IN EDUCATION

www.ineducation.ca

exploring our connective educational landscape

ISSN: 1927-6117

Volume 28, Number 1a, 2022 Autumn

Faculty of Education, University of Regina

This work is licensed under a Creative commons Attribution 3.0 License

Editorial for *in education* Autumn 2022

Patrick Lewis

University of Regina

At this writing, we are fast approaching the twilight of another year of living with the pandemic. In the previous issue of in education we were musing about the return to work and some of the practices of everyday life prepandemic. Yet, this autumn has seen some alarming increases with infection rates of COVID-19 compounded by respiratory virus syndrome (RVS) infections (particularly among children) and an extra strong surge in influenza this season. At the same time, I wrote that the spring 2022 issue would be the final issue for me as Editor of our little journal, yet here I am once again penning the autumn 2022 issue. Needless to say, the future, even the very near future is always and everywhere uncertain!

What is certain is that this issue of the journal is packed with five fascinating articles from a diversity of authors, not to mention two book reviews. Readers will find a handful of topics which cut across a broad variety of research interests and approaches to inquiry. In Eva Lindgren's and Kristina Sehlin MacNeil's article, they propose that European policy researchers take up an Indigenous research lens to help them better understand their positionality and practice in such research and the importance of relationships. In "Confronting Partial Knowledge Through a Pedagogy of Discomfort: Notes on Anti-Oppressive Teaching," authors Michael Cappello and Claire Kreuger unearth and confront their social positioning and the need to better recognize the power and privileges of dominant actors in the work of anti-racist and anti-oppressive education; all of which requires moving into and standing in your own discomfort. Researchers Mohamad Ayoub and George Zhou share insights about elementary education approaches from the lived experiences of Syrian newcomer elementary youth. They found that although students "reported positive resettlement and socio-cultural experiences in Canada so far" many of them faced challenges and hardships with their learning progress. Through their findings they offer strategies and recommendations for teachers, administration, and school communities to help support Syrian newcomer students for more positive learning experiences and integrating into the school community. Laura Woodman takes us into the world of early learning and care drawing attention to family childcare educators (FCC educators) and the many challenges they face. In particular she identifies four main challenges: "lack of respect, low wages and funding, isolation, and lack of training" but then offers ways to meet these challenges by way of using "ecological theory as an effective tool for conceptualizing the challenges." Finally, Nabila Kazmi sheds light on the difficulties young women in India face when trying to challenge the status quo. Using narrative inquiry, she reveals how young women utilize their everyday practices as forms of resistance to the oppressive patriarchal structures that operate throughout Indian society. She argues for the need of "feminist resistance scholarship to be inclusive of young women at the periphery and their everyday resistance for finding a voice." We invite you to delve into this issue of the journal in no particular order as we are certain you will find all of the works of interest.

At this writing we are 3 weeks before the winter solstice of 2022 here in the northern hemisphere and many folks are winding down the autumn semester and looking forward to some holiday time with friends and family. Here at *in education* headquarters we wish you and your family a pleasant winter solstice.

—Patrick Lewis

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

Syrian Newcomer Students' Feelings and Attitudes Regarding Their Education in Canada

Mohamad Ayoub, *Greater Essex County District School Board*

George Zhou, *University of Windsor*

Authors' Note

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Mohamad Ayoub, email ayoub5@uwindsor.ca, and George Zhou, gzhou@uwindsor.ca

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to share and discuss our research findings on the experiences of Syrian refugee students in elementary public schools in a southwestern region of Ontario, Canada. We used Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child as a frame to guide this study. Data collection involved an anonymous questionnaire completed by the students. The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The majority of the students missed several years of school or experienced interruptions to their education prior to resettlement in Canada. The students reported positive resettlement and socio-cultural experiences in Canada so far; however, some of them faced difficulties with their learning. Based on the findings, we propose some strategies and make recommendations for educators and the school to support Syrian newcomer students with their learning and integration into the school community.

Keywords: Syrian refugee students, resettlement, school experiences in Canada

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

Syrian Newcomer Students' Feelings and Attitudes Regarding Their Education in Canada

Millions of people worldwide have been, and continue, to be forced to flee their homes due to wars, armed conflicts, or natural disasters. There are currently 100 million displaced people in the world and among them 27.1 million refugees who are living in dire conditions while seeking safety and protection (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR] Canada, 2022). An example of such armed conflicts is the ongoing war in Syria that started in 2011 and has led to millions of Syrian refugees internally and externally displaced from their homes (Amnesty International, 2022).

In previous years, Canada has, and continues to, respond to global crises by providing relief and sponsoring thousands of refugees every year to resettle in Canada; by doing so, Canada maintains a humanitarian tradition on the global stage. In response to the Syrian refugee crisis, Canada has sponsored, and continues to sponsor, thousands of Syrian refugee families to resettle in Canada. During 2015 to 2022, Canada admitted 44,630 Syrian refugees to resettle in Canada; out of this total number, 19,620 Syrian refugees resettled in the province of Ontario (Government of Canada, 2022).

Once in Canada, Syrian newcomer children begin a challenging process of integration into Canadian society and adaptation to a new school system. This paper is based on a mixed methods research study we conducted in 2019–2020 to investigate the educational experiences of Syrian refugee students in elementary English public schools (Grades 4–8) in a city in the southwest region of Ontario that welcomed 1,525 Syrian refugees from 2015 to 2018 (Government of Canada, 2018). We embarked on this study for two main reasons: First, we learned from educators that some of the Syrian newcomer students are experiencing challenges with their learning and adapting to the school system in Canada, and second, there is very limited research on the experiences of Syrian newcomer students in Canada due to their recent arrival.

The purpose of the study we conducted was to investigate the experiences of the students using their own perspectives, stories, and views about their education in Canada, and to shed light on their challenges and needs. As emphasized by Guerrero and Tinkler (2010) and Smyth (2013), to have a good understanding on how an education system is meeting the needs of newcomer students, it is imperative to hear from the students themselves about their school experiences; this is of particular importance since the views of refugee children and those of minority groups are rarely heard with regards to their education.

Since the students have experienced some premigration and postmigration challenges, we hoped that this study would empower them by giving them an opportunity to voice their opinions and advocate for themselves. We also aimed at shedding light on their resilience and areas of strengths so that educators are aware of these positive skills that are essential to the students' educational success. We believe this is imperative since refugee students' resilience and coping strategies, as stressed by Ogilvie and Fuller (2016), is not always considered with their education. As accentuated by Weekes et al. (2011), refugee children are resilient, and despite the many challenges they have to overcome, they have the capacity to thrive with their learning.

We used the following overarching research question as we explored the students' school experiences and gained insightful information using their own perspectives: What are the educational experiences and challenges of Syrian newcomer students in elementary English public schools in a southwestern city in Ontario, Canada? More specifically, we focused on the students'

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

premigration school experiences, resettlement experience, and their school experiences in Canada related to learning, social integration, extra-curricular activities, and staff support. This was a mixed-methods study that used an anonymous questionnaire with students and interviews with students and parents for data collection. This article focuses on the quantitative data from the questionnaire completed by the students that elucidated their strengths, challenges, and needs. We also propose strategies and recommendations for consideration by educators and schools welcoming Syrian newcomer students.

Literature Review

Premigration Refugee Experiences

The literature outlines the significant impacts of the refugee experience particularly on young children due to the lack of basic human needs, exposure to traumatic events, and disruptions to education (Ayoub & Zhou, 2016; Barber & Ramsay, 2020; Ferfolja & Vickers, 2010; Vongkhamphra et al., 2011; Walker & Zuberi, 2020). Refugees, or those who are displaced from their homes internally or externally, struggle with lack of basic life necessities. As reported by Save the Children (2022), due to the war and displacement, many Syrian children and their families are lacking basic life necessities such as food, water, healthcare, hygiene services, and education. Many Syrian children have been impacted by this humanitarian crisis and are suffering from malnutrition (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF], 2019, Syrian Crisis section, para. 5).

Another major challenge for refugees, especially young children, is the risk of exposure to traumatic events (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007; Walker & Zuberi, 2020) such as experiencing or witnessing violence, or the loss of family members and their home. As described by Miles and Bailey-McKenna (2016), "Trauma can be understood as an experience that overwhelms an individual's ability to cope, and can include acute (discrete) or chronic (over and over again) events. Refugee students may have experienced one or both types of trauma" (p. 118). Beltekin (2016) pointed out that even though most people who flee war violence survive, they lose their personal belongings including their homes and lose their connection with family and friends. In the example of the war in Syria, children have been impacted most severely by the violence, risk of injury, trauma, lack of access to basic life necessities, displacement, loss of friends and family, and separation from family and relatives (Hamilton et al., 2020; Save the Children, 2018; UNICEF, 2019). Syrian children who experienced these psychologically impacting, traumatic events suffer from injuries, chronic stress, and instabilities in their lives (Save the Children, 2022).

The refugee experience also has adverse effects on children's education by causing interruptions or missed years of schooling (Barber, 2021; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007). Displaced people who flee their homes for safety and make it to a refugee camp "are typically offered little or no educational opportunities" (Melton, 2013, p. 3) and children who are disabled or have special education needs are mostly affected by having limited school opportunities (Beltekin, 2016). Some of the factors that contribute to refugee children receiving little to no formal education include large class sizes, lack of resources, underqualified educators, parents' inability to cover school fees, and in certain countries gender may be a factor in limiting school opportunities (Courtney, 2015; Miles & Bailey-McKenna, 2016). Hos (2016) learned in her study of Syrian refugee children's education in a school in Turkey that the students "are receiving basic education under difficult conditions" (pg. 59). Nofal (2017) also witnessed, during her visits to Syrian refugee camps, the limited resources for education: "Schools are unable to accommodate

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

the number of students," and "schools do not offer the specific educational curriculum that meets the needs of students who have experienced war, trauma and displacement" (p. 6). Resulting from these educational challenges, refugee children often suffer from weak literacy and numeracy skills (Courtney, 2015; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2002), and it is possible that "many resettled refugee students may arrive to their host country having no past experiences with schooling at all" (McBrien, 2011, p. 76).

Postmigration Experiences

In addition to the premigration difficulties, refugee families and children face further challenges after resettlement in a host country with integration, adaptation to a new way of life, introduction to a new language, and education (Ayoub & Zhou, 2016; Nofal, 2017; Roxas & Roy, 2012; Segal & Mayadas, 2005; Taylor & Sidhu, 2012; Wilbur, 2016). After resettlement, refugee children are challenged to overcome "disrupted or minimal prior education, disruption to family networks, insecure housing, poverty, negative stereotypes and discrimination" (Block et al., 2014, p. 1338).

Some refugee children, as indicated in the literature, experience post-traumatic stress in the host country resulting from premigration experiences with violence, trauma, and losses. Forced migration, as described by De Haene et al. (2007), is a "pervasive and adverse long-term experience" that involves losses and transitions that cause mental health challenges for refugees (p. 233). The mental health and psychological needs experienced by refugee students is "one of the most challenging categories related to the education of children and youth with refugee backgrounds" (Schutte et al., 2022).

In some cases, one of the causes for stress for refugees in their host country is dealing with racism and discrimination (Walker & Zuberi, 2020). Baker (2013) highlighted in his study on the effects of racialized name-calling on refugee students in Canada that "persistent racism can significantly impact the social and mental well-being and development of youth … and can seriously impact their [refugee youth] integration into Canadian society" (p. 82). Additionally, some educators working with newcomer students may not have the proper training or knowledge to deal with the children's emotional challenges or stress (Barber & Ramsay, 2020). For example, Li and Grineva (2016) found in their study that teachers in Canada relied on the learning that resulted from their everyday work with newcomer students as well as consulting with one another because none of them had training on working with refugee students.

Resulting from premigration education interruptions or missed years of schooling, refugee students face educational disadvantages (Taylor & Sidhu, 2012) and challenges in their host country with "adapting to the expectations and culture of formal education" (Ferfolja & Vickers, 2010, p. 152). Li and Grineva (2016) learned from refugee youth at a high school in Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada, that they "encountered many difficulties trying to keep up with their native-born peers in academic achievement" and their "limited proficiency in English and interrupted formal education strongly affected their ability to negotiate and manage the development of their academic competence at school" (p. 59). Nofal (2017) identified "low language proficiency and a lack of proper information and knowledge regarding the education system" as some of the factors that affected the education performance of Syrian refugee students in Ottawa, Canada (p. 56). An additional challenge with learning is that although many refugee parents/caregivers have high hopes that their children will be successful in school (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008a), they are "unable to provide educational assistance to their children as they possess limited or no English,

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

and parental illiteracy in the mother tongue is common" (Ferfolja, 2009, p. 398). Bitew and Ferguson (2010) learned in their study that the majority of Ethiopian-Australian students in secondary school did not receive educational support from their parents who had limited educational experiences and that most parents had no contact with their children's school.

Another challenge for some refugee students in their host country has to do with inclusion and social aspects of school. Li and Grineva (2016) found in their study that refugee students in Canada encountered difficulties with social adjustment, had low participation in extracurricular activities, and lacked friendships with Canadian-born or local students; some of the factors that account for these social challenges include the newcomer students' "limited English language proficiency … negotiating between different cultures and religious beliefs … and trouble understanding their local peers' behaviours" (p. 63). Guo et al.'s (2019) findings—from their study that explored Syrian refugee students' integration in schools in one of Canada's western cities—show that the students had many difficulties with social integration, and they raised concerns over "feelings of isolation, separation and not belonging in Canada" (p. 94). Such experiences with social isolation "place refugee students' self-esteem, social competence, and academic achievements at risk, hindering the student's social, economic, and political integration in the receiving society" (Ratković et al., 2017, p. 3).

Conceptual Framework

To guide this study, we used a children's human rights participatory framework articulated in Article 12 (1) of the United Nations' (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Article 12 (1) of the CRC (1990) states:

> 1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child. (United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights [UN OHCHR], 2018, Convention on the Rights of the Child section, Article 12)

In other words, children have a human right to freely express their opinions on matters that impact them and for those views to be considered when decisions regarding their lives are made (Perry-Hazan, 2015). Furthermore, Article 12 affirms that consulting with children is a requirement for professionals working with them, including educators (Dunn et al., 2014). Therefore, Syrian newcomer students to Canada have participatory rights, and their opinions on their school experiences, curriculum, and education programs should be heard and taken seriously. By recognizing the students' participation rights articulated in Article 12, it is legally and morally essential to ask them about their school experiences (Huus et al., 2015; Lundy, 2007; United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child [UNCRC], 2009).

To ensure full implementation of Article 12 of the CRC, we relied on Lundy's (2007) model for conceptualizing Article 12 as a framework to guide this study. Lundy's model has four key elements:

- Space: Children must be given the opportunity to express a view
- Voice: Children must be facilitated to express their views
- Audience: The view must be listened to
- Influence: The view must be acted upon, as appropriate

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

We used these four elements of the model to design the study, conduct the research, and to make recommendations. The elements of space and voice deal with the first component of Article 12—the right to express a view. Starting with space, we conducted this research in a Syrian community Saturday school program that the students attended. The students and their families felt comfortable in this space which encouraged participation and engagement with the study. With respect to voice, there is a need for educators and researchers to give newcomer students to Canada an opportunity to voice their opinions on their education. This study provided the students with an opportunity to express their opinions and views freely regarding their educational experiences in Canada. They had the choice to participate in English or Arabic, whichever language they felt more comfortable with to ensure meaningful participation. All the children who expressed interest in participating in this study were able to participate on their own or with parent support if needed.

The elements of audience and influence deal with the second component of Article 12—the right to have views given due weight. Regarding audience, we explained to the students that their views are very important, and that we were keen on listening to their opinions to understand their experiences from their own perspectives. We also hoped that by giving the students an opportunity to be heard, it would allow them to advocate for their needs, develop self-advocacy skills as emphasized by Lake (2015), and to learn about their rights in education. Lastly, in terms of influence, we approached this study with the mindset and belief that the students' input should have influence on their education in Canada. Based on their input and what we learned from this study, we made recommendations to improve the students' educational experiences. We made sure to share the final report including our recommendations with senior administration and educators working with the students.

Methods and Procedures

Research Design

To gain a full understanding of the students' experiences, we employed a mixed methods research design using a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods to collect and analyze data (Creswell, 2012; Gay et al., 2011). A mixed methods research design is used to "build on the synergy and strength that exists between quantitative and qualitative research methods to understand a phenomenon more fully than is possible using either quantitative or qualitative methods alone" (Gay et al., 2011, p. 481). For the quantitative component of this study, the focus of this article, we collected data using an anonymous student questionnaire.

The questionnaire yielded numeric data that we analyzed statistically. Although the data from "survey research cannot answer what is causing a certain problem, it can, however, identify traits that are seen in people" (Kiess & Green, 2010, p. 20). Questionnaire data also offers valuable information for describing the attitudes, frequency, and magnitude of certain trends with participants (Creswell, 2012; Nardi, 2006). Therefore, the data from the student questionnaire provided a broad picture of the children's school experiences.

Research Setting

This study was conducted in a Syrian community Saturday school program offered to Syrian newcomer children, a space the students felt comfortable in—one of the four key elements in Lundy's (2007) model for conceptualising Article 12. The Saturday school program is a fairly new program in the city where this research took place. It started mainly after the influx of Syrian refugees to Canada, and this city, between 2015 and 2018. The program takes place at one of the

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

local schools, runs for 5 hours every Saturday, and is supported by a school board, school president, community volunteers, and Syrian community.

The Saturday school program is available for children at an elementary school level (Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8 or 4–13 years old) and welcomes all interested Syrian newcomer children. The students who attend the program are mainly students who are enrolled in the English public board of education (during the weekdays) that this study focused on. Students in the Saturday program have Arabic, French, religion, crafts, and gym classes as well as two nutrition breaks during the school day. The classes are taught by community volunteers who have previous teaching experience.

Selecting Participants

For participant recruitment, the selection criteria for students was based on cultural background, duration of time in Canada, location, age, grade level, gender, and language. Participants had to be Syrian newcomer students to Canada since the war started in Syria in 2011 and had to be in Grades 4–8 (9–13 years old) attending elementary English public schools in the city where this study took place. The students also needed to be comfortable enough to complete the anonymous questionnaire alone or with parent support if needed in their choice of English or Arabic.

With the help of the Saturday school program president, a member of the Syrian community and key informant in this study, we identified all the students in the program who fit the selection criteria and we invited them to participate in completing the questionnaire. The school president and parent volunteers in the Saturday school also distributed questionnaire packages to other Syrian newcomer families in the city to reach the desired number of questionnaires for this study (75 students). Letters of information about the research, consent forms, and the questionnaire were provided in English and Arabic. We were also available every Saturday during the school program to answer any questions or concerns the students or parents had. The students or their parents then dropped off the questionnaire anonymously in a sealed box in the main office of the Saturday program.

Data Collection

We used an anonymous questionnaire that we developed for the quantitative component of this study to collect numerical data from the students about their school experiences (Gay et al., 2011). This gave the students a voice regarding their educational experiences so far in Canada—another element in Lundy's (2007) model for conceptualizing Article 12. Data collection took approximately 4 months. Out of 160 questionnaires handed out (inside and outside the Saturday school program), 75 were completed and returned, generating a 47% response rate.

The purpose of the questionnaire was to collect numeric data about the students' feelings, attitudes, and perceptions regarding their education. To develop the questionnaire, we relied on Article 12 of the CRC as a guide to keep the focus on the students' own experiences. We organized the questionnaire using the following themes: family background; school experiences before coming to Canada; settlement experiences in Canada; and school experiences in Canada related to learning, socio-cultural, extra-curricular activities, and staff support. The questions were mainly closed-ended (e.g., Likert scales, rating scales, etc.) and students chose from standardized answers. We worded the questions carefully considering the children's ages and language skills. The

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

students had the option to complete the questionnaire in English or Arabic and with parent support if needed.

Data Analysis

For data analysis of the anonymous student questionnaire, we relied on the voice, audience, and influence elements of Lundy's (2007) model for Article 12. We used the element of voice by focusing our analysis on the students' own views, the element of audience by ensuring those views were heard and presented, and the element of influence by presenting any of the students' challenges that could lead to recommendations.

Once we organized the data from the questionnaires, we used descriptive and inferential statistics techniques to analyze the numeric data. We used descriptive analysis to present summaries and descriptions of the students' experiences with various aspects of their education. We also used inferential analysis, using two-sample t-test for proportions assuming unequal variances, for comparisons of means between groups of students to determine any variances or significant differences in the data on different topics.

Findings

Demographics

A total of 75 students completed the anonymous questionnaire, with 56% female students and 44% male, and an age range from 9–13 years old. The responding students had been in Canada from 2 to 4 years. Although all the students were born in Syria, almost all of them had fled Syria to neighbouring countries due to the war. The vast majority of the students lived in Jordan or Lebanon, and followed by Turkey. Almost half of the students (53%) reported that they lived in a refugee camp for an average of 4 years before resettlement in Canada, while 47% reported that they did not live in a refugee camp. Arabic was selected by the students as the language most often spoken at home (82%), followed by English (17%), and one student reported Kurdish as being spoken at home.

School Experiences Before Resettlement in Canada

Table 1

Interrupted Education Before Resettlement in Canada

	Yes	No	Total
Students	41	25	66
Percent (%)	62%	38%	100%

Out of 74 respondents, 66 students (89%) reported that they went to school before resettlement in Canada, while eight students (11%) did not go to school. Of the 66 students who went to school, 62% reported that their education was interrupted as shown in Table 1. On average, those students missed 3 years of school before resettlement in Canada, and the highest concentration of grades missed were between Grades 2 and Grade 5. Most students who went to school before resettlement in Canada reported that they had difficulties and did not benefit from learning in school, or they just benefited a little, as shown in Table 2 below.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

Table 2

Benefiting From Learning in School Before Canada

	Not at All	Little	Fairly Benefited	Much	A Great Deal	Total
Students	24	22	7	5	4	62
Percent (%)	39%	36%	11%	8%	6%	100%

Note. N =66. Missing data = 4 (6.1%).

Resettlement Experiences in Canada

Slightly over three quarters of the respondents (80%), reported that people in the city where they resettled are "very" or "extremely" friendly towards their family as shown in Table 3 below. This is a positive experience for the children and their families especially due to the traumatic experiences they have been through before resettlement. Feeling welcomed and treated with friendliness by others in Canada supports the students with social integration in Canada.

Table 3

Friendly Approach Towards Your Family in Canada

	Not at All	A Little	Fairly Friendly	Very	Extremely	Total
Students	0	4	11	24	34	73
Percent (%)	0%	5%	15%	33%	47%	100%

Note. N =75. Missing data = 2 (2.7%).

In terms of providing support to their parents with aspects related to resettlement (translating, appointments, reading letters, etc.), nearly half of the respondents (46%) reported that they "often" or "very often" provide support to their parents, while 32% indicated "sometimes." This is probably because the students' parents do not possess English skills yet, and since the children are learning English at a faster rate than the parents, they are providing any support they can to their parents with translations.

The students placed significant importance on maintaining their Syrian culture; out of 74 respondents on a 5-point Likert scale, 89% of the students reported that Syrian culture is "important" or "very important" to them. At the same time, the students placed significant importance on learning about Canadian culture; out of 75 respondents, 81% of the students indicated that learning about Canadian culture is "important" or "very important." This demonstrates that the students want to integrate into Canadian society and learn about Canadian culture, while also maintaining their Syrian heritage and culture.

Learning Experiences

We asked the students about their learning experiences in their respective elementary public schools in Canada.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

ESL and Regular Homeroom Classroom

Regarding the English as a Second Language (ESL) program, where the students spend half of their school day, the majority of the respondents (87%) reported that the program is either "helpful" or "very helpful." Also, out of 71 respondents on a 5-point Likert scale, slightly over three quarters of the students (79%) reported that they are/were "very" or "extremely" interested in the learning in the ESL program. The students' interest in learning in the ESL program shows they are engaged in the learning, and this may explain why they believe the program is helpful.

In relation to learning in the regular homeroom class (non-ESL class), three quarters of the respondents (75%) reported that it is "important" or "very important" for newcomer students to Canada to learn in this class. However, out of 72 respondents on a 5-point Likert scale, 32% of the students reported that learning in regular homeroom class is "very" or "extremely" difficult, 33% "fairly difficult", and 35% indicated that learning is a "little" or "not at all" difficult. The students felt the learning in regular homeroom class was more difficult than ESL class. One explanation for this difficulty is that the students are in their early stages of English language development, in addition to having limited school experiences before resettlement in Canada, which created a gap in their learning. This reinforces the importance for teachers in regular homeroom class to differentiate instruction for the students and to teach to their levels.

In both ESL and regular homeroom class, student feedback on their learning is an area of growth and could be used more by educators. 17% of the respondents indicated that teachers in ESL "rarely" or "not at all" ask for their feedback to help them learn, while 18% indicated that teachers in regular homeroom class "rarely" or "not at all" ask for their feedback. These findings suggest the need for teachers to set up more conferencing or meeting times with students to ask for their feedback on their learning. With more conferencing with students, teachers will be able to learn more about their learning needs and levels, which will help in differentiating instruction for meeting individual student needs. This is especially important in the regular homeroom class since 32% of the respondents reported that learning in regular homeroom class in Canada is "very" or "extremely" difficult.

Learning English and Math

Regarding difficulty learning English in Canada, as seen in Table 4 below (all students), 18% of the respondents reported it has been "very" or "extremely" difficult, 48% "fairly difficult", and 34% indicated it has been a "little" or "not at all" difficult. A comparison of the means between students with prior school experience and students with interrupted or no prior school experience showed that the scores varied for the two groups (students with prior school experience: $M = .47$, $SD = .16$; students with interrupted or no prior school experience: $M = .59$, $SD = .19$). At an alpha of .05, the analysis indicated a statistically significant difference among the groups, $t\ (57) = -2.88$, $p = .0056$, effect size = .69 *SD*. Students with interrupted or no prior school experience before resettlement in Canada are experiencing greater challenges in learning English than students who had school experience prior to resettlement. Only 4% of the students (out of 25 respondents) with prior school experience reported it has been "very" or "extremely" difficult to learn English in Canada, in comparison to 25% of the students (out of 48 respondents) with interrupted or no prior school experience who reported it has been "very" or "extremely" difficult to learn English (see Table 4).

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

Table 4

Difficulty Learning English in Canada

All Students						
	Not at All	Little	Fairly Difficult	Very	Extremely	Total
Students	8	17	35	10	3	73
Percent (%)	11%	23%	48%	14%	4%	100%

Students With Prior School Experience						
	Not at All	Little	Fairly Difficult	Very	Extremely	Total
Students	4	9	11	1	0	25
Percent (%)	16%	36%	44%	4%	0%	100%

Students With Interrupted or No Prior School Experience						
	Not at All	Little	Fairly Difficult	Very	Extremely	Total
Students	4	8	24	9	3	48
Percent (%)	8%	17%	50%	19%	6%	100%

Note. N =75. Missing data = 2 (2.7%).

With respect to difficulty in learning Math in Canada, 32% of the respondents reported it has been "very" or "extremely" difficult, 26% "fairly difficult", and 42% indicated it has been a "little" or "not at all" difficult. A comparison of the means between students with prior school experience and students with interrupted or no prior school experience showed that the scores did not vary for the two groups (students with prior school experience: M = .57, SD = .25; students with interrupted or no prior school experience: M = .59, SD = .27). At an alpha of .05, the analysis indicated a statistically non-significant difference among the groups, t (52) = -0.38, p = .7061, effect size = .09 SD.

Since many of the students had interruptions to their education and limited school experiences before resettlement in Canada, they are likely to have gaps in literacy and numeracy skills even in their mother tongue Arabic, which leads to them needing more time to develop literacy and numeracy skills in English school system in Canada.

Socio-Cultural Experiences

Table 5 below indicates that 22% of the respondents reported that it has been "very" or "extremely" difficult to make friends at school in Canada, 22% "fairly difficult", and 56% indicated that it has been a "little" or "not at all" difficult. A comparison of the means between female and male students showed that the scores did not vary for the two groups (female students: M = .5, SD = .25; male students: M = .52, SD = .23). At an alpha of .05, the analysis indicated a

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

statistically non-significant difference among the groups, t (67) = -0.44, p = .6644, effect size = .1 *SD*. For female students (41 respondents), 22% reported it has been "very" or "extremely" difficult to make friends at school in Canada and 61% reported it has been a "little" or "not at all" difficult. This is in comparison to male students (31 respondents) where 23% reported it has been "very" or "extremely" difficult to make friends at school in Canada and 48% reported it has been a "little" or "not at all" difficult (see Table 5 also).

Table 5

Difficulty Making Friends at School in Canada

All Students						
	Not at All	Little	Fairly Difficult	Very	Extremely	Total
Students	15	25	16	10	6	72
Percent (%)	21%	35%	22%	14%	8%	100%
Female Students						
	Not at All	Little	Fairly Difficult	Very	Extremely	Total
Students	9	16	7	5	4	41
Percent (%)	22%	39%	17%	12%	10%	100%
Male Students						
	Not at All	Little	Fairly Difficult	Very	Extremely	Total
Students	6	9	9	5	2	31
Percent (%)	19%	29%	29%	16%	7%	100%

Note. N =75. Missing data = 3 (4%).

Having limited English and being in a new environment in Canada could be contributing factors to some difficulty in making friends at school for Syrian newcomer students, especially in the initial stages of resettlement. The students will need teacher and school staff support to develop friendships at school.

Overall, less than 15% of the respondents reported that they "often" or "almost always" experience conflicts with other students, which may be due to premigration experiences, language barriers, being in a new school system and environment in Canada, and/or some Canadian-born or English-speaking students may bring some of their own issues to the interaction thus creating problems. Considering the students' premigration and limited formal school experiences before resettlement, these promising findings show that the students are doing well in Canada with peer relationships and getting along with other students.

We also asked the students if they had the choice with their learning, whether they prefer to work with newcomer students to Canada or Canadian-born students for their group work or

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

team project. Out of 73 respondents, 66% preferred to work with Canadian-born or English-speaking students for their group work or team projects, in comparison to 34% of the students who preferred to work with newcomer students to Canada. The students also reported that they spent almost equal time at school playing with newcomer students to Canada and Canadian-born or English-speaking students.

These findings demonstrate that the students want to learn and play with Canadian-born or English-speaking students and not just newcomer students to Canada. They may feel this helps them with inclusion, integration, learning English, and adapting to their new environment. In addition to working with newcomer students to Canada in ESL class, these findings also highlight the importance for Syrian newcomer students to be integrated into regular homeroom class since they want to learn and play with Canadian-born or English-speaking students.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Levels of participation in extra-curricular activities at school often reveals valuable information about the extent of integration. 86% of the respondents reported that they participate in at least one extra-curricular activity at school in Canada (see Table 6 below).

Table 6

Number of Extra-Curricular Activities at School

	None	1	2	3	More Than 3	Total
Students	10	20	16	11	13	70
Percent (%)	14%	29%	23%	16%	18%	100%

Note. N =75. Missing data = 5 (6.7%).

Out of 71 respondents on a 5-point Likert scale, 59% reported that extra-curricular activities at school are “important” or “very important” for newcomer students to Canada, 24% “fairly important”, and 17% indicated that extra-curricular activities at school are “a little important” or “not important”.

The students are doing well in trying to participate in extra-curricular activities, and most of them participate in at least one. This is beneficial for the students’ inclusion and well-being as they adapt to a new culture and school system in Canada. School staff and teachers could support the students and encourage them for further participation in extra-curricular activities since it is a great way for the students to develop friendships, English language, and social skills.

Staff Support

The study addressed students’ levels of comfort consulting staff about problems they may be having at school. Fifty-eight percent of the respondents reported that they are “very” or “extremely” comfortable talking to school staff about their problems, 21% “fairly comfortable”, and 21% indicated that they are a “little” or “not at all” comfortable. A comparison of the means between female and male students showed that the scores did not vary for the two groups. Out of 72 respondents on a 5-point Likert scale, 62% reported that they receive “much” or “a great deal” of support from school staff when they need help with a problem, 18% “some” support, and 20% indicated that they receive a “little” or “not at all” support.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

Some of the students may not be comfortable asking teachers or school staff for support with their problems especially in the initial stages of resettlement due to language barriers and premigration challenges with school prior to resettlement. Building trust and using a caring approach with the students will increase their confidence level, trust, and likelihood of asking for support. Students may also not know who to ask for support during breaks and when they are playing outside on the field or playground, and therefore, showing them staff who can support and guide them during these unstructured times of the school day will help the students in getting the support they need.

Discussion

The results from the student questionnaire shows that the students are having positive resettlement experiences, facing some challenges with their education, but also experiencing success in many areas. The majority of the students reported that they missed, on average, 3 years of education prior to resettlement in Canada. Those who attended school experienced many difficulties. These findings were not surprising to us because many of the Syrian newcomer families we have worked with in Canada expressed premigration difficulties with children's education. These findings also align with the existing literature that documents the many challenges faced by refugee children in receiving proper education. For example, Nofal (2017) described witnessing "the emotional disorder of children" and the "limited resources available for formal and non-formal education programs" (p. 1) in Syrian refugee camps in Syria, Turkey, and Lebanon. Beltekin (2016) also pointed out that children with special education needs or have a disability are almost totally left out of school in refugee camps. Due to these prior school interruptions, and missed years of education, major efforts are required from educators, parents, and Syrian newcomer children to bridge the learning gaps in Canada. The students are also more likely to have positive learning experiences "when they are supported by teachers and peers who are sensitive to their needs and bolster their self-confidence" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005, p. 19).

Although the literature points to many challenges experienced by refugee children in their host country, for example, adjusting to a new way of life, language, and education (Block et al., 2014; Skidmore, 2016), the students in this study reported overall positive experiences with resettlement in Canada. Despite some difficulties with adapting to a new culture, the students indicated that people and community agencies in Canada—including school—have been welcoming and supportive to their family. Owing to these experiences, the students seem to be comfortable with the resettlement process and optimistic about their future in Canada.

In terms of the education programs offered to them in Canada, the students reported that they are interested in the learning that takes place in the ESL program and that the program is helpful. At the same time, more than three-quarters of the students believe that being in regular homeroom class is also important for their education success. The students expressed that the learning in homeroom class is more difficult than ESL class, with possible explanations being the students' limited prior school experiences and larger class size in regular homeroom class (in comparison to lower number of students in ESL) making it more difficult for educators to meet their individual learning needs. Although the students will require more time to achieve academic proficiency, they can be successful with their learning when provided with intensive literacy and language support programs and with appropriate supports (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008b).

The data also shows that seeking feedback from the children about their learning is an area that could be utilized further by educators in the ESL and regular homeroom class. These findings

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

suggest that more efforts are needed from ESL and homeroom teachers to meet or conference with the students individually to learn more about their educational needs. This is especially important in the regular homeroom classroom since some of the students expressed difficulties and could benefit from more differentiated instruction and individualized accommodations and modifications. Educators working with Syrian refugee students should work towards meeting regularly with the students to develop a rapport with them, to learn about their learning needs, and to build on their prior knowledge (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005, 2008b). This data also suggests that PD and in-service training on best pedagogical approaches for newcomer students would be beneficial for educators.

Regarding learning English, some of the students indicated it has been very difficult to learn English in school with evidence that students with little or no prior school experiences are having greater challenges. Some of the students also reported that it has been very difficult to learn math. These learning difficulties are likely a result of gaps in the students' literacy and numeracy skills, even in their first language, due to prior interruptions or missed years of education (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2002, 2008b). These findings align with other research and discourse in the literature surrounding learning challenges for refugee students in their host country. Because of previous interruptions to their education, refugee students are likely to lack age-appropriate knowledge and literacy and numeracy skills putting them at an educational disadvantage in their host country and may also face challenges adapting to the expectations of formal schooling (Ferfolja & Vickers, 2010; Taylor & Sidhu, 2012). The school and educators play a critical role in supporting the development of Syrian newcomer students to Canada by providing intensive literacy and numeracy support programs and by building on the students' prior knowledge and areas of strengths (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008a, 2008b).

Concerning socio-cultural experiences, the literature discusses many challenges faced by newcomer students in their host country. For instance, newcomer children may struggle with social integration, isolation, and bullying due to having a different religion or cultural background, which puts them at risk of emotional and psychological distress (Ehntholt & Yule, 2006; Loerke, 2009; Moriarty, 2015; Mthethwa-Sommers & Kisiara, 2015; Smyth, 2013). However, despite some of the students experiencing difficulty making friends initially, most of them reported overall positive experiences in school with developing friendships, being included, and treated with respect by other students and staff. These findings indicate that the students are finding success with social integration and inclusion. Some factors contributing to this success are likely to be the students' own efforts to establish social connections, the efforts of educators, and other students' supportive approach.

In relation to staff support, although nearly three-quarters of the students stated they are comfortable talking to school staff if they have a problem, some of the students are still developing this comfort level. As they develop their English and become more familiar with working through challenges with their teachers, the students seem to be on track to developing self-advocacy skills and a level of comfort to consult with educators when needed. Educators could support this process by guiding the students and facilitating a comfort zone based on trust that would encourage them to share their problems and challenges.

For full implementation of Article 12 of the CRC, the opinions of the students reported in this study must have influence – another of the four key elements in Lundy's (2007) model. Based on the results, we propose several recommendations for educators and schools to further support Syrian newcomer students: First, since the majority of the students missed years of education and

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

may not be familiar with the expectations of formal schooling, schools should provide Syrian newcomer families and children a school orientation to prepare them before they start school (e.g., procedures, schedules, expectations, school map, safety, supports, etc.). Second, educators are encouraged to continue with extensive literacy and numeracy support to bridge the learning gaps resulting from previous school interruptions. Third, it is important for educators to differentiate instruction for individual students based on their needs. This is especially important when Syrian newcomer students are in regular homeroom class since some of the students reported difficulties and could benefit from accommodations and/or modifications with their learning. Fourth, educators should utilize group work activities to facilitate peer support and opportunities for Syrian newcomer students to share their ideas and make social connections not only with other newcomer students but also with Canadian-born or English-speaking students. Fifth, and lastly, to provide educators with professional development and training opportunities to strengthen their understanding of the premigration and postmigration experiences of refugee students as well as best pedagogical strategies.

A limitation in our study is the difficulty of determining if the students expressed their true attitudes and opinions when completing the questionnaire. As stated by Gay et al. (2011), a potential problem with surveys is that some respondents may respond "true" or "agree" to questions feeling that is what the researcher desires or because of the "tendency of an individual to select responses that are believed to be the most socially acceptable, even if they are not necessarily characteristic of that individual" (p. 159). To assist in overcoming these potential problems, the questionnaire completed by the students was anonymous to encourage them to express their true attitudes.

Due to the recent influx of Syrian refugee families to Canada, there are many topics that could be explored regarding their education. While we focused our study on elementary school students (Grades 4–8 or 9–13 years old), future research could explore the experiences of Syrian newcomer students at the secondary school level (Grades 9–12 or 14–18 years old). Another potential research area is to compare the experiences of the students in this study that we conducted in a city in southwest Ontario, Canada, to the experiences of Syrian newcomer students in other Canadian cities and provinces.

Conclusion

The majority of Syrian refugee students in this study missed, on average, 3 years of education before resettlement in Canada due to the war in Syria. The students indicated positive resettlement experiences and feel welcome and supported by people in their city, community agencies, and their schools. Some of the students reported it has been very difficult to learn English and math in Canada, likely due to gaps in their learning resulting from previous interruptions to their education. The students have been finding success with social integration at school and feel included and respected by other students and staff. The results from this study revealed some areas of growth with the children's education in Canada which our proposed recommendations were based on.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

References

Amnesty International. (2022). *Syria*. https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/syria/report-syria/

Ayoub, M., & Zhou, G. (2016). Somali refugee students in Canadian schools: Premigration experiences and challenges in refugee camps. *Comparative and International Education / Éducation Comparée et Internationale, 45*(3), Article 5. https://doi.org/10.5206/cie-eci.v45i3.9300

Baker, J. (2013). Just kids? Peer racism in a predominantly White city. *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, *29*(1), 75–85. https://doi.org/10.25071/1920-7336.37508

Barber, S. (2021). Achieving holistic care for refugees: The experiences of educators and other stakeholders in Surrey and Greater Vancouver, Canada. *British Educational Research Journal*, *47*(4), 959–983. https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3730

Barber, S., & Ramsay. (2020, September). Literally speechless? Refugees to Canada overcome preliteracy and learn to communicate through a literacy of the heart. *English 4–11*. https://englishassociation.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Barber-and-Ramsay-Sept-2020-1.pdf

Beltekin, N. (2016). Turkey's progress toward meeting refugee education needs the example of Syrian refugees. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research, 16*(66), 175–190. https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/ejer/issue/42424/510885

Bitew, G., & Ferguson, P. (2010). Parental support for African immigrant students' schooling in Australia. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, *41*(1), 149–165. https://doi.org/10.3138/jcfs.41.1.149

Block, K., Cross, S., Riggs, E., & Gibbs, L. (2014). Supporting schools to create an inclusive environment for refugee students. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 18*(12), 1337–1355. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2014.899636

Courtney, R. H. (2015). Looking at racial segregation: An exploratory case study of a predominately Somali charter school. *Multicultural Education, 22*(2), 22–29. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1065407

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Pearson Education.

De Haene, L., Grietens, H., & Verschueren, K. (2007). From symptom to context: A review of the literature on refugee children's mental health. *Hellenic Journal of Psychology*, *4*(3), 233–256. https://pseve.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Volume04_Issue3_DeHaene.pdf

Dunn, J., Niens, U., & McMillan, D. (2014). "Cos he's my favourite character!" A children's rights approach to the use of popular culture in teaching literacy. *Literacy*, *48*(1), 23–31. https://doi.org/10.1111/lit.12024

Ehntholt, K. A., & Yule, W. (2006). Practitioner review: Assessment and treatment of refugee children and adolescents who have experienced war-related trauma. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 47*(12), 1197–1210. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2006.01638.x

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

Ferfolja, T. (2009). The refugee action support program: Developing understandings of diversity. *Teaching Education, 20*(4), 395–407. https://doi.org/10.1080/10476210902741239

Ferfolja, T., & Vickers, M. (2010). Supporting refugee students in school education in Greater Western Sydney. *Critical Studies in Education, 51*(2), 149–162. https://doi.org/10.1080/17508481003731034

Gay, L. R., Mills, G. E. & Airasian, P. W. (2011). *Educational research: Competencies for analysis and applications* (10th ed.). Pearson Education.

Government of Canada. (2018). *Syrian refugees*. https://open.canada.ca/data/dataset/01c85d28-2a81-4295-9c06-4af792a7c209

Government of Canada. (2022). *Syrian refugees: Monthly IRCC updates*. https://open.canada.ca/data/dataset/01c85d28-2a81-4295-9c06-4af792a7c209

Guerrero, A. L., & Tinkler, T. (2010). Refugee and displaced youth negotiating imagined and lived identities in a photography-based educational project in the United States and Colombia. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 41*(1), 55–4. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1492.2010.01067.x

Guo, Y., Maitra, S., & Guo, S. (2019). "I belong to nowhere": Syrian refugee children's perspectives on school integration. *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education*, *14*(1), 89–105. https://doi.org/10.20355/jcie29362

Hamilton, L. K., Veronis, L., & Walton-Roberts, M. (Eds.). (2020). *A national project: Syrian refugee resettlement in Canada* (Vol. 2). McGill-Queen's University Press.

Hos, R. (2016). Education in emergencies: Case of a community school for Syrian refugees. *European Journal of Educational Research, 5*(2), 53–60. https://doi.org/10.12973/eu-jer.5.2.53

Huus, K., Granlund, M., Bornman, J., & Lygnegård, F. (2015). Human rights of children with intellectual disabilities: Comparing self-ratings and proxy ratings. *Child: Care, Health & Development*, *41*(6), 1010–1017. https://doi.org/10.1111/cch.12244

Kiess, H. O., & Green, B. A. (2010). *Statistical concepts for the behavioral sciences* (4th ed.). Pearson Education.

Lake, K. (2015). A case study of elementary schoolchildren's perspectives on character: An exploration using a children's rights participatory framework. *Lakehead University: University Library.* http://knowledgecommons.lakeheadu.ca/handle/2453/729

Li, X., & Grineva, M. (2016). Academic and social adjustment of newcomer youth at a Canadian high school. *TESL Canada Journal*, *34*(1), 51–71. http://www.teslcanadajournal.ca/tesl/index.php/tesl/article/view/1255

Loerke, K. (2009). Global migration and education: Schools, children, and families. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, *55*(2), 259–262. https://doi.org/10.11575/ajer.v55i2.55325

Lundy, L. (2007). 'Voice' is not enough: conceptualising Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. *British Educational Research Journal*, *33*(6), 927–942. https://doi.org/10.1080/01411920701657033

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

McBrien, L. J. (2011). The importance of context: Vietnamese, Somali, and Iranian refugee mothers discuss their resettled lives and involvement in their children's schools. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education, 41*(1), 75–90. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2010.523168

Melton, G. P. (2013). *Somali refugee student experiences in U.S. public high schools* (Order No. 3574649). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1450158848).

Miles, J., & Bailey-McKenna, M. C. (2016). Giving refugee students a strong head start: The LEAD program. *TESL Canada Journal*, *33*(10), 109–128. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1134418

Moriarty, S. M. (2015). *Entwined in the complex tapestry of schooling: The experience of being Somali newcomer students in Minnesota outstate high schools* (Order No. 3726913). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1725109333).

Mthethwa-Sommers, S., & Kisiara, O. (2015). Listening to students from refugee backgrounds: Lessons for education professionals. *Penn GSE Perspectives on Urban Education, 12*(1), 1–9. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1056671

Nardi, P. M. (2006). *Doing survey research: A guide to quantitative methods* (2nd ed.). Pearson Education.

Nofal, M. (2017). *For our children: A research study on Syrian refugees' schooling experiences in Ottawa* [Doctoral dissertation, Université d'Ottawa/University of Ottawa]. uO Research https://ruor.uottawa.ca/bitstream/10393/36470/1/Nofal_Mozynah_2017_thesis.pdf

Ogilvie, G., & Fuller, D. (2016). Restorative justice pedagogy in the ESL classroom: Creating a caring environment to support refugee students. *TESL Canada Journal, 33*(10), 86–96. https://doi.org/10.18806/tesl.v33i0.1247

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2002). *The Ontario curriculum, Grade 1-8. English as a second language and English literacy development: A resource guide*. https://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/curricul/esl18.pdf

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2005). *Many roots, many voices: Supporting English language learners in every classroom: A practical guide for Ontario educators.* https://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/manyroots/manyroots.pdf

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2007). *English Language learners: ESL and ELD programs and services: Policies and procedures for Ontario elementary and secondary schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12*. https://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/esleldprograms/esleldprograms.pdf

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2008a). *Supporting English language learners: A practical guide for Ontario educators, Grades 1 to 8*. https://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/esleldprograms/guide.pdf

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2008b). *Supporting English language learners with limited prior schooling: A practical guide for Ontario educators, Grades 3 to 12*. https://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/manyroots/ell_lps.pdf

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

Perry-Hazan, L. (2015). Freedom of speech in schools and the right to participation: When the first amendment encounters the convention on the rights of the child. *Brigham Young University Education & Law Journal*, *2015*(2), 421–452. https://digitalcommons.law.byu.edu/elj/vol2015/iss2/4

Ratković, S., Kovačević, D., Brewer, C. A., Ellis, C., Ahmed, N., & Baptiste-Brady, J. (2017). Supporting refugee students in Canada: Building on what we have learned in the past 20 years. *Ottawa, Canada: Social Sciences and Humanities*. http://citiesofmigration.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Supporting-Refugee-Students-in-Canada-Full-Research-Report-1.pdf

Roxas, K., & Roy, L. (2012). "That's how we roll": A case study of a recently arrived refugee student in an urban high school. *Urban Review: Issues and Ideas in Public Education, 44*(4), 468–486. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-012-0203-8

Save the Children. (2018). *Our response in Syria*. https://www.savethechildren.net/our-response-syria

Save the Children. (2022). *Syria*. https://www.savethechildren.org/us/where-we-work/syria

Schutte, V. R., Milley, P., & Dulude, E. (2022). The (in)coherence of Canadian refugee education policy with the United Nations' strategy. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, *30*(39), 1–59. https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.30.6887

Segal, U. A., & Mayadas, N. S. (2005). Assessment of issues facing immigrant and refugee families. *Child Welfare, 84*(5), 563–563. http://nclc203muir.pbworks.com/f/Assessment+of+Issues+Facing+Immigrant+and+Refugee+Families.pdf

Skidmore, J. (2016). From discord to harmony: How Canadian music educators can support young Syrian refugees through culturally responsive teaching. *The Canadian Music Educator*, *57*(3), 7–14. https://www.proquest.com/openview/1ef7aadfc3ba526d57d1fe534dd8b004/1.pdf?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=9510

Smyth, H. (2013). Somali students' perceptions of a New Zealand primary school. *Kairaranga, 14*(1), 39–45. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1011414

Taylor, S., & Sidhu, R. K. (2012). Supporting refugee students in schools: What constitutes inclusive education? *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 16*(1), 39–56. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603110903560085

United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). (2009). *General comment No. 12: Theright of the child to be heard*. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fGC%2f12&Lang=en

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Canada (UNHCR Canada). (2022). *Refugee statistics*. https://www.unhcr.ca/in-canada/refugee-statistics/

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). (2019). *Syrian crisis*. https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/syrian-crisis

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN OHCHR). (2018). *Convention on the rights of the child*. https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx

Vongkhamphra, E. G., Davis, C., & Adem, N. (2011). The resettling process: A case study of a Bantu refugee's journey to the USA. *International Social Work, 54*(2), 246–257. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0020872809358397

Walker, J., & Zuberi, D. (2020). School-aged Syrian refugees resettling in Canada: Mitigating the effect of pre-migration trauma and post-migration discrimination on academic achievement and psychological well-being. *Journal of international migration and integration*, *21*(2), 397-411. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-019-00665-0

Weekes, T., Phelan, L., Macfarlane, S., Pinson, J., & Francis, V. (2011). Supporting successful learning for refugee students: The Classroom Connect project. *Issues in Educational Research*, *21*(3), 310–329. http://www.iier.org.au/iier21/weekes.pdf

Wilbur, A. (2016). Creating inclusive EAL classrooms: How language instruction for newcomers to Canada (LINC) instructors understand and mitigate barriers for students who have experienced trauma. *TESL Canada Journal, 33*(10), 1–19. https://doi.org/10.18806/tesl.v33i0.1243

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

Practice-Based Research Policy in the Light of Indigenous Methodologies: The EU and Swedish Education

Eva Lindgren and Kristina Sehlin MacNeil

Umeå University

Authors' Note

Eva Lindgren https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4641-1206

Kristina Sehlin MacNeil https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4853-9641

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Eva Lindgren at eva.lindgren@umu.se and Kristina Sehlin MacNeil at kristina.sehlin-macneil@umu.se

Abstract

Participatory research methods in education, such as action research, have been around for some time. Recently, not only researchers but also research policy makers have highlighted the importance of participation between society and research. Citizen science, science with and for society, and practice-based educational research are examples of approaches that aim to bring society and research more closely together. In this paper, we explore underlying premises behind practice-based research policies in the EU and in Swedish educational research policy. In order to understand how participation can be understood, we have analysed them closely through a lens of Indigenous methodologies. Results reveal an underlying understanding of participation as nonreciprocal where expertise is a key concept, researchers hold this expertise, and where the main responsibilities for research lie with the researchers. However, the results also indicate a sense of respect for practice and a willingness to form relationships between research and practice.

Keywords: practice-based research, school-based research, participatory research, Indigenous methodologies, Citizen science, research policy

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

Practice-Based Research Policy in the Light of Indigenous Methodologies: The EU and Swedish Education

In the international arena, the role of research in society is currently being discussed, explored, and developed. The European Union (EU) promotes *citizen science*, science with and for society (SWAFS) (Science Europe, 2018), and in the education research field in Sweden, participatory research methods are strongly promoted and even a prerequisite for research funding in a recently established national research council. Even so, there is little consensus of what participatory research entails and in what ways it differs from other research approaches.

The purpose of this paper is to view European and Swedish policy on practice-based research from a new angle. In particular, we target policy documents regulating research and research funding on national and EU levels and pose the following overall questions: Who designs a research project for whom?; How is knowledge valued between the participants in research processes (including researchers)?; How does policy and practice-based research connect?; What and how is practice-based research meant to change?; and What epistemological challenges can be identified in practice-based research? To answer these questions, we borrow aspects from Indigenous methodologies, which we understand to be intrinsically collaborative and relational, and create an analytical framework based on three key concepts: respect, reciprocity and relationships. Our aim is to contribute some novel ideas to the already progressive and rapidly developing field that is practice-based research. In this paper, we do not explicitly discuss decolonizing perspectives, although we recognize that there is a strong focus on and need for decolonizing perspectives in Indigenous research (See Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, 2012, 2021 for seminal works on this). However, the collaborative and relational aspects that we discuss also promote decolonization in research processes. We include a discussion on the hierarchical relationships between research and practice in practice-based educational research policy and borrow concepts from Indigenous methodologies to formulate a number of issues to consider prior to starting a research project.

Indigenous methodologies, when referred to as specific Indigenous peoples' theories and methods for knowledge production, are founded in specific Indigenous peoples' ontologies and epistemologies and thus linked to the respective peoples and their respective lands (Sinclair, 2017, p. 65). Indigenous peoples are varied and multifaceted; however, there are some strong parallels between them, one of which is the importance of positionality, derived from the importance of the connection between peoples and their lands (Moffat, 2016; Sinclair, 2017, p. 67). To honour these aspects, we here position ourselves as Swedish researchers, active in the fields of educational research and Indigenous studies, with considerable experience of working together with Indigenous scholars and communities and with a strong interest in and respect for Indigenous research paradigms.

Practice-Based and Participatory Research

Citizen science (SWAFS), participatory research, and practice-based research are examples of approaches that all aim to bring society and research more closely together. Citizen science as a term was coined in the 1990s in the fields of social sciences, stressing the importance of research responsibilities to society, and in biology, where citizens' observations as contributions to science were in focus (Science Europe, 2018). To date there is no single definition of citizen science, but it typically "involves scientific work undertaken by members of the general public, often in collaboration with professional scientists and scientific institutions." (SiS.net, 2017, p. 1). More specifically this may refer to a research method that allows citizens to participate in data collection, a movement that aims to democratize research by moving it closer to society, or a social capacity contributing to knowledge production and decision making (Eitzel et al., 2017).

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

In their research program Horizon 2020, the EU advocates science with and for society (SWAFS) as the central theme underpinning all their calls. Indeed, the main aim of the research program is "to build effective cooperation between science and society, to recruit new talent for science and to pair scientific excellence with social awareness and responsibility." (European Union, 2013, p. 743). A central transversal in SWAFS is *responsible research and innovation* (RRI). In essence RRI implies "that societal actors work together during the whole research and innovation process in order to better align both the process and its outcomes, with the values, needs and expectations of European society" (European Commission, 2012 p. 1). These goals are to be met through "inclusive participatory approaches" (European Commission, 2012, p. 1).

Participatory approaches to research have a strong agenda of change and are grounded in a transformative paradigm. A well-established method for participatory research is *action research* (Mertler, 2011), sometimes specified as *participatory action research* (Dedding et al., 2021) or *collaborative action research* (Cain, 2011). Action research is a common methodology used in schools with the aim to contribute to teacher development and growth as well as to students' achievements (Mertler, 2011), which fundamentally rests on the idea that issues perceived by practice should be solved in a real context. In the field of linguistic landscape studies, Matras and Robertson (2017) collaborated with society in what they describe as "process pragmatism," which they describe as "a distinct approach to co-production that views research itself as part of a process of social change" (p. 7). They further describe a research process that is characterized by strong relationships and is collaborative even before issues for investigation are defined. Co-production of knowledge and social change are two fundamental values in participatory research (Dedding et al., 2021). In an attempt to form guidelines for community-based participatory research (CBPR), Muhammad et al. (2015) added some additional values, to the aforementioned, such as reflexivity, social justice, and sustainability. However, they also problematized the resistance participatory research teams may meet in the academy, the need for reflection on researcher identity, and researcher accountability (Muhammad et al., 2015). Methodologies in participatory research are not necessarily different from conventional methodologies, but the "key difference between participatory and conventional methodologies lies in the location of power in the research process" (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995, p. 1667).

In the educational field, Carlgren (2011) described practice-based research as research based in practice, as opposed to research that is based in theory. She argued that if the research is practice-based, then the problem under investigation comes directly from practice, and then teachers are actively involved in parts, or the whole, of the research process. One example of such an approach using (quasi)-experimental methodologies is as a study of writing development in two classes with 11-year-old pupils (Hermansson et al., 2019). In their study, a multidisciplinary research team collaborated with two class teachers from the very onset of the research process, collaboratively deciding the focus of the study and how it was to be implemented. After agreement between researchers and teachers, the researchers took the main responsibility for analysis and dissemination of the results. Bergmark (2019) described the importance of creating such a "shared understanding of roles and responsibilities between researchers and teachers" (p. 11) and refers to Beveridge et al. (2018) who proposed that researchers and teachers may even create a joint Memorandum of Understanding in order to discuss and clarify roles and responsibilities.

Prepositions are central in definitions of practice-based research and a way of describing how the collaboration between researchers and practitioners can be viewed. All the approaches above, for example, fall within the broad definition of practice-based research defined by Oancea and Furlong (2007) as "*an area situated between academia-led theoretical*

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

inquiry and research-informed practice, and consisting of a multitude of models of research explicitly conducted in, with, and/or for practice." (p. 124). Similarly, Aho et al. (2016) discussed the Swedish term "skolnära forskning" [research close to school] and how this line of research can be "about, by, for, in, close to, implicitly meaning teachers, school, and practice" (our translation, p. 124). Fundamentally the variety of prepositions used to describe practice-based research illustrates a continuum of proximity to practice where one end illustrates no participation from practice and the other end full participation from practice. For example, if research takes place *in* school it does not necessarily have to be *with* teachers. If it is for practice it does not have to be performed *in* schools or *with* teachers, and so forth. According to the definitions, not all prepositions have to be present in a study in order for it to be defined as practice-based, meaning that a study could take place in practice, but without involving practitioners and without an aim to feed back into practice. However, even if inclusive prepositions, such as "with" are included in the definition, the ideologies and values of researchers and practitioners underpinning the project may direct the characteristics of the collaboration to different ends of the continuum.

Indigenous Methodologies

Indigenous methodologies share certain traits with practice-based and participatory approaches to research. However, what are often simply called "Indigenous methodologies" are both a) Indigenous peoples' theories and methods for performing research, often developed and used over millennia, and b) a call for decolonization of research processes and thus shifting power or rebalancing existing power structures.

In the name of research Indigenous peoples have been poked and prodded, othered and observed. Indigenous peoples have been and are still considered objects to be researched more often than subjects performing research on their own issues (Kovach, 2010; Tuhiwai Smith, 2021). As a response to this treatment, Indigenous and decolonizing methodologies have emerged in the last 30 years and taken root within the mainstream academe, evidenced in part by the ever-growing number of prominent Indigenous scholars contributing to the field (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Indigenous research methodologies, however, are not new—rather they are as old as the cultures that invented and practice/d them in their quests for knowledge production. Neither are Indigenous methodologies one specific theory, method, nor way of performing research; on the contrary, they are as varied as the many peoples that use them (Kwaymullina, 2016, p. 439). First Australian scholar, Karen Sinclair (2017, p. 64) described Indigenous methodologies as "offering 'possibilities' and 'opportunities' for ways of thinking and knowing which are grounded in my own Indigenous epistemology." Wilson (2001) posed that rather than talking about "an Indigenous perspective on research" (p. 176), which implies that mainstream Western research paradigms (Wilson names four in his article: positivist, post-positivist, critical and constructivist) are the norm and Indigenous research only different perspectives on these, we should talk about an Indigenous research paradigm, positioned alongside the Eurocentric and dominant research paradigms, most often used in the academe. This Indigenous paradigm is different to the dominant research paradigms as it rejects the idea that knowledge is individual. Wilson (2001) explained the following:

> Dominant paradigms build on the fundamental belief that knowledge is an individual entity: the researcher is an individual in search of knowledge, knowledge is something that is gained, and therefore knowledge may be owned by an individual. An Indigenous paradigm comes from the fundamental belief that knowledge is relational. Knowledge is shared with all of creation. (p. 176)

Wilson (2001) also stated that knowledge produced through research cannot be owned, rather it is "a relationship with all of creation. It is with the cosmos, it is with the animals, with the

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

plants, with the earth that we share this knowledge" (p. 177). Underpinning this epistemological thesis is worldview, something that is echoed by other Indigenous writers such as Russell Means and Bayard Johnson (2012) who wrote about connectedness in an American Indian context and how an individual is never alone but always part of the entire universe, thus placing responsibility on people to be accountable to earth and all aspects of it (p. 2). Similarly, Sámi scholar Rauna Kuokkanen (2011) asserted that remaining connected and maintaining balance with earth on all levels was (and is still) fundamental to many Sámi people—as this could ensure survival in sometimes treacherous climates and landscapes (p. 34). The above mentioned perspectives also underpin the core of Indigenous methodologies.

Despite the great variety of Indigenous methodologies, most scholars agree that there are some fundamental shared principles that guide them (Evans et al., 2014; Kovach, 2010; Louis, 2007; Martin, 2003; Moreton-Robinson & Walter, 2009; Porsanger, 2004; Wilson, 2001). Several Indigenous scholars offer their perspectives on these shared positionings, one example being Renee Pualani Louis (2007) who suggested that the literature on Indigenous methodologies presents "four unwavering principles: relational accountability; respectful representation; reciprocal appropriation; and rights and regulation" (p. 133). Relational accountability, relating back to Wilson's above-mentioned discussion, implies that the researcher is accountable to all parties—and everything around them—at all stages of the research process. We interpret this to mean that in practice, successful research processes should rest on foundations of dialogue, transparency, equality, and mutual respect between researchers and research participants and their environments. Which brings us to respectful (re)presentation, meaning that a researcher needs to show genuine humility and ability to listen to and truly hear research participants, as well as understand that processes might take time and that outcomes might not always be the ones desired by the researcher, or the research participants for that matter. The third principle is reciprocal appropriation, the recognition that research is appropriation and thus, should benefit both researcher and research participants. Finally, we have rights and regulation, which stipulate that research with Indigenous peoples, guided by Indigenous protocols, should be conducted as collaborations and that no research results should be published without the consent of the research participants. It also refers to ownership of intellectual property and the control over publication and reporting of shared knowledge.

As a complement to these four principles can be added three R's: respect, reciprocity and relationships (Reid & Taylor, 2011). The R's should guide the way that researchers and research participants conduct themselves in a research process. Relationships are valued and protected by respecting each other and the intellectual property shared—which should also be reciprocal; research should not be extractive but mutually beneficial for both researcher and research participants.

When research is conducted *on* rather than *with* Indigenous peoples, without recognition of Indigenous situations and protocols or ethics and methodologies, the results are rarely beneficial to the Indigenous communities they impact. Margaret Kovach (2010) stated that Canada faces a crisis in Indigenous education and child welfare policy because the research that help shape the policies, thus affecting the practices that impact First Nations communities, stems from Western rather than Indigenous understandings and expertise (p. 13). Similarly, Daniels-Mayes (2017) wrote from a First Australian education context and described how Indigenous Australians often are viewed as deficient or inferior and that these deficit models of thinking, which impact heavily on Indigenous cultures and societies, stem from colonialism and are closely connected with racism and discrimination. However, through the use of Indigenous research paradigms, Indigenous methodologies and Indigenous ethics, there is a

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

potential for research with Indigenous peoples to disrupt deficit thinking and create positive outcomes for communities.

One such example is the "policy regarding research and project collaborations with Sámiid Riikkasearvi", launched by Sámiid Riikkasearvi (see SSR, Svenska Samernas Riksförbund or Swedish Sámi National Association) in 2019 (Sámiid Riikkasearvi, 2019). Sámiid Riikkasearvi is an interest organization for Sámi reindeer herding in Sweden and its members consist of Sámi reindeer herding communities (samebyar) and Sámi Associations. The 2019 document is a set of guidelines and a toolbox for researchers or project workers who want to research (or work with) matters connected with reindeer herding, Sámi reindeer herding communities or Sámi Associations in Sweden. The intention is to provide a form of handbook to be utilized by both Sámiid Riikkasearvi and researchers or project workers interested in collaborating with the organization or any of its members, this to ensure that collaborations are carried out based on mutual respect between all parties. A concrete way to achieve this is the checklist with questions to be answered by the researcher or project worker prior to contact with Sámiid Riikkasearvi, provided as an appendix. The Sámediggi (Sametinget or Sámi Parliament in Sweden) has expressed similar ambitions in their recent document to the Swedish government (Sámidiggi, 2019): "The Sámi Parliament's views on the government's research policy" (Our translation of "Sametingets synpunkter på regeringens forskningspolitik," in Swedish).

These developments within Indigenous research in the Swedish arena follow an international progression in the field. Particularly in settler and colonized nations of the Pacific Rim, such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, there has been far reaching developments to make research inclusive for Indigenous communities, for instance through Indigenous-led research projects and through the acknowledgement of Indigenous research methodologies and Indigenous ethics (See for example AH&MRC, 2016; AIATSIS, 2012). Such guidelines have been established to ensure that research with and about Indigenous peoples follow a process of meaningful engagement and reciprocity between the researcher and the individuals and/or communities involved in the research (AIATSIS, 2012).

Aims and Methods

The aim of this paper is to analyse and unpack what constitutes the relationship between research and practice in research policy within the EU in general and in practice-based educational research in Sweden in particular. This is done through borrowing the concepts of respect, reciprocity and relationships from Indigenous methodologies as mentioned above. Thus, our focus in this paper is the actor in research that regulates research policy and how funding, on national and EU levels, should be distributed. How the research is implemented by researchers and practitioners is beyond the scope of this study.

For closer analysis, we have selected a number of formal policy documents intended to steer or guide research. From the EU, we chose two documents: the EU Regulation to Establish the Research and Innovation Programme Horizon 2020 (No 1291/2013, European Union, 2013) and the Framework Regulation for Horizon 2020 (No 743/2013, European Council, 2013). From the Swedish context we have selected government decisions, official reports, and other documents that relate to the implementation of the Swedish Institute for Educational Research (Skolforskningsinstitutet) and ULF-avtal. The Swedish Institute for Educational Research is a government-funded research council for practice-based educational research in preschools and schools. ULF (utbildning/education, lärande/learning, forskning/research) is a government initiative with the aim to develop structures for practice-based educational research. Four universities received a total of SEK 12,000,000 for 2017–2021 to "develop and

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

test sustainable models for cooperation between the academy and school concerning research, practice and teacher education" (Åkesson et al., 2017; Regeringsbeslut, 2017).

Firstly, the selected texts were read closely and notes, general comments, and annotations were made. Secondly, the documents were re-read in order to make a thematic selection of quotes responding to the concepts of respect, reciprocity and relationships. The quotes were closely analyzed for meaning and in some cases thematic roles with a particular focus on agents and recipients.

Findings

Similar to Indigenous methodologies, practice-based educational research strives to be inclusive, transparent, and guided by real issues highlighted within and by the school communities. However, when policy on practice-based educational research is scrutinized through a lens modelled on Indigenous research methodologies, some discrepancies come to light.

EU and Horizon 2020

The main purpose of Horizon 2020, central to the EU documents, is to contribute to society and to the economy: "The general objective of Horizon 2020 is to contribute to building a society and an economy based on knowledge and innovation across the Union" (European Union, 2013, p. 110). This overarching goal is complemented by two specific objectives: "Spreading excellence and widening participation" and "science with and for society" (European Council, 2013). In the first of these two specific objectives, the importance of "unlocking excellence and innovation" (European Council, 2013, p. 1031) is brought to the fore. Participation refers to processes where strong research institutions are teamed with research institutions in low performing RDI regions in order to "fully exploit the potential of Europe's talent pool" (European Council, 2013, p. 1031). In addition, research should widen participation to society and "offer expert advice to public authorities at national or regional level" (European Council, 2013, p. 1031). Participation is closely connected with excellence; the purpose of participation is to build excellence. A discourse of excellence and expertise emerges in which participation means participation between researchers and where researchers are experts, expected to participate with their knowledge in policy and in societal processes.

In the second specific objective "science with and for society" the aim is threefold "to build effective cooperation between science and society, to recruit new talent for science and to pair scientific excellence with social awareness and responsibility" (European Council, 2013, p. 1031). Similarly to the first specific objective, talent and excellence are in focus as recipients of the aim, but here they are coupled with cooperation between science and society and social awareness and responsibility. Ideas and talent have to be harnessed and that can only "be achieved if a fruitful and rich dialogue and active cooperation between science and society is developed" (European Council, 2013, p. 1031).

There is an emphasis on the need to focus on "ethical, legal and social issues that affect the relationship between science and society" but also on the fact that cooperation between science and society will "enable a widening of the social and political support to science and technology in all Member States" (European Council, 2013, p. 1031). On the one hand science has brought about ethical, legal, and social issues that can be approached through collaboration, on the other hand collaboration should strengthen social and political support to science. The idea that society and policy should support research is further emphasized when the commission states that "public investment in science requires a vast social and political constituency sharing the values of science, educated and engaged in its processes and able to recognise its contributions to knowledge, society and economic progress" (European Council,

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

2013, p. 1031). It is the values of science and its contributions that should be shared by a social and political constituency, not the other way around.

However, when the focus of activities connected with this specific goal are described, mutual responsibilities and acknowledgement are put forward. Among other things, activities shall "foster sustainable interaction between schools, research institutions, industry and civil society organisations" and "integrate society in science and innovation issues, policies and activities in order to integrate citizens' interests and values and to increase the quality, relevance, social acceptability and sustainability of research" and "develop the governance for the advancement of responsible research [...], which is sensitive to society needs and demands, and promote an ethics framework for research and innovation" (European Council, 2013, pp. 1031, 1032). Purposes for integrating society and research are not only to gain support for research but also to build long-term relationships, increase research quality and relevance, and to listen to needs and demands from society, and there is a call for an ethics framework.

To sum up, the Horizon 2020 discourse about participation and collaboration between research and society is somewhat contradictory. On the one hand there is a discourse of expertise, excellence, and talent where the driving forces behind participation and collaboration is to find talent and to develop excellence. In this discourse, research is connected with expertise that should be supported socially and politically, but where the expertise also has a responsibility to advise in social and political processes. On the other hand, there is a responsible and collaborative discourse where research has created ethical, legal, and social issues that should be addressed. Collaboration is key in order to not only address these issues but also to ensure sustainable research of high quality and societal relevance. In particular the values and interests of citizens are brought forward as factors that will increase research quality, relevance, acceptance, and sustainability. While it is stated in the documents that collaboration is key, collaboration in itself is not specifically described as a relationship on equal terms, thus creating potential power imbalances.

Swedish Educational Research Policy

In the Swedish policy documents the main aim of practice-based educational research is to contribute to teaching, to pupils' learning (and learning outcomes), and to teacher education. All translations from Swedish to English are ours. In 2015, the Swedish Government initiated the Swedish Institute for Educational Research with the specific instructions to,

> Contribute to providing good opportunities for those in the school system to plan, implement and evaluate teaching with the support of scientifically underpinned methods and ways of working. The authority shall contribute to good conditions for the development and learning of children and pupils and to improved learning outcomes for pupils. (SFS, 2014/1578)

In the Government decision about the ULF initiative the focus is on the scientific base in school and in teacher education: "The experimental activities will contribute to a strengthened scientific base in teacher and preschool teacher education and in the school system" (Regeringsbeslut, 2017). On the ULF-avtal (n.d.) website the term scientific base is further explained: "This means that teachers should base their professional practice on research and that school development should be permeated by a scientific approach" (para. 2). It is further explained how this does not happen enough in schools and how there is "an experienced gap between theory and practice, which means that educational research cannot always be applied in school activities" (para. 2) which justifies the need to develop models for collaboration between research and practice. Similarly to the EU documents, these national documents include a view of research as expertise. Research should provide methods that can improve

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

pupils' learning and knowledge outcomes, in accordance with current educational policies.

Relevance and scientific quality are brought forward as central concepts in all the documents. In order to receive funding from the Swedish Institute for Educational Research, scientific quality and relevance should be valued equally: "the research funded by the institute must be of the *highest scientific quality and relevant*" (Skolforskningsinstitutet, 2019, p. 9). Relevance means that "there are practice-related dilemmas or problems to deal with and remedy, and that research can help improve teaching" (Skolforskningsinstitutet, 2019, p. 9). As read on the ULF-avtal (n.d.) website homepage, relevance can be achieved when collaborative models allow for reciprocal initiatives: "The collaboration models should lead to research that is relevant to the school by allowing professional groups within the school to take the initiative for research, not just researchers in the academy" (para. 4). However, even if relevance indicates reciprocity, the concept of scientific quality is directional. Scientific quality is connected back to the scientific base of education or teacher education in that it will "develop teachers' knowledge base" (Skolforskningsinstitutet, 2019, p. 9), again reflecting a research as expert discourse.

Reciprocity is not only brought to the fore in relation to relevance. On Swedish Institute for Educational Research (2019) website, the Institute encourages teachers to be part of applications and research teams in order to make use of and integrate their professional knowledge and tried experience. The entire ULF initiative is underpinned by a need to develop structures and models for collaborative research. There are different examples of what collaborative models could encompass, such as collaborative research projects, research environments in schools as well as in universities, and positions that include both teaching in school and research. However, reciprocity between research and practice in the policy documents does not apply to funding from the Swedish Institute for Educational Research (2019) as read on their website: "A researcher has to be employed in a research environment in order to receive funding" (n. p.).

The Swedish policy documents that direct practice-based educational research reflect an expertise discourse where research provides school or teacher education with knowledge in order to improve practice and knowledge results. At the same time there is reciprocity, mainly in the strong emphasis on relevance, but also in an encouragement to include practitioners in research teams and suggestions to create research environments in schools as well as at universities. The documents show a willingness to move research closer to practice but the main responsibility to date lies with research, in responsibility for funding and for the development of collaborative structures. Practice should contribute by taking initiatives to research and by participating in research teams. Again, this suggests that there are certain power hierarchies in place potentially impeding the creation of relationships on equal terms.

The EU documents include three actors that feed into each other to different degrees: policy, research, and society. Policy supports research, society provides input to research in order to increase quality and relevance, and research feeds back into both society and policy. The Swedish educational documents include two of these actors: research and practice explicitly. Research supports practice and practice provides some input to research, in particular to enhance the relevance of research. Policy is present, but implicitly as the instigator of rules and regulations and as a main funder of educational research.

Discussion

Our understanding of Indigenous methodologies is that they are holistic research perspectives that build upon one another in order to create complete research processes. For example, the three R's—respect, relationships and reciprocity—are interdependent when applied to a

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

research process; mutual respect builds on the formation of equal relationships that are cared for and sustained—these in turn depend on the willingness to work inclusively and reciprocally. It is, of course, possible to show respect without caring about relationships or to form relationships without reciprocating; however, the outcome will not be mutual processes on equal terms.

Respect, Relationships, Reciprocity

The concept of "respect" in the context of Indigenous research means an intention to form mutually respectful and collaborative relationships between researchers and research participants. Thus, the concept includes the commitment to real partnerships and to performing research in non-extractive ways. "Relationships" is therefore in part a product of the mutual respect but also extends this concept to include cultural safety (see Bin-Sallik, 2003, for a discussion on this) and building relationships over time that last beyond the actual research project. This creates an extended mutual accountability between project participants, where researchers cannot simply show up, extract data and leave. Furthermore, building relationships includes the concept of "giving back." or "reciprocity," which means that the research process is a mutual process where the researchers need to give something in return for the information shared by the research participants. These three Rs in Indigenous research should guide agreed protocols, a type of additional research ethics agreements designed through dialogue between researchers and research participants on equal terms. The agreed protocols can then direct the process of giving back.

In the analyzed documents, contribution to society, or to practice, is fundamental. The main purpose of Horizon 2020 is "to contribute to building a society and an economy based on knowledge and innovation" (European Union, 2013, p. 110), and the rationale for initiating the Swedish Institute for Educational Research or the ULF project is to contribute to providing good opportunities for those in the school system, both teachers and students. The EU explicitly expects researchers to provide input to policy thus feeding back not only to research participants but also to the societal system at large. There is also a belief that research quality will improve through participation, leading to an understanding of reciprocity as an, at least to some extent, interplay between policy, research, and participants/society. In the Swedish documents, giving back refers specifically to the school system: to teachers by providing research-based teaching approaches and to students that will ultimately benefit by improving knowledge results. Implicitly, knowledge refers to the learning outcomes in the curriculum, indicating that research should be connected with, or even directed by, current curricula and educational policy. Research is not expected to feed back to policy and there is no explicit statement that practice can feed back to research. Even though the sense of contribution is strong in all the analysed documents it is mainly a one-directional stream, research should contribute to society. In some aspects society, or practice, contribute to research, by enhancing quality (in EU) or by securing relevance. However, in both systems, it is research that is expected to apply for funding, manage projects, and disseminate results, constructing a relationship that is only partly reciprocal.

There is a strong and explicit discourse of expertise both in the EU and the Swedish documents. In the EU framework, one main purpose behind citizen science is to find expertise that can contribute to research and ultimately to society. At the same time, the relationships between research and society are to some extent reciprocal. Not only citizens' interests but also their values should be integrated with research in order to create "sustainable research," which indicates a sense of mutual respect and a willingness to form real and long-term relationships. In the Swedish document research also emerges as expertise. The purpose of research is to assist practice, while practice is encouraged to be involved, to initiate research and to be part

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

of research teams. The documents reveal an unbalanced relationship, though. The main responsibility for all aspects of the research lies with the research part. Practice should feed into research processes in order to secure relevance of projects, and they are encouraged to be part of research teams. In these documents, practice and society can be viewed as experts to a certain degree, experts in defining what issues should be investigated in their practices; however, the documents reveal that the "real" experts are the researchers who hold the main responsibility for the entire research process, including the power to make overarching project decisions.

Conclusions—Building Respectful Relationships in Educational Research

Crucial to Indigenous research methodologies is the concept of respect*,* including the ambition to extend the concept of expertise to include both research participants and researchers on more equal terms; the commitment to creating long-term relationships between researchers and research participants thus creating a basis for more valid research results that are relevant to the participating communities; and research being performed in non-extractive and sustainable ways with respect for all participants, as well as their environments, through all parts of the research process (Kovach, 2010; Louis, 2007). Indigenous methodologies also include an ambition to disrupt and question hierarchies of power, created in colonial contexts that are today the norm (Tuhiwai Smith, 2021). Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) stated that "Researchers must go further than simply recognizing personal beliefs and assumptions, and the effect they have when interacting with people" (p. 175). She further explained that there are particular questions that need to be asked prior to performing research in cross-cultural contexts. The following questions have been identified as particularly valuable by Tuhiwai Smith (2012):

- Who defined the research problem?
- For whom is this study worthy and relevant? Who says so?
- What knowledge will the community gain from this study?
- What knowledge will the researcher gain from this study?
- What are some likely positive outcomes from this study?
- What are some possible negative outcomes?
- How can the negative outcomes be eliminated?
- To whom is the researcher accountable?
- What processes are in place to support research, the researched and the researcher? (p. 175-176)

With inspiration from Tuhiwai Smith's list along with the list of questions/guidelines formulated by the Sámi reindeer herding branch organisation, Sámiid Riikkasearvi, we identify, in particular, three issues relevant to actors involved in participatory educational research.

Interpreting the Concept of Expertise in Policy, Research and Practice

As shown in the documents analysed, current hierarchical structures, attitudes, and values dictate who is deemed an expert. Although there are some changes underway, partly evidenced by the encouragement of collaborative research projects, there is a need for further scrutiny of what constitutes "expertise." The relationships between researchers and participants can benefit from an honest dialogue about what expertise is and who is an expert. Bergmark (2019) stated that "some conditions for creating caring researcher–teacher relationships include

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

valuing both researcher and teacher expertise, [and] recognizing the importance of researchers and teachers learning to know each other and their perspectives" (p. 11).

Implementing Reciprocity Throughout the Entire Research Process

A research process contains a number of steps from identification of research questions or problems, data collection, analysis to dissemination of results. The analyzed documents stated that practice should contribute to the identification of relevant issues to be researched and also benefit from the research results. However, this requirement creates a gap where practice is not necessarily involved in the steps in between, such as the analysis of data, or even the data collection. One possible consequence can be less relevant results. Margaret Kovach (2010) stated that "the proposition is that methodology itself necessarily influences outcomes. Indigenous research frameworks have the potential to improve relevance in policy and practice within Indigenous contexts" (p. 13). When related to a practice-based educational research context this would mean that reciprocal relationships with teacher and school participation throughout the process could improve relevance for practice.

Building sustainable and respectful Relationships between Policy, Research and Practice

Both Horizon 2020 and the ULF-avtal initiatives are examples of attempts to create overarching structures for participatory (educational) research. Initiated on the policy level, funding is directed towards collaborative aims and directed by formal agreements. Thereby relationships may, in time, become sustainable regarding how the funding for research, and collaboration between universities and school areas are organized. However, we suggest that close attention is also paid to how relationships are built and maintained on other levels in the system, in particular relationships between those who are closely involved in the research, for example the researchers and the teachers. In Indigenous contexts written agreements can be used between researchers and participants in order to assist the development of sustainable and respectful collaborations, a tool that has also been suggested for educational research (Bergmark, 2019; Beveridge et al., 2018).

The field of practice-based educational research holds great potential for being at the forefront of further development of ethical, relational, and truly collaborative research initiatives. Such initiatives would provide starting points for the construction of models where research, practice, and policy inform each other with a joint goal to improve sustainable societies. One spark to initiate that further development might just be to borrow some insight from some of oldest research methods known to humanity.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

References

Aho, E., Henriksson P. A., & Larsson, M. (2016). Skolnära – ett skolnära begrepp? *Kapet, 12* (1), 116–134.

AH&MRC. (2016). *Guidelines for research into Aboriginal health: Key principles.* https://www.ahmrc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/V2.0-Key-principles-Updated.pdf

AIATSIS (Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies). (2012). Guidelines for ethical research in Australian Indigenous studies. Accessed 23 September 2020. https://aiatsis.gov.au/research/ethical-research/guidelines-ethical-research-australian-indigenous-studies

Åkesson, E., Fredman, P., Adolfsson, H., & Bergenheim, Å. (2017). Avsiktsförklaring för uppdrag om försöksverksamhet med praktiknära forskning. [Explanation of intent for assignments on experimental activities with practice-based research]. https://www.ulfavtal.se/digitalAssets/679/c_679100-l_3-k_20170621avsiktsforklaring_underskriven.pdf

Bergmark, U. (2019). Rethinking researcher-teacher roles and relationships in educational action research through the use of Nel Noddings' ethics of care. *Educational Action Research, 28*(3), 331–344. https://doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2019.1567367

Beveridge, L., Mockler, N., & Gore, J. (2018). An Australian view of the academic partner role in schools. *Educational Action Research, 26*(1), 25–41. https://doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2017.1290538.

Bin-Sallik, M. (2003). Cultural safety: Let's name it! *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education,* 32(1), 21–28. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1326011100003793

Cain, T. (2011). Teachers' classroom-based action research. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education, 34*(1), 3–16. doi:10.1080/1743727X.2011.552307

Carlgren, I. (2011). Forskning ja, men i vilket syfte och om vad? Lärare som praktiker och forskare. *Forskning om Undervisning och Lärande, 5,* 64–79

Cornwall, A., & Jewkes, R. (1995). What is participatory research? *Social Science in Medicine, 41*(12), 1667–1676. https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536(95)00127-S.

Daniels-Mayes, S. (2017). Revealing a counterstory of Aboriginal education success. *Nexus, The Australian Sociological Association (TASA).* Accessed 23 September 2020. https://nexus.tasa.org.au/

Dedding, C., Goedhart, N. S., Broerse, J. E. W. & Abma, T. A. (2021): Exploring the boundaries of 'good' participatory action research in times of increasing popularity: Dealing with constraints in local policy for digital inclusion, *Educational Action Research*, *29*(1), 20–36. https://doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2020.1743733

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2008). Introduction. In N. K. Denzin, Y. S. Lincoln, & T. L. Smith, (Eds.), *Handbook of critical and Indigenous methodologies* (pp. 1–20). SAGE. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483385686.n1

Eitzel, M. V., Cappadonna, J. L., Santos-Lang, C., Duerr, R. E., Virapongse, A., West, S. E., Kyba, C. C. M., Bowser, A., Cooper, C. B., Sforzi, A., Metcalfe, A. N., Harris, E. S., Thiel, M., Haklay, M., Ponciano, L., Roche, J., Ceccaroni, L., Shilling, F. M., Dorler, D., Heigle, F., … Jiang, Q. (2017). Citizen science terminology matters: Exploring key terms. *Citizen Science: Theory and Practice, 2*(1), 1–20.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

https://doi.org/10.5334/cstp.96

European Commission. (2012). *Responsible research and innovation: Europe's ability to respond to societal challenges.* European Union. https://doi.org/10.2777/11739

European Council. (2013). 2013/743/EU: Council decision of 3 December 2013 establishing the specific programme implementing Horizon 2020 - the Framework programme for research and innovation (2014–2020) and repealing Decisions 2006/971/EC, 2006/972/EC, 2006/973/EC, 2006/974/EC and 2006/975/EC Text with EEA relevance. *Official Journal of the European Union, L 347,* 20.12.2013, 965–1041. http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2013/743/oj

European Union. (2013). Regulation (EU) No 1291/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing Horizon 2020—the framework programme for research and innovation (2014-20) and repealing Decision No 1982/2006/EC, *Official Journal of the European Union, L 347*, 20.12.2013, pp. 104–173. http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2013/1291/oj

Evans, M., Miller, A., Hutchinson, P. J., & Dingwall, C. (2014). Decolonizing research practice: Indigenous methodologies, Aboriginal methods, and knowledge/knowing. In P. Leavy, (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 179–194). https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199811755.001.0001

Hermansson, C., Jonsson, B., Levlin, M., Lindhe, A., Lundgren, B., & Norlund Shaswar. A. (2019). The (non)effect of joint construction in a genre-based approach to teaching writing. *The Journal of Educational Research, 112*(4), 483–494. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.2018.1563038

Kovach, M. (2010). *Indigenous methodologies: Characteristics, conversations and contexts*. University of Toronto Press.

Kuokkanen, R. (2011). *Reshaping the university: Responsibility, Indigenous epistemes, and the logic of the gift*. UBC Press.

Kwaymullina, A. (2016). Research, ethics and Indigenous peoples: An Australian Indigenous perspective on three threshold considerations for respectful engagement. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples, 12*(4), 437–449. https://doi.org/10.20507/AlterNative.2016.12.4.8

Louis, R. P. (2007). Can you hear us now? Voices from the margin: Using Indigenous methodologies in geographic research. *Geographical Research, 45*(2), 130–139. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-5871.2007.00443.x

Martin, K. (2003). Ways of knowing, being and doing: A theoretical framework and methods for Indigenous and Indigenist research. *Journal of Australian Studies, 27*(76), 203–214. https://doi.org/10.1080/14443050309387838

Matras, Y., & Robertson, A. (2017). Urban multilingualism and the civic university: A dynamic, non-linear model of participatory research. *Social Inclusion, 5*(4), 5–13. https://doi.org/10.17645/si.v5i4.1137

Means, R., & Johnson, B. (2012). *If you've forgotten the names of the clouds, you've lost your way: An introduction to American Indian thought and philosophy.* Treaty Publications.

Mertler, C. A. (2011). *Action research: Improving schools and empowering educators.* SAGE.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

Moffat, M. (2016). Exploring positionality in an Aboriginal research paradigm: A unique perspective. *International Journal of Technology and Inclusive Education, 5*(1), 763–768. https://doi.org/10.20533/ijtie.2047.0533.2016.0096

Moreton-Robinson, A., & Walter, M. (2009). Indigenous methodologies in social research. In M. Walter (Ed.), *Social research methods* (2nd ed., pp. 1-18). Oxford.

Muhammad, M., Wallerstein, N., Sussman, A. L., Avila, M., Belone, L., & Duran, B. (2015). Reflections on researcher identity and power: The impact of positionality on community based participatory research (CBPR) processes and outcomes. *Critical Sociology*, *41*(7-8), 1045–1063. https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920513516025

Oancea, A., & Furlong, J. (2007). Expressions of excellence and the assessment of applied and practice-based research. *Research Papers in Education, 22*(2), 119–137 https://doi.org/10.1080/02671520701296056

Porsanger, J. (2004). An essay about Indigenous methodologies. In P. Bäckström, K. Jernsletten, & C. Theodorsen (Eds.), *Special issue on northern minorities. Nordlit nr. 15* (pp. 105–120). University of Tromsø, Faculty of Humanities.

Regeringsbeslut [Government decision] (2017). *Uppdrag om försöksverksamhet med praktiknära forskning* [Decision about assignments on experimental activities with practice-based research] U2015/03573/UH, U2017/01129/UH

Reid, J. B. & Taylor, K. (2011). Indigenous mind: A framework for culturally safe Indigenous health research and practice. *Aboriginal and Islander Health Worker Journal, 35*(4), 19–21.

Sámediggi (2019). Sametingets synpunkter på regeringens forskningspolitik [The Sámi Parliament's views on the government's research policy] https://www.sametinget.se/135666

Sámiid Riikkasearvi. (2019). *Policy regarding research and project collaborations with Sámiid Riikkasearvi.* Accessed 23 September 2020. http://pdf.sapmi.se/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Forskningsriktlinjer-light-eng.pdf

Science Europe. (2018). *Science Europe briefing paper on citizen science. D/2018/13.324/2.* Accessed 3 May 2020https://www.scienceeurope.org/media/gjze3dv4/se_briefingpaper_citizenscience.pdf

SFS (Svensk författningssamling [Swedish Statutes]) 2014/1578. Instruktion för Skolforskningsinstitutet. [Instructions for the Swedish Institute for Educational Research]

Sinclair, K. (2017). *Educators' understandings and perspectives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural competence: A mixed methods study* (Unpublished doctoral thesis). School of Communication, International Studies and Languages, University of South Australia.

SiS.net. (2017). Citizen science policies in the European Commission: research agendas towards issues of concern to citizens. Policy Brief, 3, 2017. Accessed 3 May 2020 https://www.sisnetwork.eu/media/sisnet/Policy_brief_Citizen_Science_SiSnet.pdf

Skolforskningsinstitutet. (2019). *Mer praktiknära forskning inom utbildningsvetenskapen—en förutsättning för framgångsrik skolpolitik. Skolforskningsinstitutets inspel till den forskningspolitiska propositionen 2020.* [More practice-based research in the

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

educations sciences—a prerequisite for successful school policy. The Swedish Institute for Educational Research's comments on the research policy bill 2020]. Accessed 22 November 2019. https://www.skolfi.se/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Skrivelse-om-regeringens-forskningspolitik-Skolfi-2019-30_tillg.pdf

SOU (Statens offentliga utredningar [Public reports by the Government] 2018:19. *En utbildning på vetenskaplig grund förpliktigar* [Scientifically based education is a committment]

Swedish Institute for Educational Research. (2019, November 25). https://www.skolfi.se/forskningsfinansiering

Tuhiwai Smith, L. (1999). *Decolonising methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples*. Zed Books.

Tuhiwai Smith, L. (2012). *Decolonizing methodologies. Research and Indigenous peoples* (2nd ed.). Zed Books.

Tuhiwai Smith, L. (2021). *Decolonizing methodologies. Research and Indigenous peoples.* (3rd ed.). Zed Books.

ULF-avtal. (n.d.). Accessed 22 November 2019. https://www.ulfavtal.se/om-ulf-avtal/

Wilson, S. (2001). What is an Indigenous research methodology? *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 25*(2), 175–179.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

Confronting Partial Knowledge Through a Pedagogy of Discomfort: Notes on Anti-Oppressive Teaching

Michael Cappello and Claire Kreuger

University of Regina

Authors' Note

Michael Cappello, Faculty of Education, University of Regina

Claire Kreuger https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5061-2951

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Michael Cappello at Michael.cappello@uregina.ca

Abstract

Wrestling with issues of racism and colonization in the classroom requires significant nuance from dominantly positioned educators. In this article, we weave together a narrative unpacking of an uncomfortable experience in a graduate level class with an exploration of relevant theoretical literature. Our reflection on practice takes up the possibilities for anti-oppressive education to engage with the partial knowledge of educators and students. Ultimately, engaging in a pedagogy of discomfort is necessary to unsettle dominantly positioned educators and students and enable a move towards bearing witness to the unequal realities of Canadian society. In order to begin to enter more deeply into relationships of accountability between non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples, teaching moments such as these are inevitable, if not required.

Keywords: anti-oppressive education, discomfort, colonialism, partial knowledge, Indigenous futurity

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

Confronting Partial Knowledge Through a Pedagogy of Discomfort: Notes on Anti-Oppressive Teaching

On April 17, 1995 Pamela George, a Saulteaux woman living in Regina, Saskatchewan was killed by two White[1] university students. Pamela, a mother of three, a writer of poetry, and an occasional sex worker, was picked up by Alex Ternowetsky and Steven Kummerfield. The men were both students at the University of Regina; Steven Kummerfield was training to be a teacher. That night, as part of Ternowetsky's and Kummerfield's end of term partying, Pamela was sexually assaulted, brutally beaten, and left to die. The subsequent trial served to highlight the racist and sexist nature of the Canadian justice system and was followed intently across the country. In the end both of Pamela's killers, despite the preplanning of their attack, were found guilty of manslaughter and were each sentenced to 6.5 years in prison of which they served roughly half that time before being released.[2]

In the summer of 2015, two decades later, in the same building where Steven Kummerfield studied to become a teacher, the image of Pamela George was projected onto the screen in a small lecture hall in front of a class of students in a master's of education course. The lesson intended to draw students' attention to the racialized nature of teacher education. However, the image prompted a charged teaching moment and days of ongoing conversation about racial and gendered violence, the power of storytelling, and the complexity of creating anti-oppressive spaces. In this paper, we investigate a moment of pedagogical tension and explore both the necessity and the difficulty of dominantly positioned teachers troubling oppression in the classroom.

Initial Positionings

Michael (Mike) Cappello is a middle-aged, White cis man who, at the time of writing, was in a tenure-track position at the University of Regina. His dissertation research examined how teacher education produces Whiteness. In particular, he looked at the way that what counts as good teaching—a list of reproducible "competencies" usually focused on management or a performance task—also works to center aspects of Whiteness.

Claire Kreuger is a middle-aged, White cis woman who, at the time of writing, was completing a master's of education degree at the University of Regina. She is also a full-time elementary teacher and mother of five. Two of her adopted daughters are Saulteaux.

We begin by acknowledging that Southern Saskatchewan, where we live, is Treaty 4 land and the territory of the Cree, Saulteaux, Nakota, Lakota, and Dakota peoples, as well as the homeland of the Métis Nation. This treaty history is not well understood by Canadians (Miller, 2009) and yet it has become fashionable, of late to ritually recognize the original inhabitants of this land. More than an empty recitation of history, we claim a settler identity in an attempt to put the colonial context for our life and our work at the forefront. We acknowledge the Treaty relationships that allow us to be here and we recognize the possibility of relating to each other in good ways (Asch, 2014). Nonetheless, even as we work to undo the legacy and ongoing reality of settler-colonialism, we acknowledge that we, Canadians and the Canadian state, are not in good relations with our Indigenous neighbours.

As settlers, we are beneficiaries of the colonial system that has dispossessed and continues to dispossess Indigenous peoples of their land, lives, and resources. Echoing Fine et al. (2008), we recognize that, "those of us who are not Indigenous have been profoundly shaped by our witnessing of colonization, by our roles as accomplices, abettors, exploiters, romanticizers, pacifiers, assimilators, includers, forgetters, and democratizers" (pp. 159–160). We understand both Canada-

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

past and Canada-present to be an ongoing settler-colonial project (Starblanket & Hunt, 2020, p. 49) and we recognize how our lives are very much bound up in this project.

Further to this settler identity, both authors, like most teachers in Canada, are White (Ryan et al., 2009). Despite increasing racial diversity in our general and student populations, Canada's teaching force continues to remain disproportionately White. Our identities exist in the nexus of privileges created by the intersection between Whiteness and settler- colonialism. However, these privileges are not equally distributed as Mike has access to both gender-based and institutional power that Claire does not have.

Using the frameworks of anti-oppressive education, decolonization, and Boler's (1999) pedagogy of discomfort, we deconstruct an unsettling conversation about oppression, Indigenous voices, and reconciliation. We have structured this paper as a reflection on teaching and learning built around our narrative accounts of an incident that occurred within a graduate class in which Mike was the teacher and Claire was a student. Given our shared work as teachers committed to anti-oppressive education, and our disparate locations in elementary education and teacher education, we believe that this writing supports similarly situated educators in planning for and navigating similar pedagogical decisions. We imagine this article being taken up by our teaching colleagues in K-12 and postsecondary who find themselves in similar contexts, with similar goals, and who may encounter similar issues.

In terms of process, we met and sketched out the salient moments of the story that would be the basis of this article. We each wrote our own narrative sections, taking responsibility for those parts of the story that seemed most connected to our individual experiences. These narrative passages are written in italics and from the point of view of either Mike or Claire. We then layered these narrative sections with relevant theory, in a sense annotating each teaching moment. While parts of this process follow the structure of a duoethnography, this is not a research paper, but rather a reflection piece on our practice. Many iterations later, this article represents both an honest attempt to describe a highly charged and complicated teaching moment in an anti-oppressive classroom as well as our subsequent theoretical analysis. The paper ends with a discussion of the complexities of teaching towards Indigenous futurity while contending with ongoing settler-colonialism. Ultimately, ethical relationships and the accountability they engender are required.

What Happened

In the summer of 2015, Mike taught an afternoon class on curriculum theory and development in which Claire was a student. The class was made up of 25 graduate students mostly from Southern Saskatchewan. Most of the students were White although the class did include a Métis man, a Cree kêhtê-aya (elder) and residential school survivor, and an Inuk woman from Nunavut. The class was part of an Anti-Oppressive Summer Institute, with all students participating in a morning class focused on anti-oppressive education and teacher activism. Both the morning and afternoon classes made frequent reference to the recently released "Executive Summary" of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC, 2015b) inquiry into the Indian Residential School System in Canada and made deliberate and explicit attempts to include Indigenous perspectives and voices.

As part of a discussion on the racialization of teachers, Mike projected a picture of Pamela George onto the large screen in the classroom. The image prompted a hush that descended in the room. In this quiet space, Mike talked about being a classmate of one of Pamela's murderers, how he was raised and educated similarly, and how this teacher education space had helped create a

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

murderer. Mike and Steven Kummerfield had been in class together in this same building. Despite an open invitation to discuss the place-based implications of this story, few students took up the offer to do so and the class ended shortly thereafter with students quietly dispersing.

Mike approached Claire, who had stayed behind, asking if she was okay, her discomfort clearly visible to him. We went to Mike's office to discuss what happened. Claire described the many ways she felt that the use of Pamela's story and image was problematic. Who gets to tell such a story of pain and humiliation? Who is responsible enough to hear it? Why weren't the images of the White male murderers projected instead?

The discussion was rich and nuanced. Mike thought it would be important to share this conversation with the other students, to allow other students to share their own possible discomfort and take part in problematizing the lesson. Mike proposed a fishbowl activity where we would sit in the center of the classroom while the rest of the students would gather in a circle around us. We both anticipated that the majority of the class would support Claire's interpretation of the lesson and find the use of Pamela George's story problematic. The idea was for dominantly positioned educators to engage with the complexity of anti-oppressive pedagogy. The next day we sat in the circle of students and recreated our discussion, inviting other students to participate and join us in the discussion. The activity did not go exactly as planned.

Context: Anti-Oppressive Education

Anti-oppressive education refers to a broad range of teaching and learning that aims to challenge multiple forms of oppression (Kumashiro, 2000). Because there are multiple oppressions (racism, sexism, heterosexism, and ableism, for example), and because these oppressions are "reciprocally constructing phenomena" (Hill-Collins, 2015, p. 2), educators must both understand and teach against oppression from multiple perspectives. Some examples of anti-oppressive education practices include anti-bias education (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010), critical social justice education (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017), and culturally responsive teaching (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Anti-oppressive approaches recognize the structural nature of oppression, or how oppression is "deeply embedded in the fabric of the society" (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017, p. xx).

In particular, anti-oppressive approaches actively resist and contest dominant theorizing and practices (Moosa-Mitha, 2005). Rather than focusing only on those victimized by oppression, anti-oppressive education seeks to understand the ways that dominance is produced, enacted, and rooted in identities and systems. Anti-oppressive pedagogies work, especially with dominantly positioned groups, to reveal the ways that inequalities are produced through processes that marginalize *the other* and normalize dominance. Within our teaching contexts, taking up dominance is deeply personal work for the dominantly positioned—both for ourselves as teachers, and for our students. However, this is legitimate work for dominantly positioned teachers as it is, "not up to the oppressed to educate their oppressors about their experiences of oppression" (Stewart et. al., 2014, p. 13).

An enduring critique of anti-oppressive approaches centers on the tendency for these practices to individualize the effects of the systems of dominance that are being interrogated, thereby limiting the scope of the conversations that can be had. Even in the context of a critique of larger systems, the pedagogical practices associated with some forms of anti-racism (for example) that lead mostly White students to notice their (individual) Whiteness and to confront their (individual) implication in White dominance, reproduce individual responses—sometimes

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

personal guilt and shame, sometimes a personal sense of goodness. This personal response detracts from both understanding and working against larger systems of oppression.

This individualizing tendency also complicates the relationship between anti-oppressive work and decolonizing education. If decolonizing requires attention to complex layers of thought (wider global contexts, complicated histories of migration, imperialism, and racialization, Indigenous resistances and ways of knowing and being, etc.), as Tuck and Yang (2012) made clear, then the goals of these educational projects are not the same. Zembylas (2018b) argued that critical pedagogy can become a decolonizing pedagogy. However, it must be noticed that there are abiding tensions between rationalist ideas and individualizing practices that make up much of anti-oppressive education's work and decolonization's necessary rejection of rationalism's Eurocentrism including any move to individualize colonialism's totalizing effects. It is, therefore, necessary to take up anti-oppressive education and its emphasis on the production and maintenance of dominance alongside (and in critical conversation with) the specific and larger demands of decolonization.

Context: Colonialism/Decolonization

Mike: *My Ph.D. research examined how teacher education at the University of Regina produces Whiteness. I traced the ways that what could count as good pedagogy, competencies that usually focused on the use of classroom management strategies and specific performance tasks, also worked to center, and in some ways create, Whiteness. In our grad class, I was attempting to explore how curriculum, specifically a technical/rational approach to teacher education, racializes teachers, equating the 'good' teacher with the White teacher. Including the absent presence of Pamela George seemed crucial. In 1995, my first year as an Education student, Pamela, a Saulteaux woman from the Zagime Anishinabek (formerly the Sakimay First Nation), was murdered by a classmate of mine, Steven Kummerfield, and his friend Alex Ternowetsky. Nothing, in this first year, or any subsequent years in the Faculty of Education, would have allowed me to understand race/racism and colonialism, and the role of education in perpetuating this violence, even though a fellow Education student was responsible for this crime. Now, decades later, many of the students in our Anti-Oppressive Education Summer Institute were also (more recent) graduates of this same Faculty and I felt a keen responsibility to interrupt this glaring absence.*

Both the academy and the public school system are deeply racialized spaces that play a crucial role in perpetuating settler-colonialism (Cote-Meek, 2014; Donald, 2009; Ermine, 2007; Kempf, 2009; St. Denis, 2011). Our current and historic Eurocentric approach to education perpetuates the structures of colonial dominance that shape the relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. In her article exploring the trial, Razack (2000) argued that both Steven Kummerfield and Alex Ternowetsky possessed a "collective understanding of Pamela George as a thing" (p. 111). Furthermore, Razack (2000) noted that the two men's exclusively White worlds, including the University of Regina's Faculty of Education, gave them "little opportunity to disrupt" (p. 111) this objectification.

The colonial nature of our school system is well-documented and calls for its transformation are frequent, including the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples' (RCAP, 1996) recommendations and the TRC's (2015a) "Calls to Action." We as educators are called repeatedly to challenge colonialism, to make space for Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing, to create an "ethical space of engagement" (Ermine, 2007), and to work towards renewed relationships and reconciliation. Challenging Pamela George's objectification in the same space that helped create

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

her murderer seemed to be an essential component to include in a class attempting to deconstruct colonialism.

We frame this task of deconstructing colonialism in the classroom as a necessary component of decolonization (Donald, 2009; Pete, 2015; Pete et al., 2013). However, Tuck and Yang (2012) have provocatively and persuasively argued that decolonization is not a metaphor: "Decolonization brings about the repatriation of Indigenous land and life; it is not a metaphor for other things we want to do to improve our societies and schools" (p. 1). We structure the work we are doing, nonetheless, in terms of decolonization as this is our goal, albeit long-term. As Veracini (2011) observed, “The decolonization of settler colonialism needs to be imagined before it is practised, and this has proved especially challenging” (p. 211). Our immediate task is the deconstruction of the colonial nature of our classrooms and our relationships, to get to a place where ultimate decolonization, “the repatriation of Indigenous land and life” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 21) is seen as both possible and imperative.

Figuring out how to do this work effectively and ethically is a primary responsibility of all educators but most especially White settler educators like ourselves. We must find ways to do this work well and on our own, learning from and following the lead of Indigenous colleagues, but without always relying on their time and labour. For dominantly positioned teachers, having to do this work independently makes us uncomfortable. We worry about our lack of knowledge being exposed, about getting things wrong, about offending our colleagues and our students. Despite our deep discomfort, we know we must do it regardless, even though the work we do can be problematic and full of missteps and fumbles.

Caught Between Spectating and Bearing Witness

Claire: *On the second day of our class, Mike projected a photo of Pamela George onto the screen in our classroom. I looked at Pamela's face, and I saw the faces of my daughters and my sisters, and my friends. I looked at the women at my table, my long-time Inuk friend from Nunavut, my newly met Cree friend, and I wondered what they were thinking. I worried that Pamela's story was hitting too close to home. But I did not say anything.*

For my Master's research, I had been reading a lot about Indigenization and the problems with White people deciding what Indigenous content to include. At this moment, it felt like Pamela George's story was questionable Indigenous content. It felt like we, mostly White students, were being invited to engage with Pamela's narrative as a spectacle for our settler-colonial gaze.

The social sciences have a long history of collecting and commodifying the stories of pain and humiliation experienced by Indigenous peoples and documenting colonial damage (Tuck & Yang, 2014). This research becomes the basis for lucrative careers, promotions, and degrees. Meanwhile, the Indigenous communities, the subjects of the research, are left with narratives "that tell them that they are broken" (Tuck & Yang, 2014, p. 227). The premise that the harm must be recorded, proven, and confirmed by dominant eyes in order for change to occur justifies this focus on the victims of colonial violence. Indeed, research itself becomes a stand-in for change. This legacy of the collection and circulation of pain narratives is invoked when we tell stories about Indigenous victims of colonial violence.

Boler (1999) defines spectating as a learned and chosen mode of viewing that deliberately omits and erases, that purposefully does not see everything. To spectate is to be a voyeur, to permit "a gaping distance between self and other" (p. 184). Furthermore, spectating is a privileged position, which involves a distinct separation and abdication of possible responsibility. In contrast,

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

as witnesses, we undertake a dynamic process of perceiving our own "historical responsibilities and co-implication" (Boler, 1999, p. 186). Bearing witness is a process in which we do not have the luxury of distance and objectivity. These differences between witnessing and spectating are crucial.

Looking at the image of Pamela George as White spectators of colonial violence, we had the unfortunate option of viewing this trauma from a distance, even as many of us fought to bear witness and see our complicity with this oppression. By centering our gaze on Pamela's picture, we were collectively drawn into a complicated and uncomfortable colonial tableau. Offering students the invitation to bear witness does not mean that students can or will take up that stance. There is no way of ensuring that Pamela's picture and story were not being received as spectacle. There is work involved in resisting the spectacle and instead attempting to bear witness and be implicated in the story we are offered. However, Tuck and Yang (2014) proposed that there are some stories that the academy "has not yet proven itself responsible enough to hear" (p. 232). Who decides if students are responsible enough to hear Pamela's story? Could telling this story be worth the trauma it could cause Indigenous students? The "psychological cost" (Moule, 2005, p. 31) of telling stories of pain and humiliation, is to cause marginalized communities to partially re-live these experiences. As dominantly positioned educators for whom these stories hold pedagogical, if not necessarily personal significance, the decision of if and how to use them is problematic.

Partial (Incomplete) Knowledge and Centering Marginalized Voices

Mike: *As I taught, I remembered my 1995 classroom, ED 317, just upstairs from our current lecture hall. I remembered an assignment on Piaget and learning. I worked in a group with Steven Kummerfield, presenting on Piaget's stages of cognitive development. I described the course content and my memory of Kummerfield, a star basketball player with large hands. As I think back on this moment, I remember his hands in particular.*

I want my students to understand the closeness of this colonial violence. Both Kummerfield and I were produced through our schooling to have limited understandings of racism, and our privileged Whiteness. It is important to me that my White students understand something about Pamela's humanity and about White supremacy that Steven and I could not when we were students.

It is necessary to understand that our knowledge of oppression is incomplete, especially when working with and as dominantly positioned students and teachers. Kumashiro's (2000) idea of partial knowledge is useful. First, knowledge is partial because of the limits of our understanding. In this sense, "otherness" is known only at a distance, only "by inference, and often in contrast to the norm, and is therefore only partial" (Kumashiro, 2000, p. 31). A dominant standpoint makes it difficult even to recognize that there are other viewpoints and that these other perspectives offer more clarity on how race and racialization function in our society. For example, those of us who are racialized as White are not able to easily see, understand, and empathize with the experiences of racialized minoritized people (Sleeter, 2004).

Partial (incomplete) knowledge, especially for dominantly positioned students and teachers, is confronted pedagogically by centering the voices of marginalized people. We come to a greater understanding of oppression by purposefully placing marginalized voices at the center of the curriculum. In some ways, addressing these gaps is relatively easy. In contrast to the education that Mike and Steven Kummerfield received in the 90s, in our Summer Institute, every class included voices from those social locations that were not dominant, in particular, the voices of women and Indigenous authors. As a class, we read a short story about residential schools written by Métis

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

author Maria Campbell (1995). We listened to Métis scholar Zoë Todd reading the beginning of the TRC report as part of the #ReadTheTRCReport movement. We compared the "Calls to Action" in the TRC (2015a) with what Indigenous people had already said through "Citizens Plus" (Indian Association of Alberta, 1970) also known as the "Red Paper" in response to the overt cultural genocide of the "White Paper" (Indian and Northern Affairs, 1969). We troubled the lack of inclusion of essential scholars of colour in the mainstream narratives of curriculum theory and history. We focused one assignment on personally responding to the TRC, which placed the voices of survivors of Indian Residential Schools and the 94 "Calls to Action" at the center of our attention. In these ways, this course attempted to confront, challenge, and potentially transform the partial nature of traditional course offerings. Even engaging with Pamela George's murder, including the use of her picture, was an attempt to center the experiences of Indigenous women. This particular inclusion, however, was more nuanced and much more problematic.

Partial (Invested) Knowledge and a Pedagogy of Discomfort

Mike: *With the portrait of Pamela George looking down on us, I gestured with my hands. At the time, I was thinking about my similarity with Steven. Both male, both White, both students in this Faculty of Education. Razack (2000) says that both men had a "very small chance of seeing Pamela George as a human being" (p. 95). Given my education, my position, my racialization, at that time, that would have been true of me as well. I feel my complicity in this violence keenly. I am partial to telling this story. I am personally invested in this narrative. This violence is not only close to me; it is also intimately part of this Faculty, part of this place. It is a story that belongs here, and I feel it must be told here. However, the more I tell it, the more I realize that I only understand the story partially.*

While the incomplete nature of our knowledge is a necessary focus, the second meaning of partial is also essential. Partial knowledge is biased; it is a recognition of our investment and commitment to what we think we know. The problem for dominantly positioned educators is that we "often *desire* hearing only certain voices, we desire the silencing of others, and we desire the continuation of normalized teaching and learning practices" (Kumashiro, 2001, p. 6). These emotional and affective investments in particular ways of knowing, prevent us from knowing differently, or from critiquing what we know. Whereas we address the limitations of our partial (incomplete) knowledge through centering the presence of *othered* voices, confronting our partial (invested) knowledge requires something much more difficult. The embedded nature of these oppressive desires and understandings requires a sustained pedagogy of discomfort to notice, confront, uproot, and replace our convictions about what we know. For Boler (1999), this pedagogy of discomfort represents both an approach to teaching and a form of critical inquiry that invites both students and educators to examine how our modes of seeing have been formed by our cultures, our histories, and our lived experiences. The challenge, though, is that there are so many forms of oppression. While both of us were well-versed in analyzing structures of colonial oppression, we were unprepared for the gendered implications of this teaching moment.

Context: Patriarchy

Claire: *Mike gestured with his hands as if they were Steven Kummerfield's hands, and his personification of this murderer was unnerving, particularly as the picture of Pamela still looked down upon us. It seemed that in death, this woman could still get no peace. That there was no dignity for her, even now. I wondered how she would feel about her image coming to represent and personify the very real female and Indigenous price of White male dominance. And I wondered*

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

about these White boys, these men. Faceless in this class. Their mug shots were nowhere to be seen. They got their privacy, their anonymity. They got to live. By now, they were free.

The class ended, and students silently went their ways. Mike came over and asked if I was OK, my face clearly betraying my discomfort. Despite having already decided not to say anything, I accepted Mike's invitation to discuss the class. Later, this decision was endlessly analyzed by both of us. Why did I not say anything in class? Why did I say something afterwards? What was it about me as a student and Mike as the instructor that allowed this complicated discussion to take place?

It would be a mistake to focus solely on both of the Authors' many similar positionings, White, cis gendered, teachers, settlers, middle class … without also noticing the areas of significant dissimilarity, notably in terms of gender and institutional power. While Mike is a tenure-track male professor, Claire is a female elementary teacher. We both personified stereotypes in our own rights, the absent-minded professor and the helpful teacher.

In this curriculum development and theory class, race and colonialism formed the framework for our anti-oppressive analysis, while gender, when considered, was underdeveloped. This was something that became more evident as we analyzed this moment, with the image of Pamela George a stark reminder of the dangers, yes of being Indigenous, but also of being female.

By telling the story of the sexual violence and murder of a woman, Mike played a key patriarchal card and shifted the dynamics in the classroom significantly. Reminding a class primarily composed of women about the very tangible threat of male violence had the result of reifying structures of male dominance. Indeed, the threat of sexual violence has long been considered one of the foundations of patriarchal control (Brownmiller, 1975) and the fear of violence has been shown to limit women's participation in a variety of settings (Pain, 1991). By telling this story and by gesturing with his own large male hands, Mike's lesson had the result of putting the women in this class "in their place" as potential objects of male violence. It is unsurprising then, that no women took up the invitation to discuss this further.

But this story of Pamela George is much more than a simple story of one woman's tragic end. The extended story, the press-fueled drama that captivated the nation, was the trial of the two White men and the very light sentences they received in the end. We know that it is not just the threat of male violence that keeps women in a state of fear, but also the limited reaction of the state that solidifies this fear. The failure of the state to react in any substantive way to violence against women allows for male violence to be an effective form of social control (Pain, 1991). Not only was Pamela George sexually assaulted and killed, but her killers faced very few repercussions, a few years in jail and then they were free. Reminding a class full of women not only of the prevalence of male violence but also of the state's apathy towards this very violence was a double blow.

Having known Mike before this teaching moment, Claire was better placed to trust the good intentions of this lesson. Part of her willingness to discuss this teaching moment was due to the relationship that had already been established between the two. Claire knew Mike to be caring, fair, and open to critique. Certainly, this prior relationship is key to understanding the conditions necessary to have this student-teacher conversation in a productive way.

But Claire's actions were not just that of a helpful teacher. Systems of power are rarely so simple. By agreeing to meet with Mike, and to later discuss her concerns openly in front of the class and ultimately to co-author this paper, Claire was being strategic. By aligning herself with

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

male, institutional power, she positioned herself in such a way that she could benefit from these very structures of oppression that she was seeking to expose. Although, ostensibly trying to speak up for the women in the class who may have felt unable to call attention to the unsafe situation created in this class, Claire also knew that she personally had little to lose by cooperating with Mike and much to gain. As Butler (1997) noted, "Power is not simply what we oppose but also, in a strong sense, what we depend on for our existence" (p. 2).

Resisting Defensiveness

Mike: *Claire had been a guest in my class multiple times. I knew her teaching work as excellent, engaged, and sharp. And now she was uncomfortable with what I had just done. Oh boy.*

We head back to my office, and I can tell that she is unsettled. She asks me about the picture. We talk about the differences produced when we talk about "The Murder of Pamela George" rather than "The Murder Trial of Alex Ternowetsky and Steven Kummerfield." She asks why I did not include their pictures. I listen as Claire describes the vulnerability she felt. I listen as she laments that these men got to remain anonymous. It gets worse.

Claire is not sure about what her Indigenous colleagues were feeling, but she was at a table with two Indigenous mothers. She asks why I would choose to hold out that pain for so long… to spend 15 minutes with Pamela's picture as the only visual in the room. Does Pamela George's family get any say about how you use that photo?[3] *What are their wishes? I don't have a lot of answers. I am sweating. I do not know.*

I try not to be defensive …

A pedagogy of discomfort challenges us as educators to dispense with traditional teaching methods and to join our students in learning about dominance and concurrently trying to undo it. Through this process, we acknowledge our "profound interconnections with others, and how emotions, beliefs, and actions are collaboratively co-implicated" (Boler, 1999, p. 187). A pedagogy of discomfort is a "mutual transaction" (Boler, 1999, p. 187) in which both educators and students share the vulnerability through mutual exploration and explicit discussion of pedagogy.

Mike: *I am careful to underline for my students that our desire to be seen as "good" is problematic. Often, being good or being seen as good makes it impossible for students to also wrestle with their implication in systems of oppression. I demonstrate to them how I recognize my ongoing participation in a system of racialized advantage that benefits me. In some sense, I will always be a "recovering racist," recovering from my engagement with dominance. Goodness, however, is a persuasive discourse; the siren call of goodness can be hard to resist. I want to be good. I work in a system where I can easily be seen as good. Defensiveness arises from the tension between the legitimate critique of my participation in dominance and my desire to be seen as good.*

Resisting defensiveness is a pedagogical choice, which recognizes mistakes as the possibility of good teaching; in fact, it is the space where good teaching can happen. This type of pedagogy requires both students and educators to feel uncomfortable emotions such as fear and anger, even as these emotions can become obstacles to learning. Defensiveness is a response that masks fear and moves us away from vulnerability. When our cherished assumptions are challenged, our identity can feel threatened. In this case, a reaction of anger or defensiveness (see Boler, 1999) must be interpreted not as the righteous defense of honour but rather as the protection of our stake in the status quo. This "investment in the status quo" represents that second sense of partial knowledge, the way that our dominant position is reified in how and what we know. A pedagogy

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

of discomfort invites students and educators to engage in collective self-reflection to investigate the genealogies of our uncomfortable emotions. “The right thing to do,” Boler (1999) argued, "is [to] risk one's own comfort for the sake of others' freedom" (p. 195).

Difficult Knowledge

Mike: *As a committed anti-racist, I felt pretty sure that I knew enough about anti-racism to work through the difficulties that Claire would bring forward. I was willing to be wrong or corrected or at least shift in terms of how I mediated this material in our classroom experiences. What I was unprepared for, and unnerved by, was the reproduction of violent masculinity through my description of Steven Kummerfield. I was not prepared for, or comfortable with, hearing about the possible violence that my teaching embodied. While I have worked hard to read, listen, and care about the experiences of racialized minoritized people (and the requisite changes required of my pedagogy), I realized that I had not done enough to read, listen, and care about the experiences surrounding gendered violence. I was offered* difficult knowledge*, an intimate glimpse into the way that I potentially was re-enacting that violence in the classroom.*

For Britzman (1998), difficult knowledge is a concept that theorizes both the social traumas inherent in formal curriculum and how each student might encounter those traumas through the teaching and learning process. As Pitt and Britzman (2003) described, “a kernel of trauma in the capacity to know” (p. 756) complicates the relationship between educational practices and their social justice goals. Zembylas (2012) explained how the burden of engaging emotionally with this difficult knowledge is, "unevenly distributed in different members or groups of a divided community" (p. 114). In other words, the emotional labour of this work is always differentially borne on the bodies of marginalized people. Partly, it is this affective component and our inability to account for, or meaningfully work through, emotions that underline the difficulty of engaging in anti-oppressive work in the classroom.

How do we work together to undo structures which greatly benefit some of us and profoundly inhibit others, while simultaneously operating within these same structures? Is it possible to engage in this work equitably when the differential is sometimes so hard for dominantly positioned folks to even notice? Mike was unable to anticipate the gendered way that his hand gestures could be read, unable to see how his performance was also reifying existing male dominance. Standing with his hands out, figuratively asking his mostly female students to imagine the size of a murderer’s hands, places the weight of that moment squarely on the shoulders of those most affected by gendered violence. Dominantly positioned as he is, regardless of the oppression being engaged with, Mike can never bear the embodied weight of this work, and can often not even see it. As Zembylas (2012) noted, those who benefit from oppression carry with them this “troubled knowledge”: they must continue to “live together with victims of oppression while oppression and social injustice still persist" (p. 118).

Navigating Discomfort

Mike: *I know about my choices, about why I decided to engage the class through this method. I had taken to heart #sayhername, the call from Black American activists to put the names and stories of Black women, who are also victims of police violence, at the forefront. Drawing attention to Pamela, both through her image and through sharing details of her life that were unconnected with her murder—mother, sister, friend, daughter—was an attempt to highlight her humanity. And yet these choices are not without other consequences, including the tensions that Claire was now making clear. She was not wrong.*

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

And so I asked Claire, "What would you think about having this conversation tomorrow in class? We will start right here. You can ask these questions publicly, and I will respond publicly. The messiness of this work and the myriad of pedagogical decisions would be worth exploring in a fishbowl."

A pedagogy of discomfort requires not only students but also teachers to engage in an inquiry process, to question not only our beliefs and assumptions but also our methods. We recognize that our ability to attend to and to think about certain things, as dominantly positioned people, is impaired. We also recognize that the world, including ourselves, does not fall into neatly reductive binaries. Good teachers can make bad decisions. Good intentions can still cause harm. We, as dominantly-positioned educators and students, are always implicated in the structures of dominance that we are trying to dismantle; this is uncomfortable work.

It seems important to notice that a pedagogy of discomfort also requires care for students who are wrestling with these implications. Schultz (2017) argued that "discomfort alone may be insufficient when the aim is to create positive social change" (p. 267). As educators, we create the kinds of spaces where students feel like they can be vulnerable. This is manifest in the use of "careful and care-filled language" (Schultz, 2017, p. 266), through a deep compassion for students, what Boler (2003) referred to as "lovingkindness," and is both motivated and sustained by a sense of "critical hope" (Boler, 2003). We are mindful that comfort here cannot be a re-centering of Whiteness or dominance, a kind of complicity with dominance (Applebaum, 2017). Rather, it is a compassion that does not let students off the hook about the implications of their (in)actions, but rather supports them to "stay in discomfort" (Applebaum, 2017, p. 872) and continue learning.

An important distinction is to be made between comfort and safety. Those who are dominantly positioned will often announce feeling unsafe when what we mean is that we are uncomfortable (DiAngelo, 2011). It is necessary to acknowledge that even this discomfort is not only an individual phenomenon, but also a social phenomenon, connected to the production and maintenance of Whiteness/coloniality (Zembylas, 2018a). We have become accustomed to a "culturally sanctioned avoidance of anxiety and fear" (Boler, 1999, p. 141) that falsely positions discomfort as dangerous. We may flee this anguish in "bad faith" (Flowers, 2015, p. 38), anxious to regain our comfortable, unquestioned dominance, insulated from "race-based stress" (DiAngelo, 2011, p. 55). However, it is possible to be simultaneously discomforted and pedagogically safe.

The invitation to use a fishbowl strategy here was an attempt to intervene pedagogically in the problematic situation that Mike had created in class. It was an attempt to publicly and meaningfully sit with the discomfort of this work. We felt that this structure enabled the most transparency and the least hierarchical power. Instead of standing in front of a sitting class of students, Mike would be sitting in the midst of the students, as a learner amongst learners. The fishbowl was a way to model what it might look like for dominant-identified instructors to struggle with the complexity of anti-oppressive pedagogy and to open themselves up to the discomfort of hearing about the harm that they had unwittingly created. It was meant to allow for a critique of the instructor that was not borne on the shoulders of already marginalized students, centering on the mistakes of dominance and not the pain of the oppressed. It should be noted that Mike suggested this strategy with an honest expectation that he would be criticized, given the previous conversation with Claire. Being discomforted as the instructor and addressing the flaws and potential damages of the pedagogical choices that were made is essential to creating a truly anti-oppressive classroom space. Furthermore, navigating discomfort in this way invites students to also feel this discomfort and offers the opportunity to engage.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

"We Need to See You Grieve"

Claire: *Mike and I sat at a table in the middle of a circle of chairs, and the dynamic of the class suddenly shifted. Their attention was on us, was on me. There was an uncomfortable silence. But there was also a powerful symmetry to what we were doing. While during the previous class, I had been uncomfortable with the way that our White colonial gaze had been centered on Pamela George, now the reverse was true with the focus placed on us, on our Whiteness and coloniality*

This was uncomfortable, but I also felt confident; I felt that I was right. I had organized my thoughts into compelling sound bites. I was sure my ideas would gain favour. And so we began, first Mike then me, then Mike, slowly dissecting the previous class. There were head nods and sounds of agreement from the circle around us. But as Mike and I each painstakingly explained our positions and our thoughts, something became immediately apparent. We were both right and both wrong. That everything we do as White educators in a colonial space is fraught. Naming Pamela George, telling her story, is both wrong and right. There is no correct path; everything is problematic. If anything, the one right thing seems to be this, this transparency, this deconstruction, making explicit the pedagogical choices made and showing what these choices have allowed to be possible and what they have rendered painful and problematic.

Although both Mike and Claire had expected Claire's critique of this teaching moment to be accepted and further developed by the class. This did not happen. In hindsight, the expectation that a class of students who relied on Mike for their grades and who had little to no prior relationship with him would choose to criticize him and his teaching methods at this moment was misguided. Mike expected the students to trust him, to trust the process, and to engage in a deep critique of his pedagogy on Day 3 of a 2-week course. In retrospect, this was clearly wishful thinking. Instead, what transpired was a chorus of support for him and his teaching methods that was at times deeply unsettling for Claire. Being unprepared for this situation, neither Mike nor Claire reacted to the chorus of critique and Claire was left to shoulder much of the burden of this disapproval alone.

Claire: *In the fishbowl, I said that I did not think Pamela George's story was useful, that we have too many of these types of stories. Another story of an Indigenous woman murdered perpetuates the stereotype of broken Indigeneity. Thomas King (2003) writes extensively about the power of stories, how stories are wondrous and dangerous things, how stories can come to control our lives, and how we can become chained to them. You have to be careful with the stories you tell, and the stories you are told, "for once a story is told, it cannot be called back" (p. 10). In this moment, I was thinking about my Saulteaux daughters, about all the stories they had been told. I said that I wanted them, now and years from now, to hear different stories, I wanted them to dream different dreams, and imagine different futures. I wanted stories of strength and resilience for my daughters, not another rehashing of stale and destructive tropes.*

*I expected this line of reasoning to find favour in the room, especially amongst my Indigenous colleagues. It did not. Instead, I was told unequivocally that Pamela George's story was precisely the kind of story that needed to be told. "We need to cry about this," said a residential school survivor. "We need to see **you** grieve. It is not yet time for stories of strength."*

Attending to stories such as Pamela's is deeply personal work. Learning the truth, this tricky prerequisite for reconciliation requires an emotional response. We settler-educators cannot engage with these stories without engaging with grief. We cannot hear these stories in a deep and meaningful way without also grieving ourselves. And as we grieve alongside our Indigenous colleagues, we begin to bear witness and, in this witnessing, begin to approach the possibility of

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

building new relationships (Zembylas, 2021). However, what we were offered, as a class, must be contextualized a little. The idea that "now is not the time for stories of strength" must be heard in the immediate context of the release of the TRC's (2015b), "Executive Summary" a few weeks before. We recognize this as an insistence to not breeze past the trauma and to fully attend to the recollections of violence and their myriad forms that the report captured so carefully (even as those same stories also told of the strength and resilience of survivors).

Simon and Eppert (1997) argued that the act of bearing witness is two-fold. First, dominantly positioned educators must bear (support and endure) the burden of this traumatic history. However, bearing witness is not limited merely to enduring the telling of difficult stories. We are also called to bear (carry) these stories of past injustices "beyond their moment of telling" (Simon & Eppert, 1997, p. 178). Central to witnessing is the, "enactment of one's relationship with others" (Simon & Eppert, 1997, p. 178). It is in this relationship where we carry these stories into our own lives, where we admit the dead "into [our own] moral community" (Simon & Eppert, 1997, p. 187). As a class, we were told unequivocally that Pamela's story needed to be told and that we needed to grieve. We were invited to bear witness, to communally honour and grieve for this life that was so brutally and tragically ended.

There are dangers for educators here too, though. Gebhard (2017) demonstrated how the telling of stories about Indigenous trauma, and Indian Residential Schools in particular, can both re-inscribe colonized Indigenous subjectivities and re-inscribe settler innocence. How and when we engage with these stories requires work. We must ensure that dominant narratives of Indigeneity such as those described by Starblanket and Hunt (2020), as stories of deficit, criminality and overwhelming trauma, are disrupted.

Stories of Strength

We are struck by the words of a Métis colleague who read a draft of this article and wondered, "When will be the time for stories of strength?" (B. Pacholko, personal communication, October 29, 2018). As dominantly positioned educators, we need to tell stories of strength and resistance, and open up spaces for marginalized communities to be not just "more than victims," but "other than victims." We must tell stories that include moments and movements like Idle No More (McAdam, 2015), the resistance at Standing Rock (Estes, 2019), and the work of land defenders in support of Wet'suwet'en sovereignty (Manuel, 2017). We recognize that teaching only or even primarily the stories of oppression without also teaching the corresponding stories of "constant resistance" (Anderson, 2020) is not giving students access to the entirety and complexity of our history. We echo Madden's (2019) emphasis on telling counter-stories, especially stories of refusal, resistance, resilience, and resurgence. Making space for the telling and hearing of these stories must work in direct opposition to the silencing, destruction, and erasure of community inherent in stories of colonial power (Morris, 2017, p. 461). Our Métis colleague wonders if it is possible to "hold stories of trauma and grief, side by side with stories of triumph and pride without contradicting or cheapening one another?" (B. Pacholko, personal communication, October 29, 2018) highlighting the fraught complexity of this task. How do we, as educators, learn to do both of these things deeply and well, with and alongside our students?

More than a balance of stories, we also recognize the dangers of positioning colonization as the dominant framework for storytelling about Indigenous lives and of framing colonial relations as those between Indigenous victims and empathetic settlers (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005). The horrors of colonialism in their immensity have a tendency to become mythical, untouchable,

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

something that cannot be confronted (Patel, 2022). This is captured in Haudenosaunee scholar Courtney Skye's (2022) recent tweet:

> It's so simple and easy for colonization to keep going. It's generations of harm that's so normalized, all the brutality becomes sanitized. It's a quote and a citation for you. For us, it's our life. It's our entire world. It's every child's life, and every child yet to be born.

Even when intending to demonstrate the opposite, stories of colonization insidiously present White settler-colonial violence as permanent and immutable, while simultaneously framing any potential counternarratives of Indigenous resistance and refusal as ultimately futile. Within the context of a class taught over 30 hours, the fifteen minutes of Pamela's story might seem a small thing. However, given how any story of violent settler-colonialism taps into a familiar framework of White dominance, even a passing reference can carry a disproportionate amount of weight. In this case, Pamela George's story of pain and humiliation easily overshadowed the other stories of Indigenous resistance and strength. The massivity of settler-colonialism in the minds and biases of almost all students, renders almost all attempts to engage with stories of colonization as a reproduction and re-inscription of settler futures.

While we take seriously the need to confront dominantly positioned students and ourselves about our complicity with the settler-colonial project (Zembylas, 2018a), we recognize that this confrontation simultaneously reinforces and re-inscribes the very structures that we are trying to dismantle. We recognize that confronting settler-colonialism is not the same as disinvesting in settler futurity (Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013, p. 86), which decolonization requires. Guided by Tuck and Yang (2012), we see the necessity of reframing this confrontation not with "an 'and' but an 'elsewhere'" (p. 36). Decolonization is not something to add to an anti-oppressive approach but rather it is an entire framework of its own, an entire elsewhere. Indigenous futurity is about the creation of a space not yet imagined, a future that may not be quite tangible (yet), and that is frankly not accountable to us as settlers. Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernàndez (2013) note that while settler-colonialism requires the disappearance of Indigenous lives, Indigenous futurity does not require the erasure of settlers but rather the relinquishing of a commitment to settler futurity, the abandoning of hope that settlers may one day be "commensurable to Native people" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 36). As we think about this teaching moment, of Pamela George looking down on us in this classroom, we are reminded of her children, of all Indigenous children born and waiting to be born. In a concrete way, Indigenous futurity is the world that they are breathing into being, and mostly, we just need to get out of the way.

But, as we name Indigenous futurity, we are simultaneously chastened by Skye's (2022) tweet, "It's a quote and a citation for you." Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández (2013) foresaw this too, that their lines would be "quoted, APA style, to either agree or dismiss, in some dusty footnote at the end of some argument" (p. 86). Because of this necessary critique, we acknowledge the need for accountability.

Reflection: Relationships

To many of the questions that this teaching moment and this article pose, we have found the answer to be relationships. At the beginning of this article, we acknowledged treaties as the ceremonies that allow us to be here. In many ways, the nation-to-nation relationship created by the treaties is our primary relationship as Canadians in this place. Given the past, present, and ongoing trauma of colonialism, teaching and learning in these complicated counter-colonial ways is part of our

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

obligation as settlers; it is part of how we become accountable and how we begin to move beyond our settler-colonial selves.

But human communities are complex multi-layered spaces. We are not just settlers in this place. We are men, women, and non-binary, abled and disabled, tenured faculty and elementary teachers, rich and poor, heterosexual, cis-gendered, two-spirited, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, queer, immigrant and racialized and everything in-between and beyond. The complexity of attending to one relationship while simultaneously caring for all our relationships is daunting. As dominantly positioned folks, the immensity of what we do not know, the narrowly partial nature of our knowledge and understanding is humbling if not at times debilitating. And yet we must teach anyway. We must design lessons and assess learning and make jokes anyway, knowing that as hard as we try to get things just right, this "just right" is illusive. Every lesson that we teach may be wrong in some measure and yet we have to teach anyway. What our goal must be, ultimately, is to make our teaching the least wrong. To optimize learning and minimize violence. To deconstruct oppression while also recognizing the ways in which we are simultaneously constructing it. To be transparent about both the near impossibility and yet the monumental necessity of this work.

In this article, we have attempted to explore a pedagogical moment in a graduate classroom and reveal some of the (im)possibilities for anti-oppressive teaching and learning from a position of dominance. We noticed the importance of confronting incomplete knowledge with the vital living presence of the knowledge and ways of being of marginalized groups. We identified the necessity of confronting our biased investments in dominance through a pedagogy of discomfort, which requires a choice to take up our complicity in oppressive systems while resisting defensiveness, and an ability to navigate discomfort (a care-ful but insistent working against complicity in dominance). While these ideas may be useful to teachers in their practice, most of what is described here cannot be reproduced in any rote way; and, taking up anti-oppressive and decolonizing work must always be local (Smith, 1999) and attentive to the particular histories, local resistances, and on-the-ground realities of marginalized communities.

Good anti-oppressive teaching is always relational and contextual. If we want to do it well, we must first build and be attentive to the relationships that make this uncomfortable and challenging work possible. Relationships ultimately make spectating difficult, as we commit to resisting the objective distance that spectacle demands. Relationships allow for our partial (invested) knowledge to be encountered and pushed through. Relationships drive and support the desire to bear witness.

It is also evident that good anti-oppressive education is not enough. By itself, it also reinforces the very relations of dominance that it hopes to dismantle. It is relationships that invite us to go beyond the confines of anti-oppressive pedagogy and lead us to the elsewhere that follows. Being in relationship with members of marginalized groups enables our accountability to manifest and be enacted. Furthermore, being in relationship with members of Indigenous nations allows us, as settlers, to accept and live into an impending Indigenous future. If there is one lesson learned here that we wish to highlight, it is the power of relationships. There can be no other starting place for this work and there certainly is no other end.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

References

Alfred, T., & Corntassel, J. (2005). Being Indigenous: Resurgences against contemporary colonialism. *Government and Opposition, 40*(4), 597–614. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1477-7053.2005.00166.x

Allen, B. (2020, January 2). U of R rejects calls to cancel MMIWG lecture by renowned poet over friendship with Indigenous woman's killer. *CBC News*. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/pamela-george-elliott-clarke-lecture-1.5411701

Applebaum, B. (2017). Comforting discomfort as complicity: White fragility and the pursuit of invulnerability. *Hypatia*, *32*(4), 862–875. https://doi.org/10.1111/hypa.12352

Anderson, M. (2020, February 22). *Teaching the oppression of Black people *without teaching our constant resistance* is not teaching our history. Period! The reason white*…. Twitter. Retrieved September 15, 2022 from https://twitter.com/mdawriter/status/1231274764385345537

Asch, M. (2014). *On being here to stay: Treaty and Aboriginal rights in Canada*. University of Toronto Press.

Boler, M. (1999). *Feeling power: Emotions and education*. Routledge.

Boler, M. (2003). Teaching for hope: The ethics of shattering worldviews. In D. Liston & J. Garrison, (Eds.), *Teaching, learning, and loving: Reclaiming passion in educational practice* (pp. 114–129). Routledge.

Brownmiller, S. (1975) *Against our will.* Martin, Secker & Warburg.

Britzman, D. (1998). *Lost subjects, contested objects: Toward a psychoanalytic inquiry of learning*. State University of New York Press.

Butler, J. (1997). *The psychic life of power: Theories in subjection.* Stanford University Press.

Campbell, M. (1995). *Stories of the road allowance people*. Theytus.

Indian and Northern Affairs. (1969). *Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian policy.* Government of Canada. http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/200/301/inac-ainc/indian_policy-e/cp1969_e.pdf

Castagno, A., & Brayboy, B. (2008). Culturally responsive schooling for Indigenous youth: A review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research, 79*(4), 941–993. www.jstor.org/stable/40071151

Cote-Meek, S. (2014). *Colonized classrooms: Racism, trauma and resistance in post-secondary education*. Fernwood Books.

Derman-Sparks, L., & Edwards, J. (2010). *Anti-bias education for young children and ourselves*. National Association for the Education of Young Children.

DiAngelo, R. (2011). White fragility. *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, *3*(3), 54–70. http://libjournal.uncg.edu/ijcp/article/view/249/116

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

Donald, D. (2009). Forts, curriculum, and Indigenous métissage: Imagining decolonization of Aboriginal-Canadian relations in educational contexts. *First Nations Perspectives, 2*(1), 1–24. https://www.mfnerc.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/004_Donald.pdf

Ermine, W. (2007). The ethical space of engagement. *Indigenous Law Journal, 6*(1), 193–203. https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ilj/article/view/27669/20400

Estes, N. (2019). *Our history is the future: Standing Rock versus the Dakota access pipeline, and the long tradition of Indigenous resistance*. Verso.

Fine, M., Tuck, E., & Zeller-Berkman, S. (2008). Do you believe in Geneva? Methods and ethics and the global local nexus. In N. Denzin, Y. Lincoln, & L. T. Smith (Eds.), *Handbook on critical and Indigenous methodologies* (pp. 157–180). SAGE.

Flowers, R. (2015). Refusal to forgive: Indigenous women's love and rage. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, *4*(2), 32–49. https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/des/article/view/22829

Gebhard, A. (2017). Reconciliation or racialization? Contemporary discourses about residential schools in the Canadian prairies. *Canadian Journal of Education*, *40*(1), 1–30. https://www.jstor.org/stable/90002340

Hill-Collins, P. (2015). Intersectionality's definitional dilemmas. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *41*(1), 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-073014-112142

Indian Association of Alberta. (1970). *Citizens plus: The Red paper*. Indian Association of Alberta.

Kempf, A. (2009). *Breaching the colonial contract: Anti-colonialism in the US and Canada*. Springer Science + Business Media B. V.

King, T. (2003). *The truth about stories: A Native narrative*. House of Anansi Press.

Kumashiro, K. (2000). Toward a theory of anti-oppressive education. *Review of Educational Research*, *70*(1), 25–53. https://doi:10.2307/1170593

Kumashiro, K. (2001). "Posts" perspectives on anti-oppressive education in social studies, English, mathematics, and science classrooms. *Educational Researcher, 3*(3), 3–12. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X030003003

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Education Research Journal*, *32*(3), 465–491. https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312032003465

Madden, B. (2019). A de/colonizing theory of truth and reconciliation education. *Curriculum Inquiry*, *49*(3), 284–312. https://doi.org/10.1080/03626784.2019.1624478

Manuel, K. (2017). Decolonization: The frontline struggle. In P. Mcfarlane & N. Schabus (Eds.), *Whose land is it anyway? A manual for decolonization* (pp. 42–46). Federation of Post-Secondary Educators of BC.

McAdam, S. (2015). *Nationhood interrupted: Revitalizing nêhiyaw legal systems*. UBC Press, Purich Pub.

Miller, J. (2009). *Compact, contract, covenant: Aboriginal treaty-making in Canada*. University of Toronto Press.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

Moosa-Mitha, M. (2005). Situating anti-oppressive theories within critical and difference centered perspectives. In L. Brown & S. Strega (Eds.), *Research as resistance: Critical Indigenous and anti-oppressive approaches* (pp. 37–72). Canadian Scholars' Press.

Morris, K. B. (2017). Decolonizing solidarity: Cultivating relationships of discomfort. *Settler Colonial Studies, 7*(4), 456–473. https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2016.1241210

Moule, J. (2005). Implementing a social justice perspective in teacher education: Invisible burden for faculty of color. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, *32*(4), 23–42. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23478744

Pain, R. (1991). Space, sexual violence and social control: Integrating geographical and feminist analyses of women's fear of crime. *Progress in Human Geography*, *15*(4), 415–431. https://doi.org/10.1177/030913259101500403

Patel, S. (2022). Talking complicity, breathing coloniality: Interrogating settler-centric pedagogy of teaching about White settler colonialism. *Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy*, *19*(3), 211–230. https://doi.org/10.1177/030913259101500403

Pete, S. M. (2015). Indigenizing the academy: One story. *Aboriginal Policy Studies, 4*(1), 65–72. http://dx.doi.org/10.5663/aps.v4i1.23355

Pete, S., Schneider, B., & O'Reilly, K. (2013). Decolonizing our practice—Indigenizing our teaching. *First Nations Perspectives, 5*(1), 99–115. https://www.mfnerc.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Section6_Decolonizing-Our-Practice-Indigenizing-Our-Teaching.pdf

Pitt, A., & Britzman, D. (2003). Speculations on qualities of difficult knowledge in teaching and learning: An experiment in psychoanalytic research. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, *16*(6), 755–776. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390310001632135

Razack, S. (2000). Gendered racial violence and spatialized justice: The murder of Pamela George. *Canadian Journal of Law and Society, 15*(2) 91–130. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0829320100006384

Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). (1996). Report of the royal commission on Aboriginal peoples. Canada Communication Group. https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/royal-commission-aboriginal-peoples/Pages/final-report.aspx

Ryan, J., Pollock, K., & Antonelli, F. (2009). Teacher diversity in Canada: Leaky pipelines, bottlenecks, and glass ceilings. *Canadian Journal of Education*, *32*(3), 591–617. https://www.jstor.org/stable/canajeducrevucan.32.3.591

Salami, M. (2021, June 3). Why I don't believe the word 'black' should always have a capital 'b'. *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/jun/03/word-black-capital-letter-blackness

Schultz, C. (2017). Between discomfort and comfort: Towards language that creates space for social change. *Philosophical Inquiry in Education*, *24*(3), 266–272. https://doi.org/10.7202/1070611ar

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

Sensoy, O., & DiAngelo, R. (2017). *Is everyone really equal? An introduction to key concepts in social justice education*. Teacher's College Press.

Simon, R., & Eppert, C. (1997). Remembering obligation: Pedagogy and the witnessing of testimony of historical trauma. *Canadian Journal of Education*, *22*(2), 175–191. https://doi:10.2307/1585906

Skye, C. (2022, Sept. 13) It's so simple and easy for colonization to keep going. It's generations of harm that's so normalized, all the brutality…. Twitter. Retrieved September 15, 2022 from https://twitter.com/MOHAWKEMOTIONS/status/1569731435161870336.

Sleeter, C. (2004). How White teachers construct race. In C. McCarthy, W. Crichlow, G. Dimitriadis, & N. Dolby (Eds.), *Race, identity, and representation in education* (2nd ed., pp. 243–256). Routledge.

Smith, L. (1999). Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples. Zed Books.

Soloducha, A. (2020, January 3). Canadian poet George Elliott Clarke cancels Regina lecture after controversy over convicted killer's poetry. CBC News. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/pamela-george-u-regina-george-elliott-clarke-1.5413590

St. Denis, V. (2011). Silencing Aboriginal curricular content and perspectives through multiculturalism: "There are other children here". *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, *33*(4), 306–317. https://doi.org/10.1080/10714413.2011.597638

Starblanket, G., & Hunt, D. (2020). *Storying violence: Unravelling colonial narratives in the Stanley trial*. ARP books.

Stewart, M., Cappello, M., & Carter, C. (2014). Anti-oppressive education and the trap of 'good' intentions: Lessons from an interdisciplinary workshop. *Critical Education*, *5*(14), 1–19. https://doi.org/10.14288/ce.v5i14.184392

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). (2015a). *Calls to action.* https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). (2015b). Executive summary. https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Executive_Summary_English_Web.pdf

Tuck, E., & Gaztambide-Fernàndez, R. (2013). Curriculum, replacement, and settler futurity. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, *29*(1), 72–89.

Tuck, E., & Yang, W. (2012). Decolonization is not a metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, *1*(1), 1–40. https://decolonization.org/index.php/des/article/view/18630

Tuck, E., & Yang, W. (2014). R-words: Refusing research. In D. Paris & M. Winn (Eds.), *Humanizing research decolonizing qualitative inquiry with youth and communities*. SAGE. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/557744ffe4b013bae3b7af63/t/557f2ee5e4b0220eff4ae4b5/1434398437409/Tuck+and+Yang+R+Words_Refusing+Research.pdf

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

Veracini, L. (2011). Telling the end of the settler colonial story. In F. Bateman, & L. Pilkington (Eds.), *Studies in settler colonialism: Politics, identity and culture* (pp. 204–218). Palgrave MacMillan.

Zembylas, M. (2012). Critical pedagogy and emotion: Working through 'troubled knowledge' in posttraumatic contexts. *Critical Studies in Education*, *54*(2), 176–189. https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2012.743468

Zembylas, M. (2018a). Affect, race, and White discomfort in schooling: Decolonial strategies for 'pedagogies of discomfort'. *Ethics and Education*, *13*(1), 86–04. https://doi.org/10.1080/17449642.2018.1428714

Zembylas, M. (2018b). Reinventing critical pedagogy as decolonizing pedagogy: The education of empathy. *Review of Education*, *Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, *40*(5), 404–421. https://doi.org/10.1080/10714413.2019.1570794

Zembylas, M. (2021). Navigating the affective aspects of vulnerability in our times: Faithful affective witnessing as pedagogical theory and practice. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, https://doi.org/10.1080/14681366.2021.2018723

Endnotes:

[1] We have decided to capitalize the terms "White," "Black," and "Indigenous" as a way of marking these terms as matters of race/racialization and not skin colour. However, we note the circular and repetitive (see Salami, 2021) nature of these naming discourses and that capitalizing or not capitalizing a letter does not in itself achieve much. In using these capitalized terms, we in no way mean to limit the complexities of these identities and we recognize that race as a concept is inherently flawed. Nonetheless, for clarity, we have made the decision to use these capitalized terms.

[2] In December 2019, George Elliott Clarke, a Black writer and former Canadian Parliamentary Poet Laureate, was scheduled to speak at the University of Regina as part of an annual lecture series. His proposed talk was entitled "'Truth and Reconciliation' versus 'the Murdered and Missing': Examining Indigenous Experiences of (In)Justice in Four Saskatchewan Poets." As the event neared, Indigenous leaders and faculty members urged the University to cancel the event due to Clarke's known association with Steven Kummerfield (now Stephen Brown). Further enflaming the issue, in an interview with CBC news, Clarke said that he was considering reading a poem by Pamela George's murderer as part of his talk (Allen, 2020). After weeks of tense debate, in the end, Clarke withdrew from the lecture and apologized for the anguish he had caused the Indigenous community (Soloducha, 2020). This incident serves to highlight the ongoing relevance of this story and the complexities of telling it in a good way.

[3] Mike justified this pedagogical choice partly because of the permission that Pamela George's family gave to Sherene Razack (2000) to write about her murder and has used this article many times in the past. These decisions are contextual and require ongoing discernment of responsibilities/accountabilities. This justification may not be enough, or it might be enough at one moment, and then not enough later. These pedagogical choices are fraught and require ongoing ethical engagement.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

Feminist Resistance Through the Lens of Everyday Lived Experiences of Young Women in India

Nabila Kazmi

University of Victoria

Author's Note

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Nabila Kazmi, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Victoria, MacLaurin Building A541. Email: nabilakazmi@uvic.ca

Abstract

In this article, I examine the lived experiences of two young women from urban slums in India who participated in an after-school program focusing on issues of gender inequality within their homes, communities, and schools. Through unstructured and semi-structured interviews and observations, this paper argues that young women from marginalized spaces resist patriarchal structures of society through everyday acts of resistance. Using narrative inquiry, the data reveal that young women use different yet interconnected means to resist oppression in their daily lives. The article makes a case for expanding feminist resistance scholarship to be inclusive of young women at the periphery and their everyday resistance for finding a voice.

Keywords: youth activism, narrative inquiry, lived experiences, pedagogical praxis, feminist resistance

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

Feminist Resistance Through the Lens of Everyday Lived Experiences of Young Women in India

By focusing on the lived experiences of young women who are challenging patriarchal social structures within their daily lives, I offer a unique perspective for understanding feminist resistance. "By placing all forms of resistance within the ordinary life of power" (Haynes & Prakash, 1992, pp. 2–3), I intend to create a more inclusive understanding of women's empowerment and feminist social justice. Both Ghosh (2008) and Ahmed (2020) call for a need to move beyond the overwhelming passive and silenced image of women from colonised South Asia. Resistance by such women in the past has been considered from the lens of participation in large mass struggles led by men or those within the existing conventional social fabric (Ghosh, 2008). Both these perspectives fail to consider the everyday negotiations of power that happen between the oppressed and the oppressor on a sustained basis (Haynes & Prakash, 1992). This is not just true for patriarchy but also for the class-caste connection that prevails in the complex social hierarchies existing in countries like India, as pointed out by Haynes and Prakash (1992).

"The personal is political," a phrase popularized by Carol Hanisch in her 1969 essay, holds great relevance to the feminist shift in understanding action by connecting individual practices in daily life to challenging structural institutions of power (Abrahams, 1992). The role of individuals in creating change has expanded into the alternative narratives of women and their informal actions for transformation (Martin et al., 2007). However, there is limited exploration of young people's resistance (including young women) in their daily lives and their struggles with lived realities as they challenge the status quo. Private spaces become sites of oppression as they enact the wider economic, social, cultural, and political dynamics of power, while at the same time also becoming a space for enacting agency. This is by no means to say that large-scale resistance and socio-political changes are equivalent in their force and influence on the everyday resistances of women. But an inclusive and diverse study of feminist resistance from a complex and multilayered lens of power struggle in the everyday life is important for examining agency within varied socio-cultural contexts.

Everyday Resistance

In this paper, I build on James Scott's (1985) theoretical concept of "everyday resistance" described as quiet, dispersed, disguised, or seemingly invisible. The concept of everyday resistance dictates that acts of resistance are so deeply integrated into social life that they become an ordinary part of people's existence. de Certeau (1984) also spoke about the concept of everyday resistance whereby people use tactics in their daily lives to turn things for their own benefit. These actions of everyday resistance can be seen through common acts of humor, sarcasm, physical reaction, coping, avoidance, or accommodation (individual or combination of these) that help in the creation of ongoing identities, and are, therefore, a way of creating oneself as an "agent of change" (Johansson & Vinthagen, 2019, p. 19). However, an important thing to note here is that everyday resistance is always entangled with power, intersectional and contingent on the contexts and situations that these acts of resistance are played out in.

Johansson and Vinthagen (2019) argued that there are two elements of everyday resistance: First, everyday resistance is practice/action that presents itself as actions such as those discussed in the previous paragraph and second, everyday resistance is an oppositional activity whereby power and resistance go together. Within both these elements, everyday resistances are activities or tactics employed by oppressed people to "both survive and undermine repressive domination; especially in contexts where rebellion is too risky" (Johansson & Vinthagen, 2019, p. 4). However, Simi and Futrell (2009) claimed that

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

researchers have not considered everyday acts of resistance as relevant to scholarship on activism. This stance has kept certain forms of resistance by actors (such as women) who have not had traditional access to public spaces absent from the literature. This absence establishes a need to break through the dichotomy and understand that everyday resistance goes along with the other larger scale, political, visible forms of resistance, sometimes one initiating the other. Understanding the theoretical underpinning of everyday resistance becomes important to this research as young women who find themselves at the periphery of society, struggling to find safe spaces to voice their concerns, could enact agency through these everyday acts of resistance.

Feminist Youth Resistance

There are numerous studies around youth activism and resistance that focus on political participation (Noguera et al., 2006), social movements (Earl et al., 2017), feminist perspectives (Gordon, 2008; Walker, 1995), use of digital media (Jackson, 2018; Keller, 2012) and interdisciplinary study of activism (Harris, 2012). However, youth resistance and their modes have shifted in recent times. As mentioned by Putnam (2000), a rising concern is the relative disengagement of young people in the politics of a nation. However, some scholars (see Dalton, 2009; Schlozman et al., 2010; Shea & Harris, 2006) argue that the forms of youth engagement are not declining, just changing their form (Earl et al., 2017). Within the context of India, with the growing attack on democracy, young people, especially students, have taken to the streets and digital media to express their dissent (Bhatia, 2019). As young people participate in social movements through campus activism, hashtag movements, and building communities (offline/online), the re-evaluation of what constitutes youth resistance is deemed important and necessary. By extension, the possibility of breaking through the traditional notions of resistance from the public (rallies, demonstrations, strikes) to the private has a precedent.

Conversations regarding resistance, if inclusive and diverse, will bring to the fore alternative forms of resistance that some women enact. In theorizing resistance, most of the research has focused on boys and young men, often ignoring ways in which girls act as "cultural contributors and political agents" (Keller, 2012, p. 431). Historically, young women were considered at the periphery of conversations of resistance because they were absent from the public domain. With the restriction on the physical mobility of young girls and women, particularly in India, compared to boys and men, their lack of visibility in public sites of resistance became further indicative of their exclusion. The inclusion of otherwise absent voices of young women from varying contexts has led to a global evolution that is on the rise (Jeffery & Basu, 1998). This exclusion posits the need to unfold the meaning of resistance through the study of private spaces that women and girls occupy and the everyday acts of resistance they employ against patriarchal and misogynist practices.

A step further is the contemporary evolution of youth resistance and feminist ideas of negotiating power seen in domesticated forms of action, invisible forms of dissonance, and feminist analyses of personal spaces. As noted by Jupp (2017), these forms of resistances are generally overlooked. This absence makes young women's everyday resistance through the building of communities, domestic enactment of dissent, and the negotiation of voices within their own personal spaces an area of study still minimally explored. Some research has been done (see Ahmed, 2020; Kabeer, 2011; Padgett & Priyam, 2019; Wade, 1997) on the idea of considering everyday acts of agentic enactment and resistance by women as important to the feminist scholarship. However, there is a gap in what this could mean for young women who are further disadvantaged at the intersections of gender and age. Furthermore, young people are "positioned at the leading edge of many aspects of contemporary change" (Hall et al., 1999, p. 501). This article builds on the premise that a re-examination of feminist resistance from the

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

lens of the everyday lived experiences of young women challenging the status quo is a necessary step in studying their social, cultural, and political engagement which is important to the study of feminist resistance.

I argue that young women employ varied means of everyday resistance to confront the gender (in)equity that they face in their communities and homes. The young women in my research invoke practices of (a) negotiating autonomy, (b) developing identities, and (c) building connections to confront gender oppressive practices. Their ways of evoking these practices differ based on the situations they encounter and their specific family contexts; however, they do resort to these practices on multiple occasions when dealing with gender (in)equity.

Setting the Context

As is the case for most of the families living in the urban slum communities in India, their great-grandparents migrated to the cities from rural areas in search of a better life and employment as their agricultural land was taken over by capitalist greed. Since most of the students who attend public schools in India come from the same locations where the schools are situated (Ambast, n. d.), it is not uncommon to have a high population of migrant children within public schools in urban slum communities. The fathers of the students in these schools are daily-wage workers, while their mothers mostly take up domestic work in the high-rise buildings situated next to their slum communities. Unlike what might appear at first sight, these urban slum communities are not homogeneous. People living in these communities have a heterogeneous composition along the intersections of class, caste, and religion (Phadke et al., 2011). Research participants were from varied castes (see BBC, 2019 for an explanation of the caste system in India) and had communal backgrounds, and the range of their economic status varied across the board. Some of the families struggled with extreme poverty with multiple children needing to be taken care of, whereas some households were single-child families qualifying as middle-class Indians (Kapoor & Duggal, 2022).

Some of the young women with whom I worked struggled with early marriage issues as their caste or religious practices dictated family expectations. Due to early marriage practices, some of them were unable to complete their schooling or were married immediately as they finished high school. Some young women are unable to make career choices informed by their personal passions due to the economic struggles of their families that need them to take up educational degrees that would likely give them better employment and financial aspects. Another major issue that most of the young women struggle with is physical mobility and access to public spaces because of safety issues, with the burden for safety falling on these young women. With no clear boundary between public and private, Phadke et al. (2011) asserted that women from slum areas must carry the burden of "marking their private bodies" (p. 131) based on what they wear, how they walk, and who they talk to. This marking severely impedes their social access and ability, which in turn impacts their confidence as they move to colleges in cities. Another interesting phenomenon is that most of the young women in this research are the first women in their families to get an education. This has created a huge gap in their learning from the rest of their family members. Parents of these young women at times find themselves unable to support their daughters, thus impacting their access to intellectual and social capital, role models within their own families and communities, and people they can reach out to for advice and help regarding college admissions, careers, and/or handling the educational pressures of assignments and projects.

The after-school program in which my research was conducted met for weekly sessions for conversations led by the young women. The topics of discussion, decided collectively by the young women, included access to public spaces, physical harassment, lack of career

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

choices, parental pressure to marry and relationships, among others. As a participant in the program, my role was that of a facilitator. I initiated this project after identifying the lack of a safe space for young women to come together and talk about their everyday struggles. However, my role evolved into being an active participant sharing my own stories of struggle with patriarchal practices and my acts of everyday resistance.

The researcher must always be cognizant of her positionality whenever engaged in conducting research of any kind; it requires a constant state of reflexivity. The reason that I decided to undertake this project is based on my own experiences with patriarchy within my family and community. As a woman who comes from the minority religious community in India, I have struggled with systemic inequalities that come with being a woman with a minority status. I also come from a context that attempts to balance the modern with tradition by "allowing" its women to work and build careers within a certain limit of acceptable behavior for its women. Balance has been evident in the way I have been "given" the freedom to make choices about my education and career, to be able to move to Canada for higher education while at the same time upholding my family values, some of which are rooted in patriarchy. It is also important to establish here that my class privilege has given me access to resources and social networks. Therefore, it is important to examine my own positionality in this research with the overlapping experiences with patriarchy as well as examining the privilege that makes my experiences different from that of the young women in the research study.

Likewise, the research on women's experiences with everyday resistance is also connected to my personal experiences of confronting normalized patriarchal practices within my home and community. During our weekly after-school sessions, I was able to share my own experiences with the other participants. At the same time, as an older woman who has faced familial pressures while attempting to create space for myself, I could bring my tactics of dealing with some of these issues. In that process, I have also become a role model for some of the women who believed that they could learn from my experiences. This was evident in the way they would reach out and ask questions about ways to handle some of the situations they were faced with. Studying lived experiences as a relational research practice has also been a learning experience as I have gained insight into lives of women from different socio-economic contexts than my own. As noted by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), nobody leaves research (narrative-based) unchanged. Thus, the research process is a learning experience for both the researcher and the participants.

The lived experiences of women vary spatially and temporally, making diverse voices essential for studying their everyday forms of resistance. A contextualized portrayal of women and their lives offers a departure from the stereotypical representation of women in developing countries (Ahmed, 2020). By extension, young women who are assumed to enjoy even lower agentic power within the familial hierarchy might employ varied means of finding their voice and space. My argument is that even within the rigid patriarchal structures of urban slums in India, young women enact resistance through varied means within the larger socio-cultural context. I assert that an excellent means to studying these said acts of resistance is through their everyday lived stories and experiences.

One such tool for studying gendered experiences is through narrative inquiry, as it focuses on narratives as lived and told (Simmonds et al., 2015). Narrative is "one of the ways that we fill our world with meaning and enlist one another's assistance in building lives and communities" (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 35). Within the narrative space, the researcher and the participants engage in meaning-making through the sharing of personal and social stories. This becomes significant to feminist research which distinguishes itself from traditional research by bringing richness and complexity into a study. Feminist research as inclusive,

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

contextual, experiential, and socially and contextually relevant (Nielsen, 2018) gains from the multi-dimensional perspectives that storytelling and narratives offer.

Research Design

Research Question

To frame this research, the following question was developed to capture the context of the study and the everyday lived experience of two young women looking back to a common school experience: "How do the lived experiences of two young Indian women who were involved in classroom activism projects speak back to normalized beliefs that limit their life opportunities and sense of emerging female identities?"

Research Setting, Data, and Methods

The article is based on in-depth conversations with two young women (aged 18 + years) from economically marginalized communities in India who were previously (in 2018-2019) part of the after-school project l. The conversations took place through two rounds of interviews, mostly unstructured or semi-structured. The first round of interviews conducted online (through video conferencing tools) was unstructured with a large question, "What was your experience like being part of the after-school project?" asked of them followed by a few probing questions as they related to their experiences. The second round of interviews was conducted face-to-face with the participants to delve deeper into their experiences discussed in the prior conversation to unravel the anecdotes and stories that would inform these beliefs. This conversation was semi-structured where some questions were prepared before and asked with the intention of collecting their experiences in detail. Examples of questions include the following: "Elaborate on the specific experience you were talking about last time?" and "What about negotiating with your parents was difficult?"

The after-program was not part of the school curriculum, and the participation of the girls was purely voluntary. I also drew from my own experiences that I had during the project. The relationship I built with them is also built on a foundation of trust which was valuable as they shared their experiences with me honestly and openly based on the trust developed in our relationship. This relationship has shifted as we have moved on to conversing as women who have experienced living in India. The subjectivity of their experiences in connection with my own further offers validity, credibility and legitimacy to the research study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Given that the data was collected in the form of recollecting lived experiences through narratives and storytelling, the method used for analysing the research data was that of narrative inquiry. Narratives and narrative inquiry hold the key to viscerally engage the reader and emotionally move them to become a part of the lived experiences (Clandinin, 2006). Narratives involve a reader in a sensory manner by lending themselves to verisimilitude, evoking the instinctual knowledge of "this could have happened" along with the belief of "being there" for the reader. As a form of writing that speaks to the audience in a language that is not scientific, it has the added advantage of "broadening the researchers' audience" (Sparkes, 1997, p. 151) by including the nonscientific reader. Additionally, Wyatt (2007) and Sparkes (1997) argue, stories open avenues for the "unheard" and/or "untold." These avenues, in combination with feminist theories, promote inclusivity and social change.

The following section elaborates on the three themes that were recurring during the analysis of the data. These themes are complemented with snippets of the conversations that I had with the women along with recollecting my experiences as I interacted with them during the after-school program. These themes that emerge from the data are interconnected, each

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

influencing the other to a certain degree. Looking at them in isolation would not provide a complete picture of the lived experiences of these young women.

Findings

During data analysis, three themes emerged (refer to Appendix 1) that were common to the lived experiences of these young women who participated in the classroom activism project. The themes were negotiating autonomy, developing identity, and building connections. As these young women balanced the social and cultural expectations that were put on them by their families and communities, they constantly worked on generating spaces for exercising autonomy that in turn led to them re-examining and developing their identity. Through the weekly after-school program conversations these young women started to build connection beyond formal meeting spaces; they in turn learned from one another on new ways to negotiate their autonomy.

"I had to Learn to Balance Things Out": Negotiating Autonomy

Autonomy is the ability of an individual to act on their own values and interests. However, where there is conflict, the struggle of balancing opposing views becomes essential to reach consensus. Because the after-school program was non-academic, it was difficult for the young women to convince their parents (especially the father in one participant's account) to be a part of an after-school program. Because young women in India also play the role of caregivers to younger siblings, helping mothers in household chores, and taking up household responsibilities in order to be prepared for marriage, their time is highly contested (Srivastava, 2020). These factors made the regular attendance of some of the young women in the program rather difficult. In fact, in the initial days of the after-school program, some women were dropping out or rarely showing up. My own attempts at convincing the parents of the value of the program failed in some of the cases even though they sometimes showed up, though rather inconsistently.

Neha, now a 19-year-old, who participated in my study, talked about using tantrums and emotional outbursts to convince her father to let her make some choices on her own. These choices were limited, though, happening in exchange for other acts of obedience. "I have learned some tricks to handle my parents," she recounted. Neha understood that if she wanted to continue studying, she had to get excellent grades and obtain some form of scholarship, or her parents might not be willing to invest in her education given that "she had to eventually get married." Negotiating autonomy in the context of this research is the process that one undergoes where one maintains a sense of self by compromising on certain aspects of being (Mill et al., 2010). Neha says,

> I had to learn to balance things out and find ways of convincing the other person. And it helps! I am getting to study art education and learning to be a teacher. I am finally getting to do what I wanted.

The approaches to negotiating autonomy, as elaborated by Mill et al. (2010), could be to be defiant, passive, or proactive. I noticed that Neha found her voice, or maybe some part of it, through the after-school program. In fact, I am slightly proud of her maneuvers. It is not easy to be a young woman in India trying to convince the people around you to let you live your life the way you would like. Sometimes the only option is to "pick your battles," as Neha points out:

> Making art is my vent and it helps me keep my sanity on some of these days. The additional benefit being that I made a little money selling it and bought myself a phone, a proud moment. But I do what my parents expect me to do, and I get to continue studying, isn't it amazing how I figured this out.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

As mentioned earlier, de Certeau (1984) talks about the use of tactics to gain increased voice to enact everyday resistance that the young women resorted to in my research study. This is also evident in young women who gained independence in one aspect of their other lives and thereby gained access to resources in other aspects of their lives. For example, as Neha gains access to financial independence, she is able to get a phone that gives her access to contexts beyond her own through media and social networks. This in turn gives her access to intellectual and social capital.

However, negotiating autonomy in Shabnam's case, the second research participant in my study, was done by lying to her family or hiding parts of her life. As the first person in her family to ever go to college, Shabnam has managed to defy multiple stereotypes (prone to early marriage, being submissive, and a lack of inclination towards a career) associated with Muslim women from low socioeconomic contexts in India. However, she has taken the approach of telling her family only the "things that they needed to know." She recollects her regular football practice in which she had to change from the "culturally appropriate" attire to her football uniform at the home of a friend. Reader (2007) points out that agency in certain situations is not apparent and cautions against assuming that non-agential aspects are less valuable. As Shabnam enacts the agency of participating in sports, she does so by showing passivity in certain other aspects of her daily practices, such as changing clothes at a friend's place that is closer to the football field and away from her community. Thus, having a binary understanding of agency and autonomy as either empowering or disempowering is problematic. As Ahmed (2020) points out that "such binaries fail to capture why women codeswitch to 'passive' behavior that appears disempowering at face value" (p. 1186). To this end, the act of negotiating autonomy needs to be examined. As these young women negotiate autonomy in certain aspects of their lives by giving up decision-making power in some other situations, it becomes important that their acts of agency not be considered nonexistent.

Shabnam was one of the most active participants in the after-school program. Every time I met her, I spent hours talking to her about her life and the stories just amaze me. Negotiating autonomy has a complex relationship with resistance where acts of gaining higher education, pursuing a career or making choices that go against parents' wishes could be counted as acts of resistance (Al-deen, 2007). However, these may not be counted as resistance when young women's pursuit of choices adhere to the moral code of the community and family (Meyers, 2014). Shabnam says:

> Human nature is unique and complex in so many ways and I for one, enjoy the prospect of understanding it. But I cannot tell my family about the things I am studying. Gender and sexuality? They would not approve! I didn't even know what the third gender was about. I know what this means to my parents and how taboo the idea is, I am not sure if I would bring this up. If they asked me what I was studying, would I lie?

This is true to a large extent for the two young women in this research study. However, it is important to move away from a strict understanding of resistance as open defiance and consider the complexities and subjectivities of the term. Levels of autonomy vary in different sociocultural contexts, requiring that the relationship between autonomy and resistance be examined from an intersectional lens of gender, class, and race (Al-deen, 2007). Thus, examining ways in which young women exercise autonomy in their daily lives could offer a perspective to understanding resistance through negotiating and bargaining.

The struggles of these young women are real, and I am aware of the notion of hiding parts of oneself or negotiating the terms of our freedom with those who do not approve, yet whose approval we deem necessary. Even though hiding parts of ourselves from people who are close to us causes an internal struggle, it gives us the ability to have experiences that shape

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

our identity. Maybe revealing parts of oneself slowly is the only possible way for some, who are still tiptoeing around, to inspire lasting change through their stories. This leads to the overlap that exists between the way one learns to negotiate autonomy and the impact that this has on their identity development.

"I Hate Being a Girl": Identity Development

Identity development is a complex process by which people develop a sense of understanding of themselves within the contexts of cultural demands and social norms (Kroger, 2006). As a theme in this research study, identity development highlights an individual's pursuit to fulfil needs, interests, aspirations, desires, and a sense of self. This happens by integrating experiences, opportunities, social values, and abilities. It is an ongoing process as people are exposed to new learnings and experiences which leads to construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of identities. As young people grow up to be adults, the young women in the research study are in the process of shaping their identities. Their identity development is informed by their surroundings, experiences, and contexts. Most of the young women that were part of the after-school program are the first in their families to attend college. Their sense of self is developing differently that others in their families and communities and this difference has resulted in numerous clashes between them and their families.

However, these young women have identities that are composed of multiple meanings that are attached to the different roles that they play in societies (Stryker & Burke, 2000). This is evident in the way they talk about the duality of their lives outside and inside homes. As Neha says,

> I am not the same person at home. Sometimes I do not speak my mind at home, I wonder what would happen if I did. But I cannot do so when in college. I must tell others what I think, even if it a person of authority.

Neha takes a course on queer studies and feminist theory in college but does not intend to tell people at home about it since she is unsure of their reaction and is scared of the repercussions it could have on continuing her education. This augments the notion that people have many identities in the various social networks they occupy and these identities, as outlined in identity theory, are the internalization of the role one is expected to play within a group (Stryker & Burke, 2000).

Shabnam reiterates during our conversations that she has always hated being a girl. She attributes this to the bias she has noticed in the treatment of her brother and herself at home and in the community. She says:

> I have always hated being a girl, I think you know what I am talking about. Nobody worries about the safety of my brother as he goes out at night, it's so utterly irritating that I must bother my parents with this. I still remember the time when I would go out to play football but had to stop at my friend's house to change into shorts on my way to football practice and change out of them on my way back home. *Log kya kahenge* [what will people say], my mother would exclaim.

This treatment is not uncommon in society, especially those rooted in patriarchal values. However, she also points out that she has recently become extremely uncomfortable with this notion of inequity. Her developing sense of self outside her home has inculcated this dissatisfaction with a situation she and others around her have accepted as the norm.

However, the complexity of identity cannot be simply explained through the evolving sense of self of these young women and their perceived place in the world. But the research intends to point out the need to move beyond the stereotypical and monolithic discourse around

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

the identity of young women in the said context. Their identities are formed at the intersections of the multiple minority statuses (sex, gender, class, religion) with which these young women are confronted (Cerezo et al., 2020). Thus, their acts of resistance also need to be understood through the complex lens of their developing intersectional identities. This evolving sense of self and identity formation becomes, in and of itself, an act of resistance that is born from the marginalization that people face when confronted by "important persons and social spaces in their lives" (Cerezo et al., 2020, p. 77). The article posits that the process of identity formation born from navigating the world as a person facing multiple forms of oppression is rooted in resistance.

"We Found Each Other": Building Connections

Resistance in and of itself develops into lasting change when the focus is shifted from the disheartening rhetoric of "what can I do alone" to finding collective cause (Kirshner, 2007). For this research, the building of connection revolves around the notions of finding companionship through a common rhetoric for the oppression and exclusion that one faces. It also extends into collective problem solving, interdependence, finding support, and bonding over common experiences. During our conversation, the notion that these young women were able to find one another and others in the group was central. They talked about feeling less lonely in their experiences by coming across other young women who were facing similar issues at home and communities. Shabnam says:

> I would have other girls come up to me to seek advice. I thought that was strange given that I had no clue what I was doing. They would tell me the problems they were facing at college or home. I tried to help them in whatever way I could. You see, if I was facing something similar, I was able to help in a better way but if I didn't, I would just listen, at times that felt enough.

Community development can generate collective identities—we are all girls, we all come from marginalized communities. Irrespective of some of the differences, as Shaw et al. (2020) noted, marginalized communities foster connections that are built through collective oppression and lead to accountable relationships. These relationships instigate marginalized people to raise voices against unequal power dynamics in their lives. Such can be the underlying power of collectively organizing through acts if resistance.

As Nagar (2000) pointed out, it is important to understand the inner mechanisms of structure and power in the home to sense the challenges to these structures and power in the South Asian context. This commonality of experiences leads women to "rely on each other" (Ahmed, 2020, p. 1188). At times, this gathering of people can be an act of resistance when the intention is to discuss ways to confront the bias and injustice. Neha says, "We would on most days, call each other up when we all got back home. Ask if we had all reached safely." As pointed out by Neha, this is an act of community building with a deep underlying intent of care. This formation of community and building connections within them creates spaces whereby marginalized groups can collectively resist inequality and oppression (Rothrock, 2017). These collective acts of resistance become powerful narratives in the face of violence and discrimination. I propose that studying the everyday acts of building connections and community is the key to understanding the scholarship on feminist resistance.

However, we must be careful not to homogenize women and their experiences. At the intersections of race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, age, and caste in the case of India, different women experience life differently. Young women in urban slums experience the community in various forms and express their everyday resistance and practices differently. The heterogeneity of experiences gives rise to the tensions that sometimes exist with individual

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

and collective experiences. The experience of everyday resistance by young women in my research also questions the Western perception of third-world women and their struggles. Western feminism has assumed that women in the perceived third-world struggle with the same challenges, and these are not carefully examined through the lens of racism and colonialism and the varied impact it has on women from different parts of the world (Mohanty, 1991). Additionally, this view is further tainted by the "White feminist" idea that agency and empowerment are enacted in concrete and fixed ways. As Ahmed (2020) pointed out, the empowerment and agency of women in developing countries should be considered in their cultural and historical contexts.

Conclusion

Activism and feminist resistance scholarship could gain from studying these forms of politically invisible, and "counterhegemonic embodi[ed]" everyday acts of resistance (Kwan & Roth, 2011, p. 194). These acts of everyday resistance are difficult to capture as they are based on individual, contextual, constantly shifting, and momentary actions. However, this study highlights that everyday acts of resistance are entangled with power relations as these acts occur continuously, over a prolonged period, and consistently. Research on resistance has the risk of marginalizing and excluding certain discourses and articulations of resistance irrespective of their ability to resist power. The research here aims to establish the need to study everyday resistance within the existing literature on feminist resistance. Additionally, it established that lived experiences and narratives are a powerful feminist tool for studying these everyday acts of resistance as they are inclusive of marginalized voices and available to a larger audience. Studying these forms of resistance can also offer other people struggling with oppression, ways or tactics to deal with power relations (Scott, 1989). These everyday acts recounted through lived experiences can become ways for the same or other people in different time, space or relationships. Thus, they become an avenue of learning about feminist resistance praxis.

This research intends to expand the study of feminist resistance theory and research by studying the everyday resistance of people with intersecting and marginalized identities. Furthermore, everyday resistance and social action is an embodied form of learning as people learn through their participation, emotions, cognition, and collective action (Ollis, 2012). Such research studies, thus, also offer critical pedagogical tools to examine the necessary skills to envision a socially just and equal society along with the skills necessary for "feminist social change" (Martin et al., 2007, p. 199). Safe spaces for discussing everyday resistance should be incorporated into educational spaces (such as schools and adult education) and these everyday acts of resistance need to be part of the feminist resistance scholarship. As a doctoral student, I see myself building on this research in my doctoral work by expanding on the experiences of young women with more participants with diverse experiences. The research also would benefit by studying everyday resistance in the specific domains of its enactment for example, creating inclusive and safe spaces within urban slum communities by young women.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

References

Abrahams, N. (1992). Towards reconceptualizing political action. *Sociological Inquiry*, *62*(3), 327–347. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-682X.1992.tb00285.x

Ahmed, S. (2020). 'I am my own person,' women's agency inside and outside the home in rural Pakistan. *Gender, Place & Culture*, *27*(8), 1176–1194. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2019.1664420

Al-deen, T. J. (2019). Agency in action: Young muslim women and negotiating higher education in Australia. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 40*(5), 598–613. https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2019.1576120

Ambast, S. (n. d.). The public school education system and subalternity in India. *Periferias*. *Public School: Potencies and Challenges*. https://revistaperiferias.org/en/materia/the-public-school-education-system-and-subalternality-in-india/

BBC. (2019, June 19). What is India's caste system? *BBC News*. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-35650616

Bhatia, S. (2019, December 27). India's young are the real heroes of the year. *The Wire*. https://thewire.in/rights/young-india-students-caa-protests

Clandinin, D. J. (2006). Narrative inquiry: A methodology for studying lived experience. *Research Studies in Music Education, 27*(1), 44–54. https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X060270010301

Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry : Experience and story in qualitative research* (1st ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Clandinin D. J., & Rosiek J. (2007). Mapping a landscape of narrative inquiry: Borderland spaces and tensions. In Clandinin D. J. (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology* (pp. 35–75). SAGE.

Cerezo, A., Williams, C., Cummings, M., Ching, D., & Holmes, M. (2020). Minority stress and drinking: Connecting race, gender identity and sexual orientation. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *48*(2), 277–303. https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000019887493

Dalton, R. J. (2009). *The good citizen: How a younger generation is reshaping American politics*. CQ Press.

de Certeau, M. (1984). *The practice of everyday life.* University of California Press.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2018). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (5th ed.). SAGE publications.

Earl, J., Maher, T. V., & Elliott, T. (2017). Youth, activism, and social movements. *Sociology Compass, 11*(4), e12465. https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12465

Ghosh, A., (2008). *Behind the veil: Resistance, women, and the everyday in colonial South Asia*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Gordon, H. R. (2008). Gendered paths to teenage political participation: Parental power, civic mobility, and youth activism. *Gender & Society, 22*(1), 31–55. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243207311046

Hall, T., Coffey, A., & Williamson, H. (1999). Self, space and place: Youth identities and citizenship. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *20*(4), 501–513.

Harris, A. (Ed.). (2012). *Next wave cultures: Feminism, subcultures, activism*. Routledge.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

Haynes, D. E., & Prakash, G. (Eds.). (1992). Contesting power: Resistance and everyday social relations in South Asia. University of California Press.

Jackson, S. (2018). Young feminists, feminism and digital media. *Feminism & Psychology, 28*(1)*,* 32–49. https://doi.org/10.1177/0959353517716952

Jeffery, P., & Basu, A. (Eds.). (1998). *Appropriating gender: Women's activism and politicized religion in South Asia.* Routledge.

Johansson, A., & Vinthagen, S. (2019). *Conceptualizing 'everyday resistance': A transdisciplinary approach.* Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315150154

Jupp, E. (2017). Home space, gender and activism: The visible and the invisible in austere times. *Critical Social Policy, 37*(3), 348–366. https://doi.org/10.1177/0261018317693219

Kabeer, N. (2011). Between affiliation and autonomy: Navigating pathways of women's empowerment and gender justice in rural Bangladesh. *Development and Change, 42* (2), 499–528. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7660.2011.01703.x

Kapoor. A, Duggal, J. (2022, March 10) Where does the Indian middle class lie? Here's looking into the need for a definition. *The Economic Times*. https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/indicators/where-does-the-indian-middle-class-lie-heres-looking-into-the-need-for-a-definition/articleshow/90105146.cms

Keller, J. M. (2012). Virtual feminisms: Girls' blogging communities, feminist activism, and participatory politics. *Information*, *Communication & Society, 15*(3), 429–447. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2011.642890

Kirshner, B. (2007). Introduction: Youth activism as a context for learning and development. *The American Behavioral Scientist, 51*(3), 367–379. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764207306065

Kroger, J. (2006). *Identity development: Adolescence through adulthood*. SAGE.

Kwan, S. & Roth, L. M. (2011). The everyday resistance of vegetarianism. In C. Bobel & S. Kwan (Eds.), *Embodying resistance*: *Challenging the norms, breaking the rules* (pp. 38–57). Vanderbilt University Press.

Martin, D. G., Hanson, S., & Fontaine, D. (2007). What counts as activism? The role of individuals in creating change. *Women's Studies Quarterly, 35*(3/4)*,* 78–94. https://www.jstor.org/stable/27649696

Meyers, D. T. (2014). Feminism and sex trafficking: Rethinking some aspects of autonomy and paternalism. *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, *17*(3), 427–441. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10677-013-9452-1

Mill, A., Mayes, R., & McConnell, D. (2010). Negotiating autonomy within the family: The experiences of young adults with intellectual disabilities. *British Journal of Learning Disabilities, 38*(3), 194–200. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-3156.2009.00575.x

Mohanty, C. T. (1991). Introduction - Cartographies of struggle - Third world women and the politics of feminism. In C. T. Mohanty, A. Russo, & L. Torres (Eds.), *Third world women and the politics of feminism* (pp. 1–50).

Nagar, R. (2000). Mujhe jawab do! (Answer me!): Women's grass-roots activism and social spaces in Chitrakoot (India). *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, *7*(4), 341–362. https://doi.org/10.1080/713668879

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

Nielsen, J. M. (Ed.). (2018). *Feminist research methods: Exemplary readings in the social sciences*. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Noguera, P., Cammarota, J., & Ginwright, S. (Eds.). (2006). Beyond resistance! Youth activism and community change: New democratic possibilities for practice and policy for America's youth. *Routledge Taylor & Francis Group*. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203961001

Ollis, T.. (2012). *A critical pedagogy of embodied education: Learning to become an activist*. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137016447

Padgett, D. K., & Priyam, P. (2019). Gender, everyday resistance and bodily integrity: Women's lives on Delhi streets. *Affilia*, *34*(2), 170–185. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886109918818078

Phadke, S., Khan, S., & Ranade, S. (2011). *Why loiter?Women and risk on Mumbai streets*. Penguin Books.

Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. Simon & Schuster.

Reader, S. (2007). The other side of agency. *Philosophy. The Journal of the Royal*, *82*(4), 579–604. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0031819107000162

Rothrock, R. M. (2017). Community as resistance: Reconceptualizing historical instances of community within Latin@ education. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, *16*(3), 263–267. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2016.1231611

Schlozman, K., Verba, S., & Brady, H. (2010). Weapon of the strong? Participatory inequality and the Internet. *Perspectives on Politics, 8*(2), 487–509. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25698614

Scott, J. C. (1985). *Weapons of the weak*. Yale University Press.

Scott. (1989). Everyday forms of resistance. *The Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies,* 4(89), 33–62. https://doi.org/10.22439/cjas.v4i1.1765

Shaw, J., Howard, J., & Franco, E. L. (2020). Building inclusive community activism and accountable relations through an intersecting inequalities approach. *Community Development Journal, 55*(1), 7–25. https://doi.org/10.1093/cdj/bsz033

Shea, D., & Harris, R. (2006). Why bother? Because peer-to-peer programs can mobilize young voters. *PS: Political Science and Politics, 39*(2), 341–345. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20451744

Sparkes, A. C. (1997). Ethnographic fiction and representing the absent other. *Sport, Education and Society, 2*(1), 25–40. https://doi.org/10.1080/1357332970020102

Simi, P., & Futrell, R. (2009). Negotiating White power activist stigma. *Social Problems, 56*(1), 89–110. https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.2009.56.1.89

Simmonds, S., Roux, C., & Avest, I. ter. (2015). Blurring the boundaries between photovoice and narrative inquiry: A narrative-photovoice methodology for gender-based research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *14*(3), 33–49. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940691501400303

Srivastava, A. (2020). Time use and household division of labor in India—Within-gender dynamics. *Population and Development Review, 46*(2), 249–285. https://doi.org/10.1111/padr.12309

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

Stryker, S., & Burke, P. J. (2000). The past, present, and future of an identity tTheory. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *63*(4), 284–297. https://doi.org/10.2307/2695840

Wade, A. (1997). Small acts of living: everyday resistance to violence and other forms of oppression. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, *19*(1), 23–39.

Walker, R. (Ed.). (1995). *To be real: Telling the truth and changing the face of feminism*. Anchor.

Wyatt, J. (2007). Research, narrative and fiction: Conference story. *The Qualitative Report, 12*(2), 317–331. https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol12/iss2/10

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

Appendix 1

Table 1

Componential Analysis on Emerging Themes

Category Theme	Subtheme	Participant#1 Interview	Participant #2 Interview
Negotiating Autonomy	Family	Not academic...not help with studies. Started doing some things they expected	I don't even know if I can talk to my parents...stop me. Keep my freedom Nobody in my family has been to college before
	Emotion	Tantrum	Hide...stereotype associated with being a girl
	Other girls	My problems were not as big as those faced by other girls	Girls should choose what we want to study; need more women in politics
	Expression	Art. create art and that is how I express myself; Even able to sell these to make money	Write. To write my own story, my life story. By writing I can make people know what I feel
Developing Identity	Aspirations	I want to teach. Teaching art and craft in a school; financial independence	I want to stay in the country and change the situation of people in this country. I love working for humanity
	Values	Learning is important; hard work; balance the thought on both sides	To speak my mind; dignity, equality and respect for all
	New learning	Confidence to present my point of view	Brave conversations; questioning things
Building Connections	Companionship	Started opening up. Trust. Building a bond	Share and vent with people. Motivated by others
	Collective problem-solving	A lot of other girls kept coming to me and sharing their problems. I would give advice	Getting in touch with others and asking if they reached home safely. Meeting outside the project time
	Interdependence	Everybody in the group	Others had similar experiences

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

		was going through something similar Brother - his approval helps me and having him on my side	as me. Shocked Grandmother - she is the reason I can/want to do things

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

Overcoming the Challenges of Family Childcare Educators in Canada: A Family Ecological Theory Approach

Laura Woodman

University of Alberta

Author's Note

Laura Woodman https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9702-4938

Correspondence concerning this article can be directed to Laura Woodman, email: laurawoodman@ualberta.ca

Abstract

This paper explores a framework of family ecological theory for overcoming the challenges facing family childcare educators (FCC educators), who care for small groups of children in their own home. Pathways to overcoming these barriers through an ecological approach will be outlined by critically examining current research on these challenges. In this way, I justify using ecological theory as an effective tool for conceptualizing the challenges of FCC educators. Ecological theory describes how people's growth and change is influenced by the contexts around them (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). For isolated FCC educators working alone with young children, the limited interactions, supports, and environments they encounter offer incredible meaning and possibility. Examining how the challenges they face can be overcome with a family ecological theory approach illuminates many avenues for success in this unique population. In this paper, the four main challenges of lack of respect, low wages and funding, isolation, and lack of training currently facing FCC educators are examined with an ecological lens to highlight opportunities for positive change. Final thoughts of how this benefits others using an ecological theory framework conclude this paper.

Keywords: family day home, family childcare, early childhood education, ecological theory

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

Overcoming the Challenges of Family Childcare Educators in Canada

This paper explores a family ecological theory framework for overcoming the unique challenges facing family childcare educators (FCC educators) who care for small groups of children in their own home. I will outline pathways to overcoming the barriers of family childcare in Canada through an ecological approach by critically examining current research on these challenges, using the province of Alberta for specific examples of policy and regulations. In this way, ecological theory is justified as an effective tool for conceptualizing the challenges of FCC educators.

Early childhood educators in Canada work in a variety of settings, including preschool, out of school care, centre-based care, and family childcare. In a family childcare setting, also called family day care or a family day home, the educator works primarily alone, with small groups of children in mixed age groups. These settings are unique, and involve distinctive challenges that are unique to FCC settings (Bromer & Korfmacher, 2017; Cortes & Hallam, 2014). In this paper, four main FCC challenges—lack of respect, low wages and funding, isolation, and lack of continuing education— are examined with an ecological lens to highlight opportunities for positive change. Final thoughts of how this benefits others using an ecological theory framework conclude this article.

Positionality Statement

My awareness of the challenges faced by FCC educators arose out of personal experience, as I ran an accredited, award-winning day home in Edmonton, Alberta for 10 years. To support my goal of offering professional, high-quality care, I chose to open my family childcare centre with a licensed agency because in Alberta this is the only way for family day home spaces to become licensed (Province of Alberta, 2021). Benefits of joining a licensed agency include a more professional status and more support. Educators who are contracted with a licensed agency must maintain certain professional standards, including current Childcare First Aid and CPR, a clean criminal record check, and paperwork such as incident reports, medication forms, and monthly fire drills (Government of Alberta, 2022b). Private day homes, in contrast, are only mandated to meet ratios of a maximum of six children under the age of six, in addition to the educator's own children (Province of Alberta, 2021). Licensed day home agencies also provide more support for educators than those who choose to run privately. Agencies are required to offer in-home support visits from a day home consultant every month or two, and regular continuing education opportunities such as workshops or conferences (Government of Alberta, 2022b).

However, I soon came to realize that what I expected to receive from being contracted with a licensed day home agency—more professionalism and support—was sorely lacking. I was seen and treated by many peers and leaders in the early childhood field as less professional or capable, simply because I worked in a day home rather than in centre-based care. I found that continuing education was often inaccessible to me, offered at a time or place that did not allow me to attend, and frequently given by people who clearly did not know what running a family childcare program entails. This was frustrating and disheartening because it takes a lot of work and dedication to offer high-quality care in a day home setting, and even more work when one voluntarily chooses to become licensed. This article details how existing research provides empirical support for my own anecdotal experiences, and shows how ecological systems theory is an ideal approach for exploring this complex topic.

Framework of Family Ecological Theory

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

Family ecological theory examines families according to the many systems they interact with and that act upon them (Allen & Henderson, 2016). Those systems can be referred to as levels, which outline the relationship each level has with the family or individual. Each level exerts influence on the family through interactions which occur throughout the lifespan (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007). Originally, this theory included the individual and individual characteristics such as gender, age, and health; *microsystems* such as family, peers, or school; *mesosystems* where connections between microsystems take place, including interactions between FCC educators and parents, peers, or professional supports; *exosystems* such as mass media, politics, industry, the economy, and social services; and the *macrosystem*, which consists of the attitudes and beliefs of the culture as a whole (Allen & Henderson, 2016). This theory has evolved over time to include the *chronosystem*, or the influence of time and historical changes impacting each layer, evidenced by the process-person-context-time (PPCT) model (Rosa & Tudge, 2013).

The challenges of FCC educators arise at each ecological level, as do opportunities for support. Conceptualizing these challenges and possible solutions at different levels provides a solid framework for understanding their significance and complexity. Ecological theory describes levels or environments which are both proximal and distal (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). While proximal environments are closest to day home educators, such as family and peers in the microsystem, more distal levels such as exosystem policies and macrosystem beliefs also impact FCC educators and affect their abilities. These impacts are bidirectional, where an educator can influence the contexts surrounding them just as the external contexts can influence the educator (Tudge et al., 2009). For example, mesosystem interactions can be improved and increased, and exosystem policy changes can provide the necessary individualized supports and continuing education needed. Ideally, shifts in the proximal environments of FCC educators described by family ecological theory will create positive change and growth in macrosystem societal beliefs, and over time involve a chronosystem shift to increased values and respect for FCC educators.

Our understanding of the effect of various levels of FCC educators' contexts can be further refined by considering the PPCT model (Rosa & Tudge, 2013), that Bronfenbrenner incorporated into later versions of his theory. In the PPCT model, processes are key to understanding how environmental factors, from daily interactions with others to policies and political influences on family childcare, may influence educators and families. Processes describe the interactions between a person and their environment, influenced by the individual characteristics of that person. Those interactions occur within environmental contexts which can be proximal or more distal (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007). The element of time is included because people and relationships develop over time, and present experiences are influenced by historical events. Thus, ecological systems theory provides a longitudinal approach to development.

The interplay of environment and processes impacting a person over time is a central element of family ecological theory, and an approach frequently used in research to examine challenges of FCC educators (Bromer & Korfmacher, 2017; Cortes & Hallam, 2016; Forry et al., 2013). This model outlines how respectful, supportive macrolevel policies and microlevel interactions with day home parents and consultants may offer opportunities for growth and strength to FCC educators, depending on the context in which they occur. In contrast, disrespectful, negative, and underinformed or misaligned interactions or supports may have detrimental effects, depending on the context in which they occur, which may also accumulate over time.

These PPCT processes outline the reason that the term "family childcare educator" is intentionally used here, rather than the more commonly cited "family child care provider" (Bromer

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

& Weaver, 2016; Tovar et al., 2017). This shift in language aligns with recent recommendations from the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta (2020), and clearly describes the group of early childhood educators working in the home providing childcare. The term identifies FCC educators as qualified teachers of children, rather than mere babysitters. This critical distinction is important because it positions those working in family childcare settings, or family day homes, at the same level of professionalism as those working in larger childcare centres. Calling one group of people offering early learning and childcare "educators," and calling a different group of people offering those same childcare services "providers," perpetuates systemic disrespect, lowers the value of family childcare, and places people working in a day home at a lower tier than those working in centre-based settings. Yet, people offering early learning and childcare in family childcare settings do not merely "provide" care; they educate young children and meaningfully impact their growth and development (Bromer & Weaver, 2016). It is imperative that the terms chosen to describe family childcare educators reflect this, and offer a clear perspective on the valuable services provided.

Family Ecological Theory and Family Childcare Educators

Family ecological theory outlines the role that multiple societal factors may play in moderating the ability of FCC educators to overcome challenges and thrive, as outcomes are impacted by the intersection of various contexts, including individual characteristics, social class, language and language barriers, and culture (Act, 2020; Cortes & Hallam, 2016; Tudge et al., 2009). Indeed, many recent studies explicitly mention this model as being central to their research on FCC educators (Cortes & Hallam, 2016; Forry et al., 2013; Gerstenblatt et al., 2014). Examining how the intersecting layers of the ecological system influence FCC educators provides a strong framework for understanding how FCC educators can overcome the multiple challenges they face.

Understanding the Role, Benefits, and Challenges of Family Child Care Educators

Lack of childcare is pressing issue for contemporary families; for example, in Alberta, licensed spaces are only available to 34% of children under the age of six (Buschmann, 2022). The Government of Canada (2022) aims to remedy this by offering increased funding through the recent early learning and childcare agreements, which seek to increase access to affordable, high-quality care throughout the nation. In Alberta, the federal-provincial agreement aims to increase the number of licensed spaces by 42,000 over the next 5 years, with the majority aimed at family day homes (Government of Alberta, 2022c). Licensed day homes are beneficial because they involve just one educator and a small group of children, a program type which provides the opportunity for licensed childcare in communities that are remote or rural, with populations too small to support larger childcare centres (Malik et al., 2018). Additionally, family day homes offer greater flexibility in hours, increased personalization of care, the ability for siblings to be cared for together, and longevity in educator-child relationships (Lanigan, 2011). These unique characteristics offer valuable alternatives to parents, and a strong solution to the current issue of insufficient childcare spaces.

In Alberta, both private day home educators and those contracted with a licensed agency run small businesses, and are personally responsible for maintaining the environment, recruiting families, managing finances, and more. As such, FCC educators have many roles, including business owner, early learning and childcare educator, and often fulltime parent, and those intersecting dimensions are frequently unacknowledged and undersupported (Bromer & Korfmacher, 2017; Gerstenblatt et. al, 2014). Due to long working hours and unique working

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

conditions, existent continuing education opportunities are often inaccessible or irrelevant (Lanigan, 2011; Tovar et. al., 2017). Day home educators also receive low wages and funding (Gerstenblatt et al., 2014; Tovar et. al., 2017). They have low status and often are not regarded as highly as early childhood educators working in other settings (Forry et al., 2013; Gerstenblatt et al., 2014).

Unfortunately, the specialized support systems necessary for FCC educators have not yet emerged. Licensed family childcare support systems have existed in Alberta since 1989 (Alberta Family Child Care Association, n.d.), yet educators continue to face daunting challenges in their work (Blasberg et al., 2019; Dev et al., 2020). These stressors are exacerbated by the isolation faced by sole educators working with groups of young children for long hours in home environments (Bromer & Korfmacher, 2017; Lanigan, 2011).

Although day home agencies provide support for contracted educators, agencies must work within their capacity and in accordance with provincial childcare regulations and policies, which are largely the same for large childcare centres and family childcare programs (Province of Alberta, 2021). However, the experiences and abilities of family childcare are markedly different. Doherty (2015) brought awareness to this issue by stating:

> Success in developing and implementing government regulations, policies and initiatives that effectively support and enhance family child care quality requires accepting that it is not simply a watered down version of center child care. It is a distinctly different service model. (p. 164)

In addition, family childcare support professionals, referred to in Alberta as day home consultants, often lack awareness and continuing education in the specific and unique field of family childcare, resulting in a lack of knowledge on how to best support FCC educators (Bromer & Weaver, 2016; Faulkner et al., 2016). Few specialists working with FCC educators have any experience in FCC themselves (Bromer & Weaver, 2016). As such, supports provided may be misinformed and not targeted to the abilities and challenges of FCC educators (Bromer & Pick, 2012). Importantly, the challenges of family childcare do not affect FCC educators alone. They also affect the children in care, families of both educators and the children being cared for, and the broader community as a whole (Cortes & Hallam, 2016; Forry et al., 2013; Sarlo, 2016).

Though specialized support systems have emerged in the United States and are shown to increase quality of care along with educator satisfaction and abilities (Porter et al., 2016; Porter & Bromer, 2019), in Canada most early learning and childcare support organizations broadly focus on the field of childcare in its entirety, without offering targeted support for family childcare. Canada has no known national support systems specifically created for the needs of FCC educators, and family childcare quality has not been associated with services currently being provided by agencies, including monthly home visits or the supervision and support provided by agency consultants (Doherty, 2015). While advocating for and supporting the broad workforce of early childhood educators is an important goal, this diffuse approach results in family childcare perspectives and needs being left out (Doherty, 2015).

From an ecological systems perspective, interactions between systems are pivotal to life experiences and influences (Allen & Henderson, 2016; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007). Given that the microsystem of the FCC educator is very small, the characteristics of interactions between FCC educators, parents, or professional supports are more important and influential than they may be in other settings such as larger childcare centres, where more opportunities to interact with

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

others are present. The small microsystem of a family day home concentrates the experiences within, and amplifies the impact of relational interactions because there are so few (Jeon et al., 2018; Porter et al., 2016). Thus, the amount of respect that FCC educators are treated with has implications for each of the other three main challenges facing FCC educators: isolation, low wages and funding, and lack of continuing education. These challenges are addressed below according to an ecological systems framework, and this section concludes with an in-depth exploration of how the PPCT model informs critical understanding of the overarching challenge of lack of respect.

Isolation

One of the biggest challenges of FCC educators is isolation (Gerstenblatt et al., 2014; Loewenberg, 2016). There are very few opportunities for FCC educators to make connections or collaborate with their peers (Lanigan, 2011). This can be stressful because the unique dimensions of their work, including working alone and holding multiple roles as business owners, early childhood educators, and family members or parents, pose distinct challenges unlikely to be understood or appreciated by those not working in the childcare field, and even by educators working in other contexts such as larger childcare centres (Bromer & Korfmacher, 2017; Forry et al., 2013). FCC educator interactions with others, which may take place through formal continuing education opportunities such as conferences or more informal meetings such as play groups, provide valuable opportunities for connection, networking, and collaborative support such as brainstorming solutions to unique FCC educator problems (Lanigan, 2011). Thus, the challenge of FCC educator isolation could be minimized by increasing opportunity for interaction with peers and specially trained FCC support professionals on a mesosystem level (Bromer & Korfmacher, 2017; Lanigan, 2011).

While day home agencies in Alberta are required to offer regular continuing education sessions that often include opportunities for networking (Government of Alberta, 2022b), timing or travel requirements may prevent some educators from regularly attending (Cella, 2020). In addition, these sessions typically take place once a month, for about 2 hours, which is likely not frequent enough to significantly impact FCC educator experiences or abilities (Abell et al., 2014). Finally, continuing education is routinely offered in a one-size-fits-all approach, which does not meet the need of FCC educators to receive individualized continuing education and support, or the ability to self-customize their continuing education (Porter & Bromer, 2019; Tonyan et al., 2017). While existent policies in Alberta require licensed day home agencies to provide support in the form of continuing education (Government of Alberta, 2022b), in practice the support being provided often fails to meet the unique needs of educators working family childcare settings.

Working with an ecological systems lens, it is clear that increasing the frequency and accessibility of educator interactions with other adults is an essential part of reducing FCC barriers (Bromer & Korfmacher, 2017; Lanigan, 2011). Increasing interactions with peers and specialized FCC support professionals would decrease problematic isolation and address the challenge of lack of continuing education further described below. Such a change would impact licensed FCC agencies the most, as they are primarily responsible for providing such interactions (Government of Alberta, 2022b). This mesosystem shift would require more reflexivity, specialized continuing education for staff, and potentially more federal and regional funding specifically directed to family childcare (Bromer & Korfmacher, 2017; Schaack et al., 2017). However, the benefits produced by this shift would positively impact not only day home educators, but also the high numbers of children and family accessing childcare in these settings, improving outcomes at a

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

societal level (Porter et al., 2016; Sarlo, 2016). Ecological systems theory illustrates this by describing how changes in proximal and distal systems, such as mesosystem increases in interactions and exosystem changes in policy and practice to support increased connection, permeate through the entire system to impact many individuals including educators, children, and families (Tudge et al., 2009).

Lack of Continuing Education

Another daunting challenge currently facing FCC educators is the lack of accessible, relevant continuing education available to them (Swartz et. al., 2016; Tovar et al., 2015; Tovar et. al., 2017). It is too often taken for granted that mainstream approaches to supporting early childhood educators are applicable in every setting. FCC educators work within unique systems of operation markedly different than any other childcare setting, because they work alone and out of their own homes. As such, they require targeted and informed supports (Bromer & Weaver, 2016). In addition, FCC educators care for groups of children with mixed ages, a distinct challenge often ignored in literature and formal continuing education opportunities (Lanigan, 2011; Loewenberg, 2016). FCC educators need individualized, specialized continuing education, which is not currently being provided in Canada by exosystem organizations that mainly provide generalized educator continuing education. Offering specialized, individualized support benefits both children as recipients of care, and the day home educator themselves on the micro and mesosystem levels (Figueroa & Wiley, 2016; Swartz et. al., 2016, Tovar et. al., 2017).

The PPCT model aptly describes how increasing continuing education opportunities and quality can decrease isolation and provide widespread benefits for FCC educators and the people they care for. Increasing the number and quality of interactions or processes between educators, their peers, and specialized support professionals during continuing education is an environmental context shown to be an important avenue for change (Swartz et. al., 2016, Tovar et al., 2015). Over time, these increased interactional processes in the context of more targeted continuing education and opportunities for FCC educator connection has a powerfully positive impact on educator sense of self and ability to offer high-quality care (Swartz et al., 2016). Unfortunately, funding is often needed to provide more opportunities for meaningful interactions and continuing education, and lack of adequate funding is a key concern addressed below.

Low Wages and Funding

Though the field of child care is well-known for its low wages and funding (Uppal & Savage, 2021), systemic inequalities of ecosystem practice and procedures perpetuate a distinct disadvantage for FCC educators. Family day home fees are significantly lower than larger childcare centre fees in many provinces including Alberta, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, and Ontario, where childcare centres charge between $100 and $700 more per space than day homes (Arrive, 2020), even though family childcare programs are typically expected to meet the same licensing standards and requirements (Province of Alberta, 2021). Not only do family childcare programs offer the same level of quality care at significantly lower fees, affordability grants for Alberta's FCC spaces are approximately half the amount of what is offered to licensed spots in centre-based care settings (Government of Alberta, 2021). These ongoing exosystem policy inequities decrease FCC educator continuing education opportunities, financial well-being, and ability to enhance the environment and materials provided (Carter, 2018; Lanigan, 2011; Zbarskaya, 2012). The current funding policies and system also perpetuate the lack of value conveyed to family childcare, which negatively impacts FCC educator sense of self, how they are

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

seen and treated by others, and public perception of the profession (Faulkner et al., 2016). This affects quality of care for children, and job satisfaction for educators (Mimura et al., 2019).

On a positive note, some exosystem policies are changing to be more equitable toward valuable FCC educators. Until very recently, certain funding sources such as grants for professional education were offered only to employees of child care centres in Alberta, excluding FCC educators from receiving the same continuing education opportunities. The recent changes to family childcare funding, which began in April of 2020 (Government of Alberta, 2022a) support all of Alberta's early childhood educators equally, and hopefully represent a positive shift in policy that will gain in volume and momentum moving forward, to more fully include and support FCC educators.

A Process-Person-Context-Time Model Approach to the Challenge of Lack of Respect

Ecological systems theory and the PPCT model provide a strong framework for examining how respect, or lack of, impacts FCC educators. Both proximal and distal contexts, as outlined by examining the many interactional layers of the ecological system, offer experiences that can be supportive or detrimental (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007). The PPCT model further demonstrates this, by outlining four concepts and the interactions between them. Taking the time to unpack the intersecting outcomes arising from the amount of respect shown to FCC educators increases understanding of the complexity and importance of this topic.

Ecological systems theory has evolved over time to include more focus on the individual and their personal characteristics, as previous iterations were found to overemphasize context (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). This increased attention to the role of the individual and their development was further refined with the addition of proximal processes and the PPCT model (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). While PPCT concepts of process, context, and time can be explored through the levels of the exosystem as outlined below, the role of the individual and their personal characteristics needs to be delineated especially in the field of family childcare, where just one educator cares for a group of children on their own.

The personal characteristics of FCC educators have been described as perhaps the most important factor impacting quality of care (Faulkner et al., 2016; Porter et al., 2016). Sense of self as a professional, maintaining self-care and work-life balance, and engaging in professional development are all critical components which contribute to the abilities of FCC educators and the quality of care they offer (Cortes & Hallam, 2016; Tonyan et al., 2017). As the PPCT model so clearly emphasizes the importance of personal characteristics, using this theory as a framework to understand and explore family childcare is particularly apt.

Personal characteristics of FCC educators, including their self-perspective, self-care, ability to balance work-life commitments, and internal motivation to engage in continuing education all heavily impact their abilities and performance (Cortes & Hallam, 2016). If an educator views themselves as a professional, they will be more likely to offer high-quality care, maintain professional boundaries, and collaborate effectively with parents (Doherty, 2015; Faulkner et al., 2016). Educators working in family childcare who can effectively balance work-life commitments and engage in self-care experience lower levels of stress, which increases responsiveness to children and ability to offer high-quality care (Gerstenblatt et. al., 2014; Jeon et al., 2018). For FCC educators, the personal characteristic of engaging in continuing education is well-known to increase quality of care and self-efficacy, which is linked with motivation, social supports, and intention to remain in the field (Porter et al., 2016). Unfortunately, some educators

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

may choose not to engage even when professional development is available (Tonyan et al., 2017). Lack of engagement may occur when continuing education is uninformed and not targeted to FCC educators, yet it also occurs when an educator does not view themselves as a professional (Cella, 2020; Hallam et al., 2017).

The personal characteristics of FCC educators are informed and influenced by interactions with others over time, as described by the PPCT model (Tudge et al., 2009). The way people are viewed and treated, by other people as well as by licensing regulations and policies, impacts their sense of self and their abilities (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). As people, processes, contexts, and time are interrelated and intersectional, examining the three components of the PPCT which impact the role and development of the individual is essential in describing family childcare dynamics.

Processes in the PPCT describe regular interactions between a person and other people or objects in the immediate environment (Tudge et. al., 2009). For FCC educators, this may include interactions with parents or support professionals, such as day home agency consultants in Alberta who visit educators regularly to both monitor for quality, and offer support (Government of Alberta, 2022b). Interactions that occur over time, such as educator relationships with day home parents or agency consultants, contribute to form educator self-perceptions, and can grow to become sources of strength or challenge. The processes and contexts surrounding the challenge of lack of respect toward FCC educators, and how those form over time, are further outlined below.

Though societal perceptions of childcare professionals have evolved far from mere caretakers who keep children alive, there is still a distinct lack of respect for early childhood educators as a whole, and in particular the subgroup of FCC educators (Faulkner et al., 2016; Fernandez et al., 2018). This is an issue raised repeatedly in existent research (Bromer & Weaver, 2016; Gerstenblatt et al., 2014; Lanigan, 2011; Loewenberg, 2016), and it is highly problematic because it permeates every level of the ecological system. From a microsystem perspective, lack of respect negatively impacts self-esteem, self-efficacy, and sense of self-worth (Bromer & Korfmacher, 2017; Swartz et. al., 2016). Exosystem policies reflect and perpetuate the lack of value and respect conveyed to FCC educators through the low funding and inadequate supports currently being provided, as previously described (Lanigan, 2011; Loewenberg, 2016). In a broader context, neoliberal economic and social policies continue to devalue work traditionally done by women, such as childcare, despite clear evidence of the value and well-being that such work confers to children, women, families, and economics (Breitkreuz et al., 2019).

Societal perceptions impact how value is prescribed. Seeing FCC educators as the essential professionals that they are offers a profound shift in how they are treated, funded, and supported (Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta, 2020). Increasing respect of FCC educators as professionals, rather than merely babysitters or childcare providers, affects policies regarding the quality and accessibility of continuing education, amount of funding and wages they receive, and more (Forry et al., 2013; Gerstenblatt et. al, 2014). The potential for macrosystem change, which happens over time, is a critical implication of ecological theory and supports a potential chronosystem shift of perspectives which can eventually create a different culture that is more supportive of FCC educators (Allen & Henderson, 2016).

Changing the perception of FCC educators, from child care providers to early childhood educators, has profound impacts according to the PPCT model (Tudge et al., 2009). For example, increased respect for FCC educators and increased understanding that these unique settings require specialized supports could result in funding being provided directly to the FCC field, rather than

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

the broad field of early childhood education in its entirety, which is what is happening with the current Early Learning and Childcare Agreements (Government of Canada, 2022). Increasing respect held for FCC educators by themselves and in the people and policies surrounding them impacts how they are treated, how they are supported, and most importantly their ability to provide long-term quality care (Lanigan, 2011). Below, the challenge of respect toward FCC educators is further outlined and explored according to the various contexts of ecological systems theory.

Microsystem interactions directly impact FCC educators. Because educators working alone in their own home are isolated, the interactions they have with others can become concentrated, and have more of an impact than they would if educators experienced more interactions with adults during the workday. In the microsystem, if interactions between educators and parents at the day home are routinely characterized by a lack of respect, it can contribute to FCC educator low self-esteem, negative affect, and decreased self-worth (Bromer & Korfmacher, 2017; Lanigan, 2011; Loewenberg, 2016). This may cause low mood or even depression, which is detrimental not only to the FCC educator and their immediate family members, but also to children being cared for (Bridgett et al., 2013).

Depressive symptoms in early childhood educators cause withdrawn and negative caregiving, more so in family day home settings than in centre-based care where this impact can be buffered by other, happier caregivers (Forry et al., 2013). When caregivers are impacted by low mood, their responses to children change in one of two ways. Caregivers with low mood, high stress, or depression have been shown to underreact to children's needs, minimizing or even ignoring them in a neglectful or permissive parenting style, or overreact with a harsh and punitive approach common to authoritarian parenting styles (Bridgett et al., 2013). Both overreacting and underreacting to children's needs are linked with decreased socioemotional development at best, and neglect or physical abuse in the extreme (Barros et al., 2015; Kim & Kochanska, 2012). Treating people with respect is important because it informs their sense of self and bolsters their ability to perform well on the job (Forry et al., 2013).

Mesosytem interactions are also of critical importance to isolated FCC educators. For some, daily interactions with parents and monthly visits with their day home agency consultant are potentially the only times of day when educators speak to or even see another adult. Visualizing an echo chamber may clarify the concentrated impact of relationship characteristics within the small circle of individuals, including day home parents and agency consultants that FCC educators see on a regular basis. Mesosystem interactions with those regular FCC contacts hold opportunities for support, but can be detrimental if the relationship is characterized by disrespect, mistrust, or conflict (Lanigan, 2011; Tudge et al., 2009).

Exosystems of early learning and childcare regulations and organizational policies strongly impact how FCC educators are treated. In ecological systems theory, the exosystem is a context which has indirect influence on an individual; however, exosystem influences, including policy frameworks, continuing education, and support organizations, all impact how FCC educators are perceived and supported (Tudge et al., 2009). If licensing and regulation policies and perceptions of FCC educators are strengths-based and positive, it is likely that educator-consultant visits will be marked with trust and respect (Lanigan, 2011). If policies and perceptions are misinformed or place FCC educator ability in a diminished light, such as minimizing educator abilities, treating and viewing them the same as educators working in larger childcare centres, or focusing on a punitive approach to support and guidance, there is increased likelihood that visits will be unsupportive or characterized by condescension and disrespect (Loewenberg, 2016). The

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

interactions take place in the mesosystem are thus heavily influenced by exosystem procedures and policies.

Increasing respect held for FCC educators impacts how they see themselves as individuals, how other people see and interact with them in the mesosystem, and how they are supported in exosystem policies and practice. Respect can be signalled by how FCC educators are treated by others, how policies view educator abilities, and by FCC educators receiving adequate pay (Faulkner et al., 2016). Increasing their respect also increases how valued they feel and are perceived as by others, which would be reflected throughout the PPCT model (Tudge et al., 2009). Changing societal perceptions of FCC educators to reflect their worth and value is a powerful pathway to addressing each of the challenges listed above, and will likely result in a positive shift in macrosystem societal beliefs.

Benefits of a More Integrated Approach

Ecological systems theory not only describes how FCC educators can thrive by overcoming present challenges, but also outlines benefits for other people and systems described by ecological systems theory and the PPCT model. Macrosystem beliefs about the value of early childhood educators can provoke changes in the funding and supports offered to them. Those changes would strongly benefit families, who often scramble to find safe, reliable childcare (Breitkreuz et al., 2019). Increasing the perceived value of FCC educators will lead to increased supports, enhancing the quality of care provided and boosting educator ability to guide optimal development in children (Bromer & Korfmacher, 2017; Forry et al., 2013; Lanigan, 2011; Schaack et al., 2017). Improving respect levels and wages, decreasing educator isolation, and increasing continuing education quality and accessibility not only boost supports for FCC educators, but contribute to factors known to increase longevity and stability of early childhood educators (Grant et al., 2019; Jones et al., 2017; McKinlay et al., 2018).

The continuity of care established by increasing strengths and reducing challenges of FCC educators have overwhelming benefits for children, families, and communities. This is part of quality care, and promotes supportive, secure caregiver-child relationships, resulting in more interaction with caregivers and less behavioral problems (Ruprecht et al., 2016. Continuity of care promotes secure attachment and emotional well-being, increases children's self-control, and decreases problematic behavior (Horm et al., 2018). Lower childcare turnover also benefits parents, who can rely on the security and stability of their childcare arrangements. This enhances parental well-being, and provides widespread benefits for the community as well. People can arrive at work regularly, and disruptions to routine and comfort levels are minimized when such continuity is provided. In addition, family childcare's unique dynamic results in benefits to families including more flexible and individualized programming for children, the ability to provide care for siblings together, closer proximity to home and work, shared culture between educators and families, and a home environment (Blasberg et al., 2019; Lanigan, 2011). In this way, the interconnected systems of ecological theory can overlap to provide wraparound supports for FCC educators, and also offering benefits for children, families, and communities.

Conclusion

For FCC educators to be successful, they need support. Addressing current issues of lack of respect, low wages and funding, isolation, and lack of continuing education throughout each layer of the ecological system are important avenues for providing this support. Overcoming the challenges facing FCC educators provides widespread benefits for the individual, the families they

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

work with, and society as a broader whole. The ecological systems theory approach clearly demonstrates the nuances of this issue, illustrating both challenges and solutions at every level, and taking into consideration the multifaceted, interconnected processes occurring between people and their environmental contexts over time.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

References

Abell, E., Arsiwalla, D. D., Putnam, R. I., & Miller, E. B. (2014). Mentoring and facilitating professional engagement as quality enhancement strategies: An overview and evaluation of the family child care partnerships program. *Child & Youth Care Forum, 43*(5), 569–592. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10566-014-9254-1

Act, L. (2020). *Quality, affordable and healthy child care in Alberta.* Alberta Policy Coalition for Chronic Disease Prevention. https://abpolicycoalitionforprevention.ca/portfolio-posts/issue-brief-quality-affordable-and-healthy-child-care-in-alberta/

Alberta Family Child Care Association (n.d.). *Supporting licensed family day homes throughout Alberta.* https://afcca.ca/

Allen, K. R., & Henderson, A. C. (2016). *Family theories: Foundations and applications*. John Wiley & Sons.

Arrive. (2020, September 10). *Child care in Canada: Types, cost, and tips for newcomers.* https://arrivein.com/daily-life-in-canada/child-care-in-canada-types-cost-and-tips-for-newcomers/

Association of Early Childhood Educators of Alberta (2020). *Getting it right: Recommendations for improving Alberta's child care licensing legislation.* The Childcare Resource and Research Unit. https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/20/08/getting-it-right-recommendations-improving-alberta%E2%80%99s-child

Barros, L., Goes, A. R., & Pereira, A. I. (2015). Parental self-regulation, emotional regulation and temperament: Implications for intervention. *Estudos de Psicologia (Campinas), 32(2),* 295–306. https://doi.org/10.1590/0103-166X2015000200013

Blasberg, A., Bromer, J., Nugent, C., Porter, T., Shivers, E. M., Tonyan, H., & Weber, B. (2019). A conceptual model for quality in home-based child care. *OPRE Report*, *37*. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/report/conceptual-model-quality-home-based-child-care

Breitkreuz, R., Colen, K., & Horne, R. (2019). Producing the patchwork: the hidden work of mothers in organizing child care. *Journal of Family Studies, 27*(3), 436–459. https://doi.org/10.1080/13229400.2019.1635038

Bridgett, D. J., Burt, N. M., Laake, L. M., & Oddi, K. B. (2013). Maternal self-regulation, relationship adjustment, and home chaos: Contributions to infant negative emotionality. *Infant Behavior and Development, 36(4),* 534–547. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.infbeh.2013.04.004

Bromer, J., & Korfmacher, J. (2017). Providing high-quality support services to home-based child care: A conceptual model and literature review. *Early Education and Development, 28(6),* 745–772. https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2016.1256720

Bromer, J., & Pick, H. (2012). Home-based child care provider perspectives on agency support: A sub-study of an evaluation of a relationship-based training pilot for agency specialists: final report to Illinois action for children. *Herr Research Center*. www.erikson.edu

Bromer, J., & Weaver, C. (2016). Supporting family child care and quality improvement: Findings from an exploratory survey of Illinois child care resource and referral agency

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

staff. *International Journal of Child Care and Education Policy, 10*(1), 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40723-016-0020-8

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1986). Ecology of the family as a context for human development: Research perspectives. *Developmental Psychology, 22*(6), 723. https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/dev

Bronfenbrenner, U., & Morris, P. A. (2007). The bioecological model of human development. In W. Damon & R. M. Lerner, (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology* (vol. 1, pp. 793–828). https://www.childhelp.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Bronfenbrenner-U.-and-P.-Morris-2006-The-Bioecological-Model-of-Human-Development.pdf

Buschmann, R. (2022). *Headed up, but still behind: Child care coverage rates in Alberta's top ten largest cities, 2016 – 2021* (Brief). Edmonton Council for Early Learning and Child Care. https://www.ecelc.ca/whats-new-archive/headed-up-but-still-behind

Carter, T. M. (2018). *Are feeding practices of family child care home providers related to child fruit & vegetable intake?* [Master's thesis, University of Rhode Island] DigitalCommons@URI. https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/theses/1266/

Cella, T. J. (2020). *Social emotional learning: A professional development model for family child care providers* [Doctoral dissertation, Johns Hopkins University] JScholarship. https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/handle/1774.2/63556

Cortes, J., & Hallam, R. A. (2016). QRIS: Empowering family child care providers as leaders. *YC Young Children, 71(4),* 14. https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/sep2016/qris-empowering-childcare-providers

Dev, D. A., Garcia, A. S., Dzewaltowski, D. A., Sisson, S., Franzen-Castle, L., Rida, Z., Williams, N. A., Hillburn, C., Dinkel, D., Srivastava, D., Burger, C., Hulse, E., Behrends, D., & Frost, N. (2020, March). Provider reported implementation of nutrition-related practices in childcare centers and family childcare homes in rural and Urban Nebraska. *Preventive Medicine Reports*, *17*, 101021. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pmedr.2019.101021

Doherty, G. (2015). Quality in family child care: A focus group study with Canadian providers. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, *43*(3), 157–167. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-014-0645-6

Faulkner, M., Gerstenblatt, P., Lee, A., Vallejo, V., & Travis, D. (2016). Childcare providers: Work stress and personal well-being. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, *14*(3), 280–293. https://www.doi.org/10.1177/1476718X14552871

Fernandez, J., Mootoo, C. J., Romero, S., & Rasmussen, A. (2018). Role conflict among family childcare providers in the Bronx. *Children & Society*, *32*(6), 470–480. https://doi.org/10.1111/chso.12282

Figueroa, R., & Wiley, A. (2016). Factors associated with time provided to children for physical activity in family child care: a cross-sectional study. *SpringerPlus*, *5*(1730), 1–8. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40064-016-3450-4

Forry, N., Iruka, I., Tout, K., Torquati, J., Susman-Stillman, A., Bryant, D., & Daneri, M. P. (2013). Predictors of quality and child outcomes in family child care settings. *Early*

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

Childhood Research Quarterly, 28(4), 893–904. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2013.05.006

Gerstenblatt, P., Faulkner, M., Lee, A., Doan, L. T., & Travis, D. (2014). Not babysitting: Work stress and well-being for family child care providers. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 42*(1), 67–75. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-012-0571-4

Government of Alberta (2021). *Affordability rates.* Children's Services. https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/cs-affordability-rate-chart.pdf

Government of Alberta (2022a). *Alberta child care grant funding guide.* https://www.alberta.ca/alberta-child-care-grant-funding-program.aspx

Government of Alberta (2022b). *Family day home standards manual for Alberta*. https://open.alberta.ca/publications/family-day-home-standards-manual-for-alberta

Government of Alberta (2022c, September 19). *Federal-provincial child care agreement.* https://www.alberta.ca/federal-provincial-child-care-agreement.aspx

Government of Canada (2022, September 13). *Early learning and childcare agreements.* https://www.canada.ca/en/early-learning-child-care-agreement/agreements-provinces-territories.html

Grant, A. A., Jeon, L., & Buettner, C. K. (2019). Relating early childhood teachers' working conditions and well-being to their turnover intentions. *Educational Psychology*, *39*(3), 294–312. https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2018.1543856

Hallam, R., Hooper, A., Bargreen, K., Buell, M., & Han, M. (2017). A two-state study of family child care engagement in Quality Rating and Improvement Systems: A mixed-methods analysis. *Early Education and Development*, *28*(6), 669–683. https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2017.1303306

Horm, D. M., File, N., Bryant, D., Burchinal, M., Raikes, H., Forestieri, N., & Cobo-Lewis, A. (2018). Associations between continuity of care in infant-toddler classrooms and child outcomes. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, *42*, 105–118. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2017.08.002

Jeon, L., Kwon, K-A., & Choi, J. Y. (2018). Family child care providers' responsiveness toward children: The role of professional support and perceived stress. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *94*, 500– 510. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2018.08.023

Jones, C., Hadley, F., & Johnstone, M. (2017). Retaining early childhood teachers: What factors contribute to high job satisfaction in early childhood settings in Australia? *New Zealand International Research in Early Childhood Education*, *20*(2), 1–18. https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.675331854507798

Kim, S., & Kochanska, G. (2012). Child temperament moderates effects of parent–child mutuality on self-regulation: A relationship-based path for emotionally negative infants. *Child Development, 83(4),* 1275–1289. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2012.01778.x

Lanigan, J. D. (2011). Family child care providers' perspectives regarding effective professional development and their role in the child care system: A qualitative study. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, *38*(6), 399–409. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-010-0420-2

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

Loewenberg, A. (2016, April 27). Interview: Supporting family child care providers. *New America.* https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/fccinterview/

Malik, R., Hamm, K., Schochet, L., Novoa, C., Workman, S., & Jessen-Howard, S. (2018). America's child care deserts in 2018. *Center for American Progress*, 3–4. https://www.americanprogress.org/article/americas-child-care-deserts-2018/

McKinlay, S., Irvine, S., & Farrell, A. (2018). What keeps early childhood teachers working in long day care? Tackling the crisis for Australia's reform agenda in early childhood education and care. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, *43*(2), 32–42. https://doi.org/10.23965/AJEC.43.2.04

Mimura, Y., Cai, Y., Tonyan, H., & Koonce, J. (2019). Resource well-being among family child care business owners. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, *40*(3), 408–422. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10834-019-09620-8

Porter, T., & Bromer, J. (2019). *Supporting family child care quality in Philadelphia: A framework for a Philadelphia Family Child Care Collaborative.* https://www.erikson.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Family-Child-Care-Collaborative-Framework-February-2019.pdf

Porter, T., Reiman, K., Nelson, C., Sager, J., & Wagner, J. (2016). Quality in family child care networks: An evaluation of All Our Kin provider quality. *Zero to Three, 36(4),* 19–29. https://www.zerotothree.org/resource/vol-36-no-4-raising-the-quality-of-services/

Province of Alberta (2021). *Early learning and childcare act.* https://www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Regs/2008_143.pdf

Rosa, E. M., & Tudge, J. (2013). Urie Bronfenbrenner's theory of human development: Its evolution from ecology to bioecology. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, *5*(4), 243–258. https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12022

Ruprecht, K., Elicker, J., & Choi, J. Y. (2016). Continuity of care, caregiver-child interactions, and toddler social competence and problem behaviors. *Early Education and Development*, *27*(2), 221–239. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2016.1102034

Sarlo, C. (2016). *Child care in Canada: Examining the status quo in 2015.* https://www.fraserinstitute.org/studies/child-care-in-canada-examining-the-status-quo-in-2015

Schaack, D. D., Le, V. N., & Messan Setodji, C. (2017). Home-based child care provider education and specialized training: Associations with caregiving quality and toddler social-emotional and cognitive outcomes. *Early Education and Development*, *28*(6), 655–668. https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2017.1321927

Swartz, R., Wiley, A., A. Koziol, N., & Magerko, K. A. (2016). Psychosocial influences upon the workforce and professional development participation of family child care providers. *Child & Youth Care Forum, 45*(5), 781–805. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10566-016-9353-2

Tonyan, H. A., Nuttall, J., Torres, J., & Bridgewater, J. (2017). Engaging with quality improvement initiatives: A descriptive study of learning in the complex and dynamic

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

context of everyday life for family child care providers. *Early Education and Development*, *28*(6), 684–704. https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2017.1305152

Tovar, A., Risica, P., Mena, N., Lawson, E., Ankoma, A., & Gans, K. M. (2015). An assessment of nutrition practices and attitudes in family child-care homes: Implications for policy implementation. *Preventing Chronic Disease*, 12, E88. National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion https://doi.org/10.5888%2Fpcd12.140587

Tovar, A., Vaughn, A., Grummon, A., Burney, R., Reynoso, T., Østbye, T., & Ward, D. (2017). Family child care home providers as role models for children: Cause for concern? *Preventive Medicine Reports, 5,* 308–313. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pmedr.2016.11.010

Tudge, J. R. H., Mokrova, I., Hatfield, B., & Karnik, R. B. (2009). Uses and misuses of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory of human development. *Journal of Family Theory & Review, 1,* 198–210. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1756-2589.2009.00026.x

Uppal, S., & Savage, K. (2021). Insights on Canadian society: Child care workers in Canada. *Statistics Canada*. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75-006-x/2021001/article/00005-eng.htm

Zbarskaya, O. (2012). *The impact of theory-based trainings on the level of creativity of family day care providers in New York City* [Doctoral dissertation, Walden University]. Scholar Works. https://www.proquest.com/openview/30eed28965da84514083b6288fc5b955/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

A Review of *Tools for Teaching in an Educationally Mobile World* by Jude Carroll

Lin Ge

University of Regina

The internationalization of higher education has become the main strategy for dealing with the trend of educational globalization (Altbach & Knight, 2007; de Wit, 2002; Ge, 2019; Knight, 2008,). Internationalization of higher education refers to "incorporating the international and intercultural dimensions into the process of higher education development and delivery" (Knight, 2003, p. 2). In response to the trend, many national higher education institutions have paid more attention to the international exchange of education in terms of international student recruitment, scholarships, and mobility programs, and as a result the number of globally mobile tertiary education students has tripled over the past few decades. As for higher education institutions, finding ways to build up timely motivations, targets, and institutional strategies has become a top priority. University educators, as pivotal agents in the educational process, should be viewed as the main promoters and practitioners of the educational mobility. Nevertheless, in most cases, these educators occupy a complicated and contradictory position because they must also be subordinate to fixed teaching programs and the overarching educational hierarchies (subject to principals and senior administrators) (Ge, 2019; Wotherspoon, 2014). They are expected to be entrepreneurs for educational innovation and pedagogic transformation, but they must also yield to public scrutiny about what and how they teach and "their overall moral character" (Wotherspoon, 2014, p. 160). Thus, seasoned and neophyte educators need to have a toolkit for understanding how to teach mobile students in a fluid environment. Generally, research has drawn on an enormous volume of outstanding theoretical work with regards to student mobility, though much of the work adopts a theoretical focus and applications that circumvent the day-to-day practices of teachers. Moreover, no comprehensive construct of intercultural curricula, pedagogy, competence, assessment, and educational inclusivity, and so forth has been attempted. In general terms, bridging the theories with the practices is a key to addressing the various issues in the dynamic and complex environment of educational mobility. In the book entitled *Tools for Teaching in an Educationally Mobile World*, Carroll (2015) elucidates how cross-cultural and cross-racial teaching strategies can be used more effectively by educational practitioners who engage in the internationalization of higher education (e.g., frontline teachers). The book directly targets practicable teaching instruments to bolster more critical educational practices, particularly in the "Anglo-Western" context. The author accesses a rather broad theoretical literature, her teaching experiences, and the testimonies of other frontline teachers to consider effective educational practice. The objective is to transform, or at least mitigate educational approaches, which have remained somewhat localized. The challenge offered to educators is to question the current obsession in offshore students' education and emphasize Western academic culture while also examining deeper structures and configurations of power. The author digs into authentic teaching and learning landscapes in applying a globalized epidemiological framework to guide teaching practices and discovery. The task is to assist teachers in critically rethinking internationalized pedagogy and address the needs of students with varying cultural and racial backgrounds. A redefinition of "international students" is used to move away from just emphasizing the nationalities of students, and the term "Anglo-Western" is used to crystalize the book's teaching context. The author also attempts to transform education programs and courses, teacher training, the directed lifeworld of teachers, and university protocols. This theme runs through the book as a guide for educators to design and practice

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

intercultural and interactive curricula, pedagogy, competence, assessment, and authentic educational inclusivity that draws on academic insights and sociological explanations.

In developing the theme, the volume is divided into three distinct, yet thematically cohesive sections. Section 1 shows the challenge and provides an overview of international students' education in the Anglo-Western higher education institutions, drawing on specific, historically applied, theoretical approaches. The extended logic of teachers' reactions and adjustments as mediators is included, as they operate in a world of educational multiplicity. For learning English and inclusivity, educators are encouraged to critically review their work in teaching diverse students and creating a responsible and progressive educational environment. Section 2 discusses how overseas students and local students can improve their intercultural capability to adapt to their new learning environment using new working technologies. A myriad of pedagogical approaches and resources are described to address the classroom complexities at political, social, cultural, and historical levels. Section 3 offers a clear picture of how educators can effectively work on intercultural education in real classrooms by deeply reflecting on international perspectives, framing programs, and courses. Ways of facilitating the valid and active participation of international students in all learning activities are discussed (e.g., lectures, seminars, tutorial, supervision, etc.) along with group work and detailed assessment methods to serve as guidelines for frontline teachers.

The reader is treated to an eclectic and varied content, with a variety of theoretical and practical approaches. In Chapter 3, for example, the author analyzes the strategies of teachers to mediate the transition of international students from different cultural and educational backgrounds. Based on her teaching experiences, the author emphasizes the recognition of "academic culture differences" when it comes to educating international students for a more critical, supportive, cultural-sensitively approach to frontline teacher training. The aim is to assist teachers in understanding current issues associated with a wider cultural context. Much literature emphasizes the responsibilities of international students in their transcultural adjustment and transition instead of the role of teachers. Transcultural education is often emphasized in the informal curriculum through various support services and additional activities and options (online workshops or webinars) that may be organized by universities but not assessed. At the same time, the author unravels the confluence of teaching and learning, and emphasizes the need for intercultural awareness in the teaching process.

In Chapter 7, Caroll acknowledges the importance of intercultural competence in international students' education, and that it should be aptly embedded in concrete teaching processes (curriculum design, course plan, resources, different theoretical explorations, etc.). Specifically, she shapes a dynamic and interactive construction of knowledge, skills, and abilities. A "six-stage list of cultural sensitivity" is indicated that embodies how intercultural awareness can be formed step-by-step. For international students, however, perceived integration is more likely to be the opposite of its actual integration, which arouses integration deviation (Li & Chen, 2017). Hence, teachers and international students both need to contemplate the past, analyze the present, and imagine the future for the integration to be successful.

In Chapter 11, the author sets out all aspects of the group work that would involve international students, such as "interaction," "intercultural skills," "membership selection," "collaborative tasks," "assessments," and "conflicts during group work," and so forth. Based on three different group work experiences, the author reveals more details of intercultural group work for frontline teachers. That said, Caroll offers the reader a way forward. Moreover, the author

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

compares two methods (i.e., group members allocated by teachers and members selected by students), and the need for teachers to play a role in making study groups mitigate biases and stereotyping. According to current research, for international students, the opportunities for asking and answering questions in the classroom are fewer than for local students. Furthermore, local students are unwilling to form groups with international students when it comes to teamwork in classes, and instructors seem to ignore the discriminating situation (e.g., Ge et al., 2019). Chapter 13 also mentions the accessibility, authenticity, and sustainability of assessment and coping strategies. From my own experience, I think faculty members should be encouraged to pursue cultural training in developing a more culturally sensitive response to international students.

Overall, the text offers operable ways to advocate for change. The author, from her rich teaching experience in international students' education, describes the need to conjoin research with practice. Importantly, the book facilitates a dialogue between the relevant participants to activate a deeper understanding and contextualized interpretation of international students' education.

Arguably, the book has value for both seasoned educators and neophytes and can serve as a toolkit for anyone interested in international students' education research in the Western context. Carroll also recognizes the challenges and complexities associated with comprehending and critiquing educational processes, pointing to the need to adopt and deploy different teaching approaches, technologies, and methodologies. This author asks readers to rethink their deepest assumptions and biases regarding teaching and learning in educating diverse students. The author has wisely chosen to have an open ending to allow scholars to continue probing for context-specific teaching measures.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

References

Altbach, P. G., & Knight, J. (2007). The internationalization of higher education: Motivations and realities. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 11*(3-4), 290–305. https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315307303542

De Wit, H. (2002). *Internationalization of higher education in the United States of America and Europe: A historical, comparative, and conceptual analysis*. Greenwood Press.

Ge, L. (2019). Taking curriculum personally: Analyzing William Pinar's method of currere and implication in improving international student education in Chinese higher education institutions. *International Journal of Advanced Research, 7*(10), 1158–1165. http:/doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/9817

Ge, L., Brown, D., & Durst, D. (2019). Chinese international students' experiences in a Canadian university: Ethnographic inquiry with gender comparison. *Journal of International Students, 9*(2), 582–612.

Knight, J. (2003). Updated internationalization definition. *International Higher Education*, *33*, 2–3. https://doi.org/10.6017/ihe.2003.33.7391

Knight, J. (2008). *Higher education in turmoil*. Sense Publishers.

Li, W. D., & Chen, S.S. (2017). Acculturation strategy, integration paradoxes and educational adaptation—A case study of Chinese visiting scholar's family in the United States. *International Education Studies, 10* (9), 39–53. https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v10n9p39

Wotherspoon, T. (2014). *The sociology of education in Canada: Critical perspectives*. Oxford University Press.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

A Review of *#BlackInSchool* by Habiba Cooper Diallo

Kamogelo Amanda Matebekwane

University of Regina

*#BlackInSchoo*l reflects the firsthand lived experiences of Habiba Cooper Diallo as she navigates high school years interwoven with systemic racism, micro-aggressions, and discrimination of her as a Black female student in a Canadian education system. Diallo sheds light on her experiences through a number of journal entries from Grade 11 to Grade 12, which courageously and eloquently illustrate her interactions with classmates, teachers, administrators, and support staff that condoned pervasive and embedded systemic racism in the education system. She further dismantles systemic racism and fearlessly resists its malignant growth by using her voice to address the constant struggles she had with her teachers, vice principal, and support staff. In her memoir, she shares practical solutions that educators can use to provide an anti-racist environment. Throughout her journal entries, Diallo asks crucial questions that provoke educators and students to reflect on their practices, language, and communication for ways they may perpetuate discrimination and unjust learning spaces, especially for Black students.

As a Black parent and a graduate student, I am deeply interested in the author's insightful experiences as she navigated an unsafe space purported to be a space to educate, guide, and inspire students for better futures. I keenly acknowledge Diallo's exceptional ability to unearth taken-for-granted behaviors, language, attitudes, and thoughts that perpetuate systemic racism and counterattacks along with her recommendations for an inclusive and just society. I appreciate Diallo's opening for each journal entry where she highlights the content with motivational quotes from profound anti-racist activists such as Maya Angelou, Nelson Mandela, Rosa Parks, bell hooks, Malala Yousafzai, and others. Also, she includes photos of herself and friends in some of the entries.

In Part 1, Diallo highlights the endless struggles of Black students in high school as they go through policing, brutality, and eroded humanity which is constantly under attack in presentations and assemblies—in particular the attacks on the Kony 2012 campaign (see Invisible Children, 2012). Diallo is asking critical questions about how schools can be safe and healthy places when the police coerce Black students away from education. How can Black students focus on their assignments when their humanity is being degraded and humiliated at the same time, their existence and images only represented negatively as those experiencing warfare, famine, and diseases? Diallo continues questioning the teachers' and school staff's accountability in the misrepresentation of Black bodies in classrooms. Diallo shares her emotional and spiritual struggle through her encounters with White students' distorted statements about Africa. Nonetheless, she acknowledges the support system she has established with her Black peers and her immersion in Reggae and Wassoulou dance to recharge her spirit and reconnect with her culture. Diallo concludes the first part by identifying multicultural and diverse ideologies as non-existent, rather the existence of a system embedded with the entanglements of each student and staff's thoughts and racial prejudices.

In Part 2, Diallo shares her encounter with White students hypersexualizing her cultural dance during the school's multicultural show preparations. She also shares overt interactions with her biology teacher and the terminology the teacher used that perpetuated racism and discrimination. Examples of her biology teacher's notions include that "light people cannot survive in Africa" (p. 35), and the "sickle cell has primarily been isolated to the continent of Africa, and

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

the descendants of Africa" (p. 37). Diallo unsettles the stereotypes of racialized communities by planning her presentations in a way that acts as resistance and offers alternate narratives. In this entry, she shares her French presentation that addresses racial profiling by the police and gives specific details of the two young French boys of Malian and Algerian descent, Bouna and Zyed, who were electrocuted on a transformer while being chased by the police. Instead of helping these young boys, the police failed to warn them of the danger they were in or to rescue them but left the boys to their deaths. She further clarifies that the term "Francophonie" not only pertains to White people and those of European descent, but the majority of the Francophonie are in Africa. Diallo is conceptualizing the legacies of Dr. Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks and re-imagining how their legacies can challenge today's racist, anti-Black realities that alienate Black students in high school. She further critiques the school events that disregard the existence of Black students and neglect to address important racism issues. Diallo gives an example of her school celebrating "Happy Day!" instead of commemorating the International Day for the Elimination of Racism. From her perspective, she believes that the school administration is neglecting its duty to the students as it lacks involvement in such crucial events that she and other Black students are experiencing daily inside and outside of the classroom. One of her constant struggles was with teachers invasively and antagonistically questioning her elevator use. Diallo expresses her frustrations with her teachers inquiring about her agency using the school elevator and believes the incidents indicate racial micro-aggression. However, she proudly shares how each elevator incident made her a stronger person, more aware of herself, her rights and position, and society. Diallo sheds light on the unfortunate incident which happened to the Dalhousie's African Student Association's members at the Grad house, where they were treated with disrespect and intimidation, dehumanizing their culture and presence. However, the incident brought positive change to the Dalhousie community as students were mandated to participate in anti-racism training sessions as part of orientation week. Diallo questions the teachers' and administrators' responsibilities. She asks critical questions such as who is accountable to Black students? Who is responsible for her human rights, her dignity, and her security of person? Why are her basic human rights eroded by the very institution that is meant to build her confidence, educate her, and provide her with a quality education? Diallo bravely sheds light on the obscure history of obstetric fistula in North America by focusing on the story of Anarcha, an African American slave who developed an obstetric fistula. Due to this health problem, Anarcha was sold to a gynecologist, Dr. Marion Sims and forcibly performed over 30 fistula surgeries on Anarcha without anesthesia (which was available at the time). Anarcha was cured eventually. To this day, a large number of fistula patients are Black women in Africa, and Diallo is committed to raising awareness through the organization she founded, the Women's Health Organization International (WHOI). Diallo concludes Part 2 with an email to the Minister, outlining her experiences as an International Baccalaureate (IB) student, indicating how her school lacks the necessary tools to engage multiculturalism and suggests three key strategies: (a) anti-racism training for staff and administrators, (b) development of critical tools and strategies to engage students of non-White backgrounds, and (c) review of the core curriculum by experts in epistemological racism.

In Part 3, Diallo opens her chapter by sharing her International Baccalaureate graduation experience, proudly wearing her Kente sash to symbolize her difference, Blackness, and Africanness. Even though she was emotional from missing her father, Diallo was surrounded by her family and friends and received the Higher-Level French Award. She further shares her preparations for prom with her friends, as well as graduation rehearsals. Amid her graduation experience, Diallo feels discontent because of the lack of diversity in her school that has been

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca

impactful on her everyday learning experience. In this entry, Diallo reflects on her middle school where she began the IB program in seventh grade. She appreciates the small community that offered great opportunities to bond with teachers and receive individualized feedback. Now, in eighth grade, she shares the great joy of having a Black teacher, describing her as going above and beyond her call of duty. She continues sharing her learning experiences as refreshing and invigorating. However, high school changed everything. Diallo's perspective indicates that high school fosters a sense of disunion among students by labeling IB students as the academic elite, naturally creating division between IB students and non-IB students. Diallo graduates from Grade 12 feeling fatigued, relieved, and anticipating a new beginning—a relief from the elite. In this entry, Diallo explains wisely how Black youth channel their human ingenuity into innovative ventures to improve their economic standing. Further, Diallo critiques the pervasiveness of whitewashing and the racism that pervades media, advertising, education, and social culture and the critical paradigm shift needed by White people in respecting and viewing Black people through a positive lens. Diallo concludes the chapter by showing a photo of herself and her friend, Ntombi holding a rally in support of Michael Brown, an unarmed 18-year-old Black male from Ferguson, who was fatally shot by a White police officer on August 9, 2014.

In concluding her memoir, Diallo shares her bitter-sweet experiences in high school, highlighting the impediment of the education system to Black students' self-actualization and their full potential. At the same time, she shares the amazing opportunities and friendships formed over the years during high school. She urges Black students to use their voices, energy, and effort in taking a stand against systemic racism. Similarly, Diallo challenges White educators, administrators, curriculum consultants, and policymakers to design inclusive programs that are congruent with the experiences of Black people in Canada. Her last arguments point to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, reminding parents of Black students to safeguard the inclusion of these rights in the education system. Also, Diallo suggests filing a class action lawsuit to disclose any injustices to Black students on national and legal levels to fight against institutionalized racism.

Reference

Diallo, H. C. (2021). # *BlackInSchool*. University of Regina Press.

Invisible Children. (2012). *Kony 2012* [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/Y4MnpzG5Sqc

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. www.ineducation.ca