Editorial for *in education* Spring 2022

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At this writing we are well past the spring equinox and hurtling through space toward summer solstice. However, observations out my window suggest it is still spring, albeit late spring but seasonal change persists. Something else that seems to be changing as I look out my window is how people and governments are navigating the ongoing pandemic; folks seem to have decided it is over, or at least over as far as getting to live and work as they think they did prepandemic. A great deal (and also not much) has happened in the 6 months since writing the last editorial for our journal in December 2021. Yet the world and humans spin on through our celestial path, "to everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven."

This will be the last editorial I pen for *in education* as I am set to resign at the end of June 2022. I have spent the last many years steering our journal with the assistance of a great board of associate editors, consulting editors, exceptional authors and reviewers, and of course readers. I must also thank our tireless and dedicated Managing Editor who has kept me on task and focused all these years through regular issues and many special issues, without her assistance I am sure I would be endlessly floundering.

With my stepping down the Editorship of *in education* is moving into the Faculty of Education research centre at the University of Regina: the [Centre for Educational Research, Collaboration, and Development (CERCD)](). Dr. Andrea Sterzuk, the Director of CERCD will be taking on the role of Editor-in-chief of *in education*. I believe this is a sound move in that the resources of the journal and CERCD will enhance and benefit both endeavours. So, congratulations and welcome to Dr. Sterzuk into the role of Editor-in-Chief of *in education*.

This issue of *in education* is a slim volume but packed with very interesting and innovative works. Martha Moon and Paul Berger share important and timely work they did with teachers and in-service learning on the importance of relationality when teachers are working with Indigenous students. Working across two provinces the work has Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers share their stories and practices with each other in how they support the learning of Indigenous students. They point to the many existing and ongoing collegial collaborations amongst Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators and the need to support and augment that work.

Kate Bucca's article delineates the myriad challenges that university students must navigate in order to utilize Universities' disability services systems noting that when accommodations are provided for students it is invariably a one-size-fits-all approach that does not consider individual student needs. This is particularly difficult for students with "pronounced psychiatric disabilities—disorders that frequently do not follow a predictable pattern and are cyclical in nature" as the standard list of accommodations often are misaligned to their needs. Through story as research, she interrogates the structures and practices of the university and faculty with how they often fall short of supporting students who live with mental health issues.

Candy Skyhar and Alysha Farrell's piece travels through the world of professional women teachers who are moving into new academic positions in faculties of education in a university setting. Using collaborative authoethnography they share their experiences of the journey with all its ups and downs and the many lessons they learned along the way; working hard to make the invisible visible within the highly biased and entrenched systems and structures of universities and faculties.

Enjoy the works within this volume and the concurrent special issue. In closing, I just want to thank everyone who has supported the journal as authors, reviewers, readers, or board members. It has been a real pleasure working with all of you; take care and keep well!

--Patrick Lewis

Shadows and Light: Professional Women Educators Transitioning to Academe

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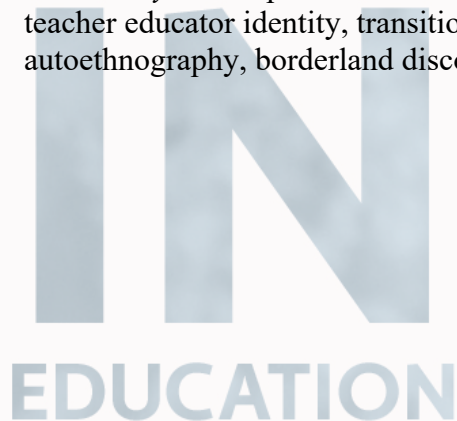
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Abstract

Many professional women educators make the transition from school settings to academe after significant graduate work in their field(s). This transition, which often occurs on a mid- to late-career trajectory, places such individuals within liminal spaces on many levels as they inevitably must navigate unfamiliar, often alien, territory that frequently does not recognize or respect the experiences with which they enter their new university contexts. The collaborative autoethnographic study we embarked upon involved examining our own experiences of making this transition. By revisiting an academic year's worth of recorded conversations and analyzing them through an ecofeminist lens, we considered the lessons we had learned through engaging in a program renewal process and designing and co-teaching new courses in our first few years as faculty, as well as how these lessons impacted our emerging identities as new teacher educators. Our findings included three broad lessons learned: Beware of Institutionally Invisible Work*; This is not High School, Dorothy; and Two Heads and Hearts are One*. These lessons taught us to navigate the shadow places (Plumwood, 2008) of academe, including the delegitimization of teaching, nurturing and service *work* and the dematerialisation (Plumwood, 2008) associated with such delegitimization, and to embrace the light we found rooted in interconnectedness, an ethic of care, and our mutual recognition of the other. Moreover, these lessons offer others in the field ways of understanding the difficult transition to academe undertaken by professional women educators and the complexity of academic/teacher educator identity formation.

Keywords: professional women educators, ecofeminist, institutionally invisible work, teacher educator identity, transition to academe, program renewal, collaborative autoethnography, borderland discourse, mutual recognition, shadow places, ethic of care

Shadows and Light: Professional Women Educators Transitioning to Academe

Philosopher and ecofeminist Val Plumwood (2008) describes *shadow places* as "places remote from self that we don't have to know about but whose degradation we as commodity consumers are indirectly responsible for" (p. 147). These places, while primarily discussed in terms of the denial of ecological impacts brought on by consumerism, also exist in any context in which human and more-than-human life dwells, including in hyper-rational, neoliberal, patriarchal institutions such as universities. The question from an ecofeminist point of view, then, becomes what, or who, is degraded within the shadow places of academe, out of the realm of consciousness? Moreover, what follows is how might these shadow places be illuminated so as to bring out of the shadows, the unseen or unacknowledged within the halls of academe?

The study we embarked on sought to examine, through an ecofeminist lens, our own unique experiences transitioning to academe from careers in the field of public education. We were interested in how our knowledge and identities were constructed as new academics and teacher educators, as well as what lessons we carried with us as a result of this metamorphosis. Through our research, we uncovered several shadow places that existed broadly in academe and in our unique, immediate contexts. We were also drawn to the light we found through our work with each other and our interactions with our students.

Background to the Study

In the fall of 2016, one year after we both arrived in academe, our Faculty of Education undertook the task of revamping a Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Education Integrated Program (IP). Despite the fact that the Faculty had a successful After Degree (AD) program in Education, the IP had been relatively unsuccessful in retaining students due, in large part, to structural barriers in the program and lack of connection with the Faculty of Education (the first year of the program was located entirely in the Faculty of Arts). Alysha, who had had previous experience leading change initiatives in educational contexts, led the program review and re-visioning process at the Dean's request, taking on a committee of faculty members who had volunteered to take part (including Candy) through several steps: (a) a review of literature in several fields related to teacher education programs, (b) a re-visioning of a new IP based on the research conducted, (c) the drafting and approval of changes to the program at the committee level, (d) approval of changes to the IP at the Faculty of Education level, (e) approval of changes to the IP at the University level, and (f) implementation of the new IP in the fall of 2017.

In addition to several other new features, the new IP included an Education course in each term of the first 4 years of the program in order to foster student connections with each other, with faculty, and with the Faculty of Education more broadly. Within this context, we embarked upon the task of designing and co-teaching two new courses focused on identity for first year students. Through these courses, we sought to help our students navigate the borderlands between student and teacher (Alsup, 2019), recognizing how the complexity of who they were impacted the type of teachers they would become in the future.

Somewhere between the re-visioning of the IP and the designing of two new courses for first year IP students, we began to think about our own experiences of this process as new faculty members coming to academe from the field of education. Having been warned about the dangers of taking on such work as pre-tenured faculty, we wondered both how our identities as professional educators impacted our work as new academics and what the experiences of engaging in program revitalization, course design, and co-teaching offered us as we straddled the borderland between

teacher and teacher educator (Alsup, 2006; 2019). It was this curiosity that led to a collaborative autoethnographic study that was guided by the following research questions: What lessons did we learn through the process of engaging in an IP program renewal, the design of two new courses for IP students, and co-teaching the new courses? How did these lessons impact our emerging identities as new teacher educators in a faculty of education and as professional women educators transitioning to academe?

Professional Women Educators Entering Academe

It is common in many professional fields (e.g. health, education, law, business) for academics to travel first down the road of professional practice, through subsequent education/degrees, and finally to the halls of academe. Many in the field of education come to universities with significant experience in schools or related fields, choosing teacher education as a second or additional career (Acker, 1997). While the move to academe is often viewed as a prestigious step upward, the transition from teacher to teacher educator (and academic) can be a difficult one, fraught with challenges such as imposter syndrome, self-doubt, anxiety, depression, loneliness, uncertainty, lack of supports, difficulties around work-life balance, and stress in relation to tenure and research expectations (Memorial Writing Group, 2017). Several factors contribute to the challenges faced by women educators transitioning to academe. While many of them relate to academics and women academics more broadly, those transitioning from careers as professional educators often experience significant shifts in institutional value systems that impact their professional (and even personal) identities profoundly.

One of the factors impacting the success of professional women educators entering academe is the prevalence of institutional inequities for women faculty. Women faculty have the greatest representation in less prestigious institutions (August & Waltman, 2004; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2017), lower percentages in higher university ranks (Acker et al., 2012; Cook, 2018; Marsden et al., 2012; Snow, 2017), and disproportionate representation as lecturers rather than tenure track professors (Acker et al., 2012; August & Waltman, 2004; Serrano, 2008; Snow, 2017). According to Gardner (2013), women faculty face underrepresentation in fields such as mathematics and science, lower rates of promotion and tenure, lower pay than their male counterparts, heavier teaching loads, higher service responsibilities, chilly climates, exclusion from important committees and decision-making, trivialization of their research, and issues related to sexist, misogynistic, and/or paternalistic views. Women also, perhaps as a result of such challenges, are more likely to leave academia pre- or post-tenure (August & Waltman, 2004; Gardner, 2013; Gonzales, 2018; Serrano, 2008).

High expectations for performance is a second factor that impacts the success of women transitioning from K-12 educational contexts to academe. The moment new faculty members first set foot on campus, their tenure clock starts; at the same time, they must begin "learn[ing] the ropes" (Acker, 1997) in their new positions. Within a relatively short period of time, new faculty must develop course material for their classes and get research agendas off the ground if they are to be successful tenure applicants. While many institutions openly communicate splits between expectations for teaching attainment, scholarship/research, and service (e.g. 40%/40%/20%), unwritten expectations and rules about what is most/least valued for tenure and promotion linger within academic institutions (and those who work within them). Women faculty, who tend to do more service work, or what Hill (2020) refers to as "institutionally invisible" work, have to be careful that they do not do so to the detriment of their research agendas. Rising standards, sometimes referred to as "academic/upward drift" (Gardner, 2013), continue to make research and

(peer-reviewed) publications increasingly important, and together with ambiguous expectations in terms of tenure requirements, can be a significant source of stress and anxiety for those new to academe who are worried about job security (Acker & Armenti, 2004; August & Waltman, 2004).

A third factor identified in the significant literature around the challenges faced by professional women educators entering academe relates to paid work-family life balance. Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2016) suggest that women live "linked-lives" when it comes to career and family, each impacting the other. Despite the fact that the average academic works approximately 55 hours per week (O'Laughlin & Bischoff, 2005), many women faculty engage in what has been referred to as the "second shift" (Snow, 2017), caring for children or elderly family members, and performing household duties at disproportionately greater rates than their male counterparts (Acker et al., 2016; August & Waltman; 2004; O'Laughlin & Bischoff, 2005; Snow, 2017). When combined with the increasing expectations for tenure and promotion in academic institutions, it is evident how difficult it is for women academics to "have it all" (Stoesz, 2020). This, perhaps, is the reason why many women academics choose to have children later in life, have fewer children than desired, or choose not to have children at all (Serrano, 2008; Snow, 2017; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2017). Those who do have children are forced to face the "greedy" nature of both their academic career and mothering (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2016; 2017), finding ways to negotiate both. Sleeplessness, loss of leisure time, stress, guilt, fatigue, and mental health concerns are all cited in literature related to the paid work-family life balance of women faculty, especially for those new to academe and on the road to tenure (Acker & Armenti, 2004; Chambers, 2017; Gereluk, 2020; O'Laughlin & Bischoff, 2005; Snow, 2017; Stoesz, 2020).

While women educators transitioning to academe experience many of the challenges faced by women faculty generally, they also face unique challenges related to making the cultural shift from professional educator to teacher educator and academic. Often placed in the incongruous position of being both mature educators and novice professors (Block, 2017), professional women educators entering academe must adapt to a new context that is likely to minimize and marginalize their life's work to that point. According to Acker (1997), "teaching is a job associated with women and children, and thus suspiciously feminine and downgraded when it comes to the competition, hierarchy and power that pervade institutions like universities" (p. 65). Whereas effective teaching, nurturing and service to community are highly valued characteristics of professional educators in K-12 settings, within academia, such qualities are seen as "lesser" than the ability to conduct (and publish) quality research (Gardner, 2013; Harris & Gonzalez, 2012). Moreover, despite the fact that many professional women educators come to academe with many years of successful teaching experience (that helps them engage with teacher candidates and current teachers in the field), professional experience is not always recognized and respected in academic contexts (Acker, 1997; Kornelson, 2017). When combined with other enduring values in academic contexts such as enduring conceptions of the ideal/universal (male) worker dedicated entirely to job-related matters (Acker, 1990; Harris & Gonzalez, 2012; Serrano, 2008; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2017), preferential treatment and respect for the sciences over the humanities (Harris & Gonzalez, 2012), and immutable notions of what counts in terms of knowledge production, favoring quantitative research and marginalizing (or actively denigrating) methods of qualitative inquiry (Harris & Gonzalez, 2012), it is not hard to see how professional women educators entering university contexts are confronted with opposing values that impact their identities as new academics. While simultaneously trying to honor their previous experience, knowledge and expertise in the field of education, they are forced to develop new capacities and identities as professors, fitting into (and thriving within) their new institutions.

An Ecofeminist Approach

This research study is grounded in ecofeminism. At its core, ecofeminism is concerned with the inextricable links among social oppressions and the environment. Because we focused on our immersion in a new place and power and privilege as it related to *becoming an instructor,* ecofeminism was an appropriate and insightful framework for our work. By examining what we learned as beginning academics engaged in program renewal, including new understandings of the way domination works to dislocate women from the material conditions that sustain their lives (Plumwood, 2008, p. 141), we were better positioned to critically assess how the associative services we performed, and the multiplicity of our identities were constructed in the university.

As a conceptual framework, ecofeminism effectively troubles the dualisms of reason/emotion and mind/body in Western style education (Taylor, 2020). Our feminist commitments opened space for the emotional dimensions of leading (Farrell, 2020) to trouble the reductionist, hyper-rationalized, neoliberal culture that entangles many renewal efforts in educational institutions. The framework also illuminated, sometimes in uncomfortable ways, our own perpetuation of dualism-talk as evidenced in the good cop/bad cop reference later in the article. More importantly, in the context of this work, ecofeminism attunes us to mutuality among humans and the more-than-human world and constructs subjectivity amidst a complex and generative system of relationships (Martusewicz, 2018). We assume that we learn, grow and change only in relation to others (Farrell, 2022) and that an aim of educational encounters is a recognition of the other. According to Benjamin (2018), this type recognition involves "an affectively meaningful experience of the other not simply as an object of need to be controlled or resisted, consumed or pushed away, but another mind we can connect with" (p. 3). We understand subjectivity as mutually constructed and affectively charged, which is why we characterize our work together as "two heads and hearts are one" rather than using the commonplace phrase, "two heads are better than one."

We are aware that positioning ourselves as ecofeminists thrusts us into contested space. Ecofeminism is filled with a myriad of "lights and shadows" (Puleo, 2008, as cited in Estévez-Saá & Lorenzo-Modia, 2018) and it has faced criticism for its early association with women's spirituality (Mallory, 2010), Eurocentrism (Gaard, 2017), insufficiently describing the work as intersectional (Kings, 2017) and for essentializing femininity (Cuomo, 1998, p. 22). Although exploring the contested history of ecofeminist praxis is beyond the scope of this article, we, along with Estévez-Saá and Lorenzo-Modia (2018), Gough and Whitehouse (2020), Mallory, (2018) and Mann (2006), assert ecofeminism has always been concerned with the exclusion and degradation of women's bodies, other marginalized human bodies, and the more-than-human world. We go even further to echo Mallory's (2018) claim, that in the midst of the collapse of late-stage capitalism and the ecological crisis we find ourselves in today, "All feminisms, should in some sense, be *eco*" (p. 29).

Methods

As a method, autoethnography combines autobiographical and ethnographic methods to examine the reciprocal relationship between the individual and the broader culture(s) in which they participate. Bringing together "the self (auto), culture (ethno), and writing (graphy)" (Adams et al., 2015, p. 46), autoethnographers use their own personal experiences to expand understanding of social phenomena through their writing. As a result, "autoethnography is both a process and a product" (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 273). While numerous benefits have been cited about

autoethnography as a method, including its friendly format for researchers and readers, its ability to enhance cultural understandings of the self and others, and its transformative potential (Chang, 2016), what draws many to its use, including us, is its potential to "disrupt and deconstruct … cultural and methodological practices" (Denzin, 2006, p. 333). Recognizing the value of personal experiences as a legitimate and needed data source, autoethnography has the power to open dialogical spaces for those previously silenced to speak back (or speak differently) about their understandings and what can be illuminated, or perhaps questioned, culturally through them (Denshire, 2014; Holman Jones et al., 2013).

In the case of this study, we were interested in examining our lived experiences within the context of moving to a new university, joining a Faculty of Education, participating in the creation of a new IP, and contributing to the field of teacher education more broadly. Using a collaborative autoethnographic approach (Chang et al., 2012), we sought to understand the phenomenon of transitioning between educational contexts within/against the professions of teaching and teacher education (Denshire, 2014; Lather, 1991). Autoethnography allowed us to both look inward at our vulnerable selves as they were "moved, refracted, and resisted during the process" (Hamilton et al., 2008, p. 24), and to look outward at the culture of the academy for women, for professional educators, and for new academics.

Participants and Data Sources

In order to capture our lived experiences designing and implementing two new IP courses for the new program, we engaged in weekly, recorded conversations (25 in total) from September (2017) through March (2018). During these conversations, we planned for student learning together, reflected on our experiences, and shared our thoughts, musings, and emotions about co-teaching and engaging in programmatic change. The conversations we engaged in were transcribed for analysis.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed for through what Chang et al. (2012) refers to as three clusters of data analysis: "(a) reviewing data; (b) segmenting, categorizing, and regrouping data; and (c) finding themes and reconnecting with data" (p. 102). The first step involved a *macro-review* in which the data was reviewed holistically (Chang et al., 2012). During the macro-review, *analytic memos* (Saldaña, 2009) were used to document our reflections and reactions about our experiences, and themes that were emerging as we read. The second step in the data analysis process involved what Chang et al. (2012) refers to as the *micro-review*. In this phase, data were divided up into segments according to general categories and reviewed in these smaller parts. Within each of these smaller segments, data were coded using thematic codes from the macro-review, and codes from the literature reviewed for the study (as initial codes). These codes, in addition to others that emerged during the micro-review were collapsed, grouped, categorized, and recategorized into broader themes or "lessons learned."

Findings

Three broad "lessons learned" have been used to describe our findings: Beware of Institutionally Invisible Work; This is not High School, Dorothy; and Two Heads and Hearts are One. These lessons (or themes) get at both the shadow spaces associated with institutional blindness to the efforts of women academics who value teaching and service work, sometimes to the detriment of research and publication, and the light associated with claiming one's space in the academy,

pushing against neoliberal, hyper-rational, and sometimes patriarchal values that do not honor the multiplicity of women's identities, or the interconnectedness of us all.

Beware of Institutionally Invisible Work

One of the most significant themes or lessons evident in the data in the study was the tension that existed in relation to what Hill (2020) refers to as "institutionally invisible" work. Participating in the designing of a new IP; creating, getting approval for, and co-teaching two new 1st-year IP courses; fostering the development of support structures for 1st-year IP students; creating e-portfolio structures for IP students; designing a micro-practicum experience for IP students; and communicating with faculty about the new IP were time-consuming tasks that did not necessarily advance our qualifications in terms of tenure and promotion. This tension was illustrated explicitly in comments such as "It's high stakes stuff, but [according to more senior colleagues] it's not going to pay off in terms of the credits that we need to accrue in order to get tenure really right?" (Alysha, recorded and transcribed conversation, Nov. 21, 2017). The tension also emerged in relation to comments about workload, long hours spent on the course/initiative, fatigue/health concerns, resentment, and even comments about leaving academia. One of Candy's comments illustrating several of these tensions is included below:

> I can't go into the week without having the teaching part ready to go because I just don't know what's going to happen during the week or how I am going to feel. Because I still have some issues with fatigue and things, like still. So, I don't really know. It's hit and miss whether I can work in the evening or whether I can't. And I certainly can't write the conclusion to my dissertation in the evening. I was really resentful when I had to spend all that time prepping; like you said it's taking away from me being able to complete this research and I feel this immense pressure to get the research done. It's like every day somebody is like "Oh, how's your dissertation going?" … "It would be going a lot better if I wasn't teaching four courses!" Like trying to design; we're designing this and I just think, "Who does this?" It's awesome and I love it, but I cannot believe the stuff that we are expected to do. Like, it's just not humanly possible and well, having had cancer … I go through moments where I think I swore to myself that I would find a better balance in my life … that I would take better care of myself and I get angry when I can see that it's just not possible. It's not possible to prepare for four classes, finish my dissertation, and take good care of myself at the same time. That part I find really frustrating. (recorded and transcribed conversation, Nov. 15, 2017)

As two fairly new faculty members, we found ourselves paradoxically torn between what the institution recognized in relation to the criteria for tenure and promotion, which was primarily research and publications, and what we felt morally and professionally obligated to address in relation to the IP. While we both felt ethically compelled to make changes in the IP to meet the needs of students and to make the program sustainable, the time and energy required to carry through with the 1st-year courses (and the IP design) was something that overwhelmed us at times. Intuitively we knew that the work was important; however, we came to realize that even though the dean and our colleagues seemed to value our work, it might come at a price to us personally and professionally in the academy. For one, not all faculty members were happy about the resurrection of the beleaguered IP, particularly when our initiative impacted their workloads, time to conduct research, or personal agendas. This was evidenced in the comments of one of our male colleagues who warned that we were, perhaps, "tall poppies who were in danger of having their

heads cut off by one of the departments." We found ourselves, as new, untenured faculty, worried about potential conflict with colleagues who we knew would be making decisions about our tenure and promotion applications. In addition, we found our research and writing time compromised by our heavy involvement in IP changes. Throughout the transcribed conversations, these tensions existed, ebbing and flowing through our collaborative consciousness. As we celebrated our victories with the new IP and our new IP students, we often struggled with suggestions that we somehow make ourselves smaller or less noticeable, and lamented the time we felt we had lost in terms of our individual research goals.

This is Not High School, Dorothy!

The second theme or lesson that emerged from the data was our own developing understandings about the differences (and similarities) between our previous professional contexts, and our new context(s) in academe. Learning about institutional structures and processes in our new academic context was vitally important for both our own professional success, and for the success of the new IP. We wrote the following in a memo about our October 26, 2017 conversation transcript:

> One thing that jumps out of the data is the level of institutional knowledge we had to develop to make these things happen. We had to learn how to design new courses; get them in the academic calendar through the use of committees, forms and motions; work with the local school division and its teachers to create mini-practicum experiences for our IP students; and work with the university technology support systems to design and create e-portfolios housed within the institution. It is a wonder we were able to figure all of this out within a little over 1 academic year.

While our backgrounds were different in terms of leadership and policy experience (Alysha had significantly more experience through her program development and educational administration background than Candy did, who had been most recently engaged in other areas such as classroom practice, curriculum, and teacher professional development), university policies and processes were new to both of us. Engaging in program development in academe had a steep learning curve, as did the tenure and promotion process. In order to be successful in our new positions and in the tasks we had chosen to take on, we had to become familiar with the policies and processes, or "learn the ropes" (Acker, 1997) in our new institution as quickly as possible.

A second area in which we had to develop an understanding of our new context was in regard to our new IP students, who were both different from and similar to our after-degree students in Education and the previous high school students we had worked with. The IP students were mostly new to university, although there were some exceptions. Many of them were from rural and remote communities in the western and northern parts of the province, and as such, had recently moved away from home. In addition, due to the fact that the IP was designed to have students do a B.A. and B.Ed. simultaneously, as opposed to doing a B.Ed. after a B.A. was already completed, it attracted several students who had wanted to be teachers for a very long time, and who wanted to go right into education. Many of them had volunteered in classrooms, or coached sports or extra-curricular activities in the past, and some of them had a very strong desire to develop experience in teaching.

As we came to understand the demographics and dynamics of the group of 1st-year IP students, we found ourselves responding to their needs in a variety of ways. For example, when students were very quiet at the beginning of the course, we took the time to have them meet each

other through a variety of drama-based activities. When it became apparent to us that several of the students were homesick in the fall, we revamped an existing assignment to be a digital story about how home/place impacted their identities as becoming teachers. And when students expressed that they were struggling in some of their math courses, or with personal issues, we connected them with tutors and/or walked them over to make appointments with student support services on campus. However, not all of the adaptation and responsiveness to IP students was easy. At times, we found it difficult to support our IP students at an appropriate level as is evidenced in the following conversation about how much support to provide in regard to course selection:

> **Alysha:** It's different, in high school there are many people chasing you around "Do you have the right credits?" You know? I wanted to say to them "It's not like that here. You are in the end responsible to meet your degree requirements. It's hard to make that transition in Year 1, so you have to force yourself to go to these meetings once a year with your advisers and [faculty student advisor] to make sure you are on the right track." We can't do that for them. They are adults, right? So, I also don't want to infantilize them either.

> **Candy:** And I can feel that this is part of my high school teacher background that's doing this. Like I can feel it. I can feel like I want to rescue them and I know that that's - I can feel the tension in myself in that particular [way].

> **Alysha:** We know about university attrition rates and we are really trying to support them as they get through this 1st year. So, I think we do a nice job of moving back and forth between, "Come on! Get on this!" And then we move to, "Okay, we will help you."

> **Candy:** We play good cop/bad cop well [laughter]. Well, not bad cop …

> **Alysha:** Maybe firm cop? Is there something important about hearing your university instructor say, "I don't really care what the issue is, just get it done?" I think about how many incidences that are like that in a K-12 school. So, at some point you have to be able to wrestle with the idea, "I've just gotta get it done. It's my issue to deal with." They have to have some skills and resiliency in that area because schools are going to demand that they have it.

The data in the study, in fact, included many instances like the one above in which we struggled with how much support to provide students. Because we were very concerned about students dropping out of the program, and because we cared about the distances they had traveled and the dreams that our students had, there was a constant tension between wanting to help them be successful and allowing them to develop independence and resilience as young adults. In a memo written about our September 28th, 2017 conversation, we wrote the following:

> Our concern about the well-being of students in our first IP class is interesting. Perhaps this was because of the failures of the previous program and our fear of losing students. Perhaps it was because we are both mothers of teenagers, or because we were both public school teachers. In any case, our worry about their experiences and well-being led us to ask them about their other classes, walk them over to counsellors, and sit with them when they were sad, in distress, or stressed out. We wondered if we were mothering them too much, if we were reaching

beyond the role of teacher educator. And yet, why did we feel this way? Where does it say that we should not care so deeply about the well-being of our students?

The memo above illustrates the complexity of understanding and operating within a new context as educators. In addition to struggling with how much support to provide students, we also struggled with differences in values between our previous teaching contexts and academe. While caring about and supporting students were prized values in public education, something made us feel that these qualities were not valued in academe, at least not to the same extent. Interestingly, we both recognized and considered the impact of our experiences as high school teachers and mothers on our identities as teacher educators, something that facilitated our transition to academe.

A final area in which we had to develop understandings about the similarities and differences between our previous professional contexts and our new academic context(s), was in relation to our own skill sets and feelings of efficacy. While both of us had had successful careers prior to taking our first faculty positions, academe was new to us, putting us in the position of being, as Block (2017) suggested, both mature educators and novice professors. Over the course of a year of conversations, a recurring theme of vulnerability emerged in relation to our feelings of self-efficacy, our work together as co-teachers, and the experiences on which we drew. One of the strongest examples of this occurred in a November 21st conversation between us in which we discussed some reading we had done about the borderlands that exist for becoming teachers. During the conversation, Candy shared some disparate thoughts she had recorded on a sticky note:

Insecurity,

Imposter.

I don't have what it takes for this environment.

Vulnerability in having a co-teacher to witness my short comings

Want to hold my cards close to my chest.

Why do I feel this way? Is 20 years of experience not enough?

I am learning so much by working with you, the reward outweighs the risk by far.

Why am I so anxious and insecure?

Is this how our students feel in the student-teacher borderland?

How I feel in the teacher-faculty borderland?

This passage in the transcript, which Alysha referred to as a poem, captures much of the internal turmoil we both felt as we navigated the move from highly successful professional careers to academe, an environment in which we sometimes felt like imposters. Learning how to co-teach together, coming to the understanding that previous teaching experience in public education was not always valued in academe, and dealing with our own feelings of insecurity in our new context and roles were all part of the process as we made the transition to academe, one that elicited a raw vulnerability that was still difficult for us to read even after the fact as researchers.

Two Heads and Hearts are One

While we had both worked with others in various ways as professional educators, designing the first two IP courses in the program, and team teaching or co-teaching the courses with our first cohort of IP students was a unique and fulfilling experience that neither of us could have predicted

would be as successful as it was. By working together, we were able to share the load with each other, and draw on the unique strengths we each possessed. For example, Alysha's background in leadership, administration, and program development allowed her to construct, elicit support for, and carry out a process for revamping the IP. Similarly, Candy drew on her technology expertise and professional development background to develop an electronic portfolio structure for use in the new IP. While these are but two examples of how the load was shared through our work together, they illustrate not only how our work became more manageable as a team, but also how two heads worked together due to the various assets we each possessed.

The individual strengths, beliefs, and passions we each embodied powerfully complemented each other in our teaching, as well as in our work developing the new IP. We often referred, in our conversations, to the way our similarities and differences provided us with a broad array of teaching strategies and approaches, and unique perspectives with which we thought about teaching and learning. Alysha brought to the classroom, amongst many other things, arts-based strategies, a strong feminist perspective, and a teaching background that included experience with newcomer students and other young people who are often marginalized in school communities. Candy, who had spent 20 years teaching in three different rural communities, brought to the classroom an appreciation for rural places, a background in mathematics education, and experience planning professional development for teachers. These differences allowed us to provide a greater depth of experience for our students, which was something they shared with us on several occasions.

A third way that our unique differences worked in tandem during the inception of the new IP, was in the way we interpreted our experiences and shared those experiences with each other. The differences between our backgrounds allowed us to provide unique alternative viewpoints for consideration in our reflections with each other. Whether it was how lessons went, behaviours of students, or how to handle decisions that had to be made in relation to students or the course, we were able to look at new situations with two distinct, and often opposing, points of view. This was a common thread that permeated the data in comments such as those made in the following memo: "We balanced each other well with the 'good cop/bad cop' and 'arts/math' dichotomies I suppose. It is interesting how much richer we were together—we helped each other see different viewpoints in every conversation" (recorded and transcribed conversation, Nov. 16, 2017). Within the data, the moments in which these interchanges were most evident were when one of us was feeling vulnerable, or when something rubbed up against our individual or collective values and beliefs as is evidenced in the following memo:

> There are several incidences in the transcripts where we talked about encounters in what Alysha referred to as "prickly moments." These encounters occurred when our values and beliefs as educators were challenged by the words and actions of students—when they provided negative feedback about an activity, behaved in ways that we felt were inappropriate or unprofessional, or were not as excited or engaged as we maybe hoped they would (or perhaps should) be. Deconstructing these critical encounters caused us to question our own understandings about teaching and learning, and to engage in psychoanalyzing some of our own actions and contributions to the situation. These moments, when our beliefs and values rubbed up against what appeared to be opposing beliefs and values were key moments of learning for us. Deconstructing them together, we tested out our assumptions and observations with each other, something that was incredibly

valuable and affirming for us both. (memo of transcribed conversation, Nov. 30, 2017)

Being able to share our thoughts and hear the other's perspectives were an invaluable part of our growth. It was through our differences that we were able to offer this to each other, something we would otherwise never have experienced.

Intuitively, we knew that there was something special about our partnership. We often commented about our gratitude for this, noting that we could not have team taught with most (or perhaps any) of our other colleagues the way we did together. For example, Candy wrote the following in a memo:

We constantly worried about the load being equitable when team teaching. There was such a heavy load, and we felt guilt, I think, seeing each other working so hard. We also cared for each other as teaching buddies, offering to do our part, or more than our part. It is so interesting how we complemented each other that way. Other colleagues would not have been so intuitive about their partners, I don't think. (memo of transcribed conversation, Feb. 6, 2018)

While Candy's comments reflect the work distribution and compatibility in terms of the care we expressed for each other, care was also expressed in the ways we compassionately witnessed the struggles of the other. For example, Alysha wrote the following:

Sometimes I would look over at Candy and her face was a portrait of exhaustion. Guilt would leak into our conversations because I worried the splintered girl inside of me, the perfectionist who overcorrects, the one who craves acceptance in unfamiliar spaces, was driving us to the edge of a professional and personal cliff. I fantasized that I was bringing about the final scene of Thelma and Louise in our new professional context! (memo of transcribed conversation, Feb. 6, 2018)

In both the conversations and our reflections about them, we saw the precarity of our situation, the difficulties we faced individually and collectively, and the ways in which we were invaluable resources to each other. This was evidenced in comments such as the following by Alysha:

In meetings, Candy's presence was a great comfort. When others wielded a map of the political terrain that was initially invisible to us, she became a steadfast navigator. She would remind me that when trying to imagine a more inclusive IP program, we were bound to find ourselves in contested and even paradoxical spaces. Through her compassion and grace, we shared personal stories to contextualize the embodied curricula we were weaving during the program renewal. As we made ourselves more emotionally legible to one another, our friendship deepened and so did our understanding of the affective dimensions of leading and learning. I wonder if being vulnerable, in our case amid what felt like professional precarity, created some of the conditions for us to enact pedagogy that was grounded in mutual recognition and an ethic of care? (recorded and transcribed conversation, Mar. 15, 2018)

The experiences we shared developing courses and team teaching together allowed us to develop a relationship that many in academe never find. We took care of each other, checked in on each other, witnessed the struggles of each other, shared the load together, and made gentle suggestions that allowed us to make sense of and (re)interpret our values and beliefs, thereby growing as individuals and professionals (Hill, 2020). It was not only the sharing of two minds that made us

successful in our work together, but it was also the capacity of two hearts to care that supported us, through relationship, to grow into our new roles and identities as academics.

Discussion and Implications

Our experiences as new faculty members engaging in significant program development and faculty service work echoed much of what others in the field have previously expressed. For example, Acker et al. (2016) noted the following:

> Our findings on the persistent gendered nature of university service reflect Fitzgerald and Wilkinson's (2010) argument and need to be addressed. While clearly service is a critical part of academic life, how is it that institutions often de-emphasize or do not "count" service in criteria for tenure? If service does not count, why are some junior faculty positioned in such a way that they deploy their most limited resource—time—engaged in activities that will reap little reward to their immediate goal of gaining tenure? Alternatively, should tenure criteria be revised to embrace service as a viable way to spend time and not just as devalued women's work? (p. 16)

In terms of our own careers in academe, we found that engaging in service work was, *at best*, a zero-sum enterprise; what was gained through engaging in service work in terms of the points, criteria, and expectations for tenure and promotion was also lost in terms of the time needed to engage in meaningful research, something universally recognized as being of greater value in academe. Still, we volunteered to do this work, feeling ethically, morally, and professionally compelled to support our students and address the issues with the IP, even at the expense of our careers, health, and well-being.

The lessons we learned through this research highlight the stark separation that exists in academe between teaching, research, and service. This separation, not unlike the mind/body and spirit/matter dualisms described by Plumwood (2008), also separates highly cerebral processes such as theorizing, writing, and researching from more embodied processes such as teaching and providing service to the university, colleagues and students, leading to what Plumwood (2008) describes as "dematerialisation":

> *Dematerialisation* (a term I owe to Barbara Ehrenreich), applied to cultures, traditions as well as processes, is the process of becoming more and more out of touch with the *material conditions (including ecological conditions) that support or enable our lives*. Losing track of them means making more and more exhausting and unrealistic demands on them, and being deluded about who we and others are. (pp. 141–142)

We found, over time, that our colleagues and the institution became out of touch with the labor we engaged in as "body people" in the faculty, caring for the program and our students, somewhat in isolation as others turned a blind eye to something that was "beyond their attention" (Plumwood, 2008, p. 142). We felt the degradation associated with our IP work, which while championed by some who benefited from the work, was clearly beneath others who felt their cerebral prowess was far too important to be hampered by what was constructed as the bodily and feminized work of caring for students and programs (Acker, 1997). And where the individualistic aspirations and agendas of the "mind people" (Plumwood, 2008, p. 142) in the faculty were threatened by our work, we were reminded by our colleagues not to stand too tall, for fear of having our poppy heads

cut off. What became clear to us in the examination of the conversations we engaged in, was the multiplicity of ways that that domination worked to dislocate us from the material conditions that supported our lives and well-being. It became apparent to us that the false dualisms that exist in academe, such as mind versus body, rational versus emotional, and even research versus teaching and service, worked to delegitimize the knowledge that we thought we held about what it means to be a good educator, colleague, and human being; making our new contexts foreign to us, despite the echoes we still heard of our former teacher selves. Coming to recognize these "shadow places" (Plumwood, 2008, p. 139) within our contexts, as well as the ways in which we were, in fact, "replicating the discrepancies between men and women academics" (Gereluk, 2020, p. 177) through our complicity, we became motivated to push back against the dualisms that constrained us. In conversations with our colleagues, and in meetings we participated in, we chose to subvert boundaries (Gonzales, 2018), claiming our knowledge and constructing identities for ourselves that embraced our own "linked lives" (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2016) and the teaching, nurturing, and service *work* we were engaged in as not only legitimate, but powerful and full of light.

The light that we found in our work, like the multiplicity of identities that emerged for us as new academics, was rooted in interconnectedness, an ethic of care, and mutual recognition of the other. We came to understand not only that our identities were constructed in relation to and with each other, but that "relationships bonded by affection, kindness, and care are the source of our intelligence and our strength" (Martusewicz, 2018, p. 26). Such understandings, or light, made the shadow places in academe visible to us, allowing us to illuminate them, push back against them, and stand as tall as our identities would allow. In an article titled "Moths to the Flame Tend to get Burned: Life on the Liminal*,"* Wallin (2018) states the following:

> Regardless of our feminist "learnings, leadings and leanings," we fly into flames that we know are going to burn us. Sometimes we do so with purpose, strategy, and determination, while at other times we burn as we are distracted by whatever else is going on around us. Regardless of how it happens, feminist leaders emerge from the flames a bit scarred, somewhat disoriented, and forever changed. What is important is how women make sense out of those experiences and with what purpose they then move forward. (p. 121)

The metaphor of a moth being drawn to the flame is an apt one: Light in the form of a flame is both beautiful and dangerous. The kind of work we engaged in as professional women educators transitioning to academe had to the potential to burn us, and may have, in fact, scarred and disoriented us in numerous ways. What we know is certainly true, however, is that we have been forever changed by this work. The new identities we formed as colleagues, teacher educators, and academics will forever be drawn to the flame, though it may be dangerous at times. We will choose to move forward with an ethic of care for our students and each other unapologetically, embracing the light and releasing it on any shadow places we encounter.

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An Exhausting Job: A Story of Psychiatric Disability in University as Performativity (Dis)Rupture

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Abstract

Who gets to perform the identity of student? How does the process of obtaining accommodations affect a student's sense of belonging in university? What messages do faculty attitudes send to students who seek accommodations for psychiatric disability? To facilitate addressing these questions, this article uses the fictional short story form to explore one student's journey to receive accommodations in her classes during a manic episode of bipolar disorder. Drawing data from literature review and researcher lived experience, the story seeks to portray the complexity of navigating higher education's disability services system. The story-as-research aims to build empathy through inviting readers to place themselves in the mind of the main character, to consider the messages she receives about (non)belonging from faculty who view accommodations from different standpoints. The article offers insight into the complex interplay of internalized stigma, passing as (dis)abled, and navigating discourses within an educational institution.

Keywords: psychiatric disability, higher education, fiction-based research, performativity, accommodations

An Exhausting Job: A Story of Psychiatric Disability in University as Performativity (Dis)Rupture

Who gets to perform the identity of *student*? What does it feel like to be suddenly unable to perform this identity in the context of the university? How does the process of obtaining accommodations impact a student's sense of belonging? What messages do faculty attitudes send to students who seek accommodations for psychiatric disability? In this article, I attempt to address these questions, drawing on the existing literature and my own lived experiences.

Though attitudes toward individuals living with a mental illness have shown improvement in recent years (Sánchez et al., 2018; Sandhu et al., 2019), there remains a disconnect between self-reported inclusive attitudes on the part of faculty and the reported lived experience of students with psychiatric disabilities (see Carroll-Miranda, 2017; Francis et al., 2019; Stein, 2013; Thompson-Ebanks & Jarman, 2018). Social desirability bias likely accounts for some of this disparity, as study participants may wish to appear inclusive to others or themselves (Larson, 2019), understanding it to be a desired stance in today's postsecondary environment even if they do not, in practice, support inclusion. Yet survey response bias alone does not fully illuminate why some students with psychiatric disabilities still face disbelief and stigma from postsecondary community members. A lack of cognizance regarding the impact of ableist behavior, combined with entrenched notions of the correct performance of student, may better explain why perceptions do not always translate into actions.

Kaul (2017) situated ableism as existing "not [in] a single institution, or university, but [as] a way of organizing the academy, the world" (p. 176) that frames disability as an added burden, potentially needing accommodation, that is brought to the classroom by a student. Due to such attitudes, the fear of being stigmatized by the postsecondary community prevents some students from outing themselves as living with a mental illness, requiring them to forgo academic accommodations (Kruse & Oswal, 2018; Stein, 2013). At the core of the dismissive behaviors and statements exhibited by some faculty, outlined in the scholarly literature, is a disbelief, an invalidation of student experience often couched in language of performativity (Carroll-Miranda, 2017; Francis et al., 2019; Lyotard, 1984/1979). What does it feel like, what does it mean, to go through the documentation process for accommodations only to be disbelieved about a psychiatric disability?

To facilitate answering this question, I adopt the fictional short story form to explore a student's journey to receive accommodations in her classes during a manic episode of bipolar disorder. Stories that highlight the emotional—and, even, existential—impact of negative, stigmatized interactions open up space for faculty, students, administrators, staff, and the general public to empathize with the experience of individuals who have encountered ableism in university and to question the motivation(s) and assumption(s) underlying systemic stigma in education. Employing a fiction-based research approach, I tell a story that draws on research literature, imagination, and my own experience as a student with a psychiatric disability to inform the character and plot, using interiority to demonstrate the meaning—rather than simply the facts—of the events, in all their messy, human complexity (Leavy, 2016).

First, I explore the research literature on the experiences of postsecondary students with psychiatric disabilities and contextualizes it within Lyotard's (1979/1984) theory of performativity. Then, I describe my positionality as a researcher, followed by my methodological

approach to drafting the research short story. Finally, comes the story, "An Exhausting Job" and a concluding discussion of the work.

Suggestion on How to Read This Article

Though the article is formatted in a traditional academic progression, the following sections may be read in any order. I encourage readers to engage with the short fiction prior to reviewing the scholarly literature and methodology, in order to experience the interiority and emotional core—the humanness—of the explored issue before framing it within the academic discourse (Leavy, 2012). If one wishes to do so, skip ahead to the section titled "An Exhausting Job" before returning to the literature review, researcher positionality, methodology, and discussion sections.

Literature Review

Success at university includes not only the attainment of new knowledge and a degree, but also engagement with the community—the attitudes of the full university community towards students with psychiatric disabilities contribute to the overall environment and its degree of inclusivity (Sánchez et al., 2018). Students with psychiatric disabilities acknowledge some improvement in societal attitudes toward mental illness (Francis et al., 2019), but also cite stigma toward mental illness that often stems from media portrayals as a concern (Stein, 2013). Students with psychiatric disabilities, which may be nonapparent, sometimes choose to *pass*, or not out themselves through disclosure (Thompson-Ebanks & Jarman, 2018). Passing is a performance of expected behavior and appearance, according to social conventions in a particular context, and varies over time (Brune & Wilson, 2013). While passing is often portrayed as internalized stigma, it also can represent strategic empowerment or resistance to ableist discourses (Brune & Wilson, 2013; Cox, 2013). People with invisible disabilities may be more likely to face ableism indirectly, such as through microaggressions, policing of whether they are disabled *enough*, and internalized ableism, and may struggle with their right to identify as part of the disability community (Kattari et al., 2018).

Fear of having normal emotions attributed to a mental illness prevents some students from sharing their diagnoses with their peers (Stein, 2013). Pearson and Boskovich (2019) have suggested that faculty being open and vulnerable about disability with students can break down boundaries and lead to greater solidarity amongst students of differing experiences. Professor perspectives and vulnerability are two key factors that influence students' decision to disclose, or not disclose nonapparent disabilities (Kranke et al., 2013). Some students disclose to raise awareness among faculty and pre-emptively address potential inconsistencies in their work, while others delay disclosing until symptoms begin to interfere with academic performance (Kranke et al., 2013). Others still opt not to disclose at all, for reasons ranging from intermittent need for supports to fearing stigma and its repercussions (Kranke et al., 2013). Given the challenges of the official documentation process and concerns about formal disclosure, some students choose to disclose informally to select professors (Thompson-Ebanks & Jarman, 2018).

When students do disclose in order to receive accommodations, they must provide documentation of their disability, a process that, itself, can be emotionally and financially burdensome (Thompson-Ebanks & Jarman, 2018). Laws regarding the granting of accommodations vary from country to country, and undergoing the documentation process does not guarantee that the supports will be enacted (Alberta Human Rights Commission, 2010; Katsiyannis et al., 2009). When accommodations are granted, they involve a wide range of supports, including, but not limited to, a note-taker, preferential seating, excused absences,

extended time on assignments and tests, alternative formats for assignments and tests, and quiet spaces for testing (Stein, 2013). Yet accommodations often follow a one-size-fits-all approach, resulting in supports not suited to individual needs (Carroll-Miranda, 2017; Dowrick et al., 2005). This misfit of supports is particularly pronounced for students with psychiatric disabilities—disorders that frequently do not follow a predictable pattern and are cyclical in nature—who may not be well-served by standardized accommodations (Kruse & Oswal, 2018).

Faculty reception to accommodation requests holds the potential to empower or disempower students with disabilities (Pearson & Boskovich, 2019; Riddell & Weedon, 2014). The primary positive outcome of disclosure is receiving the necessary supports to access fully, and have a positive experience in, higher education (Stein, 2013; Thompson-Ebanks & Jarman, 2018). Students report feeling "empowered once they received effective and appropriate supports at school" (Francis et al., 2019, p. 253). Encountering educators who respond positively, through exhibiting understanding and caring attitudes toward students who disclose, further contributes to a sense of inclusion (Francis et al., 2019; Thompson-Ebanks & Jarman, 2018). Simply obtaining documented, official access to accommodations, whether or not students avail themselves of the supports, can offer a positive outcome in terms of reduced anxiety (Stein, 2013). Additionally, some students with disabilities view disclosure as an opportunity to raise awareness, reduce misconceptions and stigma, and actively push back against ableism in higher education (Carter et al., 2017; Pearson & Boskovich, 2019; Thompson-Ebanks & Jarman, 2018).

In contrast, negative outcomes of disclosure include additional labour, encountering ableist attitudes, and increased feelings of isolation. Some students report finding the process of attempting to access accommodations to be exhausting and an ongoing challenge that takes substantial energy and work (Carroll-Miranda, 2017; Francis et al., 2019). Ableist attitudes persist in academia, at times forcing individuals who disclose to face professors who accuse students of attempting to gain an advantage in the class through accommodations (Pearson & Boskovich, 2019); view extensions as rewards (Carter et al., 2017); or disbelieve the student's need for accommodations, suggesting the student simply needs to study harder (Carroll-Miranda, 2017; Dowrick et al., 2005; Francis et al., 2019). Such experiences reinforce stigma and can lead to feelings of isolation (Francis et al., 2019), undermining inclusion efforts in the postsecondary community.

Each of these dismissals of a student's request for accommodations—as unfair advantage, as (unfair) reward, or as unneeded—can be viewed as rooted in a neoliberalist approach to education that values performativity and success based in merit and production (Cowen, 1996; Lyotard 1984/1979). If academia were not fundamentally driven by competition, offering students supports would not call forth an accusation of attempts to get an advantage over peers or an admonishment for laziness. Yet the educational system, in its drive for legitimation, sends a clear message: "Be operational (that is, commensurable) or disappear" (Lyotard, 1984/1979, p. xxiv). A student who performs outside the bounds of the entrenched system—one who asks for the right to produce knowledge in a manner deemed less efficient or threatening to established performative norms—jeopardizes the function of the university under the production-driven neoliberal society (Cowen, 1996; Lyotard 1984/1979). The potential disruption presented by accommodating a student with a disability—as the knowledge produced from such a student may not be "saleable" or "efficient" in rigid, performative terms (Lyotard, 1984/1979)—is a risk to the university's performance, when the system's goal is not full participation but full production (Roberts, 2013). Some who perpetuate ableist responses to accommodations may do so simply because that's how

the university operates, driven by performativity's "connotations of measurement, completion, and perfection" (Stone, 1999, p. 301). By calling attention to the specific, lived impact of such responses within the current educational system, the fictional story works to disrupt resistance to accommodations—rooted in abstractions of student—through building empathy.

Researcher Positionality

The structure of academia and its standards, developed during an era where access to education was highly restricted by identity, continues to affect perceptions regarding who belongs in the system. Carter et al. (2017) noted that the history of academia serves as the foundation for ableism that pervades the system, as the institution was "created and structured around the ideal, productive body that is ideologically predetermined for white, cisgender, heterosexual, able-bodied males" (p. 96). The experience of disabled individuals varies according to many factors, including intersecting identities (Brune & Wilson, 2013). As a White, cisgender woman from a middle-class American background, I come to academia with a substantial amount of privilege. I was raised with the assumption that I would attend university and, though I did not have the financial resources to pay out-of-pocket, I knew how and was able to access financial aid. Though I am bisexual, I am in a marriage that appears straight, and I do not face significant discrimination due to my sexuality.

Intersecting with my privileged identities is my position as an individual with a psychiatric disability. My initial diagnosis with schizoaffective disorder (which entails symptoms of both schizophrenia and bipolar disorder) arrived after my symptoms necessitated my withdrawal from an early attempt at university and derailed my participation in academia for half a decade. On a regular basis, I deal with hallucinations, intrusive and disorganized thoughts, and mood instability, including mania, depression, and mixed states. Yet, after more than two decades of living with and learning to recognize and manage symptoms, I largely am able to pass as neurotypical. I am rarely visibly disabled. As such, I experience being both a part of the disability community and an outsider to it (Johnston & Sanscartier, 2019), with a degree of privilege from appearing able-bodied. The decision to (not) pass carries its own complex meaning for me, as someone who has ranged from attempting to deny my diagnosis (internalized stigma) to embracing my identity as disabled to weighing the risks and benefits of passing in any given situation (Cox, 2013). My orientation to the idea of passing in my own daily life remains in flux.

Methodology: Fiction as a Vehicle for Empathy

The decision to tackle the intersection of and tension between psychiatric disability and performativity-based attitudes about accommodations through fiction was rooted in a desire to "build critical consciousness, and raise social…awareness" (Leavy, 2016, p. 50) in educators. The capturing of interiority made possible by fiction invites readers to place themselves in the minds of characters, opening space for empathy as they consider the inner and outer lives of those in the story-world (Leavy, 2016; Stansfield & Bunce, 2014). As Leggo and Sameshima (2014) noted, narrative "recognizes some of the possibilities of meaning that lie always in the seemingly tangled messiness of lived experience" (p. 543), and offers a way to illuminate and forefront some of those possibilities of meaning.

During the process of producing an autoethnographic master's thesis focused on barriers to accessing higher education for a student with psychiatric disability, I was immersed in reading literature surrounding accommodations and postsecondary student experience to contextualize the study and my own experiences. This review of the literature, both during the production of my

thesis and, subsequently, the beginning of my doctoral program, provided data and ideas for the creation of the story in this article, as did my own lived experience as a student with a psychiatric disability, all of which facilitated the writing itself as a method of inquiry (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). My intention in creating a short story that highlights the experiences of navigating higher education with a psychiatric disability is to capture the embodied truth of the research through an ethnographic fiction that "refigures the relationship with the reader/audience and opens up myriad possibilities of transformation and change at the macro and micro dimensions .... [and] *trusts* the reader to think and feel with the [story]" (Inckle, 2010, pp. 38–39). Further, approaching the topic through fiction enabled the representation of multiple voices from the literature, as well as my own experience, in an ethical format that considers relational ethics and recognizes the manner in which autoethnographic work implicates others (Ellis et al., 2011). Though fiction-based research, like autoethnography, is not generalizable, I argue that the format allows for the combination of self-research and literature review to present a particular embodied story in an ethical manner, one that echoes the fact that the experience of being disabled is neither static nor generalizable, yet invites others into a particular experience so that they might imagine the experience of disability more broadly and with greater compassion.

The emotional components of the story, in particular, stemmed from autoethnographic consideration, including details such as the feeling of mania and of sitting in a classroom while managing symptoms; the oscillation between hope and despair in reaction to the possibility of and resistance to accommodations; and the disruptiveness to a sense of identity that stems from hearing disbelief of a psychiatric disorder and the dismissal of experience, particularly in the context of an accommodations request. Other story details do not follow my exact experience; for example, though I have gone through the accommodations process and had both positive and negative experiences, I did so during graduate school, not undergrad, and I have never lived on-campus at a university beyond an initial 6 weeks before my withdrawal after diagnosis. I drew heavily from descriptions in the literature, which both echoed my own and added depth of detail to the events of the story, such as a participant's assertion that "I've had [the disclosure of the nature of the disability] used against me. I don't like to tell people unless it's absolutely necessary" (Stein, 2013, p. 155); Francis et al.'s (2019) study that found "instances of professors 'refusing to accommodate' their required accommodations...because they did not believe participants required the accommodations" (p. 251); and a professor's response to an accommodation request that "revealed her condescension, complete irritability combined with underlying disgust" (Pearson & Boskovich, 2019, p. 11). The mixing of autoethnographic research with accounts of similar experiences in the literature serves both to synthesize data and to further center the focus on an embodied truth drawn from multiple voices in an ethical format. Imagination, specifically for the details of the setting and the characters, rounded out the approach.

Following Leavy's (2016) advice for constructing fiction-based research, I considered which aspects of the data I wished to explore, as well as the intended—or, at least, hoped for—response I desired to evoke in readers. I gathered these key ideas into a document, which I printed and taped above my writing desk for easy referral. I produced the initial draft over the course of 4 weeks, writing in sections (which largely remain delineated by "****" in the story), after which I set it aside for a week in order to gain artistic and emotional distance from the piece. Next, I returned to the draft to consider it in the context of the data I had hoped to incorporate, which resulted in additions to the dialogue. I then considered whether the story contained enough interiority and sensory details to evoke the response I hoped for in readers, which led to additions in these aspects of the story. Finally, I sought feedback on the story from trusted writing peers,

who enabled me to determine areas that needed additional attention. The full process of drafting the research story took 4 months and involved seven drafts; the final product of this process follows.

An Exhausting Job

As Greta Sampson awoke early one morning from uneasy dreams, she found herself unable to control the dark mood that had been percolating in her brain for some time, a small bubbling of tension that threatened, now, to overtake her focus. Greta surveyed her setting. The small dorm room had seemed adequate at the start of the semester—if a bit cramped. She was lucky to have scored a single. Her twin bed was covered in a crumpled cerulean bedspread, a modest desk was cluttered with unorganized papers and depleted highlighters, a few gallery posters were taped to the walls, commemorating her initial desire to major in art, a desire she pushed aside to reorient herself as an economics major for the sake of future career options. With the skin-crawling agitation of mania expanding minute by minute, Greta felt the walls of the room encroaching.

An unfinished essay awaited her engagement. The thought of opening her laptop to look again at her dissection of Billy Pilgrim's coming unstuck in time tremored through her limbs— ripples of disgust distinctly removed from her usual love of literature. Books had always been a safe haven. Why her brain would betray her in such a pointedly cruel manner was a question she entertained with each episode of illness. As she tried to corral her leaping mind, her hands pulsed an erratic rhythm against the bed, and she wrestled with her next steps. While she did not want to disclose her bipolar disorder, she also did not want to fail her classes.

Greta had known this day may arrive. A moment when she could no longer banish the swinging of her moods to an almost separate part of her, a non-academic part she kept hidden from classmates and professors alike. Her parents had been reluctant to allow her trek north of the border for school, worried about the distance between Mid-Atlantic United States and Atlantic Canada, but capitulated when Greta committed to weekly check-ins. While she maintained the regular phone calls, she rarely disclosed her full experience. Since receiving her diagnosis in her final year of high school, Greta had grown skilled at compartmentalization. At passing. For two years, she had avoided registering with the Disability Services Office, keeping her condition quiet enough and maintaining high marks; the occasional blip of a late assignment, missed class, or subpar quiz the only outward testaments to the condition she managed on a daily basis. But, now, as autumn descended and darker, colder days set in, the familiar rise of heightened discomfort and her inability to quell it suggested her medication might need changing, a disruptive process involving a degree of trial-and-error, one requiring additional appointments with her doctor. Even a switch in meds would not guarantee an alleviation of symptoms. Greta could not know how long this episode might last. How long it might affect her ability to study.

Relying on popular media portrayals, people assumed mania as equivalent to euphoria, all excitement and creativity—and it was, at times. But Greta's mania quickly slipped from the pleasant thrill of energy to the exhaustive form of a mixed state, depression and agitation dancing with the highs, leaving her unable to abide her own body. Focus, a near impossibility, at least in any straightforward, traditional student way. She may end up pulling all-nighters, but not to study; rather, from an inability to silence her racing thoughts. How would she attend class? Sitting through the lectures, keeping on-point during discussions, making herself appear no different from her peers—a challenge, even on some good days.

Her peers. Greta never discussed her illness, even with her closest university friends. She didn't trust they would understand, particularly given that dismissive language about mental illness was casually embedded in everyday conversation.

"Wait, I thought you wanted to go for pizza," Greta might say.

"Yes, but now I want pad Thai," Alice would reply. "Ohmygawd, I know, I'm so bipolar."

Or, Greta might notice and comment on Taylor's well-organized binder. "Can I steal your notes? Everything's so perfect. I'm always losing track of the handouts."

"I know, I'm totally OCD about my class stuff," she'd reply.

Greta even caught herself, with regularity, calling events and ideas *crazy* or *insane*.

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Several days later, Greta headed to the meeting she'd scheduled with the Disability Services Office, arriving 10 minutes early. Housed next to the on-campus health clinic in an imposing brick building, the DSO was far too publicly visible for her liking, and she battled an inner voice telling her to ditch the appointment and grit her way through the semester, unsupported. As she sat waiting, she considered whether her failure to deal with the symptoms—failure to be *normal*, she thought, even as she chastised herself for using the word—was an indication that she lacked the qualities associated with university graduates. Isn't that what all those trendy books and assertive parents said? It's all about *grit*?

"Greta Sampson?" A 30-something man in thick-rimmed glasses and a forest green cardigan led her back into his office. Several manila folders filled with papers sat stacked on the edge of the desk, face down. Greta imagined her name imprinted in block letters on the slim label tab, perhaps with a case number associated with her file, and involuntarily shook. Records of her time in hospital sat in her psychiatrist's office; did she really want another file of her disorder in another place?

Jeff, the DSO coordinator, mistook the shudder for a shiver. "Sorry, it stays a bit cold in the office. I can turn up the space heater, if you'd like."

"Thanks, I'm fine."

"So, let's have a discussion about what supports are typically offered as accommodations, whether you see them fitting your needs, and the letter that we'll send to alert your professors. Thanks for submitting documentation of your diagnosis already; it helps move the process along, and means that what we come up with today will be official instead of provisional."

Jeff outlined the standard accommodations offered at the school: time-and-a-half to double-time on assignments and tests; a student note-taker; a quiet room for testing; and alternative formats for assignments, such as oral instead of written work.

"Umm, I don't really know that I'll need those. Or that they'll even be helpful," Greta said quietly, feeling defeated.

"What would be helpful?"

"Well, I guess extra time on exams might help, if I'm having a bad day with focus because of the mania. Maybe the note-taker? But, really, I can't predict how rough my symptoms will be on any given day. It varies. If I stop sleeping and my mind starts leaping too much, for example, I

don't even know how I'd be able to finish a paper until I managed to regain my focus. I can't always control it."

Jeff appeared sympathetic, understanding. "What I hear you saying is that you need flexibility, maybe with assignment deadlines?"

"That would be possible?" Greta sensed a small hope taking hold.

"It seems reasonable to me. We can put it in your letter."

"I don't want to seem like I'm trying to get away with something, though."

"I know you're not. Think of it as accommodations helping to level the playing field."

"My other big worry is if symptoms get bad enough, I don't know how to sit in a lecture and listen to the professor, let alone hide my mania. Sometimes it feels like my skin is crawling and I can't sit still and every noise grates on me. Other times I struggle to get out of bed. But I don't want to fail for missing class, some of the profs are really strict about that. Like, in my math class, participation, which pretty much means attendance, is 15 percent of my grade."

"What I'm hearing is that you worry about losing points for having to miss class due to your disability. We could put down flexible attendance," Jeff suggested.

"Really?"

The small hope grew. Greta began to wonder whether she would, in fact, be able to complete the semester without having to withdraw while she figured out new medication and dealt with the amplified symptoms. She was already behind most of her friends from high school, having taken a two-year gap after her diagnosis to focus on health. Not the kind of gap year other students bragged about, like working for an NGO in Switzerland or hiking the Appalachian Trail start to finish. The pressure to keep pace with prescribed timelines pervaded every aspect of university. With accommodations, perhaps she wouldn't have to fall further behind her peers and risk feeling out of place. Perhaps, rather than expending so much energy worrying about how to perform like a normal student (*neurotypical*, she corrected herself) while also controlling her symptoms, she would be able to focus that concerned effort into the studies.

Jeff's reply halted her optimism and called her fear back to the forefront. "But, I have to warn you, flexibility with deadlines and attendance aren't usually offered here, so you may encounter resistance."

"Wait, what? I thought you said they were reasonable accommodations."

"I think they are, which is why I'm approving them."

"So, if you approve them, then I should be all set, right?"

"Hopefully."

"Hopefully?"

"At the end of the day, it's up to the professors."

"But you're the coordinator. Aren't you in charge of disability services?"

"Yes, but I don't have the final say."

"Aren't there laws about this?"

"There are, though limited. It's a bit of a grey area. Canada doesn't have as strong of protections as, say, the United States."

"Why did I bother to disclose a disability if it might not even matter? If professors can choose to ignore it?"

"You might not get any pushback. We'll put them down as accommodations, you just need to be prepared for the possibility that some faculty may be reluctant to grant them."

"What happens if they won't?" Greta's voice wavered. She couldn't imagine finding the energy for a fight when she was already so depleted from managing her disorder on top of her academic work.

"Well, we can have a conversation with them. I can advocate on your behalf. But, ultimately, it's a tricky area. Sometimes students just give up and try to get through without the supports. Let's not worry about that unless it happens, though. Right now, let's focus on getting this letter completed and sent to your professors. You will need to follow up with them to discuss the details."

Greta remained silent as Jeff finished the document and emailed the form to the faculty for each of her classes. She muttered an anxious *thank you* as she left the office, afraid now of being known. Of what professors might say, who else might find out. Of whether it would all have been for nothing. As she walked back to her dorm, she felt exposed, as if she wore a flashing neon sign across her chest, labeling her *bipolar*.

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"C'mon, it's freezing and we're going to be late!" Taylor grabbed Greta's arm and dragged her toward Butler Centre. Faded brown leaves crunched beneath their boots as they made their way across the quad. An early snowfall the night before clung to the grass in sparse patches, a reminder of the fiercer storms to come.

Greta scuffed her shoes over the carpet just inside the door, taking greater care than she normally would—any excuse to delay her arrival in class and seeing a professor for the first time since the accommodations letter went out.

"Your boots are *fine*," Taylor said, annoyance evident in her voice. "I know you don't find economics all that hard, but I do and can't be late. Come *on*, what's with you today?"

"Sorry, just out of it. Didn't get much sleep." Greta hoped her reply would pass as *ordinary college student*. Reluctantly she followed her friend into the lecture hall and geared herself for Global Economy. Though the topic interested her, conceptually, its delivery threatened to derail her attentive-student façade; she simply could not follow along in the oral presentation format when mania flexed its claws across her brain.

Through a combination of inner conversation, jumping and twitching legs, and an AirPod strategically hidden behind her untucked hair and cycling through her running playlist, Greta managed to sit through the 45-minute class. As she attempted to dash from the room post lecture, Dr. Garcia called out.

"Greta Sampson, would you hold back for a moment?"

A couple of young men who apparently had yet to outgrow their high school personalities snickered, *ooooh, someone's in trouble*. Greta struggled to restrain herself from snarking back.

When manic, she was particularly quick to anger and had none of the patience, gained from years of enduring high school, to let annoyances slide off her.

When the room emptied, Dr. Garcia looked up from her computer. "Just wanted to touch base with you. I got the letter from the DSO."

"Uh, yeah," Greta braced herself.

"So that's totally fine, if you need extra time or have to miss class. I just ask that you shoot me an email to let me know. You don't have to tell me what's going on, just give me a heads up that the work's still coming or you couldn't make it in, so I know you didn't just forget. Sound fair?"

Stunned, Greta nodded and mumbled *yes*. After the meeting with Jeff, she had been prepared for the worst, ready to have to advocate for herself—something she'd never excelled at, especially in the face of authority.

Regaining her composure, she said, "Thank you so much. I'll try not to be late or miss class."

"No worries, and please don't think of it as late. As long as you're getting the work done at some point so you learn the material, it's all good. I mean, after all, isn't knowledge the point?"

"Yes, thank you," Greta whispered, trying to hold back relieved tears. Embarrassed by the uncontrollable visible display of her inner state, she started to excuse herself.

"Just one more thing, Greta. I don't know what you're going through exactly, but I do know that you belong here." Dr. Garcia gestured toward her laptop. "Let me know if there's anything else you need, even if it's not officially on this list."

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Buoyed by her interaction with Dr. Garcia, Greta felt the hope creeping back in, slowly taking root. She thought of all the times during freshman and sophomore years when she nearly dropped out due to the exhaustion of white-knuckling her way through university, symptoms making each assignment, each course, exponentially harder. Even if she never needed an extension or needed to miss class—and she hoped not to have to—she felt comfort knowing those supports were there, that it was understood and acknowledged that there were additional barriers she faced, even if others couldn't see them. Why had she waited so long to disclose?

The feeling, not quite joy, somewhere akin to optimistic relief, carried Greta through the next day and into her Political Novel class. Exhausted from another sleepless night yet wide awake with agitation, she pushed down the worry threatening to surface—worry that the relief-emotion she felt may simply be the mania, worry that she still had four other conversations with professors to go—and dragged herself across campus to the smaller, more intimate literature classroom.

Only 10 minutes in, the worry overwhelmed her. Dr. Williams darted disgusted looks her way and snapped when she lost her place, briefly, in their discussion of *Slaughterhouse Five*. Perhaps that is the mania talking, Greta reasoned with herself. Paranoia, an occasional symptom. She tried to focus, but couldn't make sense of the words on the page when so many other stimuli called for attention. Still, she managed to appear knowledgeable about the text with a couple of brief comments, and turned her head toward fellow classmates as they spoke, as if she were absorbing their words.

At the end of class, Greta didn't dare attempt to leave without waiting for Dr. Williams to speak to her, and remained sitting in her usual spot at the long oval table.

"This is an upper-level course, Greta," Dr. Williams started in, as students still shuffled out of the door. "I expect you to be prepared."

"I'm sorry, I just, it's a rough day," she tried.

"I got the letter about accommodations. As I outlined in the syllabus at the beginning of term, no late papers will be accepted and attendance is mandatory, as you cannot learn without our discussions."

Abandon all hope, ye who enter here flashed through Greta's mind. Dr. Williams seemed to take her stunned silence as insubordinate.

"Look, classes get harder as upperclassmen. You have done exceptionally well prior to today, and I've seen no evidence that you need accommodations. You simply need to apply yourself, study more."

"I am applying myself and studying. This isn't about that." Greta tried to remain calm, respectful in tone, but found her frustration rising.

"Please, Greta, don't argue with me. I have had students who really needed accommodations and you could tell. You are not such a student. I would have seen it in your performance so far if these supports were necessary for you."

Greta slumped in her chair. So, because she had performed well when she managed to control her symptoms it meant she couldn't possibly need accommodations now? But if she'd performed poorly—demonstrating, in Dr. Williams' eyes, the truth of her disorder—she never would have qualified for advanced courses.

The professor continued, "certainly you understand that it wouldn't be fair to your classmates, all of whom work hard to meet deadlines and participate, if I let you skip class and turn in assignments whenever it suited you."

"I'm not trying to get away with something. I'm not lazy," Greta said, louder than she intended. She wasn't supposed to have to disclose the specifics of her disability, but felt increasingly like she would need to in order to convince Dr. Williams.

"Please lower your voice," he replied. "I am not going to grant these accommodations, Greta. You simply do not need them."

"You don't see it because I work hard to hide it," she said, voice shaking but lower-volumed. "I have bipolar disorder. It comes in waves and is especially bad this fall."

Dr. Williams stared at her. She knew that look, had seen it before in cop drama episodes dealing with a homeless individual presumed to be psychotic, in the faces of people on the elevator when she clicked the button for floor six—the psychiatric floor—on her way to an appointment.

"I've known people with bipolar disorder, you are not that. I would have seen it. This discussion is over." He turned in disgust and walked out of the small room.

<center>****</center>

Greta had encountered disbelief—from a couple of high school friends she'd told, from the well-meaning nurse at her primary care doctor's office—delivered in encouraging tones

underscored by a simple, unspoken thought: *but you seem so normal*. But Dr. Williams' statements were not encouraging or well-intentioned. Greta replayed each word he spoke, over and over, obsessively ruminating over the dismissiveness and the assumptions underlying his stance. That she couldn't have bipolar because she did well in school; that she couldn't have a disability because he didn't see it; that she was trying to get away with something. And, of course, the core message: *if she did have bipolar, she didn't belong at school*.

She had already provided the documentation to the DSO—official diagnosis on a form from her doctor, a record of a hospital stay. What more could she offer? How could she prove her disability affected her if faculty simply refused to acknowledge its existence? Or worse, accused her of wanting an unfair advantage? An unanticipated catch-22. Greta thought about all the effort she'd put into her work, how that hard-won success now threatened to derail her studies. How could she go back and sit in a room, class after class, week after week, with a man who believed she would lie about living with a mental illness for an extension and an excused absence?

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Ultimately, Greta chose to forego the fight for accommodations in her literature class. Her calculus, business communications, and Roman civilization professors were fine with the supports—neither effusive with encouragement nor resistant to the request—and she hoped to channel the energy she saved by not further advocating her case with Dr. Williams into the work for his class. Her mark suffered, as her reading focus did not recover during term, and needing to complete the work without flexible deadlines led her to submit papers she knew weren't ready. *Better than a zero*, she repeated as a mantra, hoping to lessen the sting.

In the final days of the semester, Greta received an email from the DSO, bcc'd along with the other students enrolled with the office. A reminder: *make sure to fill out the new semester's accommodations form with the names and email addresses of your professors!* Greta felt anxiety clench her shoulders, back, jaw. She would have to do this each term? Three more semesters of university, another 15 potentially derailing interactions? As she considered the exhaustion settling over her, Greta wanted to be optimistic, but found herself wondering whether university— *knowledge*—was intended for minds like hers.

Discussion

By presenting both positive and negative experience in one student's attempt to access accommodations, this story seeks to demonstrate the emotional and practical impact of faculty response—components often missing from more abstract conversations around concepts such as *reasonable accommodations*—as well as the potential messages of (un)belonging inherent in such interactions. The story also highlights the ongoing, exhausting job that securing supports can be for a student with a psychiatric disability. Fiction rings true when it captures the complicatedness of existence; rather than portraying events and characters as strictly one thing (e.g., universally wonderful or exclusively terrible), a story becomes engaging through complexity (Maslej et al., 2017). The decision to end the story on an ambivalent, even gloomy note did not come lightly, but represented an attempt both to reflect the reality as found in the literature and to show how impactful the accommodations process and a single stigmatizing encounter may be.

As the story notes, everyday language often includes offhand references to mental illness as shorthand for frustrating, annoying, ridiculous, or out of control. These microaggressions may even be used—with or without realization of the internalized stigma—by disabled individuals

(Kattari et al., 2018). Kattari et al. (2018) noted that "people with invisible disabilities or illness may be more likely to experience ableism indirectly" (p. 479), as others around them might not temper their ableist language in the same way they would with someone who is visibly disabled. The story demonstrates the conflict of recognizing how embedded ableist language is in culture and struggling to resist employing it, even while hoping to pass as belonging in the ableist society.

The story also contributes an embodied examination of the catch-22 of attempting to access services when others are in charge of determining whether a person is *disabled enough* to qualify for accommodations (Kattari et al., 2018). This quandary—passing as abled may allow access to spaces otherwise exclusionary, while passing *too well* may result in others disbelieving the need for accessible spaces—may necessitate an ongoing internal negotiation of disabled identity. When occurring within the context of educational spaces, with social pressures to appear on-track and neoliberal pressures to produce, a student may be left debating the return-on-investment (to put it in society's capitalist terms) of (not) passing, taking into account the substantial effort passing may entail. As the story illustrates, for a student with an episodic psychiatric disability, in which symptoms may come and go, the relationship to asking for accommodations and to identifying as disabled may be particularly fraught. Encountering disbelief about a disabled identity reflects the enduring nature of ableist discourses—that there is a narrow and stereotyped way to be disabled, a single experience that others should be able to see to verify the individual's experience.

Ultimately, this research story was produced from a place of hope: that engaging with fiction that highlights the emotional, embodied experience of navigating the accommodations process in higher education will lead professors and other university community members who are entrenched in rigid notions of performativity to question their held ideas and understand the power they wield to affect students' experiences of belonging in higher education. Fiction-based research offers its practitioners the ability to highlight the feeling of an experience, "to access and express aspects of the human condition that may otherwise be out of reach" (Leavy, 2012, p. 252). For individuals, including members of the postsecondary community, who have not experienced mental illness themselves or had a close relationship with someone with a psychiatric disability, inhabiting the life and emotions of a character with bipolar disorder may help to build empathy and understanding. Sandhu et al. (2019) found that contact with individuals living with a mental illness contributed to lower explicit and implicit stigmatizing attitudes. In the absence of direct contact, I suggest that stories such as the one above might bring to life research data about lingering stigma in academic systems, making the data more affecting than the brief quotes often included in reports of research findings, and serving as a complement to more traditional academic articles. In other words, fictional representations that incorporate embodied details and present data in story format may broaden the reach of research.

The key stakeholders (Leavy, 2016) for this article's story are educators, particularly those who may not yet recognize the impact of their held beliefs about accommodations on the students they teach. Through the fictional representation of both autoethnographic writing and published literature, I emphasized the emotional disruption of encountering ableist attitudes in academia and the destabilizing effect of being told a disability that significantly impacts daily life is not valid, but rather an attempt to gain an advantage. The story adds to the literature on psychiatric disability in higher education by presenting data in an emotionally evocative manner and highlighting the complex and exhausting process of navigating both the accommodations system and the individual disabled identity. While I intend future fiction-based research to offer speculations for a more inclusive university, this story attempts to move toward social justice through calling attention to

moments of opportunity in the existing system—interactions that can lead to a sense of belonging or exclusion.

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Relationship-Based, In-Service Learning for Teachers of Indigenous Students

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Abstract

This article is about heartfelt teacher learning in K-12 publicly funded schools with Indigenous students' school success at the centre. As part of her dissertation research, Moon (2019), a non-Indigenous educator, asked Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators in two provinces to share stories about their meaningful and productive collegial learning relationships, including how they believed Indigenous students benefited. The diverse stories point to varying interpersonal, institutional, and political dynamics, which indicated that meaningful and productive learning relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators exist in multiple settings and with diverse starting points and outcomes. Some key findings across stories are that students were central to educators' learning relationships, educators saw each other as genuine and open, and a time commitment—both day-to-day and often over years—was evident.

Keywords: Indigenous education, teacher development, cross-cultural learning

Relationship-Based, In-Service Learning for Teachers of Indigenous Students As non-Indigenous educators,[1] many of us have much to learn as we seek to honour Indigenous students and provide them with meaningful school experiences. Learning through relating with Indigenous colleagues and community members provides a valuable opportunity for non-Indigenous educators' learning (Morcom & Freeman, 2018; Oskineegish, 2014). On a broader scale, learning through relationships is established by Indigenous scholars as a vital way to learn (Cajete, 1994; Canadian Council on Learning, 2007; Simpson, 2014). The purpose of this study was to explore specific learning relationships shared by Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators who have interacted together in publicly funded schools in Canada. Participants offered their own personal and professional stories about relationships that they identified as productive. As the authors, we take responsibility for any errors or omissions in this manuscript. In particular, we recognize that as EuroCanadian researchers, we have gaps in understanding and experience connected to colonization, and unearned social privilege that affect our viewpoints (see Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017).

Martha's Professional and Personal Context

The research questions come from my experience as a non-Indigenous educator of Indigenous students in publicly funded school systems. As a young and passionate elementary school teacher, I quickly came to recognize gaps in my understanding. As a Kindergarten to Grade 6 teacher of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in a large Canadian city, I was blessed to have Indigenous educators in my daily work context who helped me see new perspectives as they shared their own experiences, stories, knowledge, and even friendship. My experiences and wondering during those first 4 years of teaching in a public school board led me to the heart of this research. Further teaching in other Canadian school boards, along with contract lecturing at Lakehead University, again with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, has continued to shape how I understand this research.

I come from English, Scottish, and Irish heritage with ancestors who immigrated to Ontario in the 1800s. I come from a Jesus-seeking worldview where church community and biblical understandings shape my values. I am increasingly aware of the harmful and long-lasting impact my religious group and ancestry made—and can continue to make—through colonization and in the name of education. In grieving this and seeking to deepen my understanding and better my practice, my intent is to walk alongside Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, colleagues, and communities toward positive change in education.

To be clear, this research takes place within a context where Indigenous educators and Indigenous students face racism in Canadian school systems (St. Denis, 2010). My hope as a teacher has been to develop increasingly strong and understanding relationships with Indigenous students and colleagues as one step toward addressing this problem. On an academic level, Indigenous scholars' work on concepts such as "ethical relationality" (Donald, 2012) help shape this vision, linked to wider work on "decolonizing education" (Battiste, 2013).

Paul's Professional Context

Paul supervised my master's and doctoral research. He is a non-Indigenous educator and scholar who has been learning alongside Indigenous students and communities as a teacher and researcher in Nunavut and an academic in Ontario. We are honoured to pass on the stories and insight that Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators shared in this study.

Research Questions

The following questions guided this study: How do non-Indigenous educators and Indigenous educators and community members describe experiences and qualities of the productive learning relationships they share? How are these relationships initiated and sustained, and how do participants believe they affect non-Indigenous educators' practices with respect to Indigenous students?

Literature Review

For this study, I take a strength-based approach to teacher learning in the context of Indigenous education in publicly-funded K-12 schools. From existing research, we know that many non-Indigenous educators have a gap in knowledge about historic and current relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in the land we call Canada (Godlewska et al., 2010; Rice et al., 2020). This reality is mirrored in the general Canadian population, as indicated by a large survey of 1st-year university students in Ontario (Schaefli et al., 2018), and a more general sample by Environics Institute (2016). There is also a gap in school completion and school achievement for Indigenous students (Statistics Canada, 2017), a gap that exists within the reality that Canadian school systems have not honoured Indigenous people and need systemic change (Battiste, 2013).

The need for non-Indigenous teacher learning has been established and reestablished by Indigenous leadership. According to the groundbreaking—and now historic—Indian Control of Indian Education (National Indian Brotherhood/Assembly of First Nations, 1972), "Non-Indians must be ready to recognize the value of another way of life; to learn about Indian history, customs and language; and to modify, if necessary, some of their own ideas and practices" (p. 26). Recommendations included "in-service training of teachers" (p. 26). More recently, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) called upon Ministers of Education to commit to teacher training in "residential schools and Aboriginal history," and "building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect" (p. 7).

Teachers pass on knowledge and values through the formalized, political institution of schooling (Apple, 2004). Their own understanding and attitudes are factors in Indigenous and non-Indigenous students' school experience (Bishop & Durksen, 2020; Manning et al., 2020). Recognizing that the influences on Indigenous students' school experiences are diverse (Manning et al., 2020), the focus of this study is the relationships that have supported their non-Indigenous teachers' growth and learning.

Non-Indigenous teachers who learn from Indigenous community members by positioning themselves as learners alongside their students can increase their understanding and improve their practices in ways that benefit students (Dion, 2016). Decades of research have underscored the importance of teachers learning from Indigenous community members, colleagues, and students inside and outside of school (e.g., Archibald, 2008; Berger, 2008; Goulet, 2001; Oskineegish, 2014). In the field of preservice teacher education, researchers have pointed to "first voice testimony" (Nardozi et al., 2014, p. 116) and learning through relating with Indigenous community members, Elders, colleagues, and students as key to educators' learning (Blimkie et al., 2014; Moon, 2014; Tanaka, 2009).

Cree and Métis scholar St. Denis (2010) found that Indigenous educators in Canadian public schools experienced racism from some non-Indigenous colleagues and meaningful allyship in others. Describing allies, St. Denis (2010) wrote, "These non-Aboriginal colleagues tended to

be genuine, honest and trustworthy, positive, open-minded and good listeners; they were persons who made an effort to learn and to change" (p. 61). St. Denis's (2010) large study points to the existence and qualities of productive collegial relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators.

Recent studies on settlers' learning caution about the demands placed on Indigenous educators. As Davis et al. (2017) wrote:

> Experiential learning that involves being in relationship with Indigenous peoples, entering Indigenous spaces, and participating in ceremonies, teachings and on-land activities, is an undeniably rich source of learning and decentering for non-Indigenous Canadians….Yet, a tension exists in knowing how big a role Indigenous peoples should play in settler education, and in striking a balance between, on the one hand, learning from Indigenous peoples, knowledge and pedagogies, and on the other, settlers taking responsibility for their own education and unlearning of dominant narratives and histories. Finding ways to include Indigenous voices and perspectives respectfully without burdening Indigenous peoples is a balance to be considered. (p. 407)

In light of these words, it is important for me as a non-Indigenous author to note the large contribution made by Indigenous educators to the present study.

Since the research questions in the present study focused on the positive, productive aspects of learning relationships, it is possible that some of the challenges and costs may not have been voiced. Varying learning dynamics were described, with some participants engaging deeply on spiritual, emotional, and intellectual levels with colleagues. From my perspective, it is one thing to be learning on that level and another to be guiding someone else's learning (which many Indigenous educators were doing). I want to honour their work here and to recognize that further research would be needed to explore the challenges posed by such deep learning and leadership.

Methodology

Story and relationship are underlying principles in this research, indicated in the context and literature review and stated by participants in the findings. I first learned of research founded in story and interpersonal relationship through the work of Kovach (2009), a scholar of Nêhiyaw and Saulteaux ancestry. Later, I read Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) work on narrative inquiry where story and relationship were central in school-based research with teachers, valuing their experiences. My methodology draws on both Indigenous and EuroCanadian scholarship as I seek to honour story and relationship as Indigenous forms of knowledge sharing (Archibald, 2008) and recognize findings from recent research that point to the power of storytelling in settler educators' learning (Rice et al., 2020).

Theoretical Location

At the theoretical core, my aspiration is Donald's (2012) "ethical relationality" (p. 103) concept, which was inspired by teachings shared by Kainai (Blackfoot) Elders and Cree scholar Ermine's (2007) work. This stance presupposes the interconnectedness of all living beings, and as Donald (2012) explains, Aboriginal people and Canadians are thereby intrinsically related—albeit through colonization. He invites "an ethical stance that requires attentiveness to the responsibilities that come with a declaration of being in relation" (Donald, 2012, p. 103). In the present study, Donald's (2012) "declaration of being in relation" (p. 103) is highly significant at both a person-

to person level and a societal level. Interpersonal relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and educators are central and are situated within wider societal relationships and histories, as addressed next.

Donald's (2012) work is connected to the larger body of scholarship on decolonization. Within that nuanced body of scholarship, I highlight some underlying ideas shared by Mi'kmaq scholar Battiste (1998; 2013). Battiste (1998) described ongoing "colonial siege" (p. 19) where Canadian schools have been used against Indigenous people to discredit their knowledge bases and values, leading to loss of language and knowledge. She contrasted this with the original intent, established through treaties between the Crown and First Nations, to "enable the nations to be enriched by new knowledge that supplemented Aboriginal knowledge" (p. 19). Battiste (1998) wrote, "We cannot continue to allow Aboriginal students to be given a fragmented existence in a curriculum that does not mirror them, nor should they be denied understanding the historical context that has created that fragmentation" (p. 24). While Battiste (1998) underlined major issues in Canadian education systems, she also pointed to new possibilities: "Canadian and other nation states have a chance to comprehend another view of humanity as they never have before. They should understand Indigenous humanity and its manifestations without paternalism and without condescension" (p. 26). Thus, Battiste (1998, 2013) wrote about schools as sites of colonization, but also part of a larger vision of decolonization.

The potential for education to contribute to renewed relations while recognizing the impact of Indian Residential Schools is evident through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC, 2015). Justice Murray Sinclair, Chair of the TRC, stated: "Reconciliation is about forging and maintaining respectful relationships. There are no shortcuts" (TRC, 2018). In this study, I recognize racism and oppression within school systems and hope that school systems can be part of renewed relations at interpersonal and systemic levels.

Learning Through Stories

Teaching and learning through stories has been explored in depth by several Indigenous scholars (e.g., Archibald, 2008; Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008). Cree scholar Wilson (2008) outlined several types of stories, which are linked to different purposes and guidelines. Recognizing diversity within the word "story," I would like to be clear upfront: stories of personal experience were the type I sought in this research. My purpose was to understand how Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators in current school systems relate in meaningful ways. Thus, I asked about stories of their experiences as individuals and as colleagues in order to offer insight for other educators. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) argued for the value of learning from teachers' experience and practical knowledge as expressed through stories. Sharing stories can honour the experiential knowledge of educators (Ciuffetelli Parker & Craig, 2017) and contribute to their ongoing learning (Hollingsworth & Dybdhal, 2007).

I seek to honour the prominent position of stories as ways to teach one another and to convey important knowledge in a relational way. As a researcher of Irish, English, and Scottish heritage, I acknowledge that I am interpreting these principles from my own perspective, and that my spiritual, social, and professional backgrounds come to bear on my understanding (see Absolon, 2011; Kovach, 2009; Moon, 2019).

Overview of the Study Design

I designed my research to centre the stories of educators. I met with 19 participants, including one trio, seven pairs, and three individuals who shared stories of relating as Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators. In addition, I observed one of the pairs in action. After summarizing interview conversations into 11 stories to represent each trio, pair, or individual, I wrote up key themes from the set of stories as a whole. The data represented in this paper provides brief glimpses into the stories shared by each trio, pair, or individual, and highlights three major themes.

Participants

Participants were recruited based on referrals or preexisting relationships. Most taught a mix of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, and all taught in publicly funded schools. I knew some (n= 9) participants before the study and some (n=10) were recommended by school board administrators, Indigenous leads, or their colleagues across the three school boards in which I gathered data. The school boards were located in two different Canadian provinces. Since I was looking to study meaningful and productive learning relationships, I relied on participants to identify colleagues or community members with whom they had learned in meaningful ways. Where possible, I began with Indigenous educators to privilege their selection of successful learning partnerships.

The following table outlines each participant by name (pseudonym), and indicates the pairings and trio. Participants are listed as Indigenous and non-Indigenous based on how they identified in this study. Similarly, their roles are listed based on the stories they shared for the present study. Participants were offered the opportunity to choose their own pseudonyms. Several took that opportunity and I chose a pseudonym for the others.

Table 1

Participant Overview

Participants Names (pseudonyms)	Educator's role described in this study	Partner in this study	Mode of data collection (Martha conducted all conversational interviews, observations from February to June, 2017)
Tee-chaw	Native[a] teacher, teacher educator, volunteer in schools	n/a	Individual interview
Dan	Indigenous educator at the school board and school levels	n/a	Individual interview
River	Indigenous administrator	Agnes	Shared interview with Agnes
Agnes	Non-Indigenous teacher and administrator	River	Shared interview with River
Greg	Indigenous educator	Bryn	Shared interview with Bryn
Bryn	Non-Indigenous educator	Greg	Shared interview with Greg
Simone	Indigenous educator at the school board level	Sky	Shared interview with Sky
Sky	Non-Indigenous teacher and administrator	Simone	Shared interview with Simone

Brittany	Indigenous educator at the school board level	Christine, Michaela	Shared interview with Christine
			Shared interview with Michaela
			3 observation sessions with Michaela
Michaela	Non-Indigenous teacher	Brittany	Shared interview with Brittany, 3 observation sessions with Brittany
Christine	Non-Indigenous teacher	Brittany	Shared interview with Brittany
Hope	Indigenous educator (various roles)	Chantal	Shared interview with Chantal
Chantal	Non-Indigenous educator (various roles)	Hope	Shared interview with Hope
Max	Indigenous educator	Kate	Shared interview with Kate
Kate	Non-Indigenous teacher	Max	Shared interview with Max
Alise	Indigenous educator	Lydia, Renee	Shared interview with Lydia and Renee
Lydia	Indigenous educator at the school board level	Alise, Renee	Shared interview with Alise and Renee
Renee	Non-Indigenous teacher	Alise, Lydia	Individual interview
			Shared interview with Alise and Lydia
Olivia	Non-Indigenous teacher	n/a	Individual interview

[a] Since Tee-chaw prefers the term "Native" to "Indigenous," this term is used in reference to her.

Note: This table shows whether the participant was Indigenous or non-Indigenous, their roles, whom they were partnered with, and the mode of data collection used.

In terms of formal qualifications, all of the non-Indigenous educators in this study were formally trained teachers, some holding administrative roles. The Indigenous educators included teachers, administrators, and others with formal roles in schools and school boards, some of whom were not formally trained teachers.

Conversational Interviews and an Observation Set

Following research ethics reviews by Lakehead University and the three school boards, I conducted conversational interviews (Hollingsworth & Dybdhal, 2007) in person between February and June 2017. I offered each participant their choice of tobacco or loose-leaf tea as a relational way to acknowledge the time and wisdom they were sharing with me (see Lavallée, 2009). I also brought homemade snacks or treated people to a meal to express hospitality and relational connection within the research process. Sometimes participants brought items to share as well. We often began by making or reestablishing relational connections through informal conversation. Most took place in the participants' work space, which sometimes involved me learning a bit about those environments and what they meant to the educators. Other conversational interviews took place in my university office or at a restaurant. In some cases, these places held significance to participants or to our shared past experiences.

Conversational interviews (Hollingsworth & Dybdhal, 2007) were based on the research questions and were open-ended and participant-led. Participants were offered the information and consent form and interview guide beforehand. I phrased the two research questions as topics of

discussion and provided optional written prompts (see Appendix 1). During the interviews, I sometimes asked about the research topics directly, but often relied on participants to guide the conversation. In addition to asking each trio, pair, or individual about how their relationships were initiated and sustained, how they believed the non-Indigenous educators' teaching practices were shaped for the benefit of Indigenous students, and about their overall experience of the learning relationship, I observed one pair in action. In that case, watching the Indigenous educator work alongside the non-Indigenous classroom teacher for three lessons on 3 days complimented the conversational interview about their longer-term process. The Indigenous educator was teaching on the topic of Indigenous history, and on Indigenous-Canadian interactions, including Indian residential schools and their implications.

Data Analysis and Representation

With participants' permission, each conversational interview was audio recorded. In addition, I took field notes (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) on participants' words and interactions as back-up for the audio and to add my observations and reflections. I transcribed each audio file myself, then sent transcripts back to participants for their review. Throughout the data compilation and analysis process, I sought to offer participants the chance to be the first audience, inspired by Clandinin and Connelly (2000). Thus, my next step was to present participants with very brief summaries to check that I was accurately representing them and honouring the heart of their stories before I wrote their stories in longer form. To do this, I looked for quotations in the transcripts that emphasized recurring ideas or that seemed central to the conversational interview as a whole. I also created a small interpretive watercolour painting to display the essence of the learning relationship as I understood it, with a title using descriptive words from my initial analysis. I called the product of this phase of data analysis a "snapshot document" (see example in Appendix 2). I sent each individual, pair, or trio the snapshot document from their interview conversation and welcomed feedback.

I also scheduled an optional collective discussion of the set of snapshots with participants before I began to write up findings in longer form, calling it a "co-theorizing" session (see Tuck & Yang, 2014). Two people participated. I integrated their feedback into my analysis of the story set. They also advised me to keep the interpretive watercolour paintings as part of the dissertation, which I did.

I then wrote up each of the stories in about 10 pages and shared them with the relevant participants. To write the longer version of the stories I built on the snapshot document, listened to interview audio for tone, and listed out key ideas as I reviewed the transcripts, my interview day notes and reflections, and related notes on previous interactions related to the research. To track main ideas, I created flash cards to use as reference points for writing the full story, and employed strategies such as making lists, mind maps, and art to help me summarize and synthesize. Finally, I wrote up themes and key ideas across the eleven stories, and again welcomed participant feedback on the full analysis.

In choosing themes, I sought to honour the integrity of each story, and to draw out ideas that interacted across stories. While I was immersed in the data during the writing of each story, I had taken point-form notes on key ideas and on points of interaction between the stories. To inform my writing of the key themes section, I printed off the point-form notes about connections between stories, cut them up, and reorganized them into a large mind map that I glued onto Bristol board. I found that I was at my capacity for number of stories at around the same time that I had followed

up with interested or recommended potential participants. This led to 11 full stories in their own right, plus a discussion of key themes that drew on central aspects of the 11 stories and made connections between them.

Certain aspects of thematic analysis as described by Savin-Baden and Howell Major (2013) applied to this process, such as getting "a feel for the whole text by living with it prior to any cutting or coding," and acknowledging "that analysis happens at an intuitive level" (p. 440). A commitment to "immersion in the data and considering connections and interconnections" (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013, p. 440) was ongoing through being directly involved with conversational interviews, transcription, painting about the data, making snapshot documents, receiving feedback, writing full stories, and revisiting and adapting them based on participants' feedback.

Overall, 16 of the 19 participants responded at least once during the member-checking process (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013). The phases of recruitment, conversational interviews, transcribing, writing, and participant feedback took place in overlapping waves. My work was shaped in an ongoing way by prayer and reflection, participants' feedback, and conversations with friends, educators, mentors, and Elders Barbara Hooper (who I first met as an Elder-in-Residence at Queen's University) and Gerry Martin (Elder-in-Residence at Lakehead University).

The outcome of data analysis in the dissertation was 11 stories about learning through relationship, averaging 10 pages each, and a thematic discussion analyzing key ideas from the stories. In this article, key ideas are the focal point.

Findings

Certain themes in the 11 stories stand out because they characterized many of the learning relationships or were foundational to their development. They are a focus on students' learning and well-being, genuine openness, and time. While the ideas shared here are excerpted from longer stories (see Moon, 2019, pp. 160–256), my approach is to present the ideas through direct quotations from participants. To provide context, brief introductions to the participants are woven into this findings section.

Students at the Centre

Students' well-being and learning experiences at school were central to participants. Hope, an Indigenous educator, put it this way:

> I'm attracted to working with genuine people who really remember the purpose of why we're here, and it's for the kids and their learning. Not always just academic learning, although that's very important, but the holistic parts of self.

Hope and Chantal, a non-Indigenous educator, worked together for several years, through progression in their careers. Hope provided leadership and support for Chantal. Collaboration for student holistic well-being and success was at the forefront for these educators. Hope encouraged Chantal to challenge herself for the benefit of students, and to take leadership roles, valuing Chantal's excellence in teaching and long-term dedication to relationship-building with Indigenous students, families, and community. Together, and with their school staff, they faced challenges and said they "enjoy the ride" together.

Greg and Bryn were another pair of participants who spoke extensively about students as central. Greg, an Indigenous educator, and Bryn, a non-Indigenous educator, worked together on projects at school board and provincial levels. Over time, their working relationship developed into a friendship characterized by trust and mutual learning. Bryn gained insight into students' circumstances through Greg's stories. Greg shared Indigenous teachings with Bryn, which helped her in her own growth and understanding and in her role of supporting teachers. Bryn supported Greg in sharing his ideas confidently. Greg valued Bryn as a strong source of support for students and for himself, saying:

> That was one of the things that probably draws us together, is my big thing is the kids. I don't care about anything else. I just want the best for the kids. And to be honest, the [First Nation] kids, that's my focus.

This deep care and commitment to students framed how Greg related to Bryn, as evidenced when Greg said, "I know that Bryn has kids' best interests and always has. You can sense that, that those relationships with those kids mean the world to Bryn, and that the kid is supported and feels loved." Greg's words underscored the centrality of students to the learning relationship he shared with Bryn.

Olivia, a non-Indigenous classroom teacher, provided another angle on the centrality of students to educators' learning relationships. She related with many different Indigenous educators and Elders, some through a multi-year learning group. Olivia said, "It's just all learning all the time," and she valued the variety of people she learned alongside. Olivia was able to encourage her students to draw on the knowledge and presence of Indigenous educators in their school and community. Working with Indigenous students was the impetus for her learning; Olivia said, "I felt like it was the first time I ever had any interactions with any Indigenous people. Coming in super [unaware of] any history, any teachings, or just relationships, or any conflict—just not knowing." She spoke about her gratefulness for a learning group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators at the school board and provincial levels, "where the big learning started for me in better understanding of Indigenous issues and relationships and history." Through different colleagues' knowledge and experiences, she learned more about "the land relationship," "more sacred teachings, or the Seven Grandfathers," and "Residential Schools." For Olivia, the students in her class each year were the reason for her learning. In addition to the collegial learning group, she gave examples of learning with her students through the guidance of an Elder and an Indigenous program person.

Another way to see the centrality of students to educators' learning and relating is through the eyes of Dan, an Indigenous educator who through many years worked relationally with many non-Indigenous educators. Dan supported teachers and administrators through his school board role and as a colleague. He focused on developing learning relationships with educators over time, often through sharing personal, family, and local stories and inviting teachers to share their stories as well. Dan encouraged teachers to consider their current understanding of Indigenous communities. Through educator-to-educator dialogue and relationship, Dan offered a space to ask questions and engage in meaningful learning. Dan's aim was for teachers to "open up doors for other possibilities of a relationship with the child," as the teacher's "foundational knowledge" of Indigenous histories and communities was strengthened. Dan shared the following explanation:

> I think our society, particularly our teachers are, again, scared, or hesitant, or not sure how to approach it, and they're worried that they're going to offend, they're

worried they might say something. And knowing and learning and understanding can help break down some of those insecurities. Open up doors for other possibilities of a relationship with the child .... The child is feeling recognized, feeling supported, feeling cared for in a school; well, that's going to translate to, I'm going home and I'm talking about school, talking about the teacher, talking about what I've done today. And I'm wanting to go back and get more of that.

Caring about students and their well-being was often a connecting point for Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators who worked and related in meaningful ways. Students were at the center for the Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators in this study. Non-Indigenous educators often sought to learn and to connect with Indigenous colleagues in order to honour their Indigenous students or to facilitate the opportunity for all their students to learn from Indigenous perspectives. For Indigenous educators, students' learning and well-being were a major motivator for extending knowledge, support, and time to non-Indigenous educators.

Being Open and Genuine

Openness, care, and genuine commitment to students is a theme that interacts with educators' genuine and open stances toward one another. This was expressed in multiple ways. For example, Max and Kate's story shows multiple levels of openness and being genuine.

Max is an Indigenous educator who kept an open door to support educators and students. Kate is a non-Indigenous classroom teacher who sought Max's advice and guidance toward inviting Indigenous community members' leadership and collaboration in the classes she was teaching. Kate gained insight into supporting Indigenous students and confidence in engaging with Indigenous topics through Max's approachable, open support. Max valued Kate's genuine desire to "do things properly" when seeking Indigenous community members' guidance, her empathy for students' circumstances, and her desire to shape her teaching to facilitate their success. This view is demonstrated in Max's words, as follows:

I think Kate is just—she's an extremely kind, kind person. One of the kindest teachers I've come across in my career in the schools …. It is really refreshing to have people seeking out this sort of information—looking to do things properly. Kate was very careful of wanting to do it properly. And you know I think that made it very easy for me to open up and to work with her. And to just connect with her on that professional level. You know of course there's a lot of uncertainties, there's not a lot of education out there right now …. So, I really got that sense off Kate. It was just—I sensed the genuineness from her, and I think that was really important.

Humility, kindness, and openness were important as educators related, and within the wider web of relations. Max explained it in the following way:

Being on this horizon of new learning and bringing Indigenous teachings into schools and into education, we're, you know, you gotta have the relationships, whether it's community people, or with teachers, and just an understanding that we're here for best outcomes for our youth, and ultimately ourselves too, and our community. So yeah, just kind of fostering those relationships in a proper way. And you know and looking in the mirror and knowing that we don't know it all. So, it's important that we have people to go to and to be open with.

Being open and genuine were traits that both Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators noted in one another.

Many non-Indigenous educators experienced fear, discomfort, or nervousness when addressing Indigenous histories or perspectives in class. It seems this was mostly because they felt undereducated and inexperienced. The guidance and companionship many educators found in the Indigenous educators who taught alongside them was meaningful, leading to increased confidence. Brittany and Michaela modelled this type of meaningful interaction.

Brittany, an Indigenous educator, taught non-Indigenous teacher Michaela's class a set of lessons on Indigenous perspectives and Residential Schools. Michaela accepted Brittany's offer to teach when she heard about her colleague Christine's experience with Brittany's class visits. Brittany tailored the lessons to the students in the specific class, many of whom she knew from visiting the school over time. Michaela listened closely as Brittany taught, seeking to deepen her own background knowledge on topics like Indigenous history. Addressing "uncomfortable" and "painful" topics with Brittany in the lead made learning meaningful and within reach for both Michaela and her students. Michaela felt that Brittany "laid it bare" when teaching the history of residential schools, bringing new perspectives. Michaela said the following:

> There's always that fear that when you talk about these things, that you might not teach the things appropriately, you might not say the right things. There might be questions that are asked of you that you don't know how to answer….We kind of glossed over the whole residential school [topic] because as a teacher, I was uncomfortable. I fully admit I did not know enough. And so, it's nice to be able to have somebody come in, not just to have them sort of take over, but I was madly doing notes because if I'm approached with a question, I would like to be able to answer it.

At another point, referring to instances when she had approached Brittany for guidance, Michaela said, "I really felt comfortable with you because…you had a sense of humour, you came in, and you know it wasn't just…'Do this! You should be doing this; you're not doing this.'" Brittany replied, "Yeah. There were no judgments….Going into a classroom, and you walk out and think, 'Well that was interesting.' But I can't—it can't be deficit driven. It's all about, okay, where is the potential relationship here, or the growth." Michaela's openness—her experience of sensing her own knowledge gap—and accessing the knowledgeable support of an Indigenous educator who came alongside, resonated with several non-Indigenous educators' stories.

Non-Indigenous educators' openness to being challenged and to shaping their practices existed alongside Indigenous educators' openness, support, and focus on their growth and development. Dan, an Indigenous educator, said, "It's very exciting to be walking in that journey, and going together down this trail of growth." River and Agnes also experienced a long-term process of shared growth.

River, an Indigenous educator, and Agnes, a non-Indigenous educator, met when Agnes came to teach in the school where River was a school administrator. They shared years of collaboration on teaching and leading in multiple contexts. Later, both were administrators who leaned on and challenged one another toward excellence in public education and cross-cultural understanding. Students were offered in-depth learning opportunities with local Indigenous knowledge holders, such as ongoing collaboration with an Elder. River's and Agnes's perceived

impact included developing a school culture of high expectations—a challenging and growth-oriented environment for both educators and students.

River said, "I operate from a central belief system that people are people, and people have strengths, and people generally want to learn, so we need to have that space for them to be able to learn." River described cultivating an environment that was open to teachers and challenged them. Agnes responded to that environment, and River appreciated her openness to learning and to changing her practices.

As another example of being genuine and open, Kate said that while "there is a huge level of ignorance on my part, [Max was there] helping me get further." Max was clear that he was often "in the same boat," describing his own learning. "We're still learning ourselves and trying to do things properly, it's just a never-ending path of learning. I mean, that is life, right?"

Indigenous educators' strong support for their non-Indigenous colleagues' learning processes was a purposeful choice. The following quotation was shared by Dan, who offered guidance to many educators in his school board:

> You've got to be willing to go to those uncomfortable places and ask those questions. And a huge part of my work is helping teachers, administrators, first of all slow things down so they don't trip later on. But also, to think about the right questions to ask and what they need in order to be able to ask those questions. So instead of just coming in and talking about Reconciliation, I ask teachers to tell me a little bit more about their experiences in Indigenous communities. I ask teachers to share with me some of their insights. And I share a lot of my own stories. I share a lot about who I am and how I've arrived at this place. I talk about my family, and their experiences in Residential Schools. And I literally open myself up to them as a process of making the environment safe, so they can see I'm willing to put myself out there; they should be willing to put themselves out there as well. And all of a sudden, we have this new type of relationship where teachers feel safe asking questions that they don't know how to articulate, or saying things that they were worried before might offend me. And for them to be able to have that space, creates a dialogue, it creates a relationship, it creates a process where learning becomes part of who we both are.

For Dan, teacher development in Indigenous education was highly personal and interpersonal. The power of personal stories surfaced many times in the study. The personal nature of this learning was emphasized by Simone and Sky.

Simone is an Indigenous educator at the school board level who supported students, families, teachers, and administrators at Sky's school over several years. Sky is a non-Indigenous educator who worked with Simone as a teacher and then an administrator. Sky leaned on Simone's guidance when addressing Indigenous cultural content. Over time, the two built interpersonal trust and deep collaboration, putting knowledge into practice and modelling collegial learning. They offered students many opportunities to connect with Indigenous community members and perspectives.

Sky valued Simone's openness. She said, "That's where it starts. When you hear someone's story, how can you not be affected? It's their story." In addition to being open to interpersonal connection, non-Indigenous educators often opened up their teaching practices, current knowledge

base, or assumptions to be challenged or reformed. As examples, Michaela challenged her own assumptions and judgements related to poverty and racism through Brittany's insight. Kate actively sought out guidance from Max to help her understand and respond to students' situations and to deepen the Indigenous section of her World Religions course by learning from local teachers in the community.

I note that Indigenous participants did not imply that all non-Indigenous educators they encountered were open to learning alongside them. This was indicated by Tee-chaw, a Native[2] educator who shared her knowledge and experience with educators in university and school settings over her multiple-decade career. Non-Indigenous colleagues did not always ask for her guidance, but she was consistently willing to support the learning of students and staff alike who were open to it, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. As a classroom teacher, she said the needs of her Indigenous and non-Indigenous students shaped her practice. Later, she offered professional development, presentations to students, and support to administrators. Through storytelling and bringing a "resource box" from her community, she aimed to show students how Native people "live today." Regarding teachers, she said, "They need to be told, and shown, how to meet the needs of our children." Tee-chaw said people weren't always open:

> The teachers seemed to have an idea that they know what's needed and they don't need to be told….They don't need to be reminded how to teach. Like in all professions, most people feel they know how to do their job. I said, "Okay, fine, no problem."

Tee-chaw operated in contexts where people sometimes made negative assumptions about Native people, but she was persistent in offering learning opportunities for students, teachers, and administrators. She often created or collaborated to offer brand new learning opportunities and relationships. She said, "People say, 'You can't do it.' Sure, there's ways to do it." This tenacity was characteristic of her approach.

One of the ways she asked me to mention was sharing food. By inviting educators, students, or families to a gathering over lunch, for example, she offered a new learning project or opportunity to connect. Another example of tenacity and creativity comes from early in her teaching career. When expected to teach from a biased textbook, she "chucked the book out the window and said, 'We're going to learn about the contributions of Native people and what they do today,'" instead drawing on materials that her mother sent her from their home community.

A final quotation about an open, genuine stance comes from Alise, Lydia, and Renee. Alise and Lydia are Indigenous educators, invited by Renee, a non-Indigenous classroom teacher, to share their knowledge about local food traditions in her class. At various times, both Lydia and Alise came to class to teach specific skills, and Lydia brought another Indigenous guest as well. The presence of these guest educators offered students new learning through stories, demonstrations, and new knowledge. Renee learned from relating and sharing stories with Alise after a class session, growing her own understanding through further interpersonal learning.

Lydia, speaking about being a guest who taught in Renee's class, noted, "When you were learning, it's the attentiveness and just the respect. And asking questions because you were engaging with the content too." Thus, openness was mutual and was a stance into which students were implicitly invited.

Being open and being genuine were traits that echoed through the conversational interviews again and again. The quotations provided in this section indicate that both Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants sensed this stance in one another, important for successful learning relationships. Participants noted how educator openness affected students.

Time Commitment

Whether educators met through board-initiated positions in Indigenous education, through working together as colleagues in the same building, or via provincial or school board level projects, time was an important theme. I noted two facets of time. One was the time—often in years—that was involved in building trust and deepening collaboration. A second was time on a day-to-day scale that was vital to co-plan, share a class or co-teach, discuss and debrief, ask questions, or relate informally in ways that built familiarity, trust, and friendship.

Simone, an Indigenous educator, brought up both facets. Long-term trust-building is emphasized. She said her school board has done well at,

> Allowing some opportunity for Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers to work together….You come to learn about each other personally, which that relationship piece is key, and it's key to Indigenous people. Not only in building relationship, but in being able to work together. Because then there's a trust. Especially when you're dealing with heavy things….So, there's a risk, right, in opening yourself up to be open and honest.

Since their school board provided formal Indigenous education roles like Simone's, and dedicated time, Simone and Sky were able to collaborate and relate in meaningful ways that benefited students. Simone also said the following:

> It's not just a one-shot deal and you're done. It's that continual journey….but how do we move forward in the journey when we don't have knowledgeable people to support? Non-Indigenous people open and willing to learn ... And the time …. [And] institutional support.

Many participants spoke about depth of relationship developing over time.

The following quotations from River, an Indigenous educator, and Agnes, a non-Indigenous educator, indicate how their learning relationship was shaped over years, and how time within a day provided learning opportunities. The context was a meeting where Agnes met with River and Indigenous colleagues and Elders:

> River: My brain's going, 'Oh my [goodness], she's telling them what to do! Shut up!' But I didn't want to kick her under the table because I didn't know her that well yet. Now I would kick her under the table [smiles].

> Agnes: Sometimes that's the best learning space. It's like immersion …. And you need to spend a moment in that time. Watching, listening, and learning. And deciding if there's an entry point for you at all, or if your only entry point is to sit and be an observer.

River and Agnes spoke about the Western norms that Agnes brought to that meeting, and how she had an opportunity to learn about an "entire system of communication and community and reciprocal relationships and business" by sitting quietly and listening—after realizing she needed to be quiet in that moment. Agnes, through working alongside River, had the time to learn from

Indigenous community members in school that day. Years later, they continued to reflect on that instance and to share conversations and collaboration in new contexts.

The changing form and function of a learning relationship over time was expressed by Greg, an Indigenous educator:

> We went from there to being co-workers, and over time I feel like that relationship has molded, not just a coworker relationship, a friendship…. I feel like Bryn is a friend of mine that I can go to that I trust, if I need help. If I need advice. If I need to vent….And that relationship means a lot to me.

While not every learning relationship represented in this study became a deep friendship, it is evident that having time to relate and work together could lead to profound mutual learning and support.

On the day-to-day level, time to collaborate professionally was an important provision. Brtittany and Christine's learning relationship offers insight on the time involved. Brittany, an Indigenous educator, offered to teach a set of lessons on Indigenous perspectives and residential schools to any interested class at a certain grade level. Christine, a non-Indigenous teacher, eagerly accepted. Christine felt that engaging with Brittany and her stories, experiences, and knowledge meant learning about Indigenous/non-Indigenous Canadian relations in a way that she and her class would not otherwise encounter. Countering racism in their community was an outcome that Christine valued for herself and her students.

Brittany was in a school board role where she could go and spend the time with Christine and her class, and with Michaela and her class, which led to student and educator learning. Similarly, Lydia's role meant that she could support Renee through leading classes and being present to connect her with Indigenous guests. Time dedicated to projects at school board and provincial levels allowed Olivia opportunity to collaborate with many Indigenous and non-Indigenous colleagues for her own learning and the benefit of her students. Time on large projects at the school board level also facilitated Greg and Bryn's initial collaboration.

Discussion

The three central themes of the present article—students at the centre; being open and genuine; and time—are evident in existing research. My focus in this article on stories from multiple Canadian school boards, offers nuance in each area.

Teacher learning motivated by students' well-being is discussed by Dion (2016), Morcom and Freeman (2018), and Oskineegish (2014). In Dion's (2016) collaborative inquiry in Ontario's public schools, a stated goal was "student well-being and achievement" (p. 4). As both teachers and students engaged with Indigenous community members and ongoing learning in Indigenous education, students' well-being, including their feelings of belonging at school and their relationships with teachers and peers, was affected (p. 31). In this research, non-Indigenous participants such as Renee and Michaela valued the opportunity to learn alongside students from an Indigenous educator much more knowledgeable than themselves. Lydia, who was teaching in Renee's class, noted that students' engagement in the topics she was teaching was informed by Renee's engagement in her own learning. Oskineegish (2014), whose research was situated in First Nations schools in northern Ontario, studied teacher development with student success at the heart of her purpose. Thus, teacher growth in cultural competencies such as learning Anishnaabemowin and growing their own land-based understanding was noted as beneficial to students because

teachers could then present more meaningful lessons and connect to students' experiences and values. In this present study, Dan pointed to a similar positive outcome in his support of non-Indigenous teachers' learning. He believed that teachers could build stronger relationships with students when they understood more about local Indigenous history and life, as well as colonization and its impacts.

Educators' openness to learning is an idea that resonates with St. Denis' (2010) findings. Indigenous educators in St. Denis' (2010) work could sense when their colleagues were genuine about learning and about sharing their own strengths and support, which they saw as an important attribute of an ally to Indigenous education. Oskineegish (2015) also wrote about the importance of teachers' openness to learning, and how this was part of what made them successful teachers in remote First Nation communities. Many educators in the present study emphasized being open and genuine as part of their stories, and the details they gave opens a view into their experience with their colleagues. For example, Kate, a non-Indigenous educator, explained that Max—her Indigenous colleague—always had his door literally open. Kate could seek direction and guidance, and Max highly valued that she was doing so in order to honour the Indigenous students she was teaching. Together, they could offer students connections with Indigenous community members who had the authority to teach important topics. These educators' intuitive sense that their colleagues were genuine people and open to sharing and learning created an environment in which adult-to-adult and adult-to-youth relationships could flourish. Morcom and Freeman (2018), who studied Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers in an Aboriginal Teacher Education Program, wrote, "Real reconciliation….requires members of the Euro-Canadian majority of society to step away from previously unexamined assumptions and incomplete understandings, and to face anger, guilt, and apathy within themselves and those around them." They explained how this links to the Anishinaabe Seven Grandfather Teachings, including love. While each story in the present study was unique, relating from the heart was noteworthy. Friendship and humour featured in several stories, as did a sense that many teachers were open to deep learning.

In my research as well as in existing research, time commitment in collegial learning relationships is evident. Tompkins (1998), a non-Indigenous principal in an Inuit context, wrote about the power of non-Indigenous teachers teaming up with local Inuit uncertified teachers where professional development time was set aside for co-planning in the school. Oskineegish (2015) honoured the wisdom of teachers who had spent many years in an Indigenous community, giving them the time to become knowledgeable teachers. In my study, several of the Indigenous educators taught in non-Indigenous educators' classrooms as part of their role, meaning that their time was available for that sort of guidance. Acknowledging the long-term nature of the learning in this study is essential; relationship-based learning is not a quick fix, but a genuine, ongoing process when it is flourishing. Will schools and school boards recognize and prioritize this? With so much work to be done for reconciliation—so much learning needed for non-Indigenous teachers to be able to teach Canadian-Indigenous history (Godlewska et al., 2010; Rice et al., 2020) and so much to do to combat racism (St. Denis, 2010) and cognitive imperialism (Battiste, 2013) in schooling—will time be made available?

Returning to watershed publications in Indigenous education, Indian Control of Indian Education (National Indian Brotherhood/Assembly of First Nations, 1972) stated—as quoted in the literature review above—"Non-Indians must be ready to recognize the value of another way of life; to learn about Indian history, customs and language; and to modify, if necessary, some of their own ideas and practices" (p. 26). My present study documents one venue for this learning and

valuing. The educator-to-educator learning described in the findings of the present paper was a form of "in-service training of teachers" (National Indian Brotherhood/Assembly of First Nations, 1972, p. 26). While the learning was unique to the educators and their contexts, it provided an opportunity for meaningful learning with students' well-being as a central factor.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Learning relationships shared by Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators already exist in publicly funded schools in this land known as Canada. The educators in this study were diverse and their relationships took many forms. Some learning relationships began through formal Indigenous education school board roles where lead educators offered support to classroom teachers and administrators in multiple settings. Some developed within schools and boards where educators were colleagues as teachers, administrators, or in other roles. Student learning and well-being were central motivators. Indigenous educators often offered their support to non-Indigenous educators with students' well-being and success in mind, and many of the non-Indigenous educators were engaged in their own learning for the benefit of their students.

Being open and genuine characterized the learning relationships that educators shared. At times, non-Indigenous teachers felt tentative or fearful in addressing Indigenous perspectives since they felt their own background knowledge was low (cf. Rice at al., 2020). Indigenous educators extended their own time, stories, and presence for non-Indigenous colleagues' learning. While dynamics varied, some of these learning relationships developed into close friendships or vital professional partnerships. Time to collaborate, plan, and discuss together was important. Many educators were familiar with one another over many years, even if their curricular collaboration was contained within a few lessons and follow-up communication. Joy, hope, collaboration, support, and learning alongside students often characterized the teacher learning that was taking place.

Based on these conclusions, I recommend that school boards and policymakers offer teachers rich learning experiences without forcing interpersonal learning. Simone, a participant in the present study, explained her approach: "You work with the people who are willing… you start here, and you try and expand it and grow it out." Where Indigenous educators are extending themselves personally and professionally for the sake of their colleagues' growth—as demonstrated by participants in this study—Ministries of Education and school boards should formally honour that contribution to teacher development. Examples include funding formal Indigenous education positions, setting apart professional development time for collaboration, and continuing to fund long-term Indigenous education learning groups and projects. The presence of Indigenous teachers, administrators, school staff, Elders, and community members in publicly funded schools is vital to the type of learning described in this study. School board hiring practices and policymaking should support Indigenous educators and their increased presence in public education. The time involved in developing deep collegial learning relationships—often 5 years or longer—should be honoured in policymaking and funding. While early or brief interactions mattered in the present study, the impact of longevity on learning relationships was notable.

Situated within the larger picture of current and historic relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in the land now called Canada, person-to-person learning is one way for Indigenous students' school experiences to be enriched through the growth of their teachers. The findings in my study offer practical entry points toward productive learning relationships

shared by Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators. While challenges existed, the joy, hope, and human connection among the educators in this study were remarkable.

Endnotes:

[1] Notes on Terminology: "Indigenous" and "non-Indigenous" are terms that describe educators and community members based on how they self-identified in this study. "Indigenous" could include First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples. "Non-Indigenous" is used to describe participants who did not identify as First Nation, Métis, or Inuit.

"Educator," and "teacher" are used broadly, referring to participants' roles in promoting others' learning. As noted in the findings, people held different roles in the school contexts described.

"Relationship-based learning" and "learning relationship" are phrases used to describe the process of people learning alongside one another, either formally or informally.

[2] This participant preferred the term "Native" to Indigenous.

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Appendix 1

Conversational Interview Guide

NOTE: The "general research topics" guide the entire study. I hope that each interview conversation will touch on these. All other discussion topics and story starters are optional ways to get at the research questions.

General research topics:

1. The experiences and qualities of productive learning relationships shared by non-Indigenous educators and Indigenous educators or community members

2. Stories and experiences about how these relationships are initiated and sustained, and how they affect non-Indigenous educators' practices with respect to Indigenous students

Examples of potential discussion topics or story starters:

- Stories about how the two of you relate

- The kind of learning that occurs as you work alongside one another

- Developments in the non-Indigenous teacher's practices regarding Indigenous students

- How your connection began and what keeps it going

- Examples or stories about important moments in your learning relationship

- Examples of what makes the learning relationship meaningful or productive

- Ways in which the relationship has changed over time

- What the relationship means to you

Appendix 2

Snapshot Explanation and Sample Snapshot

Explanation: This sample is one of eleven snapshot documents, drawn from the original dissertation (Moon, 2019). As noted in the methodology section of the present paper, creating "snapshot" documents was part of the data analysis process. Snapshots were sent to participants to verify that I captured key ideas and quotations from their interview transcripts, and became the backbone of the full-length stories published in the dissertation. In the snapshot documents, Brittany's words are in gold and Christine's in green.

Sample Snapshot Document: Brittany & Christine

Figure 1

Fueling the growth

When teachers in her school board were offered the opportunity to have Brittany in their classes to present over several lessons, Christine was one of the first to respond. She was already actively learning more about Indigenous-Canadian relations and had interacted with Brittany at the school, but this was the first time they were together in the classroom for extended time. Christine built on what Brittany shared with students to develop a longer-term project that allowed students to advocate.

Quotation Sample 1

> **Christine:** "It's a topic, in general, that is not comfortable for me …. I'm not from [this city], I'm from [city in another part of the province]. Okay, so my upbringing, and even in school, very different. I don't even, to be honest with you, I don't even remember having an Indigenous student in my school. I felt the education there wasn't present. Just not having enough background and history and teaching, I feel

there's a gap in my learning. And having you [Brittany] come in is amazing for the students, but it's also wonderful for me. It helps me feel more confident when teaching and talking about it …. I don't want to misrepresent anything. And I want to understand it, and I want to appreciate it, and I want to represent it properly. So, I feel like having you there is comforting for me… I was taking notes while you were talking."

Brittany: "Well it's like professional development."

Christine: "It is. And I think more people need that."

Quotation Sample 2

Brittany: "Really, it's the teacher engagement though that really determines the depth of the learning. I think that that's super important, and if you don't have classroom teacher interest or engagement, if they don't value that learning, then the kids won't value it as much. ..."

Christine: "If they feel the teacher's invested and it's meaningful to the teacher and it's being presented that way, you're right. You can grab them and pull them in."

Brittany: "And well your kids even went further with it."

Quotations Sample 3

Christine: "It was so good for me, and I think that's why I just jumped at it. Because I feel I need that comfort and that confidence. The only way I'm going to get it is if—it's one thing to read about things in a book, but it's another to have somebody who lives it. This is her life, and this is her history. I felt good about it, and I feel more confident going forward. I wish I had it sooner, to be honest with you …. 'cuz I've had to teach some Indigenous curriculum through Social Studies … and I mean I teach a little bit from the book, and I can't talk off of really a lot. Which is not—I like to be able to talk from experience, and talking to others, and now I can bring that in."

Brittany: "And telling stories. It's storytelling, right? ... A lot of my teaching is telling stories."

Quotations Sample 4

Brittany: "So, taking more time to debrief with teachers that wanted to debrief, right? And there was some teachers that were like 'That was great, thanks, see ya.' But then there was some teachers that really wanted to."

Christine: "Question, dig deeper."

Brittany: "Yeah, wanted to dig a little deeper and just have more conversations and wanted me to come back in a different way. Some teachers even, you know like yourself, went and did something independently with kids and then brought me back as that wrap-up piece."

Quotation Sample 5

> **Christine:** "Having these raw conversations, even having you come in, it's good. I need that. Because I want to know why, I want to know what I can do. So that—I don't want to partake in any sort of racist views or fall into some sort of trap that other people so commonly—I hate to say it, but it's honest, it is very, it's there in this city. And I don't want anything to do with it. I want to be a part of the good side, the pro side, the- I want to be the act—"

> **Brittany:** "The right side of history!"

Quotation Sample 6

> **Brittany:** "They've got this though. [Colleague] and Christine get that piece…. I never worry about kids in their class…. Because I know that their needs are looked after. Like they're going to have clothing, they're going to have—whatever, right?"

> **Christine**: "Food"

> **Brittany**: "Yeah, food."

> **Christine**: "Just comfort and kindness, yeah."

> **Brittany:** "And if you can't get it yourself, you will find a way to get it, right?"

> **Christine**: "Yeah, absolutely" ….

> **Brittany:** "You can't force a teacher to say, 'I'm going to have Brittany come into my classroom.'"

> **Christine:** "And how do you change that mindset?"

> **Brittany:** "Yeah, so how do you change that mindset, and that's where leadership comes in. 'Cuz you can do that kind of PD at, you know, staff meetings, or you can have little snapshots …. But it's just getting that engagement from teachers."

> **Christine:** "Yeah, and that's again why it's so important to develop it young, because as people get older, it is hard to change mindsets. Right?"

A Review of *Teachers as Health Workers: A Critical Understanding of the Health-Education Interface* by Louise McCuaig, Eimear Enright, Tony Rossi, and Doune Macdonald

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The authors of *Teachers as Health Workers* take an in-depth look into the health work that teachers do in their everyday practices and the consequences of this expansive role on both student and teacher health. After 2 years of a pandemic, the health work that teachers are expected to complete came to the forefront as the COVID-19 virus ran rampant throughout communities across the globe. Yet, as McCuaig et al. (2022) point out, health work such as providing pastoral care, promoting healthy lifestyle choices, and caring for the well-being of students are responsibilities that have always been imbedded in the fluid role of teachers. Set in a time prior to and also during COVID-19, this book provides a detailed account of the expansive role of the teacher, who by all accounts might also be called a health worker.

The book details a research project involving 12 Australian schools that was conducted by four critical health educators. McCuaig et al. poignantly map the health work of teachers through an analysis of health policies interviews with teachers and observations in schools. They conclude that to meet both the health and academic needs of students, the silos in which health and education are constructed must be permeated through a form of boundary spanning. And as such, boundary spanning professionals must be given training and recognition to adequately meet student needs and avoid a state of burnout.

In the first section of the book, McCuaig et al. provide an overview of the health work done by teachers and a fulsome discussion of why schools are ideal places for this type of work. Artifacts such as posters, images, policy statements, and quotes from teachers provide the weight and authenticity necessary to demonstrate the unassuming health work teachers do such as pastoral care, crisis management, and family support.

After clarifying the extent of teacher's health work, McCuaig et al. articulate the impact this work has on teachers' personal and professional lives. Teachers responded to questions about how being a health worker affected their own well-being with conflicted sentiments. Most teachers said that the health work was a burden but a necessary burden because of their commitment and sense of responsibility to the children.

The final section of the book titled, "Teachers' Health Work: Care, Crisis, and Costs" details the information acquired through the research to provide thought provoking insights into the most concerning issues surrounding teachers' health work and potential strategies to remediate. In an analysis of the data, the authors apply the Regime of Personhood (RoP) analytic framework (Rose, 2000, as cited in McCuaig et al., 2022) to "devise the lines of inquiry underpinning [our] Teachers Health Work Spectrum" (p. 148). The spectrum works to critically analyze the pathogenic and salutogenic registers of teachers' health work through the domains of problematizations, teleologies, technologies, and authorities. This framework proves useful in deepening the analysis and demonstrating the crucial health work teachers assume and the supports, training, and policies that are lacking.

Under the pathogenic and salutogenic health perspectives, McCuaig et al. create four clusters. The first two clusters, classroom delivery of health education curriculum and routine and formal health and safety policy, fall under the pathogenic register. The tasks associated with the

pathogenic clusters include understanding policy, fulfilling legal obligations and implementation of the health education curriculum which are all included in a teacher's contracted duties. Of the remaining two clusters, which align with the salutogenic perspective, health oriented caring teaching is considered by both the teachers and researchers to fall under the umbrella of responsibilities within what would be considered "in loco parentis" in the Education Act (1995). In contrast, the last and maybe most interesting register, crisis management was problematic for teachers for several reasons. Through conversations with teaching staff McCuaig et al. (2022) discovered that in multiple instances,

> A fast-failing family institution was a dominant theme in our participants' descriptions of their role in dealing with complex and emotionally charged challenges that included: neglect and sexual abuse, violent students, poverty, death of family members and severe student or parent disability. (p. 155)

With little to no guiding policies or training to assist educators in the preceding situations many of the teachers although seemingly willing to tackle these tough situations did so at a cost to their own well-being. The authors then appropriately attempt to answer the question "Why are teachers more committed to and enthusiastic about this health work than, what many would consider to be, their core business of teaching the mandated health education curriculum?" (McCuaig et al., 2022, p. 157).

An analysis of the personal and systems costs of teachers undertaking health work is then described in Chapter 11. The research acquired from this study highlights the costs incurred to the time spent teaching the core curriculum, both the financial debit and credit teachers' health work provides to the state, and finally the personal costs teachers experience to their own well-being as a result of taking on this type of work.

The book concludes by discussing how neoliberalism has created a healthcare hustle in the Western world. In an attempt to address these issues, the authors advocate for a re-visioning of education that accounts for the fluidity of demands on teachers. As a means of meeting the student's health and academic needs as well as supporting teachers in the taxing health work that will inevitably fall on them, this re-visioning would include a co-location of education and health services. For this type of re-visioning to be successful the findings from McCuaig's research indicate that boundary spanners from both health and education will need to be trained and supported in this fluid work.

As noted in this book, the education and health sectors played vital roles in the economy throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, yet chronic underfunding to both sectors are still prevalent and continue to place greater pressures on those working in these fields. While this study was set in Australia, the issues and challenges will be familiar to a North American audience. *Teachers as Health Workers* is a timely and essential read for both researchers looking to support front-line workers in school systems and educators working the healthcare hustle for the betterment of students.

Reference

McCuaig, L., Enright, E., Rossi, T., & Macdonald, D. (2021). *Teachers as health workers: A critical understanding of the health-education interface* (1st ed.)*.* Routledge.