players start a round. The sound catches the attention of ¢upqa (deer) grazing in the soccer field. At regular intervals the buck and four does lift their heads and glance over. November: Kt̓aɨuʔk ¢upqa.

*

The first outing by the lake had left lingering thoughts. The business of the day had shifted the focus to other items on the to-do list. Few words had been exchanged afterwards. The charge towards kyaq̓ɨa (duck), the treatment of ʔak̓is hanq̓u (cattail), bending the will out of a young tree and the destruction of a stump contradicted a goal of the OP to form relationships with the environment. A week later, standing in a circle, at the same spot by the lake, Rhett reviewed behaviours but went beyond: “we need to pay attention to nature, to non-human beings.” He focuses on “the connections and relationships with other beings.”

*

The location of the school in proximity to downtown’s fast food joints and a highly coveted corner store is regularly evidenced by the rapid accumulation of litter on

the grass and along the walls of Bear Mountain Middle School. Invigorated by the games and benefitting from extra time, the OP group is organized into pick-up crews; each outfitted with large black industrial garbage bags. I check with Rhett prior to addressing the class. "You saw the deer in the schoolyard, it's as much their spot as it is yours. Let's show respect."

Rhett reinforces timelines and expectations, he notes ¢upqa's presence, and crews go to work. As tends to happen with most middle schoolers, a few energetic groups have turned litter picking into a frenzied competition of see-race-clean. Meanwhile ¢upqa graze inside the wide imaginary circle of tranquillity that has designed itself around them. The circle is the result of a collective effort, not without temptations, necessitating no further interventions from Rhett. Success.

Purpose in Practice: Braid intertwines purpose in practice and a sense of place.
Braid 3: Preparedness
Strand 3: *A Ready Mindset*

The bus pulls up to the school's rainbow path under a heavy grey sky. Snow has been coming down since 8:30 am, and today is much cooler. In fact, it's cold. A flurry of footwear climbs the two steps leading to warm seats and foggy windows: winter boots, skate shoes, gym runners, and lace-up canvas shoes from a popular teenage clothing store. Canvas shoes? It's snowing! Three extra pairs of wool socks are ready, crammed in my backpack. Jody has noticed. We look at each other, I pat my pack. We're off to the lake to finish building last week's shelters.

As we near our destination, the bus driver points to ʔaknuqǂuǂam̓ (bald eagle). Jody promptly mentions ʔaknuqǂuǂam̓'s presence to the group. Perched high enough to

survey the lake, still unfrozen, ʔaknuqⱡuⱡam̓ observes silently, immobile. ʔaknuqⱡuⱡam̓'s resting position hides the typical yellow talons clenching the branch. Tucked low, head lightly retracted into body, and fluffed up, ʔaknuqⱡuⱡam̓'s feathers overhang on either side of the branch; talons undoubtedly gathered underneath, seeking warmth. A thin layer of snow accumulates on ʔaknuqⱡuⱡam̓'s feathered coat attenuating the usually sharp light head and dark body contrast.

At the shelters, those with oversized winter jackets replicate ʔaknuqⱡuⱡam̓'s pose.

*

Wearing an oversized black garbage bag, the Métis Trapper demonstrates ways to stay safe and dry in the woods. The OP group, surrounding him on the stage, is captivated. He shows how easy it is to get a poncho organized, and the lightweight property of a garbage bag. It's perfect for the backpack! Bear spray should be carried on the front of a jacket, on a pull string, because searching inside a backpack among other gear burns precious seconds. The Métis Trapper is animated and moves through tricks of the trade quickly. Along with his grandson, they have brought in a panoply of pelts, scents, traps, tools, and survival kit essentials.

In the cold winter months, Ktunaxa traditional knowledge indicates that activities occur mostly indoors (sewing and telling stories for women) and trapping (for men), which is more time efficient than hunting, is preferred though not exclusive. Temperatures in Valley School District often dip between -10°C and -20°C, cold snaps reaching -30°C and below.

Still wearing his garbage bag, the Métis Trapper pulls two smaller plastic bags out of his pack. Arms extended, one bag in each hand, he tells the OP group wool socks are ideal. “If your socks get wet, put a plastic bag over the socks and back in your boots. It helps keep your feet warm.” Those plastic bags are also easy to carry.

*

Rhett carries a ready-pack to every outing. “I’ve started seeing a number of students do it more. In September kids would want to leave their things at school, they did not want to bring anything at all, but I’ve seen a few more bring their stuff, even a water bottle.”

*

<u>Pandemic online work:</u>

1- Using the Tetris Challenge style, post a pic of at least 10 items you would bring on a day hike.

2- Make a list of the 10 things you selected in point-form:
If you used place-holders, just tell what that would be (e.g: p-h #1 = granola bars).

3- Explain why you would bring these items (very briefly).

Discussion: Braid 3 Preparedness

In Someone’s Home

Taking learning outside of the classroom environment challenges more constrictive and archaic content-driven educational stereotypes in favour of rekindling relationships with place and more-than-humans (Fettes et al., 2022). In addition, well-organized and planned outdoor learning contributes to augmenting the value of

experiential and active learning (James & Williams, 2017). For all the positive aspects learning in place yields, *being* in place also requires understandings and preparation.

Meeting Place. Tuck and Yang (2012) draw attention to the way settler colonial structures, practically invisible, infiltrate all parts of education. An unquestioned answer mistakes place as space, an alternate learning environment at the disposition of educators, or views outdoors as an extension of indoors. Yet, when a group sets out to learn outdoors, they enter a place, they enter someone else's home. Braid 1 encouraged thoughts around how the Other is welcomed into a circle of relationships, in braid 3 Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre uses imagery to offer thoughts steeped in reciprocity about how one enters the many circles already in existence in nature. This shift in mindset, an epistemological readjustment perhaps, demands of educators to consider the skills, thoughts, and attitudes to (re)model and (re)teach when one enters outside and, as importantly, to consider the agency of place.

Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre's message exposes the contradiction between well-established mostly agreed-upon human social conventions and the failure to replicate these with those viewed as Others, and with place. Hierarchal thinking, well-camouflaged, gets in the way (L.T. Smith, 2012; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Land, Indigenous knowledges, and practices, continue to be dominated by imbalanced social structures and disruptive practices, and perceptions of inferiority justifying resource extraction, human or more-than-human (Bannon, 2014; Engel-Di Mauro & Carroll, 2014; Riley, 2019; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Top of the hierarchy thinking can be a conscious state of mind but it is also ingrained in one's habits such that there is no second thought about how things are

done or approached. Like many other schools in the school district, Bear Mountain Middle School posts guidance and behaviour expectations on its indoor walls. A quick turn around to head outdoors however reveals a marked absence of similar reminders for place and more-than-humans.

Friendship's Respect. Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre encourages viewing place as a being who deserves the courtesies one would afford another person. This requires moving away from hierarchal thinking and entering into a relationship with place. Bannon (2014) suggests reconsidering the conception of nature's agency as a means to transform the dominant approach, even when well-intended, that permeates human thought. A friendship with nature serves as an ideal which would bind humans to a set of purposeful engagements similar to those one would enact towards a friend (Bannon, 2014). Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre's analogy and Bannon's friendship perspective both point to an involvement of the self and how that might look like in a reflexive relationship to Land. Bannon's (2014) description of a friendship with nature draws many parallels with visiting to someone's house:

> If we are invited to identify what actions are appropriate by reference to friendship rather than moral obligation, work upon our own thoughts and feelings, and develop habits that allow us to reimagine our relationship to the more-than-human world, then significant differences emerge between the ethical teleology of an environmental ethic and the more traditional anthropocentric ethics. (p.355)

Entering squirrel's circles (in braid 1) for example, would demand awareness and reflexivity, and perhaps the recognition that while in that home our responsibility is to the well-being of all the reciprocal relationships held within squirrel's environment.

Share

The second strand of braid 3, *Share*, reflects a successful attempt by the OP to respect a shared space; a first step to understanding where someone's home can be. In explaining how learning supports well-being, the panel for ANED (2017) grounds the principles in relatedness; "what affects one person affects all others" (p. 1). More concretely, educators are encouraged to "create learning opportunities for students to "make a difference" in the well-being of others and the environment" (ANED, 2017, p. 1). The short tableaux portray a reciprocal effort to take into account persons, more-than-humans, and place.

The schoolyard clean-up is not only good for the environment in general –usually the feel good justification– but the reciprocating action affects the environment of the beings whose home it is, notably ¢upqa (deer). Relatedness becomes concrete. The fence, which delineates property boundaries, dissipates as ¢upqa's presence indicate that the OP indeed enters someone's place. To view the schoolyard in this manner can lead to adjusting learning activities and influence behaviours accordingly, the way educators would naturally do were there another class on the field. The OP students' ability to work around ¢upqa shows that it is possible to cohabit, co-learn, in a space that is in fact many Others' place.

A Ready Mindset

The final strand addresses the idea that entering someone's home requires practical forethought. Sobel (1996/2013) recognizes the investment needed in ensuring students are outdoor-ready and educators' resulting reluctance to consider going outside. Strand 3, *A Ready Mindset*, reminds that middle school students continue to benefit from scaffolded learning to strengthen their own sense of preparedness. The reality of being outdoors for an extended period can continue to be challenging to grasp for habituated classroom bodies. In strand 3, The Métis Trapper's presentation offers pointers to conserve warmth with ingeniously light equipment. Unprepared, the focus on place is lost. In ʔaknuqɨuɨam̓'s (bald eagle) tableau, ʔaknuqɨuɨam̓ eventually flies away. The OP students in need of warmth have tucked in and, like ʔaknuqɨuɨam̓, are immobile, but for the duration of the entire activity. Attention to learning and attention to place are both backgrounded in favour of attending to a need likely nestled in the basic levels of Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs. Forethought pertains as much to the processes needed in place *for* learning as the ability to envision processes that will be involved *in* learning.

Reciprocity in Place. A reciprocal element to entering someone's home lies in growing an awareness of whose home(s). As a measure of safety the Métis Trapper shows the most effective way to carry bear spray. Entering someone's home does not necessarily entail actively seeking to encounter all who live there. Reciprocity can translate into respecting and giving more-than-humans a wide berth, as was the case in the schoolyard. In This City's trails, a sign at each entrance of the trail network is regularly filled by

hikers to indicate the latest bear sightings. Preparedness works to minimize the impact on someone's home and includes being informed and prepared in order for encounters and experiences to remain positive.

Concluding Words

This chapter opens an exploration of how ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa can influence one's practice that is carried through the next two chapters. Bringing purpose to practice involves paying close attention to those foundational beliefs that ground one's pedagogical choices.

The influence of ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa begins with acknowledging circles of relationships and delves into ways of doing while being outdoors. This translates into revisiting why certain pedagogical strategies are adopted and noticing how they are carried through while teaching. Chung (2019) observes how "everything the Ktunaxa do seems encased in deliberate protocol, if not ceremony" (p. 16). The word *deliberate* is key. Consciously acknowledging ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, demands an understanding that, as part of an interconnected web of relationships with other humans, more-than-humans, and place, there exists an internalized intentionality. Once passed a Westernized interpretation of mama nupqu teaching about surviving, we start noticing that mama nupqu teaches to be deliberate.

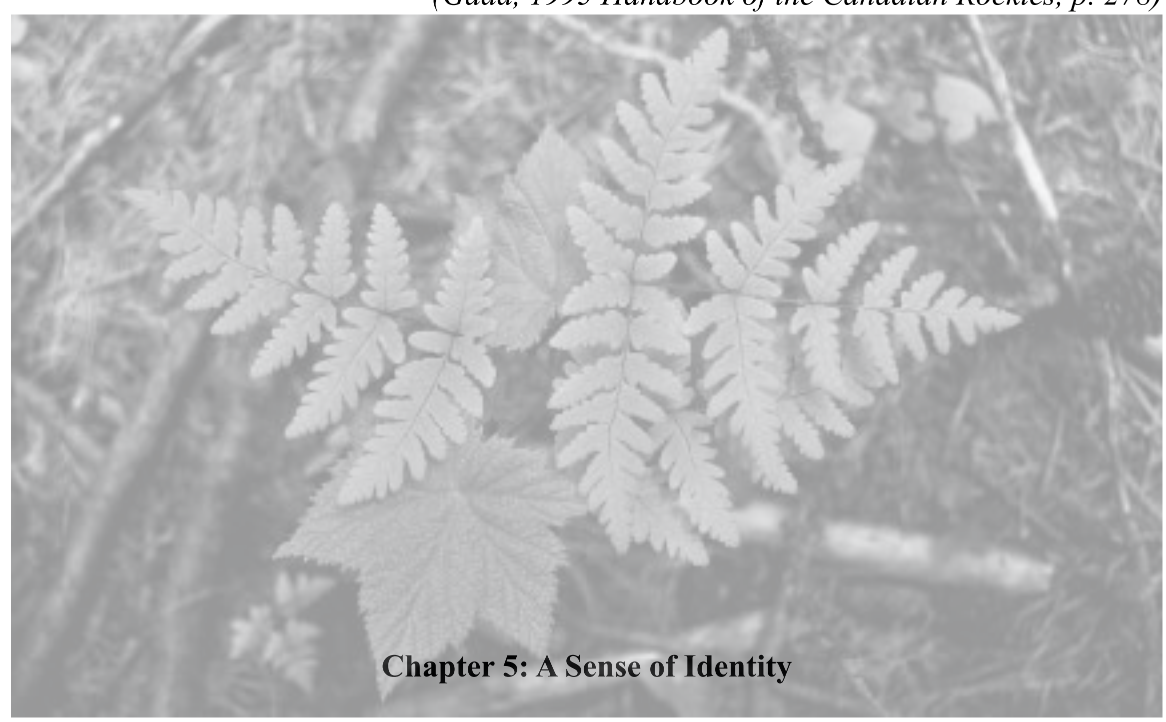
Learning from ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa means becoming cognizant of the consequences of one's action (FNESC, 2015), more extensively than through a lens of cause-effect types of relationships, towards performance-causality focused relationships borne out of "reiterative transforming-with Others" (Riley, 2019, p. 97). High expectations around

behaviour processes reinforce how "actions and words have an impact on others in the circle of life" (ANED, 2017, p. 2). Educators' preparation, expectations, and responses, become critical since learning is conveyed as much through actions as it is through words. Attention needs to be invested into processes of learning, and of behaviours, in order for teaching practice to start reflecting Land. In this way, listening to a story in place has more to offer when listeners are learning how to listen, when listeners are learning how to *be* in place, and when more-than-humans are acknowledged as "intra-actions" that emerge from "reiterative, open-ended, random, chance consequences of affects," contributing to sense-making (Riley, 2019, p. 97).

Purpose in practice requires as much forethought for the lessons and activities that will occur in place as for the implementation of foundational behaviours, skills, and attitudes. The influence of ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa resides in understanding the sense of purpose embedded in protocols that define Ktunaxa ways of being and doing as they are shared across the chapters (by humans and more-than-humans). A caution arises however, with the idea that replicating protocols addresses this learning. While educators may be exposed to specific protocols and ceremonies, it is crucial to remember that knowledge, stories, places, or experiences, may be shared only with permission and/or may be sacred (FNESC, 2015; Marker, 2018). An unquestioned answer might see elements borrowed, let's say forming a circle, yet forego an investment into learning about their importance, or basic structures and procedures. Learning about doing comes from *being* on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. There is a need to develop reverence for ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa in order to (re)start transforming one's experience as a person, as an educator, and as part of many circles of

relationships (Chung, 2019). Reverence enables reciprocity to be less transactional and generic because it connects to ʔa·kiɨwiy (le coeur), mind, and esprit.

ʔaqaɨiʔis suqsuq
Oak Fern: Fougère du Chêne; Gymnocarpium Dryopteris; Perennial
(Gadd, 1995 Handbook of the Canadian Rockies, p. 391)
ka¢ɨaquɨaqpi·k
Thimbleberry/Salmonberry: Ronce à Petites Fleurs; Rubus Parviflorus: Rose Family
(Gadd, 1995 Handbook of the Canadian Rockies, p. 278)



Chapter 5: A Sense of Identity

This chapter focuses on the second sub-question: *How does Land influence the learning journey in the process of building bridges of understanding between Indigenous and Western philosophies?*

In *A Sense of Identity* discussions and braided ecoportraits explore learning connections through facets of humans, more-than-humans, and Land identities. Amidst a differentiated conceptualization of space, place, land and Land, and working from the knowledge that the Other is a who rather than a what or an it, paying attention to identity offers an opening towards building bridges of understanding. In chapter 4, for example, viewing mama nupqu in a different light allows for foundational elements contained in

learning processes to emerge. Additionally, building on the understanding that Land includes all relationships, identity is also shaped by human interacting with each other. Bridges are thus also explored from a human perspective, as well as through interactions with the more-than-human world.

Chapter 5 first addresses the power imbalance that resides in assigning identity in any contexts, and cautions against self-assigning allyship too hastily. How identity is bestowed, on oneself and on others, influences future courses of action with often devastating results. The early months of the pandemic, its impact on how the OP perceived itself, the adjustments that followed, and the shift in the way relationships with each other, and with the more-than-human world, were to be considered. Braided ecoportraits, discussions, and implications then conclude the chapter.

Assigning Identities

The propensity to assign identity to others continues to be pervasive in education, maintaining colonial habits. Assigning identity inevitably others, and in doing so we "reproduce oppression in spite of our best intentions" (Bishop, 2015, p. 2). The dynamics at play reflect the relationship between "power-over" and "power-with" held within a patriarchal culture (Bishop, 2015; L. T. Smith, 2012).

The education system's structure includes discrepancies such as curriculum goals promoting the self while simultaneously labelling and categorizing students from kindergarten on. Educators continuously adjust to limiting funding formulas that count bodies, categories, and Individual Education Plans (IEP) –how many–, while striving to invest in persons –who–, and passions –what/how–, which can increase education's value

factor exponentially (Robinson & Arnica, 2009). Yet, educational talk often still continues to refer to students by their "designation" rather than their names. In short, educators are called to support students' identity growth within the parameters of the system that has them duly catalogued; ideally enacting cooperative "power-with" pedagogies while working within a "power-over" structure.

The power-over mechanism is a power with the ability to erase. Assigning identity goes much further with the reference of others in generic terms. In education, the work to be done may be held as a priority independent of students' identities, personalities, abilities, or learning needs, leading to viewing them through a generic lens: *students.* Assigning identity tends to maintain an absence of relationship in favour of pre-established conceptions.

Unlearning

In her book, *Becoming an Ally,* Bishop (2015) advocates for Westerners to learn about their/our identity as oppressor and move towards allyship by practicing invested listening. She offers a reflexive thought to action process which starts with "naming ourselves;" coming to terms with ourselves (p. 116). The work entails evolving along an awareness continuum which aims to transform the "power-within" that Bishop (2015) defines as "one's own centredness […] beliefs, wisdom, knowledge, skills, culture, and community" (p. 30). Chapter 2's overview of the intricate relationships with Land and policies, especially the new BCTC (2019) ninth standard addressing educators' responsibilities towards Indigenous worldviews, attest to the significance of the work to be undertaken. One should refrain from sitting too comfortably in their practice. New

knowledge has the power to refine and redefine educators' conceptualization of "power-with" towards students and parents for example, however unlearning that which is connected to the settler self becomes a key step (Bishop, 2015; Calderon, 2014; Strigley & Varley, 2018; Alfred, 2010).

Assigned Identities

To acquire newly discovered lands colonizers viewed as an overabundance of resources, a process of emptying and erasure was set into motion where they assigned identity to Land and Indigenous Peoples. Terms such as "wild" and "savage" became the narrative, inferring an end goal to tame and conquer. Religious Orders worked to reassign Indigenous women's identity as inferior and subservient to men, and children as uneducated (Bishop, 2015; Sioui, 1991/1992).

In Canada, policies progressively delineated places, rights, and identities further. Battiste (2013) identifies these policies, such as the 1920 Indian Act, as "identity politics" and outlines their devastating effects:

> False premises have been created in the *Indian Acts* and residential schools. As a result, Aboriginal people have been removed from their homeland, their nationhood suppressed, their Aboriginal and treaty rights ignored, their governments undermined, and their identity and cultured smothered. The legacy of the colonial history of Canada bears heavily upon Aboriginal people in the form of culture stress. (p. 135)

Education was the mechanism utilized in the attempt to eradicate identity, assert colonial superiority, and assimilate Indigenous people into Westernized society (L.T. Smith, 2012).

The establishment of mandatory residential schools by the Canadian government, Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs (1913-1932) Duncan Campbell Scott in particular, sought to "get rid of the Indian problem" despite knowledge of the alarming death rates of Indigenous children (British Columbia Teacher's Federation [BCTF], 2015, p. 8). During my first tour of the residential school near Valley School District, I recall the silent shock at learning most religious personnel came from my home province of Québec. I also recall the heartbreak of being shown the flight of stairs where our Ktunaxa tour host had been thrown down; he was still limping now well over sixty years old. Our Ktunaxa host reminded me I wasn't done learning.

Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre has often told the story of Ktunaxa children attending schools in Valley School District after the closure of the residential school as being equally challenging. Assigning identity is a societal issue. Folded into Westernized public schooling, Indigenous students faced racism along with stereotypes and the stigma that Indigenous parents were responsible for their children's shortcomings and depleted conditions (Battiste, 2013). Fellner (2018) notes the endless obstacles experienced by Indigenous communities:

> For centuries, settlers have been building cages and fences -tobacco sugar cane cotton plantation reserves residential schools Indian status scientific paradigms mental disorders Western methodology the beat goes on. The English language is

> yet another cage, privileging Western Eurosettler ways of knowing. These cages are so pervasive that it seems impossible to avoid them or find a way out of them. They are clichés – the default position of colonial knowings. On making our way out of one cage, we find ourselves in another. (p. 27)

The BCTC (2019) ninth teaching standard is a long-overdue requirement for educators; echoing Battiste's (2013) call for educators to "unlearn racism and superiority in all its manifestations" and to learn how to value others, new ways of knowing, and to be equitable and inclusive (p. 166).

Self-Identity

Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre recognizes how educators' awareness of settler involvement in education is at different stages of understanding and that attending to the truth must nonetheless be undertaken. Unlearning is a lengthy and challenging process where, as the FPPL state, the (re)learning "requires exploration of one's identity" (FNESC, 2015). It is uncomfortable.

Much like reflexivity, unlearning should result in ensuing action(s). The idea that unlearning on its own is not merely enough makes up a dimension in the differentiation between self-identifying as an ally and being an accomplice (Indigenous Action, 2014). Whether it is towards allyship or being an accomplice, Indigenous Action's (2014) provocative statements advise against hasty and convenient self-identifying, or expecting to garner identity by proclamation. Accomplices act, and these actions include listening and "in their own spaces confronting and unsettling colonialism" (Indigenous Action, 2014, p. 8). One should be somewhat uncomfortable readily self-identifying (Chung,

2019); for concrete actions, beyond how each term above is defined, are necessary yet complex and require to question purpose in practice(s). Reciprocity, then, comes in the learning of one's identity and that of one's interlocutor(s).

A Shift in Identities: The Pandemic

The pandemic cast an aura of uncertainty during, and following, the 2020 spring break at Bear Mountain Middle School. Murray et al. (2020) observed the pandemic affected how certain educators' identities were impacted by the need to approach their practice differently. Educators tasked with moving learning online, quickly developed new technological skills, and adapted to new reduced and, at times, unfamiliar group dynamics further complicated because school attendance became optional (Veerapen et al., 2020). Educators 'Zoomed' or "Teamed" and e-portfolios quickly became the norm. *Learning opportunities* at Bear Mountain Middle School were anchored in four core subjects: mathematics, science, language arts, and socials studies. Extensions to the core learning opportunities included weekly suggestions for health and physical well being and an opportunity to create. Fullan (2020) remarks that the shutdown allowed some families to explore other interests. The extensions built into the learning opportunities allowed for a broadening of interests that could be completed at students' and families' leisure.

Educational practice experienced a sudden shift from a prolonged stagnant state where few ground-breaking changes, if any, had occurred, to a learning mode itself afflicted with a range of assumptions (Dyment et al., 2018; Fullan, 2020). Fast changing working parameters continuously generated new educational pedagogies and delivery

environments causing most educators and leaders to be “de-skilled” (Fullan, 2020, p. 26). Such swift changes made many educators feel “isolated, vulnerable, and insecure” (Murray et al., 2020, p. 494). This new situation challenged educators’ self-perceptions of expertise and challenged traditional classroom hierarchies by placing educators and students alongside one another (Murray et al., 2020).

Many Selves

The main focus on core subjects, reorganization of students into small dispersed groups, and the transfer of learning to online platforms instantly dismantled the OP. The feasibility of running the program via digital platforms was quickly discussed. Outdoor education being based on experiential activities, running the program online seemed somewhat challenging; somewhat of an oxymoron (Dyment et al., 2018). Within a few days, the OP educators were able to carry on with a seventy-five per cent engagement rate during online meetings, despite participation being optional.

Successful transitioning to online teaching during the pandemic can be attributed to regular discussions, collaboration, and clear delineation of responsibilities among educators (Veeparen et al., 2020). The OP team established a similar pattern early on by holding weekly preparation meetings and discussions, the creation of optional outdoor activities –which is where I focused my support– and regular online meetings with students. Building relationships while teaching online represents a significant challenge within the context of outdoor education (Dyment et al., 2018). Veeparen et al. (2020) note that a collaborative approach holds much potential for online community building when the educator’s presence changes. The OP community (educators and students) were able

to maintain a bond online, however, concerns arose regarding ways to encourage outdoor education without staple elements relating to adventure (including risk and uncertainty), and experience (place, relationships; Dyment et al., 2018).

Online learning differs in form, content, and delivery, and outdoor educators are encouraged to "think about learning as situational rather than just experiential" (Dyment et al., 2018, p. 72). Two types of activities were created for the OP: outdoor related tasks students can work on online, and activities students can do within their own contexts. These outdoor learning options paired with the *create* section of the school's weekly learning opportunities yielded a new perspective on students' perceptions of, and interactions with, their environments.

The pandemic context further transformed relationships within the OP. Murray et al. (2020) note these types of changes and observe:

> Zoom meetings quite literally do not allow us to look the 'other' –*our students* – in the eye. We are not able to 'show how much we care' or to 'manage classroom behaviour or engagement' through physical proximity and/or positioning. Perhaps this 'loss of spatial closeness' (and with it 'control') houses an opportunity for better, more cautious, and more equal educational relationships. Online teaching may help us and our student teachers to refrain from assuming we 'know' our students or, indeed, the nature of our relationship with them. We are reconsidering the 'taken for granted' and developing a deeper, more cautious, sensitivity. (p. 495)

The OP students offered glimpses into their own world(s) that would not have been realized during regular school, be it their environments, their outdoor excursions shared in their e-portfolios, or pictures and recordings of beings in nature. Chrona (2016b) points to the importance of realizing that students possess multiple simultaneous identities influenced by their personal environments: home, community, school, and classrooms. Students' participation in this manner influenced how the OP team (educators) organized some online outdoor activities which made for some comical moments.

A Concert of Kinships

In June 2020, the (re)organization of learning translated into an unfamiliar setting. At Bear Mountain Middle School students were invited back into socially-distanced classroom and attendance was optional. In-school work consisted mainly of providing support for the weekly learning opportunities focused on the core subjects. For the OP, this shift meant the end of the program for the school year.

April and May pandemic work brought me into an inspiring neighbourhood forest with the purpose of developing activities drawing attention to more-than-humans students could notice in their own contexts. Throughout June and the following six months I carried on the extended outdoor work that had begun with the pandemic. I kept going to ʔakikq̓an¢ɫaʔin (the forest) because of the meaningful encounters that were (re)shaping my relationship with ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. This became a journey of drawing out many selves I had not had time to let roam free. This soon opened to a concert of kinships. There is a personal nature to identity, as it relates to place and belonging (Chrona, 2016b). The wealth of repurposed time allowed me to (re)learn and (re)connect with my

home in BC, more specifically with a beautiful ʔakikq̓anȼⱡaʔin. I went in to meet *who* lived there.

More-than-humans Identities

The settler colonial mindset sees the other as a commodifiable resource, human and more-than-human alike, for the settler's larger purpose of economic enrichment and progress (Marker, 2011; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Over time, the tie to Land was severed through loss of land, relocation, and restrained movements where culture, languages, traditions, and knowledge slowly eroded from communities' memories –although not from their hearts (Bishop, 2015; Calderon, 2014). Indigenous peoples' participation in "the economy" became inevitable and, thus severed, this participation translated into activities such as entering the fur/skin trade or mass logging as a matter of survival (Regular, 1999; Vaillant, 2005). The result was devastating. In *The Golden Spruce*, Vaillant (2005) depicts in great details the harrowing loss of forests which carries on today, along with the near extinction of sea otters on the BC coast. Prior to Europeans' arrival Indigenous peoples did not function with "a desire to affirm supremacy over any other creature" (Sioui, 1991/1992, p. 12). The loss of the connections with more-than-humans, for example the salmon and the buffalo, was felt in all aspects of life, "physical and metaphysical" (Marker, 2011, p. 103). They who had been kin became objects. Evernden (1993) observes "we believe everything to be things. And act as beings existing in a clutter of things" (p. 54). Land, more-than-humans, lost their identities in this process. My own upbringing with Wigwômadenizibo is tainted with many shades and layers of colonialism, as evidenced through the various tableaux.

Dr. Lorna Williams reminds listeners that semantics matter (Williams, 2021). How words are used and sentences formulated bestows an identity onto others that can often be inaccurate and belittling. Bang et al. (2014) provide a great example of this in their work renaming plants deemed invasive species: “plants that people lost their relationships with” (p. 47). When the more-than-human world is objectified as a collection of *it(s)* then “any of the character of worldhood” is denied (Evernden, 1993, p. 66). The Ktunaxa language, shares Faye O’Neil, herself a language learner, does not really have a word for *it*.

Chapter 5 Braided Ecoportraits

In *A Sense of Identity,* braid 4 delves into instances where advocacy emerges and informs a purposeful practice. Ktunaxa Elder Joan O’Neil highlights the investment involved in developing and nurturing relationships across different contexts. Her stories, and Bonnie Harvey’s short tableau, bring to light how continuous advocacy work is key to developing better understandings around one’s identity. Advocacy is directed outward, towards the self, and back to the Ktunaxa community. Encounters with k̓ustit̓ (larch), and the impact of the pandemic presented in the strand entitled *Zoom*, follow and both yield alternate layers held within advocacy.

Braid 5 leads the reader into the forest to meet more-than-humans through senses and literature. The braid concludes by focusing on an unquestioned habit that is often enacted with noble intentions but without a second thought.

The first strand of braid 6 pertains to educators’ responsibility towards place, especially with viewing place as a being. The analogies act as suggestions for first steps

towards building bridges of understanding regarding learning and place. The last two strands expose how reality can generate challenges towards knowing place and underscore the amount of work still to be undertaken. Without being so expressed, educators' responsibilities become clear.

A Sense of Identity can be perceived through most of the nine braids but is also more purposefully emphasized through braid 2 (*(Re)learning to Learn*), and through place in braid 8 *(Creating Connections*) as indicated in Table 9 below. This interconnectedness is reiterated as each braid is introduced.

Table 9

Chapter 5 Braided Ecoportraits

Braided Ecoportraits			
Ecoportait Themes	Chapter 4 **Purpose in Practice**	Chapter 5 **A Sense of Identity**	Chapter 6 **A Sense of Place**
<u>Purpose in Practice</u> How can teaching practice be influenced when educators consciously acknowledge being on Ktunaxa Land?	Braid 1 Welcoming Relationships - **Strand one:** Circles - **Strand two:** Kiʔsuʔk kyukyit (Greeting) Circle - **Strand three:** tak̓a¢ (squirrel) and one Circle	Braid 4 Advocacy - **Strand one:** Your … ness - **Strand two:** k̓ustiť (Larch) - **Strand three:** Zoom	Braid 7 Transforming Approaches - **Strand one:** Things in Nature - **Strand two:** Above the Tree Line - **Strand three:** Being in Place
<u>A Sense of Identity</u> How does Land influence the learning journey in the process of building bridges of understanding between Indigenous and Western philosophies?	Braid 2 (Re)Learning to Lean - **Strand one:** Senses - **Strand two:** Ktunaxa Calendar - **Strand three:** Modelling	Braid 5 Meeting Beings - **Strand one:** kyanɨakɨiquɨaqpik (heartleaf arnica) - **Strand two:** Smellscaping - **Strand three:** Taking	Braid 8 Creating Connections - **Strand one:** Creating Connections - **Strand two:** Bear Feet, Bare Feet, Bear Feat - **Strand three:** Signs - **Extra Strand:** Stories
<u>A Sense of Place</u> How can Land be purposefully re-centered through the building of bridges of understanding?	Braid 3 Preparedness - **Strand one:** In Someone's Home - **Strand two:** Share - **Strand three:** A Ready Mindset	Braid 6 (Re)Centering Identity - **Strand one:** Place Knowing - **Strand two:** Cattails - **Strand three:** Conflicting Identities	Braid 9 Taking Time - **Strand one:** Facets of Time - **Strand two:** (Re)visiting Place - **Strand three:** Thanking

A Sense of Identity: Braid 4 intertwines a sense of identity and purpose in practice.
Braid 4: Advocacy
Strand 1: *Your …ness*

Elder Joan O'Neil is a pillar of an Elders Program in Valley School District. "Besides having meetings [in the Elders' room], why can't we go in classrooms?" She opens her hands and looks at me. We're meeting in the Elders' place in one of Valley School District's schools. Sitting opposite each other in a circle of cozy leather armchairs, Covid rules obliging, I cross off the three questions I had jotted down. Joan, petite yet determined, talks about her passion.

"Having the Elders Program is more than tokenism. Actions need to follow. We want to belong in a meaningful way. I worked to make this happen." In classrooms, she supports students and educators. "I'm not there to push myself on them. Most kids are white, I'm a surprise to them, I wait for them to initiate contact. I get to know them, their character, what they think…" Her presence, she notes, improves students' behaviours – she is noticing a need for them to grow a stronger sense of respect and responsibility. Joan has also connected with students through programs in the school. "Everybody doesn't have to like me! But it gives you [/her] a good feeling."

Joan lost her father to the war at the young age of three. She went in the care of her grand-parents, her mother suffering from depression. In residential school, Joan's experience differed from that of many of her peers. "But," she says, "residential school didn't give you the words *I love you.* We were not taught. Maybe it was said to us in Ktunaxa at home, but we were no longer understanding." Joan explains that she set

herself on a path to change her life “by making commitments.” Demonstrating “I love you” grew in her family over time.

“I work! I work at the gas station in [my hometown]! It keeps me active, and I get to meet and know people!” Joan does not give the impression that she’s ever slowed down. She started going into classrooms during the second year of the Elders Program. “What am I doing here? They asked… People get uncomfortable.” She smiles when she describes how educators at the school wondered why she was there. She remembers going into a Law class: “the connections can be just because of one word… everything took off.” For other classes, such as English, the AbEd department liaised and supported both the educators and Joan. “Then, it was good!”

“Being Indigenous comes in many colours” Joan remarks, “you have to be able to go out there and judge people by their character and their actions.” In her introduction to students and educators she always asks the question “Have you ever talked to an Indigenous person?”

*

“October is k̓upaquɫaqpiʔk.

The leaves begin to fade and fall” Bonnie continues, having gone through almost the whole calendar year. She perks up on her chair and leans into our small white dining table:

“October 24th is Ktunaxa Literacy day. The six [Ktunaxa communities] actually signed the declaration. We set aside this day to honour the language and ancestors who have kept the language alive. It was led by the late Agnes McCoy. She was an awesome

advocate for education and language retention, sharing with educators and with students. She was going in [to schools and classrooms] and doing cultural exchanges, her and Gina Clarricoates, long before it became a mandatory part of curriculum. She just did it because it was so important. She'd share about who we are as Ktunaxa and our connection to land, and language."

A Sense of Identity: Braid 4 intertwines a sense of identity and purpose in practice.

Braid 4: Advocacy

Strand 2: *k̓ustit̓ (Larch)*

This City's mountainous terrain requires hikers to first descend into the forest to access the complex system of trails. Of the three possible entrances into the trails, the steep path at the southern end is the most idyllic, initially positioning hikers at level with trunks and branches already twelve to fifteen feet up. A twenty minute walk along a meandering creek down a lush but rocky ravine leads to a clearing acting as a junction. No matter the choice, it is going to be a climb. The up-and-down trail going further into dark forest is my preferred hike. Carved into a steep embankment proximity becomes shoulder-to-bark, shoulder-to-roots, and shoulder-to-ground. On the final roll a glance upwards and straight ahead announces the second part of the ravine and transitions hikers through a noticeable change in lighting, even mid-day.

k̓ustit̓ (larch) pepper forests on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa and grow in large numbers around This City's trails. In the fall, k̓ustit̓ reveal themselves by offering a bright yellow contrast to the habitual deep shades of green covering valleys and slopes. k̓ustit̓'s colour display is amplified by the loss of their soft needles carpeting the forest floor and, at

times, flowing into inspiring water spirals in the creek. Walks in the woods become muffled, and cushioned. k̓ustit̓s lay their blanket onto earth just before snow.

It is k̓upaquⱡaqpiʔk (October), it is mid-day. Looking forward to visiting with a favourite heart shaped moss along the ravine, I climb the final roll. I happen to glance upwards, straight ahead. The southeastern sunlight, behind me, brightens a continuous rainfall of k̓ustit̓s needles made more glistening by the contrasting wall of forest rendered dark charcoal. The wind on the treetops is absent near the ground making perceptible soft "ticks" from needles landing everywhere. Spider silk catches my eye, flashing occasional sparkling arrows between trees. I realize I have gone ahead alone on the trail. Transfixed, I reach for the camera already aware that capturing this moment will only translate into a "you had to be there" snap. I opt for living the memory with k̓ustit̓. "Wow," I whisper to myself. k̓ustit̓.

*

Snowshoes in the South Trails are useful today, not only to keep everyone from sinking in the snow or to protect the dormant plants below, but mainly because the trails are a sheet of ice. The only mechanism keeping everyone from slipping are the metal teeth underneath the toes. Snow is sparse for the beginning of February. If the sound of twenty-two grade 8 voices echoing through the open forest has not warned more-than-humans of the group's presence, the sheer scratching of snowshoes on ice effectively does the trick.

Just prior to the expedition towards the power lines clearing, behaviour expectations are briefly laid out. With Jody's permission I add three points about being

with more-than-humans: our position with nature rather than above; being in someone else's home; and being respectful. For example, if a tree is standing it is not ours to destroy, hit, or pull branches. Students jokingly commit to hugging and kissing trees, I warn about sticky sap.

Closing the walk I arrive last among young larches about as high as the students. One of them is being firmly held by their small trunk, as if a neck, while young branches are systematically ripped by a running leather mitt gliding down as low as possible. I intervene: "A reminder to be gentle please" while noticing that several other larches have had their wings clipped. The response: those trees are dead anyway. Words come out of me in a tone about as firm as the mitt on that neck: "It's a… LARCH!" I object "…they lose their needles in winter. So no, not dead!" I am in disbelief, upset by the branches laying around, and unhappy to have lost my cool.

Pandemic Online Work Sample:

Living, Non-Living, Or…

Have a look at all the pictures, pick one, explain how the being you see on the picture is: living, non-living, or…

What are clues that tell you this being is one way, or another… or another!

What are stories that can provide a different perspective?

How do these beings contribute to their environment?

Another option is to go outdoors and take your own picture of a being you have met, and tell about the encounter (use the questions above).

*

Rhett is sitting comfortably in his office chair behind the half moon table he uses as a teacher's space and work area for small groups. Rather than using paper he writes

directly on the table with dry erase markers. Leaning slightly forward, elbows resting on the table, Rhett shares a tired smile. On the eve of the November report card period, the accumulation of his many projects and commitments, in addition to the OP, is taking its toll. k̓ustit̓ has been teaching him.

“One of my favourite trees are larch, the tamarack, I just love seeing their regrowth every spring. […] Watching tamaracks the other day, I felt they were teaching me a lesson. There's a time when you have to let the extra things go; you drop those needles, you don’t need them, you can survive the winter without [them]. Come spring, you will be able to get yourself back together. There's beauty also in that letting go, […] there’s a season for it all. Where I am emotionally right now connected very strongly with the tamaracks and being able to be okay with letting some things go.” Rhett has held on to the commitments that encapsulate relationships, a strength and a priority for him: his family, the OP, and his Master’s work.

A Sense of Identity: Braid 4 intertwines a sense of identity and purpose in practice.
Braid 4: Advocacy
Strand 3: *Zoom*

Jody and Rhett agree, the pandemic offered different perspectives on how relationships, identity, and a sense of community can work in the OP. The initial sense of loss felt by both educators over the looming (dis)organization of groups within the school, was quickly transformed into an effort to maintain a sense of normality however affected by uncertainty.

“The pandemic verified and solidified the [OP] goals,” notes Jody, “part of the [OP] is the social connections.” Her and Rhett comment on the heightened online

presence of otherwise quiet and more withdrawn students. Rhett saw the importance of the social aspect of the class in the way those students "connected on the online chat, with gifs, emojis, and each other. We were privy to different insights about [all] students, were we invited into their own comfortable environments." A few pets were introduced!

Jody draws attention to the various Zoom backgrounds, many of them outdoors or while on hikes, and "[one of them] was in a tree! Learning was anywhere and everywhere." She saw students "putting a different spin on their projects" and, viewing their full e-portfolios, felt she learned more about who they were: "Learning became more holistic." This was particularly evident in the videos and photos posted. The outdoors featured abundantly, because this was the safer place to be, and because learning opportunities encouraged those connections. The OP activity *Signs of nature*, inspired by the local newspaper's weekly wildlife page, focused on noticing and sharing meetings with more-than-humans, and contributed to the growing (re)collections of stories.

"Sometimes there's being loud for the sake of being loud" says Rhett, emphasizing a need to become better listeners while connecting with nature. Jody and Rhett's personal connections with the outdoors transformed during the pandemic, opening each of them to a broader awareness of more-than-humans' active presence. As with the OP group, voices usually backgrounded came into focus.

Rhett has felt more drawn to going outdoors and saw parallels with the OP. "I go for more walks and I've been noticing a lot of spots. I have been listening to birds chirping and this makes me think of the [OP] community, talking together. I miss the time with each other." Along with his family, he has noticed "a lot of spots: a creek,

mountains, and rocks. I feel I'm doing more intentional noticing. Needles on larches are coming back, I'm noticing the growth." He contrasts his observation with another experience: "In a grove of aspens, I noticed how they grow at their own pace." Being outdoors, Rhett experienced his own rejuvenation.

Jody acknowledges how being in nature evolved for her. She realized how much more there is to do outdoors and could more readily see ties with nature. "I'm starting to look at place more specifically and link with school. I'm not just focused on my own walk, I think about the class. I pay attention to the nature that is there." Prior to confinement Jody had added a picture and story of a meeting with ni¢napku (moose) to the classroom board –which became *Signs of nature*. More-than-humans caught her attention: bullrushes, trees, "different birds, badgers, […] a black bear, [and] a woodpecker peck[ing] […] two dead trees in my parents' yard!" She is interested in learning more as she asks about dead trees and bugs.

At the end of the project Jody's assessment of the impact of Zoom on students seemed to also be fitting for more-than-humans: "Back to class, back to being quiet."

Discussion: Braid 4 Advocacy

Your…ness

Ktunaxa Elder Joan O'Neil understood early on in her involvement with the Elders Program the significance and the implications of her presence in the school. She asserts that for relationships to flourish and mindsets to transform, "actions need to follow." She recounts (re)actions where self-advocacy, belonging, and identity, intersect.

Her accounts inspires the theme for braid 4 in that all strands reflect actions connected to identity, where (self)advocacy influences learning and belonging.

Advocacy Through Presence. Through exploring one's identity, ANED (2017) suggests promoting "culturally located relationships" where one's validation extends to family, the Nation, and more (p. 5). Joan O'Neil's actions stem from a reflexive process subtly heavy with purposefulness. Her presence in classrooms causes intrigued reactions, and, at times, pushback. Yet, it is this extra step that brings purpose to her presence. In addition to strengthening connection with Indigenous students through a sense of belonging and familiarity, she is aware that to change perceptions being in place in a meaningful capacity matters.

In seeking reciprocal relationships, Joan O'Neil challenges the notion that identity and presence in the school suffice to tick the reconciliation box. When Joan O'Neil asks "Have you ever talked to an Indigenous person?" she encourages the interlocutor to simultaneously reflect on their own identity while considering hers. She confronts an unquestioned answer where "we are challenged to reflect on our collective histories and to reconsider the way in which we are in relation to one another" (DuPré, 2019, p. 1).

Shaping Relationships. Experiential learning, in addition to doing, can also encompass *being*, thus experiencing relationships. In this way, interacting with an Indigenous person also reflects the FPPL's focus on active learning and how "understanding happens as learner and subject [human, more-than-human] interact and shape each other" (ANED, 2017, pp. 1–2). Joan O'Neil has worked towards gently shaping relationships. She waits for connections to happen, at times through just one

word. She knows the power words can have. One of her personal actions has been to undo residential school damage through very specific words. Relationships do not need many words but the right words at the right time. For Joan O'Neil this happens in the hallway, in class, at work, and at home.

Long Advocacy Work. A sense of belonging can take roots in work done "through the revitalization of Indigenous languages, ceremonies, governance, food systems, art, and other cultural practices" (DuPré, 2019, p. 3). Knowledge Holder Bonnie Harvey shares a powerful example of this dedication at a time preceding education's efforts towards reconciliation.

Bonnie Harvey's colleagues understood the importance of this advocacy work. Highlighting Ktunaxa in schools first impacted the Ktunaxa communities, who came together to recognize the ancestors' heritage towards the Ktunaxa language, and to celebrate the language. Repetition over time as well as scaffolding learning can, and should, contribute to strengthening one's own identity while connecting new learners to this identity (ANED, 2017; DuPré, 2019). To forego the former is to invite tokenism. Patience and time, as stated in the FPPL, encourage learners towards perseverance while simultaneously calling for educators' dedication to *long work*.

k̓ustit̓s (Larch)

Patience and time can also hint at how *long work* mainly goes unnoticed while it is happening. Trees are mostly misunderstood, Wohlleben (2015) explains, because "they are so incredibly slow" (p. 230). k̓ustit̓ (larch tree), like all more-than-humans, are a

testament to long invested work. Chapters in k̓ustit̓s long life work, although seemingly repetitive, yield lessons around (self)advocacy.

k̓ustit̓ Many Selves. Dropping their needles, a marked trait of k̓ustit̓'s identity, influenced Rhett's own sense of self and need for self-advocacy. k̓ustit̓ spurred Rhett's reflexive process which in turn reinforced his life choice. Steeped in the knowledge that beings such as trees can elicit thoughts, Rhett's experience highlights a progression from long held factual knowledge (larch drop their needles) towards an epistemological shift. Battiste (2013) points to the organic nature of Indigenous science as "a dynamic, living process of watching, connecting, responding, and renewing" (p. 121). This process is grounded in the interconnectedness of spirited beings whose energies "interact at both an earthly level and a spiritual level" (Battiste 2013, p. 121). k̓ustit̓'s action, letting go of their needles every fall as part of their identity, was thought provoking for Rhett. An instance reminding that identity is not only physical, but also rests in mental, emotional, and spiritual states of being (ANED, 2017).

Living Object. My own perception of k̓ustit̓ transformed while experiencing the grandeur of their long work in the forest. The moment, which opens strand 2, deepened my understanding of k̓ustit̓'s identity and remained with me. van Manen (2007) distinguishes between cognitive knowledge and a "pathic" aspect of practice –derived from sym-pathic and em-pathic– which involves "the general mood, sensibility, sensuality, and felt sense of being in the world" (pp. 20–21). He recognizes the challenge in describing felt experiences, which, in the tableau, filters through my decision to let go of my camera. The relationship with k̓ustit̓ thus internalized on an emotional level

heightened the shock of witnessing the mistreatment of young k̓ustit̓ despite an effort to model expected behaviours around trees. An unquestioned answer lies in the disconnect between cognitive knowledge and attending to *pathic* (explored further in braid 5). Wohlleben (2015) sees the contradiction where students understand trees as living beings while also knowing them as objects. k̓ustit̓'s absence of needles in winter deemed them "dead." Advocacy work following this incident became a reciprocal responsibility. In the sample activity, the work focuses on beings, life providing, and stories, rather than teaching why or how k̓ustit̓ loose their needles. More pathic, less cognitive.

Zoom

The beginning of the pandemic saw the implementation of a communication system that effectively stripped students from their school identity/attachment, in favour of efficiency. Self-advocacy by the OP educators at the beginning of the regimented pandemic response aimed to maintain their long work: relationship building, and belonging. Within the FPPL's exploration of identity, ANED (2017) emphasizes how good relationships allow space for students to express themselves. OP educators Rhett and Jody understood the importance of maintaining those established relationships at a time when societal and educational structures separated everyone yet still stressed the need to connect with each other. Students' expressions stemmed from place and were abundant. For Jody and Rhett, these expressions of identity were unforeseen and provoked more conscious realizations of their own connections with place.

Pathic-Like Learning. In strand 3, place plays a dual role as both a safe environment from where to share about one's identity, and a personal environment about

whom to share pathic-oriented encounters with the more-than-human world. Inspired by Heidegger's view of being-in-the world, Häggström (2019) situates being-in-the-world as "parts of each other's life-worlds," including more-than-humans' worlds, rather than by living "in parallel with each other" (p. 1336). Communication platforms and e-portfolios provided an option for students to invite OP peers into their places and to experience the world through different perspectives. Häggström (2019) views shared experiences as taking several forms encompassing the self, space, time, and interconnectedness together, as well as experiences being particular to each. During the first few months of the pandemic, pathic-oriented experiences communicated through pictures, live Zooms, and stories, made visible to the OP educators how identity is tied to places. Jody and Rhett's awareness of their own places prompted reflections leaning towards the value of felt experiences while connecting with place.

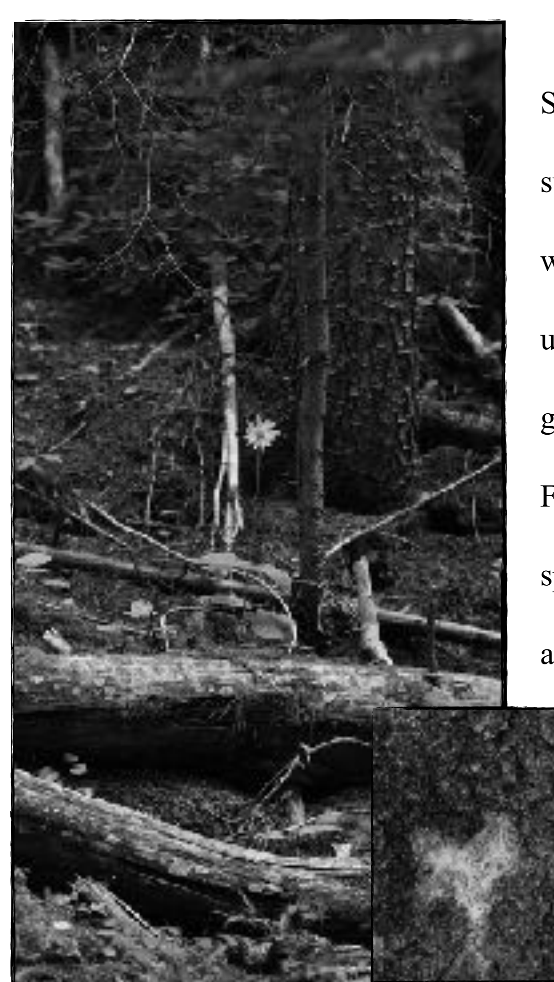
Jody's final observation of the OP's pandemic response reflects a realization that school structures can limit expressions of identity. For many students and the OP educators, sharing from or about connections with *their* places proved effective. Pathic-oriented sharing brought an emotional dimension to being in place, a heart element that could be communicated despite not being able to physically be in place with others. A key learning would be to nurture pathic-oriented connections with one's own place, while being at school.

A Sense of Identity: Braid 5 focuses on a sense of identity.
Braid 5: Meeting Beings
Strand 1: *Acquaintance with kyanɫakɫiquɫaqpik (heartleaf arnica)*

I envisioned kyanɫakɫiquɫaqpik (heartleaf arnica) weathering rain and wind, and grew anxious at the prospect of today becoming the final visit. Ready-pack on my shoulders, camera in hand, I ran the forty minutes through the forest to the ravine for a single flower. A healthy late afternoon jog over roots and rocks, under a patchwork of cumulus, blue hues, and heavy greys.

kyanɫakɫiquɫaqpik grow on mountainous terrain and sometimes into the forest. On the creek side of the ravine, kyanɫakɫiquɫaqpik settle near the trail wherever beams of sunlight land. A speck of yellow peeking through mostly greens and browns caught my attention one afternoon as I was doing a regular check for nupqu (black bear) up the steep hillside. kyanɫakɫiquɫaqpik was the only one up the hill, well into the forest, behind fallen logs. When we met, kyanɫakɫiquɫaqpik was an immediate *coup de coeur,* they captured my heart and interest. Tall amongst much taller kins, kyanɫakɫiquɫaqpik stretched upwards at least thirty centimetres further than their counterparts across the trail. The display of height brought to mind *The Golden Spruce* and Vaillant's (2005) description of BC coast's evergreen giants all reaching for a parcel of luminosity. kyanɫakɫiquɫaqpik bloomed despite the sparsity of direct light, tenaciously rooted in place. The resilience was not without reminding me of Jody and Rhett's ongoing effort to demonstrate the intrinsic value, and successes, of the OP –a concern ever-present in their mind– to what they perceived as underlying resistance from colleagues. kyanɫakɫiquɫaqpik's presence reflected my own dichotomous journey as a student: in a forest of others, at times

overlooked, dismissed as ordinary, and at others, acknowledged, name and experiences worth knowing. Seemingly out of place, kyanɨakɨiquɨaqpik wasn't.



Fox, in *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, teaches Little Prince the subtleties involved in developing relationships with more-than-humans. A being becomes unique rather than generic, Fox explains, when a genuine connection happens. In the original French version de Saint-Exupéry (1943/1990) speaks of adopting or being adopted – apprivoiser– by another being, hinting at the notion of caring. I interpret adopting as taking *time to* care *about* another being through actions but also kind words, kind thoughts, and showing a kind heart. A being could elicit the same (re)actions by drawing human's attention at that moment, in that place, the way Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre talks about trees and other beings supporting one with ideas sometimes! This is Fox's teaching for Little Prince, "on ne voit bien qu'avec le coeur. L'essentiel est invisible pout les yeux" (p. 72), meaning what's essential is sensed through the heart and invisible to the eye.

I discreetly looked for kyanɨakɨiquɨaqpik every time I went through the ravine. Respect is taught not innate so I did not disclose where kyanɨakɨiquɨaqpik stood though I

talked about them often. Over the phone one day, Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre asked me to tell him their name… “Good effort!” he said, chuckling. I learned it better.

When I located them on the hill, I kept a distance but paused to connect. I hoped they sensed a dash of serenity emanating from me, and sensed my careful presence when I did climb up to take a picture, tiptoeing around other beings along the way. “I fell in love with a flower!” I told my PhD committee and everyone who would hear it. I often imagined kyanɨakɨiquɨaqpik in their place, close to their own enveloping tree, sensing surrounding heat and breezes, by noticing changes on my own arms, and feeling the vibrations of steps and sounds coming from the trail below. I imagined kyanɨakɨiquɨaqpik enduring the rain that day. They made it through. I should have known they were tougher than they looked.

kyanɨakɨiquɨaqpik left as they appeared, unbeknownst to me. I was saddened by the loss of this relationship. I had noticed shrivelling petals, the sign of an approaching goodbye. I tried my best to remember the spot where we met, but it became impossible in the ever changing forest.

*

<u>Pandemic Online Work Sample:</u>

<u>Connect with more-than-humans:</u>
Is there a tree, a plant, a place, an animal, or another being who you are drawn to all the time?
Or, is there a tree, a plant, a place, an animal, or another being who caught your attention by their very presence?

Did you notice them or did they notice you?
Sometimes, we form a connection with a particular place, a particular plant, a particular animal, rock, etc.
What makes this connection so special?
Are there stories you know about your special connection?
(See cedar and rock, they chose me.)

A Sense of Identity: Braid 5 focuses on a sense of identity.
<u>Braid 5: Meeting Beings</u>
Strand 2: *Smellscaping*

k̓isƚuƚaƚ (spruce) has a distinct scent: fresh pine needles anchored by undertones of sunbathed bark, a presence and fragrance that inhabit the lungs the way mint does to taste. Running fingers lightly along rosemary sprigs offers a more subdued version. k̓isƚuƚaƚ seems to dispense their unmistakable trademark because of careful coordination between sunshine, humidity, place, time, and who is nearby.

Experiencing k̓isƚuƚaƚ's smell in This City's trails is a lived moment. Two steps further is already too far, and walking back to basque in the scent is usually impossible. If k̓isƚuƚaƚ communicates at that precise moment, then I should take the time to reciprocate. I have learned to take notice of those moments when they happen: to pause on the path, breathe in, look up, have kind thoughts or words, and a gentle hand-to-bark touch.

*

ɫawiyaɫ (huckleberry) has a distinct scent. They often fill an area of the forest with floral tones though flowers may not be blooming there. To know the smell is to know the berry: sweet with a hint of tang. Unlike k̓isɫuɫaɫ who seems somewhat selective, ɫawiyaɫ surrounds. As Kimmerer (2013) says of wild strawberries, the same happens with ɫawiyaɫ, "you [can] smell before you [see] them" (p. 23). ɫawiyaɫ's aroma possesses a sizeable diameter of niceness translating into an enjoyable experience as one traverses across their home.

I meet ɫawiyaɫ by crouching down in search of dark polkadots appearing through the green foliage of the forest. Surveying while standing up only yields a green view. Down at the right angle, they all appear.

In This City's trails, I leave ɫawiyaɫ to nupqu (black bear).

A Sense of Identity: Braid 5 focuses on a sense of identity.
Braid 5: Meeting Beings
Strand 3: *Taking*

Faye and I walk in the Community Trails once in a while. The forest is older, the trees are bigger, and the paths much wider. The darkness of the woods contrast with the grassland clearing opening on two small lakes. The soft yellow grass is a typical sight in these parts. Faye talks about connecting with more-than-humans as we approach a large fallen branch, a ponderosa pine. "When you take something, you give thanks. My sister and I come here and collect pine needles. I make sure to thank, to be thankful." I reach out and brush a cluster of needles, still very green, letting each needle intertwined with my fingers. The branch fell recently. "I never take the ones by the trails though, only the

ones further in… You never know if a dog has peed on them!" I look at my hand and reach for sanitizer in my ready-pack. We both giggle.

Faye tells the story of working as a cook in an archeological camp. "I ended up with a small artefact. I felt guilty." She eventually talked to an Indigenous leader from the area and was advised: "As long as you use it for educational purposes…" She honours this advice.

*

Students expressed a wish to do rock-art scenes like the pieces hanging in the green classroom. Why not do the art project but also look into the significance of rocks for Ktunaxa peoples? Hannah would be a good person to suggest resources and come spring, knowledge and activity could be paired. It's a "Yes!" from Jody and Rhett.

Hannah shares a story she stored on her computer, of a geologist remarking and noting the importance of similarities between Indigenous knowledge and a scientific look at how earth was formed. As I have learned in Dwayne Donald's writings, the grandfatherhood and wisdom of rocks is reiterated. Rocks are beings. Rocks are more-than-humans. I feel the tiny flat pebbles on my favourite bracelet, collected the last time I visited back home. I understand exactly what I need to do on my next visit, and what I need to start asking myself from now on.

Jody knowingly smiles and nods at the mention of taking advantage of the art project to steer attention towards nature as beings rather than nature solely as resources for the taking. We all need the continuous reminder. She has a good children's book she can use to remind students.

*

In between two conversations on the phone, I had shared my *taking* thoughts with Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre. I had come to the conclusion that I would not readily pick up a bear or a badger to show a class… due to size and the assumption that they would rather not want to be picked up! I realized my need to reflect further about taking. Conscious of careful attention, the educator in me still felt it had been okay to pick up fallen lichen, twigs and branches, rocks, and pinecones to bring back to class, or insects and snakes to show students right on the spot. I actually had a small collection of five "nature items" on Jody's desk!

Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre noted the entitled right to take (from) more-than-humans deemed less –in size or in importance– but also pointed to how taking is also done to humans considered "not at the top of the hierarchy."

Needs and wants, grade one socials curriculum: I taught this for years.

Is readily taking, even if only as demonstration for educational purpose, a true need?

Is an educationally justified need actually an educational want?

What is the educational impact of my educational taking?

Discussion: Braid 5 Meeting Beings

Acquaintance with kyanǂakǂiquǂaqpik (heartleaf arnica)

Learning Through Emotions and Senses. Braid 5 first foregrounds emotions and senses experienced through encounters with kyanǂakǂiquǂaqpik (heartleaf arnica), k̓isǂuǂaǂ (spruce), and ǂawiyaǂ (huckleberry). In chapter 4, Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre encourages

learning through the senses, and to *feel*. To be enthralled by a flowering kin or to notice when a communication from more-than-humans may be occurring in the moment is way of expressing learning. “The pathic sense,” van Manen (2007) argues, “perceives the world in a feeling or emotive modality of knowing and being” (p. 21). Heeding emotions is rather necessary to develop a more comprehensive understanding of more-than-humans and places even if this modality is uncomfortable (Bannon, 2014; Burkhart, 2016). (Re)Considering emotions and senses as learning guides represents a way to bridge the disconnect between cognitive learning and Land; to bridge the unquestioned answers of knowing more-than-humans as living beings while simultaneously categorizing them as objects.

Emotions and senses emanating from all beings matter. Wohlleben (2015) recognizes the the sentience of more-than-humans, and the challenge such recognition still poses for many (p. 242). kyanǂakǂiquǂaqpik took my heart away for who they were, in the moment. k̓isǂuǂaǂ, and ǂawiyaǂ displayed agencial choices when they communicated with me at a specific moment, which I noticed. Going about the world with a greater awareness of one’s own *sensing* and being *sensed* by more-than-humans, denotes a willingness to embrace an ontology that has been silenced by colonialism. It confronts an unquestioned habit strongly tied to the disconnect with Land: that of taking. Strand 3 raises thoughts about how deeply ingrained the entitlement to take is, and seeks to provoke reflections with regards to educators’ role in modelling taking.

The Invisible Essential. Initially, the encounter with kyanǂakǂiquǂaqpik recalled connections with readings and metaphorical images tying my learnings to our similar

identities and situations. But these formulations maintained our already parallel living and failed to bridge an engagement gap though they still bore a degree of emotional connectivity. Frequent visits over this particularly tall kyanɨakɨiquɨaqpik's season, however, slowly revealed their uniqueness and individuality, and fostered attachment. I couldn’t wait for the next visit! A missing chip of bark on a nearby tree –which, I admit, I anthropomorphized as a fox (a racoon, and a heart)– ignited memories of the story *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (1943/1990), heard countless times in my youth. In their analysis of the story, Hale and Fox (2013) contend that attending to one’s essence can lead to great relationships. Focusing my emotional attention towards this important kyanɨakɨiquɨaqpik, beyond information facts about every kyanɨakɨiquɨaqpik, required a time investment in the same manner as The Little Prince’s for one important rose.

Much like the story’s core element, attending to kyanɨakɨiquɨaqpik’s essence involved purposeful attention to a part of them that is invisible but matters above all. van Manen (2007) indicates how pathic knowledge, though it will show through subtle visible actions by way of being, is such an internal part of the self that it goes unnoticed as if invisible. Learning *to feel* attends to that which is invisible in others, and in oneself. It is this space, between objectification, cognitive knowledge, and knowing beings are alive, where engagement needs to be developed more purposefully. Key to this learning is to go beyond the sense of sight.

Smellscaping

k̓isⱡuⱡaⱡ and ⱡawiyaⱡ, in strand 2, teach to pay attention to *sensed* contacts. The value in others, their uniqueness, contributes to relationships, and to caring in a relational way (Colucci & Pegoraro, 2016). A reflexive relationship to Land is anchored in pathic learning. The FPPL not only remind of the importance of exploring one's identity but also that learning is relational and "occurs in the context of relationship" (ANED, 2017, p. 2). Long work is involved in a purposeful commitment to heart and pathic learning of Land's multitude of seasons.

Caring Versus Consumption. Strands 1 and 2 highlight kyanⱡakⱡiquⱡaqpik, k̓isⱡuⱡaⱡ and ⱡawiyaⱡ, as independent beings worth developing a caring relationship with for who they are. Fostering more emotionally laden relationships might affect how stewardship is modelled and strengthened. The idea that more-than-humans possess value other than to fill human needs remains perhaps less comfortable to grasp than understanding their use(s) and place in a consumption chain (Hale & Fox, 2013). Considering more pathic understandings, strand 3 brings to light the invisible colonial entitlement on display through the unquestioned habit of taking-to-teach. As Graham (2007) notes, "many aspects of our relationship to the natural world, including patterns of consumption are subtle and easy to miss" (p. 379). Following up on the example with pinecone in chapter 2, personal interpretations of needs and wants tend to colour consumption habits whether it is to collect "materials" or to handle more-than-humans to show a class.

Taking

Faye O'Neil's relationship with pine needles is infused with knowledge that taking calls for reverence. Her reciprocal approach towards pine needles reflects conscious care expressed through thankfulness. There is forethought, protocol, and purposefulness to her actions. Wohlleben (2015) sees an inevitability to take as it is part of living, however, he suggests to ponder what we need and how we take. Faye's guilt over an artefact indicates her understanding of emotional significance. She is taught to reciprocate by doing educational good.

Needs Versus Wants. The last two tableaux of strand 3 show how the blurred distinction between needs and wants easily gives way to perceived necessity. Taking, in education, is often justified as a need which obstructs the reality of still being resource extraction for consumption albeit on a dramatically reduced scale. Harmin et al. (2017) advocate for practicing a stretching of understandings, and ultimately beliefs, which acknowledges Indigenous ways of knowing:

> A transformative and decolonizing pedagogical orientation, as we engage it, involves (but is not limited to) making space for epistemologies that recognize the agency and sentience of the more-than-human, and making visible power relations that work to maintain particular ways of knowing as subaltern and marginalized. (p. 1490)

Stories introducing who rocks are for example, teach not only about about emotional significance but should provoke a reflection about the implications of taking rocks for art or other school projects. Learning from Faye, I experienced a similar guilty feeling upon

realizing how my attachment to Wigwômadenizibo. I ignored rocks' right to remain in that same place. I just took. As we discuss rock art, Jody arrives to a similar conclusion. Kopnina et al. (2020) remark on educators' ability to unknowingly thwart their own pedagogical effort and progress as well as lessons from more-than-humans. Taking-for-education is yet another instance, that holds far reaching consequences. Unquestioned modelling of taking-to-teach or taking-while-teaching reinforces the perpetuation of colonial power over Land. Actions are meaningful and impactful.

Limiting taking to what one needs demands revisiting conceptualizations of a need considering Indigenous ways of knowing, Land, and more-than-humans. We can know the properties of a plant but we also need to learn to care in a relational way, take only what we need if true need there is, and learn to express thanks such that reciprocity is evident.

A Sense of Identity: Braid 6 intertwines a sense of identity and a sense of place.

Braid 6: (Re)Centering Identity

Strand 1: *Place Knowing*

"So I acknowledge that […] a lot of teachers in [Valley School District] are not going to have an understanding of Ktunaxa, to have the comfort to be able to teach themselves, to be a teacher of that subject themselves. I would argue that before they went to teacher college there were a lot of topics that they didn't know anything about, and now they feel very comfortable teaching. It's the continuation of lifelong learning. If we're truly embracing, supporting, and promoting lifelong learning, then it's got to be done by the self too. I think that a teacher working within ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa should be

acknowledging that piece and saying ‘Yeah I’m a lifelong learner and here’s a piece I could learn.’” –Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre–

*

Rhett and I are on a final walk through the Community Trails. He is talking about place as we walk a trail the OP usually bikes. Grasshoppers resettled as we walk along the path. He realizes that when the adventure side of an activity is emphasized, the connection with place is more superficial. “When you’re biking, you’re not stopping to connect with nature!”

The pandemic cancelled plans to do an ethno-bothany tour with the OP. Rhett expresses a desire to spend more time knowing the animals and plants who live in the Community Trails. He turns to me and offers an image: “You know how we get to know students at the beginning of the year? You start developing those connections and relationships as you know more about students. The idea would be to get to know a place the same way. Develop connections and relationships, figure out how things work in that ecosystem.”

A Sense of Identity: Braid 6 intertwines a sense of identity and a sense of place.

Braid 6: (Re)Centering Identity

Strand 2: *Cattails*

The state of the snow in the Community Trails is anything but pristine and fluffy. Corn snow has appeared already in February following a series of warm days. Snowshoeing still prevents from sinking just deep enough to fill winter boots with fast melting grains of ice. Yellow grass pokes through the snow, in single stands, bunches, and patches, all through the clearing near the small lakes. On the way to ponderosa pines at

the edge of the forest, a few of us at the rear encounter a blotch of wet beige. Students are gagging. “That’s one sick dog!” I think coming across more patches. Jody and I look closely. “That’s probably one of ours…” she says.

*

Rhett and I chat on the way to the fire. The lake location is adjacent to Jody’s family home and her dad always has a fire ready for the students to warm up. Rhett point to the border of cattails by the lake: “I wish I was able to explain more about cattails based on Kimmerer’s book…” He would like to draw the students’ attention to them in a more comprehensive manner.

Coming around the bend in the dirt road onto Jody’s family property, we are engulfed in a storm of seeds filling the air. Already releasing seeds slowly, the process is sped up by broken brown flower stems being flailed and whipped around vigorously.

*

By the lake is Jody’s preferred place. “I spend a lot of time wandering around the area, noticing learning opportunities. One thing in particular: the bullrushes. After reading [about] Kimmerer taking her students to the marsh to harvest bullrushes, I was very intrigued about them. I want to learn more about how to use them as Indigenous people have…”

A Sense of Identity: Braid 6 intertwines a sense of identity and a sense of place.
<u>Braid 6: (Re)Centering Identity</u>
Strand 3: *Conflicting Identities*

Without looking at each other Jody and Rhett lift their arms and recreate the sound.

Rhett: We wanted to establish our program on the importance of place, where we are, and understanding part of the history of this place before we start[ed] figuring out our own relationships with this place.

Hannah: We brought Bonnie Harvey for storytelling. She shared the story with the students. We brought [the OP] to an area [in the valley] and you could see ?akinmi right behind.

Rhett: The students were facing ?akinmi, Bonnie was in between them. We were pretty close to the highway. The whole time Jody and I thought this was going to be pretty distracting with all the traffic going by… Bonnie captivated us through that.

Hannah: It was great because while Bonnie was speaking an eagle was flying over us. It was symbolic as far as I was concerned.

Rhett: I think that was a time when Land presented an opportunity. This is a time for us to learn from me right now. Being open to receiving those impromptu opportunities and recognizing the Land is giving us an opportunity. As Bonnie was sharing the story about the animals flinging their arrows together and building ?akinmi, an eagle started soaring above right in the line of vision. For those paying attention and listening to Land, it was emphasizing the story of the Kootenays. For me, the connection [was]" Hey we're doing the right thing!" This knowledge we receive from Bonnie has value equal to what we talk about in the classroom.

Rhett: Then, right after, this helicopter came up on the other side…

Without looking at each other Jody and Rhett lift their arms and recreate the sound.

Rhett: The eagle a few kids noticed. As soon as the helicopter came, their attention averted back to this technology. I was thinking: What an example of the Eurocentric mode and our way of knowing being loud and boisterous. Pay attention to me, this is how you should be flying… In comparison to the Indigenous knowledge that was being shared, pay attention and observe what I do, not so much listen to the noise I make and do what I'm telling you to do."

*

Rhett: When we go out and [the students] see ?akinmi, there's still some kids going "?akinmi I know your story!"

Discussion: Braid 6 (Re)Centering Identity

Place Knowing

A Responsibility to Learn. Recent changes in government policies, especially the BCTC (2019) ninth teaching standards, have made explicit educators' responsibility towards Indigenous knowledges, worldviews, histories, and perspectives. But, in the words of Elder Joan O'Neil which encapsulate reciprocal responsibilities, actions need to follow. Though many teachings are guided by the AbEd department(s) within Valley School District, educators must also undertake learning who Ktunaxa is. The FPPL connect generational roles and responsibilities to learning processes (FNESC, 2015). They identify essential teaching roles (family, community, Elders) while responsibilities remain everyone's role as learning is a continuous process (ANED, 2017). For example,

precisions around the perspectives for this principle emphasize how learners have a responsibility to learn and to determine what ought to be learned (ANED, 2017). In braid 6, Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre reflects on this responsibility to learn, countering the paralysis often triggered by the fear of making a mistake. Learning Ktunaxa relationships –place, language, culture, worldview– is long work, a reciprocal commitment of the professional and personal self, tied to the choice of establishing oneself on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. Ktunaxa relationships warrant care. Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre echoes Elder Joan O'Neil in going beyond words and following up with actions.

Caring as Responsibility. In strand 1, Rhett, also views knowing place as a commitment of the self. He thinks of this work as akin to how educators invest, and take pride, in developing relationships with their students. Learning is emphasized by reciprocal relationships (FNESC, 2015) that should not be limited solely to human interactions *but* become inclusive of all interconnected relationships held within Land. Educators' responsibility towards these relationships go beyond curriculum delivery. These relationships are reality, and consequently we are accountable to reality (Wilson & Hughes, 2019).

Rhett's observation of the work to be ideally done is emphasized through Wilson and Hughes' (2019) guidance stating how "relational accountability points to the experience that when we recognized reality as relationships, we have to act differently" (p. 13). This knowledge, integral to Indigenist research processes, is just as powerfully grounding for educational contexts. In addition to responsibility and reciprocity, Wilson and Hughes (2019) point to fulfilling a "responsibility to care" (p. 13). Researchers need

to ask whether their research is enacting an ethics of care (Wilson & Hughes, 2019), thus educators committed to a reflexive relationship to Land should ask themselves: *Is my practice enacting an ethics of care?*

Cattails

Connecting With Place. Strand 2, *Cattails*, demonstrates how a perceived lack of knowledge of other beings seems to act as a barrier to the heart, the pathic. The OP educators express heartfelt wishes to know cattails better, which they associate with being able to connect to place more effectively. Kimmerer (2013) observes that for some people knowing the scientific name of a being seems sufficient and "they stop exploring who it is" (p. 208). But this also often stops at the generic noun –tree, cattails, flowers, insects, etc.– maintaining beings as objects. Educators in strand 2 feel pressured to dispense factual knowledge when purposefully created names, as Kimmerer (2013) suggests (perhaps until the Indigenous name is learned), may entice to pay closer attention. Cattails could become *The living place of birds and turtles* or *The guardians of the lake shores.* On several occasions, knowledge paralysis reduced an opportunity for heart learning into a reminder about questionable behaviours. Expected attitudes and behaviours towards more-than-humans should be in place and become intrinsic so that curiosity and conscious efforts to meet beings, even informally, can prevail.

Emotional Reciprocity. Relatedness, reciprocity, and conceptual/emotive understanding, make up the grounding elements Martin (2007) identifies in his formulation of a care ethic for the environment. More time in contact with place increases opportunities to develop relationships and relate to other beings (Martin, 2007). These

opportunities must be taken up however, and approached emotionally as well as cognitively. Martin (2007) stresses the need to (re)connect this duality, "for educators interested in encouraging an ethic of care the capacity to think with the heart as well as the head is vital" (p. 61). Reciprocity can be a validating process when caring efforts are met with tangible responses. Martin's (2007) discussion around reciprocity highlights the difficulty to relate to the environment when morally good reciprocal efforts do not yield visible responses, and how they are perceived by the environment none-the-less. Chapters 2 and 3 also sought to shift this mindset around reciprocity –perhaps here a more subtle unquestioned answer– from a perspective of humans initially giving and Land providing back (owing), to Land initially giving and humans receiving (being thankful). Care towards the environment is an emotional endeavour that may be better conceptualized as akin to being in a friendship relationship which entails an investment of the self and creates responsibilities towards the other (Bannon, 2014; Martin, 2007).

Conflicting Identities

Persevering. In strand 3 Indigenous and Westernized ways intertwine in an unexpected format. Recognizing and "placing Indigenous knowledge as an equal alongside "western" knowledge as an equal and [complementary] knowledge" (ANED, 2017; FNESC, 2015) involves long work. Bonnie Harvey speaks despite noise coming from the highway nearby and leaves a lasting impression on the OP group. Eagle's presence is a testament to the long work yet to be undertaken in the colonized space, and how easy it is to be steered away, despite the high value of being in place to learn.

Concluding Words

A sense of identity lies at the heart of building bridges of understanding between Indigenous and Western philosophies. While exploring ways Land influence this learning journey, the lasting impact of colonialism remains the anchoring backdrop that shapes approaches and responses to identity.

Colonialism has effectively reduced Land and the intricate interconnected web of relationships to emotion-free sets of categorized beings, humans and more-than-humans, best described through factual referencing. That which emanates from the heart thus severed (love, care, knowledge, connections), resource consumption becomes the norm serving the interest of the colonizer. There is a finality that comes with assigning identity, with imposing a filter that renders considering alternate interpretations more work than continuing on with labels. The 2020 pandemic demonstrated how fast a system can default to generic categorizing, and how much negotiating it took to maintain the heart connection within the OP. In recent times, the habit of assigning identity has included self-designations, in solidarity as allies for example, often foregoing the acknowledgement of foundational power imbalances and the disconnect with Land. A learning journey into building bridges of understanding involves confronting the colonial self and mindsets that continue to be perpetuated.

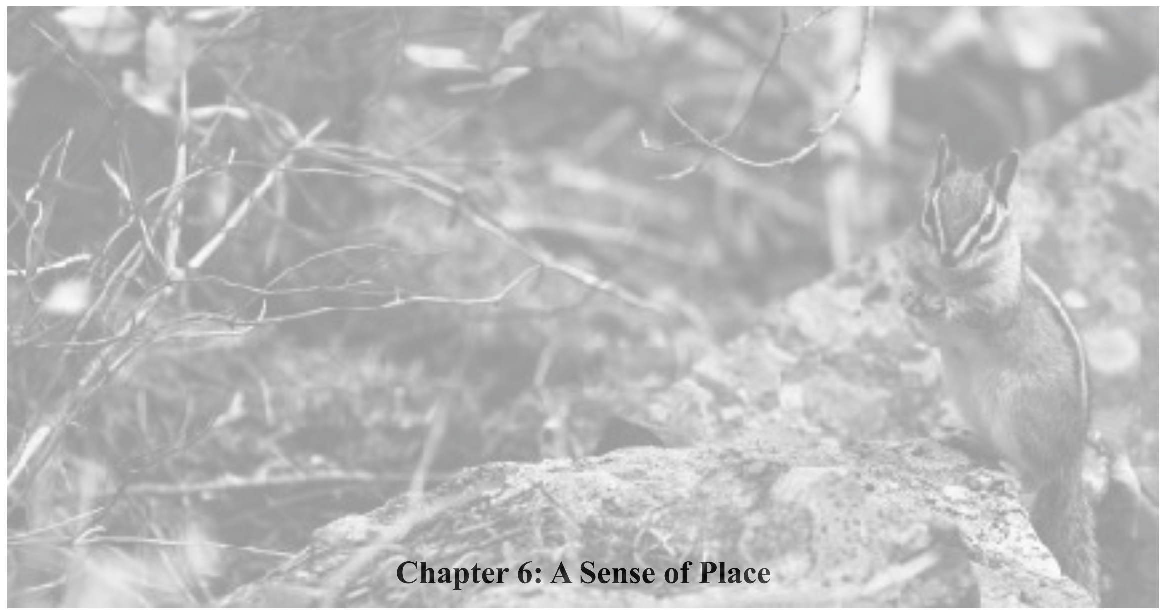
Elder Joan O'Neil engages those around her through actions, and actions should be what reflects educators' commitment of the self to long work (relationships), heart and emotional work (pathic), and knowledge building work (becoming more knowledgeable with Ktunaxa). Precisions for the principle stating "learning involves generational roles

and responsibilities" (FNESC, 2015), indicate how Elders are "knowledgeable people who understand things that need to be learned by the younger generation" (ANED, 2017, p. 3). Younger generation does not mean automatically deferring to the youngest generation (students). Subtly expressed in her account, Elder Joan O'Neil is acutely aware that educators have learning to do. This (re)learning includes (re)connecting with emotions, and (re)attaching emotions to cognitive learning. Nestled in her account is also Elder Joan O'Neil's life dedication to reappropriating the words, and emotion, *to love*. She shaped her identity and that of those around her by paying extra attention to love.

When Elder Joan O'Neil, Knowledge Holder Bonnie Harvey, Faye O'Neil, Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre, and other invested community members share about Ktunaxa, they first share heart. van Manen (2007) views emotional learning as a vital link and recognizes the intricate nature of the task educators face, "it is much easier for us to teach concepts and informational knowledge than it is to bring about pathic understandings" (p. 21). Viewing beings only through their properties and usefulness maintains the disconnect with Land. Teaching actions such as taking –picking up, lifting, collecting, touching, etc.– under the guise of educational purpose essentially models resources taking on a small scale. Pathic understandings contributes to rethinking and readjusting such educational habits. It is a different perspective to consider a being's agency and felt experience by questioning whether they want to be picked up! As bell hooks (2009) notes, "we must all decolonize our minds in Western culture to be able to think differently about nature, about the destruction humans cause" (p. 32). Land has a greater opportunity to influence the learning journey when identity has value, and embraces an ethics of care.

"Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story."

(FNESC, 2015)



Chapter 6: A Sense of Place

A Sense of Place looks at how elements within practice, identity, and interacting with place, contribute to (re)positioning and (re)centering Land, making being in place more meaning-full. Chapter 6 considers sub-question three: *How can Land be purposefully re-centered through the building of bridges of understanding?*

Land, place, is unique. Thus, learning about the concept of uniqueness is as important to being in place, as being in place itself. Paying attention to details borne out of a compendium of interconnected relationships between humans, more-than-humans, stories, language, practices, and more, and scaffolding onto this knowledge, can converge learnings into bridges of understanding.

Chapter 6 addresses the significance of place names and their intricate connections to Land and peoples. This knowledge brings a different perspective to the meaning of places, and allows for weighting into the tensions around land acknowledgements. The discussion then focuses on the depth a sense of place

encompasses, and how colonialism continues to filter through despite best intentions. Following this, the next section stresses the need to be purposeful in intent when connecting with place. Ensuring to be in place is an initial step in developing a relationship with Land –which looks and feels different in urban areas– that can grow more meaningfully if educators scaffold onto the learning. Finally, a short discussion of the place of photography in igniting interest for the essence of place is presented in combination with ways to extend imagination. Braided ecoportraits, discussions, and implications in the form of concluding words close the chapter.

Place Naming

In the story *Shi-shi-etko,* by Nicola I. Campbell (2005), Shi-shi-etko experiences place with family members who are engaging her senses, and heart. The author focuses on the relationship with Land and the impending loss of this connection as going away to residential school looms. Campbell (2005) does not identify Shi-shi-etko's place which prohibits defaulting to a limiting Westernized perceptions such as a current name. Instead, attention is focused on the depth of the relationships with place.

Marker (2018) observes how "colonization transformed both landscapes and memories of the true and Indigenous names of places and place-ness" resulting in "destruction and erasure" (p. 454). Place naming reflects "layers of arrival" and control by groups of people (settlers, religious orders) who each applied their own naming, sometimes keeping Indigenous names but transforming them into words easier to pronounce (Ingram, 2021). Through these practices much information has been lost, and most people now are oblivious to indispensable connections to Land.

Indigenous knowledge held in place names provides necessary details around comestible or dangerous foods, plants, animals, seasons, or specific events such berry seasons (Ingram, 2021). The current disconnect between places, their meaning and significance is a reminder of the severed tie to Land.

Land Acknowledgements

In recent years, land acknowledgements have heightened the awareness of place names. To acknowledge land is a step Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre considers necessary when one occupies Indigenous Land. However, there is an encouragement to go beyond merely reciting acknowledgements by following up with relevant actions connecting to Land (Blenkinsop & Fettes, 2020; Wark, 2021). Engaging through meaningful listening and interacting with stories, and gaining a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness with Land, represent ways to act upon acknowledgements (Blenkinsop & Fettes, 2020). Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre also believes in going beyond carefully crafted openings. He encourages to be reflexive about the implications of *where* one is by continuously revisiting knowledge about ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa.

In my experience, some educators grapple with the comfortability of land acknowledgements and how to plan beyond the words, despite support from AbEd. This sense of unease and fear around offending, and doing something wrong, often results in inaction and leads to perpetuating colonialism (Styres, 2017). Similarly, recent research indicates that land acknowledgements lead to an identical result; perpetuating colonialism (Wark, 2021).

Acknowledgements, Wark (2021) argues, are political, superficial, and contested areas. These statements do not hold binding commitments the way an agreement, such as the AEEA, might in BC's school districts. The responsibility for educators lies in acknowledging the tensions held in such statements, and work under AbEd's guidance to emphasize language and place.

Learnings Within Place Names

Place names nestled within acknowledgements open a space between speaking and moving on to purposeful actions such as engaged listening. They offer teachings upon which initial actions can be scaffolded and developed under the guidance of AbEd. For educators, a reflexive relationship to Land, through the reciprocal action of *learning,* includes teachings from Indigenous place names; from the language.

Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre always (re)introduces knowledge when he talks about ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. I learned from Bonnie Harvey, Faye, O'Neil, and Nasuʔkin, how ʔamak –**ʔamak**ʔis Ktunaxa– means ground, earth (among more meanings I have yet to learn). I was first taught ʔamak while Bonnie Harvey was telling a story. She would stomp her foot on the ground and wait until I repeated exactly what she did. Every time the word would come up the expectation was set. ʔamak – ground, earth.

In his autoethnography, Chung (2019) recollects his own experience learning the meaning of Ktunaxa:

> According to Christopher Horsethief, Ktunaxa is a language born of the silence of the forest, much like the forest I am walking through. It is a hunting and foraging language formed over thousands of years of gathering pine needles and berries, as

well as tracking and hunting elk, white-tailed deer, mule deer, wild turkey, grouse, and moose. Ktunaxa, I am told by elders who teach the language, is synonymous with land, deeply aligned with the whisper of snow, texture of bark, and light of this clearing. (p. 19)

Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre has often taught educators and students that the Ktunaxa Peoples were, and are, hunters and gatherers. The relationship to Land, made evident in the above teachings, and offers an opportunity to build on connections that may emerge.

Learning from place names is even more profound. Ingram's (2021) work maps Indigenous place names according to three systems: morphemes, topics of place names and locations, and sounds. Morphemes in particular can vary from a single letter to entire sentences as one word (Ingram, 2021). To go about mapping in this manner "help us think about place differently" and bring languages into visual spatialization (p. 184). On ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, educators from Valley School District and a neighbouring school district can attend Ktunaxa language classes. Faye O'Neil previously shared how parts of Ktunaxa words relating to more-than-humans are also found in parts of words identifying the human body. A visual spatialization of Ktunaxa morphemes could be imagined as represented with the body; the connections to Land embodied in Ktunaxa Peoples, powered by ʔa·kiɬwiy (le coeur), the mind, and l'esprit.

A Sense of Place

Place as a Commodity

The mindset that brought colonialism along is one where land is viewed as space, a commodity, at times worthless. French philosopher Voltaire once expressed how New

France amounted to *quelques arpents de neige* (a few acres of snow)! The consequences incurred by such casual possessiveness is one where "the redefinition of earth as human-owned space entails the elimination of the concept of place –nothing belongs anywhere" (Evernden, 1993, p. 152). Reciprocity, respect, and relationships are thus simply non-existent. Evernden (1993) points out how references such as "our environment" establish direct confrontations "with virtually every other life-form" (p. 151). Colonialism continues this confrontation with the Other, human and more-than-human. The sense of inequality is amplified by the paternalistically endearing "our" employed to describe the Other –in this case the environment, or place, and all interconnected beings.

Depth and …ness

While experiencing the forest Chung (2019) observes, "land is not neutral space […] you hear the silence of conquered space" (p. 24). Being attentive to presences in spaces reveals the interactions, connections, and meaningfulness through stories, which renders them "place*ful*" (Styres, 2018, p. 27). The fundamental essence of an Indigenous sense of place, however, is a considerably challenging understanding for non-Indigenous researchers/educators in that "even with the *best intentions*, [they] do not have access to the deepest layers of the intricate meanings in places" (Marker, 2018, p. 458). Emphasized is the *"…ness"* of place-ness pertaining to the identity, spirit, philosophy and ontology of place.

Styres (2017) draws attention to the *soulfulness* of place as "deeply intense and emotional expressions of feeling" speaking to the intimacy of place (p. 47). Soulfulness is embodied in Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre's expression of the unique*ness* of Ktunaxa as in *being*

Ktunaxa. Soulfulness is equally conveyed in Bonnie Harvey's words regarding Ktunaxa*ness:*

> At the centre of that [our legends] is our Ktunaxa-ness, who we are. Legends I learn force me to learn Ktunaxa, to incorporate and connect it to what's happening today and every day to day things…
>
> At the time of creation, the Creator, it was up to the animals [to] name these places. When we talk about these places, they're honouring the event that happened. That place, the legend and the song, and the story that goes with it, it's like a complete package.
>
> In order to be a sovereign people you need people, you need land, you need language, and traditions. As Ktunaxa that's our sovereignty. We know this is our inherent land and ancestral homelands, because we can recall the time when the Creator and the animals… When we were able to listen to them, when we were able to hear them. We don't hear them enough, we don't feel them enough anymore.
>
> These lands, these mountains, these formations, landscapes, Ktunaxa cultural landscapes are important. When we're protecting our lands, its' not just this lot, and this lot, it's the whole area. How do we honour those whole cultural landscape?
>
> Chief Jim Whitehead would always talk about when we're dealing with treaty issues; it's not about this parcel and this parcel because then we're just a checker board, it's about the whole area.

> There's many different cultural landscapes, and there's land formations, and there's legends. The Ktunaxa truth goes along with those land formations, and so we need to honour the land by acknowledging those songs and the stories and the connection to the Creator, and the connections to the animals, and the connection to the water, needs to be acknowledged and honoured.

Knowledges held in place, emerged from relationships between humans and more-than-humans and continues to be recognized by Indigenous communities (Kimmerer, 2013; Marker, 2011). To forego the recognition of the interconnected relationship with more-than-humans is an "incomplete telling of the past;" it is disrespectful (Marker, 2011, p. 104). As the FPPL state, "learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge" (FNESC, 2015). Thus, in the current educational contexts, to forego embedding Indigenous knowledge –and ways of knowing and doing– in any setting sums up an incomplete approach, regardless of its progressive allure. Marker (2011) notes how approaches to history, and one could argue education, "that show indigenous peoples relationships to plants and animals are some first steps toward recognizing a deeper sense of how, as traditional people often put it, […] "the land knows you're there"" (p. 103).

Connecting to Place

Place as Relationships

Developing connections with place requires ongoing, and purposeful, nurturing work on the part of educators. Connections do not readily happen by virtue of being outdoors whether the goal is outdoor, environmental, or place-based education. Friedel

(2011) recounts an experience where a place-based program for Indigenous youths made such an assumption:

> …important places in the research, identified by the group, were *not* necessarily located directly in Western educators' perception of nature; in fact, the place of utmost significance was the passenger van used to travel from site to site throughout the bioregion. (p. 535)

Jody and Rhett shared a similar experience, wondering why many Indigenous students favoured the AbEd room rather than the OP. In advocating for learning that is "focused on a sense of place" (FNESC, 2015), the FPPL recognize the impact of the environment where relationships (with others, with learning) are formed (Chrona, 2016b). *Where* one is matters, as well as *why* one is there, and *who* –relationships– is part of the experience. Within a sense of place there is purpose in practice. The context, in meaning-making, extends to "the purpose of learning" (Chrona, 2016b, para.12). A sense of place goes beyond a physical location to include relationships that contribute to a sense of belonging, and values stories; old, and newly formed ones (Friedel, 2011; Styres et al., 2013). As Bonnie mentions above, being *with, of,* place is part of a complete package.

Place and Imagination

"I prefer to be outside, to be outdoors" says Bonnie, explaining how being in place, outdoors, is an ideal story-telling setting. Direct place experiences stimulates imagination and the senses (Fettes & Judson, 2010). When being in place is not always possible, imagination creates and enhances the experience; especially when shared by a story-teller who is emotionally invested and themselves immersed in the story being

shared (Archibald, 2008; Egan, 2005). In urban contexts, being in place may happen but be encumbered by *city-ness*. Styres et al. (2013) address urban settings, reminding that built landscapes still hold stories:

> We want to argue for the importance of grounding contemporary stories and pedagogies in the *Land* of urban contexts, long used and occupied by Aboriginal peoples, where increasingly divergent groups of people have come to co-exist. When we speak of layers of stories and relationships, we often imagine an X-ray allowing us to peer down through the layers of earth to see the footprints of all those who preceded us on this land. Our footprints join those of the first Indigenous person who walked here and all those who followed. Our stories are layered on theirs just as the footprints are layered on one another. All our stories. (p. 45)

Though they are not explicitly discussing indoor settings within urban areas, these environments could be included. In this case, imagination can help visualize and feel stories but also work to envision Indigenous presence across time and space.

Scaffolding Learning

A key element for Dr. Dustin Louie (2021) is to go beyond that which has been shared. If stories, or Indigenous knowledge, are not followed up upon after being experienced, then knowledge stays in that place at that time, and never contributes to decolonizing. The experience becomes a “one-off.” Educators have the responsibility to reciprocate by following up –in consultation with AbEd– and nurturing new knowledge and experiences fostering a renewed or transformed sense of place. In Braid 8 –Creating

Connections– below, Jody alludes to her realization that formulating further connections after hearing a story would reinforce the knowledge acquired and contribute to scaffolding learning for students.

General to Particular to General

Photography contributes to gaining a sense of place, either as a catalyst for teaching or as a catalyst for thought, or both. Photography as a method for recording information was transformed during the life of this research project, and connected to place more closely than first anticipated.

Photography as Antagonistic

In his elaboration of the progressive objectification of more-than-human beings, Evernden (1993) considers how landscape painting and photography further enabled the separation with humans. The evolution of photography to peering through hand-held view-finding equipped cameras opened the way to staring as a kind of voyeurism (Evernden, 1993). What to say of cell phones and the proliferation of social media and "instagramable" selfies in perfect settings resulting in overcrowding and the destruction of natural places! Evernden could not foresee how "guerilla photography" and an amplification of the "I" would magnify a hundredfold (p. 97). It becomes difficult to speak of place in these instances of empty nature consumerism where place is reduced to being a convenient background space.

Seeking the Gestalt

To emphasize ecoportraiture's focus as rather lying with the "the interconnected, living gestalt of human and other-than-human beings," Datura (2022) recognizes how

capturing the essence of place "like so many panoramic photographs or landscape paintings" is unachievable (p. 132). Datura's statement relay an important connectedness idea, though panoramic pictures only capture the physical grandeur of a place and eschew essence altogether. It is challenging to convey essence when one is not of, from, and with/in, place, like Bonnie Harvey's complete package.

The essence of place is felt *within.* What is sought to be conveyed in the gestalt, a central element in ecoportraiture, is an honest yet humble attempt at edging ever so closely towards essence by articulating a sense of place through the minutiae of connections, with humans and more-than-humans. Having rekindled with photography as more than a recording method I have sought to share relationships with more-than-humans as kins; working to move away from the "kind of straightforward representation" a panorama would evoke (Datura, 2022, p. 132). The pictures and captions across chapters are but a small example, in addition to the braided ecoportraits.

Gaining a Sense of Place

Portraiture and ecoportraiture are grounded in how the universal, the general, emanates from the particular (Lawrence Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Presenting ways to develop abstract thinking in educational contexts, Egan (2005) lays out the relationship between the particular and the general and how imagination plays an important role. The particular engages imagination and contributes to an understanding of more abstract general ideas (Egan, 2005). A sense of place in relation to specific or particular more-than-humans' photographic portraits lends itself to his explanation. Knowledge initially introduced in general abstract form offers a context for imagination "to be more readily

engaged if the particular is always seen in some more general abstract context, […] particularly if each new piece of knowledge can play a role in challenging or supporting some developing general idea of belief" (Egan, 2005, p. 164). Thus, developing a sense of ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa first begins with having a general idea of ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa –even if it just stems from the formula acknowledgement. Activating and stimulating imagination through particular knowledges (stories, language, photographs, art, etc.) will yield a transformed understanding of ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, and the conception of ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa will differ from the starting point.

*Eco(photographic)*portraits that focus on particular beings can activate the imagination towards the universal –albeit on a significantly reduced scale than stories can– being carriers of stories. Ideally, this artistic and critical process generates a reciprocal action towards place (Graham, 2007). Beings who teach about ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa can contribute to place knowledge if the receiver is willing to suspend judgement and listen to the stories of, and emanating from, photographs. Alam et al. (2017) emphasize this listening through Haraway's (1998; 2008) notion of the image maker's accountability in being present and attuned, aware, conveying their own learning of the process of seeing, while also sharing in more-than-humans' stories.

When Faye presents workshops, her opening slide includes pictures of her family, each introduced and connected to each other and to place. I am reminded of Chambers (2006) who advocates for caring about places the way one cares for family members, and consider *eco(photographic)*portraits as kins from ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa; offering a more particular sense of the place.

Chapter 6 Braided Ecoportraits

(Re)Centering Land focuses as much on the experience of developing relationships while being in place as it does on being in place *with* place.

Braid 7 explores thoughts around being purposefully in place and how a reflexive approach might influence pedagogy. Through an instance of taking the OP educators realize the pervasive presence of colonialism. Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre then challenges educators to (re)evaluate pedagogies and choices around being in place. Strand 3 looks at how perceptions around *being* in place vary, attesting to the value of experiences as transformative. In braid 7 the reader's imagination is first tickled as a connecting tool to eventually be teased out as a careful and valid source of knowledge in subsequent braids.

Braid 8 looks at the development of connections with place through experiences and stories by foregrounding the validity of imagination and stories. Knowledge Holder Bonnie Harvey removes the wall of an indoor location and calls on listeners' imagination to connect with place. Jody and Rhett share about the power of stories and their wish for a better connection with ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. A play on words in strand 2 ties together the teachings from nupqu (black bear) and kławła (grizzly bear) in understanding connections with place, and one's place within ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. The last two strands, revisit how paying attention to details matters. (Re)Centering Land demands a paradigm shift and both Jody and Rhett ponder how they've embarked on this process.

Braid 9 encourages investment of time with Land as one who lives and teaches on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. Investing in "taking time to…" can benefit connections with place and support (re)centering Land. It is about noticing one's surrounding and acquainting

oneself with place in order to better convey a sense of place to others. Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre speaks of how time features in Ktunaxa ways of doing, strengthening the importance of being purposeful. In strand 3 Knowledge Holder Bonnie Harvey teaches how to treat Land, and ways to acknowledge encounters and connections. She teaches heartfelt reverence.

The interconnectedness within *A Sense of Place* can be perceived through most of the nine braids but is also more purposefully emphasized through braid 3 (*Preparedness*), and through identity in braid 6 (*(Re)centering identity*) as indicated in Table 10 below.

Table 10

Chapter 6 Braided Ecoportraits

Braided Ecoportraits			
Ecoportait Themes	Chapter 4 **Purpose in Practice**	Chapter 5 **A Sense of Identity**	Chapter 6 **A Sense of Place**
Purpose in Practice How can teaching practice be influenced when educators consciously acknowledge being on Ktunaxa Land?	Braid 1 Welcoming Relationships - **Strand one:** Circles - **Strand two:** Kiʔsuʔk kyukyit (Greeting) Circle - **Strand three:** tak̓a¢ (squirrel) and one Circle	Braid 4 Advocacy - **Strand one:** Your … ness - **Strand two:** k̓ustit̓ (Larch) - **Strand three:** Zoom	Braid 7 Transforming Approaches - **Strand one:** Things in Nature - **Strand two:** Above the Tree Line - **Strand three:** Being in Place
A Sense of Identity Hoe does Land influence the learning journey in the process of building bridges of understanding between Indigenous and Western philosophies?	Braid 2 (Re)Learning to Lean - **Strand one:** Senses - **Strand two:** Ktunaxa Calendar - **Strand three:** Modelling	Braid 5 Meeting Beings - **Strand one:** kyanɨakɨiquɨaqpik (heartleaf arnica) - **Strand two:** Smellscaping - **Strand three:** Taking	Braid 8 Creating Connections - **Strand one:** Creating Connections - **Strand two:** Bear Feet, Bare Feet, Bear Feat - **Strand three:** Signs - **Extra Strand:** Stories
A Sense of Place How can Land be purposefully re-centered through the building of bridges of understanding?	Braid 3 Preparedness - **Strand one:** In Someone's Home - **Strand two:** Share - **Strand three:** A Ready Mindset	Braid 6 (Re)Centering Identity - **Strand one:** Place Knowing - **Strand two:** Cattails - **Strand three:** Conflicting Identities	Braid 9 Taking Time - **Strand one:** Facets of Time - **Strand two:** (Re)visiting Place - **Strand three:** Thanking

A Sense of Place: Braid 7 intertwines a sense of place and purpose in practice.
Braid 7: Transforming Approaches
Strand 1: Things in Nature

The first part of the morning by the lake is dedicated to shelter building. An impressive tangle of fallen trees in the rather steep forested embankment becomes useful materials and ready-made frames. Teamwork ensures the ability to carry long poles across the jagged terrain. Using combined weights, groups of students break long and sizeable dead logs into smaller more manageable lengths. The strategy is replicated on a young live deciduous tree, easier to reach. Repeated bounces paired with a growing number of students joining in to help finally overcome the flexible trunk. A final crack reverberates through the woods. I don't know who they are… the students, the young tree, and the place by the lake.

Students gather around the fire by the lake while Jody reminds them to complete their journal reflections: identify five things in nature, identify commonalities between students and these things, and list how each thing helps the student. She turns to me and comments on students' view being one still very much anchored in taking from the environment.

She shares her reflections of the days' events and her connecting chat with Rhett. "When I was doing that table with the kids, I found that on the internet and thought, oh this is a great lesson, let's do this, this is working perfect! Then I went for it, straight out of what it was…

To me, that was a very colonized lesson plan because there it was, what does the environment do for me? If I [had] thought about it a little bit more it [could] have been: What is our reciprocal relationship? I think even those things like looking at lesson plans and going, eh! wait a sec, is it all just about me me and taking and taking and taking or can we flip this so that it's a reciprocal relationship?"

A Sense of Place: Braid 7 intertwines a sense of place and purpose in practice.

Braid 7: Transforming Approaches

Strand 2: *Above the Tree Line*

"Why are we going up above tree line? Ktunaxa wouldn't just have gone up above tree line, right? Because you now, I know, we all know, that's a rough place to be. If we're going up above tree line there's a reason why we're going up there." Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre cringes at the thought of being there in winter. "Probably the best time to go up above the tree line would be in the summertime. There's all kinds of light, and everything up there is in bloom. That to me is very much paying attention to time and pre-planning, and understanding why you're actually going somewhere. There has to be a reason for it.

There's absolute value for young people to be away from the classroom and in nature, and allowed to just roam and run and discover on their own. At the same time, there's gotta be a reason for that place you've gone to.

It is very important to know why we are doing something. Sometimes it's fine to do something for just having fun, but if that's the reason, that's the reason. We know why, so we can even prepare for that. […] It's good to have kids out in nature, but at the same time, as far as our survival, down to survival, in our modern society, our children are there to learn too. Learning has to happen. It needs to take place.

We’ve come here to this place, this lake or this river, away from the classroom, actually for this purpose, so we need to get some work done while we are here. Ktunaxa, it would have been exactly that, the pre-planning. There’s more reasons for bringing [students] to certain places within the territory for the different types of learning and whatever is going to take place there.”

A Sense of Place: Braid 7 intertwines a sense of place and purpose in practice.

Braid 7: Transforming Approaches

Strand 3: *Being in Place*

I immediately travel with Bonnie, diving into her imagination. Although the two of us have moved to the small white dining table in my house, we’re still outdoors. Bonnie’s arms, spread wide, cover as much space as possible. The indoor setting has dissipated and we are sitting with students, outside.

“When they’re out on the land, they naturally just sink in. I encourage them: if you need to stand go ahead, but I prefer if you sat, so they can feel the earth, they can feel the dampness, and they can smell and be able to recall that.” Bonnie feels the ground, picks up handfuls of soil, and brings them in close while she breathes in deeply.

“For me being out on the land is important. If not [possible] then I just need to try and situate myself [in relation to the Mountain] and encourage the audience to come with me and imagine where we are. Imagine this beautiful spot, these beautiful big trees and large, large animals. I encourage them to help me go to this magical place, and then you can just feel…” She uses her hands and exhales to show calm.

*

Well-being defines Jody. She has been an educator for a decade and sees a pedagogical difference with being outdoors. She often expresses how she "could do [activities] in the classroom easily but it's not the same." Experiencing the eagle, the fresh air, and sitting among trees, takes care of the well-being she observes.

"It's kind of hokey but I feel more [of] a spiritual connection to [Land]. That's something that in my life I've been missing" she is silent for a moment, holding back tears and emotions. "That's been something I've been tying to find because there's been lots of things going on in my life. Being out there, I'm feeling a connection, like being higher than me connection, when we're out there with kids. Now I'm finding it's when I'm not even with the kids.

I went for a snowshoe on the weekend and I get this happiness in my heart. That's so sappy! It's more than just going for a snowshoe now for me. I'm more aware of what's going on. I'm starting to notice my senses and things like that. I do yoga with my eyes closed to notice the other things that are going on. I may have done that before but I'm starting to take note of all those things. As we're learning from other people and learning from the Land, I think that's helping me personally, which then helps me professionally."

*

"Before it was very much we were trying to get the kids out into the Kootenays, whatever place that was," Rhett admits. The OP focused mainly on the recreational use of the Kootenays, or, as Jody mentions, foster "a sense of adventure."

Sitting in the sunny dismantled green classroom, a sure sign summer break is but a few sunrises away, Rhett carries on: "I think we are much more intentional in where we

are going. That intention we're having is [so] kids see the different perspectives of places and understand the history, the cultural history, [and] the impacts that have occurred over time. I think that's the big part. We're not just going onto land, or into a specific area, purely from an outdoor education focus. I feel like it's very colonial outdoor education, [from] some of the research I've been doing, it's very single-lens. When we go to different places [we] see the different perspectives of that area both Indigenous and non-Indigenous.

We use the Community Trails a lot, and I feel like returning to the same place has an importance to the kids. It really develops their connection to this place, this area. I think I've been more aware of that throughout the year.

Thinking about it, what […] it mean to teach on Ktunaxa Territory, I feel I'm still navigating that piece a bit which I think is part of this process. I don't know if I'll ever come to a place where I can say: "This is it, this is what it means" because that's part of our learning and it's constantly developing and growing."

*

Ktunaxa drummers come to Bear Mountain Middle School and hold a drum circle in the foyer during spring and fall. Drummers gather around the large drum, focused, usually leaving a chair empty for ancestors. The sound attracts listeners, and travels through place and body. Becky, one of the administrators, holds this event as yielding unspoken shared experiences:

"They come every Monday, there's the sound. I can be here [in her office] and I hear it. Then when you're standing and watching you actually feel the beat." Becky

shows the rhythm by moving her hand back and forth towards her body. "I think they've been here four or five times and an opportunity came up, I sat down. I had never done that before.

That sense of… I love music, I'm musical, and so I thought, I got this I can keep a beat. That's not what it was. It wasn't about keeping a beat, it was really about being connected. There are kids who were sitting next to me and we shared a moment. It was early in the year, and I didn't know their names yet. I still see them and I remember that moment we had together. It brought me into that place, that moment, that shared experience. That resonated with me. When Monday comes around again and I hear it, I feel it all over again."

Discussion: Braid 7 Transforming Approaches

Things in Nature

Educational Resources. The incident with a young tree in strand 1 shows that taking indiscriminately surfaces as a value anchored in students' core beliefs. Though Jody acknowledges that mindsets need to shift, this habit persists through schooling, often the combined result of pedagogies employed and modelled hierarchal positioning. In their work seeking to promote the values of an aesthetic approach to nature, Iared et al. (2016) draw attention to the consequences of replicating such status quo, "many pedagogical/curriculum activities in natural environments (or that refer to them) such as experiential learning, field trips, site studies, laboratory tasks, seem to normatively reinforce the dichotomy between human beings and nature" (p. 197). Education, for all its innovative initiatives, often continues to reflect the anthropocentrism that normalizes a

sense of entitlement towards the environment. The unquestioned answer that aises relates to the assumptions that educational resources are vetted, and sound. Being outdoors in nature, working on team building activities or implementing polished lessons, does not shield from colonial-*isms* being transmitted along. The young tree incident prompted a reflection about the way learning activities are formulated.

Educational Language. Paying attention to the educational language around perspectives, concepts, and learning tasks, can act as a starting point to transform mindsets. The FPPL model this clearly by introducing how learning **is** the process supporting the well-being of the land (FNESC, 2015), learning being in service of the land. ANED's (2017) accompanying worldview to this principle clarifies that "people do not "own" the land, they "belong" to the land" (p.1). These nuances in language may appear subtle but significantly affect pedagogical choices by reorienting thinking. For Jody, (re)centering Land first translates into noticing the anthropocentric, and colonial nature, of one of her journaling question. The use of the word "thing" to refer to more-than-humans also immediately objectifies and categorizes them as others. Jody expresses where the focus should go, both in terms of pedagogy (think before doing) and relationship (aim for reciprocity). The caveat resides in the word "our" which, although meant respectfully, directs reciprocity back to the self. Simultaneously, Jody's attention to a reciprocal relationship attests to the effect of reflexivity within one's practice.

Above the Tree Line

The mountains along Valley School District feature peaks of such elevation that delineations between trees, meadows, and the rocky summits, are clearly visible.

Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre takes the listener above the tree line to stimulate reflection about the purposeful aspect of places and learning.

Purposefulness in Place. A Ktunaxa perspective attributes purpose to being in place. As Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre says, "there has to be a reason for it" and, in an educational context, the reason should ultimately connect to learning. While ANED (2017) indicates that "the natural environment is regarded as a "classroom"" (p.1), place is not merely viewed as a space where learning can occur but as being worthy of inclusion. Barker and Pickerill (2020) reiterate how place is a being, "an ever-present member of a wider, more-than-human community, with wants and needs of its own and dynamic and unknowable aspects beyond human comprehension" (p. 648). Learning in place includes place.

Purposeful Educational Intentions. Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre raises thoughts connecting to the debated idea of structured and unstructured teaching while in place. For him, intent is infused into unstructured activities as much as the need for purpose when being in place. Hunter et al. (2017) highlight the structured/unstructured divergence while researching reactions to the transition from a playground to an outdoor classroom. Tensions appear, reflecting how definitions associated with these spaces influence perceptions around both structured and unstructured times (Hunter et al., 2017). Educators' views and modelling towards place will affect students' behaviours towards place. Iaconelli and Anderman (2021) note that the manner in which educators communicate verbally and non-verbally influences students' understanding of learning expectations. Intent and purpose are central while being on, and with, Land, and can help students learn differentiate unstructured free exploratory time, and playtime, while

refraining from less environmentally friendly behaviours. Even non-structured times can yield learning, for a reflective element is embedded within the FPPL and encourages to scaffold learning (ANED, 2017).

Place as Teacher. Transforming approaches does not only pertain to refining how learning features while in place but also to learning with, and from, place. When Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre asks the listener to think about being above the tree line, he encourages to think of an existing place on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa and calls on knowledge that can be understood even without the direct experience. He draws from the Land and from reality, to elicit connections. Here, the notion of reality exceeds perceptions and manifestations in physical form to relate "to the visible and invisible relationships between specific people, other than human beings, and more than human beings, within the cosmology of a sacred territory" (Marker, 2018, p. 459). It is perfectly plausible that this specific place, above the tree line, purposefully connects with Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre in order to help him teach. Being in place literally is ideal because it brings the experience "on the landscape where the story exists physically embedded in time and space" (Marker, 2018, p. 461). But being in place may not be possible for a myriad of reasons ranging from accessibility to sacredness.

Being in Place

Imagine to Feel. In strand 3, Knowledge Holder Bonnie Harvey favours being in place first and foremost. If visiting place is not possible she embraces being there figuratively –although any indoor location is still firmly set on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa– by leaning on Land and imagination to guide her storytelling. The tableaux build on the

sense of connection she seeks to impart to her audiences. She connects to place and with place, and communicates *feeling* in place. Jody, Rhett, and Becky's experience of feeling and being in place is conceived differently yet stems back to the FPPL's learning as relational and those relationships focusing on connectedness and a sense of place (FNESC, 2015). Each tableau relays how being in place has developed and evolved over time, depicting a beginning journey towards a more spiritual understanding of what being in place can mean.

A Sense of Belonging. Jody and Becky experience a sense of place that funnels through the heart and translates into expressions of belonging. As Jody comes to realizations about personal heart-mind connectedness, she uses the words "hokey" and "sappy" as bridges to justify being comfortable with *feeling*, and to acknowledge being comfortable with Land. Häggström (2019) describes such a connection with place as reaching more of an emotional level, "the lived experience of the human/-more-than-human relationship is a profound and existential sense of belonging that goes far beyond a sense of well-being" (p. 1343). Jody is starting to consciously see place for place, a shift in mindset Wright (2015) would consider ontological; thinking of belonging "to be more-than-human, to be bound up with emotion and affect, to becoming in relational ways" (p. 405).

Similarly, Becky goes through a logical and rationalizing process about the drumming that takes place in her school, to first explain how she feels. However Becky eventually succumbs to the beat of the drum which, carried by the ambient air and reverberating through the structure, simultaneously reaches the core –le coeur most

likely!– of everyone in attendance. Belonging is a co-creation with others, human and/or more-than-humans, “not pre-determined but comes into being through affective encounters, through doing, being, knowing and becoming in careful, responsive ways” (Wright, 2015, p. 404). Drumming, much like stories, leans on Land through sounds, songs, and stories. At that moment, in that place, Becky belongs to, and with, the experience.

Rhett views being in place through activities with the OP. His perception denotes a progression from place as a space for adventures to place as holding layers of meaning. Häggström (2019) notes how places are not “passive areas where actions take place,” and points to how places “facilitate and affect actions and are ‘products’ of actions – human as well as non-human” (p. 1341). Rhett sees the effect of a colonial approach by how places are (mis)used and seeks to travel into the multiple perspective they encompass. These “diverse constructions of belonging,” Wright (2015) contends, “may be uncertain in the face of colonization, racism and enclosure,” but are very much attached to how people “imagine and make their own worlds” (p. 404). For Rhett, this represents ongoing learning work –it is long work. Part of this work involves purposefully connecting with specific places and strengthening the sense of belonging that may emerge. This sense is built through personal experiences and attachment to place, while meaning develops over times (Häggström, 2019). Revisiting familiar places matters.

A Sense of Place: Braid 8 intertwines a sense of place and a sense of identity.

Braid 8: Creating Connections

Strand 1: *Creating Connections*

Bonnie pauses her calendar presentation to tell the story of kupi (owl). kupi gently sways children away from the village; she doesn't have her own children. Spoiler alert! Thankfully, skinku¢ (coyote) becomes the artisan of the denouement.

Bonnie shares how meaningful kupi's story is to her and her family. She talks about personal connections to the story and she also talks about her teacher and her own learning. She initially draws attention to the song, which she performs repeatedly throughout the story. Woo-Hoos and giggles fill my small house as Bonnie insists I participate, learn Ktunaxa words, and be as energetic as her.

"Any kind of connection, song, dance, and anything that we can do to ensure that it is fun will help us retain that knowledge. Maybe […] we're not comfortable singing but chances are when somebody hears [it -the song-] they're going to go 'Woo-Hoo!'

From kindergarten up to industry partners, I can share that [story] and still have the same 'Oh woooow…' I want them to feel magic. I want [them] to acknowledge the magic that is within us, to be able to realize that there is magic, and have connections to when it was just animals and not us.

Finding activities and ways to pull them away from [the] four walls we have: if we can't physically bring them out somewhere, what can we do to bring them away from the physical [space] and into another world when there was a time, before you and I, before humans were created?"

*

“We have a firm belief that learning occurs through story. We learn through story.”

Above all, Jody and Rhett summarize the experience of being in the OP as resting on relationships and the formulation of stories. They are conscious of how individuality influences their own perceptions and growth. “We’re pretty good at telling students things like, this is something that I’m getting, but you may be getting something different (Rhett). There’s no right or wrong (Jody). That’s been a big piece of this program. Students often think that there’s a checklist of the correct answers (Rhett).” Jody acquiesces and reinforces Rhett’s thought. “When they connect with Land… [they] recognize we’re different and we get different things from this experience (Rhett). Sharing [their] story, thinking about themselves, thinking about their place, helps for them to start realizing that (Jody).” The way they interject into each others’ sentences reflects the symbiotic working relationship they have built over time.

The school year starts with an emphasis on self-identity and focuses on students’ stories through journal entries, sharing circles, and English assignments. “I really like doing that activity in the beginning of the year. Then I don’t know, my brain may go other ways… but to try, in future, to stem off of that and say: ‘Okay, remember when we did this? Now…” Jody motions progressing from the initial emphasis and connecting to ‘… whatever it [new topic] is.’”

“We probably definitely could do more if I knew more. I feel limited in what I can share and express (Rhett). That’s how I feel (Jody). I think we do a very good job of trying to get our students to form stories, to reflect back on their stories of the areas that

we go to, to think back of the experience [they've] had in this area on a different trip … has it changed, is your connection the same or is it different? (Rhett)" A one-page reflective sketching activity serves to convey the gist of stories made in place, and elicit those memories and smiles.

A Sense of Place: Braid 8 intertwines a sense of place and a sense of identity.

Braid 8: Creating Connections

Strand 2: *Bear Feet, Bare Feet, Bear Feat*

I lie on the forest floor, my elbows cushioned by the foam sitting pad I carry in my ready-pack. I will have to ask Faye about this new encounter! I don't now who they are but the single berry, a vibrant cobalt, is quite attractive especially among fallen pine branches. I hold my breath, clear my mind, everyone at eye level is still, I press the shutter-release slowly. Hmm, vulnerable position to be in this far into the fall I think to myself as I kneel up and connect back to my surroundings. I pick up my ready-pack and head north further along the ravine path.

My eyes follow my husband's index pointing to the top of the steep hill as I walk up to him. Through the trees, nupqu (black bear), snout up in the air, seems to glances in our direction a few milliseconds before carrying on. The sun creates cinnamon highlights on the unusual rusty-brown rump disappearing on the upper trail. Silence suspends this moment in time.

"So quiet!" I whisper to my husband. A breeze rustling cottonwood leaves well above us is the only exception to the stillness of the forest.

*

The following weekend offers another sunny fall day. In the ravine I first stop to acknowledge queen's cup. I will have to learn your Ktunaxa name! I smile at the thought of lying on the ground, grateful for a passion in photography which prompts me to do that often, grateful also for years in grade one where lying down on the grass is the norm not the exception.

Grounding oneself. Senator Murray Sinclair shared with us at the last Valley School District pro-d day, how he was told told to go talk to his mother prior to an important decision… Mother Earth. My thoughts jump to Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre sharing about his dad and him often sitting directly on the ground. Nupqu crosses my mind… How does the forest feel from Nupqu's perspective? I stare at my own two hands.

We touch with our hands so much we disregard the value of other contacts in favour of "the extension of our eyes." It's the sense of touch rather than the sense of connecting, or the sense of experiencing. We have developed "rest-of-the-body blindness" when it comes to touching. We seldom physically connect heartbeat to ground. Remembering nupqu's quietness, I see my feet through my fingers. Shoes off.

My runners dangle from my ready-pack next to the small garbage bag usually tied on the lower back strap, mini-socks tucked deep inside them. If I've lost a few centimetres in height, an aura-like layer seems to have simultaneously dissipated around my body. I sense I occupy a more proportionately appropriate space in the forest though my ready-pack is still hanging off my shoulders. I feel exposed and vulnerable in contrast to the place. We've left the ravine and continue into the forest. I get a few looks and chuckles from hikers we meet.

In the sun, accumulations of soft larch needles store heat effectively soothing my steps. Patches of soil peering through remind that fall is here and the ground is slowly readying; a nature note reinforced by rocks who retain dew and frost well into the day. The soles of my feet account for limited sensory experiences rendering transitioning from path to forest floor, as nupqu does seamlessly, even if I treaded cautiously, a humble undertaking altogether. There is no need for me to be anywhere but on the path but I understand my own limitations. The prickle of a twig or a softened larch pinecone keeps me alert. I walk cautiously and carefully.

On the path my feet feel light and my steps are muffled, mostly silent. Last week nupqu walked away so quietly! Not a sound! Shoes on I trip over roots and, aside from giggles, a trio of sounds occur: the kick contact, a short reverberation, and the slap of my feet on the ground as I adjust my balance quickly. Shoes off, I am less likely to trip as I pay particular attention to my steps. Without "gear" my other senses become completely heightened, I'm attuned to what I'm doing. This experience is humbling and revealing at the same time.

*

[Westernized perceptions] maintain a status quo, human beings seen as "not at the top of the hierarchy" as Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre describes it. He notes the contradictions held within expectations for Ktunaxa, as a people, to share unconditionally, against their responsibility to advocate on behalf of "the real sovereigns," the grizzly bears, the eagles, and all more-than-human beings. Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre speaks of the consequences of

human actions on a more-than-human world, and of the determination of more-than-humans in teaching humans:

"It wasn't lost on me when that grizzly bear crawled in that window in [This City]. If we were to look at the actual date [when] that happened, just a couple days before, in Victoria [BC], there was an announcement made that was not very positive. Everybody who was on the 'Keep Jumbo Wild's side were like 'Aww!' It was yet another one of those road blocks that was being put up. […]

The news story was: the CO (Conservation Officer) [who] went there to get that bear out of that house discovered it was actually a sickly bear. That's what they were calling it, a sickly bear, an older bear, it was at the end of its life. Now I don't know if it was just a media thing, so that people would go: 'Oh okay, they [didn't] kill a big healthy grizzly bear, it was an old sickly bear…' I don't know if it was, what do they call it… spin doctoring?

What I think to be true: in fact, that was a sickly bear that crawled through that window, but the reason it was a sickly bear is because on the day that that announcement happened in Victoria, the bears got together and spoke. They were upset too (hits the table with his hand held together). And that bear said: 'I'll go deliver a message, I don't have that much time left on this earth, I'm sick, I'm old, I will sacrifice myself.' How often do bears crawl into peoples' home in the province of BC? Basically never. It was one of those once in a hundred years kind of events. A bear actually climbing through a window into someone's home… That just doesn't happen that often.

I honestly believe that the bears needed, and wanted, to react to that announcement in Victoria and that's the choice they made. That bear said: 'I'll go and deliver a message on our behalf and if I'm killed it's okay, because I'm sick, I'm old.'

It was a real visible action taken by the grizzly bears, in my mind. Lots of people don't even see the connection, can't even see the connection, don't even believe… How would those bears know what those humans are doing anyways, right?

I believe though, those bears knew exactly what was being announced out of Victoria, and I believe that bear volunteered themselves for that job of delivering the message. They were unhappy about it.

That was the bears' reaction."

A Sense of Place: Braid 8 intertwines a sense of place and a sense of identity.

Braid 8: Creating Connections

Strand 3: *Signs*

The afternoon is uncharacteristically warm for late November. Taking advantage of the nice weather the OP makes their way over to the Community Trails. Today the path at the entrance of the trail network represents the boundary limit for the OP students. Beyond this point the woods open to two small lakes and a wide clearing.

Along an adjoining trail a covered sign welcoming hikers to Ktunaxa Land catches my attention. A welcoming sentence in Ktunaxa crowns the panel. The importance of grizzly bear's presence in the surrounding area and mountains is highlighted, and the reader is reminded of the Ktunaxa legacy held within each more-than-human being, each track, and each sign, one encounters anywhere on the land. Ktunaxa's long responsibility and stewardship towards place is stated and clearly brought

into present times. Ktunaxa language, photographs, and written statements bridge the gap with the past and assert current presence and responsibilities.

A second covered woodland sign, this one with cedar shakes, displays three large panels and stands at a trail junction on the edge of the forest. A drawing of yamakpaɫ (pileated woodpecker) immediately interests me. More-than-humans who live here are featured prominently along with clues as to how to read the signs of presence and interconnectedness in the forest. A keen eye will notice these signs by observing wildlife trees, or by paying attention to tracks in the winter! Trees are introduced and specific elements help know who they are. Community sponsors and prohibited activities are discretely placed at the bottom.

The two signs connect: one emphasizes the ongoing legacy of the Ktunaxa peoples, the other delves into paying attention. Being on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa today is about reading the signs.

A Sense of Place: Braid 8 intertwines a sense of place and a sense of identity.

Braid 8: Creating Connections

Extra Strand: *Stories*

Water has held Jody since as far as she can remember.

Although she grew up in town her stories were formed along a lake in a different part of Ktunaxa land. “There’s something about water, it has an amazing quality to calm, recenter. […] All our family was there, it was a meeting place for us.” Now, her family has settled by the lake the OP visits. She continues to seek the water to recharge. Being closer to town she admits “I feel like I’m touching the surface of getting out to local places and learning about them.”

Jody recognizes how Land, “the firm, cool earth,” support[ed] her during a difficult time. I can’t help but think of Jody being cradled up the way she would float on water. A reminder for her that she does not have to do everything on her own. “I did a sweat lodge. The idea of heat and steam, there is so much spirituality [also] with the grandfather rocks. These are not random rocks, these are special rocks they bring in one at the time… Land is water, it’s the ground, the animals, the rocks, the trees, all the things around us, not just (she taps her foot on the floor) this. Nature shows you that you can have the strength.”

“It’s okay to have *your* story, sometimes I feel people try to hide it.” Jody connects by sharing her about herself and notices how students see her as ‘real.’ In this mindset she read a poem to students in late February: “… I am from Italy, and Sweden and Scotland, and from my great-grand mother who was Cree. I am from home-made pizza and chicken broth with gnocchi…” Connecting with her Indigenous heritage has made Jody more conscious and purposeful with regards to being on Ktunaxa land. She is interested in stories and is becoming more aware of how she, and the OP, connect with land. Her English assignments include outdoor elements and connections with land. During the pandemic Jody and her grade 9 colleagues designed a project “showcasing Indigenous traditions [and] other traditions, not just Western.” Broadening perspectives “is very important in developing well-rounded students.”

*

Jody turns to Rhett while motioning different spots in the air: “I feel like your knowledge is here, here, here, here. You have so many places to grab from. You have

your master's, you have your ranch, you have all these different stories of all these different places. You share with the kids which I think is amazing!"

Rhett grew up in the area on a ranch at the foot of a mountain range."My connection to land was more of that traditional settler connection. We work the ground, we plant the seeds, we see what grows from it." On horseback or on a quad, he could feel a difference between his "domesticated self and the 'wild' just outside the fence." His stories and experiences are grounded in "l" land, as for him, "L" Land represents Ktunaxa stories and traditions he was not exposed to. Rhett continues to navigate achieving balance between pride in his heritage and working to relearn about the area from a Ktunaxa perspective. He sees himself on a journey as a settler and recognizes the stories that *are* here. This is a process he is comfortable with.

"Before seeing a change in the students and the classroom, I've got to learn it for myself and experience it for myself first." Stories are a passion and strength. Thus, Rhett values developing connections with places. "If I have a connection with an area and I'm willing to share that story with the students, then they are learning from my story and that adds to their story." Rhett is learning in the same way. Through Ktunaxa stories he is strengthening his own sense of wonder, appreciation, and love about the area; values he seeks to impart of the students.

Discussion: Braid 8 Creating Connections

Creating Connections

Imagination is crucial in enhancing the ability to connect and develop an increasingly more comprehensive sense of place, and (re)centering Land. Imagination is a

complex cognitive process encompassing several systems (somatic, mythic, romantic, philosophic) and tools (metaphor, storytelling, wonderment, meta-thinking, to name a few) which have the potential to elevate teaching away from its too often habitual torpor (Egan, 2005; Weible, 2015). But imagination outlined by Sheridan and Longboat (2006) involves more than meta-cognitive qualities to take form as "a behavior seeking to be what humans once were before reneging on the promise of belonging to everything and forever" (p. 378). Imagination and Land mutually lean on each other and are effectively indissociable (Sheridan & Longboat, 2006). So, when Knowledge Holder Bonnie Harvey brings the listener into a story, though systems and tools inevitably factor into her imaginative process, she is not asking to imagine an unknown distant place but rather to open to another materialization of "here," at a different time, still tied to now. This perspective slightly challenges Mikkonen's (2018) position that relying on imagination to perceive environments in accordance to Indigenous myths may demand too much of a leap. Though the stories require imagination, the landmarks, language, and (most) animals are real, and anchor imagination in place.

Growing Imagination. Strand 1 illustrate how connecting with place through stories can be grown into each person. Knowledge Holder Bonnie Harvey's storytelling is a performance. She pull the audience into her imagination, and embeds the story into each listener by encouraging participation through repeating language, singing, and being part of the overall experience. She is making the listeners work and use their imagination (Archibald, 2008). The FPPL value stories as yielding much learning, and efforts should be made for "learners to listen and connect with the stories of others" (ANED, 2017, p.

4). Bonnie Harvey aims for parts of the story to remain with the listener, to stick. The connections, whether imaginative, cognitive, performative, and/or emotional, will reignite the experience, or carry it along the listener's learning journey.

Supporting Imagination. Jody and Rhett seek similar connections when they encourage students to pay attention to their own stories resulting from experiences with place. However, their efforts are met with a few challenges which demand consistency in acknowledging ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, and long work in continuously learning ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. Learning through stories involves actively looking into local stories and histories grounded in place (ANED, 2017).

Land can be purposefully (re)centered by being part of stories where ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa is involved. This remains a primary goal for Rhett, and an area of learning for both Jody and him. They realize the need to follow up on OP experiences once they happen, and appreciate the importance of recalling these; linking new learning back to those initial lessons as a means to connect and scaffold learning. To (re)center Land, Land must become central and continuously be leaned upon –by following up on, and recalling, ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa– to generate new learning and for that learning to become embedded. Reciprocity, upon having experienced a story told by Bonnie Harvey, is to (re)connect with imagination, the experience, and place, every chance possible while leaving to Bonnie the expertise of (re)telling the story.

Bear Feet, Bare Feet, Bear Feat

Through the second strand, *Bear Feet, Bare Feet, Bear Feat*, imagination takes a more phenomenological path where lessons, from nupqu (black bear) and an old grizzly

bear, offer a different way to look at connections with place. Each perspective demonstrates that learning can be spontaneous such as was the learning from nupqu, or occur well after an experience like that of the old grizzly. Hence, the importance of revising experiences through reflection and reflexivity, through follow up and recalling.

Space While in Place. During the research project my work was to ponder lessons an encounter with eagle, nupqu, or another more-than-human, might yield. It was necessary to work around anthropomorphism and easy metaphors. Mikkonen (2018) sees value in seeking to learn about place from more-than-humans but stresses there is a fundamental difficulty in fully grasping their perspectives "since our perception, imagination, concepts, and language are human" (p. 21). The learning has thus been directed towards refining my sensory learning, including heart, by imagining nupqu's world while simultaneously experiencing the forest in real time but, like nupqu, without shoes. Two realizations happened.

How I ought to occupy the forest became evident; a different take on the notion of space. Then, how this new positioning affected my sense of alertness entirely. Häggström (2019), drawing from Merleau-Ponty (1995), refers to implicit awareness and explains how "we are informed of our body's position and movement, which possibly will affect our bodily experiences" (pp. 1336-1337). Implicit awareness happens in the moment (Häggström, 2019). Through this experience, I became more aware of sensory interactions with more-than-humans. Abram (1996/2017) identifies "an intimate reciprocity to the senses," noting that interactions with more-than-humans are not

unidirectional: “as we touch the bark of a tree, we feel the tree *touching us”* (p. 268). The lesson from nupqu encourages to conceptualize the space(s) humans occupy differently.

Segregated Mind Space. Grizzly bears' lesson happens within a social, political, and economic context. Relayed by Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre, it is a reciprocal reaction at attempts to capitalize on Qat’muk, perceived as pristine real estate space. Reciprocity and connectedness inhabit the way Indigenous knowledge can point to “direct correspondence between the breakdown of social and natural systems” (Anderson et al., 2017, p. 137).

Through Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre’s argument, the responsibility of stewardship arises and is supported by his understanding and translation of the bears’ motives along with the unfortunate outcome. However, this animistic form of interpretation continues to be rejected and cast as imaginary, thus invalid, by scientific and colonized schools of thoughts (Abram, 1996/2017; Harmin et al., 2017). Learning is lost by failing to connect the court decision to the grizzlies’ reaction. Learning is also lost when death is explained away in logical terms. The impact of losing animal guidance means the “loss of the capacity to know something about North American identity through the animal teachers” (Sheridan & Longboat, 2006, p. 377).

The critical potential of imagination dissipates further in the separation and segregation of ways of knowing. Imagination loses out on all fronts, having also been displaced, colonized, and reformatted to negatively fuel convenient Westernized narratives. Alternate thinking, long held ancient ways, around imagination shows “the way to the quintessential human condition—the paradise of one’s surroundings and one’s place there” (Sheridan and Longboat, 2006, p. 379). The decades long confrontations

over Qat'muk (now in a completely new phase), and grizzlies' lesson, reinforce the FPPL stating that learning is supporting the well-being of the land, spirits, and ancestors (FNESC, 2015); recognizing how "spirits and ancestors are also our teachers and must be respected" (ANED, 2017).

Signs

Strand 3 depicts a way Land is (re)centered, and perhaps infers the responsibility for the reader of the trail signs to reciprocate by enacting stewardship towards place.

Focusing on Kins. The Community Trail signs indicate where hikers are, but without maps. Instead "the real sovereigns" of the Land, Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre reminds, are clearly featured. The Community Trails are on kławła's (grizzly's) territory first and foremost, and many other more-than-human encounters to be experienced. Seemingly answering Rhett and Jody's concern regarding knowing ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa better (strand 1), the signs communicate how the Community Trails are a source of many teachers.

Focusing on Interactions With Kins. Learning becomes more meaningful and effective when attention and participation are first focused on local places (ANED, 2017; Abram 1996/2017). Place, in the Community Trails, is more than a space to occupy. The signs signal interacting and learning opportunities that surround visitors. The key is to welcome these interactions by being attuned to signs from place and to learn to respond, though this may initially feel awkward (Barrett et al., 2017). The signs encourage the reader to take the time to *be* in the Community Trails, to notice, to reflect. This admits the possibility of conceptualizing completely differently the usual trail map signs which say

"you are here." Though infringing and colonial in nature, they may, in all likelihood, become temporary as learning grows.

Stories

Stories as Relationships. The extra strand of braid 8 revisits the influence of a reflexive approach to stories connected to place. In addition to maintaining ongoing connections through purpose in practice, such as following up and connecting with learning, stories are personal, emotional and agential. Penak (2018) describes stories as variable, "a collection of relationships" that are ever transforming (p. 264). While Jody and Rhett's accounts differ in nature, they both communicate growing relationship with place. ANED (2017) recognizes that "each person derives their own meaning from story" as they continue to gain wisdom, to learn (p. 4).

Jody's experiences are intertwined with embracing her Cree heritage (eventually sharing this publicly during the project). Place, Land, in Jody's account is water and it is often from points of water that she derives meaning in learning about places (see braid 9), whether water is lake, creek, snow, ice, steam, or relationships with kin (her heritage, her children). Water carries her emotions, and her will to deepen her knowledge of Ktunaxa.

Egan (2005) notes how stories "shape events into emotionally meaningful patterns," and engage emotions and imagination (p. 11). Rhett's experiences show how a reflexive approach to stories can unsettle ingrained beliefs and bring new perspectives into an already extensive knowledge of place. He is aware of the scaffolding appeal that sharing his stories with place holds, and acknowledges his need to do the same with learning ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. Like the fence on his ranch, he notes the delineation between his settler heritage and the journey ahead.

Through the OP Jody and Rhett value being in place, but they are also on a journey valuing *being* in place. Fowler's (2006) comment about narratives, applies beautifully here:

> We seem to spend so much of our lives as human *doings* rather than human beings. We struggle, at odds with mortal time ticking away our non-renewable life minutes, hoping for something other than what is. What often continues to provide an existential anchor and source of meaning arises out of the narratives we live. (p. 186)

(Re)centering Land begins with introspection into one's own relationship with place. Being *in* place is to be *in story with* place. The key is to become conscious of being *in story with* place, to allow the self time to *be,* to learn from place's stories and, as Rhett says, to seek for place's stories to become part of one's narrative.

A Sense of Place: Braid 9 focuses on a sense of place.

Braid 9: Taking Time

Strand 1: *Facets of Time*

Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre chuckles as he describes the story of every piece of art on the walls of his comfortable home. He amplifies messages when he conferences on Zoom, by ensuring particular pieces feature in the background. Today, I sit at the end of the small dining table in Nasuʔkin's bright and comfortable dining area. Above his right shoulder a charcoal drawing of his maternal grand-mother looks over him. I ask Nasuʔkin about the stars…

"The stars can show us the regimented movement of the earth through the cosmos because it returns to the same place every year at about the same time, and the way that they move around. Just because you're in nature doesn't mean there's no time.

My grand-mother used to be pissed off when people would say: 'Oh you're working on Indian time eh?' meaning you're late or you're always behind or that connotation of the lazy Indian not paying attention to time. [She] would say, we absolutely pay attention to time. If you were late somewhere and you missed the salmon run, well you're going to starve if you're not on time. If we're not paying attention to the time, and the days, and the stars telling us the time, and everything else around us telling us what time it is, then it would be detrimental to our survival.

Protocols, that idea of pre-planning, it is important.

We're Ktunaxa people, we're hunter-gatherers. I think [people] get this idea that it was totally free for all do whatever you want kind of deal. That's just not the case. The communities were very regimented, there were absolute understanding of roles that are played by people, and some of these people, their role was to pay attention to the time.

We used to have someone, who was Ktunaxa, who was a Duck Chief. I'm paying attention to [time], especially the timing of when the ducks come and go, because they're not here all the time. If that's my role in the community, I'm reminding our Chief, the time is coming. We probably should be, and there would be a conversation about it, and there would be a preparation for it, and we're going to go to this place, at this time, for this reason, we need to get ready to go. Because if you don't do that, again, it's detrimental to your survival plain and simple.

Where [we] were at what time, and when they should be elsewhere at what time… It could be just as regimented as punching a time-clock, that's kind of a really sped-up modern version of that."

*

Emily's eclectic decor attests to the multitude of relationships built over a long career. Her school office and her home hold collections of colourful storied mementos and cherished memories. Emily, an administrator at the school, often anchors meetings with tea; a teapot and mismatched cups sit at the center of the large meeting table in her office. The setting breathes safety and invites meaningful conversations. In her home environment one can't help but feel wrapped in warmth especially as she offers a large decorated mug of mint tea. Surrounded by antiques, we sink into comfortable dining room chairs.

"I don't want people to think I say willy-nilly, but there's so much richness…" Emily recognizes the creative and critical work entailed in seizing learning opportunities as they present themselves. Her philosophy of education prioritizes connections and includes a skilled approach to incidental learning. She often talks about allowing learning to unfold naturally, to let go of control. She recalls an afternoon to illustrate her point: "I remember one time taking the kids outside. I said to these kids 'Lay down in the grass.' (She whispers) I have all these kids laying on the grass. I said look at those clouds. So we started watching clouds and the dances and moves, and all these different shapes. We talked about what made the clouds, and why they were there, and we went back in and the kids drew pictures […] of what they'd seen, and wrote little stories. It was right

there, it was in front of us. I didn't have to come in with some pre-planned fancy art lesson, and I didn't need a writing lesson, it unfolded and happened just naturally on its own."

Emily differentiates between curricular constraints educators hold on to and the responsibility to establish clear expectations. She expresses a need for foundational teaching structures and boundaries while allowing oneself to invest and build on opportunities that arise, especially learning from land.

"I don't say let go of control [as] […] letting control go (pulls back her arms with a 'pfff' and a 'whatever!'). How do you frame it… Not every kid comes with the same interests, the same backgrounds, the same knowledge, or the same thirst for learning. They're hungry in different ways and I think we always have to remember that the lessons that we plan or we prepare or that perfect thing that we bring in is going to reach… You know when you think of a triangle, it's going to reach all these kids down here -they're going to be open and gobble it up-, this next group might take a chunk of it, this top piece… If it opens up just even a little crack for them and they go on another avenue, it's okay! I think that's what I mean about letting go of control. […] Sometimes we forget we are conduit, [we're] the yeast to help things grow, but we are not the be all end all."

A Sense of Place: Braid 9 focuses on a sense of place.

<u>Braid 9: Taking Time</u>

Strand 2: *(Re)visiting Place*

Jody walks fast, and snowshoes fast. Halfway through the excursion she stops the group and points to birch trees. She was here in the South Trails on the weekend. Her dad

taught her about the trees surrounding us. There was probably more water in the soil, a creek maybe; birch trees require a lot of water. A little further down the trail we cross a frozen creek flooded from the previous weekend's rain.

"When we're out there snowshoeing, I'm head down making sure I don't trip over something and then at one point I looked up and we're among, I don't know if they were aspens or birch, but there was just so may of them all of sudden. I thought: 'Where did these come from?' I'm sure glad I looked up otherwise I would have missed them! 'Cause they were just so different than everything else we had seen. I think it's just starting to pay attention and to pass that on to kids. Because in this world we don't pay attention anymore. Our attention spans are this to that (clicking fingers). We're multitasking, so to just be able to focus on something, being able to pass that on to kids…"

*

I look forward to stories and memories (re)created in This City's trails! I realize I have formed relationships I deeply care about. My passion becomes all the more evident when guests new to the trails accompany me. Compelled to share some of these stories and introduce more-than-human acquaintances, I note lukewarm responses; priority remains on the ongoing conversation and a good walking pace.

On the creekside of the ravine path, snug against a piece of wood in proximity of a small log feeding lush moss and a healthy community of miniature moss flies, liverworts grows. Liverworts caught my attention in the spring, their bright green shade accentuated by rain droplets set against the surrounding dark humus, growing in the shape of a heart. Lowered as close to the ground as I could to photograph them, I met a

group of pixie cups nearby on the feeding log. Walk too swiftly and you miss out on this tiny community…

As an educator who interacts with the same students daily for ten months, I am well aware of the importance of finding amazement in regularity while being open/ welcoming to the unexpected, and unplanned.

*

Rhett resides a lengthy drive away from Bear Mountain Middle School. His science background, and broad geographical and historical knowledge of the area are assets when speaking to the OP group. However, as he is transforming his practice, he recognizes a need to go meet and connect with places originally selected for outdoor activities. His goal has been met with challenges around time demands. Rhett has had to negotiate time from a logistical, practical, and personal perspective. His reflections highlight his learning towards meeting place.

"I wish I had more prep time [to] be able to go to a place by myself, maybe this is just a personal thing, and check […] my own connection with that area before I even bring the students.

[This Park] I've been there before. It wouldn't be something that I need to make sure that it's all good. […] I wouldn't necessarily go and double-check, unless the plan was to go skating, then I would go and double-check the ice and that would be for the safety piece.

Last year, I hadn't done the hike [up the Mountain for Bonnie's story], and we ended up having to jog the whole time in order to get back for the bus. That was an

oversight of time management, not recognizing how long the trail was. That was another reason for why we changed the location for this year.

During the summer I had a list of places I wanted to go with my family so that I could see if… It was like two birds: spend some of my family time to scope out this location. I think [for] a lot of teachers when you're out and about, a lot of what you're doing becomes part of your practice. I went on the bike ride, immediately I was thinking: 'Oh, this is a phenomenal spot that we can take our students, oh this would be a really good location for Bonnie to be.'

Sometimes yes, sometimes no. I didn't go up to [This lake] ahead of time to check it out when we [went in] the winter last year, but for most of our hikes, yes, we'll do a scope."

A Sense of Place: Braid 9 focuses on a sense of place.

Braid 9: Taking Time

Strand 3: *Thanking*

Knowledge Holder Bonnie Harvey:

"How do you as a teacher start that process to meet the land, and how do you make that connection in meeting the space?

I was thinking maybe it's like dating one another. You bring a picnic out. You're going to go out, to the water, to your favourite spot, and it's very intimate, and you're bringing your date there into a space that is yours. What do you do? You need to plan, make sure that you're comfortable, that they feel safe, that you're not just bringing them to some creepy part of the forest. You need to set the tone, and you bring a picnic! You bring food, you provide snacks and drinks.

Well, to the land too…

My dad always reminded me that it's important that we bring back to the land, and feed the spirits that are out there. They need water, they need food, perhaps tobacco or a herb, that maybe that loved one loved, maybe they loved lavender. Maybe that part of the forest doesn't grow cedars so you bring some cedar there. My dad always reminded me that the spirits need to be fed, that they are living too, and the Ktunaxa believe that the living and non-living all need to be honoured. My dad always reminded me to lay down food and water […].

Go and court your area. It is a being, you feel it, you hear it, and you're always looking for sights and signs and everything. As beings that are able to pick up on that, we also need to give back to them. My dad would always say that we need to feed them, because maybe they get unrest. At this time, they know that it's going to get cold, they start looking for places to be warm, and so he'd always say feed them. As you are going out, you want to introduce yourself and make that connection to a space, place, or time. I would bring food and water, to my favourite spot and just love being there. And being honest with that space, that you're there [and] you don't mean harm. That's what I do.

[…] Everything needs water. The water [is] the spirit itself. We have it all encased in pipes. Helping that water, giving it its freedom, that's also protecting you and your home, and ensuring that you have the water that you need."

*

I added an extra water bottle to my ready pack. This one, long, metallic, black with a logo of the Ktunaxa Nation on it, is filled with anticipation and imagination. The

water is for the forest, a thank you during each visit. de Saint-Exupéry's (1943/1990) Petit Prince, thirsty, observes that "l'eau peut aussi être bonne pour le coeur…" (p. 77). The emotional experiences held in intentions, thoughts, and journeying towards water, can make water equally soothing to the heart (de Saint-Exupéry, 1943/1990). Bringing water to the forest can be good for ʔa·kiɨwiy (le coeur).

ʔiǂ̓nat̓ (cedar) graces This City's trails. On occasion small fallen branches lay on the ground. I carry them in the side pocket of my rad pants where they do not get crushed. They find their way to different parts of the trails. I have done this in late fall and winter as I rarely find ʔiǂ̓nat̓ on the ground in spring and summer. Bonnie told me of how ʔiǂ̓nat̓ can illuminate one's heart one morning, tears in her eyes.

I didn't expect ʔiǂ̓nat̓ to cause my heart surprise and smiles when they emerged from under the snow, come spring, still as radiant green as on the winter day I put them there.

Thanking is meaning-full. Practiced carefully, it becomes circular.

Discussion: Braid 9 Taking Time

Facets of Time

Fowler (2006), above, encourages a reduction of incessant doings, and likely comings and goings, in favour of more reflexive being by paying attention to how we treat time. Through *Facets of Time*, Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre challenges preconceived perceptions about the nature of time within an Indigenous worldview. An unquestioned answer, often shamelessly verbalized, separates time into different categories: nature time, Indian time, "our" time, and so on. Such a view of time is the legacy of a colonial

mindset which objectifies and transforms time into a linear process that favours progress, speed, and a continuous distinction between society and nature (de Carvalho, 2018; Kimmerer, 2013; Marker, 2011). But time is “multiple and non-linear, has its own agency (time tells itself through its materialisation), is nourished and is sustained” (Barker & Pickerill, 2020, p. 650). Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre looks to the stars to note that time is circular, that the earth travels though the cosmos on a similar pattern year to year. On ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa time manifests through the multitude of more-than-humans’ seasons.

Understanding Timeliness. Purposefulness is embedded in every aspect of Indigenous ways of doing. How time is considered relates directly to long term planning. Here, Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre’s examples attest to the importance of paying attention to the time embedded in more-than-humans’ seasons. Being timely matters. “If there’s meaning in the past and in the imagined future,” Kimmerer (2013) notes, “it is captured in the moment” (p. 296). What happens in the present (collecting berries, medicine, hunting, knowledge being gained in the moment) touches the future (use, sustenance, knowledge to be passed along) and is connected to the past (passed experiences, knowledge acquired from interacting with Land). Orr (2002) sees in learning from nature “the standard for much of what we need to do” (p. 52).

Purposeful Time. Emily’s account shares in the idea of taking time to be in the present moment, to take advantage of learning opportunities that present themselves, while relying on past knowledge and experience (as an educator) to inform the future (learning). She enacts an epistemological shift that counters how time can typically be managed in class in order to get through the curriculum. Her advice, to let go of control,

is carefully given as she reiterates twice that this does not entail an unfocused “come what may” attitude. She advocates for a purposeful openness to learning from place, and her extensive teaching knowledge allows her to creatively work around the prefabrication of “one lesson fits all.” Instead she relies on her strategies to organize learning in a manner that allow students choices in who they learn from and how they will best represent that learning; an approach also suggested to support the students’ well-being (ANED, 2017). Orr (2002) urges to learn to take time, “in most things, timeliness and regularity, not speed, are important” (p. 52). This is an investment that opens up learning opportunities while maintaining long term goals in focus.

(Re)visiting Place

In strand 2, Jody transition from doing (snowshoeing) to being in place. Her surprised reaction to noticing she is among birches causes her to reflect on developing relationships with places. In order to draw students’ attention to place, she has to embark into this process herself. Rhett understands the benefits, however, as he discusses, such an undertaking represents a commitment which comes with its own consequences.

Connecting With Place. Taking the time to (re)visit places allows to initiate, then strengthen, a more intimate connection. Donald (2021) observes, of a familiar place, “I had visited this site several times before, but the act of walking to the site deepened my relationship to the place. I felt like the stones recognized me as a long-lost relative who had finally returned home” (p. 56). By walking to the Viking Ribstones site, he invests himself into critical reflection and dedicated connectivity. This experience recalls one of the FPPL, where “learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge” (FNESC,

2015). Indigenous knowledge is borne out of teachings from Land, connects with Land, and views Land as being the ultimate teacher (ANED, 2017; Styres, 2017). To bring attention to place, it seems natural to be there and learn, in what Abram (1996/2017) might call "face-to-*place*" (p. 284).

Becomings in Place. (Re)visiting places ahead of time, and frequently, increases the ability to notice particular rhythms and seasons occurring there. Increasing personal experiences and knowledge can enable educators to foresee learning opportunities that reside in place, while also developing their skills in making the most of those that may arise. Baker (2005) advocates to strive to become "landfull" by investing in a personal approach to place (p. 270). Purposefulness is at the heart of her pedagogical argument:

> This act of striving to be intentional is what enables the land to become more than a scenic backdrop; as we actively engage with the land it becomes more integral to our experience. It is through purposeful consideration of our relationship to the land that we develop our own ever-evolving personal process of coming to know a place. Rather than traveling *through* the land, we begin to travel *with* and *in* the land. (pp. 270-271)

In the process to becoming reflexive about place, or to develop a sense of reciprocity as practice, (re)centering Land needs to stem from acknowledging that place warrants our utmost attention.

Thanking

Place, a Living Being. Knowledge Holder Bonnie Harvey suggests to meet place with the same care, concern, and empathy, one would for a meaningful human

relationship. Strand 3, *Thanking*, reinforces the importance of looking after the well-being of spirits and ancestors (FNESC, 2015) through reverence, respect, and responsible reciprocity. Considering place as an agential being capable of speaking, creating, and teaching, may represent a powerful ontological shift in the anthropocene (Larsen & Johnson, 2017). Through Bonnie's words –her father's advice– it becomes evident that place, spirits, and ancestors, are contemporary, embodying past, present, and future all at once.

Heartfelt. Thanking place is not merely a surface tit for tat gesture but rather a heartfelt, mindful, communicative interaction, steeped in responsibility and reciprocity. Nestled within her analogy of a picnic is a sense of being deliberate, and planned. "Go court your area," Bonnie Harvey encourages, "and be honest with that space." Larsen and Johnson (2017) direct attention to the calls place heeds, bringing us "into productive, agonistic encounter and dialogue, to the edges of our own ontological understandings where we can begin to grasp the worlds of others" (p. 200). This call may take the form of activism as Larsen and Johnson (2017) further describe, however, this call might include first steps such as displaying "a willingness to look into the eyes of others and even when inconvenient or difficult to do so, see the world from the outside" (p. 200).

Being Reciprocal. In fostering learning that looks after the well-being of the spirits and ancestors, educators' responsibilities lie with remembering that the physical and spiritual worlds are intertwined, and that life is directly connected "to those who have come before" (ANED, 2017, p. 1). Through the braids, Faye O'Neil and Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre both mention the importance of being grateful for Land, and for Land's gifts.

Thankfulness embedded in practice can act as a way to bridge with place, and to build reverence. But, again, thankfulness is not merely the justification for taking –which itself should be envisaged carefully. Thankfulness is reciprocal, ceremonial, and accomplished in a way respectful of place and more-than-humans (Kimmerer, 2013; Simpson, 2017; Styres, 2017). Bonnie Harvey taught me ways to be thankful that did not infringe on the sacredness of tobacco –used in ceremonies and as a gift. Water and cedar showed me how place is agential, capable of returning the favour.

Learning Their Song. At the very beginning of the Ktunaxa Creation story, Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre tells, Nipika holds a meeting with all the chiefs of living beings (animals, plants, rocks, etc.) to determine how they will offer of themselves to these ʔaqłsmaqnikʾ, humans, coming. Many chiefs present their assets, while others choose to stay away from humans and opt to be spiritually available. No matter their choice, all chiefs reverently add "as long as the ʔaqłsmaqnikʾ, human beings, remember to say my prayer and sing my song, I will always be there for them" (Pierre, 2021). Thanking commands to pause to first hear and learn the songs so that reciprocity is borne out of appreciation rather than entitlement.

Concluding Words

(Re)centering Land is a learning journey of attending to particularities which funnel into growing a more comprehensive sense of place. Much in the same manner as Shi-shi-etko's family carefully teaches her through experiences, senses and emotions, developing a sense of place requires an ongoing active investment into experiencing place. This is about learning who place is, and that a sense of place goes beyond

physicality to also nurture a sense of belonging. Place can be experienced as much in urban centers as in rural areas, supported by the relationships that exist within each context.

Land acknowledgement formulations have become contested for too often being simply recited words. However, NasuʔKin Joe Pierre shares his own learning from Dr. Dustin Louie, that expressing a land acknowledgement should be viewed as entering into a commitment with place. Learning from meanings embedded in Indigenous place names, in language, may be a way to start engaging the imagination towards Indigenous knowledge, stories, and the relationships with Land; connecting more closely to the specificity of place. A better understanding of ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa extends beyond knowing where one works or lives, to delve into learning particular aspects of the land. The idea is to move further along a continuum where ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa is a scenic backdrop for leisurely activities to realizing that ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa possesses heart, essence.

Place can often end up in this role of inanimate backdrop for open-ended activities and targeted lessons, to learn about nature or being outdoors for example, and be devoid of substantial connectivity. Developing connections with place becomes imperative for educators who, in the process, must reconsider their own mindset, epistemologies, and be willing to go deeper into an ontology about place. To un-settle oneself within place involves welcoming perspectives by reimagining… imagination. A targeted casualty of colonialism and the promotion of modern era idealisms, imagination has been redesigned to become a quality of the anthropocentric mind and has dismissed

"those who comprehend that their very being manifests stories, ideas, and life forces" (Sheridan & Longboat, 2006, p. 371). Place, place's stories, knowledge, and time as it evolves within place, possess agency (Archibald, 2008; Barker & Pickerill, 2020; Larsen & Johnson, 2017; Wilson & Hughes, 2019) and it is by challenging one's colonized imagination that transformative learning can begin. Honestly, it is about opening one's heart and mind to place's manifestations. Reciprocity otherwise remains superficial (like the pinecone bird feeder in chapter 2) or misguided (like Jody's assignment), if practiced at all.

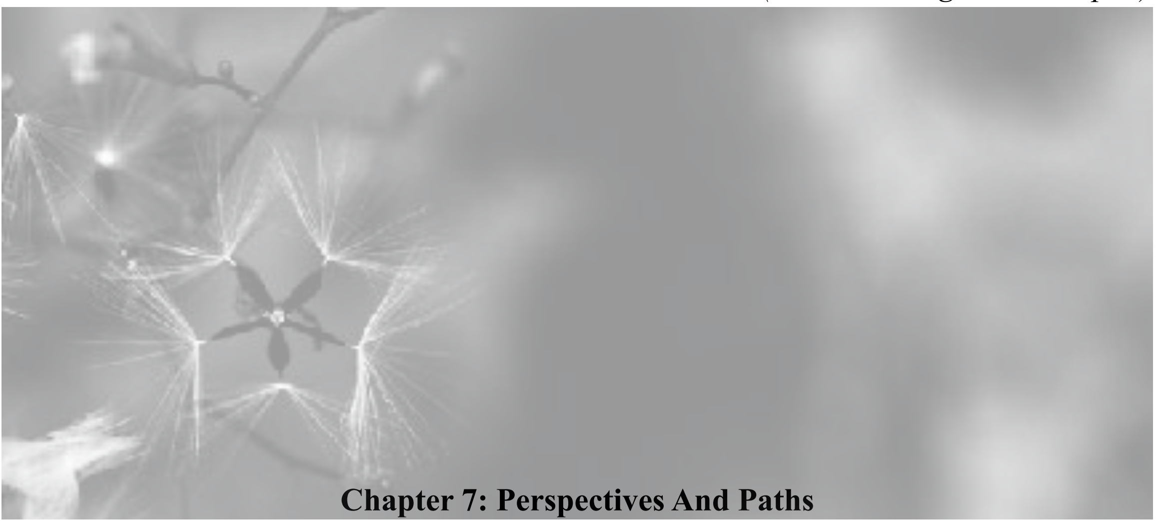
(Re)centering Land necessitates taking the time to be intentional with personal and professional practices. Intentionality and purposefulness are consistently reinforced across the FPPL through the anchoring word *learning.* Embedded in the principle "learning involves generational roles and responsibilities," lies the expectation to "explicitly model learning processes for students" (ANED, 2017, p. 3). Educators are students too! Transforming approaches is to value processes through *how*, a comprehensive *how* that shapes the present (Simpson, 2017, p. 19), and a *why* which brings about connectivity and reflexivity. Listening to Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre, Faye O'Neil, and Knowledge Holder Bonnie Harvey, teaches that verbalizing pedagogical choices and learning processes, even to oneself, contributes to modelling. Pondering *why*, and perhaps *why not*, should ultimately connect to ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa.

"Being on the land" says Simpson (2017) "is a highly contextual practice that is a living interaction between heart, mind, and movement" (p. 215). As I close this

ecoportrait, this short voyage with ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, I wonder how you, the reader who has travelled along, sing Land's many songs.

“As researchers we aren’t separate from the process, but rather participate in relationship with what we are learning.”

(Wilson & Hughes, 2019, p. 9)



Chapter 7: Perspectives And Paths

The interest in outdoor learning continues to gain momentum among educators in BC. Being outdoors, however, must continue to evolve from regarding outside as merely an alternate space to dispense curriculum objectives.

At a time when reconciliation, truth, and healing, are at the forefront, educator’s responsibilities demand continuous introspection and an attuned valuing of Indigeneity (BCTC, 2019). Opening to a relationship with Land must become an integral part of being an educator living and working on Indigenous Land, in this context ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. This learning must take into account the long work required in the process of rebuilding severed connections with Land, more so when pedagogies focusing on outdoor learning are favoured. Indigenous connections are not realized just by virtue of being outdoors. Educators must *de*-colonize themselves by transforming those unquestioned answers, those habits that readily contradict the best intended lessons.

Unquestioned Answers

Unquestioned answers permeate Westernized knowledges at all levels in all areas of life. They are conveyed through the education system, and duly reinforced at home from one generation to the next, contained in knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, and values. They can manifest as single words, or small gestures through every day teaching, and mostly go unnoticed.

Placing Indigenous knowledge side by side with Eurocentric views is not about adding new perspectives to the status quo, but rather to trouble, challenge, revisit, and become cognizant of truth(s) that reside deep within. This is about transforming colonial mindsets and the covert actions that perpetuate attitudes and values despite legitimate intentions. DuPré (2019) urges to "seize opportunities to confront the dominance of colonial institutions" (p. 3). She advocates taking up the opportunity to bring about transformations while attention and intentions are opened towards Indigenous perspectives, and "find new ways for Indigenous knowledge to breathe life into how we understand, live, and work together" (DuPré, 2019, p. 3). It's about reconstructing a worldview that includes multiple perspectives, but also allows oneself to be transformed by these perspectives through reflection and reflexivity.

Entering in Relationship

In this doctoral thesis I looked at ways in which Land informs educators' own learning, relationships, and professional practice while working and living on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. Being in reflexive relationship with Land involves the whole self as well as our many selves, and demands one develops a refined sense of intentionality. Building

bridges of understanding leads to paths where purposefulness, a deeper sense of reciprocity, and opening one's heart become central elements. In the BC education context the FPPL are an opportunity to deepen this process, especially in relation to learning outdoors. Throughout the thesis, extensions to the FPPL and examples of their applications, focused on some Ktunaxa values, stories, and thoughts, demonstrate how they can support learning from Land.

A Path Forward for Outdoor Learning

In sharing some ways Land can inform educators, I am reminded of Knowledge Holder Bonnie Harvey's lesson from Elders, that answers will come in due time.

The Challenge of Future Research

The challenge in suggesting future research is to do so without conveying an urgency to move on. As I am writing these last few pages, I continue making new connections and developing understandings. I am learning, for example, how xa·xa· (crow) shares a syllable with Ktunaxa, and when the words xa·xa· is spoken there is a connection to xa·xa·'s language, as xa·xa·'s name reflects their call.

In relation to the leading question, each sub-question, finding, or implication can be further studied. Purpose in practice, a sense of identity, and a sense of place, can be developed into their own multiple journeys around the circle. As further research and implications are suggested below, there needs to be the reminder that one ought to live these implications for a while as opposed to implementing them and looking to develop the next research question. Learning, as the FPPL teach, does take time (FNESC, 2015).

Engaging the Reflexive Selves

A reflexive relationship to Land is multi-layered and asks for a personal commitment of the many selves in order to effect internal and external shifts. This thesis work reflects my own learning throughout the project, and readers can most likely infer the changes that continue to take place in my beliefs and practice. While internal changes pertain to epistemological and ontological beliefs, external actions are both personal and professional in nature.

A meaningful relationship with Land demands one invests time in place, but educators must simultaneously delve into personal stories with, on, and against, Land. Reviewing the good, the bad, and the ugly, though likely uncomfortable, is necessary to become aware of long held unquestioned answers and how one's thinking has evolved over time. Unquestioned answers affect current ways Land is perceived, how interactions with more-than-humans are enacted, and how future choices are always at risk of perpetuating colonial-isms despite best effort, intentions, and awareness. Educators who take learning outdoors, in someone else's place, must become aware of their own ways of being/doing with Land as this can lead to a renewed understanding of the consequences of their pedagogical decisions. I continue to expand my understanding of what acknowledgement can mean, how my way of expressing myself –the language I use– will influence my actions towards Land, and to work at being reverential towards the more-than-human world (to rethink taking and thanking for example). My positioning is that of *receiver* in this reciprocal relationship.

Revisiting my own relationship with Wigwômadenizibo, brought into focus some of my own inner truths. My perceived closeness to nature was in fact a parallel relationship were I seldom confronted my White settler ways. Chung's (2019) auto-ethnographic work reflects his learning while on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, in relation to his own Korean heritage. Further research may explore the impact of confronting the colonial self, and one's personal and professional truths, in relation to place and relationships with the more-than-human world.

Engaging Policies

It is rather challenging to affirm that many governmental guidelines that are currently in place effectively promote the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives across the education system, or the curriculum. In BC, one mandatory Indigenous-focused professional development day which occurs every school year is always ever in danger of being a one-off. The issue remains that most of these guidelines are little known (nationally, provincially, and locally), thus easy to forget and bypass. This includes the assumption that Indigenous perspectives, and the FPPL, are soundly embedded in the BC curriculum. Clever zigzagging around curricular objectives results in missing out on pedagogically altering learning. The FPPL, affixed on classroom walls, suffer a similar fate, considered superficially, if at all, or dismissed through an over-reliance on "already doing this."

The implication here, is that a reflexive relationship with Land in a professional setting, even stated as a responsibility through governmental policies, remains a personal choice. Further research might explore how this personal choice is engaged upon as part

of one's professional practice. In addition, further research can also explore how Land, the FPPL, and Indigenous knowledges are affected by specific educational governmental policies, and how the impact is felt by more-than-humans.

Engaging Professional Development

It seems easy to call for more professional development and forget the incessant amount of demands on educators. However, a growing initiative that continues to take roots across the education system in BC (locally, regionally, and provincially) and nationally, is the expectation that Indigenous perspectives are evident and included in most workshops or courses available to educators. The implication, for professional development in particular, is that initiatives issued from grassroot movements get more traction. This is the case with the Classroom to Communities (C2C) provincial conference, and professional development opportunities across BC.

Encouraging more locally funded inquiry work focused on ways Land influences learning, or learning from Land, may foster additional learning or discussions similar to ideas that arose through the braids. As well, clusters of educators, entire schools perhaps, may implement more localized inquiry projects which would see them ask "How does ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa influence *this learning* in *this* school/classroom/program?" These inquiry projects may foster inter-school collegiality which would allow for sharing and learning more frequently and evenly throughout a school year. Further research might piggyback on such projects and present them in the form of case studies, or ecoportraits that are more localized within ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa.

A Path Forward With the FPPL

Purposefully embedding the FPPL within one's practice is to embark on a talk to action journey; ideally moving from consciously enacting the FPPL, to reaching a point where pedagogical decisions, and modelled actions and expectations, happen naturally and in harmony with Land. Implications at this point necessitate that educators reassess their definition of place and being in place, and open themselves to place learning aligned with Indigenous perspectives: Land education. Issues arise in that consciously embedding the FPPL assumes that educators are committed to a deep understanding of each principle and are incorporating them into their personal lives. As well, considering, learning, and including Indigenous perspectives in one's practice continues to be a series of hit and misses where time, curricular constraints, and personal professional development focuses override the work to be done. Educators are at the beginning of a long meandering learning path. In order to learn from ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, educators must start to ask themselves how ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa influences their practice, even when responses initially feel embryonic.

Committing to purposefully embedding the FPPL as part of one's educational outdoor practices, is a concrete action towards building bridges of understanding between Westernized and Indigenous perspectives, and leading to a more comprehensive relationship with Land. The FPPL can support the professional decision to develop a reflexive relationship to Land, and a better understanding of the FPPL ultimately supports both personal and professional practices.

Commitments to Learning

Looking into ways in which Land informs educators' own learning, relationships, and professional practice while working and living on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, yielded stories and situations which hopefully educators can connect with and learn from. If indeed educators "already do" a lot that is stated in the FPPL, deepening this knowledge and refining these actions can contribute to guiding teaching and learning outdoors more effectively. Here, research implications relate to developing an openness to multiple aspects of Land. I chose to present these implications, in no way a comprehensive group, in the form of commitments to learning:

Learning Consciousness. Each new piece of learning generates an action. Educators must first learn to be intentional in their personal and pedagogical actions. Learning to be thankful towards place by bringing water for example continues to be an action I am working on doing consciously. Including place when a class goes outdoors may at first, and for a long period of time, be part of an educator's conscious planning. Throughout the braids it became evident that a reflexive relationship to Land means that educators have to begin with pedagogical learning and actions situated *prior* to undertaking consciously embedding the FPPL. The journey around the circle will be repeated multiple times over, and one may be in several or all parts of the circle at once.

Learning More-Than-Humans and Agency. Educators who take learning outdoors ought to blatantly challenge societal matrixes and age-old taxonomies engraved in too many science manuals, epistemologies, and ontologies. Indigenous perspectives

respect *who* more-than-humans are and understand what agency means. Therein lies the work ahead.

Learning Listening. Barrett et al. (2017) warn of the losses of knowledge when those opportunities to learn with, and from, more-than-humans are largely dismissed, "until the voices of the more-than-human are acknowledged, and students are supported to learn the skills of 'hearing' them, human attempts at addressing complex sustainability concerns will miss important information and perspectives" (p. 132). Thus, a perspective shift should explore and learn whole body listening, and strive to *be* educated by Land rather than *do* Land education.

Learning Purposefulness. Are the what, how, and why of personal and professional choices aligned with each other? Living and working on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa demands one goes a step further and ask if the what, how, and why of personal and professional choices align with ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. "Ultimately," Baker (2005) notes, "students may be able to transcend a site-specific sense of place by developing an ongoing relationship with the land that is integral to their everyday lives" (p. 275).

Purposefulness verbalizes actions and learning processes with students such that taking, for example, is not perpetuated as entitlement, but paired with criticality and reciprocity. Purposefulness connects with ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, recalls ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, and follows up on learning with, and from, ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa.

Leaning Criticality. A critical approach to teaching while on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa advises being judicious with preparation, and appraising colonial-isms and anthropocentrism embedded in pedagogical resources. In this era of fast, fast internet, fast

cars, fast fashion, and fast food, fast teaching is also emerging through the proliferation of online outlets offering context-less predesigned lessons, and prepackaged programs. Baker (2005) foresaw these influences as barriers to connecting with place:

> The pull of modernity has existed for centuries, and will continue to disconnect us from the land with greater force and diligence in the future. Striving to actively engage students with places is a sure step towards creating a collective connection to landscapes and a more sustainable future. (pp. 275–276)

Educators must notice, slow down, and especially work to connect meaningfully to Land. To this end, criticality invites viewing and using imagination differently, and transforming one's overall relationship –language and attitude– with regards to more-than-humans.

Learning to Trust Time. Educators are in for long work over a generally and relatively limited amount of time. Therefore, becoming critical with the afforded time matters. Pedagogical strategies must involve purposefulness, foresight, repetition, and scaffolding, and ensure connections with ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. The pandemic demonstrated how time, paired with the transposition into different environments, yielded surprising positive outcomes for the OP educators. The effectiveness of learning may benefit from increased potential if the quality of an activity (building relationships with more-than-humans, lessons, etc.) held within a period of time is connected with sound pedagogical strategies.

As educators develop relationships with place and more-than-humans, time is made richer by valuing the individuality of more-than-humans' life seasons, while being in place with ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa as often as possible.

Learning to Heart. Fien (2003) deems developing an enhanced ability to love a necessary aspect of learning and living sustainably "to address the ecological and social imperatives we face as we seek to build a fairer, less troubled and sustainable world for our children" (p. 1). Learn to heart, otherwise kins –human and more-than-humans– are left shattered in the wake. Elder Joan O'Neil, for example, lost *I love you*, k̓ustit̓ (larch) lost limbs, young tree lost future, tak̓a¢ (squirrel) lost food, rocks almost lost place, and kławła (grizzly) lost life.

Educators must become mindful to model a sense of belonging that involves the independent right of place and more-than-humans to be included when appropriate while respecting *their* space. This is about nurturing emotional connections with more-than-humans and place, to get closer to a state of feeling that bell hooks (2009) identifies as "heartwhole" (p. 217).

Learning Reciprocity. Educators must start learning the multiple meanings contained in reciprocity, and how reciprocity extend far past a direct one to one interaction or exchange. Reciprocity is far different from the notion of giving back. Reciprocity is a profound responsibility.

A Path Forward for Ecoportraiture

The methodology of ecoportraiture has been an enthralling process to undertake while learning with, and from, Land. In this project, though Land is positioned as co-

researcher, I was reminded quickly that Land is teacher, and Land is all relationships. From the onset, this was a shift in perspective. While living the methodology fully, other instances caused reflection and generated the application of a critical kindness towards its processes and expressions. The sections below address some of these elements, while suggesting areas of further thought for ecoportraiture, in addition to the ideas already shared in chapter 3.

Revisiting Anthropomorphism

The research focus brought forward the interconnectedness held within the relationships that formed throughout the project. “Radical inclusivity” (Fettes et al., 2022, p. 4) transpired as much through these relationships as it has been philosophical and metaphorical. An implication of taking advantage of the openness of the methodology resulted in challenging aspects of anthropomorphism by pushing boundaries somewhat. This was introduced more extensively in chapter 3 and materialized throughout the braids. Within an Indigenous paradigm, interpretations and stories are often carried by more-than-humans, and some of those relationships were included in the project.

I’m aware, for example, that I anthropomorphized clouds that formed a bear’s paw print in the midnight sky (see below). However, I learned that air and clouds have agency, and that Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre would surely ask me to reflect on whether I had seen this anywhere else other than while being on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. Critical imagination, here, supports perceptions, as well as the connections and reflections that should arise from the experience. This is often times how “uncompromising critical consciousness” arose (Datura, 2022, p. 144), not only through my critical thought process

but through provocative happenings while interacting with ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa and Indigenous colleagues. Further research might involve how anthropomorphism and animism intersect with ecoportraiture and how anthropomorphism's boundaries can be revisited in light of Indigenous knowledge.

Embracing Indigenous Perspectives

In addition to acknowledging colonial histories and revisiting interpretations of listening (Fettes et al., 2022), ecoportraiture possesses the openness to welcome Indigenous perspectives as part of its research framework but could still go a step further. By opening to Indigenous perspectives, an implication formulates into the need for the methodology to embrace broader interpretations of land.

Styres' (2017) differentiation between "l" land and "L" Land, can support ecoportraiture in opening itself to aspects otherwise left out when considering more-than-humans and land. This is an area where I chose to push boundaries and go beyond direct in-situ interactions with the more-than-human world, to include key relationships who contributed Indigenous knowledges and thoughts in specific instances.

Land includes interconnections with humans, and these ecologies cannot be neglected while being skillfully inserted as to not overshadow foregrounded relationships with more-than-humans. Land "L" also brings a wide variety of relationships, stories, and storied relationships, affected by, and determined to, challenge current social, political, economical, and ecological issues. Grizzly bears' story in braid 8 is an example of a different perception and perspective of the bears' agency. Likewise, teaching can come

from nupqu (black bear) as in Knowledge Holder Bonnie Harvey's description of the Ktunaxa calendar, or from more-than-humans in the Creation Story.

An implication relating to the openness of this methodology ties to concerns with avoiding the replication of violence against Indigenous epistemologies and ways of knowing (Datura, 2022; L.T. Smith, 2012). Welcoming relationships such as nupqu's or grizzly's, provided they are vetted and permitted by the community, and treated with care and beneficence by researchers, bridges a separation gap where only relationships who are perceived as alive, or real, may be considered. Embracing Indigenous epistemologies and ways of knowing involves embracing this perspective shift regarding lessons from the more-than-human world, and interactions with other humans. This intersection of ecoportraiture, Indigenous stories, and storied relationships, may provide an area for further research.

Ecoportraiture possesses the inclusive foresight to consider not only *being* in place, but the relationship with place as a *being* the way Chambers (2006) or Donald (2021) view place. An implication is to consider how place as a being communicates. The vast variety of communication forms demands a variety of manners in which one listens. In stressing learning how to listen, ecoportraiture is already aware of moving beyond simply hearing. As such, the methodology is capable of exploring ways listening can manifest by considering extended ways to perceive such as heart, or feel, or sensing.

Decolonizing Speak

It is becoming unfathomable to consider the prefix *eco*, without Indigenous perspectives. Carefully opening up to Land offers the opportunity to add different layers

to portraits, and to shift the thinking around perceptions even more. An implication would see ecoportraiture extend its desire towards decolonizing by inviting Indigenous perspectives and Indigenous relationships as a way of doing/being.

In negotiating the space towards Indigenous knowledge and methodologies, ecoportraiture can progress along the decolonizing path by seeking to identify and address colonial-*isms* that threaten to permeate its fabric for good. These *isms* may not present as unquestioned answers but do appear as subtle unquestioned heteropatriachal and anthropocentric language.

Possessive referents such as "our" while discussing more-than-human kins (Fettes et al., 2022), though endearing and well-meaning, act as a possessive diminutive. Similarly, as Blenkinsop et al. (2022) notice the use of separation language, the word *us* should come into focus. Heartwarmingly looking to more-than-humans to teach *us*, or expressing what observations, findings, or knowledge tell *us* (Blenkinsop et al., 2022) may be better repositioned to value the source. I challenged myself to this endeavour throughout the thesis, and tried to avoid such language. I humbly admit my continuous learning. Finally, pairing the word "wild" (outside of cited work) and more-than-humans (Datura, 2022) replicates an archaic separating, and erasing, viewpoint that omits interconnectedness though the intent may not be such. With roots in critical and feminist approaches among many others (Fettes et al., 2022), it is an imperative implication that ecoportraiture continues to "catch itself."

Bending Time

A final implication for ecoportraiture relates to the literal bending of time. There is little doubt that time is a limitation for ecoportraiture. For this project, the pandemic cut the project short, back to my initial intention of working over a semester. As a result other parts of the project were spent on Zoom, and spent mainly alone in the forest. I was thankful for all this extra time, but realized that pandemics cannot be placed on order to accommodate researchers!

The Quality of Time. Time is always lived through multiple perspectives simultaneously. Both Jody and Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre have commented on only ever being in certain places at certain times either due to constraints, planning, or for safety. A read of Datura (2022) also reveals how one can be in place for an extended period, and not notice occurrences that have been right in front all along, staring back! During the pandemic, Zoom taught –in six to eight meetings– more about students and their relationships with place than in the six months prior. Time means making choices about where any particular focus will be directed. Ideally, well-invested research time, even reduced, will have long-lasting effects.

Scholar Leah Fowler (2006) acknowledges the scarcity of time which demands one gain “a diligent focus,” and, as educators a “heightened consciousness” towards learning and teaching (p. 145). Often, while interacting with more-than-humans, it is less about being there a long *researching* time, and much more about being there at the right *relational* time. In this sense, and acknowledging that each season will in turn bring a wealth of individually timed seasons, ecoportraiture can transform time and be

transformed by time. This implication is not about maximizing researching time but rather recognizing that more-than-humans' agency may dictate the length of a relationship, so seeking to make the most of it matters. An example of this is my investment with kyanɨakɨiquɨaqpik (heartleaf arnica), or the mere seconds with nupqu (black bear) in the ravine.

Extending Time. Knowing and being in place is at the heart of Indigenous knowledge. If all that is available is one semester, one is rich with one hundred days. In addition to time in place, ecorportraiture must privilege being with place, daily, outside of school time. Invest in getting to know place, befriend place. Juxtaposing in-situ research time (at a school let's say) and personal research time (in nature away from school), on top of time for notes and reflections, can contribute to instilling or reinforcing personal habits towards Land, curiosity, reflexivity, and reciprocity.

Life Time. Ecoportraiture is a lived methodology. It holds the potential to carry on well after a project is completed, because relationships, especially relationships genuinely anchored in heart, perdure. The implication is that ecoportraiture can extend time by fostering "coups de coeur" with place, with more-than-humans, and with human relationships –with Land really! Taught by Elders, Indigenist researcher Shawn Wilson says:

> Living a lifestyle consequent with what you are trying to achieve through your research is crucial, as is incorporating what you learned from your research back into your lifestyle afterwards. The knowledge you gain, from research or any other way, is also relational, so you will only understand it fully if it is

incorporated into all the other relations –that's how knowledge becomes wisdom. (Wilson & Hughes, 2019, p. 9)

My own learning transpires thr ough some of the braids and I continued to develop relationships with This City's trails and ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. Likewise, although I do not get to visit with Wigwômadenizibo as often as I would like, I continue to grow my learning, for, as you may remember from page 1, I have come to my senses a little more. Further research can delve into the meanings of ecoportraiture as a lived methodology and how this impacts one's life.

Beauty in Limitations

I have been reminded often throughout this research of the particularities of being on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, and that Ktunaxa is particular to this place here. In research terms this constitute a limitation. It would be regarded as equally limited that the research took place in Valley School District, in a school and area located on one of the seven Ktunaxa communities. More so, since some of the trails I visited daily were located in high mountain elevation versus those in the valley, where I went with the OP.

I have also been reminded that contributions shared remain particular to the person sharing rather than the entire community. The diversity of thoughts while listening to stories and learning more about the Ktunaxa language, where each storyteller has their own style and version and where language teachers and speakers use words differently, are also regarded as limitations. However, it is these limitations that make up the richness of Ktunaxa. The braided ecoportraits may encourage one to ponder one's own reflexive

relationship to Land, and perhaps seek to learn more about the particularities of the place where they live and work.

That which seems limiting is actually illuminating.

Final Perspective

I asked NasuʔKin Joe Pierre about the stars during our chat, concerned with ensuring I included a perspective from the sky and the cosmos. Inspired by Wilson (2008), Simpson (2017), and Kimmerer (2013), I spent many evening gazing up at the stars, chasing the moon, and connecting with "La grande ourse," the big dipper, for which a literal French translation is "Mama Bear." One night, a small cluster of clouds formed a distinct paw print right next to the moon, in an otherwise clear firmament; a reminder, perhaps, of kławła's (grizzly bear) presence across ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. The stars teach a lesson about perspectives.

Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre explains that many stories about the stars were lost to colonialism, nevertheless he shares from the limited knowledge he has:

> I can't remember if it was my grand-mother or my grand-father who showed me this as a young person. I don't know if you've ever looked down to see the stars… if you've ever been beside a lake that's just mirror, still, and you can see the stars on the earth. Because for me, it's kind of like, what's the difference on where you are seeing them? (He points up and down).

His response speaks of purpose, challenges perspectives, and highlights interconnectivity. He recognizes the propensity to label what he is saying as just story, myth, and magic.

Yet, supported by imagination, one can feel how reality is embedded throughout his narrative:

> […] one of the small piece that I know about with Ktunaxa storytelling [of] the stars, is that one of those jobs that those Seven Star Sisters had was to keep an eye on skinku¢, the trickster. That was actually part of their job and they would watch him from on high, and they were keeping an eye on him.
>
> Whenever he does wrong, he needs to be taught a lesson himself, then the Star Sisters will manifest themselves on the earth and punish coyote the trickster.
>
> I always think about how they're actually watching us.

The photograph at the beginning of this chapter bears witness to the moment I found myself in front of dozens of stars in the middle of the forest almost a year after the initial chat with Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre, and thought: "My goodness, *they are* on earth, *they are* watching us!" Oops, anthropomorphizing… but that's how ecoportraiture can be lived.

*

Hu sukiɫq̓ ukni

(Thank you from the heart,)

Taxa.

(I am done speaking.)

References

Aboriginal Nations Education Division. (2017). *First peoples principles of learning for teachers.* Greater Victoria School District # 61. https://learn.sd61.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/96/2017/09/First-Peoples-Principles-of-Learning-for-Teachers.pdf

Abram, D. (2017). *The spell of the sensuous: Perception and language in a more-than-human world.* Vintage Books. (Original work published 1996)

Airenti, G. (2018). The development of anthropomorphism in interaction: Intersubjectivity, imagination, and theory of mind. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *9*, 2136, 1-13. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.02136

Alam, A., McGregor, A., & Houston, D. (2017). Photo-response: Approaching participatory photography as a more-than-human research method. *Area*, *50*(2), 256-265. https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12368

Alfred, T. (2010). What is radical imagination? Indigenous struggles in Canada. *Affinities: A Journal of Radical Theory, Culture, and Action, 4*(2), 5-8. https://ojs.library.queensu.ca/index.php/affinities/article/view/6130

Anderson, L. M. (2011). Toward professional integration in the humanities: One teacher-researcher's experience with portraiture. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, *10*(1), 103–119. https://doi.org/10.1177/1474022210389143

Anderson, D., Chiarotto, L., & Comay, J. (2017). *Natural curiosity 2nd edition: A resource for educators: The importance of indigenous perspectives in children's environmental inquiry*. Laboratory School, Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto.

Archibald, J. A. (2008). *Indigenous storywork: Educating the heart, mind, body, and spirit*. UBC Press.

Baker, M. (2005). Landfullness in adventure-based programming: Promoting reconnection to the land. *Journal of Experiential Education, 27*(3), 267–276. https://doi.org/10.1177/105382590502700306

Bang, M., Curley, L., Kessel, A., Marin, A., Suzukovich III, E. S., & Strack, G. (2014). Muskrat theories, tobacco in the streets, and living Chicago as Indigenous land. *Environmental Education Research, 20*:(1), 37-55. https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2013.865113

Bannon, B. E. (2014). Resisting the domination of nature: Regarding time as an ethical concept. *Environmental Philosophy*, *11*(2), 333-358. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26169809

Barker, A. J., & Pickerill, J. (2020). Doings with the land and sea: Decolonising geographies, Indigeneity, and enacting place-agency. *Progress in Human Geography*, *44*(4), 640-662. https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132519839863

Barrett, M. J., Harmin, M., Maracle, B., Patterson, M., Thomson, C., Flowers, M., & Bors, K. (2017). Shifting relations with the more-than-human: Six threshold concepts for transformative sustainability learning. *Environmental Education Research*, *23*(1), 131-143. https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2015.1121378

Bastian, M., Jones, O., Moore, N., & Roe, E. (Eds.). (2017). *Participatory research in more-than-human worlds*. Routledge.

Battiste, M. (2013). *Decolonizing Education: Nourishing the learning spirit.* Purich Publishing Limited.

Battiste, M., & Henderson, J. (2009). Naturalizing Indigenous knowledge in Eurocentric education. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, *32*(1), 5-18. https://doi.org/10.14288/cjne.v32i1.196482

Belczewski, A. (2009). Decolonizing science education and the science teacher: A White teacher's perspective. *Canadian Journal of Science, Mathematics and Technology Education*, *9*(3), 191-202. https://doi.org/10.1080/14926150903118326

Bishop, A. (2015). *Becoming an ally: Breaking the cycle of oppression in people*. Zed Books.

Blenkinsop, S., Affifi, R., Piersol, L., & Sitka-Sage, M. D. D. (2017). Shut-up and listen: Implications and possibilities of Albert Memmi’s characteristics of colonization upon the “natural world”. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, *36*(3), 349-365. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11217-016-9557-9

Blenkinsop, S., & Fettes, M. (2020). Land, language and listening: The transformations that can flow from acknowledging Indigenous land. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, *54*(4), 1033-1046. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9752.12470

Blenkinsop, S., Fettes, M., & Piersol, L. (2022). Epilogue: Humility, resilience, becoming: Ecoportraiture as conversation. In S. Blenkinsop, M. Fettes, & L. Piersol, (Eds.), *Ecoportraiture: The art of research when nature matters* (pp 149-166). Peter Lang Publishing.

Blenkinsop, S., & Piersol, L. (2013). Listening to the literal: Orientations towards how nature communicates. *Phenomenology & Practice*, *7*(2), 41-60. https://doi.org/10.29173/pandpr21167

Breen, A.V., Wilson, S., & DuPré, L. (2019). Introduction. In S. Wilson, A. V. Breen, & L. DuPré (Eds.), *Research and reconciliation: Unsettling ways of knowing through Indigenous relationships* (pp. xi-xvi). Canadian Scholars.

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2013a). *BC's curriculum: Science 5.* https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/science/5

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2013b). *BC's curriculum: Science 9.* https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/science/9

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2015a). *Aboriginal worldview and perspectives in the classroom: Moving forward*. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/indigenous-education/awp_moving_forward.pdf

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2015b). *BC's curriculum: English language arts 6.* https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/english-language-arts/6/core

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2015c). *BC's curriculum: Social studies 9.* https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/social-studies/9

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2015d). *BC's redesigned curriculum: An orientation guide*. https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/pdf/supports/curriculum_brochure.pdf

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2015e). *Curriculum overview: Education for the 21st century.* https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/overview

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2015f). *Curriculum redesign: Introduction to BC's curriculum redesign.* https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/rethinking-curriculum

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2016). *Glossary of curricular terms.* https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/pdf/supports/glossary.pdf

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2018a). *BC's curriculum: Introduction to science.* https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/science/introduction

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2018b). *BC's curriculum: Socials studies introduction.* https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/social-studies/introduction

British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2019, August). *BC's curriculum: Core competencies.* https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/competencies

British Columbia Teachers' Council. (2019). *Professional standards for BC educators.* https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/teach/teacher-regulation/standards-for-educators/edu_standards.pdf

British Columbia Teacher's Federation. (2015). *Project of heart: Illuminating the hidden history Indian residential schools in BC.* https://issuu.com/teachernewsmag/docs/poh_ebook_for_issuu

Bullock, C. (2022, July 14). Commercial huckleberry harvesting restricted in Kootenays: The province of B.C. has banned commercial-scale picking from July 15 to October 15. The Free Press. https://www.thefreepress.ca/news/commercial-huckleberry-harvesting-restricted-in-some-parts-of-kootenay-boundary/

Burkhart, J. (2016). Singing the spaces: Artful approaches to navigating the emotional landscape in environmental education. *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education*, *21*, 72-88. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1151865.pdf

Cajete, G. (1994). *Look to the mountain: An ecology of indigenous education*. Kivaki Press.

Calderon, D. (2014). Speaking back to manifest destinies: A land education-based approach to critical curriculum inquiry. *Environmental Education Research*, *20*(1), 24-36. https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2013.865114

Campbell, N. I. (2005). *Shi-shi-etko*. Groundwood Books Ltd.

Castell, E., Bullen, J., Garvey, D., & Jones, N. (2018). Critical reflexivity in indigenous and cross-cultural psychology: A decolonial approach to curriculum? *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *62*(3-4), 261-271. https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12291

Chambers, C. (2004). Research that matters: Finding a path with heart. *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies, 2*(1), 1-19. https://www.proquest.com/openview/217d2256870bac793a4da1a416f605c5/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=1966354

Chambers, C. (2006). " The land is the best teacher I have ever had": Places as pedagogy for precarious times. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, *22*(3), 27-37. https://search.proquest.com/openview/691f422980f7ec08ece8c6aea3863ad6/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=25997

Chapman, T. K. (2005). Expressions of “voice” in portraiture. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *11*(1), 27–51. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800404270840

Chapman, T. K. (2007). Interrogating classroom relationships and events: Using portraiture and critical race theory in education research. *Educational Researcher*, *36*(3), 156–162. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X07301437

Chilisa, B. (2012). *Indigenous Research Methodologies*. Sage Publications.

Chrona, J. L. (2016a). *Background of FPPL and current context*. First peoples principles of learning. https://firstpeoplesprinciplesoflearning.wordpress.com/background-and-current-context/

Chrona, J. L. (2016b). *Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational.* First peoples principles of learning. https://firstpeoplesprinciplesoflearning.wordpress.com/learning-is-holistic-reflexive-reflective-experiential-and-relational-focused-on-connectedness-on-reciprocal-relationships-and-a-sense-of-place/

Chrona, J. L. (2016c). *Welcome.* First peoples principles of learning. https://firstpeoplesprinciplesoflearning.wordpress.com

Chung, S. H. S. (2019). The courage to be altered: Indigenist decolonization for teachers. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, *157*(2), 13-25. https://doi.org/10.1002/tl.20327

Coburn, E. (2013). Indigenous research as resistance. *Socialist Studies/Études Socialistes, 9*(1), 52-63. https://doi.org/10.18740/S40017

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). *Research methods in education* (8th ed.). Routledge.

Colucci, M., & Pegoraro, R. (2016). Towards a medicine of the invisible: bioethics and relationship in “The Little Prince”. *Medical Humanities*, *43*(1), 9-14. http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/medhum-2016-010946

Datta, R.K. (2015). A relational theoretical framework and meanings of land, nature, and sustainability for research with Indigenous communities. *Local Environment, 20*(1), 102-113. https://doi.org/10.1080/13549839.2013.818957

Datta, R. K. (2018). Rethinking environmental science education from indigenous knowledge perspectives: An experience with a Dene First Nation community. *Environmental Education Research*, *24*(1), 50-66. https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2016.1219980

Datura, M. D. D. (2022). Traversing a mountain of data: Ecoportraiture as critical, beautiful risk. In S. Blenkinsop, M. Fettes, & L. Piersol, (Eds.), *Ecoportraiture: The art of research when nature matters* (pp 123-148). Peter Lang Publishing.

de Carvalho, E. R. (2018). Norbert Elias and the philosophical controversy surrounding the nature of time. *Time & Society*, *27*(2), 155-175. https://doi.org/10.1177/0961463X15590744

de Grandpré, S. (2017). *Embedding the British Columbia First Peoples Principles of Learning within the curriculum.* [Unpublished manuscript]. Faculty of Education, University of Lethbridge.

de Grandpré, S. (2022). Indigenous knowledge as voice: Ecoportraiture and indigenous ways of knowing. In S. Blenkinsop, M. Fettes, & L. Piersol, (Eds.), *Ecoportraiture: The art of research when nature matters* (pp 97-122). Peter Lang Publishing.

de Saint-Exupéry, A. (1990). *Le petit prince.* Folio Junior. (Original work published 1943).

den Heyer, K. (2011). History education as a disciplined "ethics of truths". In P. Clark (Ed), *New possibilities for the past: Shaping history education in Canada* (pp. 154-172). UBC Press.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2018). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (5th ed.). Sage.

Derby, M. W. (2015). *Place, being, resonance: A critical ecohermeneutic approach to education*. Peter Lang.

Dewey, J. (1915). *The school and society.* University of Chicago Press.

Donald, D. (2009). Forts, curriculum, and Indigenous Métissage: Imagining decolonization of Aboriginal-Canadian relations in educational contexts. *First Nations Perspectives*, *2*(1), 1-24. https://galileo.org/pl/wp-content/uploads/004_Donald.pdf

Donald, D. (2012). Indigenous Métissage: A decolonizing research sensibility. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *25*(5), 533-555. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2011.554449

Donald, D. (2021). We need a new story: Walking and the wahkohtowin imagination. *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*, *18*(2), 53-63. https://doi.org/10.25071/1916-4467.40492

Doucet A. (2018). Shorelines, seashells, and seeds: Feminist epistemologies, ecological thinking, and relational ontologies. In F. Dépelteau (Ed.), *The palgrave handbook of relational sociology* (pp. 375-391). Palgrave Macmillan.

DuPré, L. (2019). Being, longing, and belonging. In S. Wilson, A.V. Breen, & L. DuPré (Eds.), *Research and reconciliation: Unsettling ways of knowing through Indigenous relationships* (pp. 1-4). Canadian Scholars.

Dyment, J., Downing, J., Hill, A., & Smith, H. (2018). 'I did think it was a bit strange taking outdoor education online': Exploration of initial teacher education students' online learning experiences in a tertiary outdoor education unit. *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*, *18*(1), 70-85. https://doi.org/10.1080/14729679.2017.1341327

Egan, K. (2005). *An imaginative approach to teaching.* Jossey-Bass.

Engel-Di Mauro, S., & Carroll, K. K. (2014). An African-centred approach to land education. *Environmental Education Research*, *20*(1), 70-81. https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2013.865112

Evernden, L. L. N. (1993). *The natural alien: Humankind and environment* (2nd ed.). University of Toronto Press.

Fellner, K. D. (2018). Miyo pimatisiwin: (Re)claiming voice with our original instructions. In D. McGregor, J. P. Restoule, & R. Johnston, (Eds.). *Indigenous research: Theories, practices, and relationships.* (pp. 25-45). Canadian Scholars' Press.

Fettes, M., Blenkinsop, S., & Piersol, L. (2022). Ecoportaiture: Research in resonance with the more-than-human. In S. Blenkinsop, M. Fettes, & L. Piersol, (Eds.), *Ecoportraiture: The art of research when nature matters* (pp 1-22). Peter Lang Publishing.

Fettes, M., & Judson, G. (2010). Imagination and the cognitive tools of place-making. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, *42*(2), 123-135. https://doi.org/10.1080/00958964.2010.505967

Fien, J. (2003). Learning to care: Education and compassion. *Australian Journal of Environmental Education*, *19*, 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0814062600001427

First Nations Education Steering Committee. (2015, September). *First peoples principles of learning.* http://www.fnesc.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/PUB-LFP-POSTER-Principles-of-Learning-First-Peoples-poster-11x17.pdf

First Nations Education Steering Committee. (2018, July 1). *BC tripartite education agreement: Supporting first nations student success*. http://www.fnesc.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/AGREEMENT-BC-TEA-TM-CA-Signed-2018-06-28.pdf

Fowler, L. C. (2006). *A curriculum of difficulty: Narrative research in education and the practice of teaching* (Vol. 17). Peter Lang.

Friedel, T. L. (2011). Looking for learning in all the wrong places: Urban Native youths' cultured response to Western-oriented place-based learning. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *24*(5), 531-546. https://doi:10.1080/09518398.2011.600266

Fullan, M. (2020). Learning and the pandemic: What's next? *Prospects*, *49*(1), 25-28. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11125-020-09502-0

Gadd, B. (1995). *Handbook of the Canadian Rockies* (2nd ed.). Corax Press.

Gaztambide-Fernández, R., Cairns, K., Kawashima, Y., Menna, L., & VanderDussen, E. (2011). Portraiture as pedagogy: Learning research through the exploration of context and methodology. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, *12*(4), 1-29. http://www.ijea.org/v12n4/v12n4.pdf

Gehl, L. (2011). Ally bill of responsibilities. *Canadian Dimensions*, *45*(1), 12. http://www.lynngehl.com/uploads/5/0/0/4/5004954/ally_bill_of_responsibilities_poster.pdf

Gehl, L. (2012). Debwewin journey: A methodology and model of knowing. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, *8*(1), 53-65. https://doi.org/10.1177/117718011200800105

Gozli, D. G. (2020). Imagination in general psychology: Thinking with Luca Tateo's "A theory of imagining, knowing, and understanding". *Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science*, *54*(4), 920-932. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12124-020-09561-0

Graham, M. A. (2007). Art, ecology and art education: Locating art education in a critical place-based pedagogy. *Studies in Art Education*, *48*(4), 375-391. https://doi.org/10.1080/00393541.2007.11650115

Häggström, M. (2019). Lived experiences of being-in-the-forest as experiential sharing with the more-than-human world. *Environmental Education Research*, *25*(9), 1334-1346. https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2019.1633275

Hale, E., & Fox, M. A. (2013). Childhood and the environment in The Little Prince. *The Dalhousie Review*, *93*(2). https://dalspace.library.dal.ca/bitstream/handle/10222/80007/Dal_review_93_2_289.pdf

Hampton, R., & DeMartini, A. (2017). We cannot call back colonial stories: Storytelling and critical land literacy. *Canadian Journal of Education*, *40*(3), 245-271. https://www.jstor.org/stable/90014778

Harmin, M., Barrett, M.J., & Hoessler, C. (2017) Stretching the boundaries of transformative sustainability learning: On the importance of decolonizing ways of knowing and relations with the more-than-human, *Environmental Education Research*, *23*(10), 1489-1500. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13504622.2016.1263279

Harrison, N., & Greenfield, M. (2011). Relationship to place: Positioning Aboriginal knowledge and perspectives in classroom pedagogies. *Critical Studies in Education*, *52*(1), 65-76. https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2011.536513

Hasebe-Ludt, E., Chambers, C., & Leggo, C. D. (2009). *Life writing and literary métissage as an ethos for our times* (Vol. 27). Peter Lang.

Hatcher, A., Bartlett, C., Marshall A., & Marshall, M. (2009). Two-eyed seeing in the classroom environment: Concepts, approaches, and challenges. *Canadian Journal of Science, Mathematics and Technology Education*, *9*(3), 141-153. https://doi.org/10.1080/14926150903118342

hooks, b. (2009). *Belonging: A culture of place*. Routledge.

Hunter, J., Graves, C., & Bodensteiner, A. (2017). Adult perspectives on structured vs. unstructured play in early childhood environmental education. *International Journal of Early Childhood Environmental Education*, *5*(1), 89-92. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1158456.pdf

Hursh, D., Henderson, J., & Greenwood, D. (2015). Environmental education in a neoliberal climate. *Environmental Education Research*, *21*(3), 299-318. https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2015.1018141

Iaconelli, R., & Anderman, E. M. (2021). Classroom goal structures and communication style: The role of teacher immediacy and relevance-making in students' perceptions of the classroom. *Social Psychology of Education*, *24*(1), 37-58. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-021-09609-y

Iared, V. G., de Oliveira, H. T., & Payne, P. G. (2016). The aesthetic experience of nature and hermeneutic phenomenology. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, *47*(3), 191-201. https://doi.org/10.1080/00958964.2015.1063472

Indigenous Action (2014, May). *Accomplices not allies: Abolishing the ally industrial complex.* Indigenous Action. https://www.indigenousaction.org/accomplices-not-allies-abolishing-the-ally-industrial-complex/

Ingram, R. R. (2021). Indigenous place names as visualizations of Indigenous knowledge. In J. B. Hess (Ed.), *Digital mapping and Indigenous America*, (pp.182-192). Routledge.

Iszatt-White, M., Kempster, S., & Carroll, B. (2017). An educator's perspective on reflexive pedagogy: Identity undoing and issues of power. *Management Learning*, *48*(5), 582-596. https://doi.org/10.1177/1350507617718256

Ingman, B. C. (2017). Bigger experiences and the meaning of adventure. *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*, *17*(4), 338–352. https://doi.org/10.1080/14729679.2017.1291356

James, J. K., & Williams, T. (2017). School-based experiential outdoor education: A neglected necessity. *Journal of Experiential Education*, *40*(1), 58-71. https://doi.org/10.1177/1053825916676190

Jardine, D. W. (2006). On hermeneutics:"Over and above our wanting and doing". In J. Kincheloe, & K. Tobin (Eds.), *Doing educational research: A handbook* (pp. 269-288). Sense Publishing.

Jayanandhan, S. R. (2009). John Dewey and a pedagogy of place. *Philosophical Studies in Education*, *40*, 104-112. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ864314.pdf

Johnson, J. T. (2012). Place-based learning and knowing: Critical pedagogies grounded in Indigeneity. *GeoJournal*, *77*(6), 829-836. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-010-9379-1

Jukes, S., & Reeves, Y. (2020). More-than-human stories: Experimental co-productions in outdoor environmental education pedagogy. *Environmental Education Research*, *26*(9-10), 1294-1312. https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2019.1699027

Keena, K. E. (2022). Getting to goodness in a green schoolyard: Trusting the process of eco-portraiture. In S. Blenkinsop, M. Fettes, & L. Piersol (Eds.), *Ecoportraiture: The art of research when nature matters* (pp 47-66). Peter Lang Publishing.

Kimmerer, R. W. (2013). *Braiding sweetgrass: Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge and the teachings of plants.* Milkweed Editions.

Kincheloe, J. L., McLaren, P., Steinberg, S. R., & Monzo, L.D. (2018). Critical pedagogy and qualitative research: Advancing the bricolage. In N. Denzin, & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 233-260). Sage.

Kopnina, H., Sitka-Sage, M., Blenkinsop, S., & Piersol, L. (2020). Moving beyond innocence: Educating children in a post-nature world. *Research Handbook on Childhoodnature: Assemblages of Childhood and Nature Research*, 603-621. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-67286-1_40

Korteweg, L., & Oakley, J. (2014). Eco-heroes out of place and relations: Decolonizing the narratives of *Into the Wild* and *Grizzly Man* through Land education. *Environmental Education Research*, *20*(1), 131-143. https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2013.865117

Kovach, M. (2018). Doing indigenous methodologies: A letter to a research class. In N. Denzin, & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 214-234). Sage.

Ktunaxa Nation. (2019). *Who we are.* http://www.ktunaxa.org/who-we-are/

Ktunaxa Nation. (2022). *Qat'muk*. https://www.ktunaxa.org/qatmuk/

Ktunaxa Nation Executive Council. (2010). *Qat'muk declaration.* https://docs.google.com/viewerng/viewer?url=http://www.ktunaxa.org/wp-content/uploads/Declaration.pdf&hl=en_US

Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing.* Sage Publications.

Larsen, S. C., & Johnson, J. T. (2017). *Being together in place: Indigenous coexistence in a more than human world*. U of Minnesota Press.

Lawrence-Lightfoot, S. (2005). Reflections on portraiture: A dialogue between art and science. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *11*(1), 3–15. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800404270955

Lawrence-Lightfoot, S., & Davis, J. H. (1997). *The art and science of portraiture*. Jossey-Bass.

Longboat, C. (2008). Ethical space in the intellectual terrain: A cultural perspective. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, *31*(1), 72–83. https://www.proquest.com/openview/44e9d9151b0a2597861c77d0153170bc/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=30037

Louie, D. (2021, October 1). *Creating a relationship of mutual respect* [Keynote presentation]. Southeast Kootenay School District 5 District Professional Development Day, Cranbrook, British Columbia, Canada.

Louv, R. (2008). *Last child in the woods: Saving our children from nature-deficit disorder.* Algonquin Books.

Marker, M. (2011). Teaching history from an indigenous perspective: Four winding paths. In P. Clark (Ed), *New possibilities for the past: Shaping history education in Canada* (pp. 97-112). UBC Press.

Marker, M. (2018). There is no place of nature; there is only the nature of place: Animate landscapes as methodology for inquiry in the Coast Salish territory. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *31*(6), 453-464. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2018.1430391

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2016). *Designing qualitative research.* Sage.

Martin, P. (2007). Caring for the environment: Challenges from notions of caring. *Australian Journal of Environmental Education*, *23*, 57-64. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0814062600000719

Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review, 50*(4), 370-396. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0054346

McCoy, K. (2014). Manifesting destiny: A land education analysis of settler colonialism in Jamestown, Virginia, USA. *Environmental Education Research*, *20*(1), 82-97. https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2013.865116

McGill University Gault Nature Reserve. (2017, November 19). *Human history*. https://gault.mcgill.ca/en/the-reserve/detail/human-history/

McGinty, M., & Bang, M. (2016). Narratives of dynamic lands: Science education, indigenous knowledge and possible futures. *Cultural Studies of Science Education*, *11*(2), 471-475. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11422-015-9685-5

McGregor, D., Restoule, J. P., & Johnston, R. (Eds.). (2018). *Indigenous research: Theories, practices, and relationships.* Canadian Scholars' Press.

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary.* https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/reciprocal

Mikkonen, J. (2018). Knowledge, imagination, and stories in the aesthetic experience of forests. *Estetika: The Central European Journal of Aesthetics*, *55*(1). https://estetikajournal.org/articles/10.33134/eeja.168/galley/166/download/

Morcom, L. A. (2017). Indigenous holistic education in philosophy and practice, with wampum as a case study. *Foro de Educación*, *15*(23), 121-138. https://doi.org/10.14516/fde.572

Moules, N. J. (2002). Hermeneutic inquiry: Paying heed to history and Hermes an ancestral, substantive, and methodological tale. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *1*(3), 1-21. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690200100301

Muccio, L. S., Reybold, L. E., & Kidd, J. (2015). Researcher-portraitists: An exploration of aesthetics and research quality. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, *16*(1), 1-24. http://www.ijea.org/v16n1/v16n1.pdf

Murray, C., Heinz, M., Munday, I., Keane, E., Flynn, N., Connolly, C., Hall, T., & MacRuairc, G. (2020). Reconceptualising relatedness in education in 'Distanced'Times. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, *43*(4), 488-502. https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2020.1806820

Noorani, T., & Brigstocke, J. (2018). *More-than-human participatory research*. University of Bristol/AHRC Connected Communities Programme. https://orca.cardiff.ac.uk/119017/1/J%20Brigstocke%202018%20more%20than%20human%20report.pdf

O'Gorman, E., & Gaynor, A. (2020). More-than-human histories. *Environmental History*, *25*(4), 711-735. https://doi.org/10.1093/envhis/emaa027

Orr, D. W. (2002). *The nature of design: ecology, culture, and human intention*. Oxford University Press.

Paperson, L. (2014). A ghetto land pedagogy: An antidote for settler environmentalism. *Environmental Education Research*, *20*(1), 115-130. https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2013.865115

Paré, P. (1985). *La toponymie des Abenaquis.* Gouvernement du Quebec. https://toponymie.gouv.qc.ca/ct/pdf/la%20toponymie%20des%20Abenaquis.pdf?ts=0.5040528521961893

Penak, N. (2018). A story pathway: Restoring wholeness in the research process. In D. McGregor, J. Restoule, & R. Johnston (Eds.), *Indigenous research: Theories, practices, and relationships* (pp 257-270). Canadian Scholars' Press.

Pierre, J. [JCI Kootenay]. (2021, October 23). *nasuʔkin Joe Pierre tells The Ktunaxa Creation Story* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jtttU5PmCds

Piersol, L. (2022). Developing eco-portraiture: A lesson from the caddisfly and other beings. In S. Blenkinsop, M. Fettes, & L. Piersol (Eds.), *Ecoportraiture: The art of research when nature matters* (pp 67-96). Peter Lang Publishing.

Probst, B. (2015). The eye regards itself: Benefits and challenges of reflexivity in qualitative social work research. *Social Work Research*, *39*(1), 37-48. https://doi.org/10.1093/swr/svu028

Quigley, C., Trauth-Nare, A., & Beeman-Cadwallader, N. (2015). The viability of portraiture for science education research: Learning from portraits of two science classrooms. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *28*(1), 21–49. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2013.847507

Regular, W. K. (1999). *Trucking and trading with outsiders: Blood Indian Reserve integration into Southern Alberta economic environment, 1884-1939, a case of shared neighbourhoods* (Doctoral dissertation, Memorial University of Newfoundland). https://research.library.mun.ca/11326/1/Regular_WKeith.pdf

Riley, K. (2019). Agency and belonging: What transformative actions can schools take to help create a sense of place and belonging? *Educational and Child Psychology*, *36*(4), 91-103. https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10103208/1/Riley_Journal%20of%20Education%20and%20Child%20Pyschology%20%208%20July.pdf

Robinson, K., & Aronica, L. (2009). *The element: How finding your passion changes everything*. Penguin.

Sato, M., Silva, R., & Jaber, M. (2014). Between the remnants of colonialism and the insurgence of self-narrative in constructing participatory social maps: Towards a land education methodology. *Environmental Education Research*, *20*(1), 102-114. https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2013.852654

Sheridan, J., & Longboat, R. H. C. T. S. D. (2006). The Haudenosaunee imagination and the ecology of the sacred. *Space and Culture, 9*(4), 365–381. https://doi.org/10.1177/1206331206292503

Shvarts, A., & Bakker, A. (2019). The early history of the scaffolding metaphor: Bernstein, Luria, Vygotsky, and before. *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, *26*(1), 4-23. https://doi.org/10.1080/10749039.2019.1574306

Simpson, L. B. (2017). *As we have always done: Indigenous freedom through radical resistance.* University of Minnesota Press.

Sioui, G. E. (1992). *For an Amerindian autohistory: An essay on the foundations of a social ethic.* (S. Fischman, Trans.). McGill-Queen's University Press. (Original work published 1991)

Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonizing methodologies.* Otago University Press.

Sobel, D. (2013). *Beyond ecophobia.* Orion Society. (Original work published 1996)

Strigley, K., & Varley, A. (2018). Learning to unlearn: Building relationships on Anishinaabeg territory. In D. McGregor, J. P. Restoule, & R. Johnston (Eds.). *Indigenous research: Theories, practices, and relationships.* (pp. 46-64). Canadian Scholars' Press.

Styres, S. D. (2011). Land as first teacher: A philosophical journeying. *Reflective Practice, 12*(6), 717-731. https://doi.org/10.1080/14623943.2011.601083

Styres, S.D. (2017). *Pathways for remembering and recognizing indigenous thought in education: Philosophies of lethi'nihste'nha Ohwentsia'ke'kha (Land).* University of Toronto Press.

Styres, S.D. (2018). Literacies of land: Decolonizing narratives, storying, and literature. In L. T. Smith, E. Tuck, K. W. & Yang (Eds.), *Indigenous and decolonizing studies in education: Mapping the long view* (pp. 24-37). Routledge.

Styres, S., Haig-Brown, C., & Blimkie, M. (2013). Towards a pedagogy of Land: The urban context. *Canadian Journal of Education*, *36*(2), 34-67. http://www.jstor.org/stable/canajeducrevucan.36.2.34

Styres, S., & Zinga, D. (2013). The community-first land-centred theoretical framework: Bringing a 'good mind' to Indigenous education research? *Canadian Journal of Education / Revue canadienne de l'éducation*, *36*(2), 284-313. http://www.jstor.org/stable/canajeducrevucan.36.2.284

Sutherland, D., & Henning, D. (2009). Ininiwi-kiskānītamowin: A framework for long-term science education, *Canadian Journal of Science, Mathematics and Technology Education*, *9*(3), 173-190. https://doi.org/10.1080/14926150903118359

Thomas, G. (2007). *Education and theory: Strangers in paradigms*. Open University Press; McGraw-Hill Education.

Timmerman, N. (2022). Relationship, complexity, artistry, and co-creation in portraiture research In S. Blenkinsop, M. Fettes, & L. Piersol (Eds.), *Ecoportraiture: The art of research when nature matters* (pp 23-46). Peter Lang Publishing.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Truth and reconciliation commission of Canada: Calls to action.* https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

Tuck, E., McKenzie, M., & McCoy, K. (2014). Land education: Indigenous, post-colonial, and decolonizing perspectives on place and environmental education research. *Environmental Education Research, 20*(1), 1-23. https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2013.877708

Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, *1*(1), 1-40. https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/18630/15554

Turkle, S. (2011). *Alone together: Why we expect more from technology and less from each other.* Basic Books.

United Nations General Assembly. (2007). *United nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples*. https://waubrafoundation.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/United-Nations-Declaration-on-the-Rights-of-Indigenous-Peoples.pdf

Vaillant, J. (2005). *The golden spruce: A true story of myth, madness and greed.* Vintage Canada.

van Manen, Max. (2007). Phenomenology of Practice. *Phenomenology & Practice,1*(1), 11-30. https://www.maxvanmanen.com/files/2011/04/2007-Phenomenology-of-Practice.pdf

Veerapen K, Wisener K, Doucet S, Amari E. (2020). A scaffolded structured approach for efficient transition to online small group teaching. *Medical Education, 54*(8), 761-762. https://doi.org/10.1111/medu.14209

Wark, J. (2021). Land acknowledgements in the academy: Refusing the settler myth. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1080/03626784.2021.1889924

Weible, D. (2015). Getting it right from the beginning: Imagination and education in John Dewey and Kieran Egan. *Education and Culture*, *31*(2), 81-112. https://doi.org/10.5703/educationculture.31.2.81

Whitehouse, H., Watkin Lui, F., Sellwood, J., Barrett, M. J., & Chigeza, P. (2014). Sea country: Navigating indigenous and colonial ontologies in Australian environmental education. *Environmental Education Research*, *20*(1), 56-69. https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2013.852655

Williams, L. W. (2021, October 22). *Environmental lessons from the indigenous knowledge and wisdom of long-resident peoples* [Keynote presentation]. C2C 2021 provincial conference. Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

Wilson, M. C. (2005). The "placing" of identity in nomadic societies: Aboriginal landscapes of the northwestern plains of North America. *Material Culture Review/ Revue de la culture matérielle*, *62, 7-19*. https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/ MCR/article/view/18057

Wilson, S. (2007). Guest editorial: What is an Indigenist research paradigm?. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, *30*(2), 193-195. https://www.proquest.com/ openview/41af2d5a458dd2ed67ac950d8e1a3042/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=30037

Wilson, S. (2008). *Research is ceremony: Indigenous research methods.* Fernwood Publishing.

Wilson, S., & Hughes, M. (2019). Why research is reconciliation. In S. Wilson, A. V. Breen, & L. DuPré (Eds.), *Research and reconciliation: Unsettling ways of knowing through Indigenous relationships* (pp. 5-19). Canadian Scholars.

Wohlleben, P. (2015). *The hidden life of trees: What they feel, how they communicate – discovering a hidden world*. Random House.

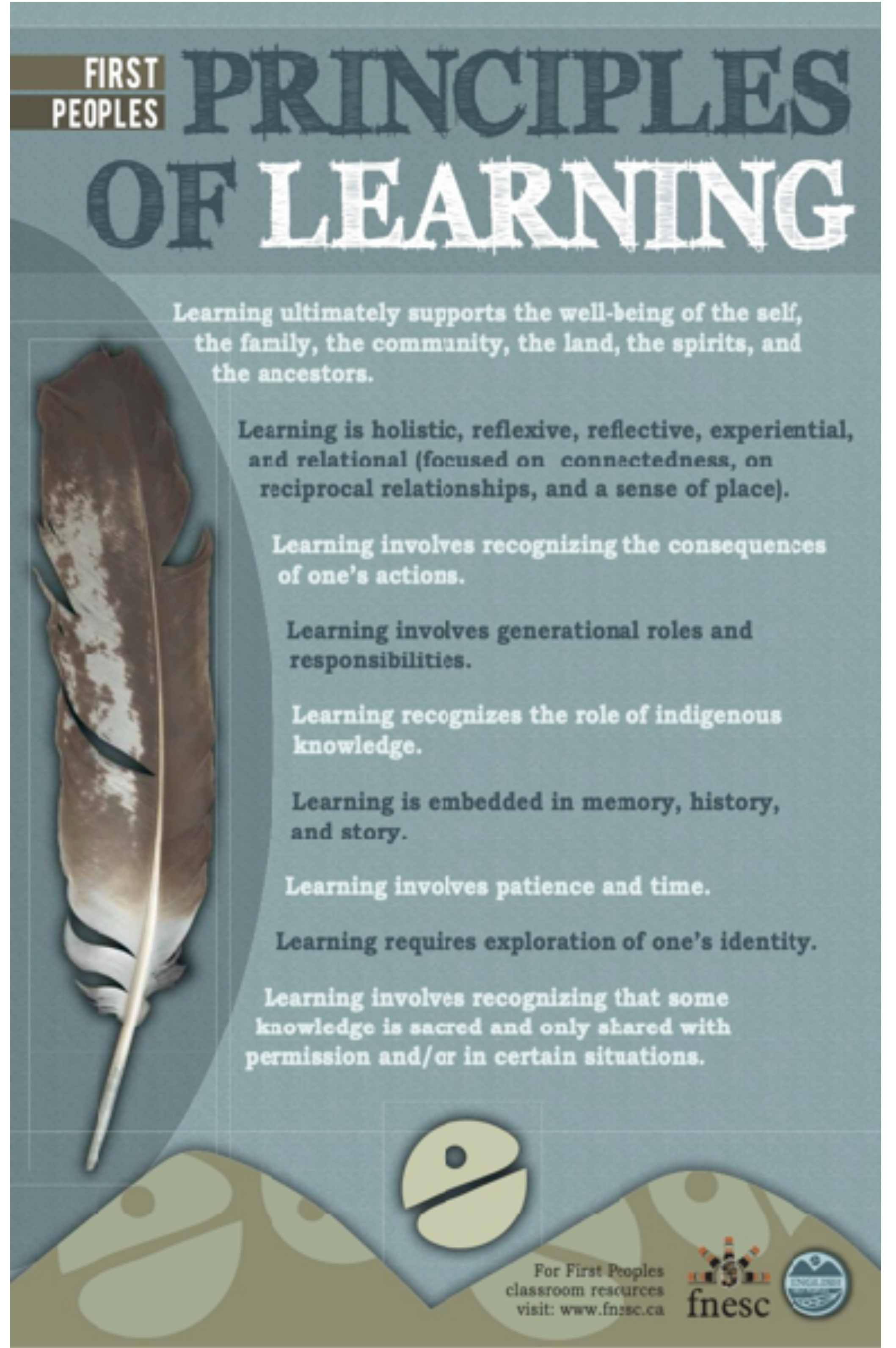
Wright, S. (2015). More-than-human, emergent belongings: A weak theory approach. *Progress in Human Geography*, *39*(4), 391–411. https://doi.org/ 10.1177/0309132514537132

Zembylas, M. (2017). Practicing an ethic of discomfort as an ethic of care in higher education teaching. *Critical Studies in Teaching and Learning (CriSTaL)*, *5*(1), 1-17. https://journals.co.za/doi/pdf/10.14426/cristal.v5i1.97

Zinga, D. (2017). Forward. In S. D. Styres, *Pathways for remembering and recognizing indigenous thought in education: Philosophies of lethi'nihste´nha Ohwentsia´ke ´kha (Land)*(pp. ix-xi). University of Toronto Press.

Zinga, D., & Styres, S. (2011). Pedagogy of the land: Tensions, challenges, and contradictions. *First Nations Perspectives*, *4*(1), 59-83.

Appendix A: First Peoples Principles of Learning



(FNESC, 2015)

Appendix B: Use of Terms

Use of Terms

As much of the terminology used in this work is specific to Indigenous Peoples and ways of knowing a note of explanation is required. Chrona (2016a) clarifies:

> Some peoples wonder about the differences between "Aboriginal," "First Nations," "Metis," "Inuit," "First Peoples," and "Indigenous." Aboriginal is a term that includes First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. These are all discrete cultural and political groups of peoples within Canada. Some people consider "Aboriginal" a political word imposed upon the First Peoples of Canada, and instead prefer to use "First Peoples" or "Indigenous." This is why [...]the principles were named "First Peoples Principles of Learning." The term "Indigenous Peoples" is an all-encompassing term that is commonly used in an international context and includes the Aboriginal or First Peoples of Canada, and other countries. Currently the federal, provincial, and territorial governments use "Aboriginal," as do the various Ministries of Education. (para. 5)

S. Wilson (2008) notes the political implications held within the term Indigenous which serves to unite peoples on an international level and assert "collective rights as self-determining" (p. 34). At times, the terms First Nations is also employed. However, Datta (2018) relays comments from Indigenous students that this appellation represents them as another category of human (p. 59). I have left terms as they are titled (Aboriginal, First

Nations, Indigenous), used specific Nation names -like Ktunaxa- where and when appropriate, and otherwise used the term Indigenous.

I refer to Indigenous ways of learning (for the FPPL for example) and to Indigenous ways of knowing for Indigenous knowledge and to the way knowledge is acquired through multiple perspectives (S. Wilson, 2008). This reflects terms used by the BC MoE or found in the literature. I use Indigenist paradigm to refer to research influencing this project (S. Wilson, 2007) and, in some cases, Indigenous research in reference to the specific work of Shawn Wilson (2008) in *Research is Ceremony*. This choice reflects recent publications and the clarification that Indigenous research, while representing a wide variety of Indigenous paradigms, is differentiated from non-Indigenous research (McGregor et al., 2018; S. Wilson, 2007).

Relationality, relationships, and relational accountability are terms that hold paramount importance within Indigenous ways of learning and Indigenist research. Relationality encompasses the epistemology, ontology, axiology, and methodology of Indigenous research together, but never apart from each other (Chilisa, 2012; S. Wilson, 2008). S. Wilson (2008) explains relationality as "thinking of the world as a web of connections and relationships. Nothing exists without its contextual relationships. Our systems of knowledge are built by, and around and also form these relationships" (p. 77). This brings into view the circularity of an Indigenous paradigm. At times, as I use the term Indigenist, it is to highlight, from Wilson and Hughes (2019) "a philosophy that includes a relational and emergent understanding of reality and Knowledge, and requires a particular way of behaving in the world" (p. 7). As I have engaged in this research

process bringing ecoportraiture and Indigenous ways of knowing together, I have committed to doing my best to work "from a relational understanding of reality," to engage "respectfully with Indigenous Knowledge and Indigenous Peoples," and to learn "to behave [myself] properly" (p. 8).

Finally, all beings, human or more-than-human, partaking in the project are referred to by their proper name, and for some co-researchers, pseudonyms to protect their privacy. Using the names of Indigenous co-researchers indicates respect (S. Wilson, 2008). Whenever possible, Ktunaxa names are used for more-than-humans, removing them from an it, or thing, designation to a 'who' acknowledgement recognizing kinship "because they are our family" (Kimmerer, 2013, p. 55). Use of Ktunaxa words is developed further below.

Some of the terms used pertain to the vocabulary already established and used by the BC MoE, and the school district:

Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement (AEEA)

The AEEA is an agreement signed between local Indigenous Peoples and a School District. If a School District is on several different Nations' land, then an agreement is negotiated with all the Nations involved. The AEEA consists of an action plan to support Indigenous students specifically. These goals are academic and cultural in nature. The AEEA is reviewed every five years. In Valley School District, the first AEEA was signed in 2005.

Aboriginal Education Department (AbEd)

Most school districts in BC have, as part of their board office structure, a department of Indigenous education. In connection with the AEEA, each school also has an ABED department (of differing size) which promotes the goals of the AEEA for Indigenous students.

Aboriginal Education Support Worker (AESW)

The AESW works within a school's ABED department. Depending on the district, this person may be a support worker or a teacher, full-time or part-time. The AESW acts as a liaison between the Indigenous community, families, students, and the school. The AESW supports students as per the goals of the AEEA, and also works with teachers to provide guidance with understanding protocols and maintaining an open cultural bridge.

Land

"The term "land" includes the earth and its relation, water" (Archibald, 2008, p.73).

The word Land/land varies in accordance with spelling used by different authors. When the word refers to land as commodity or place, or as resource, it is spelled with a lower case l. When Land is defined as representing the web of relationships, cosmology and spirituality, a proper noun is required, thus spelled with a capital L (Styres, 2017, 2018). On a few occasions, land and place are interchangeable as they are referred to by Indigenous authors and Knowledge Holders. I am hoping that, each time, the context will be sufficient to justify the spelling. Much attention was given to this detail in the writing.

More-than-human(s)

Different authors use the expression more-than-human(s) to reflect meaning ranging from representing some or all of plants, animals, soil, water, and rocks, to representing the

interconnectedness that includes humans and more-than-humans. There is an evident lack of consensus within the literature as to the meaning of the term "more-than-humans." I use the expression more-than-humans in conjunction with land (lower case l) and otherwise use the term Land (capital L). At times, I refer to specific beings as being part of the more-than-human world. When referring to more-than-humans, I use the pronoun "they" as a means to acknowledge "Who-ness."

Ktunaxa language

The Ktunaxa language is an isolate language only spoken on ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa, "once it is gone, it is gone forever" (Chung, 2019). Ktunaxa words are introduced throughout this thesis. I follow Breen et al.'s (2019) decision to resist the tendency to other Indigenous languages by representing them in a different font style such as italicizing (p. xii). Instead, Ktunaxa words and phrases are part of the text and English words are in parentheses. Although an English translation is provided, each Indigenous word holds much meaning, "one word is like a zip file, zip disk that crunches all this information into it" (S. Wilson, 2008, p. 112). Web links are available to teach you, the reader, how to pronounce a sample of the words in Appendix C.

Appendix C: Ktunaxa Language Guide

Words are listed as they appear the first time in the thesis.
Words that are underline can be listened to (and learned) through the website First Voices (firstvoices.com)

Chapter 1:

ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa (Ktunaxa land)
Nasuʔkin (Chief)
yamakpaɬ (pileated woodpecker)

Chapter 2:

tak̓a¢ (squirrel)
ʔiɬti·t̓ (lodgepole pine)
ʔa·q̓an¢̓ɬaʔin (among trees)
k̓isɬuɬaɬ (spruce)
’?a-kxam̓is q̓api qapsin’ (all living things)
ʔamak (ground, earth; one could think of land)
¢u·¢u (chickadee)

Chapter 3:

ɬawiyaɬ (huckleberry)
kławła (grizzly bear)
nupqu (black bear)
ʔin¢uk̓ (mouse)
namqatku (racoon)
mi¢kik (maple tree)
himu (ponderosa pine)
xa·xa· (crows)
ʔa·knuqɬuɬam̓ (bald eagle)
ʔak̓is hanq̓u (cattail)

Chapter 4:

?akinmi (A mountain near the school which English name will remain anonymous for the project)
kt̓aɬuʔk ¢upqa (November)
ʔa·kiɬwiy (coeur)
naqam¢u (bitterroot)
kyaq̓ɬa (ducks; mallard)

¢upqa (deer)
qałsa (three)
łu (douglas-fir)
k̓ustit̓ (larch)
kuq̓ukupku (June)

Chapter 5:

k̓itki·k¢ałił (one who is being taught)
ʔakikq̓an¢łaʔin (the forest)
k̓upaqułaqpiʔk (October)
kyanłakłiqułaqpik (heartleaf arnica)
ni¢napku (moose)

Chapter 6

kupi (owl)
skinku¢ (coyote)
ʔi¢̓nat̓ (cedar)

Appendix D: Ktunaxa Creation Story

The Ktunaxa Creation Story
Invest a moment to listen to the Ktunaxa Creation Story as shared by Nasuʔkin Joe Pierre: *https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jtttU5PmCds*

Appendix E: Guiding Questions

Guiding Questions

Dimension: -Journey-

1. What thinking process did you go through in creating the Outdoor Program? What was your purpose at first?
2. How has the Outdoor Program changed the way you are teaching?
3. How can teachers re-educate themselves to start decolonizing their teaching?

Dimension: -Relationships-

1. Tell me a meaningful story about you connecting to Land.
2. We acknowledge our presence on the land and we connect with the land. Has there been a time when you learned from the land? Can you elaborate?
3. How does that experience, and others, lead to what you do as an educator, your approach to the land?

Dimension: -FPPL-

1. What is important to understand about the FPPL as a whole?
2. What does Land mean to you?
3. Can you describe a moment, a time, an event, when Land and the FPPL connected for you?

Dimension: -Land Education-

1. What does it mean to teach on Ktunaxa Territory?
2. What are some of the teachings you have learned from being on Ktunaxa Territory?
3. Knowing that you are on Ktunaxa Territory, what guides your planning?