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FACTORS AFFECTING INDIGENOUS STUDENT MOTIVATION IN K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

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FACTORS AFFECTING INDIGENOUS STUDENT MOTIVATION IN K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

By

Duane Penner

Accepted in Partial Completion
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

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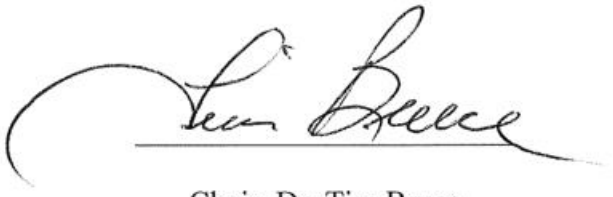

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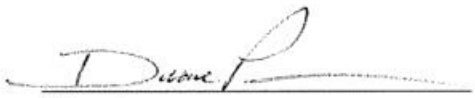

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July 1, 2023

Date

Factors Affecting Indigenous Student Motivation in K-12 Public Schools in British Columbia

A Dissertation
Presented to
The Faculty of
Western Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
Duane Penner
June 2023

DEDICATION

Leslie Cook

November 15, 1915 – March 9, 1999

The work within this dissertation is dedicated in memory and honor of my late grandfather, Leslie Cook. Many decades ago, my grandfather went on a journey to find the truth about his family's history. A story he would later share with his family of Cree and European settler marriages that would follow. My grandfather was Metis, one of three recognized Indigenous groups within Canada. Because of my grandfather's journey and what he had found, it instilled upon me a greater interest in digging deeper into the roots of my family's past, giving me a better understanding of who I am today.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my dissertation committee, Dr. Tim Bruce, Dr. Sharon Aller, Warren Aller, Dr. Don Larsen, and Dr. Kevin Godden: thank you for your friendly, yet professional, support and advice. Warren, a special thank you goes to you for your unending commitment to helping me reach higher than I ever thought possible. And lastly, to my family, Angie, Lucy, Jesse, and Theo: Thank you for supporting me throughout this entire process.

ABSTRACT

Many Indigenous Tribes within Canada, such as the Sto: Lo and Matsqui First Nations in British Columbia, with whom I work alongside in the Abbotsford School District, have struggled since the time of first contact and colonization to preserve and defend their culture and values. It is through truth, reconciliation, and the hope of working together that we may find common ground moving forward within our society. This research study considered Indigenous peoples' narratives through interview questions and stories. The research question was what are factors that motivate student success in K-12 public schools in British Columbia, Canada? A small sample of K-12 graduates and faculty participants from within the Abbotsford School District who identified as Indigenous volunteered for the study. The intent was that their responses, their narratives, and their stories could further support motivation and success of more Indigenous students in K-12 public schools throughout British Columbia, Canada.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Ey swayel.
We acknowledge that the Abbotsford School
District is located on the
traditional and unceded territory of the
Sto:lo people, the Sema:th First Nation,
and Mathxi First Nation. With this,
we respect the longstanding
relationships that Indigenous Nations
have to this land, as they are the
original caretakers.

(Abbotsford School District, 2022)

Growing up in a small-town rural setting in British Columbia (BC), Canada, I had the privilege of having friends from both the Seabird and Chehalis Indigenous reservations. At the time, my town had roughly 2000 people in its population, and I can remember my grade 12 graduating class having a total of about 40 students. Many students within my graduating class identified as Indigenous. My K-12 public education years began in the 1980s and ended in 1995 when I graduated high school. We had one elementary school that served students from kindergarten to grade five and one high school that completed our K-12 public education from grades six through 12. Because the town itself was close to two Indigenous reservations, it also gave me a unique perspective of some of our Indigenous students lives and their experiences. As I reflect upon my own K-12 public education experience, I recall announcements being made over the loudspeaker in my high school for our Indigenous students to come to the main office to receive small funds to purchase food at lunch time. They would typically use this money to walk across the street at lunch time to buy a can of pop and a bag of chips. I vividly recall the unkind

words spoken through whispers from some of my friends as each Indigenous student was called by name to the main office. Many of our Indigenous students also struggled academically in our schools and my friends from the Seabird Island and Chehalis reservations were no different.

Almost four decades later, these issues persist for many Indigenous students and families. I am now an elementary school principal, and this is very troublesome for many of us who believe that all students can succeed at high levels if the right supports are provided. It is my belief that every child has the right and deserves the opportunity to succeed in education. As a former teacher, vice-principal, and now principal, my career spanned a lifetime of being a part of the K-12 public education system in BC. I witnessed many programs implemented in our schools to help our most vulnerable populations succeed; such programs include restorative justice, Indigenous support workers, mental health clinicians, and the Indigenization of the curriculum, to name a few. As a result, there is evidence of progress as we collaborate to close the gap on student achievement and graduation rates for Indigenous students as compared to the rest of the student population. As I read the peer reviewed literature to gain a further understanding of the histories, harsh realities, and the trauma that Indigenous peoples endured since early colonization, it is evident that we must continue to do more as we move toward a path of reconciliation.

Claypool and Preston (2013) posed the following question: “To what extent can research on student motivation inform educators in creating inclusive school environments that acknowledge the importance of Aboriginal cultural values within Westernized educational systems?” (p. 274). In addition, the authors recommended further exploration of what motivates students to succeed in school and what similarities and differences exist among Aboriginal students in elementary, middle, and high school (Claypool & Preston, 2013). The questions

above were the impetus for me to dive deeper into a qualitative study to gain a better understanding. Finally, I also wanted to understand what role school administrators play in promoting Indigenous students' successful completion of their academic programs.

> OUR COMMITMENT
>
> The Abbotsford School District
> acknowledges historical and ongoing
> injustices that Indigenous Peoples endure
> in Canada, and we accept responsibility
> as a public educational institution to
> contribute toward revealing and
> correcting miseducation as well as
> renewing respectful relationships with
> Indigenous communities through our
> teaching and community engagement.
>
> Indigenous Education
>
> (Abbotsford School District, 2022)

Indigenous Peoples of BC Demographic and Educational Statistics

The auditor general's report (2019), shows us that Indigenous students in BC public schools graduated at a dismal 39% in the year 2000 as compared to 78% of non-Indigenous students who achieved graduation. Fast forward to 2018 and Indigenous students' graduation rates increased significantly. The same auditor general's report (2019) indicated that 70% of Indigenous students graduated compared to 86% of non-Indigenous students in BC public schools. We can celebrate this progress for our Indigenous students; however, there is much more work ahead to ensure all Indigenous students graduate high school.

School Achievement

Table 1

5-Year School Achievement Rate (2020/2021 School Year)

	% Indigenous Students	Graduation Rate All Students	Graduation Rate Indigenous Students
Abbotsford School District	11%	94%	73%
British Columbia	12.1%	90%	72%

Source: Aboriginal Report. (2021). *How are we doing?* British Columbia Ministry of Education Web Site. Available from ab-hawd-school-district-034.pdf (gov.bc.ca) & ab-hawd-school-district-public.pdf (gov.bc.ca)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of student motivation (intrinsic or extrinsic) as identified by Indigenous students, colleagues, and others within the Abbotsford School District. Gaining a better understanding of student intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, as seen through the eyes of Indigenous students, could provide insight into how Tribal and school district leaders might best provide needed support to future students.

Statement of the Research Problem

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) published their Calls to Action "in order to redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation" (p. 1). Specifically, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada stated, "We call upon the federal government to develop with Aboriginal groups a joint strategy to eliminate educational and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians" (p. 1-2).

The Method of the Study

This study included a phenomenological qualitative research design. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated, "from the philosophy of phenomenology comes a focus on the experience itself and how experiencing something is transformed into consciousness" (p. 25). As such, this

phenomenological study explored Indigenous students' success stories and how the students' learning spirits are ignited and nurtured.

Research Questions

The following questions helped to frame this study, serving as a reference point for the actual questions asked in the interview process:

1. To what extent can research on student motivation inform educators in creating inclusive school environments that acknowledge the importance of Indigenous cultural values within Westernized educational systems?
2. What motivates Indigenous students to succeed in school?
3. What role or support systems might schools play in promoting Indigenous students' successful completion of their academic programs?

Limitations of the Study

This qualitative research was based upon perceived attributes of success and motivation of eight Indigenous people from various tribes in BC. Some of the interviewees who identified as Indigenous were raised on reservation land and some were raised off reservation land. Therefore, generalizations of success or motivation cannot be made on specific tribes or all Indigenous people in BC. The limitations of this study are based upon thematic experiences and the interviewees' responses. The intention of this study was to gain a better understanding of what led or contributed to the success/motivational attributes of the individuals interviewed within this study. Limitations are addressed in Chapter 3.

Summary

I was fortunate enough to have grown up with friends and families from the Seabird and Chehalis Indigenous reservations. As I reflect upon my experience as a student in the K-12

public schools in BC beginning in the early 1980s, I also have a better understanding of the harsh realities Indigenous students endured.

I spent much of my career spanning more than a decade working for the Abbotsford School District; a school district committed toward a path of truth and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. It is my intention and commitment to gain a further understanding of what motivates Indigenous students to further succeed in their academic programs in the K-12 B.C. public schools, specifically how it pertains to the Abbotsford School District.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

To gain a better understanding of the history of Canada's colonization and the educational experiences of our Indigenous peoples, this research focused on the historical narrative from the time of first contact of European colonizers and continued to the present. Similar research has been done concerning the United States and Australia. The literature review will show that during Canada's colonization and shortly after, legislation was enacted, treaties ignored, and rapid loss of Indigenous land ensued, resulting in great trauma for the Indigenous peoples of Canada. Further, the residential school experience forced upon the children of Indigenous peoples in Canada led to decades-long trauma, alcoholism, and mental health issues. As the nation attempts to correct these wrongs, healing and forgiveness must occur. Canada acknowledged its mistakes and is committed to rectifying them through truth and reconciliation. Though the nation's path to reconciling with Indigenous peoples will be long and difficult, Canada must not stop and remain committed to a better nation for all. Brown (2019) indicated:

> That settler colonial violence is manifest both in the experiences of Indigenous young people in their engagement with the education system, and in the fact that despite a decade of targeted efforts to close the gap in Indigenous educational 'disadvantage' it still remains. (p. 54)

Brown's research aligned with the assumptions and lived experiences in K-12 public education in Canada and the U. S. Both countries struggled to close the academic achievement gap for over a decade with their country's most vulnerable student populations.

Themes in the Literature

There are numerous examples of false narratives displaying Eurocentric economic views during the colonial period. Stanton (2019) described the work of White European writers during the time of colonization that excluded Indigenous viewpoints and therefore presented a distorted account of what occurred. European settlers justified taking land from natives for profit. In other words, to the Europeans, the land itself would be put to better use for greater profit. Laws were then passed that disregarded the shared lands between European settlers and Natives for the purpose of private property rights. These new laws were also justified from the settlers' perspective because Natives had not settled down to improve it. It was of no consequence that they viewed the land differently. Collis (2019) described the *Indian Act*, the structure of colonialism in Canada and provided a historical critique of injustices through legislation within Canadian jurisdictions. Collis also challenged current colonial-based views in Canada.

European colonization of Indigenous lands diminished the quality of life economically and socially, and brought homelessness, mental and physical health problems, and loss of identity to Indigenous peoples. Alberton et al. (2020) discussed the differences between visible and hidden homelessness that exists for the Indigenous peoples of Canada. Social structures play a significant role in creating Indigenous homelessness. However, greater educational achievement by Indigenous peoples can reduce homelessness.

Barker et al. (2017) described many health disparities that exist for the Indigenous population compared to the non-Indigenous population that are significant factors for their higher rates of suicide. This is a national crisis in Canada. The authors summarized behavioral change frameworks to help reduce the impact of these suicide rates and recommended that cultural revitalization among Indigenous communities take place using a strength approach.

Reyhner (2018) discussed how Indigenous people experienced rapid loss of land and their way of life had to cope with new realities. Some Indigenous families intentionally sent their children to Canadian and American residential schools to escape the harsh conditions on reservations. Unfortunately, these schools used assimilation practices to erase cultural identities of Indigenous students. To counter this legacy, current curricula seek to restore Indigenous practices using culturally-sensitive instruction.

Keddie and Niesche (2012) examined how a White, middle-class principal in a rural Indigenous school can provide equity and diversity for the school. The authors emphasized the conflict between Westernized approaches to schooling and Indigenous students. These were described through the experiences of the principal. Further, these authors provided a better understanding of how to remedy poor race relations that have contributed to the oppression of Indigenous peoples.

Much of what has been learned from the Western colonization of Indigenous areas can provide an understanding of what is needed to motivate Indigenous students in K-12 public schools. Martin et al. (2021) discovered that when Indigenous high school students were compared to their non-Indigenous peers, Indigenous students had significantly lower scores for motivation and engagement. The researchers also found that positive motivation increased academic performance for Indigenous students. If positive motivation predicted student success, how can it be used to enhance educational outcomes for Indigenous students?

Miller (2018) questioned if it is culturally appropriate to measure Indigenous achievement using standardized assessments. The author investigated other types of assessments that could be used for Indigenous students in hopes of providing more culturally responsive ways to assess the educational attainments of these students in Canada.

A re-consideration of the difficult history described above led to creating the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action* (TRC) in 2009 for the province of BC. The TRC concluded that non-Indigenous students need to be exposed to Aboriginal principles of learning and various world views using collective leadership as a means to accomplish this within the K-12 curriculum (Osmond-Johnson & Turner, 2020). The TRC's (2015) report indicated a responsibility to do this from the provincial Ministry of Education to all school districts and a call to each community to unite and reconcile with Indigenous families in the area of education.

Colonization of British Columbia

Before you know where you are going, you must know where you have been.

(Pennier, 1994)

The British began their colonization efforts on Vancouver Island, BC in 1849. Another British colony soon followed along the western shore of BC in 1858 under the governor of both colonies, James Douglas. From the outset, the legislature, judiciary, and non-native population began to take advantage of the Indigenous peoples by ignoring treaties and the issue of Aboriginal land titles (Tennant & Lindsay, 1992). This began the infamous history that Indigenous peoples would endure as more British colonizers settled within native lands. Tennant (1990) described Douglas as an assimilationist, who "believed that traditional Indian ways could not survive in the new circumstances and that Indian salvation lay in Christianity and a European agrarian lifestyle" (p. 29).

The *Indian Act* and Residential Schools

The *Indian Act* of 1876 was established and fully realized in 1879. The *Act* allowed the Canadian government to use schools to assimilate Indigenous children into what settlers would

have considered ‘modern’ Canada (de Leeuw, 2007). Schools were started to instill European values, teach Christianity, and provide moral direction for Indigenous students.

Davin (1879) published his report on industrial schools, also known in Canada as *The Davin Report*. Davin completed an investigation of boarding schools for native children in the U.S. and concluded that Canada would succeed with its assimilation of Indigenous peoples only by adopting similar forceful educational practices:

> An industrial boarding school should be established somewhere in the fork of the North and South Saskatchewan, near Prince Albert, in connection with the Episcopalian Church. The land is wonderfully fertile. There are a good many Indians in the neighborhood. There are Bands of Indians near Carlton and Dutch Lake. There is plenty of fish and timber. (Davin, 1879, p. 18)

These practices required boarding or residential schools because typical public schools or industrial schools would allow too much contact between Aboriginal children and their families. Additionally, Davin stated that implementing residential schools would also decrease the opportunity for these students to interact with their cultures and therefore significantly reduce the likelihood of their being influenced by their cultures (de Leeuw, 2007).

Trauma

The Office of the Chief of the Kamloops Indian Band (2021) issued the following statement:

> May 27, 2021, Kamloops, BC. It is with a heavy heart that Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc Kukpi7 (Chief) Rosanne Casimir confirms an unthinkable loss that was spoken about but never documented by the Kamloops Indian Residential School. This past weekend, with the help of a ground penetrating radar specialist, the stark truth of the preliminary

findings came to light–the confirmation of the remains of 215 children who were students of the Kamloops Indian Residential School.

According to Kay (2017), under the *Indian Act of 1876*, the Canadian government "dictated that children could be forcibly removed from their families and placed in schools that were for the most part long distances away from their homes" (p. 107). The residential schools would be funded by the government and run by churches. Children would be punished if they spoke in their native languages. This would become known as part of a process called 'killing the Indian' in the child. Kay described the resulting trauma:

> Many of these children never saw home again, for it is estimated that 10,000 children in a total of 150,000 First Nations, Metis, and Inuit students died from tuberculosis, abuse, or violence. Schools had graveyards, and many who were lost lie in unmarked graves and were never accounted for. Some of the surviving children were sent home for summer vacation but many were not, particularly the Inuit children, as it was considered too expensive to send these children back to their homes. Some Inuit students did not see their parents for 12 years. When they did return home, they could not communicate with parents who were strangers to them. Families and whole communities were shattered. (p. 107)

Harsh residential practices used with Indigenous children lasted for almost a century in Canada. The U.S. and Australia also had national scandals concerning their Indigenous peoples and treatment of Aboriginal children and families. These nations needed to come to terms with this deplorable history as well. This resulted in many official apologies, policy initiatives, and periods to seek healing (Harkin, 2016). In BC, these policy initiatives led to the TRC,

Enhancement Agreements for Indigenous Children, and having the *First Peoples Principles of Learning* added to the provincial K-12 curriculum.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action

The authors of the TRC report (2015) stated, "Education must remedy the gaps in historical knowledge that perpetuate ignorance and racism" (p. 117). Additionally, the Commission offered many educational goals for non-Indigenous students in Canada, including:

> [Non-Aboriginal students] need to know how notions of European superiority and Aboriginal inferiority have tainted mainstream society's ideas about, and attitudes towards, Aboriginal peoples in ways that have been profoundly disrespectful and damaging. [Non-Aboriginal students] need to understand Canada's history as a settler society and how assimilation policies have affected Aboriginal peoples. This knowledge and understanding will lay the groundwork for establishing mutually respectful relationships. (p. 185)

It is crucially important to know that *Calls to Action* 62 and 63 from the TRC consider the role of education in reconciliation:

> 62. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to:
>
> i. Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students.
>
> ii. Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.

iii. Provide the necessary funding to Aboriginal schools to utilize Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in classrooms.

iv. Establish senior-level positions in government at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to Aboriginal content in education.

63. We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including:

i. Developing and implementing Kindergarten to Grade Twelve curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools.

ii. Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history.

iii. Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.

iv. Identifying teacher-training needs relating to the above. (p. 7)

Following the TRC's lead, many institutions across Canada began initiatives to create respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. The University of Winnipeg is one and now requires undergraduates to take an Indigenous course requirement. Nationally, increased support for systemic change lets students learn the injustices and discrimination that Indigenous peoples across Canada have endured (Siemens & Neufeld, 2022).

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act

As required by the TRC, the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of 2007* (UNDRIP), established by the United Nations, was the province's framework for reconciliation. The *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act of 2019* (DRIPA) became pivotal

legislation to help heal and reconcile relationships with Indigenous peoples across BC. DRIPA's Action Plan stated:

> On November 26, 2019, with the unanimous passage of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act in the BC legislature, committed to upholding the human rights of Indigenous Peoples. Under this legislation, we have begun with a five-year action plan in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples to advance this vital work. We are pleased to present the first Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act action plan. (p. 1)

DRIPA was passed unanimously by the province's Legislative Assembly, making it the first jurisdiction in Canada to adopt UNDRIP. The *Declaration* was developed jointly with Indigenous leaders and legal staff and was introduced in a historic ceremony.

Professional Standards for Educators in British Columbia

Following DRIPA came an updated version of the *Professional Standards for BC Educators* (2019). Standard 9 stated:

> Educators respect and value the history of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis in Canada and the impact of the past on the present and the future. Educators contribute toward truth, reconciliation, and healing. Educators foster a deeper understanding of ways of knowing and being, histories, and cultures of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis.
>
> The *Standards* include the following comments for *Standard 9*:
>
> Educators critically examine their own biases, attitudes, beliefs, values, and practices to facilitate change. Educators value and respect the languages, heritages, cultures, and ways of knowing and being of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis. Educators understand the power of focusing on connectedness and relationships to oneself, family, community, and

> the natural world. Educators integrate First Nations, Inuit, and Metis worldviews and perspectives into learning Environments. (p. 5)

Enhancement Agreement for Indigenous Students

UNDRIPA began a cascade of events that gave Canada the impetus to act federally, provincially, and in BC through the Ministry of Education to provide frameworks such as enhancement agreements for schools. In 2019, the Abbotsford School District acknowledged the input and development of the third *Enhancement Agreement for Indigenous Students* with elders, leaders, and families of the Matsqui and Sumas First Nations, the Fraser Valley Metis Association, Indigenous students, and their parents from the Abbotsford School District, and finally the Aboriginal Advisory Committee (Abbotsford School District, 2019). The purpose of the agreement is to enhance educational experiences and achievement of all native students within the Abbotsford School District. It is a commitment to Indigenous learners and acts as a framework for the next five years for developing educational programs, resources, supplemental services, and the use of targeted spending for Indigenous students from the Ministry of Education (Abbotsford School District, 2019).

The following three goals are within the agreement: student success, cultural identity, and equity and access. Indigenous students will be supported to develop their potential in all aspects of school life. To assist in achieving cultural identity, students will learn about their cultural identity and connect with their ancestry in a meaningful way. When these students know who they are and where they have come from, they are more likely to develop a positive sense of self and belonging. Equity will help them thrive in an environment that encourages access to all opportunities in school. Future actions to create appropriate curricula across BC are expected to follow (Abbotsford School District, 2019).

First Peoples Principles of Learning

As the Province of BC redesigned the K-6 curriculum in 2016, a learning philosophy became embedded in the *First Peoples Principles of Learning* (Hanson, 2019). The *First Nations Steering Committee* (FNESC, 2008/2014) provided nine principles to the First Peoples approach to learning that can be used in place of traditional European and American ways of learning. Sanford et al. (2013) described the FNESC. Table 2 contrasts the two methods.

Table 2

Contrasting World Views in Teaching and Learning.

Eurocentric-American (Dominant Approach to Learning)	*First Peoples Principles of Learning*
Learning is competitive, individualistic. The goal of learning is to get a job.	Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.
Knowledge is transmitted. Students work independently. Teaching and assessment are separate.	Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).
Learning is teacher-to-student focused. Teacher chooses what student learn.	Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions. Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.
Euro-American knowledge focus.	Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge.
Focus of learning is on a single discipline, in a linear fashion.	Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.
Students are ranked according to predetermined criteria.	Learning involves patience and time. Learning requires exploration of one's identity.
Teacher is the expert and all-knowing.	Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations.

Hansen (2019) described having been a middle school teacher and comparing the Eurocentric and FPPL:

> As I reviewed the principles, I called into question how learning is approached through a dominant culture lens in my classroom. While I do not relish binary thinking, I began to map my understanding of the FPPL by recognizing and naming the implicated worldview in all approaches to learning. I challenged myself to recognize the ways that I have mistakenly promoted, and thus protected, colonialism by not making explicit that I am always teaching in relationship to a worldview. For example, as opposed to recognizing the role of Indigenous knowledge, I have normalized and reproduced my settler perspective through homogeneous accounts of history, science, and geography. (pp. 128–129)

This reflection is just one of many examples of how settler teachers in BC reflected upon the changes that they needed to make in their teaching practices when guided by the worldview of the FFPL. Reflections from settler teachers such as the one above are needed to motivate other teachers to reflect upon their teaching practice and embed ways of knowing through the worldview of *First Peoples Principles of Learning*. This is not only needed to motivate teachers but all staff, students, and families within the K-12 public education system.

Motivation

Motivation is a psychological construct used to describe why individuals and groups choose a particular behaviour and persist with it. The construct of motivation has a long history that spans all cultures through time (McInerney, 2019). According to Reiss (2012), motivation includes intrinsic and extrinsic motivation:

> Intrinsic motivation is most commonly defined as ‘‘doing something for its own sake,’’ as when a child plays baseball for no reason other than because that is what he wants to do. Extrinsic motivation, in contrast, refers to the pursuit of an instrumental goal, as when a child plays baseball in order to please a parent or win a championship. (p. 152)

Cheng (2019) suggested that in Western culture, intrinsic motivation is key to academic achievement but cautioned against generalizing the dynamics of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to other cultural settings around the world.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Theories of motivation have interested the social sciences community for decades. One of the most highly regarded motivational theorists is Abraham Maslow. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (see Table 3 below) is still considered one of the most highly influential models that spans across education as well as other disciplines. Maslow's hierarchy still influences researchers around the world (Feigenbaum & Smith, 2020). Bear et al. (2022) argued that Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory was heavily influenced by the First Nation's perspective of the Blackfoot People, also known as the Siksika from southern Alberta. Bear et al. (2022) indicated:

> Maslow did not understand the Siksika way of knowing. It is not that Maslow got the hierarchy wrong or upside down, it is rather that he did not understand the circular nature in which all beings in Siksika society are interconnected and integrated. They surround each other and needs are met through these connections. (p. 40)

"The hierarchy is fundamentally focused on the question of what motivates human behaviours with the notion that survival needs are at the bottom of the hierarchy working upwards towards self-actualisation" (Bear et al., 2022, p. 31).

Hoffman (1988) stated, "frequent mystic like or transcendent experiences, a democratic rather than authoritarian outlook, and involvement in a cause or mission outside of oneself" (p. 187). Further, Hoffman defined self-actualisation as:

> The apex of personal growth in which we become freed from basic needs and deficiency motivation; not an endpoint in most people but a drive or yearning to fully develop. Also, a process of fulfilling our latent talents, capacities, and potentialities at any time, in any amount. Although we all have this drive, we also possess a fear of growth. (p. 206)

Maslow (1962, 1988) would ultimately add the notion of peak experiences (self-transcendence) to the theory (see Table 3).

Table 3

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Motivational level	Description of person at this level
Self-transcendence	Seeks to further a cause beyond the self and to experience a communion beyond the boundaries of the self through peak experience.
Self-actualization	Seeks fulfillment of personal potential
Esteem needs	Seeks esteem through recognition or achievement.
Belongingness and love needs	Seeks affiliation with a group.
Safety Needs	Seeks security through order and law
Physiological (survival) needs	Seeks to obtain the basic necessities of life.

Source: Koltko-Rivera (2007).

Self-Transcendence

Self-transcendence, as described by Koltko-Rivera (2007), seeks to experience a communion beyond the boundaries of the self through peak experience. Koltko-Rivera argued that the current model of Maslow's hierarchy is unfinished as Maslow himself had later thoughts on it. Koltko-Revera stated the following regarding the addition of self-transcendence, "The conventional description of Abraham Maslow's (1943, 1954) hierarchy of needs is inaccurate as

a description of Maslow's later thought. Maslow (1969a) amended his model, placing self-transcendence as a motivational step beyond self-actualization" (p. 302).

Maslow (1969) described a philosophical revolution (self-transcendence) that is currently underway and affecting many social institutions. He labeled it as a humanistic revolution and a turn back to human needs. According to Maslow, "it is a centering of knowledge, of epistemology, of metaphysics, of science, and of all human concerns, with human needs and with human experience" (p. 1).

Self-Actualization

Self-actualization seeks fulfillment of personal potential (Koltko-Rivera, 2007). As one realizes their potential, they may tend to seek status among friends, relatives, co-workers, or loved ones (Krems et al., 2017). These authors also examined the perceptions individuals have when they realize they have reached their full potential (self-actualized). The essence of Maslow's theory regarding self-actualization is that it can occur only after we fulfill basic needs (Vernon, 2016).

Esteem

Esteem, or self-esteem as described by Orth and Robins (2014), is yet another perceptual construct that can be used as a predictor of success in life. The authors explained that high self-esteem would indicate the potential for a successful career and relationships in life, as well as good health. Low self-esteem, on the contrary, would be a predictor of lesser potential in life regarding one's career, relationships, and health. Esteem is defined by Koltko-Rivera (2007) as something one seeks through recognition and achievement.

Love and Belonging

Belongingness and love-needs seek affiliation with a group (Koltko-Rivera, 2007). Virat et al. (2022) found that a teacher's love toward their students, as well as a student's sense of belonging at school, strengthened positive perceptions among legal authorities and created better student/teacher relationships. The same can be argued for children in care or foster care. Gribble and Blythe (2022) found that children must experience love and belonging when placed in foster care and that it was beneficial to recruit foster parents who could provide this environment for children needing foster care.

Safety Needs

Taormina and Gao (2013) defined safety needs in the following manner:

> Safety-security needs may be defined as the lack of protections such as shelter from environmental dangers and disasters, personal protection from physical harm, financial protection from destitution, legal protection from attacks on one's rights to a peaceful existence, or a lack of stability in one's life. (p. 157)

Koltko-Revera (2007) referred to safety needs as seeking security through order and law.

Physiological Needs

Physiological needs are the lowest level of the hierarchy. Koltko-Rivera (2007) described physiological (survival) needs as seeking to obtain the necessities of life. Taormina and Gao (2013) shared that physiological needs include food, water, and shelter. Taomarina and Gao defined physiological needs "as the lack of chemicals, nutrients, or internal (e.g., exercise/health) or environmental (e.g., temperatures) conditions necessary for the body to survive, such that the extended absence of these things could lead to psychological stress or physical death" (p. 157).

Summary of the Literature

The Indigenous peoples of Canada have paid a high price at the hands of European settlers. Over a century of trauma caused by historical injustices ensuing following initial contact; and it can be argued that trauma and injustices persist. The poor academic performance of native K-12 students in public schools is only one example of the harsh reality colonization has had on tribes throughout Canada.

However, Canada's provincial and federal governments made a concerted effort through the TRC to address historic grievances and, in so doing, created relationships that have been built between the government and Indigenous peoples across the country. Much more work is needed to move forward. As the nation continue to forge a path by passing legislation and implementing *Indigenous Enhancement Agreements* in BC and across Canada, the hope is that lasting healing can be achieved.

The harsh truths of Canada's past are only now being revealed. It is a positive, though belated, step that Indigenous peoples and the government are working together to provide success for all Canadians. To this end, the studies reviewed provide support for the proposed research. The educational practices now embedded in British Columbia's schools, such as Indigenous principles of learning, can provide educators with a means of cultivating success and enhancing motivation among Indigenous students.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Essence

You ask about the shape

and form of my life?

I do not know.

But how would my ancestors

have seen their shape

in the flowing river?

Don't you know

wearing masks of cow dung

clay and wood

we never experienced the “self.”

We have not seen the shape

of the clouds and rain passing by

but when the earth turns green

our drums beat

and feet begin to move.

We forget who is man,

who is woman.

We dance.

We sing.

Even then we have not seen this “self.”

Don't you know

in the reverberating

of river, mountain, rock

drums

we become one?

There is a truth –

our breath stops

when we see fields

trees, forest, thirsting

for water

as if our roots are thirsty.

We make our drums

cry then.

Don't you know

when someone turns rocks to dust,

beheads trees,

stops the river flowing

burns swamps to make ash,

we feel we have lost our

“self.”

Then we understand

dust from the earth

mountains of rocks

river, water

breath of the wind

fields of corn

light of day

darkness of night

are the essence

of our days.

You see essence

does not have a shape.

(Vasava, 2016, pp. 59–60)

Patton (2015) provided insight into qualitative research through what he terms "qualitative wisdom" (p. 1):

> A Portuguese professional from Barcelona was driving in a remote area of his country when he came upon a sizeable herd of sheep being driven along the country road by a shepherd. Seeing that he would be delayed until the sheep could turned off the road, he got out of the car and struck up a conversation with the shepherd.
>
> "How many sheep do you have?" he asked.
>
> "I don't know," responded the young man. The professional was embarrassed for having exposed what he assumed was the young shepherd's lack of formal schooling, and therefore his inability to count such a large number. But he was also puzzled.
>
> "How do you keep track of the flock if you don't know how many sheep there are? How would you know if one was missing?"

> The shepherd, in turn, seemed puzzled by the question. Then he explained, "I don't need to count them. I know each one, and I know the whole flock. I would know if the flock was not whole." (p. 1)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of student motivation as discussed by Indigenous students, colleagues, and others within the Abbotsford School District. Gaining a better understanding of student motivation seen through the eyes of Indigenous students could provide insight into how tribal and school district leaders might best provide needed support to future students.

Research Methods

Phenomenology

"Phenomenological research is the study of essences" (Van Manen, 1990, p.10). There can be an essence or essences in a shared experience, and this differentiates a dimension from a phenomenological approach. For example, there can be experiences of different people that the researcher can then bracket, analyze, and compare to identify the essence of the phenomenon (Patton, 2015). Phenomenological reduction, or epoché, "refers to the elimination of everything that limits us from perceiving things as such, since the natural attitude, due to its objective nature, prevents us from doing so. To apply the epoché, refers, to abstain or to do without." (Villanueva, 2014, p. 220)

Epoché must be a part of the methodology when conducting phenomenological research. This will allow the researcher to understand the essence (Patton, 2015). This can be accomplished in the following manner:

> (1) the researcher has to bracket personal past knowledge and all other theoretical knowledge, not based on direct intuition, regardless of its source, so that full attention can be given to the instance of the phenomenon that is currently appearing to his or her consciousness, and (2) the researcher withholds the positing of the existence or reality of the object or state of affairs that he or she is beholding. The researcher takes the object or event that is appearing but does not make the claim that the object or event really exists in the way that it is appearing. It is seen to be a phenomenon. (Giorgi, 2006, p. 355)

A phenomenological study underlies the questions put forth in this qualitative research study. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) wrote, "from the philosophy of phenomenology comes a focus on the experience itself and how experiencing something is transformed into consciousness" (pp. 25–26). This phenomenological study explored Aboriginal students' success stories and how students' learning is ignited and nurtured.

Heuristic Inquiry

Heuristics is a variety of phenomenology that takes into consideration the personal experiences and insights of the researcher (Patton, 2015). Douglass and Moustakas (1985) stated:

> There are two focusing or narrowing elements of heuristic inquiry within the larger framework of phenomenology. First, the researcher must have personal experience with and intense interest in the phenomenon under study. Second, others (coresearchers) who are part of the study must share an intensity of experience with the phenomenon. Heuristic inquiry focuses on intense human experiences, intense from the point of view of the investigator and the coresearchers. It is the combination of personal experience and intensity that yields an understanding of the essence of the phenomenon. "Heuristics is

> concerned with meanings, not measurements; with essence, not appearance; with quality, not quantity; with experience, not behavior. (p. 42)

In heuristic inquiry, the research question is deeply personal and therefore resonates within the individual researcher (Hiles, 2001).

Participants

To understand the perspectives and recent experiences through the lens of Indigenous peoples, a convenience sample will be used. As a principal in a school district of approximately 20,000 students, it is relatively easy to gain access to colleagues who identify as Indigenous and ask them about their experiences as students in the K-12 public education system in BC. Using the metric of career advancement to define success, all colleagues participating in this study who identify as Indigenous would be considered as very successful within their respective careers.

With assistance from the District Principal of Indigenous Education, I will recruit participant faculty who identify as Indigenous. All participants who are 18 years old or older and agreed to be part of the study completed an informed consent form (see Appendix B). The consent form described the study and informed them that their participation was voluntary; they could refuse to answer any question, end their involvement at any time, and that their identity would be protected. Participants were also informed about the time needed for the study and that there would be no compensation for their time. The parameters for recruiting participants included gender, school attended, and whether they lived on- or off-reservation. These requirements allowed for a diverse range of experiences that can be shared during the interviews.

All participants were given the option of being interviewed in-person at their school, work, or using *Zoom*. Additionally, another mutually agreeable location could be used if needed.

Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and interpreted. Names of the participants will not be used to protect their privacy. The interview questions are provided in Appendix A.

Data Collection

Setting

Abbotsford, described a century ago as a small rural blue-collar logging and farming community, is now considered a city located 45 miles from Vancouver. It is the fifth largest municipality in BC and has a population of over 133000 people, including the third highest proportion of minorities among Census Metropolitan Areas in Canada (Heritage Abbotsford, 2023).

The Abbotsford School District is in the heart of the Fraser Valley in Abbotsford, BC, Canada. The school district is attended by over 19,200 full and part time students at 30 elementary schools, eight middle schools, one combined middle-secondary school, and seven secondary schools. The district is the largest employer in the city, with over 2,200 full and parttime teaching and support staff. The district honors the traditional territory of the Sumas First Nation and Matsqui First Nation on which our schools are located. The programs and services provided provide to students and families are sensitive to the cultural protocols of these two communities (SD34, 2022).

Interviews

According to Loppie (2007), Indigenous principles have the potential to be a framework which other researchers can learn and conduct future studies that both respect and potentially benefit Aboriginal peoples. Therefore, it was the researcher's intent to use two aspects of the *First Peoples Principles of Learning*: learning is embedded in memory, history, and story; and

learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations (FNESC, 2007).

Initial Interview

The initial interview consisted of the same six questions for each interviewee. All interviewees consented to be recorded on an app called *Otter AI* on the researcher's iPhone, downloaded to text, then uploaded using another app called *Dedoose*. If a participant chose to be interviewed through *Zoom* or Microsoft *Teams*, both programs can provide a back-up for the recording using *Otter AI*.

First Follow-Up to the Initial Interview

Following the first interview, the researcher forwarded a transcription of interview to the participant to check it for accuracy. This step is known as *member checking* (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and helps the researcher show the reliability of the data. Maslow's (1962) theory of motivation was also applied to the thematic interpretations of each interview and included self-actualization, esteem, love and belonging, safety needs, and physical needs. The text and themes were confirmed with participants, letting them have an opportunity to add, remove, and clarify any text or theme to ensure that, to the extent possible, the data were accurate.

Final Follow-Up to the Initial Interview

The final follow-up on the interview process was a time for the interviewee to review the language of the final text of the study, to ensure that each person felt that the document fairly represented his or her story (Bruce 2006).

Data Analysis

Theme Development and Application of Motivation Theory

Dedoose uses information from the interview and extracts qualitative research themes to be analyzed by the researcher. With the ease of online platforms for communication and meetings, *Zoom* and *Teams* was used to conduct the interviews. These online platforms also functioned as a back-up for recorded interviews. If a participant chose to be interviewed at a mutually agreed upon location, *Otter AI* was used to record the interview. Transcribed interviews and coded themes were sent to the interviewees for final approval.

In addition to identifying themes from *Dedoose*, the researcher applied principles of motivation theory to each theme. When applicable, Maslow's (1962) hierarchy of needs was assigned one or more motivational causes for each theme, including self-actualization, esteem, love and belonging, safety needs, and physical needs.

Discussion of Theme Development and Application of Motivation Theory

After developing initial themes and their application to motivation theory as described in the previous section, the researcher conducted a second interview with participants. This second interview allowed me to present the research to each participant and give them an opportunity to share any of their thoughts or concerns. I then completed a final submission with participants' comments before presenting the findings.

Review of the Initial Transcript

To further assess the accuracy of the themes and application of motivation theory, I emailed the transcription to participants for review. This allowed participants to confirm the accuracy of what they shared with me. As an additional check for cultural appropriateness, the initial text was reviewed by the District Principal of Indigenous Education at the school district.

Limitations

This qualitative study focused on factors affecting the motivation of Indigenous students in K-12 public schools in BC. Due to the limited number of participants, motivation was investigated from participant perspectives shared in the study. Generalizations cannot therefore be made about a specific tribe or Indigenous people. The themes of the stories that participants shared were interpreted with the aid of the *Dedoose* program. The District Principal of Indigenous Education at the school district assisted me when interpreting themes and stories from Indigenous participants. Neither the district principal overseeing the thematic interpretations of the study, nor myself identified as Indigenous. Although, after completing this study it should also be acknowledged that I discovered that I was Indigenous (Metis) and this would play an ever important role. I acknowledge the possibility that bias may occur during data analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Ethical Considerations

The data collected in this qualitative study was obtained from participant interviews. To further validate interviews from students and faculty, I used an ethical framework (Patton, 2015). The components of this framework included:

- The purpose of the study
- Description of participant involvement
- Description of how participants were contacted and how they were informed of their rights
- How participants and the information they shared were kept confidential and anonymous
- Risks and benefits associated with this study

- Having the assistance of the District Principal of Indigenous Education within the Abbotsford School District.

Participant Involvement

Each participant completed an informed consent form (see Appendix B). Names of the participants were not used in the completed results to provide anonymity. Providing anonymity is intentional in hopes that this helped participants provide authentic responses (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Interview questions are provided in Appendix A.

Participant Contact and Consent

Myself, with the aid of the District Principal of Indigenous Education at the district, contacted all participants. Initial contact of K-12 graduates and faculty who identified as Indigenous were provided to the district principal. If participants agreed to be part of the study, they completed an informed consent form (see Appendix B). The consent form explains that participation was voluntary and they could refuse to answer any question. They could also end participation at any time.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Participation in this study was not anonymous but was confidential. Steps were taken to protect and securely maintain the identity of each participant. All documents and recordings were securely stored at the Indigenous Education Department within the school district. Data were only be accessible to the District Principal of Indigenous Education and myself. At no time can data be removed from the Indigenous Education Department. Data will be held for a period of five years, at which time it will be disposed of according to school district and provincial procedures for destroying student records.

Risks and Benefits

Risks associated with this study are expected to be minimal. Any personal information that may be revealed will be kept confidential. Interviews could potentially be emotional if a participant decides to recount painful events during the interview. To further minimize risks, participants were reminded of counseling services available through their tribe or within the community if they wished to talk further about emotions they experienced as they shared their experiences.

Benefits to this research study may include a better understanding of student motivation as identified by Indigenous students, colleagues, and others within the Abbotsford School District. Gaining a better understanding of student motivation, as seen through the eyes or perspectives of Indigenous students, may provide insight into how Tribal and school district leaders might best provide needed support to future students.

Indigenous Education at the Abbotsford School District

Having the assistance of the District Principal of Indigenous Education at the Abbotsford School District was a benefit due to their cultural awareness concerning participants involved in this study. There was no monetary compensation for this help. However, they expressed the desire to learn what motivates current students and faculty who identify as Indigenous to succeed within their K-12 public education experience in British Columbia. Furthermore, the district principal hoped that the data collected would help future Indigenous students be more motivated and successful in school.

Chapter 4 will include a summary of the participants' interviews. The identified themes were rich in Indigenous culture combined with perceptions about Western views of struggles and success. Gaining a better understanding of what motivates Indigenous K-12 graduates and

faculty using interviews may provide valuable insight into how the district and Indigenous communities can continue toward reconciliation.

CHAPTER 4:

THE AWAKENING

Native American Prayer

I give you this one thought to keep.
I am with you still. I do not sleep.

I am a thousand winds that blow.
I am the diamond glints on the snow.

I am the sunlight on ripened grain.
I am the gentle autumn rain.

When you awaken in the morning's hush,
I am the swift, uplifting rush.

Of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft stars that shine at night.

Do not think of me as gone.
I am with you still in each new dawn.

(Robin Drummond, 1997)

Drummond's (1997) poem is a reminder that eventually truth will have its day. Truth will always be with us, if we continue to share our stories as they were shared in this qualitative study. Specifically, for the Indigenous Peoples of Canada, their stories, histories, and journeys since the time of contact with European settlers continue to unfold to this very day. Hidden

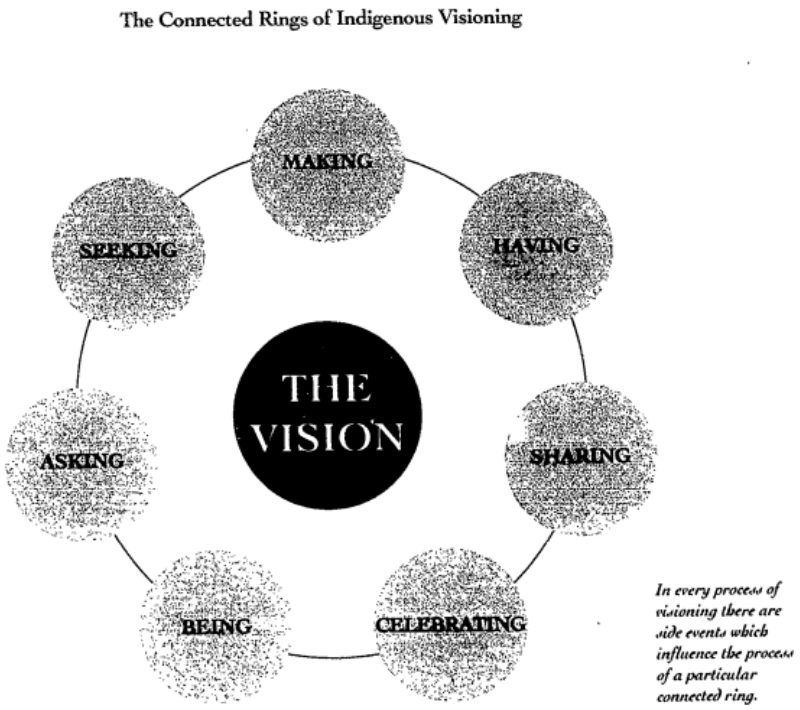
truths, harsh realities, and brave testimonies unfolded as the study participants shared their stories.

The Indigenous Education Department at the Abbotsford School District recruited nine participants who volunteered to share their stories with me. Five participants identified as Metis and four identified as First Nations.

With assistance from the Indigenous Education Department, I collaborated with and summarize what each participant discussed within their interviews. To my surprise, shortly after conducting the interviews, I discovered that I was Indigenous. The Indigenous Education Department then helped me understand my own journey. The department led me to the author Catje (1994) who described the Connected Rings of Indigenous visioning. The Indigenous Education Department explained to me how I was processing much of what was described by Indigenous participants who identified as Metis people. The Metis people are one of only three recognized Indigenous groups within Canada; the other two groups are First Nation and Inuit. As I completed interviews with the participants, I realized I began to draw parallels to my own family's history in what Catje described as a contemporary pathway for ecological vision beginning with "asking" (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

The Connected Rings of Indigenous Visioning



Catje (1994) stated:

> In many ways Plains Indian and Aboriginal Tribal traditions, learning the pathway of vision embodies a process that unfolds through a variety of dimensions. In traditional Native American perspectives, learning begins with appropriate orientation, acknowledging relationships, setting intentions, seeking, creating, understanding, sharing, and then celebrating one's vision with reference to a place of centering. (p. 69)

The rings above intrigued me, and I began to feel like I was becoming an emic extension of my own research. As the Indigenous Education Department explained, I was entering into the Connected Rings of the Indigenous Visioning through what the ring describes as *sharing.* Catje (1994) said, "In every process of Indigenous visioning there are side events which influence the

process of a particular connected ring" (p. 69). This side event for me was meeting with the Indigenous Education Department and discussing my findings. As I shared my journey, I found myself moving along the rings to *celebrating*. Later, as I continued to reflect on this process, I further found myself moving past *celebrating* to *being*. I then drew parallels to Maslow's (1987) hierarchy of needs to what I believe Maslow would describe as *love and belonging*. I was feeling a deep sense of *love and belonging* through connection to my newly discovered family. Knowing what I know now, I could feel myself preparing to move further within Maslow's hierarchy of needs to *esteem* (respect, self-esteem, status, recognition, strength, freedom) and even past *esteem* to *self-actualization*. The latter is described as a desire to become the most one can be (Maslow 1987).

Because I was using Maslow's (1987) hierarchy of needs as a lens to view participants' responses, it is important to acknowledge that Indigenous participants reminisced deeply about their family's heritage through what Maslow would describe as love and belonging needs within the hierarchy. In my interviews, participants continually reverted to these themes, referring to them, describing them, and expressing longing. Other important recursive refrains included pride in one's family and the importance of knowing who they were and what connections they had to the geographical locations in Canadian history since the time of settler contact. As a result, there were many parallels to the Connected Rings of Indigenous Visioning to Maslow's hierarchy of needs model. For example, what Catje (1994) described as one begins with the "asking" of questions and moves around the rings to "being" and ultimately achieving "visioning," so too Maslow might describe visioning within the Connected Rings of Indigenous Visioning as "self-actualization or transcendence" or a desire to be the most one can be as one satisfies all other hierarchical needs. The participants provided me the information needed to categorize their

stories into the following four themes: (a) family heritage, (b) identity, (c) faculty and staff support, and (d) defining success. In the following sections, I study participants' stories and explicate how Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the Connected Rings of Indigenous Visioning help to describe each participant's lived experiences.

Family Heritage

As previously mentioned, of the nine participants five identified as Metis and four identified as First Nation. There are three official groups of Indigenous Peoples in Canada: First Nations, Inuit, and Metis. The First Nations Governance Information Centre (2019) defined First Nation Peoples as "people who have occupied and used lands in what is now known as Canada for thousands of years prior to the arrival of Europeans, each possessing distinct cultural languages, histories, and traditional ways of life (p. 47). Perrault et al. (2022) described Inuit people, of which this study did not have any participants, as having:

> Inhabited the Arctic regions of Canada and circumpolar countries for at least 5000 years. They used to be nomadic, living in dwellings that were meant to be temporary—tents, igloos, qarmaqs (sod homes)—moving across a landscape they knew well to ensure their survival. (p. 3)

The Metis people were a mix of both European settlers and Indigenous Peoples during the time of colonization. Logan (2015) described the Metis people and their history in Canada through the time of colonization as follows:

> Metis bridged between colonizer and the colonized but were more than just intermediaries. They are a nation with unique, Indigenous origins and are more than the sum of their blood quantum. The Metis nations and leaders in Canada were cast as both treasonous and rebellious through the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth

> century. After their removal and dispossession, they became marginalized, destitute, and largely forgotten. (p. 346)

For further context, some Metis families migrated westward from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and finally to British Columbia. Historically, migration began even earlier during the time of the voyagers and the Canadian fur trade in the 16th and 17th centuries (Logan, 2015). Migration westward from Manitoba and Saskatchewan followed even at a quicker pace westward from what is known as the Red River Settlement in Saskatchewan and soon after the Battle of Batoche during the Red River Rebellion led by Louis Reil in 1885.

Forgotten Words

He stands up there this old man
white hair long, hung in braids
Struggling to talk in broken Cree
he stutters and pauses
He explains why he talks like he does
As a child he spent time in a boarding school
losing what little he had gained
Strapped for speaking his tongue
he grew up with foreign words
A stranger in his land he wandered
searching for his place in life
Accepted nowhere but in a bottle
lost for years in a land of lost spirits

He wandered alone nothing to guide him

until the cry of a fiddle and the beat of a drum

Drew him into the circle

filled with many faces like his

The sadness breaks as he sits

feels peace embracing him

He listens

and dances

Forgotten words emerge

slowly

Painfully he tells his story

as the circle makes him one

(Mercredi, 1991, p. 14)

I listened to the stories of the participants who shared their knowledge of their own Metis families' heritage since the time of the Red River Settlement in Saskatchewan and migration westward to British Columbia. I heard the stories of a once-proud Metis Nation during the time of continued colonization. Stories turned quickly from a time of peaceful settlement with mixed families of Indigenous marriages, to European settlers who called themselves Metis peoples to a the time of a defeated people following the battle of Batoche and Red River Rebellion. Logan (2015) stated, "Colonial treatment of the Metis demonstrates, in part, the broad reach of colonial control and how uneven it is, often to the detriment of the Metis and Indigenous groups in Canada" (p. 433). This colonial treatment of defeating the Metis also led to a time of shame for this culture, followed by hidden and lost generations of Metis. Today, thankfully through a

process of reconciliation, truth and healing, there has been an awakening and a new generation once again of a found, proud Metis Nation.

The Metis story continued to unfold as the participants in the study described their own families and lives as seen in the following quotes:

> My Indigenous roots are on my mom's side. Strongly from my mother's father, my grandfather. My last name was cut off from the full name which my family had seen appropriate to hide from the government for personal reasons. My grandfather also participated in residential schools.

> I was born in the prairies and my mother is Metis. She grew up being told never to say she is Indigenous and that's a bad word. To never talk about it. And a lot of shame. And growing up was kind of like, you know, you'd hear a little story and little connections and I felt really drawn to learning about being a Metis and my identity and my Mom would shut it down right away. She was really embarrassed, really hurt, that I don't even bring it up.

> "My family are Red River Metis. We moved from there once everybody was basically forced out."

During these interviews and discussing my own family's heritage with Indigenous participants, I discovered that my own family, on my mother's side, had the same story. A few months earlier, as I as writing my first three chapters of this dissertation, my mother asked if I was writing something about Indigenous families. It was at that moment she gave me some documents and writings that her father, my grandfather, worked on decades ago. Within these documents were genealogies of the Red River Settlement from the first Metis Nation.

Specifically, what my grandfather discovered was *The Genealogy of the First Metis Nation* compiled by Sprague and Fryre (2000). The document contained the Recognition of River Lot Occupants by the Government of Canada and the Genealogies of the Red River Households, 1818-1870. My grandfather had circled and underlined our family's history dating back to 1800. This document, from the government of Canada, showed my family's first marriage of a Cree woman named Mary and many more mixed marriages identifying Metis men and women family members that would follow. It was significant, because these family records listed the names, races, and dates of my own family's history upon their arrival to Canada with the Hudson's Bay Company in the 1700s. In addition, my grandfather also collected the church records that further documented the marriages. For me, this was a very emotional discovery because this historical document helped me understand my own family's Indigenous identity as Metis. Poet and author, Duncan Maercredi (1991) described this hidden identity or one's awakening in his poem of *Pride Reborn*:

Pride Reborn

like the pounding hooves of stampeding buffalo

like the beat of a single heart in an eagle dancer

like the sound of an eagle's cry

like the cry of a newborn baby

like the laughter of brown skinned children

like the soothing voice of kookum telling a story

like the song of drum and dancing fiddle

like the howl of a wolf in the forest

like the sound of paddle and canoe on water

like the sound of a young mother's lullabye

these are the sounds of an awakening nation

these are the songs of the black-haired people

with pride reborn

Identity

Identity was also interwoven throughout the stories of Indigenous participants. Participants described identity, or what Maslow (1969) described as a sense of love and belonging to include friendship, intimacy, family, and a sense of connection.

> When I was in elementary school, my Indigenous education, a lot of it, the teachings weren't Stolo teachings. I didn't learn any of my cultural background in school. We learned a lot of Inuit culture which I didn't realize as a kid. I didn't think there was a difference. I thought we were native and everything is the same. We all have the same teachings the same backgrounds, like there's not diverse traditions. But I think it's because resources back then were limited. We had things, like we'd make button blankets, which aren't made here. We'd make things from the Plains Cree; we'd make things with teepees and things like that. So as a kid my identity, I just thought I had button blankets and big letters and teepees and things that weren't directly Stolo teachings.

“I would say one of the biggest things was just not being confident in myself and who I am and then not wanting anyone at school to know. I kind of pushed other people away.”

So, I was dropped off at the school with my oldest sister, she was in grade 12. She dropped me off to start my kindergarten class and right away they thought she was my mom and they treated me and her horribly. And then I was put in the lowest reading group right off the bat.

There was a lot of racism. We didn’t have any sort of Indigenous anything in the school I went to. It wasn’t until high school there was like an Indigenous room, but we didn’t really learn anything, just kind of hung out in there. In the area I was raised, like I obviously had darker skin than everyone else. There’s a lot of yeah, racism. Lots of judgements. I felt a lot of shame.

Once I got to secondary school for some reason the issues of identity kind of became more pronounced. And it was the question of, what does it mean to be an Indian person? We didn’t use the word First Nation back then. And you know, a lot of stereotypes about what it meant to be Indian questions; are my family a bunch of alcoholics, do I live on the reserve, and is my friend’s yard full of cars up on blocks, do I have to pay taxes and do I get everything for free.

Particularly with me, I always was living in more so of a low-income household situation. And because of that, I think I had a lot of financial struggles personally. And a lot of

> things that were uncommon with some of the schools I was placed in. I was placed in a little bit more considerably above average schools for most of my adolescence. So, trying to fit in with the mass of people and what they're accustomed too and the financial positions that they are in. There's such a gap between our lifestyles and I couldn't really form any solid relationships. So, I quickly became introverted and kept to myself a lot, which to this day socially I still have to push out of my comfort zone to pursue conversation.

> I think the biggest thing was lack of identity and lack of connecting to something positive. I appear Caucasian and nobody would have questioned that, and I like looking back. I feel like the only thing we ever learned about Indigenous culture and history was like teepees and yeah, so that was it.

The participants' statements are also examples of trauma, and it is this trauma that may be the reason I did not see some of the participants move past *love and belonging* in Maslow's (1969) hierarchy of needs. An identification of trauma, specifically the intergenerational trauma that Indigenous Peoples endured since the time of colonization, could very well inhibit self-actualization. If a threat is perceived due to a traumatic experience, one could lose self-confidence (Maslow, 1987). In addition, Maslow (1987) stated:

> When we can no longer handle the situation, when the world is too much for us, when we are not masters of our own fate, when we no longer have control over the world or over ourselves, certainly we may speak of feelings of threat. We must of course also speak of the most nuclear aspects of threat, namely, the direct deprivation, or thwarting, or danger to the basic needs (humiliation, rejection, isolation, loss of prestige, loss of

> strength); these are all directly threatening. In addition, misuse or non-use of the capacities threatens self-actualization directly. (pp. 79-80)

Faculty and Staff Support

I asked participants who or what motivated them during their time as a K-12 public school student. Overwhelmingly, they spoke highly of faculty and staff. Attributing motivation to someone else is considered extrinsic motivation as previously discussed. Participants also discussed that something within them motivated them to succeed in school; this is also considered intrinsic motivation. Participants also identified being extrinsically motivated by faculty and staff who motivated them throughout their K-12 schooling. Once again, Maslow's (1987) hierarchy of needs was used as a lens to better understand the participants statements below:

> So, at the time I didn't know it, but definitely, my Indigenous support worker in middle school. That was an age where I felt like I knew everything too, but she was a non-Indigenous person running the Indigenous program and I never felt like she was over-stepping. She was our safe person. She really took the time to just be there and sit and hear us out and not have to prove to us that she earned her spot there. She let that space be for us, not for her and she let us know that she's not Indigenous and she was learning alongside us with things.

> "The first person that I remember and always remember was my I think they were called Aboriginal youth care workers back then. He was a positive role model in my life. He

made me feel happy at school. He made me laugh, gave me food, and taught me about my own culture.

I have a couple teachers. I had a grade four and a grade 7 teacher who would tell me straight up this isn't fair. I know you have the ability to do this while I'm having to place you in these groups. I know you can do it. Don't ever let anyone tell you, you can't do it. My grade seven teacher, he was also the principal, he came to my games at secondary and he came to my graduation.

"I do my best for my children and my family have definitely motivated me. Mrs. M and Mr. K have been a huge part of that as well."

"Yeah, I think it was my mom."

There was like this portable at Chief Dan Middle School that had people in it that you could just hang out with or do cool stuff with, and I really liked those people and that was nice. Grade 11, specifically my physics teacher. He said something that really struck me, and it made me start applying myself a lot more than I ever had before.

I had a math teacher and I was never actually in her class. She was super genuine, a very kind soul, and she drove us to rugby games all the time. She was supporting us and if we scored "x" amount of points, like she'd you know, buy us a meal or something nice, small gestures like that. She also spent the time after school with one of my friends. She and

> Mr. W in combination, those two adults were solid like a statue and all figures that I could come to for advice without feeling judged or pressured to do anything.

> I feel like there's just something inside of me that motivated me. But I felt like I've always been pulled into education. Actually, it was kind of neat because I've been looking more into my ancestry, and it was my great, great, great aunts who created the first school for Indigenous girls in the Red River Settlement.

> "I would say for high school we didn't have the support like we do here. What motivated me was just getting it done. Just gotta get it done. So that was kind of like that internal fight."

These statements substantiated Maslow's (1987) hierarchy of needs as participants described who or what motivated them during their education experience. Some discussed what Maslow referred to as *esteem needs* moving past *love and belonging*. Esteem needs are a desire one seeks to feel good about oneself. Participants spoke highly of the adults who respected them. This gave them confidence to succeed in school, knowing an adult valued and recognized their achievements. According to Maslow (1987), respect and reputation are crucial for children and adolescents.

When asked who motivated them, participants spoke of extrinsic motivation such as a teacher or another staff member. Weiner (1996) explained that a teacher is considered an extrinsic factor due to limited control a student has over that teacher. Furthermore, underachieving students tend to attribute their school performance to external factors compared to high achieving students who attribute their school performance to intrinsic or internal factors

(Georgiou, 1999). The participants who discussed extrinsic motivation seemed to echo *love and belonging* within Maslow's (1987) hierarchy of needs.

Defining Success

"One cannot choose wisely for a life unless he dares to listen to himself, his own self, at each moment in life" (Maslow, 1987. p. xxxiii).

Participants were asked what their definition of success was and each had a unique perspective of what they thought success was in their K-12 public school experiences. Participants described success as getting out of bed and being at school, feeling okay with themselves, completing high school, and much more as seen in the following responses:

> **"**I always try to continue to learn new things. I've consistently challenged myself to get out of my comfort zone. I think honestly, it was just really hard for me going to school. Just going was my success."

> "My success, I think it's totally different than a westernized way of success. Mine was to complete grade 12. I had many friends and family that didn't. I'm a first-generation person who completed grade 12."

> I was simply content being okay with everything going on. The biggest successes for school it's hard to really count because it's not education related. But I guess just getting out of the reserve made school better. I was in town, I was closer to my friends, I felt more normal at school. So, I guess just feeling okay with myself in school was a huge success because then it allowed me to show up to school.

I think successes were showing up like for me. I look back and I feel like I'm very lucky that I was naturally motivated to go to school. It was more like a safe haven where I just needed to get out and do my own thing. So, me leaving my household sometimes was just me getting my sanity going. For some people that doesn't come easily. Take my brother for example. He never had the motivation to go to school. So, he would stay home, and it might sound so minor but just getting up and, actually leaving and going to your school and going to your classes. I feel like it's a huge success for our community members. Because a lot of kids don't have that. They're ashamed or embarrassed. They just feel like if they're already pretty low or they're struggling with academics, they don't think it's worth going. If they have things that are happening at home that seem way bigger than finishing an assignment or finishing a project and they just shut down and won't go. It's huge for people just even showing up.

Success to me for my students when I'm thinking about just my students, success is not always academic. When we define intelligence, when we define success, it isn't that straight A student because I've had straight A students leave school and they stumble and fall. It's about helping them develop the character they want to become and build the resiliency skills. So that when they face challenges outside of school, they have within them the capability and the know how of how to deal with them and also have to advocate for themselves to receive that extra help. To me, that's real success.

"So how I define success in school is that you're feeling proud, feeling connected, and feeling purposeful. Something that they're doing has purpose for connecting in the future. I feel like that would define success."

So, finding comfortability inside of a classroom or being content of what's happening inside of that space is where I think success is defined. The big secret to success especially in school is being content or happy with simply being at school.

Like obviously there's the easy academic angle and like I said I was pretty talented academically. I generally got on a roll kind of thing. Most of my life I did well. I'm a math science talented person and I did very well in those in grade 12. I chose to do IB physics and took chemistry as an elective just because I enjoyed science too much which everyone around me looked at me like I was crazy. So, if you categorize that as success, then you could call me successful.

And that's what I though successful was in school, was you know, being a leader and taking part in those things that engaged me and I wanted to be a part of, and that's what I thought successful was in school. You know, being a leader and taking part in those things that I thought were important in school.

My analysis of participant responses about their definition of success suggests that the interviewees were navigating through each part of Maslow's (1987) hierarchy from physiological needs to self-actualization. For example, one participant stated that just getting to

school was a success, while another focused on being a leader in school. Maslow referred to this meandering definition of success as gratification of basic needs:

> The chief dynamic principal animating this organization is the emergence of the healthy person of less potent needs upon gratification of the more potent ones. The physiological needs, when unsatisfied, dominate the organism, pressing all capacities into their service. Relative gratification submerges them and allows the next higher set of needs in the hierarchy to emerge, dominate, and organize the personality, so that instead of being, for example, hunger obsessed, it now becomes safety obsessed. The principle is the same for the other set of needs in the hierarchy (i.e., love, esteem, and self-actualization). (p. 32)

As I examined the participants' interview transcripts, themes centered on family heritage, faculty and staff support, identity, and finally defining success. All played a role in student motivation. Whether it was intrinsic motivation or extrinsic motivation, the participants' stories and answers informed the themes that can be further described by Maslow's (1987) hierarchy of needs as well as the Connected Rings of Indigenous Visioning.

The final chapter of this study includes an overview of motivation as described by the participants. It also includes my recommendations for how the Abbotsford School District, other school districts in British Columbia, and Indigenous populations might continue to work together along a path of reconciliation. The recommendations within the next chapter may also be helpful, as a new enhancement agreement for Indigenous students will be renewed in the future.

Chapter 5:

Charting a Path to Reconciliation

Remember

Remember the sky that you were born under,
know each of the star's stories.
Remember the moon, know who she is.
Remember the sun's birth at dawn, that is the
strongest point of time. Remember sundown
and the giving away to night.
Remember your birth, how your mother struggled
to give you form and breath. You are evidence of
her life, and her mother's, and hers.
Remember your father. He is your life, also.
Remember the earth whose skin you are:
red earth, black earth, yellow earth, white earth
brown earth, we are earth.
Remember the plants, trees, animal life who all have their
tribes, their families, their histories, too. Talk to them,
listen to them. They are alive poems.
Remember the wind. Remember her voice. She knows the
origin of this universe.
Remember you are all people and all people
are you.

Remember you are this universe and this

universe is you.

Remember all is in motion, is growing, is you.

Remember language comes from this.

Remember the dance language is, that life is.

Remember.

(Joy Harjo, 1983)

This qualitative study with nine Indigenous participants who shared their perspectives tells a story and reflects a journey through time, as each participant had the opportunity to reflect upon and share their personal stories during their time as K-12 public school students in British Columbia. Participants' age, gender, and experience varied, which provided for rich diverse stories. However, regardless of their differences, they all had one thing in common: completion of their K-12 public school experience in British Columbia. As a result, they drew upon a wealth of lived experiences. The stories were crucial in providing insight and a better understanding of each participant's experience within the K-12 public education system. It also gave me a valuable personal understanding of my own family's history with the Cree, European settlers, and Metis Nation.

With assistance from the Indigenous Education Department, at the Abbotsford School District, I gained access to participants who identified as Indigenous and who volunteered for this research study. To gain a better understanding of what motivates Indigenous students, I used Maslow's (1987) hierarchy of needs theory supplemented by the Connected Rings of Indigenous Visioning as lenses to describe the participants' lived experiences. What followed was invaluable perspectives from each participant. The interviews also provided a historical description of

where we as Canadians once were, where we are now, and how we can potentially move forward together along a path of reconciliation to further motivate and support Indigenous students.

The major themes that emerged from the research revolved around the four following themes: (a) family heritage, (b) identity, (c) faculty and staff support, and (d) defining success. I discuss these four themes in the next sections and include recommendations for schools and school districts throughout British Columbia who serve Indigenous populations.

Family Heritage

As family heritage emerged as an underlying theme, it became quite clear that participants had a strong sense of pride regarding their family history. Some had thorough knowledge of their family heritage and others knew very few details. In contrast to participants who spoke of their First Nations heritage, the Metis participants has a mixed understanding of their family history. I vividly remember having a follow-up conversation with one of the First Nation's participants after I discovered my own Indigenous Metis family heritage. She, of course was thrilled to hear about my discovery, but also had mixed feelings of joy and sadness. She further explained her feelings of sadness saying at least she had the privilege of knowing who she was her whole life. "You, unfortunately weren't able to know as your own Metis family was defeated, shamed and forced to keep their family heritage a secret." She also explained her feelings of joy because as she explained, "now you get a chance to share your story, and you must as it will be a story of truth and pride of your Metis family heritage."

Recommendations

1. Some participants early on in their public education believed their family heritage was Inuit or that they had characteristics from other tribes in British Columbia. Back then, as participants said, teachers may not have had enough knowledge or resources

to teach about Indigenous peoples. This led to some of the confusion Indigenous people experienced as young children. Some teachers taught Indigenous family heritage as living in Teepees like the Plains Cree did or eating seal blubber and ice fishing like the Inuit. Because of this history of teaching misinformation or providing an incomplete picture, I recommend that school districts further train teachers about the differences of Indigenous Peoples throughout Canada.

2. Schools should continue, as they currently do, to allow safe spaces (Indigenous support rooms) for Indigenous students to discover and ask questions about their family heritage. This also follows the current Indigenous enhancement agreement with the Abbotsford School District and keeps the heart and center of schools in place with Indigenous support rooms for Indigenous students.
3. School improvement plans must be more explicit, allowing for ways to measure improvement when indigenizing curriculum. The First Peoples Principles of Learning could act as a framework to indigenize the curriculum across all subject areas.
4. It would benefit all school districts to provide culturally responsive practices for Indigenous families and students. This would allow students to connect their cultures, languages, and life experiences to what they learn in school.

Identity

Participants discussed their identity at school, which resulted in a summary of what participants described. According to some participants who experienced life on the wealthy east side of Abbotsford, some schools had very wealthy families and some did not. The participants who discussed their Indigenous identity at schools with monetary wealth expressed how they did not feel like they fit in or belonged. As one participant explained:

> As I listened to my peers talk about the vacations they would go on, the houses that they lived in, and the clothes that they would buy, it made me feel uncomfortable. Not so much wishing I had that opportunity, but the other student's experience was different, and those kids didn't understand. It was a stark contrast from what his life was like on the reservation. It was different on the reservation, we enjoyed each other but as we spent the hours long trip on the bus, we were tired and had to go to school. Then we spent the hours long trip heading back to the reservation.

Recommendations

1. Schools must shift their mindset or foster a more supportive role when welcoming students into school when they arrive. Regular attendance and being on time to school are important; however, there is no need to shame students or families because they are late. This would also foster a more culturally responsive practice.
2. Schools view all students as part of a community of learners with diverse backgrounds and identities. Differences must be celebrated, allowing for a more inclusive environment. This would also create a better sense of belonging for all students.
3. School districts would benefit from trauma-informed practices as many Indigenous families experienced historical trauma and grave injustices in our K-12 public schools.

Faculty and Staff Support

Participants discussed how important it was to have caring faculty and staff with whom they could connect on a regular basis. Some spoke highly of certain teachers or support staff within the school who took care of them when they needed someone to talk to, or needed a bite

to eat with when they did not bring any food to school. These connections with a caring adult seemed to motivate them throughout the school year. A few participants described how difficult it was for them moving through a fragmented system of elementary, middle, and high school. Needing to make a new connection with another trusted adult as they moved through the school system was stressful.

Recommendations

1. Schools should allow for more transition time between elementary, middle, and high schools for Indigenous students as needed. This will create more connection time or familiarity with staff and students from each elementary, middle, and high school. Transition time could look like short visits within the school day to connect with Indigenous support workers, staff, and students at their next school.
2. Greater funding of Indigenous support worker programs may is needed to provide enriched cultural experiences for Indigenous students in school. In addition to experiences at the schools themselves, off-campus opportunities may be needed.
3. Schools must be flexible regarding connection time with Indigenous students. Indigenous students should have connection time with another adult in the school. This adult may or may not be their teacher but should be someone they can reach out to in the moment if ever in a time of need.
4. Indigenous professional development opportunities must be offered continually to school district staff throughout the year.
5. Strategic plans in all school districts across British Columbia should focus on indigenizing the curriculum using the First Peoples Principles of Learning. This could

serve as a framework for all school leaders and as a guide for making decisions about program implementation.

Defining Success

Success is tricky to define and is complex to address. As I asked participants to define their success their answers varied. Participants focused on a westernized monetary or capital system focused on things such as beautiful housing, expensive clothing, and family vacations as being needed to fit into western societal norms. Constantly comparing oneself to others seemed to be a focus of all participants. For some, however, success was defined as just getting out of bed and getting to school. Others described success as being the first to complete a K-12 public education in their family. Some also had an internal drive to be successful within their careers. Some participants described internal drive related to achieving a career status or titles such as senior leadership within the school district as compared to others who were support staff or even teachers.

Recommendations

1. Schools must have an equity of access for all educational programs for every student. For example, if a student cannot afford an after-school program with a community organization, funds should be made available for any student experiencing hardship.
2. Student mentorship within schools should be considered to allow for continued peer support for Indigenous students. Examples of this could include a student in grade 5 partnered with a younger student in elementary school, a grade 8 student partnered with a younger student in middle school, or a senior student mentor partnered with a younger student in high school.

3. Indigenous role models should continue to be celebrated within all schools. This could foster a sense of optimism in other students striving to succeed in various career paths.
4. A greater focus on diversity, equity and inclusion should be considered in the school district's hiring practices. This would allow Indigenous students to see themselves in the among teachers or staff who look like them. School district staffing recruitment efforts need to prioritize hiring male and female Indigenous faculty at all schools. Many elementary schools do not have diverse teaching staff that look like the students they serve. For example, elementary schools tend to be heavily dominated by White female teachers.
5. School districts must collaborate with the teacher's unions to break down systemic barriers in hiring practices. A seniority-driven system may not be best suited when considering the need to hire and support a more diverse staff.

Themes from the interviews and recommendations are also closely related to the 2019-2024 Enhancement Agreement with Indigenous Students. The participants' stories and the recommendations from this research could potentially be shared with stakeholders for inclusion in future enhancement agreements with Indigenous students. Building upon the current enhancement agreement with Indigenous students could benefit everyone as we reflect, listen, and implement recommendations for what Indigenous peoples within the school districts are telling us is needed. In the next section I include the current Indigenous Enhancement Agreement with Indigenous Students for the Abbotsford School District to help the reader understand the close relationship that has been and continues to be developed between the school district and Indigenous people.

2019-2024 Enhancement Agreement with Indigenous Students

The Abbotsford School District works in consultation with elders, leaders, and families from the Stolo First Nation, Matsqui First Nation, the Fraser Valley Metis Association, Indigenous students and their parents from the Abbotsford School District, and the Aboriginal Advisory Committee to create the enhancement agreements. The current study includes recommendations and opportunities to listen to students and faculty. The current enhancement agreement with Indigenous students, along with goals and recommendations for the Abbotsford School District, is detailed below:

> Future goals are built upon the work previously done. Former Enhancement Agreement success has allowed the Abbotsford School District to reach for the next steps for Indigenous students in the Abbotsford School District. Emerging themes are clustered into three major goal areas for Indigenous students (1) student success, (2) cultural identity, and (3) equity and access.
>
> To help achieve the student success goal, Indigenous students will be supported to develop their full potential in all aspects of school life. Values include:
>
> - Grade 12 school completion
> - Successful transition from and level to level and grade to grade (with an emphasis on grade 10-12)
> - Consistent attendance
> - Connection to a career, trades, or post-secondary plan
> - Reading achievement benchmarks as measured in grade 3, 4, and 7
> - Successful academic completion of grades and courses throughout K-12

To assist with the second goal of cultural identity, students will learn about their own Indigenous cultural identity and connect with their ancestry in a meaningful way. When Indigenous students know their identity, who they are and where they have come from, they will develop a positive sense of self and belonging. Values include:

- Students will learn about the diversity of different Indigenous cultures of the First Nation, Métis and Inuit People and their personal connection to these cultures. Learning about the diversity of Indigenous cultures and the positive contributions of Indigenous people, will be inclusive to all students in the school district.
- Indigenous language is strongly interconnected with culture.
- Positive Indigenous role models and family are important to the Indigenous community.
- Connection to Elders instills respect and enhances learning.
- Learning that is place-based, learning from the land, in a direct and experiential way supports the success of Indigenous learners.

Finally, to help achieve the third goal of equity and access, Indigenous students thrive in an environment that supports equity and access to all opportunities in schools. Values include:

- Indigenous students have the right to a culturally safe learning environment: a school environment where students see themselves positively reflected in the schools and a space for Indigenous students to connect and feel supported.
- The Abbotsford School District will embark on an Equity Scan to self-identify structures or systems that create barriers to the success of our Indigenous students. This acknowledges that there is inherent bias and racism that Indigenous students still

face. The Abbotsford School District is committed to addressing and removing barriers to access and success.

- Reducing the over-representation of Indigenous students related to discipline and creating alternate to suspension with an Indigenous focus.
- Supporting transportation will improve access to programs and services in our schools including extracurricular, trades programs and district programs.
- The Abbotsford School District is committed to the ongoing learning, across all systems, about the truth and history of Indigenous people in Canada, the impact of that history on our students today and their families.

The Enhancement Agreement will be implemented with strategies related to staff and hiring, connection to and consultation with the Indigenous community, school space, the curriculum and professional development.

Staff:

- All staff that work with Indigenous students will have a connection to Indigenous culture, a commitment to learning and developing their skills and capacity to support culture and student success, and to be a positive role model for Indigenous students.
- Hiring practices will demonstrate a commitment to recruiting staff with a connection to Indigenous culture and student success.
- Training for all staff working with Indigenous students will be ongoing to build the knowledge of diverse Indigenous cultures, the lived experiences and challenges Indigenous students face, and the skills to support school success.

Community:

- Ongoing consultation with the local Indigenous community

- Community engagement is valued and reflected in the programs and services offered for Indigenous families.

Space:

- Each school will examine how to best provide a positive space for Indigenous students to connect with staff for support. This space should reflect Indigenous culture, be central and inviting. This space can be inclusive but must still meet the needs of the Indigenous learners in the school.

Curriculum:

- The curriculum is a natural catalyst to support Indigenous learners. This agreement outlines the expectations that secondary schools will offer First Peoples courses and will support structures that encourage participation rates for all students.
- Learning Indigenous language is closely linked to learning about culture.
- Teachers are expected to implement curriculum that infuses Indigenous content and perspectives in their classrooms with all students.
- Learning from the land, place-based learning, experiential learning, direct learning are methods to be adopted in all classrooms as examples of best practice.

Professional Development:

The Indigenous Department is committed to providing ongoing training and professional development for all levels of staff to support the success of Indigenous students. (Enhancement Agreement for Indigenous Students 2019-2024)

Recommendations for Further Research

This qualitative study focused on motivation as described by a limited number of Indigenous participants within the Abbotsford School District. Therefore, the conclusions drawn

from this limited population are not intended to be generalized to specific Indigenous tribes. One could potentially replicate this study within other school districts throughout British Columbia. Another option could be to develop a longitudinal study of Indigenous students to gather information about how their motivation may change over time. A study such as this could benefit educators throughout the K-12 system in British Columbia.

This study told the stories of each Indigenous participant through the lens of Maslow's (1987) hierarchy of needs theory of motivation supplemented by the Connected Rings of Indigenous Visioning. Within the framework provided by these lenses, I asked participants what motivated them throughout their time in public school. Their views provided insight into Indigenous perspectives, resulting in my offering recommendations for how Indigenous peoples, the Abbotsford School District, and other districts serving Indigenous populations can work together to help motivate all Indigenous students. Other voices could add value to another study, such as students who were not motivated in school or Indigenous students who did not complete their K-12 public education.

As school districts and Indigenous Peoples continue to work together through the current and future enhancement agreements for Indigenous students it is important to implement recommendations throughout the life of the agreement. It is my belief that by working together, we will continue to develop motivation strategies and best practices that will support the important work contained within the enhancement agreement with Indigenous students.

In addition, there are other Indigenous models that could foster motivation and be applied in future research. One such model is the Circle of Courage as seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2

The Circle of Courage Model

Brendtro et al. (2013) highlighted the value of creating an educational climate that fosters resilience, motivation, and capacity building among learners who have been marginalized. Drawing on First Nations' teachings that encourage a holistic and affirming perspective of culturally diverse learners, the Circle of Courage model details the way the four foundations of self-esteem (significance, competence, power, and virtue) can be applied in different contexts. These researchers propose connecting with troubled youth in positive ways to help them build emotional and social efficacy in addition to strategies that would improve teacher-student relationships.

Summary

> *We have taken so much from your culture, I wish you had taken some from ours… For there were some beautiful and good things within it. Perhaps now that the time has come, we are fearful that what you take will be lost… I shall grab the instruments of the white man's success: His education, his skills, and society.*

(Chief Dan George, n.d.)

This qualitative study was an opportunity to delve into the lives of nine Indigenous participants within the Abbotsford School District. It was an honor to hear their stories and to gain a better understanding of what motivated them throughout their K-12 public school experience and for some, their careers after they graduated. In many ways the stories they shared of what motivated them throughout school were closely related to the First Peoples Principles of Learning that declare:

- Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.
- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).
- Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one‘s actions.
- Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.
- Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge.
- Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.
- Learning involves patience and time.
- Learning requires exploration of one‘s identity.
- Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations.

(FNESC 2008)

I explored what motivated Indigenous participants during their years as K-12 public education students with the use of Maslow’s(1987) hierarchy of needs theory on motivation. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs provided a lens to help me analyze and describe the participants’

stories. Detailed stories and experiences followed each interview question as the participants proudly shared their life experiences and education journey with me. All stories told were steeped in rich Canadian history and memory. What some shared was even more significant because it also helped uncover and confirm my own identity as Metis through their stories of similar family heritage.

It is through each one of their stories that each participant shared their voice. It was my role to listen to each story, so willingly articulated, and categorize their stories into themes. With the knowledge the participants gifted to me I am reminded of this poem:

Elijah Raise Your Voice

our nation's rights trampled into the ground
our mother, the earth cries
as her children are forbidden to reap the gifts
the Creator gave
driven to the edge of despair
Elijah raise your voice
your brothers, sisters, grandfathers, grandmothers
and children are looking to you
a voice in the white man's world
held hostage by their greed, hate and the chains
of ignorance and fear
Elijah raise your voice
soft as the summer rain
dignified as the northern spruce

guided by the giver of life

and the four winds

that carry the words of our elders

Elijah, raise your voice

(Duncan Mercredi, 1991)

Finally, I offer my sincere thanks to the Indigenous graduates and the faculty of the Abbotsford School District for the tremendous gift you gave me and to all who read your stories. Your voices are heard and your stories will live on. To the Indigenous Education Department at the Abbotsford School District, I will be forever grateful for your assistance and knowledge. It was you who helped chart another journey for me and my family. A road to discovery of not only my own family heritage but of many other families who shared similar journeys along the way. To my late grandfather who went on his own journey to discover his Cree, European settler, and Metis ancestry many decades ago, I give my gratitude. Finally, to the Indigenous participants from the Abbotsford School District, may your wisdom speak its truth and may we all come together by raising our voices for a better Canadian future for generations to come.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Questions

FACTORS AFFECTING INDIGENOUS STUDENT MOTIVATION IN K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

1. Could you give me a brief background of your family heritage?
2. What challenges did you face growing up in the K-12 public education system?
3. How do you define success in school and what were some of your biggest successes as you reflect upon your education?
4. What or who motivated you throughout your education and career?
5. In your opinion, what does our education system need to do differently so all our Indigenous students experience success?
6. Is there anything else you would like to add?

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent Form

Introduction

My name is Duane Penner and I am a doctoral student at Western Washington University. I also am Principal at Prince Charles Elementary School. I am conducting a research study to examine the factors affecting Indigenous Student Motivation in K-12 Public schools. The name of this research study is *Factors Affecting Indigenous Student Motivation in K-12 Public Schools in British Columbia*. I am seeking your consent to participate in this study.

Please read this document to learn more about this study and determine if you would like to participate. Your participation is completely voluntary, and I will address your questions or concerns at any point before or during the study.

Eligibility

You may participate in this research if you meet all the following criteria:

1. Identify as Indigenous
2. Either a student or a teacher
3. Are age 18 or older

I hope to include 8 people in this research.

Activities

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following activities:

Participate in an interview (apx. 30 minutes).

During these activities, you will be asked questions about:

- A brief description of your family heritage
- How you define success and what your biggest successes
- What or who motivated you throughout your education and career?
- In your opinion, what does our education system need to do differently so all our Indigenous students experience success?
- And anything else you would like to add?

All activities and questions are optional: you may skip any part of this study that you do not wish to complete and may stop at any time. If you need to complete the activities above in a different way than I have described, please let me know, and I will attempt to make other arrangements.

Risks

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts associated with this study. You can still skip any question you do not wish to answer, skip any activity, or stop participation at any time.

Benefits

If you participate, there are no direct benefits to you. This research may increase the body of knowledge in the subject area of this study.

Privacy and Data Protection

I will take reasonable measures to protect the security of all your personal information, but I cannot guarantee confidentiality of your research data. In addition to me, the following people and offices will have access to your data:

- The WWU Institutional Review Board
- My doctoral committee

I will securely store your data for 3 years. Then, I will delete electronic data and destroy paper data.

How the Results will be Used

I will publish the results in my thesis, a presentation, and/or publications. Participants and specific schools will not be identified in the results.

Mandated Reporting

My professional role outside of WWU requires me to report suspicion of child or elderly abuse, suspicion of possible harm to self or others, and committed crimes to the appropriate authorities.

Contact Information

If you have questions, you can contact me at: pennerd2@wwu.edu or 360-525-0850**.**

My Faculty Advisor's name is Dr. Bruce They work at Western Washington University and are supervising me in this research. You can contact them at 360-650-3090 or Tim.Bruce@wwu.edu.

If you have questions about your rights in the research or if a problem or injury has occurred during your participation, please contact the WWU Institutional Review Board at compliance@wwu.edu or 360-650-3220.

Voluntary Participation

If you decide not to participate, or if you stop participation after you start, there will be no penalty to you: you will not lose any benefit to which you are otherwise entitled.

APPENDIX C

WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY STUDY INFORMATION SHEET FOR RESEARCH IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

Factors Affecting Indigenous Student Motivation in K-12 Public Schools in British Columbia

Duane Penner 360-525-0850

Email: pennerd2@wwu.edu

About this Research

Students that are at least 18 years old and identify as Indigenous are being asked to participate in a research study. Researchers do research to answer important questions which might help change or improve the way we do things in the future. I am a doctoral student at Western Washington University. I am also a Principal Prince Charles Elementary School.

This form will give you information about the study. Please read this form and ask any questions you have.

Taking Part in this Study is Voluntary

Students that choose to participate may discontinue the study at any time. Deciding not to participate, or deciding to leave the study later, will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which your child is entitled and will not affect their relationship with Mr. Penner.

Why is this Study being done?

- The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of student motivation as identified by grade 12 Indigenous students.
- Students that are at least 18 year old and identify as Indigenous may contact Mr. Penner.
- The study is being conducted by Mr. Penner under the direction of Dr. Tim Bruce, faculty at Western Washington University.

How many People will take Part?

Four student and four teacher participants will be taking part in this study.

What will Happen during the Study?

Students that chose to participate will:

- Be in a 30 minute 1:1 interview. They will not lose instructional time.

What are the Risks of Taking Part in the Study?

There are no foreseen risks for this study and the students may stop at any time.

What are the Potential Benefits of Taking Part in the Study?

There will be no direct benefits to the individual participants in this study. This research will help me understand the factors affecting Indigenous Student Motivation and may help the school district with future lessons.

How will my Child's Information be Protected?

All participants information will be confidential. Efforts will be made to keep your child's personal information confidential:

- Your child's personal information may be disclosed if required by law.
- No information which could identify them will be shared in publications about this study and databases in which results may be stored.
- The people who will have access to your child's information are: myself, my faculty advisor, and the IRB.
- I will secure your child's information with these steps: keeping all digital interview files in a password-protected computer folder.
- After 3 years, all data will be destroyed.

Will my Child's Information be used for Research in the Future?

Information collected from your child for this study may be used for future research studies or shared with other researchers for future research. If this happens, information which could identify them will be removed before any information is shared. All data about your child will be de-identified.

Will my Child be Paid for Participation?

There is no compensation for being in this study.

Will it Cost my Child anything to Participate?

There is no cost to you or your child for taking part in this study.

Who should I Call with Questions or Problems?

For questions about the study, contact the researcher, Duane Penner at 360-525-0850. You may also contact me by email at pennerd2@wwu.edu.

For questions about your child's rights as a research participant, to discuss problems, complaints, or concerns about a research study, or to obtain information or to offer input, please contact the WWU Institutional Review Board at 360-650-3220 or at compliance@wwu.edu.

Can I withdraw my Child from the Study?

Since your child is over 18, they can change their mind and decide to leave the study at any time.

APPENDIX D

Student Recruitment Email

Dear School Administrator,

Mr. Duane Penner, Principal at Prince Charles Elementary School and doctoral candidate at Western Washington University has been approved to conduct his dissertation research within the Abbotsford School District. Mr. Penner and is looking for grade 12 student volunteers who identify as Indigenous to take part in his study titled "***Factors Affecting Indigenous Student Motivation in K-12 Public Schools in British Columbia***." The first four students that identify as Indigenous, are at least 18 years old, and chose to respond to Mr. Penner will be asked questions about challenges they have faced, their success, and what educators can do to support them in a 30-minute interview. All participants' names and information they share will be confidential.

Attached is an information letter for parents. It does not have to be signed as the students are old enough to consent to study, and if for information purposes only if you chose to distribute the information. Also attached is the consent form that students will review with Mr. Penner prior to the interview.

Please forward any student participant volunteer names, or provide my email and they can contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Darlene MacDonald
District Principal, Indigenous Education
Abbotsford School District
3277 Gladwin Road, Abbotsford, BC V2T 4Y9
darlene.macdonald@abbyschools.ca

APPENDIX E

Indigenous Faculty Recruitment Email

Dear Indigenous Faculty,

Mr. Duane Penner, Principal at Prince Charles Elementary School and doctoral student candidate at Western Washington University has been approved to conduct his dissertation research within the Abbotsford School District. Mr. Penner and is looking for faculty volunteers who identify as Indigenous to take part in his study titled "***Factors Affecting Indigenous Student Motivation in K-12 Public Schools in British Columbia***." The first four faculty that respond will participate in the study. Faculty will participate in an individual interview with Mr. Penner that will be apx. 30 minutes.

Attached is the informed consent form that describes Mr. Penner's research in further detail for your review. Mr. Penner will also review the form prior to the interview. Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated. If you would like to take part in this study, please forward your name to darlene.macdonald@abbyschools.ca.

Sincerely,

Darlene MacDonald
District Principal, Indigenous Education
Abbotsford School District
3277 Gladwin Road
Abbotsford, BC V2T 4Y9