

Teaching Coloniality: How the Education System Impacts Indigenous and Settler
Relations

by

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my mother, Janelle, and my grandparents, Janet and Freeman. Without having all of you as my guiding light I would never have made it this far. Your words of encouragement, late night phone calls home, and unwavering support are what have pushed me to finish this thesis. Without your love and encouragement this never would have come to fruition and for that, I dedicate this thesis to all of you.

Table of Contents

<i>Teaching Coloniality: How the Education System Impacts Indigenous and Settler Relations</i>	<i>ii</i>
DEDICATION	ii
LIST OF FIGURES	v
ABSTRACT	vi
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	viii
Chapter One: Introduction	1
Literature Review	3
Educational Practices	4
Exploring the Settler Identity.....	9
Nuances of Settler Identity; Settlers of Colour	10
The Perfect Stranger Settler.....	12
Whose Legitimate Knowledge?.....	14
Moving Forward; Unpacking Coloniality.....	15
Decolonization is Not a Metaphor, An Action.....	16
Theoretical Framework	19
The Death of Coloniality; Steps to Rebirth & Liberation	19
The Banking Model of Education.....	21
Problem-Posing Education	22
Limit Situations	24
Chapter Two: Methods	25
First Steps	25
Research Process	26
Limitations	29
Chapter Three: Findings	30
Quantitative Analysis	30
Demographics	30
Identity Terms.....	30
The Exploration of Treaty.....	33
Connecting the Dots: A Qualitative Analysis	34
Chapter Four: Discussion	52
Identity	52
Indigenous Identity	56
Educational Practices	58
Transformative Education	64

<i>Chapter Five: Conclusion</i>	70
<i>References</i>	73
<i>Appendix A- Letter of Approval RSA</i>	76
<i>Appendix B- Letter of Approval RSB</i>	77
<i>Appendix C- Sample Survey</i>	78
<i>Appendix D- Sample Student Interview Questions</i>	82
<i>Appendix E- Sample Educator Interview Questions</i>	83
<i>Appendix F - Demonstrates which terms for Indigenous peoples students identified as being used in the classroom most frequently</i>	84
<i>Appendix G - Students understanding of the terms “Cultural Genocide” and “Genocide of Indigenous Peoples”</i>	85
<i>Appendix H- Shows which medium students are learning about this projects chosen topics</i>	86

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	Demonstrates which terms for Indigenous peoples students identified as being used in the classroom most frequently.....	31
Figure 2	Shows students understanding of the terms “Cultural Genocide” and “Genocide of Indigenous Peoples”.....	32
Figure 3	Shows which medium students are learning about this projects chosen topics.....	34

ABSTRACT

This paper will highlight the findings from my MA Sociology thesis where I explore the intersections of critical pedagogy and Indigenous and settler relations in a post-Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) context. The TRC 94 Calls to Action have informed this study's qualitative and quantitative questions, specifically calls to action numbered six through 12. I have used a mixed-methods approach to survey grade 12 students from two rural Nova Scotia schools and have interviewed both students and educators to gauge their understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing and colonial content. This paper heavily draws on the works of theorists Paulo Freire and Frantz Fanon. Utilizing these theorists work I will be assessing how the education system impacts the relationship between Indigenous and settler peoples. Not only will I explore the secondary school's capacity to impact Indigenous and settler relations but I will also work to identify where the gaps in knowledge exist in order to discern decolonial remedies; remedies that have the ability to inform schooling and educational policies across the province of Nova Scotia.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

- (IBM-SPSS) International Business Machines - Statistical Package for Social Sciences
- (NS) Nova Scotia
- (PI) Primary Investigator
- (REB) Research Ethics Board
- (RSA) Rural School A
- (RSB) Rural School B
- (SES) Socio-Economic Status
- (TRC) Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada
- (UNDRIP) United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

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Chapter One: Introduction

In 2007 the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was unveiled to the world. A declaration which Canada, along with three other white settler nations, voted against (Exner-Pirot, 2018, p.174). Years later, in 2015, The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) released 94 Calls to Action, one of which called for the implementation of UNDRIP, which current Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau committed to that same year. This implementation of UNDRIP began in May of 2016 (Exner-Pirot, 2018, p.176), nearly a decade after UNDRIP's inception.

Seven of the TRC's 94 calls to action focus on education (TRC, 2015). The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples also addresses education, specifically within Article 14 (The United Nations General Assembly, 2007, art. 5). Both institutions recognize the role that neo-colonial states like Canada play in forwarding an assimilationist agenda specifically in education, prone to embedding certain ideals and values, as expressed by Raby; "The hidden curriculum also communicates to students' certain values that reproduce inequalities..." (2012, p.12). Indeed, the education system becomes an extension of processes reproducing hierarchical relationships.

Given the current post-TRC context my research project delves into the possibilities of educational reform at the rural high school level. This thesis examines how Grade 12 students within rural Nova Scotian High Schools are educated on Indigenous ways of knowing and colonialism by carrying out research with both students and educators. This thesis aims to contribute to the growing literature of educational reform, specifically given the context of post-TRC Canada.

This sociological research project employed a mixed methods approach that involved interviewing and surveying grade 12 High School students as well as interviewing their educators, all of whom resided in a rural county in the province of Nova Scotia. The theoretical approaches provided pose questions surrounding a transformative move in relation to educational reform. Although this research project does not answer the question of how to fully decolonize, it does question how to alter the education system in a decolonial context at a micro level in relation to rural Nova Scotia. This will be done in a manner which will contribute to a transformative moment, a moment of liberation for all, also known as an “emancipatory moment” or “moment of emancipation” by educational theorist Paulo Freire (1968). This project can be seen as a part of a transformative moment as it harnesses the ability to impact educational reform in the context of post-TRC Canada. The research question is; What are High School students across Nova Scotia learning about coloniality and Indigenous ways of knowing?, and What knowledge do educators have of those topics?

With these baseline answers in hand, my analysis then asked, ‘What might we draw from these findings in terms of how they fit with Friere’s concept of an “emancipatory moment”, when put into the context of localized rural schools. From there, I make some provisional claims regarding what the findings offer to wider aspects of decolonization of Indigenous / Settler society relations.

The survey employed aimed to gauge students’ understanding of the history of colonization, as well as their exposure to Indigenous ways of knowing, and is supplemented by both student and educator interviews. The goal is to determine what subject matter is covered in relation to Indigenous ways of knowing and colonialism.

Much of the curriculum is diverse as are the ways in which each teacher approaches a subject (Apple, 2000). This exploration is especially significant in this present moment as the Nova Scotian secondary school curriculum has yet to mandate an Indigenous studies class as a graduation requirement. The idea of decolonization and its complexities will be further explored in the Theoretical Frameworks section.

In order to answer my research question, an extensive review of the literature was required. This literary exploration consisted of topics such as identity, in relation to both settler and Indigenous peoples, as well as education and its practices to contextualize the research findings. This is further backed by pedagogical and decolonial theory. The Literature Review is meant to lay the foundation while theory helps us to understand and analyse the research findings, and to recognize how they may contribute to educational reform within rural Nova Scotia (NS). The Findings and Discussion Chapters work to further answer the research question and to show how this could bolster improvements in the educational system at the rural NS level. Thus, working to build bridges between Indigenous and settler peoples (Faries, 2004), even if only at the localized level.

Literature Review

In its current capacity the education system works to mold and shape students through Eurocentric processes (Findlay, 2016, p.69). This system, often taken for granted by white settlers who are privileged by it (Battiste, 2016, p.3), operates in a manner that is difficult to detect due to its insidious nature (Grande, 2007). Although educating settlers will not erase centuries of colonialism it does have the ability to aid in combating problematic ideologies and ignorance (Faries, 2004, p.15). The education system not only impacts the mindsets of settlers, but of Indigenous peoples as well, furthering what

Mi'kmaw scholar Marie Battiste refers to as “cognitive imperialism.” Cognitive imperialism penetrates the mind and convinces people that other forms of knowledge, outside of the dominant discourse, are invaluable (Battiste, 2016, p.2). This cognitive imperialism generates a false sense of superiority among white settlers (Anuik and Gillies, 2012, p.72) while also reproducing racist recognitions into the minds of Indigenous students (Coulthard, 2014, p.41), the details of which will be further explored. This master’s thesis project will analyze to what extent students at the High School level are educated on the history of colonization, as well as Indigenous ways of knowing. By better understanding where Nova Scotian students are located in terms of their understanding, we can begin to explore steps toward improving educational strategies.

Educational Practices

The education system can be problematized in a variety of ways. For one, it reproduces dominant ideologies and eurocentric belief systems (Raby, 2012). These beliefs are reproduced in the school system and begin to be seen as “Official Knowledge”, a term coined by educational theorist Michael Apple (2000) to refer to information that is taken as fact, as the dominant form of knowledge. Official knowledge plays an intricate role in reproducing dominant ideologies (Apple, 2000, p.145). Thus, further marginalizing Indigenous perspectives and knowledge. Tuck and Yang explore how white settler forms of knowledge are counted as fact and therefore sustain unfair structures and hierarchies (2012, p.2). Settler ideals and perspectives work as forms of official knowledge and are incorporated into the school curriculum in both discrete and indiscrete modes. Settler colonial history and ways of knowing take center stage in the education system while other forms of knowledge are seen as optional (Battiste, 2016).

Apple problematizes the education system further by highlighting that it remains a site of not only knowledge reproduction, but also dominant societal roles and morals:

Education itself is an arena in which these ideological conflicts work themselves out. It is one of the major sites in which different groups with distinct political economic, and cultural visions attempt to define what the socially legitimate means and ends of a society are to be (2000, p.67-68).

This arena Apple describes, fueled by official knowledge, shapes our worlds as well as our relationships, and may be considered a location of oppression, prompting further exploration of re-colonizing effects it may engender. This research aims to explore how this arena is educating students on colonialism and Indigenous ways of knowing, in the context of rural Nova Scotia schools. By better understanding this arena and the ideological shifts it may reproduce, one can better understand the greater means and ends of “Canadian” society at large.

While institutions encode dominant belief patterns, actors in these institutions may be implicated in this encoding. For instance, teachers have the ability to teach each subject differently and in different ways, even if something is laid out in the curriculum, for “We cannot assume that what is ‘in’ the text is actually taught. Nor can we assume that what is taught is actually learned” (Apple, 2000, p.58). This further cements the importance of student input in what and how they choose to learn, as each class atmosphere will differ depending on the students and teachers.

By taking both a qualitative and quantitative approach to data collection this research project allows for a broader, more vibrant picture of the state of the Nova Scotian education system. For as we know, just because something is in the curriculum does not mean it is taught (Apple, 2000), further highlighting this

projects importance in evaluating what knowledge is taught and understood, and what knowledge is omitted.

By conducting one survey with approximately 50 participants more information can be quantifiable and therefore makes it easier to discern the gaps in student understanding. Conducting interviews helps to bridge the gaps that may exist in the quantitative research and aims to encompass a holistic and detailed picture of both student and educator experience, something that is only achievable by including qualitative methodologies. Both methodologies combined work to explain the current state of knowledge that rural Nova Scotian students possess in relation to this project's themes of coloniality and Indigenous ways of knowing.

Indeed, Apple further explains that texts make decisive claims about history, morality, and truthfulness (2000, p.117). If forms of knowledge, history, and truth are not included, they may then be discounted. Battiste (1998) touches on this missing piece by mentioning that, "Yet we [Indigenous peoples] are aware that what is defined as knowledge in schools and curricula is not congruent with our conceptualization, and so we must find ways to schools and texts" (p.24). This lack of Indigenous knowledges and historical truths can lead to these ways of being and knowing being discounted, further cementing Battistes point on the need for Indigenous peoples to find a way into these spaces of education. It can then be discerned that exploring the texts is not enough, further reiterating the importance of exploring the current state of NS students' knowledge in relation to the project's themes of Indigenous forms of knowledge, as well as coloniality.

Cognitive imperialism and official knowledge work in tandem to one another; with white-settler colonial ideals becoming official knowledge. As was previously argued the impacts of cognitive imperialism can have devastating consequences, specifically for Indigenous students. Indoctrination with racist rhetoric through neo-colonial institutions leads to "...[Indigenous] individuals with low self-esteem, depression, alcohol and drug abuse, and violent behaviours directed both inward against the self and outward toward others" (Coulthard, 2014, p.42). Neo-colonialism can be understood simply as being a new form of colonization that has taken on new forms, as it needs to be remembered that; "...despite constant assertions within settler national mythologies that colonialism is over, settler nations are not *post*-colonial" (Mackey, 2016, p.21), indeed, they are *neo*-colonial.

This process of assimilation through the education system has been around since the inception of Indian Residential and Day Schools (Kim et. al., 2015, p.122). Although residential schooling no longer exists, the current education system continues to oppress and discount Indigenous students and educate them in westernized forms of knowledge (Neeganagwedgin, 2013, p.21). The goal of these institutions is to posit settler colonial values as universal and natural. These learned privileges of white settlerhood last into adulthood and permeate further relations, specifically Indigenous and settler relations. This process of reproducing harmful stereotypes have been occurring for generations, as indicated in Susan Dion's account;

When we went to school, our teachers taught us lessons about the Indians(sic) of Canada. Lessons about native people who lived a long time ago, hunters, fishers, and gatherers who traveled by canoe, carried tomahawks, and wore war paint reproduce a discourse of the romantic mythical Other (2016, p.469).

This system works in othering Indigenous people, while also recreating the idea that Indigenous peoples are delegitimized. As discussed by Stock and Grover “It has been well established that historically, formal education has been biased in favour of Eurocentric content and forms of knowledge and excluded Indigenous content and forms of knowledge...” (2013, p.632). Indigenous knowledge and perspectives are excluded from the schooling narrative and, have the ability to reproduce stereotypes, reinforcing the need to explore the current schooling narrative in rural Nova Scotian schools. Past studies have pointed out instances of oppression and lack of Indigenous ways of knowing in schools, yet the length to which this is performed in rural Nova Scotian schools remains unseen. Prompting an investigation into what the current narrative is teaching students and what it is excluding, specifically in post-TRC times.

Past studies have found that the topic of race in the classroom makes many white settler teachers uncomfortable (Riley & Ungerleider, 2012). This could explain why resistance presently exists around transformative education practices from teachers themselves (Riley & Ungerleider, 2012, p.306). Teachers require assistance and training to address issues of oppression and racism (Vass, 2013). Educators can “begin to include and value Indigenous content and perspectives as legitimate” (Stock & Grover, 2013, p.632), and by doing so foster new relations, as touched on by Faries;

...schools have a vital role in promoting awareness by providing the students with accurate knowledge about Indigenous peoples. 'Teaching children about First Nations people will have a profound impact on building bridges between First Nations and Canadian society (2004, p. 11).

Building bridges can help to shape reform in the education system itself. Which is why this study aims to investigate where the gaps exist in understanding; by knowing the gaps in knowledge it will aid in informing educational reform in rural Nova Scotia.

Exploring the Settler Identity

Identity is a key concept in exploring both coloniality and Indigenous ways of knowing. A person's identity identifies where they stand in this relationship of Indigenous and settler peoples. Settlers play a role in educational reform, which is why it is vital to explore degrees of settler identity so as to better contextualize findings and build bridges between Indigenous and settler peoples.

What is a settler, and who counts as one? Tuck and Yang define settlers as those who “make Indigenous land their new home and source of capital” (2012, p.5). Yet defining who is, and who is not a settler can easily become a futile task, as it is clouded with uncertainty, as expressed by Corntassel and colleagues, “there is ambiguity in regard to what is meant by ‘settler’” (2014, p.13). It should be noted that there are uncertainties with the concept of white settler identity itself, as there is a history of white settler hierarchies. This hierarchy was especially seen in immigration practices prior to WWII as some racial groups were prioritized over others. Indeed, this hierarchy also worked to place those who can be seen as “Euro-settlers” at the top of this hierarchy, with other white settlers falling behind (Mackey, 1999).

Although there is some confusion, one thing that can be known for certain is that being a settler means occupying stolen land (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p.7). It should also be noted that there is no one settler, as “not all settlers are created equal” (Corntassel et. al., 2014, p.6). There exist large differences between white settlers and settlers of colour. Even in the subgroup of settlers of colour, there is even more to unpack. Although both may occupy stolen land the history of this reality has deep divides. For instance, white settlers are descendants of colonizers, Europeans who merely came to Turtle Island

(Canada) to exploit the land for mercantile-capitalist ventures. However, people of colour have different identities, which will be explored in greater detail to aid in better understanding the research findings.

Nuances of Settler Identity; Settlers of Colour

Historical context plays a role in defining settler identities. For instance, a subgroup of Black settlers were brought to Canada via the slave trade. Wolfe, an anthropologist whose research unpacks settler colonial societies, explores this and the relation to coloniality by noting that “The fact that enslaved people immigrated against their will...does not alter the structural fact that their presence, however involuntary, was part of the process of Native dispossession” (2013, p.259). Although Black settlers may not have chosen to settle here the reality remains that they are on stolen land. As Cornthassel et. al. discusses, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, and more, the fact is that; “all non-Indigenous peoples residing in settler states may be complicit in settlement, making us all settlers” (2014, p.6). Although non-Indigenous peoples in settler states share the same identity, (i.e. the identity of settler), their relation to colonialism all differ greatly. For instance, colonialism benefits white settlers while disenfranchising minority groups.

Colonialism itself has a history of pitting Indigenous and Black bodies against one another (Leroy, 2016). The history of colonialism and slavery are intrinsically linked; Leroy (2016) highlights the importance of these ties by noting that “The projects of slavery and colonialism have never been concerned with which came first, or which is more elemental-they have in fact thrived on the slippages and ambiguities of their relationship to one another” (p.5). Leroy also mentions that both Indigenous Studies as

well as Black Studies often fail to recognize the intimate relationship held between colonialism and slavery (2016, p.2). Although the detailed history of slavery is beyond the scope of this thesis, it will be touched on so as to understand its historical significance in relation to neo-colonialism. Coloniality therefore cannot be analyzed and explored without recognizing the intrinsic role slavery, and ongoing racism, has played in its development. These considerations will be fundamental in building a foundation of historical contextualization and knowledge.

Freedom for both Indigenous and Black peoples has been historically framed in such a way that it can only exist for one group if it is sacrificed for the other. As an example, Black slaves were used as a form of colonial violence against Indigenous peoples. One excerpt of a slave who fought in two wars against Indigenous peoples mentioned that when fighting he thought that “he would be rewarded with his liberty. He was not. In his final years, Roberts came to the conclusion that he had more in common with Indigenous victims of colonial violence than with the whites who promised him freedom” (Leroy, 2016, p.1). Black bodies have been used throughout history to continue colonial violence against Indigenous peoples, while oppressing Black populations themselves. For white colonists it was a “two birds one stone” solution, that kept the two groups divided. This divide can still be seen today in academia, where “there is a need for scholarship that ends practices of segregation and attempts to explore the complex histories of interactions between peoples of colour and Aboriginal peoples” (Lawrence and Dua, 2011, p. 254). When exploring anti-black racism and neo-colonialism the overlapping relations of both colonial and slave violence should be a key part of analyses. Black settlers are not the only subgroup of oppressed settlers; refugees and recent

immigrants also have an interesting relationship with neo-colonialism, knowingly or not. Indeed, settlers of colour have a different proximity to power than that of white settlers.

Newcomer settlers to Canada are especially indoctrinated with nationalistic and multicultural rhetoric to obscure the history of colonization which further clouds Canada's colonial background, as Yu (2011) mentions:

Many new arrivals in Canada received very little information about the history of Aboriginal people and, in particular, of the devastating effects of governmental policies such as residential schooling; therefore, through no intention of their own, they [new immigrants] were often left only with stereotypes and the negative images of popular culture as the basis for their knowledge about Aboriginal people (p.301).

Although some settlers of colour may believe in multiculturalism, the reality is that *all* settlers of colour are impacted by racist systems, they do not have the same privileges as white settlers.

The Perfect Stranger Settler

Susan Dion (2016) explores a facet of settler identity that she deems "the perfect stranger," in which settlers perceive themselves to be unaware of or uneducated on colonial issues because they are not Indigenous. As Dion writes:

In my conversations with teachers and teacher candidates people tell me "but I can't teach this content, I know nothing about Indigenous people, I have no friends who are Indigenous, I didn't grow up near a reserve, I didn't learn anything when I was in school. I am a perfect stranger to Indigenous people" (2016, p.470).

This identity of the perfect stranger leads to becoming immobilized, as they do not know "enough" about Indigeneity, with Dion (2016) citing some teachers saying they did not even know that Indigenous authors existed. This thinking of "perfect stranger" is especially harmful as it relieves settlers of their responsibilities; "To be a perfect stranger to Indigenous people and Indigenous issues is to absolve oneself of responsibility" (Dion,

2016, p.470). Settlers should not remove themselves from these issues, for “as the commissioners of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission have offered to Canada, everyone is now responsible for forging a better relationship with Aboriginal people in the present and in the future” (Battiste, 2016, p.8). Indeed, post-TRC Canada is supposedly committed to bettering these relationships, further prompting explorations into institutions like the Nova Scotia education system and its use of Indigenous ways of knowing and coloniality.

To be a settler researching contentious topics can lead to second-guessing oneself and questioning if this is a sphere in which a settler belongs, further relating to being a “perfect stranger” to these topic areas. This relates to the idea of settler guilt touched on by Corntassel and colleagues, who note that “The term [settler] can be paralyzing for some non-Indigenous people who are absorbed by guilt, or it can mobilize action” (2014, p.14). It is important for settlers to acknowledge their privilege and role in colonialism and to then be catapulted into action. Taking small steps – such as working to decolonize the academy, in rural Nova Scotia for instance – leads to big change (Anderson, 2016). Mackey (2016) in particular suggests that land rights and Indigenous sovereignty are intrinsically linked to decolonization efforts. To decolonize and Indigenize society as a whole will be a lengthy process, one of contention and conflict, as this;

...will likely require creativity, respect, alert vulnerability, restraint and learning from each other about how to ‘treaty as a verb.’ It will also require the hard work of learning how to paddle a metaphorical canoe without crashing into our neighbours’ paths and taking over their canoes (Mackey, 2016, 191).

Here Mackey references the Two-Row Wampum Belt agreement, where Indigenous and settler peoples are meant to paddle down the same river, but to respect each other’s own canoes. Asch (2015) also discusses Two-Row Wampum and understands that settler and

Indigenous peoples are indeed sharing space and are therefore intrinsically linked (p.113). To transform settlers can “...first of all decide to wake up, put on their thinking caps and stop playing the irresponsible game of Sleeping Beauty” (Fanon, 1961, p.62), or as seen in the realm of education as the “perfect stranger” (Dion, 2016). This transformation can involve listening to Elders and/or “finding a place to stand” in relation to one’s identity, (Asch, 2015, p.451), and learning about Indigenous ways of knowing and Canada’s history of colonialism.

To decolonize is to be awoken. It means transforming identities, and educational systems, it means changing the reality for the oppressed, who all too often can only dream;

I dream I am jumping, swimming, running, and climbing. I dream I burst out laughing. I am leaping across a river and chased by a pack of cars that never catches up with me. During colonization the colonized subject frees himself night after night between nine in the evening and six in the morning (Fanon, 1961, p.15).

To decolonize is no longer to be dreaming, to decolonize, is to be free.

Whose Legitimate Knowledge?

The education system itself plays an insidious role in colonization efforts. Not only are students and parents ignorant of the education systems role in coloniality, but many of the teachers, assistants, and administrative staff are as well (Bissel, 2016, p.5). By identifying the gaps in knowledge one can understand where educators, students, and the education system as a whole, stand in relation to Indigenous ways of knowing, and colonial issues.

One way the education system is used as a colonial arrangement is by reinforcing settler-colonial ideals as legitimate knowledge. As Pictou (2019) states, it is important to

question the motives behind this legitimate knowledge, and to ask who this is for and who it excludes. Neo-colonial discourse is taken as legitimate knowledge while Indigenous ways of knowing are seen as optional, or not worth mentioning (Battiste, 2016). Neeganagwedgin argues that teachers are accomplices in this process, who, “much like some of the missionaries and nuns decades ago, frequently discount Aboriginal people and deliberately strive to maintain European dominance” (2013, p.21). By discounting colonial history, as well as Indigenous ways of knowing, settler students are left with a false sense of entitlement, while Indigenous students are left with negative self-images; both of which carry on into adulthood (Findlay, 2016).

Moving Forward; Unpacking Coloniality

As explored previously, decolonization is not a singular idea with an obvious plan of action. Both the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) and the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) have laid out actions and recommendations on how to resist coloniality. Although the Canadian Government has committed themselves to both UNDRIP and the TRC, they fail to do so in a meaningful way. Pictou (2019), citing Diabo, mentions that the Canadian Government twists UNDRIP in an unfair manner as a means to achieve their own goals.

In fact, at the time of writing, the government of Canada has failed to adhere to UNDRIP and has forcibly removed Indigenous peoples from their land in the Wet’suwet’en land struggle (Sterritt, 2019). One recommendation put forward by the TRC that is especially interrelated to the institution of the education system mentions that;

...The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015:4) advocates all students have a right to know about treaties, the Indian Act, the development of

the reserve system, the history of residential schools, and importantly the ongoing implications of this history for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada today (Dion, 2016, p.469).

This call to action is yet to be realized, despite the Liberal Government stating their commitment to fully implementing both UNDRIP and the TRC in partnership with Indigenous communities (Exner-Pirot, 2018).

Issues addressed by the TRC and UNDRIP are also unpacked in new guises, with Stock and Grover (2013), citing Cornthassel in suggesting that Canadians must not see colonialism and its consequences as “Indigenous issues”, rather they need to be understood as “colonial issues” (p.630-631). Colonial issues involve both the oppressor and the oppressed, whereas by understanding something as an “Indigenous issue” absolves settlers from any responsibility in bettering relations.

Decolonization is Not a Metaphor, An Action

To counteract the colonial arrangements in the education system will involve a change in the current eurocentric hierarchal approaches that are seen in educational institutions, as is explored by Tanaka;

Learning is complex and requires a kind of trust in the learner that is unfamiliar in Eurocentric educational thought. To take care of our souls, we do well to embrace what Freire calls the ‘death of the professor’ (in Vella, 2002, p.20) and let the learner find his or her own way (2016, p.23).

Indeed, focusing on a more holistic approach will aid in “nourishing the learning spirit” in students (Anuik and Gillies, 2012, p.63).

A variety of Indigenous scholars such as Battiste, Simpson, and Coulthard have named ways in which we can all do better; it is time for settler society to listen. Battiste (2016) speaks out on ways to transform the education system in the context of the Mi’kmaq people. She mentions that; “Mi’kmaq and Atlantic Canadian educators need to

rewrite the curriculum so that all our children understand the importance of the treaty process and how it has created the baseline of democracy and respect for the land” (Battiste, 2016, p.9). To understand and respect the land is to work towards decolonization, which is why Treaty education is increasingly important (Battiste, 2016). Battiste (2016) also highlights that this is not just the job of educators, but of politicians and policy makers as well, specifically within the Atlantic Canadian context. Although this project does not extend to all of Atlantic Canada, it does strive to contribute to the discussion of proper educational reform within rural Nova Scotia, specifically in relation to the TRC calls to action.

Treaty talk is indeed meant to be part of educational reform. Beyond education on Treaty, some scholars, like Simpson, call for the relinquishing of land. Simpson (2014) expresses that the land must become pedagogy, which means land-based learning and community learning. In the story told by Simpson, Kwezens, a young Nishnaabeg girl, learns about the importance of the land, relations with animals, and nature through her own exploration, but also through learning with her community, her mother, and her grandmothers. The story of Kwezens learning about sap and the sugar bush embraces land as pedagogy and is unimaginable in the current “cells and bells” (Pesquera, 2015) framework of the education system. Simpson demonstrates how Kwezens learning could never have happened in the current neo-colonial model when she asked:

What if the university got ahold of the sugar bush and made Kwezens get SSHRC funding before she could go out in the field? What if she was home reading the course outline of someone else’s learning objectives? What if she never gave the sap to her doodoom but instead went to her computer to type up her research report? What if Kwezens motivation for learning wasn’t her own curiosity and joy, but recognition within the state-run education system? What then? (2014, p.9).

What would have happened to Kwezens under our current eurocentric model of educating? This passage demonstrates how without a learner's own curiosity, joy, and community guiding them, a holistic approach to learning, to nourishing the learning spirit, would never happen. All of which points to why Simpson epistemologically, ontologically, and spiritually believes in land as pedagogy. For the land to become pedagogy the "...academy must make a conscious decision to become a decolonizing force in the intellectual lives of Indigenous peoples by joining us in dismantling settler colonialism and actively protecting the source of our knowledge - Indigenous land." (Simpson, 2014, p.22). Not only should Indigenous scholars be listened to, but as should the students.

As Tuck and Yang (2012) argue, decolonization is "not a metaphor for other things we want to do to improve our societies and schools" (Tuck and Yang, 2012, p.2), but is unsettling, and does not have a synonym (Tuck and Yang, 2012). The same applies to efforts to decolonize the education system. It is not enough to give a land acknowledgement and leave it at that, as unsettling work should be done. Although it is important to centre Indigenous ways of knowing in the curriculum, this cannot be the only step towards transformation. Anuik and Gillies (2012) highlight that implementing Indigenous content is not the same as carrying out a decolonial shifting of pedagogy. Land rights can be recognized, Indigenous voices heard, and the history of coloniality unveiled, yet Fanon "told us in 1963 that decolonizing the mind is the first step, not the only step toward overthrowing colonial regimes" (Tuck and Yang, 2012, p.19). Indeed, to counteract colonial arrangements commitment to the ongoing process of decolonization and working within the context of a post-TRC and UNDRIP Canada, is crucial.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical frameworks of this study include the works of pedagogical theorist Paulo Freire and decolonizing theorist Frantz Fanon. These theoretical perspectives will aid in understanding how neo-colonial institutions reproduce oppressive and colonial ideals. The point is to recognize that colonialism has no end date, rather it has only evolved into new forms, as Grande (2007) points out:

The demon to be purged is the specter of colonialism. As Indigenous scholars, we live within, against, and outside of its constant company, witnessing its various manifestations as it shape-shifts its way into everything from research and public policy to textbooks and classrooms (p.330).

Chapters Three and Four focus on analyzing the shape-shifting ways of neo-colonialism within rural Nova Scotian classrooms so insidious and ever-changing ways of neo-colonialism can be understood.

The Death of Coloniality; Steps to Rebirth & Liberation

The ways neo-colonialism functions can be difficult to detect due to its shape-shifting abilities. Freire (1968) focuses on how education itself is a location of oppression, and he further explores how this structure can be challenged. Freire argues that a moment of transformation, also seen as freedom, or educational reform in the context of this project, is necessary. This moment of transformation can be seen as decolonization. Freire highlights how this will be like childbirth:

Liberation is thus a childbirth, and a painful one. The man or woman who emerges is a new person, viable only as the oppressor-oppressed contradiction is superseded by the humanization of all people. Or to put it another way, the solution of this contradiction is born in the labor which brings into the world this new being: no longer oppressor nor longer oppressed, but human in the process of achieving freedom (1968, p. 49).

This moment can also be seen as emancipation, as it is liberating for all. The larger project of dismantling white settler society, its institutions, and the capitalistic agenda will be no small feat. It will in fact, as Freire mentioned, be lengthy as well as difficult and painful. Incorporating the works of Freire not only allows for better understanding of the negative consequences of excluding certain knowledge sets but it also works to inform research on potential next steps in this transformative process at the micro level in rural Nova Scotia. Freire problematizes the education system and he also works to address possible changes, something that will aid in analyzing the data set and in informing findings, discussions, and contributions.

On the macro level this emancipatory moment will take decades, and possibly centuries to develop. To Freire (1968) this emancipatory moment means freedom, liberation, and breaking away from the oppressor/oppressed relationship to rid oneself of dehumanization (p.48-49).

Decolonial theorist Frantz Fanon also focuses on this idea of a transformative move but in a radically different way: “The arrival of the colonist signified syncretically the death of Indigenous society, cultural lethargy, and petrification of the individual. For the colonized, life can only materialize from the rotting cadaver of the colonist” (1961, p.50). Fanon’s depiction of this transformation is harsher than Freire’s, but the meaning remains the same. In the context of this project the “rotting cadaver” can be understood as the current colonial education system. “Death” or “childbirth” can be seen in today’s context as transformative move to decolonization, or as educational reform within Nova Scotian classrooms. Although some may resist this decolonizing effort, the reality is that it cannot be stopped (Fanon, 1961).

The Banking Model of Education

When analyzing the process of reaching an emancipatory moment it is important to understand that education is intrinsically linked to such processes (Freire, 1968, p.138). By better understanding education practices one can take steps towards educational reform and liberation. The banking model of education fails to support liberation (Freire, 1968) which is why further investigation is required.

The banking model of education proposes that education involves a subject-object relationship, with the educator being the subject while students are the objects—“receptacles” that need to be “filled” (Freire, 1968). What students are being filled with is official knowledge (Apple, 2000), which instills hegemonic white settler norms and beliefs (Freire, 1968).

Freire (1968) touches on detrimental impacts of filling students with such knowledge and mentions how the oppressed are never called the “oppressed” in these instances, they have different yet equally as harmful identities inflicted upon them by the oppressors themselves: “‘those people’ or ‘the blind and envious masses’ or ‘savages’ or ‘natives’ or ‘subversives’) who are disaffected, who are ‘violent’, ‘barbaric’, ‘wicked’ or ‘ferocious’ when they react to the violence of the oppressors” (p.56). Although these institutions do not outright utilize these terms, they do not have to. This is especially harmful and connects to cognitive imperialism. Cognitive imperialism also impacts the minds of the oppressed, as further explored by Freire:

Self-deprecation is another characteristic of the oppressed, which derives from their internalization of the opinion the oppressors hold of them. So often do they hear that they are good for nothing, know nothing and are incapable of learning anything- that they are sick, lazy, unproductive-that in the end they become convinced of their own unfitness (1968, p.63).

This furthers the colonizing process by ensuring that the oppressed are overrun with circumstances that oppress them. This is the system that is reproduced, that convinces the oppressed that they are deserving of this treatment, of this way of life, further ensuring that it is difficult to revolt or fight back as the fear of freedom is what holds them back (Freire, 1968).

Freire's proposition is that these ideologies and ways of thinking are taught in order to create adapted individuals who are more docile, and better suited to adhere to white settler society, as will be explored within Chapters Three and Four:

The educated individual is the adapted person, because she or he is better 'fit' for the world. Translated into practice, this concept is well suited to the purpose of the oppressors, who's tranquility rests on how well people fit the world the oppressors have created, and how little they question it (Freire, 1968, p.76).

The banking model of education ensures educated individuals are best fit for a world of oppression. Continuing this process through the education system evokes apathy and complacency in students and educators, making it easier for the colonial project to continue. Cherry-McDaniel, a professor through the Michigan University School of Education, argues that educators aid in this process as the first line of defense in maintaining colonial systems, suggesting teachers are "as deadly to students as snipers" (2016, p.42).

Problem-Posing Education

The term Problem-posing education, coined by Freire (1968), is liberating education, it is education that is led by questions, and dialogue. Indeed, problem-posing education is the antithesis of the banking model, as it is liberation education. Problem-posing education encourages dialogue and equality, while inspiring critical thinkers. It leads to asking questions, to posing problems, together; both the student and teacher

(Freire, 1968, p.109). Liberation education works towards reconciliation (Freire, 1968, p.72), as it moves away from the subject-object relationship towards a relationship of equals (Freire, 1968); something that the present study incorporates. Not only are students and educators seen as equals, but they each become student and teacher simultaneously; the educator recognizes that they too can learn from the students (Freire, 1968), and that they are not the only bringer of knowledge, leading to what Freire calls “student-teachers” and “teacher-students.”

Dialogue is a crucial component of problem-posing education, for there is no revolution without dialogue (Freire, 1968, p.128). Dialogue is built on a foundation of love and trust (Freire, 1968, p.89), and once this is developed only then can student and educator learn from and teach one another. The findings and discussion piece of this project explores the dialogues taking place in the chosen rural Nova Scotian schools. Dialogue is an aspect of liberating education (Freire, 1968, p.139), which is why it is a key part of the problem-posing model. In this problem-posing education where dialogue occurs students are no longer meek, docile listeners and are instead shaped into critical thinkers (Freire, 1968, p.81). Critical thinking is key to emancipation and decolonization, or at the micro level, to educational reform in the selected Nova Scotian schools.

The problem-posing model cannot serve the interests of the oppressor, highlighting this model’s importance and why the banking model will inevitably be rejected in this transformative process (Freire, 1968, p.79). Dialogue, reflection, and critical thinking are pillars in the pursuit of freedom and change, especially when aiming to create change within the NS education system at the rural level, as dialogue in this context has the ability to inform meaningful change.

Limit Situations

In problem-posing education student and teacher explore learning together, there is not a subject object-relationship, there is no lecturing, but critical thinking. This critical thinking, this problem-posing, leads to themes being generated in conjuncture with both teacher-students and student-teachers, as they are both learning and teaching to and from one another (Freire, 1968). Because of this dialogue new themes are constantly being generated and with these themes and critical thinking comes new limit-situations. In this instance, the banking model of education can be seen as a limiting situation for students. Exploring the potential for educational reform at the rural Nova Scotia level, can be seen as a limit-act as it is working to overcome the aforementioned limit-situation.

Chapter Two: Methods

This masters research project used a mixed-methods approach. The quantitative portion involved surveying students to gauge their understanding of the history of colonization and their knowledge about Indigenous ways of knowing. The qualitative method engaged students and educators through interviews to pick up themes that may have been missed in the quantitative process. As we have seen from Apple (2000) and Freire (1968), incorporating inclusion and anti-oppressive frameworks into the curriculum does not necessarily mean that it is taught or understood. Although a plethora of research exists calling on schools to Indigenize (Battiste, 2016, Stock & Grover 2013, Dion 2016, Vass 2013), scant research has examined where student awareness is now, specifically in Nova Scotian High Schools. Along with students, it was crucial to engage educators in this research, as they can be seen as the bringers of knowledge in the current banking model of education used in mainstream public schooling.

First Steps

Prior to data collection, it was necessary to build a foundation of knowledge and awareness to inform the development of survey and interview questions. The Theoretical Framework section was written before analyzing the data, to grasp the theories that would be used to examine the findings. Survey questions were created in collaboration with Indigenous scholarship gained from my exploration of the literature, and from Indigenous scholars such as Dr. Margaret Robinson and Dr. Sherry Pictou. As the primary researcher I created a draft survey that was developed further through meetings and communications with Dr. Robinson and Dr. Pictou. These survey questions focused on understanding what knowledge of colonial history students from rural Nova Scotian schools possess.

Secondly, the survey worked to collect data on students' exposure and understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing.

Research Process

This project (REB2019-4764) was reviewed and approved by the Dalhousie University Research Ethics Board (REB). Given the sensitive nature of my research project, and since most of the participants are considered children, the review process was lengthy and intricate. After submitting to the REB three times my proposal was approved. I reached out to four Nova Scotia schools, contacting principals and educators. Two rural Nova Scotia High Schools were the site of data collection. Rural School A (RSA) had a population of approximately 200 students across grades 7-12 while Rural School B (RSB) had a population of approximately 1000 students from grades 9-12. Letters of approval from participating schools can be found in Appendices A and B.

Between the two schools 45 surveys were conducted and nine interviews were completed, with 18 surveys conducted at Rural School A, and 27 conducted at the larger school, Rural School B. Three student interviews and two educator interviews were completed at RSA, and three student interviews and one educator interview were completed at RSB. I conducted recruitment myself, focusing on Grade 12 students as they are at the end of their secondary school career. Students below Grade 12 were excluded from the study. Surveys were conducted first and took place within the student's classroom with the teacher absent to ensure that no feeling of supervision from the educator was in place. As was seen in the theory section there currently exists a subject-object relationship under the banking model of education in contemporary

educational settings. The decision of having the teacher absent was made in an effort to remove the subject-object dynamic that presently exists.

I then introduced myself and gave a brief overview of my project. Compensation in the form of Dalhousie University “swag” was distributed, and each student had the chance to enter their ballot into a draw for a larger prize of Dalhousie University merchandise. Once these were distributed, I handed out ethics forms and surveys and discussed the consent forms with students. Finally, I asked students if they had any questions before allowing them to begin the survey. The survey took 15-25 minutes to complete and consisted of 16 questions (see Appendix C). Prior to the start of the survey students were made aware that their grade was in no way impacted by participation or refusal. Students were identified as potential interviews immediately following the survey, as those interested filled out a separate form at the end of the survey.

Once surveys were complete, I collected them in a secure envelope. I also collected student ballots and separate forms for those interested in being interviewees. I then returned to the office assigned to me at each school and went through the separate forms to see how much interest was expressed in completing an interview. At RSA three students wanted to be part of the interviewing process, meaning none had to be excluded. At RSB more than 3 students expressed interest, so interviewees were chosen based on scheduling availability. I conducted three student interviews at each school. Students were called to the office and an interview time was set. Interviews took place in secure and private rooms at each school.

Interview guides consisted of five questions and interviews ranged in length from 15 to 35 minutes (see Appendix D). Interview questions allowed for a deeper dive into

what and how students were learning, and for a look at which educational models were implemented in each school. These questions helped to explore educational models and the power dynamics and relationships that they reproduce within rural Nova Scotian schools. Educators were also interviewed; their interview guide consisted of similar questions and took between 15-30 minutes (see Appendix E). Those selected had expressed interest in being interviewed when I first contacted each school. Prior to beginning the interview each student and teacher participant were given compensation in the form of Dalhousie University Merchandise and a ticket to enter in the draw for the main prize of a Dalhousie University sweater and mug. Each interview was audio recorded and pseudonyms were used. I discussed the consent form with each participant before the interview began. Upon completion of surveys and interviews at both schools I drew from the submitted ballots and the prize was awarded to a participant at RSB.

I immersed myself in the data by transcribing each interview, analyzing tone of voice, terms used, and the amount of detail given in each interview. This involved keeping the paused and verbal space-fillers such as “um” and “uh,” as a way to show where participants paused to recall, or had difficulty remembering, or seemed nervous.

I conducted a content analysis by examining how students described the curriculum’s engagement with settler colonialism and Indigenous issues. I related this analysis to my research questions: What are High School students across Nova Scotia learning about coloniality and Indigenous ways of knowing?; and further, What do educators know about these topics? I then coded the survey answers using a phenomenological approach to understand how people talk about settler colonial issues at the rural Nova Scotian high school level.

I used IBM SPSS software to run frequencies to determine the percentage of students responding affirmatively to questions. For example, I calculated the percentage of students who had heard about the topic of Residential Schools discussed in class between grades 10 and 12. By using a mixed-methods approach, I aimed to assess rural Nova Scotian grade 12 students' understanding of the chosen topics while incorporating educators' perspectives and experiences. Students' understanding of terms and/or events was determined by utilizing knowledge gained from working with Indigenous academics and from the Literature Review. Students answers were categorized according to whether students understood, were unsure, or did not understand the term/event listed.

Themes identified in the data included; exploration of treaty, curriculum content, teaching methods, student interests, identity, and transformative education.

Limitations

This research was conducted without funding and with a limited time window, which impacted the reach of the project. Due to the small sample size my findings may not apply to all rural schools in Nova Scotia. These findings may also not capture the urban school experience in the province of Nova Scotia, as I had originally planned to collect data at four Nova Scotian schools (two rural and two urban). Due to communication difficulties with administrators I was not granted access to urban schools.

Chapter Three: Findings

This project worked to unveil the state of rural Nova Scotian schools, highlighting the knowledge both students and educators possess in relation to Indigenous ways of knowing and coloniality. These findings offer a glimpse at educational processes that are current and ongoing within the selected schools.

Quantitative Analysis

Demographics

After much exploration of identity in earlier chapters, it has become clear that identity matters. Which is why demographics were incorporated into survey questions. All 45 student participants were born between 2000-2002 and were in Grade 12. Overall, 6.5% of participants self-identified as Indigenous, only slightly higher than the provincial percentage of 5.7% (Statistics Canada, 2017), so Indigenous participation in this study reflects the general demographics of Nova Scotia. In terms of educators, all three of my study participants identified as white. When it came to students at RSA there was one student who identified as Indigenous, one that identified as having been an immigrant from South Korea, and all others identified as being of white descent.

The standard deviation between the two schools ranged from 0% for some criteria up to 51.05% for others, reflecting the large difference in knowledge between the two schools.

Identity Terms

Question four of the survey asked, “Of the terms above, please list the three you have heard the most frequently in the classroom.” *Figure One* highlights terms students

identified as being used most in a classroom setting. ‘Aboriginal’ was used most frequently, followed by the terms ‘First Nations’ and ‘Indigenous.’

Variable	Rural School A	Rural School B	Mean
Indigenous	50%	51.90%	50.95%
First Nation	83.30%	74.10%	78.70%
Inuit	22.20%	3.70%	12.95%
Aboriginal	83.30%	77.80%	80.55%
Mi’kmaq	33.30%	59.30%	46.30%
Indian	27.80%	0%	13.90%
Métis	16.70%	7.40%	12.05%

Figure One.

Question Five asked students about their exposure to the terms ‘Settler’ and ‘Colonizer.’ Overall 60.2% of students had heard the term settler in the classroom, with RSA students identifying this 24.1% more than RSB students. Regarding ‘Colonizer,’ 34.3% of students heard the term used within the classroom. At both schools, 37.1% of students correctly defined the term ‘Settler’ and 26.9% of students correctly defined the term Colonizer. It is interesting to note that while 60.2% of students had heard the term Settler in class, only 26.9% could correctly define the term. The term Colonizer had even less exposure in the classroom, yet the understanding of this term did not lag far behind that of Settler with only a 10.2% difference.

Participants were asked if they had heard the phrase ‘Genocide of Indigenous peoples’ and/or ‘Cultural Genocide’ discussed in the classroom. The schools differed significantly here. When asked if students had heard the phrase ‘Genocide of Indigenous People’ in the classroom 66.7% of students from Rural School A identified that they had,

compared to 22.2% of students from Rural School B. When asked about cultural genocide the percentage grew, with 94.4% of students from Rural School A having heard and discussed cultural genocide compared to 22.2% of those from Rural School B, resulting in a standard deviation of 51.05%, one of the highest in the study.

Students' understanding of these terms reflected their exposure to them in the classroom, as 55.6% of students from RSA correctly understood the genocide of Indigenous peoples (GenocideOfIndigDefUnderstood) compared to 3.7% of students from Rural School B. The understanding of cultural genocide did not fare much better with 55.6% of students from Rural School A correctly understanding cultural genocide (CulturalGenDefUnderstood) and 7.4% of students understanding it from Rural School B. *Figure Two* demonstrates the gap in knowledge, comparing Rural School A students, in blue, to Rural School B students in orange. Both the data and visuals of *Figure Two* (see Appendix G) demonstrate that a gap in knowledge exists between students at these Rural Nova Scotia schools in relation to the chosen topics.

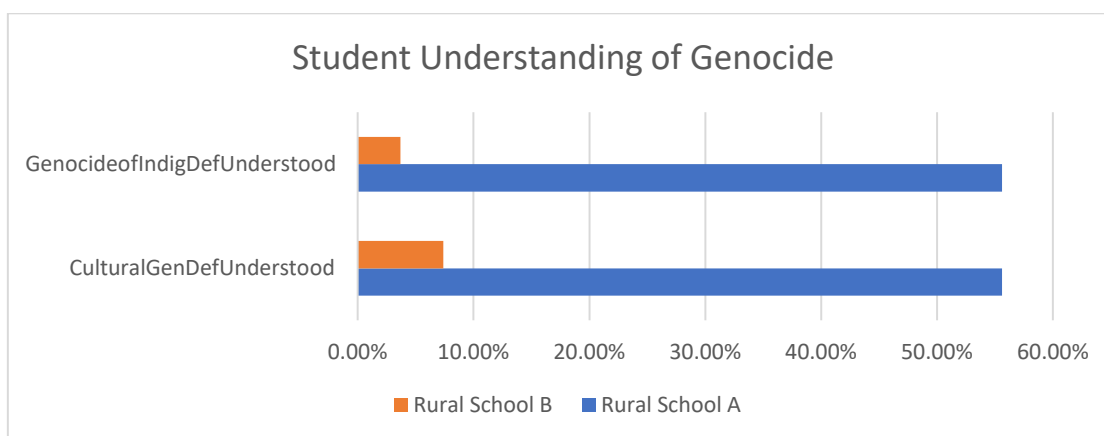


Figure Two

The Exploration of Treaty

Students were asked if they had heard the term ‘Treaty’ discussed in the classroom, it was identified that 55.6% of students from RSA have heard the term in class while 44.4% of students from RSB had heard the term. Although RSB had not heard of Treaty as much in class, they had more exposure to the term ‘Peace and Friendship Treaty,’ with 22.2% having heard the term while 16.7% of students had heard the term at RSA.

Although 22.3% of RSA students and 7.4% of RSB students *understood* the term Treaty, all 45 participants failed to correctly define the term ‘Peace and Friendship Treaty.’ On average, 50% of all students in the study had heard the term Treaty used in class and 19.5% had heard the term Peace and Friendship Treaty used in class. However, only 7.4% of all students could identify which Treaty they reside under.

Students were also asked in what capacity they discussed these topics the most (see *Figure Three*, Appendix H).

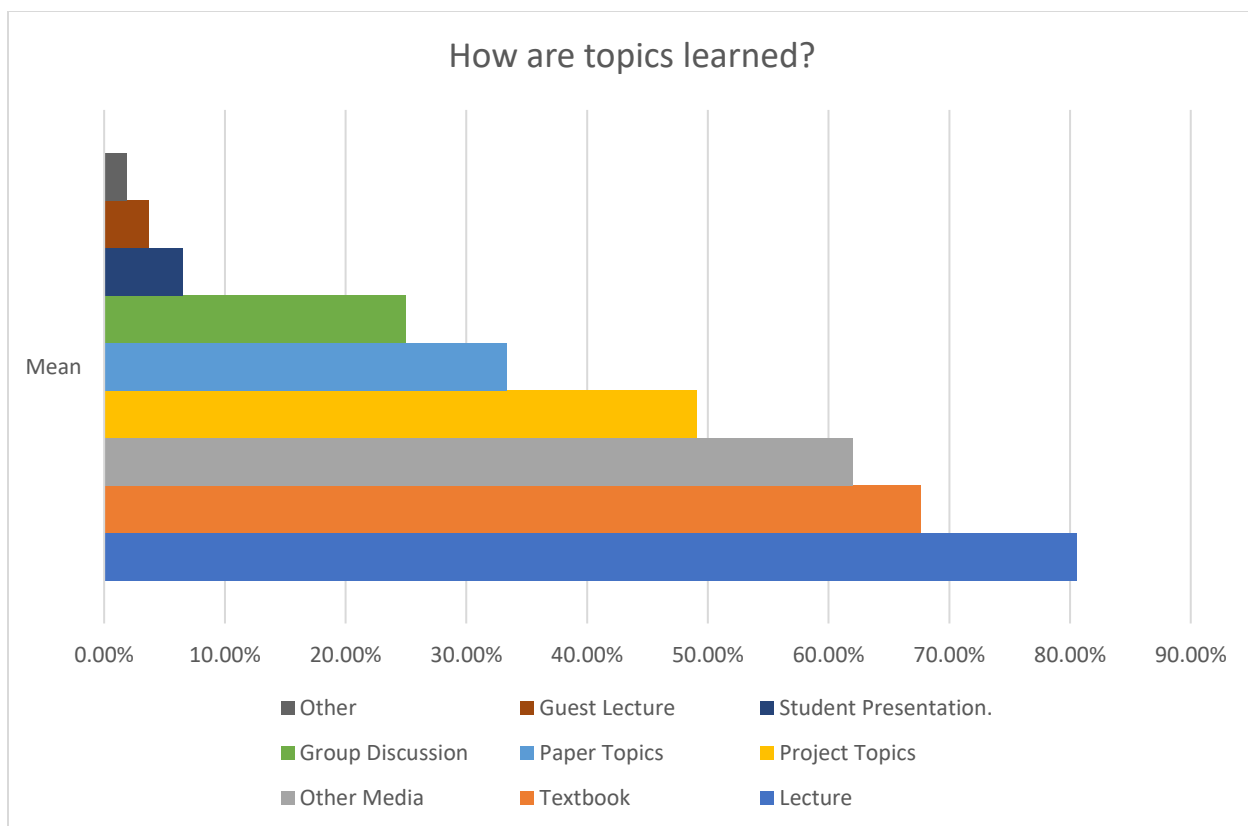


Figure Three.

As seen in Figure Three, students are introduced to these topics most often through class lecture, with 80.6% of students learning these topics in this manner. Textbooks are not far behind, and project topics came third.

Connecting the Dots: A Qualitative Analysis

When it came to qualitative data collection there were nine interviews conducted, 6 with Grade 12 students and three with educators.

As seen in the quantitative findings, Rural School A consistently knew more than Rural School B, and student interviews supported this. When asked if students had discussed genocide in the classroom, those from RSA claimed they had, with some claiming this was done in detail. Amber from RSA mentioned that “The most that I can remember it talked a lot about the genocide and the residential schooling and how

basically they were all wiped out.” Amber also mentioned the abuse and colonial violence that had taken place throughout colonization as she had learned this from her teacher. Stella, another student from RSA, also used the term genocide; “Um, yeah I remember a lot about the residential schools and about yeah just the genocide I suppose.” She talked about Europeans coming over, as well as how she remembers the most about residential schools and cultural genocide. She discussed how residential schools stripped Indigenous peoples of their culture, stating that;

I think about how uh, you know their language or their clothing or things like that were um, like they were inhibited from being able to express that. Yeah. And how they weren’t allowed to get a lot of the jobs or something (Stella, RSA).

Riley, the final student from RSA, also went into detail about what she had learned:

Um, I learned that they were put on their own land but very small, all their laws and everything were controlled by a white person basically like a white male, and then their children were taken from them and bussed to these schools, they weren’t allowed to ever really see their parents. They weren’t allowed to practice their own language, um which is genocide, like it’s a systematic killing of anything, so it is a cultural genocide and just... that’s like pretty much it, that we learned and then we also learned about Stephen Harpers apology which kind of I don’t think was enough at all.

These interviews demonstrate how students not only learned about these events in detail, but are also becoming critical, as is seen in Riley’s quote connecting her understanding of Residential Schooling to the 2008 Harper Apology. She recognizes this apology and mentions that it was not enough. Riley also made connections to other historical genocides:

We only get maybe three classes and both of those courses to actually see anything and a lot of things we’re not allowed to be taught because it was too graphic which I don’t think is possible considering we learned all about the holocaust.

Riley’s statement further demonstrates the connections that are being made.

When students from RSB were asked what they had learned in the classroom, their answers differed from that of RSA in content, tone of voice, terms used, and amount of detail given. Emily, a student participant from RSB stated that “We didn’t learn that much about Indigenous people we kind of learned about how, like, people came here and settled here and how Canada came to be or whatever.” When asked Question five, “What have you heard in class about the genocide of Indigenous peoples in Canada from grades 10-12?”, Emily responded with “Nothing.” When Linda, another student from RSB, was asked the same question, her response was similar; “Uh, I don’t actually think we ever specifically talked about like genocide of Indigenous people.” These interviews match well to the survey findings from the 27 students at the same school, as only 3.7% of those students responded that they understood the term ‘Genocide of Indigenous Peoples.’

Although the genocide of Indigenous peoples was not well known, students did touch on the term cultural genocide. George, the final student interviewed from RSB and the only male participant in the student interviews, mentioned they had discussed Residential Schooling at length. George mentioned that his class “focused on it quite a lot and we talked about like uh, Jane Wenjack and like a lot of the residential schooling and a lot of the issues between um, the settlers and the uh Indigenous people. Um, and we talked a lot about um, discrimination and loss of culture.” George even stated that they spent half a course on this topic. Linda highlighted her understanding of cultural genocide by mentioning that she learned “how their culture has been um, like basically killed by Europeans.”

Linda, similar to George, mentioned that "...about half the course [was] on like Indigenous affairs in Canada", although Linda's Canadian History course was taught in French. Linda then elaborated on what "affairs" she was referencing:

Usually when we talk about like past colonization of Canada it's in like a really negative light so um, like all the while we're learning about it in Canadian history we talk about like how Europeans colonized like how they brought disease, how they brought like alcoholism and how it like effected the Indigenous societies. And then kind of more in Sociology this year we talk about like the Indigenous societies before colonization like how they were developed societies. How they worked differently to Europeans society and like how once the Europeans colonized it became um, like a subculture.

George also mentioned this focus on life before contact; "So first we focused on the way of life before contact um, where they like had the, they had settlements they moved according to where the animals were, the weather, things like that." These topics are seen in English and Canadian History classes, and in Sociology as well; "In Sociology class we talk a lot about Indigenous affairs in Canada too, we had a speaker come in the other day and talk about it" (Linda, RSB). From these experiences it seems as though those from RSB learned more about life prior to contact in comparison to those from RSA. Some, like George, showed an understanding of cultural genocide and assimilation: "they [Indigenous peoples] socially had to act like them, they, they religiously had to speak like them, dress like them, um basically just trying to get rid of who they really are" (George, RSB).

Although all three students at RSB required the same courses to graduate, their experiences differed. When asked about what she had learned Emily claimed that "we didn't talk about Indigenous people that much" although she did mention her exposure to Treaty:

Emily- I know I remember one day um, he told us about I forget now what it was called, but like um, how we made an agreement with them when we first came here and that um, we like didn't do what we said that we were going to do.

Interviewer- Right.

Emily- And that like we still don't um, do what like our um, agreement said I guess.

Interviewer- Like what the Treaties say?

Emily- Yeah! Um, I'm trying to think. We didn't go over it that much at all. And other classes we didn't talk about it at all.

Although Emily herself had some exposure to Treaty, George noted that they were not taught the names of Treaties. As was seen in the quantitative findings 44.4% of students had discussed Treaty in class and 22.2% had heard the term Peace and Friendship Treaty.

Students identified a variety of ways that they have learned about Indigenous and colonial issues. Linda from RSB mentioned research projects, while George highlighted that his teacher being Indigenous played a role in how he was educated. All three students from RSA mentioned the influence of their history teacher.

This project's quantitative data analysis found that 80.6% of students learned the topics pertinent to this study through class lectures. However, not all learning is done inside the walls of school. Some students were aware of certain issues (e.g., Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls) because they taught themselves. George likes to research on his own time, while others noted that their interests lead them to explore topics at a deeper level. Amber, from RSA, reported that "I learned most by myself and in classes because I was more interested in it. But, um, I know that there is like, thousands of kids that were killed and um, many of the girls were raped and everything." Riley, a fellow student from RSA, discussed how she educated herself saying, "I'm really

involved with that kind of stuff, like I always keep up on it.” I explored this further when asking; “Correct me if I’m wrong, but are you like kind of going out on your own and learning things too? Like in your spare time?” to which Riley responded “Yeah, like I watch a lot of documentaries and stuff about like everything going on because like too we also had a few people in my class who like are, like they have native, I don’t know....” Riley mentioned that her interests are influenced by the lived reality of her friends and classmates with Indigenous heritage and identities.

Several students in the study made it known that they are willing to educate themselves, but students like Riley report being impacted by their classmates and friends:

Riley - My best friend she actually is like I can’t remember if it’s aboriginal or... but she has heritage of that and it’s really hard for her too to like and it’s harder for me to sit there and watch like what’s going on and I don’t know you just... I feel like they’re okay with learning about it because it’s something they [Indigenous students] have to learn about, it’s in the curriculum but at the same time they learned everything probably from their parents and their grandparents.

Interviewer- Right.

Riley- So by the time they get to school it’s kind of like a slap in the face that they’re trying to teach it to them as if they didn’t already know what had happened.

Another RSA student, Stella, discussed the impact that family has on learning.

Stella touched on the issue of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and

Girls, which was taught to her by her mother:

Interviewer- So if it wasn’t for your mom,

Stella- Yeah.

Interviewer - ...you wouldn’t know.

Stella- Yeah exactly.

Educators notice these trends. Amy, an educator from RSA, talked about the impacts people's families and homes have on her students, she mentions that "Our students are a product of their homes, we're a product of our homes." Riley addressed this influence of family and home life when discussing "hurtful jokes" heard at school, she mentions that "it's really hard too, cause you know that's something that's been taught to them...." Influences that exist outside of the scope of the classroom can have large impacts on students for the better, but also at times for the worse, as was discussed by educator Amy;

I can teach and do the best I can until I'm blue in the face here but if they're going home and everything at home or everything on the news or everything in every other facet around them is counterproductive to what I'm saying, I could be an incredible educator, it doesn't mean I'm getting anywhere really.

Amy made a point to highlight her teaching efforts despite being frustrated.

Both Emily and George mentioned that they had learned about issues through their friends. When asked if she had heard about the genocide of Indigenous peoples Emily mentioned she heard it from her friend, not through school. George too had learned through a friend, this time in relation to residential schools;

George- Um, so we never learned anything, um about it, and so the first time, the only reason I knew what it was and about it a little bit was one of my friends did a heritage fair project on residential schooling.

Interviewer – Okay.

George- So I learned some information from that but I didn't really learn all that much in the in class we never, it was never really understood or confirmed that um there was um like the mass killing of Indigenous people.

For George his exposure to these difficult topics was through a friend educating him.

Although educator Amy highlighted that outside influences can impact students and learning, students from both schools discussed their educators. Amber from RSA mentioned the importance of her teacher, she mentioned that “The teacher is very involving so, it’s you’re like all involved with it, so, that’s what I like about her. All of my other classes kind of suck.” Amber highlighted several times the methods her teacher uses, from different activities to visuals. Riley, also from RSA, discussed how her teacher impacted what she had learned and what topics were covered. When discussing the same educator as Amber, Riley mentioned that “She was amazing, and she really got into our brains and [I] realized that Canada hasn’t always been a great place for everyone.” She discussed the teachers work informing the students of events like Japanese Internment Camps, and to not feel guilty about being white. Students seemed to suggest that the curriculum could be limiting at times. Riley highlights that “a lot of things that she wanted to teach us she wasn’t allowed to, so you have to go in after class and ask for videos and that sort of thing.” This point brought up by Riley also makes a clear connection back to students working to educate themselves, a connection that will be further explored in the Discussion Chapter.

George from RSB also discussed educator impact. In the course where he learned most about Indigenous and colonial issues, he mentioned that his teacher was Indigenous. When asked what he had learned about the genocide of Indigenous peoples in Canada, he stated, “Um, not very much. Um, I feel like the teachers don’t really like to talk about the uh, the basically um, the mass murdering of Indigenous people. I feel like they like to just skip over that”. This lines up with students’ answers to the survey, as only 3.7% of

students from George's school understood the topic of the Genocide of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

Students were asked to highlight what they were taught, educators' impact, but also what they wish they were taught. Many themes reoccurred when students were asked this question in the interviews, with many wanting to know more about the ongoing and lasting impacts of colonization.

Amber, who self-identified as an Indigenous woman, mentioned how she wished her learning had been furthered. Although she recognizes that she had learned about past instances of colonization, she wanted to know more about present day issues:

Amber- Because, all around Canada there's like the women that are being killed and murdered, and no one gets told about that.

Interviewer - Hmm, like the missing and murdered Indigenous women?

Amber- Yeah.

Interviewer - Yeah.

Amber- Like I see it- I see it all the time on the news, but no one talks about it in schools so.

Interviewer - Right.

Amber- It's basically unheard of here.

Amber- And like the youth and everything they have higher risks of like mental illness

Interviewer - *affirmative sound*

Amber- and like suicide and things like that and nobody really knows or cares. Because they aren't told about any of this.

Emily from RSB also expressed wanting to learn more about present day issues; "like what's happening today about Indigenous people and stuff cause like yeah. Because we

don't really... we never really talked about it really. Um, and I, I would have personally liked to have learned more". Although the students recognize the importance of learning about colonization they also acknowledged wanting to know more about before contact and about Indigenous cultures. Stella highlights the importance of recognizing Indigenous culture and how they thrived:

Stella- it's, all kind of, like um, like I being South Korean, or partly, um I know that a lot of different cultures around the world have a lot of really different really interesting world views to offer, um, and it's a compared to things like Christianity and Western um ways of thinking it's such a difference and it's such an interesting way to look at things. And I'm sure um, uh, Indigenous cultures, and not only that even African cultures or other you know Asian cultures, or South American cultures would have those kinds of things as well. And I just totally wish I could be exposed to that.

Interviewer - Like within the schooling environment?

Stella- Yeah, and you know school they tell you that you know ethnocentrism is not good and not to be like that um, but how are you supposed to break out of that kind of um, but it's like in school they only talk about you know Europeans and them colonizing and stuff which is of course very important –

Interviewer – Yes,

Stella- to history but um, at the same time I, I feel like we should learn more about how other cultures um actually thrived.

Riley expressed a similar desire, saying, "I'd love to learn more about their culture too, like if we learned about their music and like, cause doing one project on their language or their music or their anything like that, isn't enough for me to really like understand their culture together." Linda, from RSB, had learned some things about Indigenous cultures but craved more:

Linda- I wish that we learned more about what the Indigenous culture was like before Europeans got here.

Interviewer - Mhm.

Linda- So we usually start learning about them like at the point of colonization.

Interviewer - Right.

Linda- We never really learn about what their culture was like or like how they lived before Europeans got here.

The students noted that most of their knowledge begins at the point of contact, when colonizers arrive. Beyond that, not much is known, and students are wanting more, more exposure to present day issues, Indigenous cultures, and also to Indigenous stories, experiences, and voices.

Students mentioned wanting to hear these stories from Indigenous peoples themselves within the educational setting; “I just feel like it would be a lot worthy to hear it come out of someone who understands what they’re talking about, like someone who is Indigenous and like even taking a course like I know my boyfriend’s school um he has Mi’kmaw studies” (Riley, RSA). Stella also expressed wanting more Indigenous speakers in the classroom. This is interesting given that no students from RSA identified having guest lecturers on Indigenous and colonial issues, yet those from RSB did.

The final theme that emerged was a desire to better understand colonial violence.

Linda from RSB talked at length about this:

We didn’t really talk about much like in between that point and like the point that like relations got strained, I don’t know I just I wish we had more knowledge about like the progression of relations and like that um also like about residential schooling we learn a lot about like um, like when they were starting to be I guess, no we don’t learn a lot about like how residential schooling started.

Both Stella and Amber had mentioned that they had only learned about the arrival of settlers, not the progression of said events. Riley also had mentioned this and even connected this genocide back to that of a well-known one, the Holocaust:

Another thing I would also like to know is probably exactly who was involved like some of like the teachers or their ideas and why this like actually had to take place. Like, like you hear Hitler's like ideas on Jewish people and why he wanted to do what he did but I never actually heard the whole reason on why Indigenous people had to be taken from their families and since this is a systematic killing there are many steps that would lead up to it and I just, I feel like we deserve more time to hear about things that happened so it doesn't continue to happen (Riley, RSA).

Amber connects this back to present day issues and the importance of understanding this progression when she mentioned that "It would be good for like, everyone to like, kind of understand like, why things are like this." Although these students' express interest in these topics, they note that this sentiment is not shared by all.

Question six of the student interviews asked; "What is your sense of your fellow students being open to learning about colonization and Indigenous issues?" "Although participants gave a variety of answers, apathy was a common theme. When asked about fellow students being open to learning about colonization and Indigenous issues Emily from RSB stated:

Emily- Um, a couple like, like my friend would but I think most of them honestly wouldn't care.

Interviewer - They wouldn't care?

Emily- At all.

While Amber talked about how for many of her classmates this was just about getting through school; "I think that most of the students here would probably just want to kind of like get past through it because it's just a mark to them" (Amber, RSA). Being the only Indigenous student in the interview sample, Amber added, "I feel like they care more about it if it had to deal with like themselves."

Riley and Stella also expressed that their fellow classmates would not care about these topics. Riley suggested being from a rural school may be the reason for student apathy, signalling that, the context of rural NS matters. Similar to Amber's answer, Stella stated that this is just about getting through school for some students; "Like it's just, it's just school, it's just another course sort of thing, it's um, yeah, it's just homework".

However, not all students felt this way, with Linda from RSA stating that she believes there would be some interest among her peers:

I think it's pretty mixed honestly. I mean, I think uh a lot of people are willing to learn a lot of people don't really know a lot or they just know a lot of surface level things about Indigenous issues. But I don't think a lot of people understand that like things that happened in the past are still like going on today and they're not like, they still have effects. I think people are generally open to it though.

George, also from RSB (the larger of the two schools), mentioned that students would be open to learning about these issues:

George- Um, I feel like they would agree with me in saying that it's important.

Interviewer - Mhm.

George- Um and I feel like um whatever is put in front of them they're willing to learn.

Interviewer- Right.

George- Um, they're here for a reason and I feel as though they would find the topic interesting and they would be engaged with it.

Interviewer- Mhm.

George- I know from that History class and the English class that when we did talk about those things it was very um, everybody was very involved in it.

Interviewer- They were? Okay.

George- Yeah. They-they liked talking about it. Um, so I feel like um, they would also be very open to uh learning about colonization and further issues.

As was discussed in the theory section, education requires dialogue, and this occurs between both students and their educators. This is why educator voices and perspectives were incorporated into this study. Three educators were interviewed in total, with one from RSA and two from RSB. It should be noted that although all teacher interviewees have teacher training only one is actively teaching, the other is a guidance counsellor and the final participant, who did teach for years, is now a Vice-Principal.

Amy, the active educator from RSA, highlighted that many resources are given in tandem with course textbooks and that they are well done. “Our library we’re, we’re getting references and resources here all the time” (Amy, RSA). When it comes to newly released resources, like textbooks, they are “...automatically delivered school wide” (Amy, RSA). Amy gave an example of this when she discussed the new Citizenship Nine textbook;

Amy- It just came out this year, um, and it is brand new outcomes and it is based on inquiry-based learning. And the idea is to look at how can you be a positive citizen, how can you um, how can you, when you know better do better. Um, how have we kind of gotten to where we are today.

Interviewer- Mhm.

Amy- Is Canada really that great of country to be living in? What are our strengths? What are our weaknesses? And how can we kind of address those. Um, it looks at the laws, it looks at um, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, it looks at whether or not these laws and our rights are applied equally. Uh the entire first unit actually is all about the difference between equality and equity and certain groups that have historically been disadvantaged, so it actually takes a lot of the content from my grade 12 curriculums.

Interviewer- Right.

Amy- And it’s in grade nine.

Interviewer- So is this um, a mandatory course? Or is it optional for students?

Amy- Everybody needs to take grade nine.

Amy was visibly excited about this new course and its resources. Making sure to point out that this class, necessary for all grade nine Nova Scotian students, was tackling topics that are seen in her Grade 12 curriculum. Topics included Idle No More, Residential Schools, Women's Rights, and Greenpeace (Amy, RSA). Amy reiterated the variety of resources that come with this new course; "It has its eBook and then what it does because they're trying to promote inquiry-based learning, um, and I think it's going to be something that our province really does start looking into." Amy highlighted the growing amount of resources available to both students and educators. She also discussed how despite being a small school in NS with limited courses, there are more virtual high courses being offered, she believes that things are getting better.

Similar to student perspectives, Amy expressed wanting more Indigenous voices and input present;

Amy- Um, so I would personally like to see more First Nations directly involved with the curriculum development itself, um who are we to think we know better, what should be addressed or not. Um, I certainly think the idea of sugar coating it, I hate the fact that uh there's so much power in language and you know we always down play the words that we use. Uh I think we need to include a lot more, um cultural genocide, outright genocide, systematic persecution...

Interviewer- Mhm.

Amy- I think we need to start calling things exactly what it is. Um, I don't like the idea of shying away from the controversy of it either.

Amy, whose students showed better comprehension when asked to identify terms, compared to those from RSB, does not want to shy away from difficult topics.

Throughout the interview she recognized her own privilege and identified the need for more Indigenous voices and input.

Teachers also identified time and funding as needed resources in order for proper in-service training days to occur. John from RSB highlighted needing more funds, more in-service and professional development days, and more bodies. Given the fact that educators need to be pulled out of school for these training sessions that means more substitutes are needed, meaning more money. Sally from RSA identified needing more professional development days devoted to these topics. She stated, “We as guidance councillors, as uh, as a group have been asking for all kinds of different training but what happens I think it comes down to a financial aspect.” Not only did Sally notice this lack of training, but she mentioned that there has been a decline in educator training since she began her teaching journey; “It’s been over 21 years I can tell ya that we don’t have nearly the amount of in-service days that we once did” (Sally, RSA).

Some educators are filling this knowledge gap on their own time. Amy mentioned taking part in webinars to better service her students, when she was off the clock. She notes, “Teachers themselves can’t possibly teach better unless they themselves get taught better” (Amy, RSA). Amy teaches Social Studies and History, which many students identified as the source of their knowledge.

Although resources may be available, that does not mean that they are sufficient. As was expressed by John; “You know resources are good and, uh, but last year when I was VP in, in uh [redacted] we just got dropped off a bunch of books of you know with, with Indigenous content with no real direction besides ‘here’s some books’.” Here is where the problem lies, if no education and training for teachers is offered and if there is no effort to educate themselves outside of work hours, then teachers are left to flounder or to even ignore the curriculum, as was pointed out by Amy when discussing a new textbook:

“other teachers where this is literally going to be left sitting on a shelf somewhere looking very pretty and collecting dust.” This is reflected in student outcomes, as there is a clear gap in knowledge and awareness in both of these rural schools when it comes to the topics of colonialism and Indigenous ways of knowing. As harmful as this can be there is no one to hold educators accountable if they do overlook certain educational outcomes; “Some teachers are going to look at those outcomes and say well, I don’t need to” (Amy, RSA).

Amy highlighted an instance of teaching a new course in the fall. “I have to teach psychology next year, I’ve never taught psychology. There’s not even a textbook for it. There’s no outcomes for it. I gotta create an entire course all by myself. Wish me luck” (Amy, RSA). You can sense educator’s exhaustion via body language and expressions when discussing these topics and outcomes on having to even teach an entire course from the ground up. A similar example of frustration and exhaustion came from Sally, one of the school’s guidance counsellors. When asking for more training for herself and fellow staff surrounding LGBTQ2SI+ issues the topic was shut down:

Sally- There was a time when I was looking for um, to have um, like the Sexual Health Center or Public Health to come in and do some training with um, our, our staff around you know, LGBTQ plus youth,

Interviewer- Yeah.

Sally- Um, and I was kind of said like we have no time, we- there’s all of these other things coming down from the center, Regional Center for Education and that, that has to be covered that we really don’t have the time to devote to that.

Interviewer- So they were saying in terms of time it was not a priority I guess?

Sally- No. I think a lot of other stuff is, is a priority, at this point.

Similar to Apple's concept of official knowledge (2000) and the work of Marie Battiste, some education is seen as optional, while others are a priority, as pointed out by Sally.

The impacts of this will be further explored in the Discussions Chapter.

From what educators discussed, it can be suggested that curriculum outlines are not as effective if there is no training to match the resources, as pointed out by Amy:

Amy- Just because the province outlines outcomes we know every year some teachers can cover them and some teachers can't.

Interviewer- Right.

Amy- There's also difference between covering them and covering them well. Teachers are still human.

Indeed, teachers, and students alike, are human. They each have their own bias and lived experiences that follows them into the realm of education, which is why some may enter into dialogue better positioned about topics of colonialism and Indigenous ways of knowing. Further highlighting the importance of discerning gaps in knowledge so that all participants can confidently enter into dialogue that works to build meaningful Indigenous and settler relationships.

Chapter Four: Discussion

A person's identity connects to how we see ourselves, how others see us, how we learn, and our own lived experiences. The topic of identity arose throughout this project, without prompting, from both educators and their students in rural Nova Scotian high schools. The Literature Review section explored the variations of settler identity and how colonial arrangements, seen at the micro pedagogical level, have the ability to harm students who identify as Indigenous. With the theme of identity being so prominent within this research it makes sense that it be further unpacked.

Identity

Both John and Sally, educators from RSB and RSA, are examples of the Perfect Stranger Settler narrative that was explored in the Literature Review. For instance, when discussing incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing and Indigenous and colonial issues into John's teachings he stated that "it's like, teach fractions, teach them this way, and then teach them that way, um, as far as content um, in our school where I taught there may have been two to three self-identified um, students um, so, you know it wasn't something that was at the forefront of our mind a lot of the time." Indeed, John not only demonstrated the identity of being a "perfect stranger" (Dion, 2016) to Indigenous topics and issues but he also employed key methods that make up that of the banking model of education:

John- It's like how do I get this student who's struggling to-to understand fractions in different ways,

Interviewer- Right.

John- ...you're thinking about tweaking your practice that way rather than making it more culturally responsive.

From this dialogue it can be suggested that student understanding is prioritized over cultural responsiveness and sensitivity. Not only are self-identified students and their educational topics not at the forefront of educator's minds, but they are also not prioritized when it comes to teaching. This is a classic form of the banking model of education, with students being "filled" with what is seen as the correct or official knowledge, in this case being the sciences and maths. Culturally sensitive issues and decolonial approaches to learning are not prioritized, it simply is not happening. John has, in a sense, admitted that he is a perfect stranger to these issues. Thus, furthering Western ways of learning and knowing in the setting of rural Nova Scotian schools.

Similarly, when Sally was asked about how she incorporated Indigenous ways of knowing into her role as a guidance counsellor and/or how she incorporated the topics of Indigenous or colonial issues her response reflected that of a teacher who is absolved from responsibility, one who sees themselves as a perfect stranger:

Interviewer- Tell me about some of the challenges of incorporating uh these types of ways of learning into whether it be in your curriculum or how you meet with students, how you go about um as a guidance counsellor with students.

Sally- *laughs* I guess it's a challenge simply because I don't really teach it.

Interviewer- Right.

Sally- Yeah, so.

Interviewer- And have you ever incorporated it into what you do here as a guidance counselor?

Sally- No.

Interviewer- Okay and has there ever been do you think like a need to do such a thing or?

Sally- Umm, p-probably, yeah, probably it's just one of those many, many things that I don't have a lot of knowledge about.

Despite Sally recognizing her lack of knowledge she still uses this shield of not knowing enough to deflect responsibility. When asked if students had reached out in relation to this content Sally responded “No, none have reached out.” However, in terms of students reaching out, some do not feel comfortable doing so, or at least in Amber’s case. This topic came up unprompted in an interview by self-identified Indigenous student Amber from RSA;

Amber- I know that they say like ‘yeah you can go to the counsellor’.

Interviewer- Mhm.

Amber- But, there’s nothing else other than that. That you can actually go to, too, if you needed any um, help.

Interviewer- Right. Do you think there needs to be more support um, just to understand correctly, for everyone, or do you think there should be an emphasis on sort of, uh, like Indigenous students is maybe what you’re saying or just everyone in general?

Amber- Like, it’s good for like everyone

Interviewer- Mhm.

Amber- but, sometimes it’s harder for like certain um, like groups of people –

Interviewer- Right.

Amber- to get out and help because they- when you look around usually like not to make it sound rude or anything but all you see is like all like the typical like white people everywhere...

This dialogue had with Amber is interesting for a variety of reasons. She brings identity into the discussion, even if it is done so timidly. Amber recognizes that she is in a homogenous group of peoples at her school, her school that is within a rural county in an already rural province, and she expresses that she does not feel as supported as her white counterparts, something that appears to be missed by the guidance counsellor. When

white students talk about their experiences within the Nova Scotian education system it is clear that they have had a far different experience; “I enjoy school, uh I always have my guidance counsellor whenever I feel upset or anything” (Riley, RSA), a sentiment not shared by Amber. What is clear is that these two students, from two different backgrounds, had different experiences in the same rural school under the same NS curriculum, specifically related to the guidance counsellor services. This missing link for Amber was simply not noticed by Sally, yet it should be noted that students should not have to self-identify or lay out their traumas to gain assistance in a culturally sensitive manner. Due to the fact that white settler ways of being are seen as official knowledge (Apple, 2000) many students are left behind.

Disrupting these forms of education and colonial ways of learning within Nova Scotian schools, specifically rural schools, will be uncomfortable and can, at times, lead to a great deal of guilt felt among settlers. This idea of white settler guilt was expressed by one of the students when she mentioned that “like it’s just hurtful to sit there and think that someone like of my background could do something like that to them” (Riley, RSA), this was Riley’s response when talking about learning about instances of colonialism. She makes the connection between her own identity and that of her ancestors. Learning about these topics can be hard and uncomfortable, not only for Indigenous students, but settlers as well. What is important is to remember to not be frozen by guilt (Corntassel et. al., 2014), and to teach students this. Riley did express in another part of her interview the impact that her teacher made in terms of learning these difficult subjects, she mentioned that; “Our teacher did a really good job basically like she, like when I hear that kids didn’t hear about that in High School to the depth that we did like she really got us, and

made us feel like not guilty, but feel sympathize for them, like actually feel like kind of what they were going through.” It can be suggested that students’ level of comfort and lack of feeling completely helpless and guilty have led to a stronger learning environment, given that the results from RSA reflect a higher rate of student awareness and knowledge.

Indigenous Identity

This study oversampled Indigenous students when compared to the demographics of Nova Scotia, with 5.7% of those living in Nova Scotia identifying as Indigenous (Statistics Canada, 2017) and 6.5% of my study population identifying as such. This helps to contextualize Indigenous students’ experiences at the secondary school level within rural Nova Scotian schools. Since students had a choice to participate or not, this study may have been seen as an outlet for Indigenous students to speak openly about their experiences in the Nova Scotian secondary school educational system. This was demonstrated when an Indigenous student discussed an instance of racism she experienced in class:

Amber- I remember in grade nine I was in English and they were saying how like First Nations were savages, and they always did all these things, and I’m like... that’s kind of hurting my feelings, alright. But, when I actually went to go and like say something to someone they’re like ‘well don’t you think that anyone else would think of that the same way?’ And I’m like but I asked them to like stop and they still didn’t.

Interviewer- And they still didn’t?

Amber- Yeah.

Interviewer- Did this happen in the classroom?

Amber- Yup and then I went to go tell someone and they were just like well no one else had a problem with it.

Interviewer- When you went to tell the teacher?

Amber- Yeah.

Interviewer- Yeah.

Amber- So I was like 'Okay fine I won't say anything'

Interviewer- Because they said no one else had an issue with it?

Amber- Yeah.

This instance of racism demonstrates how Amber is still left unsupported by not only the guidance counsellor, but by other educators as well.

This example of racism not only impacts Amber's own learning and feelings of safety but also how she sees herself. Educational theorist Paulo Freire discusses how oppression in the education system, can be internalized (1968). Although addressing these instances of racism may make teachers uncomfortable (Riley & Ungerleider, 2012, p.305), it is crucial, as these can have severe implications that impact student's health and mental wellbeing (Coulthard, 2014). Indeed, Vass (2013) mentions that the silence of teachers is dangerous and further argues that educators should be better prepared for race talks in the classroom. Educators have the ability to aid in transformative education (Freire, 1968) but can also hinder transformation.

Not only can Nova Scotian educators aid in better supporting students but they can also count Indigenous ways of knowing as legitimate knowledge (Stock & Grover, 2013, p.632), building bridges between Indigenous and settler peoples (Faries, 2004). Valuing student experiences, other forms of knowledge, and becoming well versed to take up race talks in the classroom (Vass, 2013) all can have positive, and transformative changes on students and the Nova Scotian educational system as a whole.

Educational Practices

Education does not just happen in a vacuum, it takes place in, and beyond the four walls of the school. This learning not only happens for students, but for educators as well. As seen in Chapter Three, Educators discussed seeking education and teaching themselves on their own time, as do some students. Students highlighted the ways they learn outside of the classroom, like through family, friends and other media influences. Some of these same students expressed their concerns on how these outside influences can do more harm than good. Riley expresses this when she mentioned that;

Riley- I know there's a lot of hurtful jokes that I've heard not just about Indigenous people but like any different...

Interviewer- Mhm.

Riley- and it's like, it's really hard to cause you know that's something that's been taught to them obviously.

Riley acknowledges the fact that this racist rhetoric she hears at school from her fellow students are clearly a learned behaviour and she is not the only one to notice this. Amber acknowledged that students' biases are ingrained in them from "how they were brought up" (Amber, RSA). Amy acknowledged that bias does not only come from students, but it can also seep in from teachers. She continued to make several remarks on how outside influences impact student learning. When asked about incorporating colonial and Indigenous related topics into the curriculum she mentioned that;

Amy- It's not the curriculum to implement it, it's the bias that the kids come in without even knowing they have it.

Interviewer- Right.

Amy- it's the, it's the language used at home, it's the media that's being watched it's all that cultural transmission piece, um when you're being raised in a very small community,

Interviewer- Mhm.

Amy- ...it is very homogenous. It's hard... in the first place to shine a light, that their world is so, micro, small, the macro, big, and that this little bubble here is just that, it's a little bubble in the bigger picture. You start applying that to different cultural value sets and religious or spiritualities or linguistic groups and things that seem to them very foreign we're still living in a time where people equate something different as a negative.

Amy points out two very important factors. First, that a student's own bias that stems from their life outside of school does not stop at the doors of a classroom. Second, the fact that her students live, work, and learn in a rural area in Nova Scotia. Many of these students are, as Amy pointed out, white, English speaking, settlers. Stella, who identified as an immigrant from South Korea, acknowledged how many of her peers were unaware of countless issues that she had been taught by her mother. Amber too had highlighted how homogenous her fellow classmates are. This makes for an interesting point as both students are non-white.

Given that all three students from RSB anticipated some interest from their peers and that all three from RSA did not, it appears that there is a pattern. With two students from RSA citing that it could just be "this school" and the fact that their school is rural, it could be suggested that size and diversity of the schools could play a role in student engagement with these topics, further highlighting how the context and locationality of these schools' matters. RSA students appear to know more and have more exposure to these topics, yet, from what has been derived from the interviews it could be suggested that the students from RSA are less open to learning about these topics and expanding their knowledge compared to those from RSB. School size, diversity, resources,

educators, and more, all play crucial roles in student learning and engagement with topics of colonialism and Indigenous ways of knowing in rural Nova Scotian high schools.

Bringing students out of their so called “bubble” of rurality can be a daunting task, especially for those from the less diverse RSA, and the students know this too;

You come from a really rural, small set, mind-set community, to go to a big university like I said I’m going to Dal and that’s huge and theirs so many different cultures and like it’s so hard to try to learn them all but if you had of had the background in High School and the mindset then it would be easier to make that transition and to make friends in different communities because you never know what’s going to be offensive and what’s not if you’ve never been taught (Riley, RSA).

Riley, who identified as a white student, addresses her own fears in terms of leaving her rural, homogenous community. Riley’s own experiences and fears relate directly back to what Amy had expressed earlier, the fact that so many of these students live in a bubble and are, in a way, sheltered and afraid of the unfamiliar. Amber also pointed out that students are apathetic about issues that do not necessarily directly involve them;

Amber- They don’t really care about it.

Interviewer- So if it’s not about you know, their heritage then they don’t care?

Amber- Mhm.

There is a clear disconnect here, one that has been highlighted by Corntassel (2014) when discussing how these topics and issues cannot just be seen as Indigenous issues, but rather, as colonial issues.

Another important outside influence to note is a student’s socio-economic status (SES) and how this may impact their learning and secondary school experiences. As was mentioned several students like Amber, Riley, Stella and George, noted taking steps to further educate themselves outside of the schooling realm. However, an interesting point

was made by educator Amy when she acknowledged that a student's SES, specifically given the context of this study in rural NS, does in fact play a role in their ability to learn inside and outside of school hours;

Amy- I think some of it has to do with poverty

Interviewer- Mhm.

Amy- and what, what exposure to opportunity and difference do you have, um, some of it has to do with time

Interviewer- Mhm.

Amy- We've got kids who have to work to support their families or they have to actually babysit, they're the ones that are out on the tractors, um do you have time for anything outside of schoolwork to really look into on your own?

Amy makes some excellent points in relation to poverty, specifically in relation to being in a rural community whose industry relies on agriculture, so much so, that some students are even excused from classes so that they can work during harvest season. When a student is busy with work, caring for siblings, or with other factors, it makes it difficult to do homework, let alone to look into unassigned topics. Thus, highlights challenges faced by both students and educators in rural Nova Scotia.

There are many factors at play here: identity, poverty, a person's agency, their family dynamic, and also the fact of being from a rural community, which has already been touched on. Amy mentioned that teaching in a rural community is an impactful role, specifically when learning about privilege;

Amy- Um, they don't want to recognise the benefits they get at the expense to others.

Interviewer- So do you think that's more uh, that's especially more prominent in a community that is rural and that like you mentioned is so homogenous do you think that plays a role where it's-

Amy- It has to.

Interviewer- Yeah.

Amy- It absolutely has to. Because when you get exposed to the diversity when you can put a name to it, when you can put a face to it, when you can interact with it when you can become a part of it...

Interviewer- Mhm.

Amy- I mean, none of our kids are around here ever going to sit in a classroom where they're the only one of their gender,

Interviewer- Yeah.

Amy- ...they're the only one of their race or they're the only one of their linguistic group.

Throughout the interview, Amy highlighted the homogenous nature of her students and how white and English speaking they truly are. This and being from a rural community in Nova Scotia can make learning about privilege and instances of oppression a scary thing, as was explored in the Theoretical Frameworks section those who are in privileged positions typically do not want to let go of that.

The theme of educating oneself on relevant issues and topics of interest was common among all participants. Educators and students took time on their own to research and learn about topics like the residential schooling system or Indigenous cultures. What is concerning is without personal interest, these topics may never be taught or learned. John, an educator from RSB, touched on working to better educate himself, as he talked about a variety of readings, he did over the summer in relation to this project's topics;

John- Um Gord Downies book, um he does a lot of, a lot of information on, on um, um... I don't know the right word to use...that culture. Um, citizenship like I

know the new curriculum just came and there's information about colonization cause I don't think we, I don't think everybody does know um, so taking courses um, to inform yourself like I, I've done a little bit of reading this past summer, um cause I felt like I knew nothing.

Interviewer- Mhm.

John- Um so, it kind of was a little bit eye opening, but you know this, I read all those, the information this summer but I- nothing has changed in my world.

Interviewer- Yeah and it's kind of done on your own time was it?

John- Oh yeah, yeah. Because I was taking a course um, on trauma

Interviewer- Okay

John- and the topics were with intergenerational trauma

Interviewer- Yeah

John- and, I was like, oh that happened? Oh! Oh! Oh god.

Interviewer- Yeah!

John- and I was like oh I'm going to do some of my own reading

Interviewer- Mhm,

John- and I through that reading I was like wow like more people need to know this cause people don't.

It is with this final comment that John captures some of the essence of this research project, the fact that so many remain ignorant to this country's past and ongoing colonial acts.

John mentioned how, despite being a well-educated person, he was still ignorant to these truths: "I'm working on my fifth degree and I think I'm fairly well educated, and I don't know enough about um, about improving the way it's done in a big picture way" (John, RSB). Despite John being educated in a Westernized sense he still remains ignorant to the topics of Indigenous and colonial issues. Although he did take time to

educate himself, one should remain critical as to what he was being educated on.

Although reading a text by Gordon Downie, a well-known settler-Canadian ally, is helpful, the reality remains that this story is still being told by a white settler. As John had mentioned, his life hadn't really changed since these revelations.

John was not the only person exposed to the settler's point of view, George, who is also from RSB but is a student, also discussed this text by Downie. Although he did not read it on his own time, it was done in class, it is worth mentioning that the chosen book when it comes to colonial issues was one written by a white man.

Educating oneself and being exposed to these stories and topics is important, but, as this projects dataset shows this is primarily being done through the eyes of settler experience. The findings also showed a desire for more Indigenous voices and experiences in the Nova Scotian curriculum, which is why it is important to explore how these can come together with a problem posing model of education to work to transform current white settler ideals and the precarious relationship that presently exists between Indigenous and settler peoples.

Transformative Education

Student input was at the forefront of this research, followed by educator perspective. This stemmed from theoretical influences in relation to the problem-posing method of education. There are interesting overlaps with this method of education, decoloniality, land as pedagogy, and students wants and needs. Students expressed a desire for more unconventional ways of learning, they want more Indigenous voices, they want to learn more about culture. As has been pointed out in the Theory section, the typical cells and bells style of education is continuing to fail students, this can be seen

within this study's data at the massive gaps in knowledge when it comes to certain topics, as was seen when discussing identity or historical events, a lack of knowledge is present for these students.

It can be argued that this gap in knowledge simply would not happen when it comes to maths and sciences, however, there is a lot of room for subjectivity in arts courses and this can be simply seen through the differences in John and Amy's interviews. While Amy had the ability to differently shape her teaching practice John had to follow guidelines and strict curriculums for his math and science courses.

It is jarring that such important topics and issues can be left out of the curriculum, something that students also picked up on. Like Riley for example, who brought up the Holocaust on more than one occasion in her interview as she was comparing the genocide here to that of the Jewish people in what was Nazi Germany. Neu and Therrien discuss this comparison when they mentioned that;

When faced with the evidence of the Holocaust, we are almost always overwhelmed by its naked brutality; the degree of inhumanity expressed through such an undertaking seems incomprehensible. And yet the same undertaking applied to Indigenous peoples-stretched over a century or two, dressed in a rationale of progress, economics and civilization-seems somehow to lose this quality of brutality and becomes not only comprehensible but even defensible (2003, p.25).

The reality of Canada's genocidal history is that it went on for centuries instead of a few years. What is so taxing about Canada's genocide is how unknown it remains to the general population, settlers in particular. Across the world people are aware of the Holocaust and its devastation, however, Canada's history is kept as a dirty secret, unbeknown to most, and the details are murky to many, which was captured by this study's quantitative and qualitative findings but at the level of rural NS.

Making a shift towards not only acknowledging these atrocities but to seeing them as a colonial issue will not be an easy one, which is why incorporating dialogue is so crucial when it comes to overcoming these limit situations (Freire, 1968). When students are interested and intrigued in a given subject, like that of Canada's violent colonial past, it can motivate students to learn more; "You sit back and you're kind of shocked that it happened but it, it motivated me to learn more and to like actually like, I don't know, like I truly don't think we've done enough even recently for any aboriginal peoples" (Riley, RSA). In this instance Riley was the leader of her own learning, she saw a problem, posed questions, and became critical of past and current dealings with these issues. It is instances like these that begin to show what problem-posing education can look like, if only it is encouraged, shaped, and allowed to grow to its full potential.

Other students, from the same school, acknowledged how different forms of learning worked for them. Amber discussed how one teacher using images and other unconventional ways of teaching made her learn and remember more;

Amber- Um, I guess I was like more open to what she was saying because all of the images and other ways that she showed us, so I retained it more.

Interviewer- Mhm, because of the different like style of learning?

Amber- Mhm.

Interviewer- Yeah.

Amber- Other than just like looking and being at the front of the class and being like 'this is what you're doing'.

This form of teaching is in direct contradiction of the banking model of education, for the banking model of education encourages teachers to be at the front of the class, to command attention and to present themselves as the bringer of knowledge to the

unfilled receptacles that are the students (Freire, 1968). Yet it is clear from the data, particularly the student interviews, that these students in the chosen NS schools prefer to learn in a manner that challenges the harmful banking model of education, especially in relation to colonial content.

Amber also discussed the fact that allowing to have her own creativity in the classroom truly helped her learning and growth. In this instance of creativity, Ambers art teacher encouraged her to create an art piece that spoke to her, and that she did:

Amber- well I have this art project...

Interviewer- Ok!

Amber- and it was all based around it. Um, because it's like my heritage and stuff like that.

Interviewer- Wow.

Amber- That's why I wanted to know about it. And I learned like what the Europeans thought, so like the Noble Savage and everything like that, and then all of the genocides and everything so there was um, there was a Cree Genocide, I can't remember which Cree it was but there, every time there is about um, almost up to 2000 people that were um, misplaced and they all had to walk miles to get to the new place and most of them died because they weren't allowed to stop.

Interviewer- And this is something that you learned on your own time?

Amber- Yeah.

Interviewer- And then you turned this into an art project for school is that right?

Amber- Yeah.

Interviewer- Yeah. That is really interesting, I would love to see that art piece now.

Amber- I could show you.

Interviewer- That's awesome. So, do you think that was uh, kind of a cool way to incorporate your learning um with the issues of like Indigenous struggles or, you know colonization within your like classwork, like was the teacher open to that?

Amber- Mhm, yeah. Oh well it was like for art, so he obviously loved the idea but, I just wanted to like show like the past and like what's happening now and like

Interviewer- Yeah.

Amber- because of all this that happened what – like- what we kind of evolved into like all like the aspects of like mental health and like maybe the substance abuse and what we learned.

Interviewer- Yeah. That is super interesting.

Amber- I have two layers that are just completely about mental illness and everything like that.

Interviewer- Wow. That is a really interesting way to like incorporate your learnings into that instead of just on a piece of paper writing it down.

Amber- Mhm.

This project is an example of the possibilities of problem-posing education. Amber explored her own interests and identity, to explore issues of neo-colonialism through her research and artwork. Not only that, but she also educated her teacher, embodying the student-teacher, teacher-student dynamic that aids in building new relationships.

Under the banking model of education, students are left with little agency or interest in many of these, at times, difficult topics. Lack of knowledge on certain topics leads to apathy, as was discussed by Amber and Riley in their interviews. However, when students are educated but also take part in this knowledge production and exploration, a deeper understanding can emerge. Rather than simple memorization, or being “filled” with what is deemed as official knowledge (Apple, 2000) students can play a key role in their learning, and therefore, will better understand these topics and issues, or as Amber stated, “it would be good for like

everyone to like kind of understand like why things are like this...it's kind of like
wow it's happening here."

Chapter Five: Conclusion

The settler nation state known as Canada has committed to both the TRC's 94 Calls to Action, and UNDRIP. Calls to Action numbered six through 12 of the TRC along with UNDRIP's Article 14 each relate to education and the fruitful role it can play in building bridges and relationships between Indigenous and settler peoples (Faries, 2004). Leading to a growing number of literatures exploring critical pedagogy, specifically in relation to decolonizing methodologies and the changes that they may engender. This thesis aims to explore a facet of this growing field of research, even if only in a small corner of the world.

This thesis explored how Grade 12 students in rural Nova Scotian High Schools are educated on Indigenous ways of knowing and colonialism. This was done by carrying out a mixed-methods approach involving both students and educators from the selected schools. This work contributes to the growing literature of educational reform, specifically given post-TRC Canada and the country's commitment to UNDRIP, but in the context of rural Nova Scotian schools.

Although this study and its findings only offer a glimpse into the wider realm of critical pedagogical studies and decolonial theory, it does work to bring forth meaningful change. My findings and analysis highlight the possibilities that decolonization theory and educational reform bring in relation to that of Indigenous / Settler society relations.

This project aimed to contribute to first steps of educational reform in rural Nova Scotia. It also aims to create a lasting impression on Indigenous and settler relations across the province. This process of change, of educational reform, has the ability to

happen on all fronts. For this is not an isolated issue, it is one that needs to be acknowledged upfront for what it is, and one that will require an intersectional approach:

Nobody's going to convince me that this isn't a genocide, nobody isn't going to convince me that this isn't still an issue, that is incredibly pressing today ... I think we need more of the social, those stories that people couldn't connect to. I think we need to start looking at those that have been disadvantaged because those are the stories that are typically left out. We need to look more at the communities themselves, what's happened, and their input of how they think we can best address things, it's a social thing (Amy, RSA).

Indeed, as pointedly addressed by Amy this transformation requires social change, it requires connection. This connection can begin on a micro level, which is what this project and its findings can contribute towards. These findings offer a guide for creating better connections and relations between Indigenous and settler peoples by changing the current banking model of education. This involves looking into the possibilities of problem-posing education in rural Nova Scotian classrooms, examples of which were seen throughout the data. Not only can this aid in Canada's commitment to TRC and UNDRIP, but it makes space for the possibility of a more wholistic learning environment for both students and teachers. One that involves meaningful dialogue between both student-teachers and teacher-students within rural Nova Scotian schools. This transformation offers the chance at further growth and educational reform in a variety of rural NS schools, but also in their urban counterparts.

By better understanding decolonial practices and pedagogy we can begin to unlearn the nuances of white settler coloniality within the education system. The aim is to explore where the education system stands in being complacent, and where the gaps in knowledge exist, for, in the words of Dion:

When Canadians recognize the distinct position that Indigenous people occupy in Canada— when students in Canadian classrooms study the history of the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, when Canadians respect and support Indigenous rights, then we will be ready to talk about reconciliation (2016, p.472).

This project will contribute to the literature of critical pedagogy, as well as the study of Indigenous and settler relations, but in the context of rural Nova Scotia. I hope to make people aware that Canadians need to recognize our history, we need to understand colonization, Indigenous ways of knowing, and beyond. Which is why I believe this study will contribute to building towards a moment where we can not only talk about building meaningful relationships between Indigenous and settler societies, but we can act upon it.

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Appendix A- Letter of Approval RSA

To whom it may concern;

Please accept this letter as permission for Hailie Tattrie, Masters student at Dalhousie University, to conduct research at my school, [redacted]. Hailie communicated with me in advance the purpose of the thesis and also the methods that she would be using to collect the project data. As she stated, the purpose of the master's thesis is to uncover to what degree the education system, within Nova Scotia, teaches students about the history of colonization and Indigenous ways of knowing. Hailie worked closely with one of my staff members who helped to connect Hailie with the students for interviews and also the students for surveys.

Hailie was very professional in the way she conducted herself in our building [redacted].

Hailie would be welcome back in the future and if you need any further information or clarification please feel free to contact me.

[Redacted Contact Information and Signature]

Appendix B- Letter of Approval RSB

June 19th, 2019

Re: Permission

To Whom it may Concern,

I am writing on behalf of the [redacted] stating that you have our permission to use the data collected from Hailie Tattrie.

Sincerely,

[Redacted Contact Information and Signature]

Appendix C- Sample Survey



This is meant to assess what Nova Scotia students are being taught. You will not be graded on this, this is for research purposes only. Please answer all questions to the best of your ability.

1. When is your birthday? dd/mm/yy

2. Do you identify as Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit, Métis)?
 - Yes
 - No

3. Of the following list please check any terms you have heard used within the classroom from you teacher in grades 10-12
 - Indigenous
 - First Nations
 - Inuit
 - Aboriginal
 - Mi'kmaq
 - Indian
 - Métis

4. Of the terms above, please list the three you have heard the most frequently in the classroom.

5. Between grades 10-12, have any of your teachers used the term “settler” in the classroom?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Unsure

6. If you do know the term “settler”, how would you explain this to someone who has never heard this term before? Please explain in 1-2 sentences.

7. Between grades 10-12, have any of your teachers used the term “colonizer” in the classroom?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

8. If you do know the term “colonizer”, how would you explain this to someone who has never heard this term before? Please explain in 1-2 sentences.

9. Which of the following terms, if any, do you remember your teacher using/teaching in the classroom from the grades of 10-12?

- First Nations
- Indigenous
- Inuit
- Mi’kmaw
- Genocide of Indigenous peoples in Canada
- Cultural genocide
- Nation to Nation
- L’nuk

10. For the terms you have checked off please provide a 1-2 sentence explanation of your understanding of each term below.

11. Which of the following material has your teacher discussed in the classroom, between the grades of 10-12? Check all that apply.

- Residential Schooling System
- Indian Residential Schooling System
- Indian Act
- Sixties Scoop
- Peace and Friendship Treaties
- Stephen Harper 2008 Apology
- Treaty
- Oka Crisis
- Donald Marshall Jr.
- Two-eyed Seeing

12. Of the topics above that you have indicated were discussed in class please provide a 1-2-line description of what you remember about these discussions.

13. In what context did you discuss these topics?

- Class lecture
- Guest lecture
- Textbook readings
- Other media (i.e. podcast, video, etc.)
- Group Discussion with other students
- Student presentation
- Paper topics
- Project topics
- You do not have a category that fits the way this was discussed in my classroom, I will provide an explanation below

14. Do you know the treaty that applies to the territory in which you currently live?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

15. Has your school held activities or events related to the following?

- Treaty Day
- Mi'kmaq History Month
- Orange Shirt Day (Residential School Commemoration)
- National Indigenous Peoples Day
- Red Dress Day
- Smudging Ceremony
- Indigenous Guest Lecturer/Assembly Presentation

16. What is something you think is important for me to know about how issues of Indigenous peoples and the history of colonization are presented and discussed in grades 10-12? Please explain in a paragraph or less.

Appendix D- Sample Student Interview Questions



1. Tell me about yourself, who are you and how has this shaped your High School experience?
2. What courses did you take in High School?
3. Tell me what you remember learning about Indigenous people, and Indigenous cultures and nations in grades 10 to 12.
4. What's been your experience with learning about colonization historically or in the present?
5. My next question might get a little heavy, if you want to take a moment, or skip the next question let me know. What have you heard in class about the genocide of Indigenous peoples in Canada, in grades 10-12?
6. What is your sense of your fellow students being open to learning about colonization and Indigenous issues?
7. If you had five minutes to talk with someone who has the ability to change the curriculum in relation to colonial and Indigenous content what would you tell them?

Appendix E- Sample Educator Interview Questions



1. What courses do you teach? How long have you been a teacher? What kind of supports do you get in terms of this material?
2. Tell me about how you teach your students about Indigenous ways of knowing and/or Indigenous culture, and colonial content?
3. Tell me about some of the challenges of incorporating the curriculum.
4. Tell me about how receptive the students have been to learn about this content from your perspective.
5. How could you, and fellow teachers, be better supported to approach this content so that you can properly educate yourself, and students on it?
6. If you had five minutes to talk with someone who has the ability to change the curriculum in relation to colonial and Indigenous content what would you tell them?

Appendix F - Demonstrates which terms for Indigenous peoples students identified as being used in the classroom most frequently

Variable	Rural School A	Rural School B	Mean
Indigenous	50%	51.90%	50.95%
First Nation	83.30%	74.10%	78.70%
Inuit	22.20%	3.70%	12.95%
Aboriginal	83.30%	77.80%	80.55%
Mi'kmaq	33.30%	59.30%	46.30%
Indian	27.80%	0%	13.90%
Métis	16.70%	7.40%	12.05%

Figure 1

Appendix G - Students understanding of the terms “Cultural Genocide” and “Genocide of Indigenous Peoples”

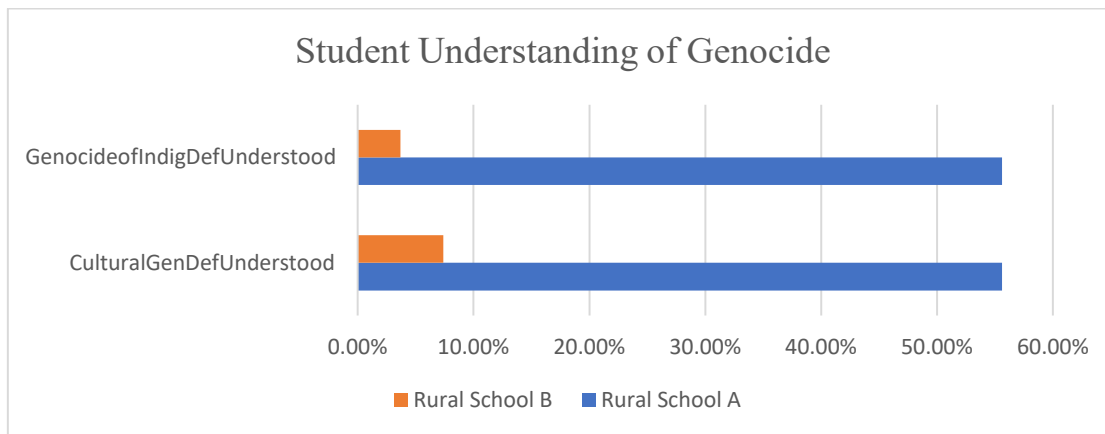


Figure 2

Appendix H- Shows which medium students are learning about this projects chosen topics

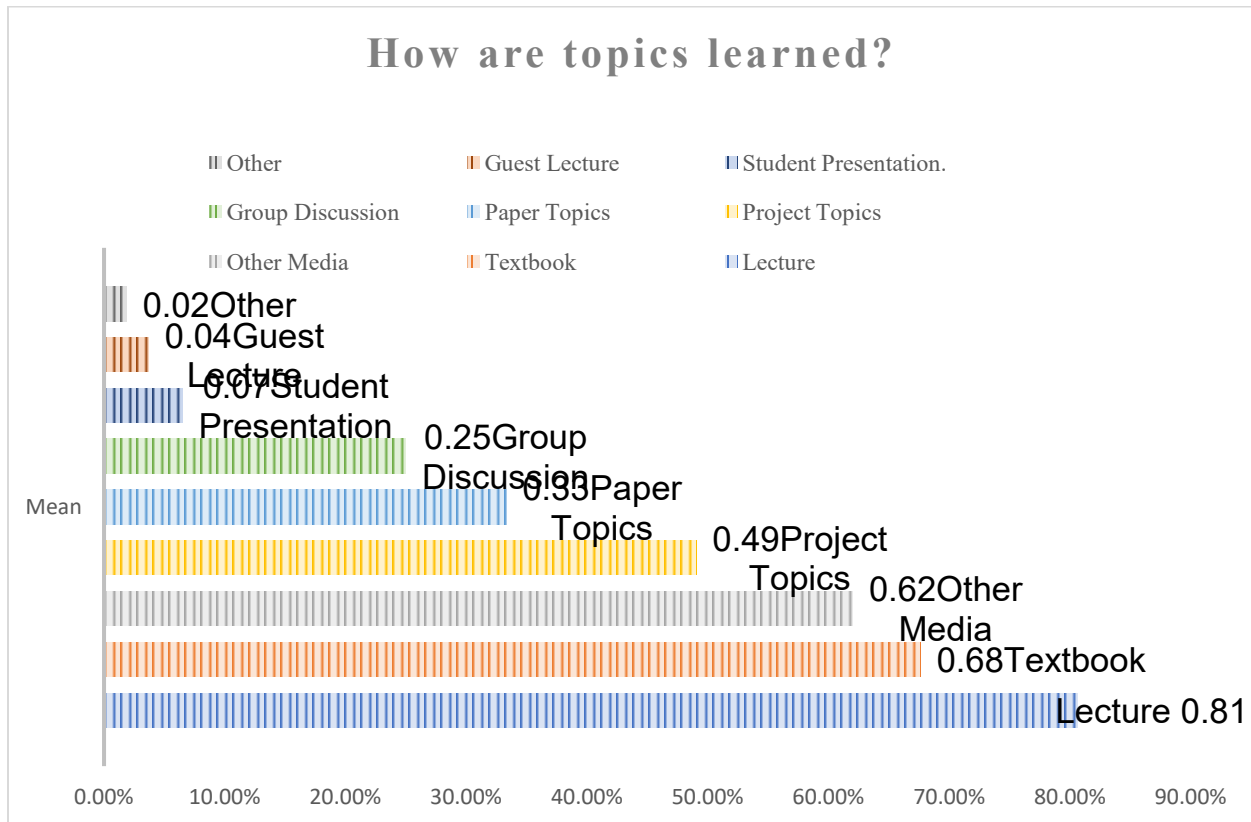


Figure 3.