

**Exploring Co-Mentorship as a Promising Practice
for Weaving Indigenous and Western Pedagogy**

by

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Abstract

Canadian provinces have recently started incorporating Indigenous perspectives and content into their official provincial curriculum, and while school districts often provide K-12 curricular resources and one-time professional development sessions, many educators continue to struggle with implementing Indigenous worldviews and pedagogies into their daily classroom practice. Some literature has explored the role of mentorship in supporting teachers in this implementation, but no research relates directly to British Columbia's context. This study examined co-mentorship as a promising practice for increasing both Indigenous and non-Indigenous teacher efficacy with integrating Indigenous knowledge and worldviews into classroom practice. This qualitative research was shaped by Tribal Methodology and uses storytelling to interpret the findings. The results from this study showed that co-mentorship effectively promoted holistic connection and reciprocal relationship; the removal of power hierarchy; respect and openness; recognition and encouragement of strengths and good practice; and taking the time needed for learning. These results could be used to inform the building of Indigenous/non-Indigenous mentorship relationships between teachers for the purposes of effectively integrating Indigenous ways of knowing and learning into classroom practice.

Keywords: Indigenous worldviews, co-mentorship, mentorship, Indigenous education, Indigenous pedagogy, implementation of curriculum

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pushed me forward when I had thoughts of giving up or when I became frustrated with the guidelines of Western education, and she never allowed me to quit. I am grateful for all the time you have given me in helping and guiding me so that I could walk the ways of both Indigenous and Western education.

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Dedication

I have thought long and hard about whom I would like to dedicate this research to, and I came to the same name each time. This paper is dedicated to my father, Roy Campbell. He has inspired me to work hard and never let society stop me when doing anything in life. My father attended Indian Residential School and did not have the best experiences; I believe this is why he did not complete his education and hit the workforce early, due to the trauma he endured from attending St Mary's Indian Residential School. I know it was hard for my father to step foot into any school when I was a young girl, and I am thankful that he has been able to make up for lost time with his ten grandchildren. My father is respected by many people and has done many beautiful things in his life. One thing that I will always be grateful for is the teachings he has taught me - about wéwłm (fishing) in our home community, and the way we make scwén (wind dry). These are things that I will always keep with me and pass down to my children. The bond that is created when we are down at the river talking and making memories will always be in my heart.

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Introduction

Purpose

While Canadian provinces have recently started incorporating Indigenous perspectives and content into their official provincial curriculum, individual educators are struggling to implement Indigenous pedagogy and curriculum into their classroom practice. British Columbia (BC) mandated Indigenous perspectives and content in the curriculum for K-12 in 2015, while Alberta recently released their new draft curriculum for K-6 that includes Indigenous perspectives to be piloted in the current school year (Government of Alberta, 2022). Ontario has had mandatory learning on residential schools and other Indigenous topics in social studies in grades 4-8 and grade 10 since 2018 and will pilot K-3 Indigenous content with their new curriculum in the current school year (Government of Ontario, 2021). With provincial Canadian curricula so recently including Indigenous perspectives, there has been little research on pre-service teachers' or teachers' perceptions of how they might implement the curriculum. And where mentorship in this area does exist, there are a lack of sustainable programs where Indigenous educators are the mentors. As such, very little academic literature has studied the impact of Indigenous educators in the role of mentor. Perhaps ironically, there is much more literature on how to mentor Indigenous teachers (Burgess & Harwood, 2021).

Although many Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators are willing, and in fact desire to move in a positive direction towards integrating Indigenous knowledge and worldviews into their professional practice, educators often encounter barriers and emotional obstacles when they embark on this work. Non-Indigenous teachers feel reluctant to overstep or to make mistakes in implementing Indigenous education, and perhaps unintentionally disrespect Indigenous Peoples (Burgess & Harwood, 2020; Kanu, 2005). Indigenous teachers, me included, who carry with

them intergenerational trauma from the lived experiences of family members who attended Indian Residential Schools, find it difficult to teach about those same histories and struggle to teach in Indigenous-centered ways within a Western education system (Archibald, 2008). The challenge, then, is how to build teacher efficacy for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators in the implementation of Indigenous curriculum and the integration of Indigenous ways of knowing and learning in their classrooms. My research addresses this challenge by seeking a relational solution in a professional environment.

Situating Myself in the Work

Èy swayel tel skwix is Tina Te litsel kw'e Sts'ailes. My parents are Roy Campbell and the late Juliette (Isaac) Campbell. My grandparents are Hilda (Oates) and John Isaac on my mom's side from Lytton, BC. My grandparents are Elsie (Phillips) and Harry Campbell on my dad's side. My family lineage stems from the Nlaka'pamux territory, which is located in the Boston Bar area. I currently reside in the community of Sts'ailes, where I have the opportunity to live, work, and raise my family.

My father and grandparents all attended Indian Residential School (IRS) where they were punished for practicing their heritage, culture, and traditions. Needless to say, this negatively impacted their ability to parent and pass along to my generation the teachings of our ancestors. My adult self wishes that I had relational connections to my ancestors or to the land and place of the Nlaka'pumx Nation, where I am from. This loss of connection comes from the lack of Siyólexwe (Elders) who still carry the traditional knowledge or speak the language within the community. Since I do not have access to Nlaka'pumx teachings, I have embraced my spouse's Stō:lò (Sts'ailes) culture and traditions; my main purpose for this is so that my own children will have what I did not - a connection to who they are and where they belong. My research question

is motivated by this hope to instill a sliver of connection to Indigenous culture for Indigenous students within their experience of K-12 schooling. My professional experience in an Indigenous Community School has further contributed to my growth in Indigenous views of reality.

My perception of the public education system in BC when I entered a career in the education field back in 2017 was similar to the view expressed by Haida scholars Sara and Robert Davidson (2018) when they write "that mainstream education practices were failing to meet the needs of these Indigenous students" (Davidson & Davidson, 2018, p. 12). I had so much frustration with how teachers did not seem to have the desire to implement Indigenous content that had been mandated by the Ministry of Education. I put blame on the educators and did not understand why it was so hard for non-Indigenous teachers to do this work. As I entered into a program to work on a Master's degree in educational leadership, I wondered if leadership could help non-Indigenous educators understand the generational trauma of Indigenous students and realize how Westernized teaching pedagogies were not helping these students to showcase their individual strengths. Conversations with my non-Indigenous classmates resulted in a shift in my mindset. After hearing from them about the personal challenges they faced in trying to implement Indigenous knowledge and worldviews into their classrooms, I began to look at the challenge from a needs-based point of view. I began to hope that meeting educators' needs could result in meeting students' needs. I entered into this research hoping to influence more educators to see how mentorship relationships between non-Indigenous and Indigenous educators could benefit not only educators, but also Indigenous students.

I came to the idea of mentorship from a place of trying to heal and rise from a cultural and personal history of oppression. I grew up in a world that had destroyed the language and culture of the Indigenous Peoples where I was born and raised, while being pushed through the

Western education system, regardless of whether or not I was ready for the next grade. I felt lost—like I had no identity or roots—due to the loss of my language and culture. I did not want my children and other Indigenous children in BC to have this same experience; so after finishing my Bachelor of Education, I looked for ways to help other teachers become more comfortable with integrating Indigenous worldviews and ways of learning into their teaching practice. I landed on mentorship as a way to practice Indigenous principles in my chosen profession as an educator.

This led me to designing this research study, as a ground-level way to support the learning of Indigenous students by supporting the teachers who would influence those learning experiences. I wanted to stay true to my authentic self and conduct research based on the four principles that Stó:lō and St'at'imc scholar Jo-Ann Archibald (2008) used to establish her relationships with the Elders:

- (1) Respecting each other and the cultural knowledge; (2) responsibly carrying out the roles of teacher and learner (a serious approach to the work and being mindful of what readers/other learners can comprehend); (3) practicing reciprocity so that we each gave to the other, thereby continuing the cycle of knowledge from generation to generation; and (4) revering spiritual knowledge and one's spiritual being (p. 55).

These principles pointed me to the structure of mentorship as a tool or intervention that would fit within both Western and Indigenous paradigms. Mentorship programs for educators are already an accepted part of many school districts' current best practices, and mentorship creates relational space for practicing the Indigenous principles that Archibald (2008) sets forth. I wondered if non-Indigenous educators would have greater motivation, confidence, and determination to integrate Indigenous ways of thinking and learning into their teaching practice

if they were provided with experiential learning experiences where they could observe, discuss, and teach using Indigenous pedagogies and alongside Indigenous educators.

Research Question

In considering a research question to explore, I knew that I wanted to focus on mentorship with a non-Indigenous educator. In light of the need for studies on Indigenous educators as mentors and on ways to support teachers implementing Indigenous education curriculum, I have decided to focus on the following research question: What can we learn from the experiences of an Indigenous educator and a non-Indigenous beginner educator (with little or no Indigenous knowledge) when they collaborate on an Indigenous-led unit in an Indigenous community-based school? My hope is that my research provides both a pathway and an inspiration for Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators to take steps together towards weaving Indigenous and Western knowledge and worldviews into their practices through reciprocal relationships within an educational setting.

Literature Review

In this section, I provide a survey of the research that informed my thinking about Indigenous/non-Indigenous mentorship as a way to increase teacher efficacy in implementing Indigenous education or curriculum. The articles I have identified as relevant to my area of research explored mentorship relating to Indigenous education, barriers to the implementation of Indigenous perspectives and content, and Indigenous educators' journeys in weaving Indigenous and Western ways of learning in education. Four themes that emerged from this literature include: (1) the need to be in a reciprocal relationship to learn how to weave worldviews; (2) common barriers to integrating Indigenous perspectives and content into K-12 classroom practice; (3) Indigenous mentors' use of Indigenous ways of knowing and being to grow both

Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers' confidence; and (4) the time needed for meaningful learning. I conclude with discussing the gaps in current research and how these findings informed my research structure and implementation.

The Need to Be in a Reciprocal Relationship

One major theme in the literature focused on the importance of reciprocal relationship as a foundation for mentoring that integrates Indigenous ways of knowing and learning. The First Peoples Principles of Learning (FPPL) speak to this relational nature of learning, stating that learning is "focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place" (First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC), 2020). Reciprocity in this paper refers to "making teaching and learning two-way processes," where there is give-and-take of ideas and understandings between teacher and learner (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991, p. 10). This sense of reciprocity and mutual connection surfaced in studies at the post-secondary and K-12 levels, as well as in research by Indigenous scholars from BC (Archibald, 2008; Coff & Lampert, 2019; Davidson & Davidson, 2018).

Studies found that trusting, two-way relationships between non-Indigenous and Indigenous educators were fundamental to educators learning how to better incorporate Indigenous pedagogy and to connect with Indigenous students. In working together to advocate for First Nations perspectives in Teacher Education curriculum, Yorta Yorta scholar Kathryn Coff and non-Indigenous research partner Jo Lampert (2019) showcased some of the ways that Indigenous and non-Indigenous professionals could use Indigenous ways of learning in mentorship. These researchers practiced what they termed "co-mentorship" or two-way learning, a non-hierarchical mentorship where both partners are mentors and mentees at different times. Co-mentorship is an excellent example of how genuine reciprocity can disrupt conventional

views of mentorship as hierarchical (Coff & Lambert, 2019). Hierarchy promotes one-way questioning and learning which places the responsibility of personal growth and learning squarely on the mentee. Indigenous values would advocate for a more holistic approach where growth and learning are sought and experienced by both parties (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991). In other research, cultural mentors were found to be vital to growing non-Indigenous educators' confidence to connect with Indigenous students and families and to implement Indigenous perspectives into their practice (Burgess & Harwood, 2012). Key benefits of learning directly from and with Indigenous cultural mentors included: mentees being able to watch how Indigenous cultural educators interacted with Indigenous students and families; mentees being coached on their body language and communication; and mentees observing models of how to incorporate local history and knowledge into instruction (Burgess & Harwood, 2012). The literature clearly shows that trusting and strong relationships between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Peoples promote confidence to authentically implement or integrate Indigenous education or curriculum.

This need for reciprocal relationship in learning is also emphasized by more local Indigenous scholars. Davidson and Davidson (2018) summarize this understanding in the first *sk'ad'a* principle, learned through Sara Davidson's father's stories: "Learning emerges from strong relationships" (p.14), implying that connection and relational bonding must already be in place before learning can occur. Archibald (2008), in reflecting on her learning relationship with Elders, says, "Knowledge is passed to others in the context of relationship and deep feelings of connection" (see also Holmes, 2000, p. 46). Within Indigenous communities, you must build personal relationships with the Elders and Knowledge Keepers in order for teachings and protocols to be shared with you - they need to know you are there to learn for the right reasons.

Archibald (2008) reminds us that "creating time to listen and having patience to learn what storytellers are sharing and teaching are fundamental to establishing respectful relationships " (p. 108), and that this "respect is the foundation for all relationships" (p. 91). Genuine reciprocity "comes with responsibilities to each other informed by First Nations ways of being, whereby 'you give to me and I give back to you'" (Coff & Lampert, 2019, p. 3). Both Archibald (2008) and Davidson and Davidson (2018) emphasize the importance of respectful relationship as a context for reciprocity and how much one can offer to another person through respect within relationship.

All of these works have found that reciprocity is a key part of Indigenous ways of teaching and learning that strengthens learning in mentorship relationships (Anthony-Stevens et al., 2022; Burgess & Harwood, 2021). Archibald (2008) takes this point about support even further, into cultural survival, noting that "continuation of the Stó:lō knowledge and power relationship happens through a reciprocal process between teacher and learner" (p. 3). Reciprocity, then, is a vital aspect of effective mentorship that reflects the Indigenous understanding of learning as relational.

Common Barriers to Integrating Indigenous Education into Classroom Practice

The literature reviewed showed commonalities in the barriers that exist for non-Indigenous teachers in implementing or integrating Indigenous education into their classroom practices. These barriers included racism and resistance in school environments, lack of human and material resources, and incompatibilities between school structures and Indigenous pedagogy. Effectively overcoming these barriers requires direct relationship with Indigenous Peoples.

Resistance and racism rose to the forefront of the noted barriers. Resistance to implementing Indigenous education is significant on both individual and systemic levels in education (Anthony-Stevens et al., 2022; Burgess et al., 2020, Hunter, 2015). One of the main sources of resistance in educators is the struggle to figure out “how can local Indigenous knowledge and contexts be prioritized and privileged in increasingly centralized, generalized and universalized educational structures?” (Burgess et al., 2020, p. 11). Colonial values still embedded within the school system result in both resistance: not wanting to implement Indigenous education; and racism: negative thoughts or actions toward Indigenous colleagues and students (Anthony-Stevens et al., 2022). Notably, one of the main contributions of mentors in situations of resistance or racism was modelling how to recognize and call out racism in the workplace and educational policies in the face of resistance from educational colleagues (Anthony-Stevens et al., 2022). The literature points to the potential of mentorship relationships to overcome barriers to implementing Indigenous education.

The lack of human and material resources surfaced as another key barrier. Teachers found they did not have enough knowledge about local Indigenous cultures or enough Indigenous classroom resources to use with students in order to confidently teach mandated Indigenous education curriculum (Burgess & Harwood, 2021). Along with the lack of classroom resources, there was a lack of sustainable funding for hiring Indigenous cultural educators (Coff & Lampert, 2019; Kanu, 2005). Without funding for human and material resources, teachers did not feel supported by the administration to implement Indigenous education and felt left on their own to figure it out, which caused reluctance or inaction (Kanu, 2005).

A final barrier in the literature was the incompatibility between school structures and Indigenous pedagogy. Essential elements of Indigenous ways of learning include taking the time

to build connection, to practice protocols and traditions, and to care for the land (Archibald, 2008; Davidson & Davidson, 2018). These elements become increasingly incompatible with the way courses and learning are structured, especially in secondary schools, where time-bound performance is built into the school year (Kanu, 2005). When educators try to implement new practices that incorporate Indigenous ways of learning and being, they are sometimes challenged or stopped by administrators who are uncomfortable with stepping beyond conventional school protocols (Hunter, 2015; Kanu, 2005). This last barrier is perhaps the most difficult to navigate, as an individual teacher who often does not have the ability to change school and district processes or structures. Considering these common barriers, the literature points to relationship with Indigenous Peoples, and mentorship relationships in particular, to be necessary for helping educators to work through these barriers.

Indigenous Mentors' Use of Indigenous Ways of Knowing

A third theme that emerged is that teachers reported unique benefits from personally experiencing Indigenous ways of knowing and learning as practiced by Indigenous mentors. These ways included the surfacing of identity and the use of storytelling for teaching and learning.

The idea of surfacing identity in the relevant studies involved educators both reflecting on and sharing their current worldviews, stories, and perspectives. Coff & Lampert (2019) highlighted the importance of mentorship participants first identifying their own frames of reference, stating that "we find it important first to determine our standpoint, cultural lens and beliefs on how we see the world, and to use Indigenous methods to conduct ourselves" (p. 4). Carroll et al. (2020) found self-reflection to be a key strategy to how teachers overcome anxiety about implementing Indigenous education and embrace becoming "imperfect accomplices"(p.

15). Essentially, teachers benefit from applying Dweck's (2007) concept of a growth mindset, which refers to a person's belief in their ability to grow and improve with hard work, to their journey of integrating Indigenous ways of thinking with who they are as educators. This emphasis on identity affirms that the First Peoples' Principle of Learning, which states that "Learning requires exploration of one's identity" (FNESC, 2020), applies to educators when they take on new learning. Centering educators' identities is a practice emerging from Indigenous perspectives that is appreciated by and supportive of the professional growth of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators.

Also noted in the literature was the effective use of storytelling in mentorship relationships as a way to learn that was noticeably different from the Western styles of education that mentees had previously received (Anthony-Stevens et al., 2022; Burgess et al., 2020; Carroll et al. 2020; Coff & Lampert, 2019). Storytelling was also used to carry out research (Burgess & Harwood, 2021; Burgess et al., 2020; Coff & Lampert, 2019). Archibald (2008) used the term "storywork" to describe this Indigenous methodology of storytelling and to communicate the seriousness and value of this work (p. 3). When she met with Elders for research, it was through stories that they communicated what they wanted to share, and it was up to Archibald to make her own sense from the stories. These studies clearly reflect another First Peoples Principle of Learning that can be applied to create unique experiences of learning: "Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story" (FNESC, 2020). In short, educators benefit from listening to, reflecting on, and interpreting information in a professional learning environment in the form of storytelling, as it involves both the speaker and the listener making meaning of what is shared. Knowing who you are and what you are bringing to the learning (surfacing educator identity), as

well as interacting with the learning to make your own meaning (storywork), are unique ways that Indigenous mentors can bring powerful learning to mentorship work.

Time Needed for Meaningful Learning

In my search for literature on mentorship for the purposes of integrating Indigenous worldviews into teaching practice, I was particularly inspired by Archibald (2008) and Davidson and Davidson (2018). The way these Indigenous scholars carried out the work on integrating Indigenous ways of learning into their particular areas of education suggests that meaningful learning requires the learner to take the time needed for the learning—time to connect to one's roots, time for reflection, and time to build relationships. This may seem intuitive and simple at first, but this concept of taking time refers to more than just the number of hours; time involves commitment and, often, to wait for the knowledge to emerge over time. In discussing the many teachings that his father taught him over his life span, Robert Davidson (as reported in Davidson and Davidson, 2018), shares: “So that was another part of my learning is that you have to give 100%. When you make a commitment, you have to be fully committed” (p.17). This waiting is not so easy and must be intentional, as shown by these scholars' own learning stories.

Archibald (2008) and Davidson and Davidson (2018) both sought connection to their cultural roots as a precursor to their work. Both sets of authors were committed to improving education for Indigenous students in the Western education system but realized during their learning or research process that they had to take time themselves to learn from their roots. They each went back to their home reservations or lands to engage with the teachings, culture, and protocols that were missing in their lives and that could inform their professional work. When Sara Davidson struggled to connect with her students, she sought guidance from her father, Robert Davidson (Davidson & Davidson, 2018). She decided to take the time that was needed to

go back home to Haida Gwaii to learn about her Haida heritage. Sara Davidson valued what her father and the other Elders in her community were able to teach her; she knew that this connecting to one's roots could not be rushed (Davidson & Davidson, 2018).

Reflection is another important aspect of Indigenous learning that requires time. During Archibald's (2008) time spent with Elders, she had to give the time that was needed for meaningful learning from her respected Elders, including the long silences spent waiting for answers to questions: "I learned that these silences were important because the Elders were thinking about the questions and preferred not speak until they were sure about their answers. Silence is respectful and can create good thinking." (p.89). In fact, Archibald (2008) embeds the concept of time into her definition of "teachings", using "the term 'teachings' to mean cultural values, beliefs, lessons, and understandings that are passed from generation to generation." (p.1). Time taken for reflection, perhaps in silence, makes room for the making of connections and new meanings that may not have been possible otherwise.

Finally, taking time for learning also involves taking time to establish connections and meaningful relationships between the learner and teacher, whether the relationship is with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, non-Indigenous mentees, or students in your classroom. This need for time connects to another First Peoples Principle of Learning: "Learning involves time and patience" (FNESC, 2020). Taking time to build a relationship shows that you care about each other's wellbeing, that you value the knowledge the other person is sharing with you, and that you respect Indigenous teachings and protocols. Sara Davidson valued and learned how many years her father, Robert Davidson, put into learning the Haida culture and protocols, all in relationship with the Elders (Davidson & Davidson, 2018). Taking time for learning is a vital aspect of Indigenous knowledge and worldviews, and educators who are striving to incorporate new-to-

them Indigenous pedagogy will need to have a nuanced understanding of what learning over time actually means.

Gaps in the Literature

There were gaps that I noticed while reviewing the literature related to implementing Indigenous perspectives and content into K-12 education: lack of longitudinal research; small data sets and scope; and a lack of studies in a BC context. Carroll et al. (2020) gathered their data from a single morning at a professional development day; and only one study was longitudinal (Anthony-Stevens et al., 2022). It is very difficult to extrapolate the long-term benefits or to fully grasp the complexity of research conducted in such a short time frame. Most of the studies used small sample sizes and reported their themes relative to their specific educational and local context (Anthony-Stevens et al., 2022; Burgess & Harwood, 2021; Coff & Lampert, 2019; Hunter, 2015; Kanu, 2005). While this is the nature and strength of qualitative research, it is difficult to anticipate how these findings or principles apply to a BC school context as studies involved educators and curriculum in various locations outside of BC: Australia (Burgess & Harwood, 2021; Coff & Lampert, 2019), the United States (Anthony-Stevens et al., 2022), and other Canadian provinces (Carroll et al., 2020; Hunter, 2015; Kanu, 2005). Indigenous Peoples are not homogenous: each community has a unique culture, language, and traditions. Principles and examples of effective practice from other locations may not be representative of educators in BC. With an absence of literature about Indigenous-centred educator mentorship in BC, there is an opportunity for new research around the possibilities of mentorship to support non-Indigenous teachers in their implementation of local Indigenous perspectives into the BC K-12 curriculum.

Application

With this qualitative study, I contribute to the research by focusing on a BC Indigenous educator working in a co-mentorship model using Indigenous ways of learning with a pre-service non-Indigenous educator. This creates a unique space for my research findings. The common barriers that the literature review highlighted informed the focus of the mentorship relationship I created. I also used some of the relationship-focused Indigenous ways of learning in designing this mentorship model. In particular, I was inspired by Coff and Lampert's (2019) approach to research and writing their paper using storytelling; and I have incorporated this approach by showcasing the results around the mentorship relationship as a story of weaving. I also structured my mentorship relationship after Coff and Lampert's (2019) concept of co-mentorship: where hierarchy is removed; and each person learns from and with the other. Even with trusting and meaningful relationships in place, anxieties for non-Indigenous teachers regarding the teaching of Indigenous education still arise. Since this discomfort is necessary to help educators move beyond colonial discourse, mentorship was a promising model of support (Carroll et al., 2020). Archibald (2008) and Davidson and Davidson (2018) gave me the drive to use the Indigenous teachings that helped guide them to have success in their learning journey, which included incorporating the Elders and allowing a safe space for their voices to be heard, because “it is impossible to teach without learning” (Davidson & Davidson, 2018, p. 13). Having established where my research resides within the current available literature on the topic of Indigenous/non-Indigenous mentorship, I now discuss the methodology from which I designed my research.

Methodology

The topic of this research study is something that I am very passionate about and believe is important to the current BC K-12 education system. This research aims to have a positive impact not only on the K-12 education audience but also on local Indigenous communities who

will benefit from more educators taking on the task of incorporating Indigenous knowledge and worldviews into their daily practice. Mentorship opportunities for non-Indigenous educators to learn from and with Indigenous educators as they both strive to do this decolonizing work should benefit all students. The most appropriate methodology to study this relationally based, intercultural (Indigenous-Western) topic was Tribal Methodology (Kovach, 2009). Tribal Methodology encompasses three processes: empirical observation, traditional teachings, and revelation/spiritual knowledge (Kovach, 2009). Tribal Knowledge makes room for the use of Indigenous knowledge and the involvement of Elders in research practice, which are critical in both addressing my research question and in supporting my identity as a researcher. I will now discuss ontology, epistemology, and axiology in relation to my use of Tribal Methodology. I end this discussion of paradigm by linking to Archibald's (2008) Storywork principles.

Tribal Methodology

S'í:kw'

Using the Western definition of ontology as one's view of the nature of reality, I have interpreted the Western aspect of my reality as *s'í:kw'*, the Halq'eméylem word for *lost*. I use the word *s'í:kw'* to assert that I have lost the roots to my history and identity, with the education system playing a significant role. This story of loss drove me to search for connection to in my current cultural context in Sts'ailes First Nation, where I embraced the cultural belief that reality is to be viewed in many different forms as we engage in relationships with human and non-human relatives, the spirit world, and protocols. So, after many generations of "hearing only the voices of Western Europe" in research and education, my research hopes to add to an era of "emancipation from seeing the world in one color" (Held, 2019, p. 7). To connect my Indigenous worldview to my Western context of learning, I conducted my research from a stance that

Mi'kmaw Elder Albert Marshall calls Two-Eyed Seeing: "Learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous ways of knowing and from the other eye with the strengths of Western ways of knowing and using both of these eyes together" (Bartlett et al., 2012, p. 335). I feel that Indigenous and Western worldviews of reality should have equal weight or importance, not one above the other. Thus, Two-Eyed Seeing is the ontology from which I designed and carried out the research for this study.

Lexwsí:si

Epistemology relates to the relationship between researcher and participant. According to Plains Cree and Saulteaux scholar Margaret Kovach, knowledge in Indigenous communities is located and created in place, through relationships and experiences, and at their intersections (Kovach, 2009). To describe this way of knowing, I have chosen the word *lexwsí:si*, which to the Stō:lò Halq'eméylem-speaking people means *always sacred*. Indigenous communities base much of their culture and traditions on relationships with human and non-human relatives, which is *lexwsí:si* (see also Calderon et al., 2021). The way knowledge is shared within the Halq'eméylem-speaking community to which I now belong is through trusting relationships that are reciprocal for both the giving and receiving participants. If a knowledge-keeper or *siyólexwe* feels that you have a trusting, respectful, and honest reciprocal relationship with them, they will more likely feel comfortable sharing *sacred knowledge* with you as a willing participant. Held (2019), ascribing to Botswana scholar Chilisa's (2012) work on Indigenous methodologies, describes Indigenous epistemology as both *subjective* and *intersubjective*. The subjective aspect can be illustrated by the way we learn from *siyólexwe*. When a story is shared by *siyólexwe*, what is taken away by the listener will depend on what that individual determines is needed for their spirit at the time (Archibald, 2008). Knowledge as intersubjective means that new

understanding and knowledge can be found where two people's perspectives meet. A large part of my research involved examining this meeting of perspectives between myself as an Indigenous educator in partnership with a non-Indigenous future educator as we worked together to implement a two-eyed approach that centres and values the learning that takes place in relationship.

Lheq'elómet

Finally, the term axiology refers to the role of values in research and possible biased or unbiased scenarios. The way that I best understand this concept of values guiding my work is through the word Lheq'elómet, which is Halq'eméylem for *to know yourself*. As I carried out my research, I wanted to be authentic to who I am as a female Indigenous educator by practicing Lheq'elómet and staying true to what I value.

Four key values guided my work. I developed these values after years of sitting at the feet of my community Elders and witnessing countless ceremonies and protocols. The first value was reciprocity. My research project aimed to benefit both the télexw (learner) and me, as both partners learned from each other. In the long term, the children we teach will also benefit from our individual growth. The second value was respect. The télexw and I are equal; the mentorship relationship was designed to minimize power dynamics. While we had different roles and experiences, mutual respect was maintained throughout (Coff & Lampert, 2019). Holism, the third value that guided my work, is something that is true to my heart. Teaching or learning holistically considers the whole student: not only their academic needs but also their physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual needs (Archibald, 2008). I planned to showcase holism through the questions that I asked the télexw, which included inquiring about emotions, knowledge, practices, and how the learning related to their past, present, and future. The last

value included in my research was responsibility. It was important to remember that we had a responsibility to understand each other and where we came from, to take the time to learn each other's backgrounds and to maintain respect for each other's perspectives (Davidson & Davidson, 2018). Doing so helped us to take what we learned from one another and use it in our practices going forward. These four values then shaped our story of mentorship. To guide the telling of this story, I turned to Jo-Ann Archibald's (2008) Storywork principles.

Storywork Principles

"Sit down and listen" (Archibald, 2008, p. 47). According to Archibald in *Indigenous Storywork*, this is the first step towards storytelling. Storytelling is a process to be arrived at, an experience to be engaged in with thought and preparation. To be "story-ready", you need to incorporate the principles of respect, reverence, responsibility, and reciprocity into what you are planning to do and into your way of acting (SD68 Nanaimo Ladysmith, 2021). Only then can you begin to engage with other Storywork principles.

The three principles that guided my research process were holism, interrelatedness, and synergy. Holism refers to the consideration of all aspects of a person by seeing and connecting the physical, spiritual, intellectual, and emotional realms (Archibald, 2008). This includes connections to family and community. Interrelatedness seeks connection to self and to the stories of others. Synergy involves all parts of the storytelling working together—the storyteller, the listener, the story itself, and the situation in which the story is shared. Synergy looks like the sharing of thoughts and the taking of opportunities after all the "doing" to see, to hear, to reflect, and to learn (Archibald, 2008). These three principles directed me to be mindful of the potential emotions that might arise during research conversations and to allow those emotions to tell their part of the story. Interrelatedness and synergy guided both my data collection (research through

conversation) and how I made meaning from the collected data, reminding me to consider both the mentee's and my own values, beliefs, and relational contexts. The co-mentorship relationship was interrelatedness and synergy in action. Enacting Storywork principles through the structure and carrying out of the study enabled the data that I collected to be authentic and not polished. These same principles directed me to a method of study that would honour the real story revealed in the research.

Method

The method that I thought would best allow an authentic story to be shared is the case study approach. Case study as a research approach produces an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of a complex issue in its real-life context (Creswell et al., 2018). This study was an intrinsic case study in which a unique co-mentorship engagement was described in detail and analyzed for key themes. Finally, a case study approach allowed the results of this research project to be presented through a timeline narrative supported by observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and written notes and reports.

Data Sources

Context. I conducted this study within an Indigenous community located in the Lower Mainland region of British Columbia. The Indigenous community school is a K-12 school with over 250 students attending elementary, middle, and high school programs within the same building. The student population is not Indigenous-only, as students are bussed in from all over the local region. This school thrives on imparting Halq'eméylem language and cultural teachings to all of its students, delivered by a local Indigenous Knowledge Keeper. In choosing a participant for the study, I kept in mind that the participant would ideally visit the community school a number of times and connect with the local community, as well as observe and teach as

part of the research. I designed the following criteria to thoughtfully select a participant who would not only have an interest in decolonizing educational practice, but also be willing to connect with a local Indigenous community.

Choosing the Participant. After sharing a poster regarding the study with university instructors, I was able to select a student who was enrolled in a pre-requisite course for entrance into the teacher education program at a university within the Lower Mainland region. The requirements that I set out for selecting my participant included:

- The participant must be non-Indigenous and does not reside within an Indigenous community.
- The participant must have limited teaching experience.
- The participant is willing to work with a mentor to co-create a unit plan that will include Indigenous knowledge and worldviews, as well as Western teaching approaches.
- The participant should be able to visit the school a number of times throughout January and February to co-plan, co-teach, and reflect on the mentoring experience.
- The participant must provide a valid and current criminal record check.

From the two respondents, I selected a participant for the study who expressed an eagerness for learning and proceeded with the first meeting. The participant, who chose to be referred to in this study as Ms. A, was a young (mid-twenties), non-Indigenous post-secondary student enrolled in a Bachelor of Education prerequisite course. Ms. A grew up in the Lower Mainland and had little exposure to Indigenous histories or education, only encountering these topics in her post-secondary experience. She had volunteered with youth in community in the area of literacy but had no formal teaching experience.

Data Tools. I collected data from interviews, collaborative work, teaching session products, and reflections after teaching sessions. The four main categories of data-gathering events are detailed below.

Pre-Interview. When it came to asking questions of the participant, I wanted to know specific things such as: what the differences or similarities would be between the participant's and my way of thinking regarding Indigenous knowledge and worldviews and what decolonizing meant to each of us. With these intentions in mind, I developed the following questions:

1. What is your current understanding of Indigenous knowledge and worldviews? What significance do these terms have for you at this point in your learning?
2. What does incorporating Indigenous knowledge and worldviews look like to you in your future teaching career?
3. What is your understanding of decolonizing your teaching practice? How do you feel about taking on this task?
4. Describe your current level of confidence in incorporating Indigenous knowledge or worldviews into your lessons. What contributes to your level of confidence?
5. What questions or wonderings do you have about Indigenous knowledge and worldviews?

Collaborative Work. One of the ways that I collected data was through the co-creation of a social studies unit consisting of four_lesson plans for grade four students. Meeting five times over the course of the study, the participant and I created lesson plans that embedded Indigenous knowledge and worldviews and required lesson implementation that reflected Indigenous ways of knowing. The learning from this collaborative work was captured through reflection

questions, completed orally after each lesson. The reflection responses, captured using the Otter application, also gathered data on the teaching experience.

Teaching. After teaching the planned lessons (variations of co-teaching and the participant teaching alone), the participant and I took time to reflect on the day's teaching experience by answering the following questions. These responses were also recorded using the Otter application.

1. How did today's lesson and experience in class make you feel? Why do you think you felt that way?
2. What did you learn today about Indigenous Knowledge and worldviews? How does this sit with what you currently believe or practice?
3. Was there anything that we could have done differently in our lesson? How and why would we do it differently next time?
4. What do you notice about our co-mentorship relationship? What benefits, drawbacks, successes, or discomforts are you experiencing?

Post-Interview. At our final meeting, we answered the same five questions from the pre-interview, with an additional question: What changes, if any, have you seen in your own educational philosophy or approach to teaching after participating in this study? The purpose of asking the same questions as the pre-interview was to see if the participant's thinking and philosophies had shifted and why. The additional question was used to explore the extent, for both participant and the principal investigator, to which Indigenous and Western pedagogies were adopted, internalized, and perhaps woven together. Again, this post-interview was recorded using Otter. With this last piece of evidence collected, I began the process of preparing the data for analysis.

Managing the Data

After reviewing the data from the pre- and post-interviews, as well as the reflections after each lesson that was taught, I proceeded to work with the transcripts. I cleaned up the transcripts by taking out the double words, and any repeated phrases. Once the transcripts were cleaned up, I provided them to Ms. A for review and to provide feedback. Within one week, I received confirmation from the participant that there were no necessary changes to be made, and that they approved the transcript as presented. Once approved, I was able to analyze the data using two different coding strategies.

Data Analysis

I analyzed my data in two different ways to enable the participant's thoughts, reflections and learning to be showcased in a holistic way that aligned with my way of thinking as an Indigenous person. I coded the data using descriptive and process coding, as described below.

Mentorship

In an effort to identify the moments and actions that resulted in these shifts in perception, I used process coding for the section on mentorship. This approach involves the use of gerunds ending in "ing" to summarize or to capture the action surfacing in the data (e.g., reflecting, questioning self; Saldaña 2011). Since the co-planning and co-teaching of the actual lessons were where the mentorship occurred, I felt that process coding would be an appropriate choice for telling the story. I focused on creating a timeline of these moments and actions as I read through the reflections. Process coding revealed significant moments that occurred, such as the shift from "doubting" in the pre-interview to "being resourceful" in the post-interview.

Interview Data

Descriptive coding involves reading through the collected data to identify emerging topics and assigning nouns to summarize those topics (Saldaña, 2011). I used descriptive coding for the pre- and post-interview questions, as this was the best way to capture what was talked about that aligned with the values of respect (for Ms. A), holism (considering all aspects of Ms. A's experience), and responsibility (representing Ms. A's experience accurately). This type of coding enabled me to look for changes in Ms. A's responses over the course of the mentorship process.

Managing Bias

Since I was directly involved in the interview and mentorship processes being analyzed, I took specific actions to mitigate the impact of personal bias on both the analysis of data and the study's results. Managing bias is about keeping the investigator's personal experiences and opinions from colouring the coding or reporting of findings. I was able to manage my biases by doing the following:

- I had my supervisor read the entire document.
- I kept a bias journal that was written after the participant left.
- I requested the participant's approval of quotes and the transcript and provided an opportunity for the participant to add or remove part of the transcript to more accurately represent their voice in the research.

Implementing these bias management strategies laid the groundwork for creating trustworthy qualitative research

Strength of Study

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) observed a "triple crisis of representation, legitimation, and praxis" that needed to be addressed to strengthen qualitative studies (p. 19). To provide a valid representation of my participant and myself, I designed a process that created a safe environment for the participant to feel comfortable and valued. This was accomplished through the work of creating a trusting, respectful relationship between researcher and participant from the first meeting, through the collaborative lesson planning, and the final interview. Representation aligned with the Storywork principle of synergy by providing opportunities for both participant and investigator to share their thoughts and reactions throughout the study, and by reflecting together on what was learned from the mentoring experience in the post-interview. The reflections captured both the investigator's and the participant's voices, and transcripts were vetted by the participant. Thus, the various aspects of the study's story were valued and woven together in both the carrying out and writing up of the findings of the study.

The second crisis, legitimation, raises the question of trustworthiness. To address this crisis, I designed clear processes for data collection that included data collection events soon after teaching and mentorship events so that recall would more accurately reflect the experiences. I also used direct quotes from the data to develop themes and provided thick descriptions of the key moments and actions in the mentorship relationship. In short, legitimacy was supported through diligence in the process of collecting and interpreting the data to most accurately reflect the experiences investigated.

The final crisis, praxis, questions the usability of my findings. One may question how a single case study, situated in a unique environment, interpreted by one researcher, could be useful to the larger educational community. Firstly, by modelling a BC-situated co-mentorship

relationship, my research serves as an example of how to incorporate a connection to place and community within a research setting. Further, the themes that emerged from my research provide relational and cultural considerations for Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators who are striving to work together to decolonize their teaching practices and the systems of education they work within. Lastly, my research suggests ways that Western and Indigenous pedagogies can be woven together in both research and authentic implementation of the current BC K-12 curriculum. So, through modelling the integration of Indigenous and Western ways of thinking and learning within a research environment, my findings are useful for both researchers interested in designing future studies and K-12 educators who are eager to bring together these two cultural perspectives into their teaching practice.

Having carefully constructed and carried out the fieldwork and data collection, the study's results are presented below.

Results

My findings are presented in two parts: the first section shares what was learned about the co-mentorship relationship through the five reflections, and the second section looks at how the participant's thinking and philosophies changed from the pre-interview to the last. The first section uses the metaphor of weaving to organize the findings, while the second part identifies recurring themes of change. Each section concludes with a summary of significant findings.

Co-Mentorship Relationship and the Five Reflections

In this section, I present the research results around the co-mentorship relationship, as revealed through the process coding of the five reflections I collected as part of my data. The codes capture what was happening for both the participant and the researcher as the relationship progressed through the stages of research. The results will be told through the story of learning to weave; the themes tie to specific points in the weaving journey, and the story reveals key moments in the co-mentorship relationship that can inform the success of future Indigenous-non-Indigenous mentorship relationships. This metaphor of weaving was particularly fitting as two of the lessons in our research experience involved having both the students and us engaging in the hands-on learning of traditional weaving with a local Indigenous Knowledge Keeper. Ms. A and I literally wove together, even as we metaphorically worked on weaving the threads of our mentorship relationship.

Metaphor of Coast Salish Weaving

I was introduced to Coast Salish weaving by U a La La (traditional name of the weaving teacher) who taught me the following about weaving. The design and symmetry in Coast Salish weaving is preserved no matter how many times it is folded; as you draw your design or dream about what you think your weaving project will look like, your imaginings may not always be the actual end result. The finished weaving project becomes alive and will present itself the way it is meant to. You need to learn the basics of weaving and understand each part as it comes together—it is an experience in the moment. Within this metaphor, I represent my role as an Indigenous researcher and the forming of our co-mentorship relationship as the first steps of the weaving process - warping and twilling. Then, I present four notable developments in the relationship, tied to four experiences of the weaver: weaving the threads, seeing the pattern,

making mistakes, and catching your rhythm. Finally, I end with two themes that emerge near the end of the reflections—thinking holistically and gaining confidence—and tie these to the finished woven product.

Warping & Twilling - The Researcher and the Relationship Foundation

Warping. The first step of weaving is warping, as shown in Figure 1. You start at the bottom and wrap your wool up, over, and down the loom to the desired width. This is the base and foundation of weaving. In my role as an Indigenous researcher and mentor, I saw myself as the warp threads. In this role, I provided the structure of the experience and the knowledge base of Indigenous worldviews and pedagogy, and I set emotional safety through a welcoming, co-mentorship arrangement. Specifically, I paid attention to Ms. A's body language to gauge her comfort level and provided assurance as needed, I practiced active listening throughout the interviews and discussion, and I was transparent about my own educational struggles and hopes. Throughout the research, I shared many of my own mistakes and learning experiences and consistently affirmed my desire to help and support Ms. A in her growth as an educator. I saw my responsibility in the beginning of this weaving as providing a safe foundation.

Figure 1

Warping



Note. The first step in weaving on a loom is to “warp”, or to wrap the yarn threads vertically around the loom structure.

Twilling. The next step of weaving is twilling (Figure 2). This section consists of four rows that lock the weaving and warping together, preventing the weaving from falling apart; twilling is also repeated at the end of the weaving. Twilling is a metaphor for the forming of our research relationship. The participant and I first met purely to establish a relationship, with no research being done at this meeting. During this time together we met on Zoom to ask each other questions to help us to understand each other’s backgrounds. For myself, connection was established with Ms. A in our first initial meeting together and it grew stronger as we met for each reflection. Since this initial meeting was purposefully not recorded, in order to provide a safe and casual space for the first time we met, no quotes are provided in relation to this

conversation. As well, after each of our formal (recorded) reflections finished, our conversations informally continued. Those moments were also not recorded as they were an organic part of our relationship. (They served to continue strengthening our relationship.) Establishing a connection with Ms. A was something that I did not have to force; it was surprisingly organic. Our personalities connected well, and it was like we had known each other our entire lives. With this foundation in place, the weaving (learning) process could begin.

Figure 2

Twilling



Note: Twilling is the weaving of four rows of yarn to lock the weaving in at the beginning of the weaving process.

Weaving the Threads - Connecting

After the twilling, the actual weaving may begin. Here, you will use a different colour of wool to weave through the warp. In each line, the weaving wool is passed in front and behind

various warp threads, and the woven piece is made strong from all the points where the warp and weave touch. These touch points represent the connection that was happening throughout the research experience, from the first reflection onwards. Interactions coded as *connecting* happened in each of the five reflections, sometimes between the participant and the students and other times between the researcher and the students or between the participant and the researcher. As Ms. A entered the classroom for the first time, she felt welcomed by the students simply “coming up to me asking my name”. Ms. A noticed that we had “built a good community” within the classroom and thought it was because “it’s most likely taught within your classroom as well.” The students and I made her feel like she was a part of our community. Our connections and continued relationship built trust: “I don’t know if I would have been that honest. But I think because we have this relationship, I was able to tell you”. By the fourth reflection, I expressed to Ms. A that “you’re like a part of the family already”. Just as weaving the threads through the warping creates the fabric of the weaving project, connecting back and forth in the co-mentorship relationship throughout the research experience was continuous and organically grew the relationship.

Seeing the Pattern - Appreciating & Bridging to Indigenous Knowledge

After weaving the first lines and the colour of the weaving starts to show through, you often have a moment of “Wow!” and think to yourself, “Is this what it could look like?” A feeling of excitement runs through your spirit as you see the pattern emerge, as in Figure 3, and you become accustomed to counting out the threads that make your pattern. You begin to understand how the weaving and warping work together. These feelings of wonder and emerging understanding parallel both the participant and the researcher’s appreciation of Indigenous

knowledge and new thoughts as to how Indigenous and Western worldviews could work together in teaching, a theme that appeared in four out of five reflections.

When discussing Indigenous traditions or protocols with Ms. A, she understood that she had only received the surface knowledge, as the more profound knowledge is “so sacred that there's only so much that I can know.” Ms. A did not realize that both worldviews could be woven together without being viewed as one being lesser than the other. After the lesson on seasonal rounds, she described her experience of incorporating Indigenous knowledge in the lesson as “tiptoe[ing] into learning about Indigenous knowledge” and her surprise that “everybody can connect to it” by learning to see their experiences through the lens of both Indigenous and Western worldviews. When she learned about seasonal rounds and Wampum, she shared that her interest motivated her to spend significant time on her own researching these ideas and concepts.

For my part, when I saw Ms. A making connections with the information that was being taught and shared with her, I had a warm feeling within my heart—her willingness to learn and desire to teach children in a new way was inspiring. Her growth mindset throughout the co-mentorship experience strengthened our relationship as it moved forward. I had always enjoyed teaching Indigenous knowledge and worldviews and trying to bridge between Western and Indigenous worldviews within my teaching practice; but when the research began, I doubted my ability to do so, perhaps because of the introduction of another educator. By the end of the co-mentorship experience, I began to wonder if I was doing enough for my students. Ms. A's reflections made me realize that I could be doing more with my teaching approach and for my students. For example, she suggested that I use Halq'eméylem words within lessons, words related to the particular unit of study. This further made me think of incorporating Halq'eméylem

words as one of our bonus spelling words so students can feel comfortable spelling or writing the language in the future, and when visually seeing Halq'eméylem words they will be able to recognize the word. Co-mentorship not only enabled the participant to gain a greater appreciation for Indigenous knowledge and how to make these understandings part of her practice, but it also allowed me to expand my ideas for teaching and bridging both worldviews into a holistic learning experience for my students.

Figure 3

Weaving and Seeing the Pattern



Note: As the weaving progresses, the pattern emerges.

Making Mistakes - Feelings of Apprehension

As you weave, two common mistakes include pulling the weaving thread too tight, which causes the weaving to have narrower sections, and counting the pattern incorrectly, which causes the design to be shifted. These mistakes in weaving are easily noticeable, causing one to feel

frustrated or nervous. As a new weaver myself, making these mistakes while weaving makes me doubtful of having the ability to continue to learn and become a better weaver. These feelings of apprehension arising from the making of mistakes were also present throughout the co-mentorship experience.

Ms. A certainly had these feelings when it came to incorporating Indigenous Knowledge and worldviews into the lessons - not only with teaching but also with trying something new, as she reported feeling “obviously a little shy coming in first” and “a little nervous”. Just as Ms. A felt apprehensive or doubtful in the first four reflections, I felt apprehensive both before and during the research process. More than half-way through the research, I had a strong feeling of doubting myself as an Indigenous educator: “Am I even decolonizing my teaching practices? I think I am, but I don’t know”. As each lesson passed, the feelings of doubting ourselves slowly faded, little by little, as we both began to embrace our mistakes. Ms. A came to value feelings of discomfort: “I see that I need to adjust my own thinking with teaching Indigenous perspectives to my students - being able to make mistakes...those uncomfortable moments are important”. In the same reflection, I talked about my own nervousness at mispronouncing Halq’eméylem words and how I was trying to normalize making mistakes as part of my teaching. For both partners, feelings of apprehension and doubt surfaced throughout the experience but became framed as a part of the learning experience as the research progressed.

In the weaving process, some people believe they need to take a break if their mind or emotions are not focused on the work; you must have that feeling of wanting to weave, as more mistakes will occur if you have any opposing thoughts or feelings. Some weavers will go back to fix their mistakes and learn from them. However, other weavers believe that the mistakes within the weaving are meant to be and leave them - this shows the uniqueness of the weaving and can

be a metaphor to remind us that each student has their own unique gift and uniqueness as well. This latter mindset reflects how both participant and researcher came to embrace mistake-making and feelings of apprehension - as opportunities for reflection and learning, and as an integral part of the journey. The Halq'eméylem saying Lets'emó:t, meaning "good heart, good mind", aptly summarizes this mindset of being willing to accept and allow ourselves to be.

Catching Your Rhythm - Reflecting on Practice

About halfway through the weaving, there is a sense one gets—a sense of accomplishment. Now you can see what works and what does not; and you know how you tend to make mistakes, so you begin to figure out your style and rhythm in weaving. In fact, you look forward to starting another project and trying out a different pattern. This reflecting on practice and planning for future work emerged for Ms. A later on in the research experience. Starting in reflection three, she realized that “the transition from one task to another during the lesson would have been beneficial with providing an example.” Lesson three consisted of teaching the students about evidence and how evidence affected trade among Indigenous people and the European Settlers. Although Ms. A was not a certified teacher yet, she jumped into the teacher role quite well. After the lesson, she said, “I wished that I had more direction from you [the researcher], but I understand...the choice of that”. Later, she said that “moments will come when teaching alone, [and] I will have to figure it out on my own, and I get it.” I informed Ms. A that in the past our ancestors would help and guide the learner and ensure that they were on the right path, but Knowledge Keepers and/or Elders would not hold their hands through the learning journey. During the last two lessons, where the students were weaving their own headbands, Ms. A had a fantastic idea of warping the looms ahead of time or creating a video of me (the researcher) warping the loom. She felt that this would help the students to learn to warp the

loom, but she also considered that this had the potential of “taking away the learning” from the students. I was impressed with Ms. A’s suggestion and wondered why I did not think of this idea. I believe it takes a set of new eyes working with you to see things differently. I appreciated Ms. A’s ability to reflect without any fear because this allowed me to reflect alongside her through this co-mentorship experience. When Ms. A noticed some of my pedagogical practices, such as consulting with my Educational Assistant (EA) as an equal professional or ensuring students’ nutritional needs were met before school started, this caused me to recognize and articulate my frame of thinking and how I am practically applying my cultural knowledge to my classroom teaching. Taking the time to reflect on how I was applying my cultural knowledge was not something that I regularly did nor felt comfortable doing, as neither my parents nor educators ever valued this kind of cultural reflection. However, when we conducted each reflection as part of the research protocol, I found that doing so came naturally and easily, in the context of the participant reflecting my practices back to me. So, as weavers in this co-mentorship relationship, both participant and researcher came to greater self-knowledge, which prompted both to a forward-looking mindset.

The Finished Product - Thinking Holistically and Gaining Confidence

Thinking Holistically. The finished weaving product is ready to be given or shared. U a La La taught us that, when weaving, you have to be in a good place mentally and emotionally as you do not want to pass on any negative thoughts or feelings to the end result of the weaving. This is a holistic approach to weaving - the whole person, physically, emotionally, and spiritually, are involved in the creation of the product. The warping, the weaving, and the weaver all work together to create a pattern that is not obvious from the start.

An awareness of this kind of holistic thinking emerged in the later reflections from Ms. A. As the experience of the co-mentorship relationship flourished throughout the time of the research, this allowed us as mentorship partners to develop authentic connections to each other. Reflecting on the Indigenous Knowledge that was shared and woven together with Western worldviews through the teaching experience, Ms. A struggled to express her emotions about our time together. She finally came up with these warm, heart-felt words; that Indigenous knowledge “touches your heart.” With both of us having been schooled through Western education systems, we noticed the differences between how Western and Indigenous knowledge and worldviews are perceived in the educational setting, in terms of their perceived value and credibility. Western scientific methods and text-based knowledge were set on a pedestal in our schooling experiences, while Indigenous knowledge was completely absent. Ms. A concluded, “I guess with learning about Indigenous knowledge and worldviews within textbooks, versus being here and involved in the community, is this feeling that you receive, I think, is something that obviously lacks when you're just reading a textbook.” As we wove together throughout this co-mentorship experience, we were two people trying to make the best educational experience for the students. During the weaving lesson, Ms. A realized, “I feel like there's more to it obviously than just weaving.” Teaching and weaving need to be approached holistically. I had a mindset that each time you weave, the end result is never the same; just like students, they are all unique and have their strengths. So, thinking and teaching holistically, I was able to provide some strategies for Ms. A to use in her future teaching practice. For example, Indigenous knowledge and worldviews focus more on the child/students’ needs and allowing their voices to be heard, so assignments do not have to be pen to paper, but could be oral discussion, drawings, a recording or other ways of learning that benefit the individual student. As the participant noticed her own thinking

becoming more holistic, considering the whole child, I was able to share pedagogy that supported this approach.

Gaining Confidence. Finally, when you finish your first weaving project, there is a feeling of accomplishment and confidence. You know that you have not achieved mastery, but you gain a type of inner strength. I feel more confident as I attempt every new weaving project, learning from past mistakes and strengthening my skills each time, knowing I have only learned the basics of weaving thus far and am still considered a beginner. These feelings of confidence developed throughout the co-mentorship relationship for both the participant and the researcher. Ms. A came in wanting to decolonize her future teaching practice with an open heart and mind while understanding that there would be some discomfort and nervousness. At the end of the in-class weaving experience, she said, “It was really...empowering in a way to be able to learn this [weaving] alongside the kids.” From being able to witness my teaching approach, Ms. A was able to set aside the fear she had coming into this co-mentorship experience by “noticing how easily it [Indigenous knowledge and pedagogy] can be incorporated into like just everyday learning is something ... is what I noticed with the lesson.” As Ms. A gained confidence, she was, by the last reflection, already considering how she could decolonize her teaching practice when she graduates from a Bachelor of Education program. For my part, I have gained more confidence in my ability to teach Indigenous knowledge and worldviews, as this research experience enabled me to engage with and build deeper relationships with Elders and Knowledge Keepers, as well as to witness the growth of Ms. A. In short, working together as co-mentors provided experiences that helped both Ms. A and me to feel an increased sense of confidence in our own abilities to implement Indigenous pedagogy.

Figure 4

Completed Headband Weaving

Note: Ms. A's first weaving project, a headband completed as part of our in-class learning with a local Indigenous Knowledge Keeper.

Wrapping Up the Weaving - Summary of Findings about Co-Mentorship

The process of learning to weave provides a fitting metaphor for the key highlights of the co-mentorship relationship at the center of this research. The foundational structure of warping and twilling was provided by the researcher's Indigenous knowledge, and the relational foundation was laid before the research began. The weaving process encompassed the creating of connection in relationships, the growing appreciation for and knowledge of how to bridge Indigenous and Western worldviews, the embracing of discomfort as learning, and the reflection on practice. Finally, considering the woven end product, the weavers engaged in holistic thinking and gained the confidence to move forward in their practices. In the last reflection, Ms. A expressed wanting to “come back for the spring and do some berry picking and cedar picking.” I felt honored to hear Ms. A say she wanted to return to learn more from the students and myself. Continuing our relationship holds value for both parties, as we could continue to learn from each

other and ask for guidance when needed. Not only will this allow Ms. A to have access to Indigenous Knowledge and worldviews to implement into her future teaching, but it will also provide both of us with "a new person that you're able to bounce ideas off of." Together, we can continue to weave other projects to create other masterpieces.

Changes in the Participant's Beliefs and Understandings

The second set of data gathered through this research was the participant's responses in the pre- and post-interviews, conducted before and after the mentorship experience. As noted in the methods section, the interviews consisted of the same five questions pre- and post-, with an additional question added to the final interview to reflect on any overall changes the participant saw in their educational philosophy or approach because of our work together. Using descriptive coding with the interview transcripts, I identified five distinct areas where the participant's responses indicated a shift in thinking or belief: the role of relationships in learning, emotional discomfort, understanding of Indigenous worldviews, growth mindset, and the weaving of worldviews. This section describes and defines each theme and provides examples of how and when each theme emerged in the participant's learning journey. Some of the shifts in the participants' beliefs and understandings over the course of the co-mentorship relationship were significant, while others were more subtle. To extend the weaving metaphor, Ms. A entered into the research as rich, colourful yarn, full of her own identity, knowledge, and strengths. Through the co-mentorship experience, she interacted with new yarn (me as an Indigenous educator), and through this interaction, Ms. A discovered 'new patterns' that she could weave in connection with a new and different person (me).

Role of Relationship in Learning

I have defined the “role of relationship in learning” as comments or remarks related to the value or the role of relationships in learning, as well as the impact of relationships on learning. In the pre-interview, Ms. A seemed to have a textbook or generalized knowledge of the importance of relationships in learning, as indicated by comments such as “I understand that the connection with each other is important. And I've heard of passing down of knowledge, from Elders, is extremely important within the community.” She had a desire for relationships with Indigenous Knowledge Keepers for learning purposes but had not experienced it personally: “How do you create that relationship with an Elder? ...because I have always been really jealous of people who have the connection and relationship, and I didn’t realize...how important that relationship is to have first before an Elder would come into your classroom.” So, Ms. A began with a general sense of the importance of relationships to learning but was unfamiliar with Indigenous practice of and protocols around relationships.

In the post-interview, the participant recognized how a relationship was critical to her personal and professional growth. In particular, Ms. A understood the value of reciprocity: “something that I missed at the beginning of this research is something that I’ve become more aware of, and something that I think is really prominent in Indigenous knowledge and worldviews - that is reciprocity.” She noticed reciprocity being practiced in our mentorship relationship, and within my classroom, between teacher and student and between students. As well, Ms. A was able to see the importance of stories and how important it is for the students to be able to share their stories, that it should never be about the educator having a hierarchical relationship with students. Ms. A noticed that, in each lesson, the students had a voice, and that we had established a tight-knit classroom community where students were taught to use their

voices to tell their stories. Finally, Ms. A remarked on the different experiences one could have when learning with and alongside others, as opposed to reading things in a textbook: “[what] I’ve learned as well is you lack kind of that feeling and community that I think is really important within Indigenous worldviews that you don’t get from reading the textbook.” So, through mentorship, the participant experienced and came to value learning in a relationship with an Indigenous educator, especially the aspects of reciprocity, sharing of power, and the sharing of stories.

Emotional Discomfort

I have defined “emotional discomfort” as the feelings or thoughts of and about discomfort, uncertainty, doubt, or anxiety related to implementing Indigenous pedagogy into one’s teaching practices. During the pre-interview, although Ms. A entered this co-mentorship relationship willingly, she showed discomfort and nervousness due to her perception of her lack of knowledge related to Indigenous pedagogy: “I’m nervous to disrespect something really sacred, or teach something entirely the wrong way.” Not only was Ms. A having these valid emotions with regard to implementing Indigenous pedagogy, but she was also nervous about answering the pre-interview question: “What is your current understanding of Indigenous Knowledge and worldviews? What significance do these terms have for you at this point in your learning?” She struggled to articulate her understanding, often repeating the question or restarting her responses: “I have everything in my head, but I don’t know how to put it into words...I’m trying to figure it out - I almost want to restart, but I don’t know.” Ten times in the pre-interview, Ms. A said, “I don’t know” and stopped speaking, often looking to the researcher for the next prompt. Overall, during the pre-interview, Ms. A exhibited nervousness and

discomfort with her inexperience and lack of sense of what Indigenous ways of thinking were and how these could be incorporated into her future teaching practice.

During the post-interview, Ms. A brought up experiences that had impacted her feelings of fear and also articulated a different mindset about her emotional discomfort. Ms. A had had the opportunity to meet the grade five teacher at the school, who was a non-Indigenous educator, and she noticed that the teacher was learning along with the students: “I think it takes away that fear of doing something wrong ... you're both learning together” and seeing that other non-Indigenous educators are doing the work “definitely helps with kind of removing those fears.” Another supportive experience for Ms. A was our co-mentorship relationship, as our connection “removes that fear because I have somebody that I can come to, if need be, and to understand further about certain things, maybe things that I would be worried about asking somebody else because we have that bond.” Ms. A also attributed an easing of her nervousness to the students; that “the students kind of incorporated that Indigenous worldview” in the way they responded organically to the lessons with cultural knowledge from their lives, helping her to realize that she could learn from students as well. When asked how she felt about taking on the task of decolonizing her future teaching practice, Ms. A replied, “I definitely feel more confident about it ... having that little snapshot of how easily it can be embedded and how it can be done.” She also recognized that to release some of the discomfort and nervousness, she needed to be more flexible in her thinking: “I think just being ... open to it. I think that is one of the first steps.” The end result was that Ms. A reframed her thinking and was less hindered by her feelings of discomfort; instead, she felt “more comfortable within that little bit of discomfort. It's not a bad uncomfortability, but it's just like a normal one because it's new.” Ms. A still said, “I don't know” a number of times in the final interview, but each time, it was followed with offerings of what

she could do and what she did know or had learned. In fact, she began looking into the future and began considering, “It would be interesting to go and see how it is incorporated into younger classes as well.” Within the research period, Ms. A moved from hesitancy, doubt, and fear to recognizing experiences and mindsets that could normalize and overcome feelings of discomfort.

Understanding Indigenous Worldviews

I have defined “understanding Indigenous worldviews” as comments related to the participant's thinking about or understanding of implementing Indigenous pedagogy into the classroom. As the co-mentorship relationship evolved, I began to notice the change in Ms. A's depth of understanding of Indigenous knowledge and worldviews. In the pre-interview, many of Ms. A's responses were phrases that could be considered, in her own words, “textbook knowledge.” She was able to list things she learned from professors or from readings, but these comments were often vague and generalized: “So my current understanding is that compared to Western views, it's very linear. And then Indigenous is very, I guess it'd be circular. The Indigenous principles it's very much connecting yourself and your relationships. It's very family-oriented, and just understanding your connection with the earth and the creators.” Ms. A also felt her own lack of understanding keenly as she reflected that “I think I know bits and pieces. So I feel I'd be able to list it off, but going into depth into each one is where I lack.” She noticed that “we're really struggling like that connection that we have to the Earth is kind of dwindling a little bit” and that this has been affecting the students we teach, but she had little idea of how to use Indigenous knowledge and worldviews to help with restoring this connection to the earth. One thing that Ms. A did recognize is that “doing something is better than not doing anything.” We see that in the beginning of the research Ms. A was aware of general Indigenous principles

and values and desired to learn more about how these principles could be used to decolonize her teaching practice, but realized she had little sense of how to go about doing so.

The change in Ms. A's thinking and demeanor in this area, over the span of only five visits spanning one month, was thrilling for me to witness. In the post-interview, she was able to articulate specific Indigenous ways of thinking and how she had or could apply these to her practice. The first time I noticed that Ms. A was developing a deeper understanding of Indigenous pedagogy was during our second lesson on "Seasonal Rounds". Ms. A began to understand how some knowledge is sacred and to value protocols that a colleague had shared with us, such as the protocol of giving away the first thing that you make; in our case, your first woven headband. Ms. A understood that "the proper way of Indigenous worldviews is to first give away" because "it kind of starts the reciprocity cycle." Responding to my sharing that my husband has also taught our son these protocols when it comes to fishing and hunting game, that this giving away is supposed to bring you luck during the hunting and fishing seasons, Ms. A concluded that "I also have this hope and wish when I become like a teacher that me and my students also, I guess, have that reciprocity in a way. It's not like a hierarchy where the teacher holds all this information, but it's kind of this back and forth, and growing together." At the end of the mentorship experience, then, Ms. A could not only name and discuss specific aspects of Indigenous worldviews, she was also looking forward to incorporating these into her future teaching practice.

Growth Mindset

I coded for "growth mindset" passages that demonstrate a personal recognition of the need to grow and a willingness to learn, change, or grow, as related to implementing Indigenous pedagogy. I thought Ms. A had a growth mindset the first day she emailed me to be considered

for this co-mentorship experience—the very decision to inquire about a study on this topic showed an openness to growth and a willingness to take risks. Ms. A also showcased a positive attitude about learning how to incorporate Indigenous knowledge and ways of learning in her teaching by saying, “I believe that you should continue to learn and it's really important to take on this task, even though it is scary.” She knew this would be important for her future students but struggled to define specific ways in which to address her fears and lack of knowledge.

In the post-interview, Ms. A had moved beyond her desire for growth to concrete ideas and plans for her future teaching. She was motivated to learn more and expressed specific ways that she wanted to do this. One example is that, in speaking about her newfound realization that she could decolonize practice through the removal of hierarchy, Ms. A expressed, “I felt just listening to the students in itself within the lessons, I learned a lot from them too. So, I don't know it's just like, removing that hierarchy.” Significantly, in the post-interview, Ms. A used the Halq'eméylem word *Lets'emó:t* (doing something with a good heart and a good mind) to describe her understanding of the importance of a holistic approach to education work. In fact, Ms. A had grown comfortable with using other common Halq'eméylem words when she was teaching lessons in the classroom. Ms. A also recognized that she was going to make mistakes, but reasoned that the way you deal with your mistakes is where the learning begins: “acknowledging those mistakes, but also allocating a space where you're learning from the students as well.” By the end of the study, Ms. A had moved from vague desires for growth to confidence in pursuing specific pathways of growth in implementing Indigenous pedagogy.

Weaving Worldviews

Lastly, I have defined “weaving worldviews” as thoughts about how Indigenous and Western worldviews and pedagogies could be used together or interchangeably in teaching

practice, along with two-eyed seeing approaches or ways of thinking. In the pre-interview, Ms. A already held a belief that the two worldviews should be integrated and that Indigenous perspectives should not just be an add-on to a Western lesson: "I think to have it [Indigenous worldviews] embedded within, hopefully, every subject to some degree, kind of removes that separation and makes it feel normal, instead of ... just adding on." Like her growth mindset, the participant had a desire to do the work and a broad concept of what that involved but lacked specifics of how to do so at that point of time.

During the post-interview, Ms. A was able to articulate specific ways that she had seen the two worldviews woven together in practice and began planning how she could do this work. She noted how I never announced to the class that I was using an Indigenous or Western way of learning, but seamlessly moved between the two; in this way, I gave both worldviews equal power by assuming that both belonged in the classroom. Ms. A also recognized that it was essential for her to learn from different perspectives, "to learn to shift that view and to see that there are so many ways and perspectives that knowledge can be shared and represented, and it doesn't have to be represented in a certain way." In fact, Ms. A's response to one of the last questions of the interview highlighted that she was thinking ahead to how she could integrate both worldviews and ways of learning into her future practice with primary students. Since we had conducted this study with an intermediate class, "if I taught grade two, I was thinking how and what ways I would incorporate it [Indigenous knowledge or worldviews]." Ms. A related her shift in thinking to her own upbringing, where she felt she had to fit into educational "boxes" for each class: "I am definitely learning how not to have a box ... allowing students to orally tell you a question, highlight, and having this area [where] they can express their knowledge in any way is something I want to implement." So, co-mentorship enabled Ms. A to experience, notice,

and begin to consider how Indigenous and Western worldviews could be integrated practically in classroom practice.

In summary, the participant's beliefs and understandings shifted in five main areas in the course of the study: the role of relationship in learning, the purpose of feelings of discomfort, ideas around her own growth, her depth of understanding of Indigenous worldviews, and how these might be woven together with Western worldviews and ways of learning. Ms. A began to understand her relationships as critical to her learning, seeing that "learning with" gave her a learning experience that could not be provided by textbook learning. She also came to accept discomfort as a normal part of the process of learning and could be specific about how she could grow in her practice. Finally, as Ms. A began to gather knowledge about Indigenous protocols and ways of learning through co-mentorship, she moved from listing general facts about Indigenous worldviews to discussing specific protocols and values, and then considering how to apply these through weaving Indigenous and Western worldviews into her future practice. Connecting back to the metaphor of weaving, Ms. A emerged from the mentorship process (the weaving) with new patterns of understanding and a finished product (her new mindsets and ideas of what is possible in her practice) that she was ready to give away (apply to future practice to benefit students).

Discussion

Now, I turn to discussing the implications of my findings for educators (including myself), both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, and for the possibilities of mentorship relationships in the educational field. I begin with considering the gaps in current research in the areas of Indigenous educators as mentors and implementation practices specific to BC. Then I present four principles that emerge from my research that can inform and support educators

seeking to do the work of weaving together Indigenous and Western pedagogy, including: (1) connection is essential in a co-mentorship relationship; (2) emotional obstacles or barriers can be overcome in the context of a strong relationship; (3) weaving of Indigenous and Western worldviews need to be experienced and articulated; and (4) learning to think and work holistically takes time. Each principle is discussed in terms of both my research and related literature and is followed by a practical recommendation for future practice. I then describe the personal impact of this research on myself as an Indigenous educator and provide a summary of the educational importance of my findings. Finally, I end the discussion with the limitations of my research.

Identified Gaps in Research

As mentioned in the literature review, little research exists on how to support Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators to work together to implement Indigenous education or to weave the two worldviews into everyday professional practice or curriculum. Burgess, Bishop, and Lowe (2020) remarked on a noticeable gap in the literature around Indigenous people mentoring non-Indigenous teachers to develop a responsive pedagogy. As well, the idea of co-mentorship was only addressed in one study (Coff & Lampert, 2019); most of the research around mentorship in this area centered on a more culturally knowledgeable mentor working with less experienced or knowledgeable mentees. While Archibald (2008) and Davidson and Davidson (2018) suggest principles learned from their own research with Elders in a BC context that can be applied by other BC educators in their practice, an example of this application in a K-12 environment has yet to be documented.

My research offers new understandings in this gap—specific examples of mentorship across Indigenous and Western cultures, of non-Indigenous and Indigenous educators working

together in a safe space where both perspectives can be woven together in practice. My research adds an example of how Indigenous and non-Indigenous ways of constructing knowledge can be woven together in educational research and practice. Specifically, my methods provide a contemporary example of applying Two-Eyed Seeing and Storywork principles to designing and carrying out qualitative research on decolonizing future teaching practices for non-Indigenous educators. The principles I discuss below bring to light themes and insights to inform a more meaningful building of Indigenous/non-Indigenous mentorship relationships between teachers in the future for the purposes of effectively integrating Indigenous ways of knowing and learning into K-12 classroom practice in a BC context.

Principle #1: Connection is Essential in a Co-Mentorship Relationship

As an Indigenous person, relationships are an essential protocol to beginning any work between individuals. Establishing a safe emotional connection was the most important aspect of beginning our co-mentorship relationship. I explicitly defined to the participant that we would both be mentee and mentor at different times, continuously learning from each other's perspectives, and working alongside one another while actively keeping the sense of hierarchy out of the equation. Ms. A repeatedly expressed how this removal of hierarchy was important for her to feel safe to begin connecting with me. This helps me understand Davidson and Davidson's (2018) principle that "Learning emerges from strong relationships" (p. 14) in a practical way; that strong relationships need to feel safe for both parties. Therefore, my study suggests that mentorship relationships between non-Indigenous and Indigenous educators must build in time in the beginning to allow mentorship partners to get to know each other without the pressure of research, learning, and accountability.

One way that connection was built in our co-mentorship relationship was through the practice of reciprocity. The participant frequently mentioned reciprocity as one of her key takeaways, both in the reflections and in the interviews. Further, establishing connection in relationships did not extend only to us as mentorship partners; connection was also built between each of us and the students in the classroom, which not only allowed students to feel safe enough to be engaged in each lesson, but also served to strengthen our mentorship relationship too. These interconnected relational benefits to all parties confirms to me that knowledge, power, and reciprocity are woven together in learning that integrates Indigenous principles (Archibald, 2008).

Thus, my recommendations for future co-mentorship relationships between non-Indigenous and Indigenous educators are two-fold: (1) take the time to establish a personal connection before research or work is conducted, and (2) intentionally practice reciprocity. In my study, we first met online over zoom for about an hour where our conversation was about families, school, and life in general. Then we met in person at the school where the research was conducted, which served as a neutral space that felt safe. It might also be beneficial to attend cultural gatherings together or to meet each other's families and to be in each other's homes to understand each other holistically. In terms of reciprocity, in my study we gave to each other knowledge about our individual cultures and upbringings, we gifted words of thanks to each other at the end of every experience, and we sought ways to serve each other, such as sharing our resources or preparing materials for the other's lessons. It may also be helpful to explicitly discuss what each person would consider valuable in terms of reciprocity, because each mentorship partner's needs could be different.

Principle #2: Emotional Discomforts Can Be Overcome in the Context of a Strong Relationship

Emotional discomfort seems to be unavoidable in the work of integrating Indigenous ways of learning into a Western educational approach; but having a strong relationship with an Indigenous educator can help non-Indigenous educators to overcome this obstacle. I had been expecting this same emotional discomfort from my co-mentorship partner, but I also wondered if Ms. A being a young person would lessen the strength of this discomfort (assuming that she had had more exposure to Indigenous education in her own schooling experience). At the beginning of the research, Ms. A did have feelings of anxiety, nervousness, and discomfort that were described in the literature (Burgess & Harwood, 2021; Carroll et al., 2020; Kanu, 2005), in large part because she felt that she knew only the surface level of information about Indigenous knowledge and worldviews. This feeling aligns with Kanu's (2005) finding that lack of knowledge about Indigenous culture, resources, and ways of learning were perceived by non-Indigenous educators as one of their greatest challenges in meaningfully integrating Indigenous curriculum (p. 57). By the final interview, Ms. A herself saw that these feelings of discomfort were necessary for identifying areas where growth was needed or where her Western ways of thinking differed from Indigenous ways of thinking. She credited the trust and safety of our strong relationship with her being able to start working through her discomfort. Several elements of our mentorship relationship made it strong enough to support a non-Indigenous educator to move beyond discomfort in a short time. Three key contributors in our relationship were respect, openness, and the absence of a power hierarchy.

Thus, my recommendations to support mentorship partners to move "from anxiety and feelings of discomfort to action" (Carroll et al., 2020, p. 17) would be to build strength within the

relationship through these three areas. In my study, we cultivated the first two areas, respect and openness, not only through honest and open conversation, the practice of active listening, and affirming and valuing each other's feelings, but perhaps most significantly through the practice of curiosity. Both of us showed interest and openness to hearing new ideas and to hearing the other person's story throughout the reflections and interviews through our genuine questions about each other's beliefs, values, and spirituality. This practice of curiosity as a way of showing respect aligns with Davidson and Davidson's (2018) principle that "Learning emerges from curiosity" (p. 15). By being curious, co-mentors can learn more holistically about each other, which leads to deeper conversations. The third area that contributes to strong relationships, the removal of hierarchy, I have already mentioned in the first principle, but revisit here as a recommendation for practice. Explicit removal of hierarchy in a mentorship relationship not only promotes connection, but also creates a safe space for growth. At the beginning of my study, I explained to the participant that because of this removal of power structures, there would be no opportunity to use me as a potential future reference, the participant would not be given a grade, and either party had the authority to end the research at any time. The traditional benefits and security offered by a conventionally hierarchical mentorship relationship were instead let go of, in order to create a safe space for the participant to learn, grow, make mistakes, and to ask questions that she may have been afraid to ask otherwise. Removal of hierarchy allows mentorship partners to collaborate in a way that promotes new ideas and understandings that weave together both partners' perspectives (Coff & Lampert, 2019). Co-mentors, then, can develop strong relationships by building respect and openness through curiosity and by explicitly leveling the power dynamic in the relationship.

Principle #3: Weaving of Indigenous and Western Worldviews Needs to be Experienced and Articulated

This principle addresses the different needs that the participant (non-Indigenous soon-to-be educator), and I (Indigenous researcher and educator) had in the work of integrating Indigenous worldviews into our teaching practices during this study. Ms. A benefited from directly engaging in and reflecting on experiences in the classroom where the two worldviews were being woven together, while I benefited from engaging in discussions with Ms. A and hearing her articulate the practices that she noticed me using. We had differing needs and found experiences within the mentorship relationship that met those needs.

For Ms. A, it was important that we co-created the unit and lesson plans, observed each other teaching, and then co-taught the lessons to the students. She frequently commented throughout the reflections and interviews how she felt more confident and understood practically how to incorporate Indigenous views into lessons after experiencing this hands-on, immersive form of learning.

One thing that I discovered that is important for myself as an Indigenous educator is that there were opportunities to hear my practices that wove the two worldviews together specifically described or articulated by another educator. This realization came from our conversation about how I did not even realize that I was teaching in a certain way until Ms. A mentioned that she had noticed characteristics of my pedagogy throughout our five reflections together. When we had taught the first two lessons, Ms. A commented on how I moved easily between Western and Indigenous knowledge and ways of learning throughout a lesson, without specifically telling the students that I was doing so. She noted that sometimes I used Western note-taking with Indigenous concepts, or oral learning with Western concepts, and this seamless weaving of

methods and knowledge seemed to allow students to easily learn and show their learning. Hearing the participant's articulation of my practices and how they impacted her gave me confidence and reassurance that I was bringing my Indigenous self to my teaching practice.

Based on our experiences in this study, I have two recommendations to provide non-Indigenous and Indigenous educators with the experiences they need to more confidently weave both Indigenous and Western worldviews into their practice. The first is for mentorship partners to co-create and co-teach as part of their work together. Doing so creates opportunity for partners to share and understand each other's values and worldviews (Coff & Lampert, 2019). For Ms. A, it was not enough to have a lesson plan handed to her to implement—she needed to see the way I planned lessons, taught, and interacted with the students and then to reflect on the lessons she took from these experiences. The second recommendation is to build in reflection time in the mentorship relationship for articulating practices that each partner sees in the other's teaching that reflect Indigenous ways of learning. Acknowledging and affirming each other's strengths leads to individual growth beyond even personal expectations (Davidson & Davidson, 2018). In my study, the reflection and interview questions served this purpose, but this could also be accomplished less formally through a periodic check-in time with guiding questions.

Principle #4: Learning to Think and Work Holistically Takes Time

While Western ways of learning often value objectivity and developing individual areas of expertise, Indigenous ways of learning emphasize holistic learning, involving all aspects of a person in their learning, including emotion and spirituality (Archibald, 2008). My study showed that learning to think and work in this holistic way took time because the participant had to experience the tension between the two ways of learning. In the reflections, Ms. A expressed that she wanted more guidance from me during her teaching experiences, and noticed that I

purposefully supported and guided rather than providing direct answers or jumping in to "rescue" her during a lesson, which was what she was used to through her Western education. This 'guiding' dynamic aligns with the way Elders teach us in community, and the participant came to appreciate, by the post-interview, this space I was holding for her to learn. It is interesting to note that, in the reflections, holistic thinking and gaining confidence only emerged near the end of the mentorship experience; these more complex and integrated areas of growth took time. The reward was that as the research was ending, both participant and researcher began feeling a different type of tension—that of not wanting the experience to end, and instead to continue the mentorship relationship and friendship beyond the scope of the research.

So, my recommendation in this area is for Indigenous mentorship partners to explain to their non-Indigenous partners about how Elders tend to guide and provide space for learning, and how that might look in their experiences together. In my study, I shared this principle with Ms. A in response to her questions and sharing of her feelings of tension, but it would also be beneficial to offer this consideration near the beginning of a mentorship relationship so that the non-Indigenous partner has a framework to view and process these tensions as they occur.

Personal Impact

This research project is an area that I am passionate about as an Indigenous person who has navigated the Western education system without Indigenous pedagogies being integrated into my learning experience; nor was there any discussion or learning about the history of Indigenous Peoples related to Indian Residential School, the 60s Scoop, loss of language and culture, or anything related to how Indigenous people have suffered through generational trauma for decades. When I entered the education field, I made a promise to myself that I would not allow my students to feel like they did not belong or that they were not smart enough to complete

assignments. I had a mindset of blaming the education system and the people with higher authority as the source of the problem for teachers not implementing Indigenous knowledge and worldviews into their daily teaching. Moved by Davidson and Davidson's (2018) principle that "Learning honours the power of the mind" (p. 18), I sought to change my own thinking about how to bring about change in the current education system. This research experience has begun to change my thinking to believing that Indigenous educators like me, by providing patient guidance to other educators (non-Indigenous or Indigenous) through mentorship, like the Indigenous master teachers with Indigenous novice teachers in Anthony-Stevens et al.'s (2022) study, can make a meaningful and sustainable difference.

Not only did Ms. A help me to grow and gain confidence, she also brought the idea of "I can do more" into my journey to decolonize my current teaching practices. Using a Halq'eméylem word as one of our spelling words each week will hopefully improve the students' ability to recognize the word in written form and know how to pronounce it. Another suggestion that I will implement is using a word for the unit or lesson to introduce other words in the language that students may not get to learn. For example, if I was doing a unit on Earth and its axis, I might introduce the word "tém:éxw" which means earth and land. As the lessons progress, I can use more Halq'eméylem words such as sun, moon, and water.

Educational Implications

My findings have educational implications for both the K-12 school system and individual educators in the work of implementing Indigenous education and pedagogy. When the Ministry of Education rolls out new Indigenous Education curriculum, they need to be prepared to support school districts with not only curricular resources but also relationship-based training. Providing adequate funding for sustainable co-mentorship programs between non-Indigenous

and Indigenous educators could be a key way to support non-Indigenous teachers to implement Indigenous worldviews and pedagogy more confidently and effectively. Districts could also consider co-mentorship programs with local Elders or Knowledge Keepers. Individual co-mentorship projects need not be a long-term commitment – this research took place over just one month and had a dramatic impact on both mentorship partners. Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers alike would find one-month co-mentorship projects manageable within their heavy workloads and community responsibilities. Relational thinking around the rolling out of mandated Indigenous education curriculum could significantly increase the number of educators more effectively implementing that curriculum.

For individual Indigenous educators, my work provides a relational pathway to decolonizing the education system that is achievable and aligns with Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Indigenous educators engaged in co-mentorship would be able to share their values of reciprocity and respect in an organic way with non-Indigenous colleagues and bring about localized change. For non-Indigenous educators, co-mentorship provides the network and support to gain the knowledge and courage to move forward with integrating Indigenous and Western worldviews into their teaching practices. My work promotes co-mentorship as a practice that naturally weaves Indigenous and Western ways of learning in a respectful learning space.

Limitations

As in all qualitative research, my findings have limitations. These limitations are rooted in the small number of participants, the short amount of time spanned by the research, and the particularly open nature of the selected participant. My co-mentorship research had only one participant, so I question if scaling this intervention to multiple partners (group mentorship) or to a program of mentorship might change the results. Might different principles or practical

applications of the principles emerge? As well, my research is very much linked to place and community, so my findings may apply differently or not at all in other Indigenous or non-Indigenous communities. Each community has their own protocols and teachings, and ways of transferring knowledge, that may affect how my findings might be applied. There was also limited time; we only had five 45 minutes of teaching time and five one-hour reflection sessions within which to collect data. Although the results were thought-provoking, would the research have benefitted from having more time? I also wonder what the co-mentorship relationship experience would have been like with a participant with a negative mindset, not a growth mindset like the one that Ms. A exhibited. Could their mindset be changed to a positive one? If I had a participant with subconscious racist attitudes to overcome or a participant who was a seasoned teacher reluctant to embrace change, the results might have been different as well. Each member of a co-mentorship relationship brings a diverse set of experiences, knowledge, and philosophies to working and learning together – how might co-mentorship be established given this diversity? My findings, then, should be considered in light of the limitations imposed by study size, length of the research period, and the background and experiences of the co-mentorship partners.

Conclusion

. Through the process of co-creating and co-teaching, the participant and I were able to form strong personal connections and support each other to overcome emotional discomfort through the practice of respect, openness, and curiosity. We learned equally from each other and took the time to name and encourage each other's strengths and promising practices. The principles learned through this co-mentorship experience have implications for educators and school systems alike. I hope this research will provide motivation and practical suggestions for other

Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators to engage in co-mentorship experiences. When hierarchy is taken out of the mentorship equation, a safety is created where relationships can be strengthened, mistakes and growth can be experienced organically, and important shifts in mindsets can occur. I also hope that reading this research might encourage more non-Indigenous educators to take a step towards a holistic approach of creating more reciprocal learning experiences for all students in the current education system. My goal in the future is to encourage other educators to participate in co-mentorship relationships like this one, with the hope that more educators practicing Indigenous ways of knowing and learning in the classroom will support Indigenous students to thrive. I look forward to sharing my learning experience at educator conferences or with teacher candidates. I also intend to continue engaging in future co-mentorship experiences, perhaps exploring group mentorship. My ultimate hope is that through this process of co-mentorship, learning environments for Indigenous students, including my own children, will become so rich that graduation rates for Indigenous students will increase, and more Indigenous students will enroll in universities to make a difference in education for the future generations.

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Appendix A

Ethics Approval

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Human Research Ethics Board - Certificate of Ethical Approval
HREB Protocol No: 101216

Principal Investigator: Mrs. Tina Wenman

Team Members: Mrs. Tina Wenman (Principal Investigator)

Dr. Nikki Yee (Co-Investigator)

Title: Experiences of an Indigenous educator and a non-Indigenous beginner educator collaborating on an Indigenous-led unit in an Indigenous community-based school.

Department: Faculty of Education, Community & Human Development\Teacher Education

Effective: November 25, 2022

Expiry: November 24, 2023

The Human Research Ethics Board (HREB) has reviewed and approved the ethics of the above research. The HREB is constituted and operated in accordance with the requirements of the UFV Policy on Human Research Ethics and the current Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2).

The approval is subject to the following conditions:

1. Approval is granted only for the research and purposes described in the application.
2. Approval is for one year. A Request for Renewal must be submitted 2-3 weeks before the above expiry date.
3. Modifications to the approved research or research team must be submitted as an Amendment to be reviewed and

approved by the HREB before the changes can be implemented. If the changes are substantial, a new request for approval must be sought. *An exception can be made where the change is necessary to eliminate an immediate risk to participant(s) (TPCS2 Article 6.15). Such changes may be implemented but must be reported to the HREB within 5 business days.

4. If an adverse incident occurs, an Adverse Incident Event form must be completed and submitted.
5. During the project period, the HREB must be notified of any issues that may have ethical implications.
6. A Final Report Event Form must be submitted to the HREB when the research is complete or terminated.

*Please note a Research Continuity Plan is no longer required.

Thank you, and all the best with your research.

UFV Human Research Ethics Board

****Do not reply to this email****

Appendix B

Oral Reflection and Interview Question Protocols

Reflection and questionnaire will be carried out orally and an audio recording will be made with the permission of the participant. The recorded oral mode is chosen in order to tie together both Indigenous and western methods.

Initial & Final Meeting Questionnaire:

1. What is your current understanding of Indigenous Knowledge and worldviews? What significance do these terms have for you at this point in your learning?
2. What does incorporating Indigenous knowledge and worldviews look like to you in your future teaching career?
3. What is your understanding of decolonizing your teaching practice? How do you feel about taking on this task?
4. Describe your current level of confidence in incorporating Indigenous knowledge or worldviews into your lessons. What contributes to your level of confidence?
5. What questions or wonderings do you have about Indigenous knowledge and worldviews?

Added question for the final meeting is:

1. What changes, if any, have you seen in your own educational philosophy or approach to teaching after participating in this study?

Reflection questions for co-mentors (each time we visit and teach together):

1. How did today's lesson and experience in class make you feel? Why do you think you felt that way?
2. What did you learn today about Indigenous Knowledge and worldviews? How does this sit with what you currently believe or practice?
3. Was there anything that we could have done differently in our lesson? How and why would we do it differently next time?
4. What do you notice about our co-mentorship relationship? What benefits, drawbacks, successes, or discomforts are you experiencing?