

**Earth dance and fire song:
A journey towards transformative reconciliation in
nursing education**

By Joanna Fraser

MCE, University of Calgary, 2002
BScN, University of British Columbia, 1986

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

in the
Culturally Inclusive Place Based Learning Program
Faculty of Education

© Joanna Fraser 2022
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Spring 2022

Copyright in this work rests with the author. Please ensure that any reproduction or re-use is done in accordance with the relevant national copyright legislation.

Declaration of Committee

Name: Joanna Fraser

Degree: Doctor of Education

Thesis title: Earth dance and fire song:
A journey towards transformative reconciliation
in nursing education

Committee: **Chair:** Michael Ling
Senior Lecturer, Education

Vicki Kelly
Supervisor
Associate Professor, Education

Stephen Smith
Committee Member
Professor, Education

Evelyn Voyageur
Committee Member
Elder in Residence, Faculty, North Island College

Alanaise Ferguson
Examiner
Assistant Professor, Education

Dwayne Donald
External Examiner
Professor, Education
University of Alberta

Ethics Statement

The author, whose name appears on the title page of this work, has obtained, for the research described in this work, either:

- a. human research ethics approval from the Simon Fraser University Office of Research Ethics

or

- b. advance approval of the animal care protocol from the University Animal Care Committee of Simon Fraser University

or has conducted the research

- c. as a co-investigator, collaborator, or research assistant in a research project approved in advance.

A copy of the approval letter has been filed with the Theses Office of the University Library at the time of submission of this thesis or project.

The original application for approval and letter of approval are filed with the relevant offices. Inquiries may be directed to those authorities.

Simon Fraser University Library
Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada

Update Spring 2016

Abstract

Gilakas'la, Nugwa'am Joanna Elizabeth Fraser. I was born in East Africa to parents of European ancestry. I have been an inhabitant of the West Coast of Canada since I was two years old. This inquiry offers a vision for co-creating healing learning spaces for transformative reconciliation in nursing education. Oriented by Indigenous research methodologies, I draw from métissage and, portraiture to share the story of finding *ya'xan yiyakwima* (my gifts from the Creator). Starting with finding *ya'xan dligam* (my name), I ask who I am in relation to the places and people who I have learned from. In finding *ya'xan k'angextola* (my blanket), I ask where I am from as I weave, unweave and reweave understandings of what I have learned as a nurse and as an educator. In finding *ya'xan yaxw'anye'* (my dance), I ask where I am going and share my experiences from over 13 years of co-facilitating immersion learning field schools in remote First Nations communities. Finally, I share the learnings of my inquiry for educators more generally as I find *ya'xan k'amdām* (my song) and ask myself why I am here.

My learnings from the field schools are about following the lead of Indigenous people, orienting myself to relationships and always seeking out wellness. These learnings are applied to nursing education more generally as my inquiry leads me through three landscapes: bearing witness, being an inhabitant and becoming Indigenist.

Transformative reconciliation happens when we *naki'stamas* (make things right) and *tlaxwalapa* (lift each other up with love). We can do this through living in relationally accountable and ecologically reciprocal ways. My lessons are of the *Sisiutl*, seeing everything in complexity, and of the *he'istalis* (world around us) experiencing everything as relationship. Ultimately, my vision is to reimagine nursing and nursing education so that we can heal ourselves, each other, and the land to become *synala* (whole).

Keywords: Transformative Reconciliation; Nursing Education; Indigenous Pedagogy; Land Based Learning

Dedication

To my mother, Susan Fraser, in memory of our ancestors who teach us belonging

To Tsikwi (Seagull) Fabian Johnson, in memory of our children who teach us freedom.

Acknowledgements

Gilakas'la. I am grateful for the land that nurtures me and has always been my greatest teacher. I am grateful to the people who have reciprocally nurtured the land. Those that were here before me, those that are here now and those that are yet to come. *Gilakas'la* to the people of the Wuikinuxv and Dzawada'enuxw Nations who have welcomed me into their homes and communities. Words can not express the gratitude I have for your generosity in sharing your way of living, your stories and your knowledge with me and those who have travel with me to live and learn in your communities. I would like to give a special thank you to Carla Voyageur who helped me with learning and writing the Kwakwaka'waka language.

I would like to thank my family, friends, students and colleagues. Each of you have committed to finding a path towards Truth and Reconciliation in Canada and you have supported me in finding mine. You have been my greatest inspiration. I am especially grateful to my three daughters, Katrina, Amanda and Janine. You have each offered me your particular wisdom and given me a reason to keep on writing. *Gilakas'la*, Rory, my husband, who has been there for me in every way possible. Thank you, Sally Kruger, and Alison Thompson for proof reading. I could not have done this without all of you and your constant support.

I want to express my gratitude to all the faculty and staff at SFU who have been a part of my journey as a student. I am especially grateful to the cohort of “sisters” who have walked along side me in this learning journey. My life is so much more meaningful for having each of you in it. We did this together!

It is with all my heart and with love that I want to thank the *ni noxsola* (wise teachers) who's knowledge is integral to who I am and everything I have written. *Gilakas'la* Evelyn Voyageur, you have taught me to listen more carefully, care more generously, and speak more loudly. *Gilakas'la* Paul Willie, you have been a constant and patient guide in understanding *ya'xan yiyakwima* (my gifts from the Creator).

Finally, I would like to thank my academic supervisor, Vicki Kelly and committee members, Stephen Smith and again Evelyn Voyageur for giving me the permission to write this dissertation in a way that helped me find my “soul work”.

Table of Contents

Declaration of Committee	ii
Ethics Statement	iii
Abstract	iv
Dedication	v
Acknowledgements	vi
Table of Contents	vii
Chapter 1. <i>Dłigam</i>: Becoming Myself.....	1
1.1. A Calling	1
1.2. Finding Ya'xan <i>Dłigam</i>	16
Chapter 2. <i>K̄angextola</i>: Becoming a Nurse	29
2.1. Finding Ya'xan <i>K̄angextola</i> as a Nurse	30
2.2. Unravelling Ya'xan <i>K̄angextola</i> as a Nurse	35
2.3. Re-Weaving Ya'xan <i>K̄angextola</i> as a Nurse	51
Chapter 3. <i>K̄angextola</i>: Becoming an Educator	69
3.1. Finding Ya'xan <i>K̄angextola</i> as a Nurse Educator	70
3.2. Unravelling Ya'xan <i>K̄angextola</i> as a Nurse Educator	82
3.3. Re-Weaving Ya'xan <i>K̄angextola</i> as a Nurse Educator	95
Chapter 4. Ya'xan Ȳaxw'anye': Learning to Dance.....	104
4.1. Finding my Style	105
4.2. Learning the Moves	114
4.3. Moving With Grace	119
Chapter 5. Ȳaxw'anye': Dancing Together.....	128
5.1. W̄akes (Frog) Dance	128
Interlude	132
5.2. U'ligan (Wolf) Dance	132
Interlude	136
5.3. Buffalo Dance	137
Interlude	141
5.4. Ḡala (Bear) Dance.....	142
Interlude	144
5.5. An Earth Dance	144
Chapter 6. <i>K̄amd̄am</i>: Singing Together.....	146
6.1. Learning to Sing	146
6.2. Following the Lead of Indigenous People	147
6.3. Orienting Through Relationships	157
6.4. Seeking Out Wellness	165
6.5. Experiencing Discord and Singing in Tune	172
6.6. Raising our Voice	179

Chapter 7. <i>Ya'xan Kamdām</i>	181
7.1. <i>Ğilakas'la</i>	181
7.2. Tuning into the Lyrics	184
7.3. A Fire Song	192
7.3.1. Bearing Witness	194
7.3.2. Being an Inhabitant	200
7.3.3. Becoming Indigenist.....	203
7.4. Dancing my Song	209
7.5. <i>Halakas'la</i>	224
References.....	232

Chapter 1.

***Dłigam*: Becoming Myself**

A Calling

In the moaning endless moaning of a tired tired sea
Hear the groaning on old boards of wood and slime
And the creaking easy creaking of the rigging endlessly
In the darkness of a day gone by in time

Hear the murmur, soulful murmur of
the salty sticky air
and the whining of taught wires through the night

Hear the calling distant calling of a seagull lost somewhere
through your yearning endless yearning for a bite.

Joanna Fraser (1980) Written after spending a summer fishing with my father on his commercial trolling boat.

1.1. A Calling

It was on an unusually crisp and sunny spring day in 2006, on the banks of the Cowichan River, that I was to find my purpose. This dissertation is ultimately my sharing of that purpose and what I have learned on my journey towards realizing it. I was sitting at a conference table in the Quw'utsun Cultural Centre listening to Dr. Evelyn Voyageur, *noxola* (wise teacher) give a keynote address on the health effects of Residential Schools. I had only recently met Evelyn although her reputation as a nurse who advocated fiercely for her people in the Kwakwaka'wakw territories was well known to me. Beside me was Wuikinuxv Chief Frank Johnson. Frank had traveled from his home

community, which is located up the long arm of Rivers Inlet and rests on the bank of the Wannock River. He had come to the workshop via seaplane and then remote roads. His trip was fraught with the unpredictability of spring weather on the West Coast of British Columbia. His hope was that, this time, someone would listen. The fact that he still had hope required extraordinary resilience given his people's experience of generations of racism, colonial violence and systemic oppression. Frank was visibly angry at the lack of adequate health services that the Wuikinuxv had received and the resulting tragedies that the community had faced. I was a nurse educator, only just becoming aware of the extent of my white, Euro-western privilege. I was experienced enough to know I had a lot to learn and naive enough to think I had something to offer.

We were at a workshop entitled *Integrating Culture into Practice*, attended by health directors and nurses working in Indigenous communities. The workshop's intention was to develop a "guiding framework...to be used as a tool for Aboriginal communities/organizations to create their own criteria/indicators for cultural competency to support improved recruitment, orientation and retention of nurses, and to contribute to culturally safe and effective delivery of services" (Smye, 2006, p. 31). I was a facilitator of this workshop and I was learning from Frank firsthand about the challenges and barriers that remote communities face in receiving any, let alone adequate, nursing services. When Frank got up to speak at the conference he started with our title, *"Integrating Culture into Practice"*. He stated, "the problem is you have it all backwards and it's time for you to start thinking about integrating your practice into our culture!" (Johnson, 2006). These words startled and provoked me. I was awakened to a new level of insight into my own ethnocentricity. I realized in that moment how I blindly and naively considered myself and my role as a nurse at the center of all my professional relationships. Up until this moment I had thought that my practice was "patient centered" because I had endeavoured to focus my nursing encounters on the patients' or clients' needs and interests. What I realized was that the encounters themselves, and my role as a nurse in these encounters, had to be reconsidered. What I needed to do was to place the people I was working with, and the land they live on, in the center of my relationships. What I had been doing is thinking that my role as a nurse was the central reason for our relationship. In that moment, I was being held to account. I made the choice to take responsibility for becoming aware of my own ethnocentricity and the privileges that my personal history afforded me. I needed to learn how to integrate my

practice into the “life-world” of the people and communities I was working with, not the other way around. Although this realization seemed simple in that moment, it led me on a path of unlearning and relearning much of what I thought I knew as a person, as a nurse and as a nurse educator. It led me to bearing witness to the deeply ingrained and systemic power differentials and social forces that had shaped every aspect of my life. I was being held to account to engage in a process of *conscientization* (Freire, 1993), starting with decolonizing myself.

After Frank’s appeal to the conference, we sat together and talked about how we could integrate our practice into the culture of his community. He invited me to bring nursing students to learn in his remote community. Evelyn Voyageur, Frank Johnson and I put our heads and hearts together. It was the birth of an idea - and a responsibility - that led to what are now immersion learning experiences for nursing students located in remote First Nations communities. These immersion learning experiences began as part of an advanced nursing elective in North Island College’s BSN program: NUR 410 Health and Wellness in Aboriginal Communities. The course includes a seven-day field school, originally designed for fourth-year nursing students. However, other faculty members, students, and health professionals from across a variety of disciplines have also participated. The experiences include learning in the Bighouse¹, in the community, in people’s homes, and on the land. They are Indigenous-led, wellness-focused and land-based learning experiences.

Central to my story of transformative reconciliation is my relationship with Dr Evelyn Voyageur, who is *noxola* of the Dzawada’enuxw, an Elder in Residence at North Island College (NIC), a nurse, and a scholar. Evelyn has been integral to (and instrumental in) the development and facilitation of all the immersion learning experiences we have developed at North Island College. Also important is my relationship with Evelyn’s brother, Paul Willie, who is *noxola* of the Dzawada’enuxw and works as tribal leader in the Wuikinuxv territory. Paul worked with us in the development of the first immersion learning experience, a field school in Rivers Inlet. He has supported the Wuikinuxv community in being our guide and teacher while we are there. Both Evelyn and Paul have provided me with insight and guidance throughout this

¹ The Bighouse is a place of governance and ceremony used by Kwakwaka’wakw people.

inquiry. I raise my hands to these *ni noxola*, I am grateful for their mentorship and friendship every day, because of them, I walk in the world in a better way.

This inquiry is about a journey of transformative reconciliation in nursing education. I share my personal experiences of transformation as a nurse, educator and inquirer working with Indigenous people in Indigenous communities. Ultimately it is the story of being relationally accountable to the people and communities about what I have learned, how it has changed me and how I can be useful as a person who has been given a rare and special gift by sharing it in a good way. I will braid the story together as a *métissage* in order to illuminate the connections and contradictions within my inquiry. At times I write as a scholar, an educator, and a nurse. I also write as a child, friend, mother, daughter, or any combination of the identities that have made me who I am. Métissage, as I will explain in more detail later, is a way of revealing and exploring the tensions inherent in complex relationships, without having to give authority to one perspective over another (Donald, 2012). Through the use of *métissage*, I will share how, as a nurse educator working with Indigenous people, I have engaged with decolonization and transformative reconciliation. My intention is to address the quintessential question frequently asked by nurse educators, who, like me, largely reflect a demographic of Euro-western cisgender women, with a strong sense of social justice: How do we meaningfully and respectfully engage in truth and reconciliation? It is a simple question without a simple answer. We are uncertain about our role because we do not know how to engage in healing relationships without recreating the power dynamics that have supported the system that gives us agency and a voice with the power to silence others in the first place. (de Leeuw et al., 2013; Smith, L.T., 2020).

My response is to share my story and the learnings I have had from facilitating the field schools. I share my ongoing journey of becoming awake to and healing myself from a legacy of colonialism. I then share a vision for transformative reconciliation in nursing education. It is a healing vision that comes from my relationships and through my experiences. I understand the idea of becoming awake as it is described by Meyer (2008). She writes (as a Hawaiian scholar) about being awake to the higher spiritual forms of inquiry that open our minds to what is significant and our hearts to having the courage to discuss it (2008, p. 229). Meyer states that “To disagree with mainstream expectations is to wake up, to understand what is happening, to be of service to a larger whole” (p. 299). Brazilian educator Paulo Freire’s (1993) ideas of conscientization as a

praxis, a process of reflection, and action leading to radical social change, is a form of becoming awake. I am becoming awake, I am on an exquisitely beautiful and painful journey of transformation. I share it to be accountable to all those that taught me and to be of service to all those who walk on this journey with me. I share it because we all need to heal and what I have been on is a profoundly healing journey.

I hold my hands up with gratitude for everyone who walks with me on this journey towards transformative reconciliation. I envision us walking up a steep West Coast forest terrain eventually reaching the alpine where we can see the horizon in every direction. Yet when we reach the alpine, we must leave the path laid out by the forest floor in search of our own route. My route starts with becoming awake to my own colonization and, through the forces of colonization, to the scope of my disconnection from the human and more-than-human world. It takes courage to walk this path. I am vulnerable in this unknown landscape. I must trust others to lead, even when I think I know the way. If I seek only my old entrenched paths, I will go astray. It takes fortitude to pick up the load, even when over and over again I trip on the uneven ground. I am aware of those I walk with who carry the load every day, those that carry the heaviest burdens, those that, because of who they are, can never put the burdens down. I write with gratitude for all those who help to bear the load. Together we push on up the steep terrain towards freedom and belonging for all our children and our children's children.

An important moment for me on the path towards transformative reconciliation was while I was sitting at a faculty meeting with a group of nursing instructors at North Island College in 2003. A question was asked about who could and should teach an elective in "Aboriginal Health" and I tentatively looked up from the table and made eye contact with the person asking the question. I was afraid to look up because, if I did, I would be responding to a request to step into a place I may not belong in and may not know how to be in. The problem was that none of the nurse educators sitting around the table identified as Indigenous, and none of us felt qualified to teach a course in what was then commonly referred to as Aboriginal health. This lack of Indigenous nurse educators continues to be a problem in nursing education generally. There is also an associated problem with how nurse educators without Indigenous identity should meaningfully and respectfully engage in what is also commonly and problematically referred to as the "Indigenization" of nursing curricula. However, in 2003 we were being asked to teach a nursing elective in Aboriginal health. It took some courage to step into the uncomfortable

and unknown, but eventually I realized, if not me, then who? Before I accepted the challenge, I felt compelled to talk to an Indigenous nurse, Phyllis Jorgenson, who had mentored me in a previous job. I told her what was being proposed and how uncomfortable I was with taking it on. After listening to me for a while she asked, “Are you seeking my permission to teach this course?” (P. Jorgenson, personal communication, May 4, 2003). I had not realized until that moment that that was exactly what I was doing. Eventually, I did take on the course. I began teaching in the typical seminar style with a course outline, learning objectives, weekly readings and focused discussions. Phyllis came to every class and brought with her different members of the community she was from to speak and share their knowledge with us. I was paid well for my role as a college instructor but there were minimal resources provided for me to compensate Phyllis or the knowledge holders she brought with her. I had much to learn, but I knew things needed to change. I still had no idea how that fateful moment, when I raised my head and stepped into the uncomfortable and the unknown, would profoundly shape my future.

Realizing that I needed to change what I was doing in the Aboriginal Health elective but not knowing how, I decided to start with what I knew and so I took a community development approach. I brought people who had an understanding of Indigenous health and nursing education together to learn from each other. Indigenous nurses, nursing faculty and nursing students from across the North Island met at NIC in 2005 at an inaugural meeting of what was to become the Learning Circles for Aboriginal Nursing (LCAN). LCAN's vision became “Staying Connected to the Circle...Changing Hearts”. Eventually we included communities and educational institutions from across Vancouver Island. Our mission was the creation of culturally safe learning and practice environments for students, nurses, clients, communities and institutions on Vancouver Island (LCAN Memorandum of Understanding, 2008). The relationships and understandings I developed through these discussion circles led me on a path towards transformative reconciliation.

It was through the learning circles that I eventually ended up in a conversation with Evelyn Voyageur and Frank Johnson at a nursing conference on the banks of the Cowichan River. After Frank's suggestion that we bring nursing students to his community to learn and with Evelyn's guidance we began to find a path for doing so. We began by developing both personal and official relationships between NIC nursing and

the Wuikinuxv community. Paul Willie, who lived in the community and held a leadership position there, was instrumental in helping us to navigate the official community processes with the Chief and Council at the time. He also helped us to understand the specific context of navigating our relationships with the Wuikinuxv community. I remember him often reminding me to come as a person first and then as a nurse. I also remember long phone calls with the Community Health Representative and Health Manager. Often the conversations would seem unrelated to our purpose but yet I would find them enriching as I developed new friendships and understandings of what life was like in a remote First Nations community. NIC supported our relational work as both the Dean of Health and Human Services, Jocelyne Van Neste- Kenny and the Department Chair of the BSN program, Betty Tate, had an understanding of the importance of the ground work in developing new types of relationships with Indigenous Communities. They helped us to navigate the tensions in developing new ways of doing things within the institution. The director of Indigenous Education, Vivian Hermanson was instrumental in practical ways such as finding funding to support our endeavors. She also provided invaluable teachings such as reminding me that the community has protocols and standards that need to be respected. It took me a while to learn what she specifically meant by community protocols and standards as they were not as evident to me as the written policies and standards of North Island College or the regulatory body for Registered Nurses.

Eventually with the help of visionary leaders from within the Indigenous communities and the Educational institution, Evelyn and I began the journey of developing field schools by visiting the Wuikinuxv and Dzawada'enuxw communities together. I share the story of my first visit to the community of Wuikinuxv in Chapter Five. After developing relationships and understandings between individuals and organizations, we brought the first group of fifteen students, a combination of practicing nurses and nursing students from across Vancouver Island, to live and learn with the Wuikinuxv community for a week in 2007. The immersion learning experiences occur as part of a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree offered by NIC. NIC is a small college, located on the northern end of Vancouver Island, where I work as a nursing instructor. I will share learnings from the journey of facilitating field schools in more detail in Chapter Five and Six.

As I write this, I can feel the momentum building towards creating a more inclusive future with Indigenous people in Canada. In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC): Calls to Action (2015) published its final report, which set the stage for a national conversation leading to increased awareness of the injustices faced by Indigenous people in Canada. Through the commission the general Canadian population developed a higher level of social awareness about the extent of the inhumane practices and levels of violence that were inflicted on Indigenous people. The colonial project required the dehumanization of Indigenous people in order to subjugate, control and disenfranchise them from their land. The commission went as far as to state that “the establishment and operation of residential schools...can best be described as cultural genocide” (TRC, 2015).

Since this time, further incentives have resulted in a greater commitment, by Canadians at large, to work towards a more just future. The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal upheld the rights of Indigenous people when it ruled (on January 26, 2016) in favor of the First Nations Caring Society and the Assembly of First Nations’ claim that First Nations children living on reserve were discriminated against (Government of Canada, 2016). As a nation, we are painfully working our way through the findings of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (n.d.) launched in September 2016. There is ongoing momentum supporting the grassroots movement of *Idle No More*, which calls for “people to join in a peaceful revolution, to honour Indigenous sovereignty, and to protect the land and water” (n.d.). The Government of British Columbia passed legislation in November 2019 which supported the TRC framework for reconciliation through implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP, 2018). The Federal Government brought UNDRIP into force on June 21, 2021 with the intention of renewing its relationship with Indigenous peoples (Government of Canada, 2021). The courts have held Provincial and Federal governments to account with numerous decisions upholding the rights of Indigenous people to meaningful consultation and accommodation that is commensurate with the degree of any infringement on the use of traditional territories. The expansion of pipelines across Canada has received rigorous attention and has generated debate focused on the rights of Indigenous communities to have a meaningful say in the outcomes.

The Great Bear Rainforest agreements, pertaining to 6.4 million hectares of land in Northern British Columbia, were established by the Province working in partnership with participating First Nations in 2016 (Province of British Columbia, n.d). They established new and unprecedented protocols for forest stewardship, which include additional requirements for meaningful consultation and the protection of 85% of the forest from logging. The British Columbia school system has restructured the Kindergarten to Grade 12 curricula. The new curricula aims to be more flexible with a focus on higher level learning. In the process, the B.C. school system has also committed to address historical wrongs and acknowledge historical truths. Importantly one of their five main foci include the integration of Indigenous perspectives and knowledge (BC Minister of Education, n.d).

Since the TRC in Canada, there has been a noticeable change in the general consciousness within the country. I have noticed the change in students, who start their nursing education with an increased awareness of the inequities faced by Indigenous people generally. However, the movement towards reconciliation has been slow and at times, as voiced by many Indigenous communities, disingenuous and ineffective. Unless we address and redress unequal power relations and policies that espouse inclusivity of Indigenous populations, we will do little more than legitimize the power that is already inherent in our institutions. As pointed out by de Leeuw et al., (2013) the good intentions of academic institutions in decolonizing and Indigenizing themselves are more than likely to lead to unintended harms. I will discuss the paradox of the nurse educator's role in attempting transformative reconciliation work in more detail in Chapter Seven. It is these unintended harms that leave us struggling to imagine a reconciled future or to see a path that will take us there.

Nurses, nurse educators and academic institutions all have a responsibility to engage in reconciliation with Indigenous people in Canada. The TRC of Canada addressed nursing schools specifically in the 24th Call to Action which states:

We call upon medical and nursing schools in Canada to require all students to take a course dealing with Aboriginal health issues, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, and Indigenous teachings and practices. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism. (TRC Report 2015, p. 323)

Addressing this Call to Action in postsecondary institutions is a challenge in classrooms where Eurocentric values are firmly embedded in the institutional structures, processes and forms of accountability constructed for learning (Cote-Meek, 2014; Hampton, 1995). What is required is a willingness to value indigenous knowledge systems in their own right without being compared to or judged by other knowledge systems (Battiste, 2013; Smith, L.T., 2012). As Sandra Styres (2019) points out:

Indigenous thought is crucial in education as it decenters dominant Western notions of what constitutes legitimate knowledges and knowledge creation, while centering Indigenous thought as a distinct knowledge system with its own understanding of rational thought and the ways one is deeply, intimately and spiritually connected to the lands and to all creation (human and non-human/ animate and non-animate). The point is not to replace dominant Euro-western thought but that the two can co-exist in mutually egalitarian and sovereign relationships. (p. 40)

The words “legitimate” and “distinct” are important descriptors of Indigenous knowledge, as is the idea that it can coexist in an egalitarian and sovereign relationship with Euro-western knowledge. What this means to me as a nurse educator will be examined in more detail in subsequent chapters. First, we can begin to address the TRC Calls to Action through engaging in a process of decolonization and becoming awake (Meyer, 2008). Together we can bring to light and address the neo-liberal and neo-colonial assumptions embedded in institutions of health and education (de Leeuw et al., 2013). When we do this, we can begin to imagine a path towards transformative reconciliation.

Justice Sinclair (2014), the chief commissioner of the TRC, stated:

In order for any society to function properly it must raise and educate its children so that they can answer what philosophers such as Socrates and Plato, and Aboriginal Elders call ‘the great questions of life’. Those questions are: Where do I come from? Where am I going? Why am I here? Who am I? (p. 7)

He states that answering these four questions are the primary responsibility of education in reconciliation. This inquiry is based on asking myself these four questions. I will discuss these questions through one of the teachings I learned from Paul Willie (2007) in our first field school in Rivers Inlet. He taught us that we are given four *yiyakwima* (gifts from the Creator) for our life journey: *dligam* (name), *kangextola* (blanket), *yaxw'anye* (dance) and *kamdām* (song). When we are born, we forget these *yiyakwima* (gifts from the Creator) and begin our journey through life to find them. Ever since I first learned

these teachings, they deeply resonated with me and informed my practice. With guidance from Evelyn Voyageur and Paul Willie, these teachings have become the lens through which I view much of the learning of this inquiry journey. Thus, I have offered them here as a way to orientate my inquiry. The four gifts from the Creator have become the central hermeneutic imagination for my doctoral journey.

I remember the first time I heard about the four gifts. It was in the Wuikinuxv Bighouse, the house of Nuakawa, during the first field school in 2007. We were sitting in a circle next to the fire listening to *noxso/a* Paul Willie who was gifting us teachings from his worldview. While I listened to him, I needed to take my shoes off so that I could be directly connected to the earth floor under my feet. What I was hearing and experiencing during that first field school was so profoundly moving for me I would often find myself shaking with energy. Without realizing how I knew it would help I sought out ways to be enveloped by the natural world. I would often go and sit by the river letting the cold water run through my fingers and then I would splash my face and ask the river to help me wake up to what was happening around me. I asked the water to teach me to see more clearly how everything is connected. Often when I was walking, I would stop to lean against a tree and think about all that I was doing and learning. I would place my hand on its trunk and look up into the towering branches when I needed to make a decision. Then with a couple of quick pats on the rough bark I would leave feeling grateful and sometimes even saying out loud “O.K. I’ll give it a try”. As I wandered around the village beside the river my pockets became filled with small smooth stones that I fingered throughout the day. I began to receive the teachings that would guide me on the journey towards finding *ya’xan yiyak’wima* (my gifts from the Creator).

It was after the field school on another walk, this time on the beach close to my home, that I was in deep thought about what Paul’s teachings meant for me. The waves were rhythmically pushing up against the rocky shore moving and sorting the debris that floated around there. Even here on these shores far from the Wuikinuxv village there are traces of the water I ran my fingers through in the Wannock River. I was marveling at my growing understanding of the relationship within all things. As I walked on the water’s edge, I thought about Paul’s teachings of our gifts from the Creator and how they related to what I understood of the world. When I got home, I drew a circle in my journal and tried to make sense of it all. Around the circle I wrote the words for the four gifts; name, blanket, dance and song. Then I wrote the four important questions we must all ask

ourselves; Where do I come from? Where am I going? Why am I here? Who am I? Eventually I tried to add words that came from my Western understanding about knowledge. I was trying to understand the relationship between the four gifts from the Creator and words such as epistemology, ontology, axiology and methodology. There was both connection and tension between the words as I looked at them and moved them around on the page. This image and my understanding of the four *yiyakwima* (gifts from the Creator) have continued to change as I have come to learn more over the course of my relationship with Indigenous and Western philosophy. It was 10 years after that first field school, and 10 years since I had first started grappling with how Indigenous and Western world views influenced my own understandings of reality, that I realized *ya'xan yiyakwima* (my gifts from the Creator) had become an orientation for my own scholarship. I had finished the course-based work of my Doctorate and was formulating the first proposal for what would become this dissertation. I was unsure about how or if I should use an Indigenous teaching in my scholarship. I asked Evelyn and Paul for guidance. They generously met with me in a restaurant close to the college and I shared with them what I was hoping to do. Once again, I found myself seeking permission. I was given another teaching. Gifts from the Creator belong to everyone, and therefore they belong to me too. However, I can only write about what I know and experience in the world. I hold no claim to understand the meaning of the *yiyakwima* (gifts from the Creator) other than what I have come to learn over time. I continually ask for guidance and understanding as I find and share my journey towards understanding what the four *yiyakwima* (gifts from the Creator) mean to me. Please take what I share with you in this dissertation in the context of who I am becoming and what I have humbly learned. Please use only what is useful to you in the context of who you are and what you know. I endeavor to be accountable to the people who have taught me and the communities I serve when I share my understanding of the four *yiyakwima* (gifts from the Creator) as a way of orientating my inquiry and the lessons I have been gifted.

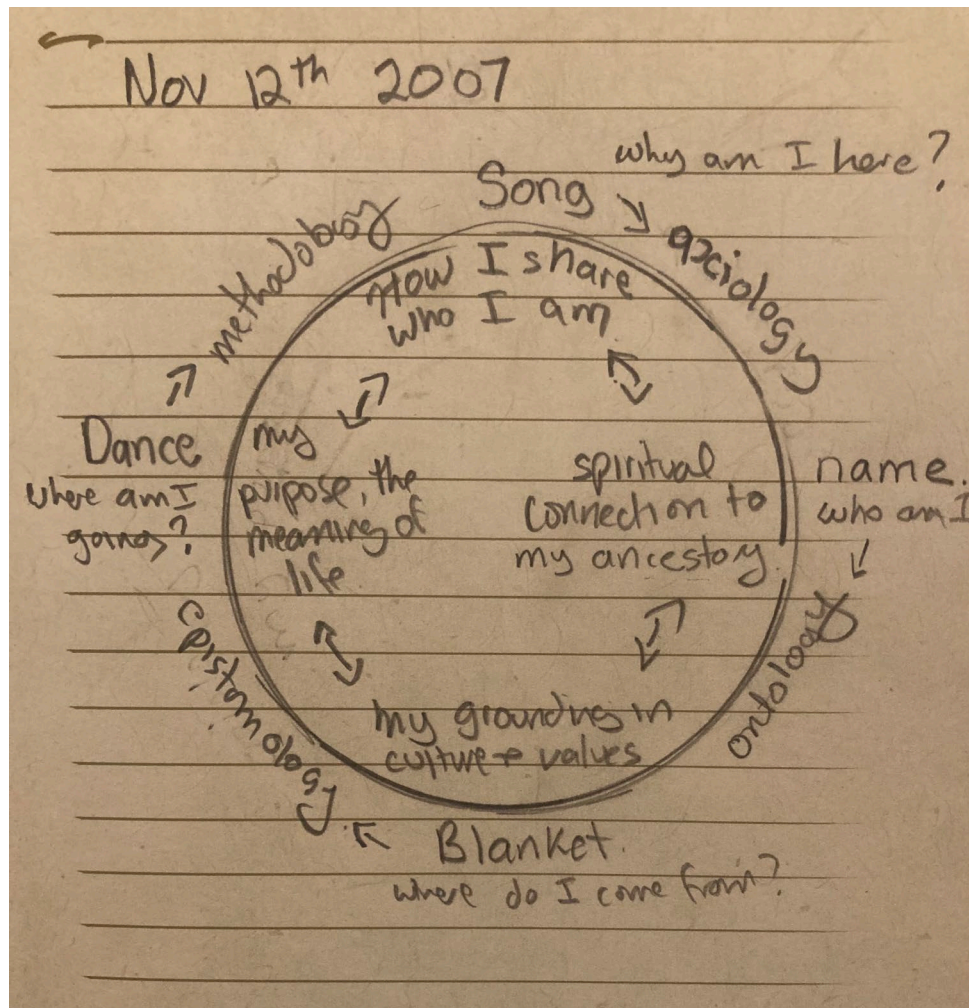


Diagram of beginning understandings of the teachings from Paul Willie related to the four gifts from the Creator (November 12, 2007)

As I originally learned from Paul Willie, (2007; 2019) understandings of the four *yiya'kwima* (gifts from the Creator); *dligam* (name), *k'angextola* (blanket), *yaxw'anye* (dance) and *kamdām* (song) are interdependent and interconnected. As I have come to a deeper understanding of these profound teachings, they have become a part of who I am, permeating every aspect of my practice. I understand finding your *dligam* (name) as a journey towards understanding your identity or your being. It is about a spiritual connection with your ancestors that relates to the ontological question: Who am I? I will explore *ya'xan dligam* (my name) as I locate myself and my ancestry in relation to my inquiry in the first chapter of this dissertation. My journey to find *ya'xan dligam* (my

name) is focused on my experiences of both privilege and oppression, and how my identity is transformed through my relationships within these experiences.

I understand finding your *k'angextola* (blanket) as a journey towards understanding your cultural location and worldview. It is about understanding the foundation of your beliefs and values. It is the “becoming” part in relationship with the “being” part of the human experience. It is about the epistemological question: Where do I come from? I will explore *ya'xan k'angextola* (my blanket) through weaving, unweaving and reweaving the story of becoming a nurse (in Chapter Two) and a nurse educator (in Chapter Three). The weaving is a métissage of the experiences and theoretical underpinnings of my practice as I become awake to the forces of colonization and possibilities for transformative reconciliation.

I understand finding your *yaxw'anye'* (dance) as a journey to realize your purpose, a journey towards spiritual connection to the universe. It is the methodological question; Where am I going? “What is my purpose and how do I find it? I will explore *ya'xan yaxw'anye'* (my dance) in Chapter Four and Chapter Five. In Chapter Four I share my methodology for approaching this inquiry. I will explain how I have been oriented by Indigenous research methodologies, originally guided by portraiture and then métissage to engage in an idiosyncratic process. Eventually I settled on life writing as a method which led me to experience my journey as a form of transformative inquiry. In Chapter Five, I continue with life writing as a métissage of my experiences as a facilitator of the field schools. My intention is to draw on the process of life writing as described by Chambers et al., (2012) in enough detail to uncover the essential learnings that have occurred for me so that I can share them with you.

I understand finding your *k'amdam* (song) as sharing your purpose with the universe. It is about answering the fourth question: why am I here? For me, finding *ya'xan k'amdam* (my song) is an ethical question about how to be in the world. It is the axiological question: how do I fulfill my purpose and share my gifts in a good way? I will explore *ya'xan k'amdam* (my song) in Chapter Six and Chapter Seven, as I share what I have learned from co-facilitating the immersion learning experience and what I have learned through this inquiry. I hope to share my journey in a way that is useful for all of us who are finding our way on a path towards transformative reconciliation. Chapter Six focuses on the teachings I have been gifted and what I have learned from participating in

and facilitating immersion learning experiences. Chapter Seven continues my journey through sharing a vision for the transformative reconciliation of nursing education generally. My story is one story in a multiverse of stories that are being told, all with the potential to heal ourselves and our communities from centuries of disconnection through colonization. If we listen, hear, and learn from the stories that are being told, we can reconnect ourselves to each other, to the land, and to everything. It is our relationships that have the power to heal us on the path towards transformative reconciliation.

This dissertation is a story of finding *ya'xan yiyakwima* (my gifts from the Creator); *ya'xan dligam* (my name), *ya'xan kangextola* (my blanket), *ya'xan yaxw'anye'* (my dance) and *ya'xan kamdam* (my song). It is a personal story of revealing the exquisitely beautiful and painful healing journey that I am on. At the same time, it is a communal story. It is a story of and vision for transformative reconciliation in nursing education that has been gifted through a web of relationships. I know that what I have learned through these relationships is important, it is a sacred gift. I am compelled to share what I have been gifted in a way that is useful to others. What I have been searching for is a way to share these gifts that is accountable to the place where and the people with whom I live, learn and work, even though my ancestors are not from here. My challenge is that the learnings are embedded in the context of and relationships from which they have been gifted. How do I share them in a meaningful, respectful and accountable way with others who have not had the same experiences and who are not accountable to the same people and places that I am? I am also uncertain about my right to share a story that is not wholly my own. Just as those of us who have Eurocentric privilege must ask how to respectfully and meaningfully engage in reconciliation, I continue to question how I can share this story and the teachings in an ethical and useful way. For me, this means helping to carry the load of transformational reconciliation, while tripping over the terrain but trying not to take up the space of what rightfully belongs to my Indigenous mentors, teachers and friends. By offering my learnings I am hoping to be useful to particularly those of us who work in education and health care. My story is part of a far greater story of transformative reconciliation in Canada.

The calling I hear in the poem I wrote as a child and shared at the opening of this chapter, is of a seagull's lonely voice, echoing across a wide ocean. The seagull is calling other seagulls to come together and be nourished by the sea. I hear the yearning

in a seagull's call and am reminded of Bach's (1970) iconic story of *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*. It is a yearning to both belong and to be free. Ultimately, the seagull in Bach's story fulfills his potential through becoming love. I believe that we are all searching for a way to come together, to heal from the wounds of colonization and to be nourished by love. Through sharing the story of my journey towards transformative reconciliation, I hope to illuminate a vision for nursing education that hears this call for healing and responds to it with love. I am grateful that you are willing to spend this time with me. I am grateful that our journeys have found this meeting place. If we were resting by a fire sharing our thoughts, as our ancestors have done for eons, we would see and hear the fire crackle and spark as we talked. The fire would keep us warm and draw our gaze inward towards the flames. We would feel transfixed, witnessing matter as it is turned to energy. We would taste and smell the smoke as it seeped into our clothes, our hair, and our nostrils. We would be transformed by each other and our time together. This is the hope I have for our journey towards transformative reconciliation. This is my offering. It is an earth dance and fire song.

1.2. Finding *Ya'xan Dłigam*

Beyond the garden gate
Along the little lane
Across the railroad track
And down the stairs again
To where the road goes down
To meet the age-old sea
Sits upon a log
My grandmother and me.

Joanna Fraser (1976) Written for my grandmother on her birthday

I have been taught that every relationship must start with an introduction of who I am and where I come from. In order for you to make meaning of my words, you must come

to know me and how I make meaning of my world. This is the story of finding my identity in relation to others or, as I have been taught finding *ya'xan dligam* (my name).

My ancestors are of European descent, predominantly English, Irish, Scottish and Dutch. Those on my maternal side traveled as missionaries to what would become known as Bathurst, South Africa in 1820. They were part of the British government's plan to establish an English-speaking colony in the Cape area that would defend the eastern frontier against the Xhosa people. My paternal grandfather arrived on the African continent more recently; shortly after the First World War. As a British subject, he was looking for opportunity and the ability to swim in a warm climate year-round in order to heal his war injuries. He married my grandmother, who came from a farming community in South Africa. Her mother was Dutch (Afrikaner) and her father was a Welsh builder. I have fond memories of sitting at my grandmother's kitchen table as a child listening to her stories of feeding British soldiers from food stored in an underground sawdust fridge during the Boer war. I wonder now how she was caught up in the complexities of conflicts as the British rulers spread their colonist ambitions throughout much of the world. My grandmother met my grandfather in Uganda. She was sent there as an escort for her older sister, who was going to visit her fiancé. My paternal grandparents were married in Kampala, Uganda in 1921. Uganda was a British colony at the time and my grandfather became the leader of the non-government officials on the Legislative Council.

My father, Hugh Malcom Fraser, who was raised in Uganda, East Africa, met my mother, Susan Margaret Murray Thompson, who was born in Thaba 'Nchu, South Africa, on a blind date in London. They had both been sent to England to further their education. They were married, moved to Nakuru, Kenya and farmed on the Rift Valley Escarpment until the establishment of Kenya's independence from Colonial rule in 1964. I was their third child, born in Nakuru, a place in transition, at a time of unrest.

I was named Joanna Elizabeth Fraser, after the nurse who attended my birth and my Maternal Grandmother. At the time, Kenya was still considered a British Protectorate, but the independence movement (which was to become known as the Mau Mau uprising) was well underway. The Nakuru hospital where I was born is located on the eastern edge of Kenya, close to the Ugandan border. It was being run at that time by the British Army. True to the traditions of military culture, my mother was given a specific

time to arrive for my birth. Ready or not, I was to be delivered at the convenience of the hospital staff and administration. Prior to my arrival, a preparatory bath was being run, and everything was going according to plan. However, Africa has a rhythm of its own. Just then, a train arrived from across the Ugandan border carrying a large load of foreign nationals who were fleeing the political conflict in the Congo. The brutally controlling Belgium government had collapsed the year before and the tension between foreign nationals and African political factions was mounting. As the evacuees arrived in town, the hospital staff rushed down to the railway tracks to help. The hungry passengers were being offered *mbembe* (The Kikuyu word for corn on the cob) to eat. The food was refused by the foreign nationals who considered mbembe to be fit only for feeding the pigs. Meanwhile, my mother waited patiently at the hospital to deliver her baby. Unfortunately, by the time the staff returned to the hospital, the bath had overflowed and the hospital was flooded. Another series of desperate attempts were employed to gain control of the situation. I was eventually born in an oxygen tent, which was considered a revolutionary birthing practice at the time. What I now realize, as my birth story comes to life for me in the retelling of it, is that I have been destined to find my purpose in disrupting the colonial agenda ever since my birth.

My parents supported the Kenyan Independence Movement (KIM), but they were also potential targets of the Mau Mau freedom fighters and resistance movement. Although we lived under the protection of a colonial government, my parents told me stories of the fear they lived with during the Mau Mau uprising. A particularly poignant story for me was the one about a night shortly after Kenya gained independence, when the Mau Mau warriors came to our family farm. The Kikuyu farm workers all disappeared; it was dangerous for them. My parents were alone with their three young children. It was not unusual for white farmers to sleep with firearms under their pillows at this time. My parents grabbed their protection and went to the door. I can't imagine the fear they felt at that moment. I do have a picture in my head of the Mau Mau warriors standing in a circle on the lawn dressed in war paint carrying *pangas* (machetes). What my parents saw may have been quite different. As my father opened the door to go and meet the warriors, he said to my mother "cover me". My mother, who must have been terrified in that moment, misunderstood his command and immediately took off her white night dress and threw it over him. I don't know what the warriors thought when the door opened and what appeared before them was a farmer, apparently trying to pose as a

ghost, and a stark-naked white woman standing beside him. What happened next was that my parents were told that it was time to leave the farm. Shortly after that, they sold the farm for a dollar to the Kikuyu people who had worked the farm all along. They moved our family, along with my paternal grandmother, to Canada. It was through later research on the Mau Mau that I was to find out about the systematic way the British government attempted to colonize and forcibly control the Indigenous African population (Elkins, 2005). I learned that the stories about the Mau Mau freedom fighters brutally murdering the family members and employees of European held farms were greatly exaggerated. Elkins (2005) describes how the stories were skewed by the colonial powers and how they also neglected to mention the large number of Indigenous Africans that were killed and incarcerated by the colonial government and its agents. These distorted stories were part of my own family's experience of colonization.

My parents often express both nostalgia for their time in Kenya and remorse for leaving a country when it most needed the support of its allies in the transition to independence. Memmi (1965) who first named colonization as the driving force behind racism in Africa, describes these experiences of cultural dissonance in the struggle for independence and the legacy of colonial power structures that occurred (and is still occurring) throughout Africa. While my family supported the Kenyan Independent Movement as European settlers, they found that, as predicted by Memmi, "there was no place for them" in the immediate aftermath of Kenya's Independence. They told me that neither side wanted them there; neither the Africans who were seeking independent control, nor the Europeans who remained engaged in a destructive struggle for power. Memmi (1965) predicted over 50 years ago that ineffective and corrupt local government and legal structures would inevitably fill a vacuum left by colonial power. My parents found that life became too unsafe and difficult as the infrastructure established and maintained by the British Government broke down. They described how, for example, roads were not maintained between the white farming communities and the cities. The African people had no need for the European road system, as they had their own means of transportation between their own homesteads. My mother told a story about driving into an ambush on a remote farming road. Fearing for her life and mine, as I was just a baby at the time, she drove right through the car doors that had been opened in front of her to block her passage. My parents left Kenya as a result of the destructive aftermath that followed the transition from colonial rule and the development of a new social order.

Countries in Africa that were colonized by foreign states continue to struggle with forming effective and unprejudiced legal and governmental structures. It is from hearing these stories from an early age that I have developed a deep appreciation for the complex effects of colonization on the relationship between people who identify as Indigenous, those that don't, and those who occupy the spaces in between. It is through my family's experiences of dislocation and relocation that I have come to understand the significance of belonging to a place.

This is the backdrop of my understanding of colonialism, racism, and oppression. It is a complex interplay of relations on the micro level between individuals and on the macro level between societies and institutions. My family immigrated to Canada and arrived on Xwemelh'stn territory of West Vancouver when I was two years old. Contrary to the situation in Africa, where the Indigenous population far outnumbered the colonial population, in Canada the Indigenous population was set apart, hidden and, for the large part of my childhood, unaccounted for in my experiences of community. I was told that we had come to Canada because it was a more egalitarian society that welcomed all people into the multicultural mosaic. Surprisingly, for a family that came from a place where the Indigenous people were a majority, I don't remember considering how, or if, the Coast Salish people were included in Canada's mosaic. Canada's own colonial history was to remain invisible to me for some time.

I grew up with an appreciation for the land and water around me. My parents were farmers in Africa, and they brought a connection to the land with them in the way we learned from, and paid attention to, the natural world around us. My childhood was spent on a large property where pathways wove natural areas together with gardens, fruit trees, small animals, chickens, and beehives. Our lives revolved around the seasons. We spent much of our time outside, undeterred by the West Coast rain or the chilly Canadian winters. In the summer, we would set off to the Gulf Islands where we slept in an old boat pulled up into the forest we called "the scow" while my family built a cottage. As soon as we arrived, I would head to my secret hideaway with the anticipation of greeting an old friend. There, in a small mossy clearing overlooking the sea, I would lie flat on my back staring up through the towering fir trees that filtered the hot summer sun. Breathing deeply, I would take in the moist smell of the rainforest mingled with the salty ocean air and feel such gratitude and joy for being alive. Then, when my body had soaked up the sun and the earth, I would run wildly to the water, barefoot over the

barnacle covered rocks, with moss dripping from my long hair, and plunge myself into the sea. It was a greeting ritual for me, a way to wash off the stresses of the past school year and embrace the freedom of the summer months ahead.

In the winter, I had another secret place at the bottom of a deep ravine that ran through the woods behind our house. There I could escape the demands of a school system with which I struggled and was able to find my own teachers. My favorite activity was to gather tree bark from the forest floor that I would imagine to be big wooden freighters. I would crew the boats with sailors, usually made of bracken fern leaves. Alongside the sailors, I would load a cargo of treasures found in the debris of the forest floor. When the boats were ready, I would send my fern leaf friends out to sea. There was an old hollowed out log that I used as a launch, sliding them at great speed into the middle of a swift creek. If they managed to remain afloat on their swirling and bobbing wooden rafts, I would cheer them on. "Tally ho! Tally ho!" I would call, secretly imagining that one day I would build a boat big enough for me to follow them out to sea.

I developed a sense of connection and belonging to the land and water from my mother and father. My mother was an early childhood educator. We would harvest wild food and collect natural materials such as shells, driftwood and clay for creative projects. I have fond memories of the tapestries I made with her from whatever we found on the beaches of what I would come to know as the Salish Sea. My father was a hydrographic surveyor and a commercial fisherman. From him I learned a love of the sea, and I would spend hours sailing a small sabot up and down the channel beside our summer home. The land and the ocean were my greatest teachers. I spent much of my time in a traditional school classroom yearning to be outside and, as a result, was chastised for a propensity to daydream. In the natural world my teachers were endlessly wise and patient, teaching me whatever and however I wanted to learn.

I grew up in relative privilege within a community that reflected my European and colonial ancestry. Even though I grew up in a family where topics of racism and social justice were commonly discussed at the dinner table, I had little awareness of the First Nation whose territory we lived on. I knew they lived on a reserve on the other side of the Capilano River. I could look down on what I perceived to be their older and disheveled houses when we would drive to town across the Lions Gate Bridge. However, who it was that lived "under the bridge" remained largely invisible to me. Years

later, as I drove across that bridge with *noxsola* Evelyn Voyageur, I was told that Native people were not allowed to come to the West Vancouver side of town. She told me that there was a law keeping Native people out. This was a moment of profound awakening for me. It is an example of how I began to become aware of the institutionalized marginalization of First Nations people around me and how this kept my own privilege invisible to me.

Although my conscious awareness of institutionalized or structural racism was to develop much later in my life, there is a story I remember from my childhood about becoming consciously aware of racism for the first time. When I was about 10 years old, we travelled back to Africa to visit my grandparents who owned a farm in the Eastern Transvaal of South Africa. On my grandparents' farm, there were lots of children my age, but they were Xhosa and lived in the workers compound down near the fields. We were kept separate from each other except for one young girl named Sophie who lived in the "servants" compound next to my grandparents' house.

Sophie and I did not speak the same language, but we had no difficulty figuring out how to play together. We would roll down the grassy banks behind the house and play hide-and-seek in the garden paths with lush vines and vibrant flowers towering over our heads. We taught each other tricks and games like cartwheels and hopscotch on the lawn beside, but never in front of, my grandparents' patio. One day Sophie invited me to her house behind the garden gate where we played a game on the dirt floor with sticks and stones. Behind that gate that concealed so much from plain sight I felt, for the first time in my life, uncomfortable in my own white skin. I could tell the adults, relaxing while not at work, did not want me there. I remember being told and accepting without critique that the farm workers' houses were built without floors because, "the Africans like it that way".

Later on during our visit, on one particularly hot afternoon when my relatives had all retired to their bedrooms for an afternoon nap, I asked Sophie to join me for a swim in my grandparents' grotto pool. A small stream trickled over a delicate rock garden at one end before falling into the pond of water sitting in the neatly manicured lawn just to the side of the house. Sophie sat on the edge of the pool dangling her feet in the water but not swimming. I remember how I splashed around showing off, ignorantly doing my best to tempt her in with me. I now realize how awfully aware she must have been about the

racial limits of her position in the home. Did she even own a bathing suit? Had she ever been taught to swim? I am taken aback now, even this many years later, as I think about this scene and my self-absorbed abandoned freedom, splashing in the cool water as she sat sweating in the hot African sun. I can't remember who told me that Sophie was not allowed in the pool because she was "black", however I do know that I looked at the world a little differently after that. I began to see racism where it had been hidden before, often in plain sight.

Although my experiences are primarily formed from belonging to a privileged white community, I was also subjected to various forms of oppression. My experiences of being discriminated against as a woman, an immigrant child, and a person with a disability have also played a part in my understanding of who I am. I remember the first time I felt that I didn't fit in at school. It was in grade one and I was just getting used to the idea of having to sit in rows and fill in workbooks. This was a challenging and unpleasant way for me to learn. For lunch that day, I had a homemade stick of *biltong*, a strip of dried beef prepared in the African way by my father. The meat would be bought in a big slab directly from the butcher. My father would cut it in thin strips and hang it to dry for some time around the hot water heater in our basement. When they were ready, the chewy strips of meat made delicious snacks for us to take to school. One day, after eating my piece of *biltong* in the wooded area of the playground, the children in my class thought it would be funny to tell the teacher that they had seen me eating a stick. I remember the sinking feeling I had as I sat at my desk in the middle of a row of desks, unable to explain what it was that I had done. Everyone's eyes were on me and I wanted to crawl into the dark cubbyhole and hide with my pencils and papers. I was punished by the teacher and the children that day in a way that taught me that to be different was not acceptable.

The feeling that I did not entirely fit in was amplified by the growing awareness that I was also living with a learning disability. I was constantly being told that I was not putting the effort into my written work that I should be. Understanding that I had the capacity to do better, my teachers called me lazy, told me to pay attention, and endlessly demanded that I stop daydreaming. No matter how hard I tried to please them, to fit in, and do what was expected, I always felt that I had failed. My thoughts would drift away from learning how to structure a sentence and wander off to something more interesting; like wondering where the ants that had formed a line on the windowsill were going.

There were many times that I remember being forced to sit in a small room filling in dreaded workbooks while my peers were outside during breaks learning and playing in the natural world. This is not an untypical story for people who had a learning disability in the 1970s. However, with the strong support of my family, who reinforced in me a belief in my strengths and abilities, I carried on successfully through the school system. Now I realize that these experiences of coming from an immigrant family and learning with a disability have given me many gifts as an educator.

My identity, like most people's, does not fit neatly into a single category such as oppressor or oppressed (Bishop, 2002, p. 5). I can choose to become awake to my own experiences of both privilege and oppression in order to connect more deeply with others. Connecting through our similarities does not mean that we are the same or that our experiences of oppression or privilege are the same in their extremity or their consequences (Wier, 2013). Rather, connecting through our similarities is a way of making meaning together (Wier, 2013, p. 78). In our relationships with each other, we are often creating a new understanding, a possibility for a new way of seeing ourselves and transforming the power relations between us.

I understand my identity as a relational becoming, rather than being contingent on a set of static attributes (Wier, 2013). Seeing identity as positional and contingent supports a hermeneutic that creates binaries and borders. It can be a form of othering and a tool for oppression. This is why labels such as "non-indigenous", "immigrant", "settler" (Ragen, 2010), "ally" (Bishop, 2002) and "accomplice" (Paul, 2017) trouble me. My identity (like everyone's) is much more fluid and my relationship to belonging is much more complex than being contingent on the assumptions of any single label or the binary that labels invoke (Jones & Jenkins, 2008). As Meyer (2008) states, we need a more dynamic way of understanding ourselves through universal ways of knowing (p. 224). She describes belonging as a connection to the spiritual, or the universal knowledge that is within all our ancient selves (p. 224). When describing who I am, I prefer the notion of orienting myself to the relationship as proposed by Jones and Jenkin (2008, p. 478). They resist using the binaries of safe and unsafe, ethical or unethical that can be easily applied to relationships from a Euro-western tradition. They also challenge the assumed power relations of "self" being the colonizer and "other" as being the colonized. During the field school experience, we were told by an Elder from the community that, "When you know you have full understanding of one another, and feel comfortable because you

have found yourself, you feel you belong” (Johnson, G. 2007). His words still resonate with me and have led me to new understandings of the fluidity of identity. Finding my name is a journey of coming to know my identity in relation to others. It is a fluid process of connection and belonging rather than a static process defined by binaries of difference and exclusion.

As much as I resist the use of labels, I also recognize the privilege I have in being able to choose, in most circumstances, not to label myself but to assume that I fit generally into the dominant norm. White privilege as Giroux (1997) explains “is both invisible to itself and at the same time a norm by which everything else is measured” (p. 309). I recognize the privilege inherent in the many labels that I may choose or am assigned. Being a woman over fifty from a Euro-western heritage, I represent the typical demographic of a nurse educator. I am comfortable with the feminist, Euro-western epistemologies from which nursing theory and philosophies are derived. However, my personal history and experiences as a nurse have led me to uncover and question many of the habits and assumptions I have made in my practice. I need also to be aware of the privilege I am afforded and the blind spots I have as a result of being identified as white and belonging to the social order of the colonizer. It is easy for me to slip into the position of racializing others and assuming my centrality in the dominant society by defining myself as what I am not, such as non-Indigenous (Gustafson, 2007). Although I may choose to use labels such as “immigrant” or “settler” to introduce myself in some situations, I remain uncomfortable with the way they both limit a full expression of who I am and make me uneasy by exposing the privileges I am afforded. Donald (2012) expresses this sensibility stating:

We need more complex understandings of human relationality that traverse deeply learned divides of the past and present by demonstrating that perceived civilizational frontiers are actually permeable and that perspectives on history, memory, and experience are connected and interreferential. The key challenge is to find a way to hold these understandings in tension without the need to resolve, assimilate, or incorporate. (p. 534)

I see my identity as a more fluid interplay of values, beliefs, and commonalities that are formed with and dependent on who I am in relationships with.

If I must identify myself, I do so through my relationships to people and land. I am an inhabitant of the West Coast of Canada who immigrated here as a child. I come

from ancestors who left their homelands in England, Ireland, Wales and Scotland many generations ago. They were farmers, doctors, builders, healers, missionaries, fathers, and mothers living in South and East Africa. They were all privileged players in the colonial agenda of dislocation and cultural genocide. As a young adult, I settled on my “own” land with my husband on the traditional territory of the Wei Wi Kai people. He, and as a result my three children, have deep roots in this place, called Canada. Their ancestors through multiple branches arrived in Canada and the West Coast as early European explorers. They also hold at least one distant and severed line of Indigenous ancestry. The stories of Canada’s early colonial relations are written with their blood. Together, we have built our home, our garden, our orchard and we have raised our three children on an Island in the Salish Sea. We have dug ourselves deeply into the ground. We have worked at reconciling our ancestry and our current relationships between the people and the land. My husband found his purpose as a forester and I found mine as a nurse. We have grown in this place that has taught us deep gratitude and profound responsibility. We have tried to live in a way that is accountable to the land that holds us all and with the people who have held onto the land since the first human inhabitants of this place.

Even as I express my discomfort with essentialist ideas of identity and see relational understandings as more meaningful, I am aware of a different stance that opposes this view and once again exposes the privilege I have in holding it. Coulthard (2014), for example, explains that essentialist views of culture that claim and name Indigenous identity can be important forms of resistance to colonial relations (p. 103). It makes sense that some groups may choose to label themselves definitively in order to position themselves as separate from and in opposition to the dominant norm. However, as Coulthard also points out, this form of essentializing culture can also be used to “other” groups within groups, such as women within Indigenous communities. The effect can be that power relations of identity and culture remain contested and positional within communities. Donald (2012) furthers my thinking with the argument that post-colonial ideas of hybridity that allow for the fluidity and complexity of culture and identity to mix in liminal spaces without boundaries can be problematic for place-based understandings of culture. He states,

While hybridity must be placeless in order to transcend the local particularities of Indigenous peoples who continue to maintain place-based

traditions, it must be acknowledged that this postcolonial preoccupation with contesting essentialisms ironically promotes the further colonization of places in the name of reified forms of postcolonial hybrid spaces” (p. 8).

It is in the very act of making abstract ideas of culture as being linked to a place concrete and geographically specific that Indigenous people can assert their rights against a colonial agenda of ownership. Donald and Coulthard make it clear that the lived experience of culture cannot be universally theorized and that an ethical relationship between Indigenous people and Canadians must transcend ideas of essentialism and hybridity. Donald (2012) states that “ethical relationality is an ecological understanding of human relationality that does not deny difference, but rather seeks to understand more deeply how our different histories and experiences position us in relation to each other” (p. 535). I am beginning to understand that building relationships across differences means recognizing the complex and often conflicting and chaotic relationships between people and ideas. While I view the process of understanding and disrupting settler identity as a critical aspect of transformative reconciliation, I also see the need for other paths to take us there.

Finding my name is a journey through the terrain of understanding who I am. As I was writing the stories of my past, I asked my mother, “Is this how it was?” She responded, “The way you remember your story is more important to who you are than the way I do.” I was born on the other side of the world at a time of unrest. I learned to see racism in plain sight, but I also learned that I have not seen much of what has been purposefully and persistently hidden. I grew up with great privilege but, in my own way, I have experienced a bit of what it was to be held apart for being different and to be thought of as inferior for what was perceived to be a disability. Through all of this, I have learned to connect through similarities and differences. I have come to understand my resistance to labels and my privilege in being able to do so. I have seen my identity as a relational becoming and a striving for belonging and freedom all at once. I have developed an ecological understanding of relationality through my journey of finding my name. I share my stories and my learnings of finding my name, blanket, dance and song with respect and gratitude for all of those who are a part of the journey and who, through our relationships, have become a part of me.

I will share my journey towards transformative reconciliation in my practice as a nurse in Chapter Two and as a nurse educator in Chapter Three. These journeys are

offered as a weaving, unweaving and reweaving of *ya'x̱an ḵangextola* (my blanket). They are about becoming awake to who I am and who I am becoming through my relationships and experiences with Indigenous people and teachings. In Chapter Four I share how I have continued to integrate these teachings into who I am becoming as an inquirer. This chapter offers what has become *ya'x̱an yaxw'anye'* (my dance) of my inquiry as I endeavor to be relationally accountable to the places and people who have gifted me with their teachings. In Chapter Five, I will share stories from the field school for nursing students in remote communities with the intention of illuminating the lessons I have been gifted through *ya'x̱an yaxw'anye'* (my dance) of experiences and relationships. In Chapter Six, I will offer these lessons of finding *ya'x̱an ḵamḏam* (my song) for co-creating Indigenous led, land based and wellness oriented learning experiences. Finally, in Chapter Seven, I will share a vision for transformative reconciliation in nursing education more generally. This is a *ḵamḏam* that includes traveling through the landscapes of bearing witness, being an inhabitant and becoming Indigenist. It is offered to the community of nurse educators and anyone who like me is on a journey towards transformative reconciliation. It is a fire song for the people and communities we serve.

Chapter 2.

***Kangextola*: Becoming a Nurse**

Extended Care

Behind that brown cardigan,
that polyester dress that I tucked you into,
your swollen feet with slippers slashed but still too small,
I see you stare at me.

Your empty face with worn and wrinkled skin,
your mouth sucked in for lack of teeth,
your pale tired eyes,

I see you stare at me.

Your hair brushed back and left like the one I sat beside you
and her

and her

and her.

Do you know they're there,
all dressed in ugly cardigans
tucked into clothes too old and drab to wear?

Do you know I see you?

Do you know I care?

She moans so much I never hear her anymore,
She talks so senselessly I never listen anymore,
she asks so constantly I never answer anymore,
but you just sit there and stare at me

and stare

and stare

and stare

Joanna Fraser (1982) written after my first summer of working as a nurse's aid in a long-term care facility.

2.1. Finding *Ya'xan K̓angextola* as a Nurse

My experiences as a child immigrant with a family that engaged in social justice in the form of feminism and multiculturalism, fueled my passion from a young age and led me towards becoming a nurse. I wanted to connect with and promote the equality and health of people and communities across all sectors of society. It was 1985, in my final year of a BSN program at the University of British Columbia (UBC), that my awareness of First Nations people had grown enough for me to finally become curious about the people living “under the bridge”. At the time I knew nothing about the people who I had seen living under the Lions Gate Bridge as we regularly drove to Vancouver throughout my childhood. Then in the last year of my Nursing degree I organized a practice experience working with the X̓wemelch'stn people of the Squamish Nation to develop culturally appropriate prenatal classes. Now I reflect back on the arrogance of my plan, as a 23-year-old, childless, white nursing student, to teach culturally appropriate prenatal classes to women from the Squamish Nation.

Despite my naive lack of awareness, I was given many gifts from this experience. One was the opportunity to talk to some of the Elders about traditional child-bearing practices of the X̓wemelch'stn people. It was my first opportunity to go onto a reserve and visit a person's home. I remember the wooden steps, a little overgrown with grass, and the cluttered porch strewn with the daily trappings of life, many of which were unfamiliar to me. I don't remember the details of my surroundings as much as I remember looking past them. I needed to gather courage by purposefully covering myself in the mantle of becoming a “professional nurse”. I walked up to the wooden door with peeling red paint and plywood nailed over broken glass. The woman who invited me in was small and friendly. She cleared some things off a nearby plastic chair so that we could sit together at a wobbly table. She made me feel comfortable right away. I sat and listened carefully. Even then, I sensed how extraordinary and significant this experience

would be. It was a foretelling of what becoming a nurse would mean to me. She was generous in her sharing of birthing practices, explaining how placentas were buried and why. I was full of compassion and gratitude when I left. At the time, I realized what a gift I had been given but I didn't give any thought to what I could or should have given back. I still had much to learn about my own cultural location, my blind spots, and the importance of reciprocity and relational accountability.

In stark contrast to the experience of visiting an Elder in her home, I also spent time researching the birthing practices of Indigenous people in the musty basement of the UBC's library archives. What I found in the banks of old catalog drawers, by sifting through plastic microfiche slides, was a few copies of the original journals from early male European explorers. I selected a few plastic films and took them to the light projectors where, in old English, I read the descriptions of the birthing practices of what Captain Vancouver called the "Indians who lived around Burrard Inlet". Many of the practices, such as burying placentas, were blatantly described as dirty and savage. The incongruences between the stories from the Xwemelch'stn Elder and what I found in the academic archives was startling. I was completely shocked by the arrogance, and the ignorance that was so evident in the early explorers' journals. My learning was immeasurable as I encountered the incomprehensibly incongruent accounts of history from these two different sources. This was another significant moment in my life, where I was able to perceive my own cultural location as being built on an understanding of history that was one sided and colonized. Certainly, through this experience, my passion for social justice and understanding myself in relation to First Nations people was awakened.

I still had much to learn about the process of decolonizing myself and understanding my own white privilege. It was easy to see the cultural bias and epistemic racism in the early explorers, but it took longer for me to see it in myself. What I came to understand is how white privilege allows me to ignore race-based discrimination in the everyday experiences I have and in the way that society is organized around me (Giroux, 1997; Gustafson, 2007). Through the ongoing process of decolonizing myself and becoming "awake", I have come to see more of the once-invisible advantages and discriminatory blind spots that being a white, middle class, educated Canadian has afforded me.

If, for example, I go to a hospital's emergency room for what I think might be a broken bone, and a person with a similar looking injury is rushed in ahead of me, I don't have to consider whether or not the decision was based on the colour of my skin. Furthermore, if the intake nurse asks if I have used alcohol or taken any drugs or medications in the last 24 hours, I am not going to have to consider whether or not my answer may lead to racialized judgments that could stereotype me as "drug seeking" based on the colour of my skin. It is well recognized that Indigenous people face discrimination in multiple ways when attempting to access the Canadian health system (Allan & Smylie 2015; McNally & Martin 2017). Recent exposure of racism directed towards Indigenous people accessing health services in British Columbia led to the appointment of an independent investigator on June 19, 2020, by Health Minister Adrian Dix. In November 2020, the release of the report *In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care* exposed widespread systemic racism against Indigenous people in British Columbia's health system (p. 6). Earlier public inquiries, such as the high-profile case of Brian Sinclair, revealed the extent to which racism in all its forms is ingrained within our health care systems. Mr. Sinclair died in the waiting room of a Manitoba Emergency Department after being overlooked for more than 24 hours (Court of Manitoba, 2014). Unlike those of us with white privilege, people who are identified as Indigenous, such as Mr. Sinclair, have to consider how race-based assumptions and discriminatory practices will affect the care that they receive (Allan & Smylie, 2015; Browne et al. 2011).

I have found it useful to conceptualize racism as having four general forms, although there can be many more found in the literature. These are interpersonal, systemic, epistemic and internalized (Allan & Smylie, 2015; Loppie et al., 2014; Reading, 2014). In the examples of accessing emergency departments above, all four forms of racism are at play. The patient, who is identified as Indigenous, faces the potential of interpersonal racism in the direct assumptions and interactions of the intake nurse leading to the risk of being passed over for necessary care. In Mr. Sinclair's case, there were assumptions made that he was homeless, intoxicated, and using the waiting room as a safe place to "sleep it off". None of this was true. Systemic racism is embedded in the policies and structures of the way access to the emergency room and treatment is organized. For example, systemic racism is at the core of the belief that social suffering is separate from, and less urgent than, the physical pain of a traumatic injury. Mr.

Sinclair's suffering was assumed to be less urgent than that of the other patients who were in the waiting room that day. Epistemic racism is present in the way people interpret their own experiences, such as the meaning of pain and the assumption that the body is separated from the mind and spirit in the way it is likely to be treated. Mr. Sinclair's death was recorded as being the result of "natural causes" with the primary cause being "peritonitis" (Court of Manitoba, 2014). The inquest revealed that the story leading to why he was sent to the emergency department to treat a bladder infection without a family member or advocate, and died there unnoticed, is connected to so much more than "natural causes". Internalized racism occurs when the patient internalizes racist judgments and accepts that their own health experiences are less legitimate than others. Many aspects of who Mr. Sinclair was, and how he would or would not advocate for himself in the system, were determining factors in his decisions when he went to seek care from the health system. There were also many race-based assumptions and judgments made by the health care providers he connected with on the days leading up to his death (Court of Manitoba, 2014).

What is important to the process of transformative reconciliation is understanding that the legacy of racism in all its forms remains imbedded in the way we view ourselves and others, in our institutional structures, and in our assumptions about what types of knowledge are valuable and considered to be "true" (Allan & Smylie, 2015; Loppie et al., 2014; Reading, 2014). As a nurse educator with white privilege, I am automatically afforded the ability to ignore the impact of race on my everyday experiences (Gustafson, 2007). I don't need to consider, and often do not even see, the way society is organized to my advantage. I can usually assume that my experiences and my view of what is normal and what is considered to be true is what all opposing views must be measured against (Giroux, 1997). In understanding my story of becoming a nurse, I need to uncover the historical and colonial repercussions of how I have been socialized as a nurse in order to decolonize and reconcile myself within the profession.

It is particularly important for me as an educator to consider how epistemic racism has influenced my understanding of the world, what is considered to be true, and what is considered valuable knowledge (Allan & Smylie, 2015). Considering the colonizers' view of what is true as superior to all other views has led to what Marie Battiste (2013) refers to as cognitive imperialism. It is the assumption that people of Euro-western heritage have the authority on what knowledge is valid, what type of

knowledge is valuable and how knowledge should be taught. Epistemic racism and cognitive imperialism have resulted in the ability to use “science” to establish faulty theory that one race is superior to another.

When I was in nursing school in the 1980s, we were still being taught that there were biological differences attributed to races that made one “race” of people, almost always the colonized, more susceptible to diseases than others, almost always the colonizers. Yet a paper submitted by UNESCO in 1952 clearly identified that the idea of race as a biological difference is based on scientifically unsound reasoning. A large international group of scientists from multiple disciplines, although in disagreement about the details of the “race question”, agreed that “those that seek a simple explanation of the differences observed between cultures will realize that neither the evidence nor ‘common sense’ is on their side” (p. 10). They recognized then that “race hatred and conflict thrive on scientifically false ideas and are nourished by ignorance” (p. 5).

Kelm (1998) later provided a comprehensive picture of how attributing the rampant increase in illness and death that impacted Indigenous people in British Columbia following contact to ‘natural’ causes meant that the culpability of the Europeans could be overlooked. Kelm (1998) writes how this logic was justified by the colonizer:

Meanwhile, medical science in western European and North American society became a “hallmark of racial pride” and a major component in the conceptualization of colonial “fittedness”: a “rational” basis, among others, for the right to rule. According to non-Native observers, the susceptibility of Aboriginal bodies to diseases associated with contact showed that they were unable to survive independently in the changing conditions of European global expansion. In such a view, Aboriginal populations around the world consistently showed themselves, through their bodies themselves, to need and deserve colonization. And it was through colonization and the associated dual mechanisms of “civilization” and medicine that these indigenous populations could ultimately be saved. Both the diseases and their cures justified colonization in a perfectly circular logic. (Kelm, 1998, p. 101)

The profound epistemic racism within this flawed perspective and its logic are still used to explain and justify the health inequities experienced by Indigenous people today. In nursing education, we continue to perpetuate a neo-liberal, behaviorist ideology that implies that there are “natural” differences between racialized groups, if not biological then behavioral, that make Indigenous people more susceptible to illnesses. We attribute

the high incidence of illnesses in Indigenous people (such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases) to poor lifestyle choices or risky health behaviors. We make reference to the higher incidence of addiction, family violence, and other health risks that are experienced by Indigenous people, without always making clear connections to the underlying social determinants. Even when looking at the social determinants, we often focus on factors such as education, employment, and housing. We overlook the historical, political, and ideological drivers that are ingrained in the way that our society is structured in the first place (Reading, 2018). Such a deficit view negates the potential for resilience, resurgence, and sustained vitality that is also present in Indigenous communities. Unless we are willing to consider different interpretations of health and different understandings of social organization from Indigenous perspectives, we will continue to perpetuate epistemic forms of racism on Indigenous people.

I remember *noxso/a* Evelyn Voyageur's response to Health Canada's plan for centralizing obstetrics care and having mothers relocate from remote coastal communities. The report referred to high morbidity and mortality rates generally. Her response was, "You would think we are dying all over the place" (E. Voyageur, personal communication, June 24, 2009). There was little conceptualization of the community's understanding of health, wellness, spirituality, and holism that could substantially enrich a healthy birth experience. It is evident that the social construction of race, coupled with racism and Euro-western ideologies of the causes of illness, has contributed to the health inequities experienced by Indigenous people and communities in Canada (Blanchet Garneau, Brown and Varcoe, 2018). What I had been taught as "scientifically sound evidence" is now recognized as flawed science used to promote a colonial agenda of social hierarchies. What I still needed to learn (or, more accurately, unlearn) was that epistemic racism was ingrained in the way I understood my world, in what I have been taught to believe as true, and on where I should focus my attention as a nurse. An important question I have been grappling with in my own journey of decolonization and transformative reconciliation is: How do I know what I know?

2.2. Unravelling *Ya'xan K'angextola* as a Nurse

My personal struggle to uncover the effects of colonialism on my way of knowing parallels an ongoing and existential struggle in nursing philosophy generally; reconciling multiple, and at times conflicting, theoretical paradigms. Fundamentally there is a

tension between rationalism, with the search for a universal truth, and idealism, with the desire to uncover multiple truths. Traditionally, nursing is grounded in an idealistic philosophy that depends on interpretive and pragmatic knowledge for decision-making (Bevis & Watson, 1989, p. 16). However, nursing, in its struggle to gain credibility as a health profession has over time privileged rationalistic philosophy grounded in positivist and empirical knowledge traditions (Bevis & Watson, 1989, p. 16).

Some would argue that nursing had its origins in the Victorian era with Florence Nightingale, who is often referred to as the founder or mother of modern nursing. Nightingale was a Victorian English woman from the upper classes, who tenaciously, and against the social norms for women at the time, decided to put her education in “the classics” to a useful purpose (Arnone & Fitzsimons, 2015, p. 157). She established nursing as a career for middle class women during the Crimean war and later started the first school of nursing in Europe (McDonald, 2014, p. 1437). Nightingale, who was strongly influenced by the ideas of Plato, employed empirical knowledge to instigate rigorous observation, recording and measuring of health outcomes in the practice of nursing (Arnone & Fitzsimons, 2015). It was the resulting ability to assess, to apply interventions, and to evaluate and demonstrate the measurable health benefits of nursing care, which gave nursing its credibility (Attewell et al., 2010). Nightingale also established a military-style organizational and a disciplinary hierarchy within the hospital system that was effective within the context of the Crimean war and Victorian era (Arnone & Fitzsimons, 2015; McDonald, 2014). Nursing has, from the time of Nightingale, established its credibility through the use of empirical science and rationalist philosophies within a context of misogynistic hierarchies.

Nightingale also established principles within nursing that fit within an interpretive paradigm (Attewell et al., 2010; McDonald, 2009). She is known for having a more holistic view of health than the reductionist biomedical view that continues to dominate health sciences (McElligott, 2010, p. 251). Although relationships between health care workers were militaristic in style, she valued patient centered relationships for nurses (Arnone & Fitzsimons, 2015, p.159). Her interventions were considered revolutionary because she saw people and their health in relation to their environment and recognized the importance of social context on health (Arnone & Fitzsimons, 2015, p. 158). She often spoke up against the unilateral focus on curing illnesses, an approach that was as omnipresent then as it is now. She was considered revolutionary for her ideas about

preventing disease and promoting healthy environments. Nightingale is known for establishing social justice and health promotion as core tenets of nursing practice (Arnone & Fitzsimons, 2015, p. 158; McDonald, 2014, p. 1437). The symbolic importance of Nightingale as the “Lady of the Lamp” has become so central to our image of nursing that we rarely consider how rooted Nightingale’s story is in nursing’s experience of colonization. Nightingale was an upper-class Victorian woman who was able to use her white privilege to navigate the church and the patriarchy. She was able to establish a place for women in the institution of providing health care, albeit one that was subservient to the male dominated medical profession.

Nursing, since Nightingale, has been and continues to be a threat to the patriarchy’s control over the body, mind and spirit, and to medicine’s self-proclaimed right to be in control of individual and societal level decisions about health and wellbeing. Even now, there remains an attempt to bring Nightingale’s revolutionary ideas under control and into disrepute in the extensive scholarship and writing done about her work (Small, 2000). Hugh Small (2000) a historian who has written extensively about Nightingale, expressed this well in a letter to the editor of *The Times Literary Supplement* (TLS). He commented that “Depreciating Nightingale’s 50 years of work as a social reformer appears to be a low risk pursuit, presumably because Nightingale is an outlaw who at every turn threatens to demolish the ‘great man’ theory of history (Small, 2000, p. 15)”. On the one hand, Nightingale is a victim of the patriarchy and cognitive imperialism, and on the other, she and her ideas (as taken up by modern nursing) are a tool of these systems.

Nightingale’s story is a powerful one that has shaped what nursing has become, but this singular story has also limited our vision. What has been lost is a multitude of other possible stories. The story of Mary Seacole, who also cared for soldiers during the Crimean war, has been put forth by many historians as a juxtaposition to the single story of Florence Nightingale. Mary Seacole’s story is noteworthy because she was born in Jamaica to a British soldier and a Jamaican mother. She was considered a business-woman during the time of the Crimean war. She set up a “hotel” to care for wounded soldiers and treated them with ‘medicines’ or herbal remedies learned from the Creole tradition through her mother. Her treatments were found to be particularly effective against infections. Canadian Historian Lynn McDonald (2014) proposes that Seacole’s story was taken up widely during the 1990s, at a time when nursing was trying to rewrite

its history with a more culturally inclusive one (p. 1437). She proposes that Seacole's work should be considered more in line with the practice of medicine (curing) and less involved with the development of nursing's theoretical beginnings (caring and health promotion) (p.1439). McDonald makes a valid point backed up by extensive research, however she does not go as far as to question how what we consider a nurse to be has been shaped by colonial history in the first place. What other stories of people who were healers or carers, beyond those with their roots in European worldviews, have been silenced due to our preoccupation with the single story of Florence Nightingale in our identity as nurses?

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) opened my eyes to my colonized view of history through her book, *Decolonizing Methodologies*. She demonstrates the colonial impacts of the modernist project that sees time and place as moving linearly in Europe from an Age of Darkness to an Age of Enlightenment (L.T. Smith, 2012, p. 112). The primary assumption of this view is that "people lived according to myths and stories which hid the truth or simply were not truths" until the Age of Enlightenment (L.T. Smith, 2012, p. 112). The social construction of this age posits that "history could be recorded systematically and then retrieved through recourse to written texts. It was based on a linear view of time and linked closely to progress. Progress could be measured in terms of technological advancement and spiritual salvation" (p. 112). L.T. Smith goes on to explain how this conception of time and space is a powerful tool of colonization because it "assumes that there was a point in time that was prehistoric" (p. 112). She describes how "The point at which society moves from prehistoric to historic is also the point where tradition breaks from modernism. Traditional Indigenous knowledge ceased, in this view, when it came into contact with "modern" societies, that is the West" (p. 112). Grosfoguel (2007) points out three major assumptions by the colonial project in its construction of a knowledge hierarchy (p. 214). The first, predominantly attributed to the 16th century, was to see societies without writing as inferior. The second, predominantly attributed to the 18th and 19th century, was to subjugate "people without history". In the 20th century "people without development" were commonly categorized as inferior. Now, in the 21st century, a case can be made that we claim the superiority of societies with democracy (Grosfoguel, 2007, p. 214).

It is important to consider how colonial views of history continue to lead to the subjugation of Indigenous people and the perceived credibility of their knowledge. As

L.T. Smith, (2012) states, “coming to know the past has been part of the critical pedagogy of decolonization. To hold alternative histories is to hold alternative knowledges” (p. 81). There are many alternative stories to the single story of Florence Nightingale that could be told about the health promoting and healing potential of our relationships with each other and the land.

Understanding and reimagining the history of nursing is an important part of decolonizing myself. Recognizing who I consider a nurse to be and what I think a nurse should do, is regulated and limited by a colonized view. Nursing historian Kathryn McPherson (1996) points out how universal categories such as nurse, doctor, and midwife have been determined through a specific historical context. She states that we need to “rethink the boundaries of the categories of nurse and, therefore, to re-conceptualize what is included under the rubric of nursing archives” (pp. 118-119). By the time Europeans began to colonize the Western world, the “Lady of the Lamp” was well established as the singular story and a powerful symbol of nursing.

I realized that part of my own process of decolonization consists of looking for alternative stories. For many centuries before Nightingale, healers around the globe passed on knowledge from one person to another, generation to generation, family to family, practitioner to apprentice. Much of this knowledge combined spiritual and cultural understandings with careful observation and experimentation, which was consistent with early scientific thought (Ehrenreich & English, 2010). As early as the 13th century in Europe, the church and state began an intentional and systematic attack on this type of healing knowledge because it was outside of their control (Ehrenreich & English). Threatened by the use of science and the bodily senses to gain knowledge and authority, the church deemed healers to be heretics (Ehrenreich & English). This was also a convenient way for the state to maintain control over the peasantry during the development of the feudal system across Europe. During this time, also known as the “Dark Ages” in European history, witch hunts were used as a tool by the patriarchy of the ruling class primarily to control the woman peasantry and their “heretical” knowledge (Ehrenreich & English). The staggering genocide that occurred for more than four centuries strained the survival of traditional European healing knowledge and forced what remained of it to be hidden.

Meanwhile, the medical profession was beginning to establish itself largely under the control of the church, and solely to serve the ruling classes (Ehrenreich & English, 2010). Medical schools excluded women and lay people and promoted the ideologies of the Catholic and Protestant church (Ehrenreich & English). Ironically, early medical schools taught that bodily knowledge derived from observation of the bodily senses was heresy (Ehrenreich & English). Only God, as interpreted and controlled by the church, was considered to have the power to cause and cure illnesses (Ehrenreich & English). It wasn't until Europe began to have contact with the Eastern world for trade that new understandings of scientific knowledge and worldly influences on the health of the body began to take hold in medical schools (Ehrenreich & English). However, by then the authority of knowledge focused on disease and curing the human body was exclusively the domain of men and the upper classes (Ehrenreich & English). After over four centuries of tyranny in Europe, what was left of traditional and woman's healing knowledge was formally sanctioned only as long as it remained subservient to what was considered the far superior knowledge and authority of the exclusively male terrain of medicine. Nursing became the only sanctioned place for a woman to practice healing knowledge in the form of caring for the sick. Nightingale's writing is important because it is a record of nursing's connection to "folk" wisdom. She wrote about the importance of the environment in healing (McDonald, 2009, p. 577). She recognized the importance of connections between the body, soul and mind for healing. She also encouraged a wide range of healing modalities to be incorporated into the nurse's role. An excerpt from *Florence Nightingale's Notes on Nursing: What It Is and What It Is Not & Notes on Nursing for the Labouring Classes*, republished in the 2010 commemorative edition, stated:

I use the word nursing for want of a better. It has been limited to signify little more than the administrations of medicines and the application of poultices. It ought to signify the proper use of fresh air, light warmth, cleanliness. Quiet and the proper selection and administration of diet - all at the least expense of vital power to the patient. (Part 2 p. 3)

Nightingale is well known for having a holistic view of healing that incorporated multiple types and sources of knowledge from a variety of traditions (McDonald, 2009). However, it is also important to consider how Nightingale's ideas of holism were influenced by her indoctrination into Euro-western thought and her education in the Greek classics. As commented on by L.T. Smith (2012) "Early European societies

would not have made much distinction between human beings and their environments. Classical Greek philosophy is regarded as the point at which ideas about these relationships changed from naturalistic explanations to humanistic explanations” (pp. 100-101). As I will discuss in more depth later, nursing has established itself through humanistic values that fundamentally separate humans from the natural world and put humans on a higher plane because of our ability to reason. Part of decolonizing ourselves and becoming inclusive of Indigenous worldviews will be uncovering alternative histories with deeper understandings of holism that can also hold naturalistic ways of imagining our realities and our relationships. As stated by McGibbon et al. (2014):

Nursing has developed within all of the...contexts of colonization, including the intersections of racism and sexism that inform the colonial project. Embedded beliefs and assumptions provide a foundation for the colonizing of intellectual development in nursing. Similarly, racism and white privilege play a central role in the continued colonization of the profession. (p. 183)

The profession of nursing has had a role in the systematic oppression of Indigenous healing knowledge and in the oppression of Indigenous people. While nursing has struggled against the oppressive forces of the Church and State to find its authenticity and legitimacy within a Euro-western colonized world, it has also been complicit in taking up the role of oppressor (McGibbon et al., 2014).

In Canada, the development of nursing as a profession was considered to be influenced by the French Catholic nun and the British Nightingale Apprenticeship models (Wytenbroek & Vandenberg, 2017). There has been little regard in the recorded history of how or if nursing has also been influenced by other healing traditions that were already being practiced when the Europeans arrived (Wytenbroek & Vandenberg, 2017). Burnett (2010) has written about the experience of Indigenous healers working with European settlers during the late 19th to early 20th century in Alberta. She uncovers the paradoxical and hidden potential of multiple stories during the period of white settler colonialism on Aboriginal land. European diseases were sweeping through Indigenous communities and missionaries and settlers needed to learn to survive in unfamiliar and, for them, harsh living conditions (Burnett, 2010). People, particularly women, who had the primary responsibility for health, healing and childbirth, depended on each other and their shared healing knowledge for survival (Burnett, 2010). The very survival of the early missionaries, settlers and health care

providers was dependent on the Indigenous people and their knowledge of the land when they first arrived in the Indigenous territories (Burnett, 2010). As a result, many Indigenous people and their healing knowledges have contributed to, and been appropriated by, the Euro-western contemporary health system.

Kelm, (1998) in her seminal work on the colonization of *Aboriginal Bodies in British Columbia* made some important points about how the institution of health care professionals and their knowledge were later used as a powerful tool of colonization. The colonial project systematically discredited both the general healing knowledge of the Indigenous communities and the specific responsibilities of the people in those communities who were acknowledged for having unique gifts and abilities (Kelm, 1998). The goal was to replace traditional healing knowledge with Euro-western medical knowledge in order to control the Indigenous population (Kelm, 1988). The pattern was the same as that which was used to control the peasantry from the 13th century and onwards in Europe. Kelm, (1998) gives an example of the story of Dr Higgs, who worked in Lytton B.C. in the 1920s and was trying, unsuccessfully, to save the life of his young Indigenous assistant “Danny”. Danny’s grandfather was considered a knowledgeable healer in the community and he opposed Euro-western medicine and missionary work generally. Referring to Dr Higgs’ unpublished manuscripts, Kelm writes that “Higgs explicitly stated that his medical techniques were intended to undermine the authority of Native people not only as healers but also as leaders who opposed assimilation” (p. 105). Higgs was concerned with the saving of Danny’s life not only as the “prize” but also as the “reward to repay the loyalty of the greater majority of the Indians” (p. 105). He was concerned that, if Danny should die, then “some of his relations who fought against his coming to the hospital would be cruelly contemptuous of our efforts” (p. 105).

Health was used as an authority for and a justification of the cruel and assimilationist policies that supported the colonial agenda. For example, Potlatch bans, which were intended to destroy the communities’ political systems, were justified on the premise that they were unsanitary gatherings that bred and spread disease and infection (Kelm, 1998). Under the pretext of “modernization” the colonizers’ ideas of what was considered appropriate domestic and personal hygiene were used to control and subjugate the cultural and health practices of Indigenous peoples (Bennet, 2010). Residential schools and the removal of children from their families, intended to destroy Indigenous people’s social systems, were rationalized on the basis of the colonialists’

belief that they had a superior ability to care for the children's physical and spiritual health (Kelm, 1998). Regrettably much of the harm done to Indigenous people was carried out under the guise of "doing good". Medicine was a powerful tool of persuasion used to justify the actions and assuage the conscience of the health professionals who were complicit in the process of colonization.

History as it written largely by colonial perspectives, only tells partial and incomplete stories. I wonder what other stories may have existed in the complex relationships that were developed between explorers, settlers and Indigenous people during and following contact. It is likely that these relationships were complicated by the hardships experienced and at times contingent on the survival of individuals and families. I wonder if it is a romantic notion to imagine two woman healers from separate worldviews and traditions sharing their knowledge in order to care for their families and communities? Evelyn talks about her grandmother who was a well-known healer and midwife for her people. Sadly Evelyn's grandmother, or any of the descendants that were taught by her grandmother, would not be considered qualified to practice as a midwife under current health care regulations. I wonder how much better we would be at living well on the land if we had recognized the vitally important knowledge and experience that Indigenous people hold?

Instead we are left with a legacy of racist policies and practices that have often severed Indigenous people and communities from their own abilities to care for and heal themselves. First, there was a systematic destruction of healing knowledge and systems that had been developed over generations to be in synergy with the local environment (Kelm, 1998). Health services provided to Indigenous people across Canada have been consistently inadequate and underfunded (RCAP, 1997). McBain (2012) did a study of nurses working with Indigenous communities during the 1940s. She described stories of horrendous working conditions, ill prepared nurses and underfunded services. She concludes:

The nurses sent to northern isolated communities to provide healthcare services were provided with inadequate support in terms of working and living arrangements. The nursing stations were often ill-equipped, there was no culture or language training, transportation and communication systems were at times inadequate and unreliable, and there was little if any professional support. (p. 323)

She also makes the link between nursing services and the racist policies of the colonial agenda stating:

Clearly, the nursing stations were part of an overall plan to “modernize” the region and improve conditions for the primarily Aboriginal population. However, the resources required for funding construction and support of the outpost hospitals were in direct competition with government plans to fund the construction of Uranium City, a community whose sole purpose was the mining of uranium carried out largely by non-Aboriginal employees relocated from outside the region. (p. 313)

The colonial modernization agenda created the deplorable living conditions and poor health experienced by Indigenous peoples and, at the same time, perpetuated the dependency of Indigenous people on inadequate health and social services that were purported to “support” them.

There were further trends in the modernization of health services in Canada that had negative impacts for Indigenous people. One was the urbanization of populations generally, which included the centralization of health services and resources. Another related trend was the move from community-based home care to the hospital-based acute care focus for nursing services. Both of these trends have amplified the impacts of colonialism by separating nursing care and people generally from being in relationship with the natural world (Avery, 1996). This separation has further contributed to the anthropomorphic conceptualizations of holism and holistic patient care by nurses. Likewise, it has led to a lack of ecological understanding of our interdependency with the natural world in nursing theory development. It is likely that at the time of nursing’s inception when Nightingale was conceptualizing the environment as one of the four metaparadigms of nursing that our human connection to the natural world was more inherently experienced. Avery (1996) argues that returning to place-based and ecological understandings of nursing theory is also a returning to nursing’s roots. There has been a great deal of theorizing about how disconnection from the places we inhabit has supported a colonial agenda (Gruenewald/Greenwood, 2008; 2019). I will discuss these trends further as I talk about reweaving *ya’xan k’angextola* (my blanket) from my experiences of connection to place as a community nurse in the next section. I will also talk more in Chapter Three about how critical pedagogies that were developed within urban contexts have led to a disconnection from ecological and ethical understandings of place (Gruenewald/Greenwood, 2008; 2019). Finally, in Chapter Seven, I will explain

how an ecological understanding of healing is essential for reconciling nursing philosophy, practice and education.

The inequities experienced by Indigenous people today are the result of long term racist and colonial policies (ingrained by the Indian Act) that have been, and still are, imposed on Indigenous communities. Health services for Indigenous Canadians continue to be disrupted by unclear processes that are not well delineated between Federal and Provincial responsibilities. The result is an ambiguous and fractured health system for Indigenous people (Lavoie, 2013). Tanya Talaga (2018) in her CBC Massey lecture series, *All Our Relations*, points out how the system is intentionally designed to perpetuate the unequal provision of health services for Indigenous people. She implores us to address basic human rights (p. 164-166) before we talk about reconciliation. What was once an autonomous and effective wellness system developed over generations from the resources and knowledge connected to the places in which Indigenous people lived has been replaced by an external, faulty and underfunded illness system. The result is ongoing and serious health discrepancies faced by Indigenous people, especially those who remain, with increasing difficulty, in more remote areas.

The Euro-western health care system has been very effective at medicalizing and pathologizing the experiences of Indigenous people living in remote communities. This is not completely universal or unique to Indigenous communities. We have all become increasingly dependent and our lives have been increasingly pathologized by a health care system that perpetuates its usefulness by controlling access to knowledge and services. But the effects are more pronounced in remote communities where there is a lack of “expert” health services available and the need for independence and resourcefulness to survive is magnified. The urbanization and centralization of health services has perpetuated a vicious cycle of creating a dependency for remote Indigenous communities on an externally controlled system that remains inadequate and limited.

For a long time, nurses have been hired to work in Indigenous communities in limited roles focused primarily on giving immunizations, dispensing medications, providing treatments and conducting health-related education sessions. There is limited focus on the nurse’s role in health promotion or the community’s ability to care for themselves. What is even harder for communities to understand is that when nurses

come to the community to provide health related services they are further segregated and specialized into types of nurses. A public health nurse, who has come to a remote community (usually at the expense of the communities' health budget) to do a baby visit, cannot also visit an adult who needs help with managing a chronic illness. This may make sense to health providers and health authorities, and it may work well in an urban center, but it makes no sense to someone living in a remote community.

The role of nurses in remote Indigenous communities has contributed to increased dependency and the pathologizing of Indigenous people's experiences of health. Nurses who work in remote First Nations communities are often astounded at the seemingly simple reasons that people will call for help. A classic example is the story of a nurse who is called out for a minor injury in the middle of the night. What we all know is that, underlying this learned dependence and call for help, there is a need for healing far greater and more insidious than a small cut that needs a band aid. Due to the compounding effects of colonization many Indigenous people have become disconnected from the traditional healing knowledge of their communities. This knowledge has been developed over generations and is specific and relevant to the environment in which people live. What I have been a witness to is not only the suppression of Indigenous knowledge (epistemic racism) but the tragic loss of Indigenous people's belief in themselves, as well as their belief in their ability to look after each other (internalized racism).

During my first visit to the Wuikinuxv community in Rivers Inlet, two people had recently died in the community as a result of medical emergencies. The lack of access to health services was being felt very strongly by the people I was meeting with. I was astounded to learn about the intricacies of accessing health care for people living in the community. Unlike the logging camp that was located just down the road, people in the village did not have access to emergency services by dialing 911. Instead they needed to go through a federally established network of process that ensured they were "not taking advantage" of the system. How can we even consider it taking advantage when the colonial system systematically destroyed the people's ability and knowledge to care for themselves? We regulated health professions so those with traditional knowledge could not legally practice it. We commodified stolen knowledge about the healing potential of local plants and then patented the knowledge so only pharmaceutical companies would benefit. We centralized health services so that people needing help

would be separated from their holistic support systems. This is only the beginning of what I was to discover about health inequities when I went to the remote First Nations communities to learn from the people who lived there.

I pause in my thinking here to reflect on my own colonized assumptions about what it means to be considered “remote”. I am reminded of the time I spent traveling over back roads and rough waters to arrive in Ahousaht B.C. I was there with a research team funded by a Michael Smith Convening and Collaborating (C2) grant. We were exploring the Nuu-chah-nulth communities’ priorities for “a nursing approach that promotes and supports wellness despite the existing challenges imposed by a colonial health system” (Nuu-chah-nulth Nursing Program 2017). Once there, Nuu-chah-nulth Elder Cliff Atleo reminded us all that “This is not remote. My home is the center of the world. Everything I need is here” (Atleo, 2017).

Recognizing that our health systems are in need of reform, and that we need to address the complex issues of the contemporary human experience, we strive to develop models that are financially sustainable and effective. Unfortunately, most visions for reform of the health system remain largely influenced by a limited and colonized view of the environment and the human experience that is supported by the positivist and neo-liberal assumptions of the medical model. Giroux and Giroux (2008) point out that:

Neo-liberalism has become one of the most pervasive and dangerous ideologies of the 21st century...Free market fundamentalism rather than democratic idealism [equity, liberty and justice (p. 188)] is now the driving force of economics and politics in most of the world. Its logic has moreover insinuated itself into every social relationship such as the specifics between parents and children, doctors and patients, teachers and students has been reduced to that of supplier and customer. (p. 182)

Ultimately, this view assumes that health is achieved through controlling the environment to reduce threats and by treating the human body with tools (largely surgery and pharmaceuticals) to cure illness.

Nursing has been complicit in perpetuating a neo-liberal ideology in health care. As Peggy Chinn (2020) states;

The focus of much of nursing’s theorizing is on the individual as a person with uninhibited free will, one who can care for oneself (with ample resources assumed to be available), with only a passing nod in the direction of the family and community (critical and central concerns for those who

are not privileged). The positivist assumption of the whole as the sum of the parts is reflected in just about all undergraduate nursing curricula, in the focus of our textbooks, and organization of hospitals, medical (and nursing) specialties – divided into children (under the medicalized label of pediatrics), various adult conditions (many of which have been transposed into major profit centers), mental health (again medicalized as “psychiatric”) etc. To the extent that “family and community” is addressed, these vital, central dimensions of human experience are treated as separate and different from the individualized organizing concepts (n.p.).

The neo-liberal influence on nursing theory development is, in part, due to the historical and contemporary subjugation of nursing to a reductionist medical model. In an increasingly bureaucratic and technocratic health system, the more relationally holistic values of nursing theory remain underappreciated. As a result, in order for nursing to maintain its professional credibility and compete for health care resources, it has become increasingly complicit in perpetuating neo-liberal values.

The medical model, with its primary focus on curing illnesses, continues to dominate health care delivery. We mechanistically break the body down into its physically determined, measurable and predictable parts. We are aware of the pieces, from atoms to cells, and how they work together in systems to ensure the health of our bodies. This approach has led to great discoveries and has prolonged the lives of countless individuals. It has provided a useful explanation for diseases of the body from infections to organ failures. We have the use of expensive technologies to cure some of the most devastating diseases. The tools of medicine, such as pharmaceuticals and surgeries, lead to quick fixes with obvious and measurable results for treating our physical bodies. Arguably, these tools have had less success in understanding and treating the illnesses of our minds. With mechanistic and reductionist approaches to understanding and treating illness, medical science is sorely lacking in even beginning to address questions related to the spirit.

Not only has the supremacy of a biomedical model in health care dictated the way we conceptualize health and illness and the way we treat (rather than relate to) individuals, it has also had systemic impacts on the way we structure and fund our system. Our health care system, often referred to as being more of an illness care system, is focused primarily on the cure of disease and secondarily on prevention, albeit with significantly fewer resources. There is even less attention and fewer resources given to promoting wellness or health from a holistic perspective. When we talk about

health promotion, we often frame it within Euro-western, neo-liberal, and humanistic understandings. We presume to have the “scientific” expertise to promote health through a linear process of cause and effect. We like to assume we can control and measure outcomes such as indicators of human wellbeing. Our funding bodies and social systems support this linear and rationalistic thinking. The most obviously measurable and simplistically obtainable interventions (to what are likely complex social problems) are given the most support in a market-driven system.

Although viable options for a more sophisticated approach have been suggested, there has been little success in moving beyond the basic assumptions of a medical model and an illness care system. In 2002, the Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada released what is commonly known as The Romanow Commission’s report, which recommended that we reform Canada’s system to a Primary Health Care Model. The principles of primary health care, as described by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1978, are: accessibility, public participation, health promotion, appropriate technology, and intersectoral cooperation. Accessibility means making sure that the five principles are equally available and affordable to all people regardless of gender, age, ethnicity or geographic location. Public participation means actively involving individuals and communities in making health care decisions that affect them. Health promotion is defined by the WHO as the process of

enabling people to increase control over their health. It covers a wide range of social and environmental interventions that are designed to benefit and protect individual people’s health and quality of life by addressing and preventing the root causes of ill health, not just focusing on treatment and cure. (WHO, 1978)

Appropriate use of technology means using medical technologies that are socially and culturally acceptable, affordable and feasible for individuals and communities.

Intersectoral collaboration means integrating a commitment from all sectors including governments, businesses and organizations in addressing the social determinants of health. The principles of Primary Health Care (as endorsed by the Romanow Report) if enacted in a holistic way, hold the potential for revolutionary change and the realization of an inclusive and decolonized health system.

Unfortunately, the current vision for health care reform is often limited to merely Primary Care with a focus on the delivery of clinical health care services that remain steeped in

the medical model (Canadian Nurses Association, 2015). Nurses and nurse practitioners in this model of reform are seen as physician assistants or substitutes, whose primary value is as a resource to reduce the high costs of medically-oriented health care.

Nurses generally purport to be defenders of a Primary Health Care model in Canada. Nursing sees itself as having a sophisticated theoretical understanding of health promotion in keeping with the WHO's definition. Nursing's vision of health promotion is, however, too often limited by its colonial roots and its complicity with the medical model. Often, the practice of health promotion in the field of nursing is restricted to a behavioral approach, such as balancing lifestyle factors and promoting healthy daily habits. As identified earlier, behaviorism is an easy source of legitimizing racism. There is a long history of focusing on unhealthy behaviors, which are believed to be the result of racial inferiority and the cause of health inequities. Nursing theorists continue to stress a more progressive socio-environmental perspective of health promotion, which conventionally means focusing on the social determinants of health. However, as Sally Thorne (2020b), a Canadian Nursing philosopher, points out

We train up our young ones to know, theoretically, that the person before us will have been affected by the social determinants of his or her life. But we have been rather more passive about our discipline's larger obligations toward dismantling the structural inequities that shape those determinants. (p. 1)

If nurses are going to enact the principles of Primary Health Care, we need to not only take up a more progressive understanding of health promotion, we need to address the Euro-western assumptions that remain embedded in how we conceptualize it.

Although my practice as a nurse and educator is guided by a socio-environmental perspective of health, I am becoming increasingly aware of the reductionist tendencies in my thinking, which identify and label social determinants and focus only on inequities or what is lacking from a Euro-western perspective. Reading (2018) points out that Indigenous perspectives include many additional ways to conceptualize wellness, our relationship with the land, and a path to self-determination that are considered to be "beyond the social determinants" (p. 5).

Nursing has a history of being both a victim and tool of colonization. Nursing has had a role in the systematic oppression of Indigenous healing knowledge and in the

oppression of Indigenous people. The effects of cognitive imperialism and epistemic racism on and in nursing has led to our privileging of and dependence on rationalism and medical science-based reductionism over all other rich knowledge traditions. The result is that nursing has become complicit in a technological and mechanized approach to health care delivery that is too limited to respond to the complex issues affecting people, communities and the environment today. As long as nursing remains subservient and beholden to the medical model, our potential to be holistic in our practice and fulfil our moral imperative to society is compromised. When unraveling *ya'xan ḵangextola* (my blanket) as a nurse I wondered: How can we not see ourselves as part of and subject to the natural world and the universe? What of the unpredictable and the unknowable? Where is our humility? The natural world is teaching us. It always has been, we just need to learn to listen.

2.3. Re-Weaving *Ya'xan Ḵangextola* as a Nurse

As I re-weave *ya'xan ḵangextola* (my blanket) as a nurse, health promotion remains the warp and caring the weft. The shuttle represents the transformative reconciliation and relational inquiry lenses that I employ to reimagine and recreate *ḵangextola*. The shuttle moves my threads back and forth creating the warp and weft (ethic) of my practice. The threads are made of a multitude of theoretical ideas woven together, sometimes in harmony and sometimes in contrast; always in flux. As I weave it, I wear it, there is no separation between me and *ya'xan ḵangextola*. It is a phenomenological and embodied way of knowing. It is who I am becoming.

When I began my teaching career in 2001, I was introduced to the Collaborative Academic Education in Nursing (CAEN). Both health promotion and caring are foundational perspectives in the CAEN curriculum. Health promotion is described as both a way of being and doing (CAEN, 2015). There is a focus on “power with” relationships rather than “power over” relationships and recognizing people as their own experts (CAEN, 2015, Part 2 p. 1). The CAEN curriculum identifies that; “A relationship can be health promoting in and of itself” (CAEN, 2015 Part 2 p. 1). These philosophies are in keeping with the World Health Organization (WHO) definition of health as “the extent to which an individual or group is able to realize aspirations, to satisfy needs and to change or cope with the environment. Health is a resource for, as well as an object of, living” (WHO, 1986). The WHO describes health promotion as “a process of enabling

people to increase control over and to improve their health...a mediating strategy between people and their environment, synthesizing personal choice and social responsibility in health” (WHO, 1984, p. 1). These broad definitions of health and health promotion have both supported and limited my growth in reconciling my nursing practice

Caring is described as a meta-concept in the Collaborative Nursing Program (CNP) curriculum guide that was a precursor of the CAEN curriculum. Caring is believed to be both ontological and epistemological, in that caring is a pedagogical paradigm as well as a theoretical foundation (CNP 1997, p. 19). Nurse theorist Jean Watson (1999) states that caring is “both process and intervention: as effect, as trait, as an ethical moral imperative, as an ontology and as a philosophical and scientific basis for nursing” (p. 65). A major theme in Watson’s (1999) theory of human caring addresses the human to human process of caring relationships whereby the nurse and client transcend self, time, space and life history and enter the phenomenal field of the other. What I believe is that caring happens in the relational space between ourselves, each other, and the environment. It requires a holistic view of humans as more than physical beings and as part of the natural world. Humans are neither above nor separate from the natural world but intimately connected and dependent on it for wellbeing. I will discuss the relevance of caring as a pedagogy in more detail in Chapter Three, when I address the tensions I experienced in a caring curriculum as an educator. In Chapter Seven, I will then expand on my growing understanding of the limits of caring as I consider the healing power of relationships and my vision for nursing education.

As I re-weave *ya’xan k̕angextola* (my blanket) I am developing a deeper ecological understanding of holism. Holism is a central idea of nursing philosophy that has been theorized extensively and differently over time. The traditional understandings of holism in nursing, from a Euro-western perspective, see it as the sum of all parts (McGibbon et al., 2014). This view holds dualistic assumptions about cause and effect relationships consistent with a Cartesian view of the world. However, nursing theorists such as Rogers (1992), Watson (1999), and Parse (1987, 2002) see holism as more than and different from the sum of the parts. Rogers (1992), sees the human holistically as “an irreducible, indivisible, pandimensional energy field identified by patterns and manifesting characteristics that are specific to the whole and which cannot be predicted from knowledge of the parts” (p. 29). Watson (1999) has an expanded view of the person as “fully embodied, but more than body physical; an embodied spirit; a

transpersonal, transcendent, evolving consciousness, unity of mindbodyspirit; person-nature-universe as oneness, connected” (p. 129). Parse (2002) states that a,

pandimensional, indivisible, unrepeatable, unpredictable, and everchanging human...cannot be known by studying parts through the disciplines of psychology, physiology, sociology, and theology. The unitary human is a pandimensional pattern, only glimpses of which may be known through studies of human experiences. The human is a mystery. (p. 43)

Nurses are guided by these theorists to recognize and respond to patterns within an expanding and unpredictable universe. Yet holism in nursing remains steeped in Euro-western, neo-liberal and humanistic philosophical assumptions (Reed, 2017).

In reweaving *ya'xan k'angextola* (my blanket) as a nurse, I am intentionally including Indigenous understandings of holism that I have gained from both the relationships I have developed with Indigenous knowledge holders and the writings of Indigenous authors. These teachings share glimpses into another worldview that forefronts balance, reciprocity and meaningful relationships between not only humans but everything in the natural world. For example, Shirley Tagalik (2018) explains how an Inuit Elder, Louise Angalik, gives directions that are different from the linear way I am used to giving and receiving directions between two points on a map. She states that:

Louise presents directions from the perspective of looking down on the land to be travelled through. He describes geographical features, including links to unusual land forms, fauna, snowdrift patterns, animal trails and atmospheric conditions. He uses place names that clarify information about the way the land looks or the way it has been used over generations. His directions paint a mind picture that enables the traveler to build relationships with this environment. (p. 94)

Tagalik (2018, p. 95) describes an Indigenous holism that is connected to being in balance with and having reciprocity within the natural world. Cajete (2015) describes this holistic connection to place, developed through the lived experience of harmony and reciprocity in the natural world, as an “ecological relationship borne from intimate familiarity with a homeland” (p. 169). He writes that:

the harmonizing of the human community with the natural community was an ongoing process in Indigenous education. It was both a formal and an informal process that evolved around the day to day learning of how to survive in a given environment. This learning entailed involvement with ritual and ceremony, periods of being alone in the environment, service to one's community through participation in the life making processes with

others, and engendering a sense of enchantment for where the people lived. (p. 169)

Umeek, a Nuu-chah-nulth hereditary chief and scholar (also known as Richard Atleo), explains how an Indigenous understanding of wholeness differs from Euro-western understandings because of different assumptions about cause and effect and what “constitutes significance” (Atleo, 2004). He states that “whereas other theories may assume that if variables do not show significant relationships, these variables are not related or connected to each other. The theory of *tsawalk* always assumes a meaningful relationship between variables” (p. 117). The theory of *tsawalk* comes from *heshook-ish tsawalk* (we are all one). It is derived from origin stories and Nuu-chah-nulth understandings of reality that Umeek links back to ancient knowledges. Richard Wagamese (2016) connects us to this ancient wisdom through the following story:

One windy day in summer many summers ago, a hawk hurtled straight down at me. Ten feet above my head, she spread her wings and stopped in mid-dive. I heard the whoosh of her wings against the sound of the wind and the exhalation of my own breath. Three things collided in an instant: wind, hawk, breath. There was no separation. We were connected. Joined by air. In the flash of that sacred moment, I understood what it is to be alive: to be connected, to be aware of that connection, to be grateful for it. To breathe is to take in the wind of all breath. To exhale slowly is to open myself and glide over everything I feel. (p. 39)

As much as there are points of connection between nursing theory and Indigenous worldviews, we in the field of nursing have not yet adequately addressed our relationship to the land, nor have we fully developed an ecological understanding of our relationship to each other and the natural world. Nursing theorists refer to our relationship to the environment from different perspectives that are steeped in Euro-western philosophical traditions. From humanistic perspectives we consider how interactions between humans and the environment affect health. From neo-liberal perspectives we consider the environment to be a resource for health. Socio-environmental perspectives consider the environment as a system and appreciate the interconnectivity of humans with their lived worlds. However, in nursing these views remain largely anthropocentric in their attempts to understand the environment in which people live as largely for the benefit of humans alone (Avery, 1996). What is missing from nursing theory, and this may be more important now than ever, is our deep and situated interdependence with the natural world.

My nursing practice has mostly occurred in a community setting with families and people living with chronic illness. Learning as a nurse to enter into the spaces and places in which people live, rather than caring for them in the artificially controlled environment of the hospital, has had a significant influence on who I am as a nurse and educator. There were many pivotal learnings from my practice as a community nurse that have influenced how I think about health promoting relationships. A significant one occurred in 1999 in the Haida community of Old Masset. I was at a community luncheon and I was using my nursing knowledge and community development skills to inquire into the needs of the people (as I had been taught to do). My goal was to figure out how to provide culturally relevant education and interventions for the prevention and management of type two diabetes. I went to an Elders luncheon and I asked them what they needed and what I could do for them. An Elder gifted me with a story. He told me how to dig for clams. He carefully explained where to get clams and how to dig for them. He talked about the tides, the different seasons, the times of day, and where the best sandy beaches were. He described the clam digging grounds for some time. I could almost feel the wet sand grating under my fingernails and the salty sea air blowing up my nasal passages. He continued to explain the importance of clams, how he cooked them, how he liked to eat them best. He told me about one specific time when his nephew brought him some clams and how much it meant to him now that he had trouble digging for them himself. The story went on for some time. I tried to listen as respectfully as I could. In the back of my head there was a voice saying, "I am being paid to be a nurse here. I am expected to provide some service to these people. I am supposed to focus on their health needs. How is this relevant to what I am supposed to be doing here?" When he was done, I thanked him and moved on asking the next person. What do you need? How can I help you? However, without really realizing it, I started to add a little more detail into my questions, making them more relevant to the context of the people with whom I was in relationship with. I asked things like: "What kind of food would you like to eat at a community meal? How would you like it cooked? Who knows how to gather and cook food the way you like it here?"

It was much later, in fact it was many years later, when I was a nurse educator teaching community development for the first time, trying to explain how to engage with the community authentically (not from a position of power or as an objective expert with health knowledge) that I remembered that story. All of a sudden, I realized what I had

been taught and the meanings that I had made of it. Digging for clams became a metaphor for being health promoting with (rather than on) the community. I have learned how you need to understand where and how to look for clams if you want to nourish relationships in a community. I also needed to take the advice of *noxsola* Paul Willie (2007) and “forget that I am a nurse”. In order to authentically engage, I needed to let go of my nursing agenda (that I should be doing something health promoting and caring) and instead to just be my most vulnerable self with an open mind and heart. When I am in relationship with people, the relationship becomes health promoting and caring in itself. From the Haida Elder, I learned how to dig clams and I learned how to share them. Consistent with the etymology of the word nurse, “to nourish” (McMaster University, n.d.). I learned that nourishing the community is nourishing myself. We are all in this together. I was beginning to, as Wuikinuxv Chief Frank Johnson had implored us to do at the conference in 2006 on the banks of the Cowichan River, integrate my practice into the culture of the people.

The way that I theorize my practice influences my language and my actions in the moment. For example, if I see my practice with the community as doing a needs assessment, I have theorized the community as needy and will act on the community in a certain way. When I ask a person to tell me what they need, it is easy to miss the irony in my words. What I have assumed is that the other person is needy when it is me that has the need. My need is to fulfil my obligation or agenda as a nurse. My “patient” on the other hand may not have any such need or desire for me to do so. It is the social structures that support our actions and assumptions that need to change in order for our patients or clients to feel empowered. I have also not missed the irony in the use of disempowering labels such as patient or even client, which also assume that the nurse has the power to act on behalf of the other. Often the social structures that oppress us are so embedded in our language and our assumptions that to try and change them can literally render us speechless.

I no longer approach the community as an outsider with the intention of doing nurse’s work. I have learned that health promotion is not an act that I can do “unto others”. It is a way of being in relationship with others and with the community. Cajete (2015) explains “coming back to our power as empowerment” (p. 124). Rather than empowering others, we can only walk beside others, holding them up and if we have the ability, helping to remove barriers as they come back to their own power (Cajete, 2015).

Empowerment is not something we can do for someone else without paradoxically disempowering them by the very act of empowerment itself. In nursing we can join with others and take up a role in the emancipation of all of us from unequal power structures. If we continue to work only within the existing power structures and social order we risk remaining complicit in being an instrument of the colonial agenda. When we understand how the Social Determinants of Health are often interpreted without attention to the root “historical, political, ideological, economic and social foundations (which include Indigenous world views, spirituality and self-determination) from which all other determinants evolve” (Reading, 2018, p. 5), then we can move from seeing our role as empowering others to seeing our role as emancipating all of us together collectively. This is a way of being health promoting.

It is the act of being in relationship with others that holds the possibility for us all to realize our potential for health and wellbeing. Together we have the ability to free ourselves from the social and ideological structures that prevent us from realizing our potential. From the gift of a clam digging story, and indeed from my practice as a nurse working in the community, I have learned to challenge nursing’s theoretically rationalistic ideas of health promotion and community development as empowering others. As I will describe further in Chapter Seven, I am developing an ecologically reciprocal and relationally accountable ethic of practice that is inclusive of an expanded worldview. I am finding that I am needing to rethink the many assumptions that have been incorporated into my practice as a nurse.

There has been a great deal of discussion in the nursing literature about theory development from multiple paradigms, a single paradigm or no apparent paradigm at all (Weaver & Olson, 2006, p. 465). This paradigmatic plurality has led to the fragmentation of nursing theory and challenges nursing to establish itself as a credible and autonomous discipline according to Euro-western assumptions about knowledge and power. In order to re-weave *ya’xan k’angextola* (my blanket), I have had to consider what ideologies and assumptions I have taken up in understanding what it means to me to be a nurse. In order to decolonize my practice, I am asking myself questions such as: How has my view of nursing been influenced by rationalism, cognitive imperialism, epistemic racism? Ultimately, I need to ask myself how the value I might unconsciously place on some knowledge traditions over others affects who I am and how I practice as a nurse.

Transformative reconciliation in nursing means recognizing and valuing multiple and competing theoretical paradigms and the way they are enacted in practice.

Uncovering my theoretical assumptions starts with examining the artificial separation between theory and practice and between knowledge and knowing. Nursing, like teaching, but unlike most other health professionals such as that of doctors, physiotherapists, nutritionists, is referred to as a verb. It is seen as a praxis where theory and practice are not separated but are enacted at once in a context. Importantly *praxis* in nursing is also defined as an intentionally liberating act. Nursing theory sees praxis as reflection in action through the incorporation of critical theory that challenges our assumptions and taken-for-granted practices, leading to emancipatory actions and health promoting relationships (CAEN, 2015). This way of understanding praxis is consistent with the ideas of Freire (1993), which are based on emancipation from taken-for-granted assumptions about power. The following quote exemplifies my thinking about praxis as a mingling of both theory and practice, being and doing, and knowledge and knowing:

What we have discovered is that ideas not only seek to be made into reality (through *hechos* or concrete actions) but reality itself reaches out to be made into an idea. Without such reaching out, we are left only with empty gestures or disconnected, circular lucubrations. When these two processes occur simultaneously (we could even say dialectically), we call this praxis, and when praxis occurs in the context of class struggle, we call this revolution. (Jaramillo & McLaren, 2008 p. 193)

This quote is a calling to nursing as a praxis of social justice and freedom. It also speaks to the moral imperative of understanding reality not only as that which is derived from rationalistic knowledge assumptions (evidence-based practice) but also from interpretive assumptions (practice-based evidence).

As a nurse and a nurse educator I am expected to practice from the theoretically informed use of evidence-based practice. At the top of the assumed “hierarchy of evidence” is empirical knowledge, obtained through randomized controlled studies. This knowledge is given superior credence because it is presumed to be objective and apolitical. The result of rationalistic decision-making assumptions in nursing is that there is ultimately a universally applicable “best practice”. This inevitably leads to practice guidelines and clinical pathways that are steeped in white privilege and inherently racist.

As nursing philosopher Sally Thorne (2014) explains in her publication *Particularizing the General Sustaining Theoretical Integrity in the Context of an Evidence-Based Practice Agenda*, there is a tension for nursing within the hierarchy of evidence:

Although propositional knowledge is foundational to safe and competent nursing practice, nursing practice is inevitably influenced by additional non-evidential forms of knowledge. For example, philosophical approaches pertain to questions about metaphysical aspects of reality. Thus, disciplinary questions extending beyond the phenomenally oriented scope of science into such considerations as the nature of reality (ontology), the way we come to understand or acquire knowledge (epistemology), or the ethical or moral basis of practice are therefore more appropriately addressed using philosophical approaches that rely on reason, logic, argumentation and common sense. (Thorne & Sawatzky, 2014, p. 8)

Nurses have been guided to consider “evidence-informed decision making” as a way to maintain theoretical integrity while at the same time recognize the need to contextualize and particularize practice decisions. The Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) describes evidence-informed practice as:

Evidence-informed nursing is the ongoing process that incorporates evidence from research, clinical expertise, client preferences and other available resources to make nursing decisions about clients. Decision-making in nursing practice is influenced by evidence and also by individual values, client choice, theories, clinical judgment, ethics, legislation, regulation, health-care resources and practice environments. At the community level, evidence-informed public health is defined as “the process of integrating science-based interventions with community preferences to improve the health of populations. (CNA, 2010)

Using evidence informed practice is a way of contextualizing and legitimizing nursing decision making. Thorne (2014) states:

When we use the term evidence-informed practice, that claim ought to be unambiguously understandable to our audience as an authentic confirmation that we have the benefit of careful consideration of the formal scientific knowledge that has relevance for the case and that it does actually provide convincing guidance to our practice decisions. It does not, however, imply that we must uncritically apply it in a standardized manner (which is the harm implied with the use of the term evidence-based). (p. 2)

Evidence informed practice is one way of responding to, without resolving, the theoretical plurality within nursing. Another response is through the uptake of pragmatism. Pragmatism is seeing the value of knowledge in its contextual usefulness.

Nursing theorists argue for a pragmatic approach that draws on multiple or the best paradigm and tests its usefulness in practice (Weaver & Olson 2006; Doan & Varcoe, 2015; Bevis & Watson, 1989).

Indigenous worldviews also draw from multiple paradigms. As Umeek (Atleo, 2004) explains, Indigenous understandings of reality take into account things such as dreams, omens, empirical facts and stories. Shawn Wilson (2008) explains how:

Something is understood to be more true if it is 'encircled' – that is, if it exists within a web of community relationships, and when context has been taken into account. Because knowledge is contextual. It's also relational, so you must look at the nature of relationship that went into making knowledge. If you behave properly, if you demonstrate love in your actions, then it is a path to truth. (p. 45)

Recognizing that all knowledge is inseparable from meaning and influenced by interpretation and values, Indigenous scholarship goes beyond facts to find truths (Atleo, 2004). In re-weaving *ya'xan k'angextola* (my blanket) as a nurse I am aware of the power relationships between knowledge types and knowledge hierarchies. I need to rethink the idea that there is a "hierarchy of evidence" that puts random control trials and expert opinion at the top and other forms of knowing at the bottom. Indigenous knowledge does not exclude any types of evidence and pays less attention to the hierarchy of evidence (Atleo, 2004).

Adding to the tensions I have in seeing nursing as a praxis and in navigating nursing's theoretical plurality, there is also the tension I experience between my knowledge (theory and evidence that can be shared with others) and my knowing (the way I perceive my world). Part of the challenge nurses face are the forces of rationalism and imperialism which support the separation of mind from body. When we value the mechanistic and reductionist assumptions of biomedical science over all other ways of knowing, we risk losing the healing potential of embodied knowledge that is enacted through relationships. Nursing has a history of challenging the Cartesian dualism of biomedical knowledge that separates the physical realm of the body from the non-material dimensions of mind and soul (Wilde, 1999, p. 26). Nurses must be able to humanize the technological environments promoted by medical science (Bevis & Watson, 1989, p. 18). As technology has replaced the physical examination, we have lost the important human connection of touch. Nurses use embodied understandings of

the meanings we make of illness and technology to support people through health experiences. The impacts of nurses who care for and nourish our minds, bodies and spirits through transitions in health are not easily quantifiable or articulated. Because the direct benefits are less obvious or easily measured, they are less valued in a business-oriented approach that dominates health care environments. If nurses lose sight of their moral imperative to care, then we will all become uncared for in an increasingly bureaucratic and technocratic health care system.

Nursing is a complex interplay of knowledge and knowing that is not easily articulated or well understood. As Wilde (1999) points out, although the ideas of phenomenology are a central tenet of nursing there is a lack of understanding what this means in practice (p. 30). Doan & Varcoe (2015) in their book *How to nurse* describe the underlying assumptions of hermeneutic phenomenology as:

- People are not separate from their worlds but are situated in and constituted by them;
- The world influences and shapes people since we are an integral part of it, and it is an integral part of us;
- People have life experiences that are unique in meaning and at the same time have shared meaning with others;
- People can only be understood in relationship to their worlds, for it is only within their contexts that what people value and find significant is visible. (p .44)

The CAEN curriculum identifies phenomenology as a philosophical foundation informed by “several philosophical traditions, including Merleau-Ponty’s (Merleau-Ponty & Landes, 1962/2012) ideas of embodiment and existentialism, Heidegger’s (1962) ideas of hermeneutics in being and becoming and Gadamer’s (1976) ideas of praxis as a moral act of caring” (CAEN, 2015, Part 2, p. 8). What became important for me in my growing understanding of phenomenology, was insight into the processes of personal transformation that occurred as a lived experience through situated learning, relational understandings and the time for deep personal and interpersonal reflection. I will speak more to these theoretical understandings as I describe the important aspects of how they are enacted as a pedagogy within the immersion learning experiences in Chapter Six.

Phenomenological and embodied understandings of knowing are fundamental to how I weave and wear *ya'xan k'angextola* (my blanket). Through postgraduate education and in my role as a nurse educator, I began to understand nursing practice, as described by Van Manen (2016), as “a phenomenology of practice”. He states that “phenomenology does not produce primarily a doctrine or a body of knowledge; rather, it generates “body-knowledge” (p. 62). I am developing a phenomenological understanding of myself as being constituted and situated in the world in a pre-conscious and corporeal way. Realizing that I was drawing on rudimentary ideas from a deep philosophical tradition, I related to Merleau-Ponty’s ideas of phenomenology as a sensual and reflective relationship with the world through which knowledge is first experienced through our bodies (Merleau-Ponty & Landes, 1962/2012). As Meyer (2008) states “Our body holds truth, our body invigorates knowing, our body helps us become who we are” (p. 223).

As a nurse, bodily knowing is important not only in the way that knowing happens through relationships and in the context of relationships, but also in the way the healing acts of nursing requires us to be tuned into the presence (more than just body/mind/spirit) of others. Nursing practice is described as an embodied experience, where we care for embodied humans through our own embodiment (Harrison et al., 2019). Benner, a well-known nursing theorist, states that “we do not perceive the world in pieces or meaningless sensations but as a whole pre-given, pre-reflective world” (Benner, 2000, p. 6). Benner describes the embodied knowing of nurses as a phronesis that requires moral agency, discernment and relationship. She describes the importance of phronesis for nurses in the present context of a highly technical and detached world (Benner 2000 p. 8). I am reminded of Meyer’s (2008) words here. She describes phronesis as a path away from dualistic thinking and towards a spiritual knowing where life moves in a “dynamic consciousness” (p. 225). It is a way of thinking that can connect us to the “inherent wholeness” of ancient epistemologies (Meyer, 2008, p. 225). Thayer-Bacon (2003) agrees that relational ways of thinking include a type of bodily knowing, not as separate from or subordinate to the objective knowledge of our minds (p. 26). I believe that being attuned to this bodily knowing is an essential part of the healing act required of nurses. Phronesis and praxis are interrelated concepts. I use phronesis to emphasize the moral and ethical components of thought in action or the moral imperative through which all action is manifested (Kinsella & Pitman, 2012, p. 9). Praxis puts the emphasis

on the action itself that happens through reflection and embodied knowing or reflexivity (Kinsella & Pitman, 2012, p. 9). Nursing as a praxis and a phronesis is silenced because the very act of articulating it disembodies it, thereby making it meaningless. Nurses sometimes, as a result of not having the words to describe the complexities of their praxis/phronesis, call it “nursing intuition” or the “art of nursing”. Nursing knowledge remains subordinate to medical knowledge because in the Euro-western tradition of knowledge hierarchies what nurses know cannot be adequately described with words nor validated as evidenced-based knowledge.

My understanding of nursing as a praxis has been largely influenced by what is commonly referred to and taught in nursing curricula as a “nurse’s patterns of knowing”. Carper (1978) originally developed four primary patterns of knowing in nursing that have since been integrated into nursing curricula: empirical, ethical, personal, and aesthetic. A fifth, emancipatory or socio-political knowing, was later added by Chinn and Kramer (2011; 2018). Emancipatory knowing is described by Chinn and Kramer (2018) as the “praxis of nursing” (p. 5). It is a process of reflection and action with the aim of reducing or eliminating social injustice. It is what Freire (1993) describes as *conscientization*. I could see the significance of what I had learned about emancipatory knowing through Indigenous wisdom as described earlier in the clam digging story. Empirical knowing, described as the disciplinary knowledge or science of nursing, was the most valued form of knowing (Carper, 1978, p. 14). Empirical knowing itself is not the problem, it is how we value it over all other forms of knowing that disrupts our ability to engage in holistic relationships and nursing praxis.

The art of nursing, although not separated from any of the other ways of knowing, was considered to be aesthetic. Chinn and Kramer (2018) describe aesthetic knowing as “related to the perception of deep meaning that calls forth inner creative resources to transform experiences into what is not yet real but is possible” (p. 287). Chinn and Kramer (2018) state that, “The body moves through the nursing situation, the mind understands meaning and the spirit feels – all at once – and artfully acts to transform experience” (p. 141). They describe the embodiment of nursing as “The nurses’ synchronous arrangement of narrative and movement into a form that transforms experiences into a realm that would not otherwise be possible. The arrangement is spontaneous in the moment and intuitive” (Chinn & Kramer, 2018, pp. 141-142). An aesthetic way of knowing and being happens in my body language as I match my

movements to meet the energy of the person with whom I am in relationship. It happens in every moment of care. It is evident in the way a cup of water is refreshed and placed at a bedside or in taking a moment to appreciate a small bird outside a patient's window. As a community nurse, it happens the moment I enter a person's home. Does my body language show how I notice an unclean entranceway or the family pictures displayed on a wall? I am enacting all of nursing's patterns of knowing when I engage with the beauty and potential in all my relationships.

Personal knowing is described by Chinn and Kramer (2018, p. 9) as being the conduit of all knowing. It requires thoughtful reflection on experience that leads towards increasing understanding of who you are and how who you are (your values and beliefs) plays out in your relationships. Chinn and Kramer describe this as authenticity that "requires questioning, acknowledging, and understanding such factors as personal bias, strengths and weaknesses of character, feelings, values and attitudes. They describe coming to know yourself as a "self-healing journey" (p. 8) by describing how "the nurse can work towards reconciling and resolving inner conflicts of the Self that compromise best nursing practices. In this way, the inner knowing of Self grows, and authenticity increases" (p. 9). Where personal knowing is about asking whether I know what I do and whether I do what I know, ethical knowing is about asking whether it is right (p. 14). Ethical knowing in nursing goes beyond the codes of conduct and expected norms within a social context. It includes the moral act of deciding what ought to be done in every relationship. Both ethical and personal knowing are based on the dynamic process of moment-to-moment decisions, actions, and responses that are made in every nursing encounter. They are both based on acting according to personal and societal values. This makes both ethical and personal knowing problematic when it comes to unravelling colonized assumptions in those values. Nursing has done extensive work in untangling itself from patriarchal values in how one ought to be and behave through multiple feminist critiques. We have yet to fully reveal how we remain steeped in colonial, taken-for-granted ways of being, doing and knowing.

Although nursing's "patterns of knowing" are ingrained in my praxis as a nurse, I am continuing to uncover how centered my actions are on Euro-western values. As I reweave *ya'xan k'angextola* (my blanket), I am becoming increasingly influenced by Indigenous epistemologies or ways of thinking about knowing. Meyer (2008) describes seven categories for what she calls "organizing systems of consciousness" (p. 218). The

first, "Spirituality and Knowing: The Cultural Context of Knowledge" is described as "an epistemology of spirit [which] encourages us all to be of service, to not get drawn into the ego nurtured in academia, and to keep diving into the wellspring of our own awe" (p. 219). The second, "That Which Feeds: Physical Place and Knowing", includes the idea that "land is more than a physical place, it is an idea that engages knowledge and contextualizes knowing" (p. 219). She refers to the third, "The Cultural Nature of the Senses: Expanding our ideas of Empiricism", as the unique subjectivity of all the information we receive through our senses and how those are fundamentally shaped by culture (p. 220). The fourth, "Relationship and Knowledge: Self through Other", is about connection to all things and the transformation of ourselves through this connection as a way of knowing (pp. 220-221). The relevance to this for nursing is encapsulated in her words "it is an ancient idea to heal with all relations and this included land and water" (p. 221). These ideas offer an ecological way to understand healing that challenge some of the anthropomorphic assumptions in nursing. Meyer calls the fifth, "Utility and Knowledge: Ideas of Wealth and Usefulness" (p. 221). Here I make connections with my embodied understanding of nursing as action. Meyer explains that knowledge's worth is in its usefulness to "heal, bring together, challenge, surprise, encourage or expand our awareness" (p. 221). The sixth, "Words and Knowledge: Causality in Language", is about the idea that "thought creates and intention shapes the observable world" (p. 222). An idea that Meyer states is subtly absent from modern Indigenous Hawaiian discussions about knowledge. Meyer postulates that this absence is precisely why we must pay attention. She states that "effects begin with intention" (p. 222). An example she gives explains how poverty does not cause drug addiction, rather our response to it does. This example has resonance for nurses. We know how our good intentions to help can lead to increasing dependence and further marginalization. As I explained earlier, this is the dynamic that has led in part to Indigenous communities, who once had their own well-functioning health systems, now finding themselves experiencing high incidences of chronic illnesses and having become dependent on an external and inadequate health system. The seventh way that knowledge is organized in Indigenous Hawaiian epistemologies is what Meyer calls "The Body/Mind Question" (p. 223). The embodiment of knowledge as wisdom is such a central idea that she concludes "if one dismisses embodied knowing for the objective unfeeling one...Culture erodes and wisdom becomes a flimsy caricature of its potential" (p. 223). I have only sketched a small outline of what Meyer's thoughts about knowing entail. I do so only to create

another vision or lens for understanding knowing. What is important for nurses to understand is that if we limit ourselves to only one theoretical framework, “nursing’s patterns of knowing”, then we will not see beyond our colonized assumptions about knowledge and knowing. Within Meyer’s framework, I see possibilities for a connection to spirit, land and each other in more holistic ways. I also see an ecologically reciprocal and relationally accountable understanding of healing that I will explore further in my vision for nursing education in Chapter Seven.

In reweaving *ya’xan k’angextola* (my blanket), I am rejecting the assumed authority of one type of knowing (presumably western scientific thought) to be superior to all others. I am joining with phenomenologists and Indigenous scholars in a more inclusive and expanded view of what constitutes useful knowledge. As Merleau-Ponty and Landes (1962/2012) have pointed out, there is significant value in the knowledge derived from cultural and sensual memories that “includes empiricism’s subordinate truth by putting it in its proper place” (p. 27). I am developing an understanding beyond evidenced-based or even evidence-informed practice to what Indigenous scholars have called “wise practice” (Wesley-Esquimaux & Snowball, 2010). Wise practice assumes, unlike best practice, that context (in the full sense of the word) means that there is not one universal best way to practice based on a hierarchy of types of evidence (Kinsella & Pitman, 2012). Wise practice sees the ethical context of practice and its application and usefulness within that context as an essential phronesis (Kinsella & Pitman, 2012). In doing so, I am agreeing with Thorne, who cautions nurses to be clear about what we consider as evidence (2018, p. 2) and to be clear about what we consider to be the core values that inform our nursing practice (2020a, p. 4). I am also asking that we go further and become awake to the Euro-western centrality related to the value we place on types of evidence. It is important for nurses to understand how our values for determining what counts as evidence are also influenced by the colonial context we have been educated in. Decolonizing approaches invite us to reconsider not only how nurses should act, but what it is we know and how we know what we do. Wise practice is about coming to know your gifts (who you are, where you come from, where you are going, and why you are here) and acting with integrity towards them. Meyer (2008) explains that “intelligence begins the long turnaround from an isolated thinking self, void of the potential messiness of subjective realities found in all versions of the world” (p. 223). For nurses to take up

wise practice and to be inclusive of Indigenous wisdom, we will need to expand our present understanding of what it is to know, be and do nursing.

Kimmerer (2013) describes different ways of knowing as woven together in a braid of sweetgrass. There is Indigenous knowledge, scientific knowledge, and the knowledge of the land itself. She describes the synergistic relationship these knowledges have with each other as being just like the three sisters: corn, beans, and squash. I too have these three sisters planted together now in my garden, as I was taught by my family to do. These plants nurture each other as they grow. As Kimmerer (2013) states, they teach us to “respect one another, support one another, bring your gifts to the world and receive the gifts of others, and there will be enough for all” (p. 132).

From nursing’s beginning to the present day, nursing has been colonized by Eurocentric, sexist, racist and classist views that are embedded in our core philosophies (McGibbon et al., 2014). Nursing as an institution has also been, and continues to be, complicit in the colonization of Indigenous people. Within nursing, Indigenous nurses and their contributions have been silenced in academic and research agendas (Bourque Bearskin et al., 2016).

Part of my journey to decolonize myself has been to understand how nursing has been subjected to, and complicit in, its own experience of colonization. I believe nursing is not yet fully awake and that it is imperative that we become awake in order to fulfill what once was considered “our calling” and now is referred to by various nurse theorists as “our moral imperative” to care and to promote health (Thorne & Sawatzky, 2014, p. 16). Watson (2020) explains that “Nursing has a global covenant with humanity, to sustain human caring, healing, health, and wholeness for humanity” (p. 701). Our moral imperative was born from the single story of Nightingale. It is time for an expanded understanding of what nursing can be; an understanding drawn from the multitude of stories and traditions of caring and promoting wellbeing from around the globe.

As I am re-weaving *ya’xan k̓angextola* (my blanket) as a nurse and moving the shuttle of transformative reconciliation and relational inquiry back and forth between all of the theoretical threads of my knowing I am always asking: Where do I come from? Specifically, I have reconsidered where my knowledge and my way of knowing as a nurse and an educator come from? Asking this question requires courage and humility. It

requires the willingness to engage with the complexity and vulnerability of realizing that there is much that I may not know, that there are things I will never know, and that I am comfortable with my unknowing. My desire to challenge the taken-for-granted hierarchies of knowledge, dislodge the colonial agendas and support places and spaces of belonging and freedom is the central healing ethic of my practice. It allows for what is often described as “having an open mind and heart” when working with Indigenous communities. *Kangextola* (blanket) is being re-woven with an ecologically reciprocal and relationally accountable ethic of healing as nursing praxis.

Chapter 3.

***Ḳangextola*: Becoming an Educator**

I am a Teacher

I am a teacher ...

But do not look to me for knowledge

I have no monopoly on that.

I cannot impress you with my brilliance

By pulling truths out of a hat.

I am a teacher...

But do not listen to me talk

and fill your head with information.

I would rather marvel at your thoughts

and share your inspiration.

I am a teacher...

But do not look to me for answers

it is more questions that I share.

My gift is when they lift you

and take your thoughts somewhere.

Joanna Fraser (2002) written after my first few years of teaching

3.1. Finding *Ya'xan K'angextola* as a Nurse Educator

I started my career in nursing education when what is referred to as the “curriculum revolution” was well underway. The revolution was in response to the limitations of a focus on the biomedical model through a behaviorist educational approach (Diekelmann et al., 2005, p. 71). Nursing Education in Canada was originally developed as an apprenticeship model. Students or “probationers” were taught in hospitals where they were used primarily as an inexpensive source of labor (Bramadat & Chalmers, 1989, p. 720). The expectations for probationers were described as character traits rather than performance or intellectual capacities (Bramadat & Chalmers, 1989, p. 721). Formal education was rare and when it was provided it was usually given by doctors in a lecture format (Bramadat & Chalmers, 1989, p. 721).

This approach began to shift following a survey done on nursing education in Canada in 1932 by the Canadian Medical Association and the Canadian Nurses' Association, led by George Weir, Head of the Department of Education at UBC (Fleming, 1932). One observation of the Weir Report was that “The average student nurse spends 9 hours on nursing duty, 1½ to 2 hours at classes, and 1½ to 2 hours in study, which is a twelve-hour day. No other profession would tolerate such working conditions ... A considerable percentage [of student nurses] stated that they are too fatigued to follow their lectures” (Fleming, 1932, p. 472). Another observation made in the report was “that the books, magazines, journals and references found on the shelves of the average training-school library in Canada would compare very unfavourably, in a numerical sense, with the library of the average mediaeval monastery before the introduction of printing!” (Fleming, 1932, p. 473).

As well as supporting better standards for nursing education, the Weir Report provided considerable insight into the oppression of women and hence the subjugation of nurses and nursing education to the authority of medicine. Fleming (1932), who reported on the Weir Report in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, summarized the response of doctors surveyed in the study by stating:

The weight of medical evidence is to the effect that the absolute amount of time devoted to theory should not be increased, while that devoted to practice should be relatively increased. Practically all agreed that the average nurse should be at least as intelligent as the average elementary school teacher. The doctors considered “lack of tact” as the most common

defect, but regarded “carelessness in following orders” the most serious defect which they report as second in order of frequency. (p. 472)

This quotation demonstrates the limited and self-interested understanding that the medical profession held regarding a nurse’s role. It also reveals the authority that doctors held over what was considered to be valid evidence.

The Weir Report is well known among nursing historians because, despite the doctor’s opinions, it recommended that more time should be dedicated to nursing theory and that the quality of curricula should be increased to be at least the equivalent of what was provided for teachers at the time (Fleming, 1932, p. 472). Despite its shortcomings, rooted in the colonial and patriarchal assumptions of the early 19th century, the Weir Report did much to improve the plight of nurses in Canada and support the movement of nursing towards professional recognition, worthy of receiving adequate educational preparation. The Weir Report is well known for concluding that nursing should be considered a profession rather than a trade and that nurses should be required to be licensed in order to practice as registered nurses.

Another important issue that the Weir Report identified was the lack of adequate education for public health nurses. Commentary by leading public health nurses on the report at the time concluded that the focus of training schools attached to hospitals serve the hospitals’ needs but not those of the public more generally (Simpson et al., 1932, p. 197). The authors of this article, published in the *Canadian Journal of Public Health Nursing*, focused on the lack of educated nurses available to respond to the broader public health needs of the community. At the time of the Weir Report, nurse leaders in public health were calling for unity within the nursing profession and within nursing education (Simpson et al., 1932). Nurse leaders at the time noted that “The Survey [Weir Report] opens with references to the part played by representative nurses in the earlier days. It presents Jean Mance, the first Canadian nurse, as a woman who was interested in everything that affected her community’s welfare and incidentally in the administration of a hospital and the care of the sick” (Simpson et al., 1932, p. 197). These early visionaries, like Florence Nightingale, saw nursing as an autonomous, holistic profession focused on the care of the public in all aspects of sickness and health (Simpson et al., 1932). The tension in education of organizational silos between community-based and hospital-based focuses remains problematic for nursing education today (Duncan, 2019, n.p.).

The Weir Report bolstered the trend in Canada and the United States to move nursing schools into teacher's colleges during the first half of the 19th century. UBC was one of the earliest initiators of this trend under the leadership of the visionary nurse Ethel Johns (Duncan, 2019, n.p.). In 1919, Johns gave an iconic speech (known as the *Cradle to the Grave Speech*) to the nurses at Vancouver General Hospital, who would need to accept and work alongside this new group of University educated nurses. Johns stated that:

You have to demonstrate to the University and the public that work done in the wards of this hospital by the rank and file of the staff and pupils is so good that it is worthy of University recognition. No other department of the university has to submit to such a searching test as this. (John, 1919, p. 9)

Nursing students would spend two years at UBC studying liberal arts, followed by two years on the wards of Vancouver General Hospital. For their fifth year, they would return to the University to focus on either nursing education or public health. This alliance with education was hard fought for by nurse leaders at the time, who recognized the need for nursing to have a theoretical base and a role outside of hospitals in caring for the general public health of communities. The effect of this education and the development of other University nursing programs that followed UBC throughout North America was the beginning of the development of nursing specific theory. An affiliation with University and Teachers Colleges also resulted in nursing curriculum becoming influenced by progressive educational theory. Theories such as John Dewey's ideas of pragmatism and reflective practice that aligned with nursing values were integrated into early nursing education programs (Dewey, 1934/1995; Doan & Varcoe, 2015, p. 21; Weaver & Olson, p. 465). Progressive educational theory supported a pluralistic and humanistic approach, which provided alternatives to the authority of rationalism, empirical knowledge and the biomedical model for nurses.

However, in the 1950s, Canadian schools of nursing, following the lead of American schools, strongly supported the idea of a standardized behavioral curriculum template that was developed by Ralph Tyler in 1949 (Bramadat & Chalmers, 1989, p. 723). The allure of Tyler's behavioral objectives is that it would lead to the promise of competency-based learning outcomes for nurses. The expectation was that measurable outcomes for developing nursing skills would presumably boost the credibility and status of nursing practice in the hierarchy of health care. Over the next few decades, nursing

continued to struggle to gain status as a profession. The result was an increasing dependence on the medical model steeped in rationalism and the superiority of empirical knowledge traditions in the education of nurses. This played out in my nursing education in the 1980s. I was taught to complete nursing assessments using a biomedical model that broke the body down into physical systems such as respiratory, cardiovascular or musculoskeletal. Nursing specific theory was being developed but was not well integrated into nursing education at the time (Duncan et al., 2014, p. 2). Nursing schools have gained more autonomy over time, however the biomedical apprenticeship model of nursing education continues to have a strong influence on contemporary nursing curricula (Bramadat & Chalmers, 1989, p. 723).

I completed my undergraduate degree in Nursing at UBC in 1986, sixty-three years after the first BSN prepared nurses in Canada received their degree at UBC. I proudly referred to myself as a “UBC model nurse”. I was well versed in the behavioral assumptions of the UBC model of nursing that was based, at the time, on functional body systems and the nursing process of assessment, diagnosis, intervention and evaluation. However, in my practice over the next 15 years in rural communities, and often with Indigenous people, I discovered that I still had much to learn about how to be a nurse. What I had yet to understand was that nursing required a far more expansive theoretical view. One that could include ecological and Indigenous sensibilities.

These learnings came to light for me when I was working as a diabetes educator in the archipelago of Haida Gwaii from 1998 to 2001. During this time I was also enrolled in a Masters of Continuing Education through the University of Calgary. After working as a community nurse and in rural hospitals I had decided to pursue further education so that I could be more knowledgeable in one area of practice. This decision was in part due to feeling unprepared to deal with what nurses commonly refer to as “anything and everything that might walk through the door”. I thought to myself, “I will learn one thing really well and then I will become an expert and feel competent as a nurse”. When the opportunity arose, I became a diabetes educator. What I learned was that no matter how much I knew about diabetes, there was still much more to learn. There are some things, even about the seemingly basic and tangible physiological process of diabetes, that remain a mystery to scientists. When you consider that diabetes, with its many different types and effects on the human body, also comes with people and people come with an infinite amount of complexity, you realize that there is no point in trying to become an

expert in anything. This experience taught me that the idea that I could learn one area of practice really well so that I would never feel the vulnerability of not knowing, was only an illusion.

During my Master's Degree and while working with Indigenous people and communities in Haida Gwaii I began to understand and experience relational and holistic ways of being a nurse and educator. I came to realize how the prevailing hegemony of empirical knowledge assumptions, coupled with behaviorist pedagogies has limited the potential of nurses to engage in healing relationships with people and communities, particularly Indigenous communities. Unfortunately, stereotypes of nurses such as the doctor's "handmaiden" and the patient's "angel of mercy" serve to devalue the theoretical complexity of nursing practice. I remember being intentionally provoked by a professor while I was working on my master's degree who asked me whether nurses really have time for critical thinking. Since then I have been determined to promote critical thinking in nursing. I saw myself as a disrupter of the uncritical influence of market forces, neoliberalism, globalization, and media that perpetuate the image of a nurse as a selfless, uncritical and efficient person who carries out doctor's orders within a hospital context.

In 2001, I began teaching nursing in the then Collaborative Nursing Program (CNP) offered at NIC. I was entering the arena of nursing education at a time when nursing scholars had recognized the shortfalls of behavioral pedagogies and additive curriculum for addressing the realities of nursing practice. A progressive group of Nurse Educators from the university- and college-based nursing programs in British Columbia began discussing the development of a radically different curriculum. This group was known as "The Kitchen Table Group" because of where they discussed their vision for a progressive nursing curriculum. The curriculum was developed with the support of leading nurse theorists Jean Watson and P. Ann Bevis, who had recently published their book, *Toward a Caring Curriculum* (Bevis & Watson, 1989). They advocated for;

a shift from the biomedical, behavioral model (based on a natural science perspective) to a nursing model (based on a human science perspective) founded on the meta-concepts of caring and health promotion was initiated and underpinned by the philosophical orientations of phenomenology, humanism, critical social theory, and feminism. (Zawaduk et al., 2014, p. 583).

This group of nurse educators were responsible for bringing the curriculum revolution to nursing in Canada.

Bevis and Watson's (1989) ideas resonated with me as a new educator. The idea of the "hidden curriculum" was to have great significance for me as I began to grapple with the power relations within the educational context. Bevis and Watson (1989), drawing on the ideas of the "implicit curriculum" of Eisner (1985; 2002) and the "hidden curriculum" by Vallance (1973), describe it as the curriculum "in which we are unaware of the messages given by the way we teach, the priorities we set, the types of methods we use, and the way we interact with students" (p. 75). I began to see how my values and the values of nursing education shaped the learning experience.

When I began teaching in 2001, the NIC BSN program was just expanding to offer the full four years of the program onsite. The students would graduate from NIC with a degree in nursing from the University of Victoria. I was hired because of my practice background in community nursing and my ability to teach the third and fourth year BSN courses that were being added to the curriculum at NIC. The CNP curriculum was considered a lived curriculum and defined as "the interactions that take place between and among students, clients, practitioners and teachers, with the intent that learning take place" (CNP, 1997, p. 1-11). A lived curriculum does not separate the teacher self from the whole self but rather incorporates the experience of teaching, learning and practicing nursing as an embodied experience of living through our relationships by enacting our values (Aoki, Pinar, & Irwin, 2005). When I started working as a nurse educator in 2001, what was missing from the curriculum philosophy, and what was being discussed by leaders in nursing education at the time, was the need for a "post-colonial perspective" in the curriculum. Later editions of the curriculum started to incorporate emerging ideas related to decolonizing perspectives.

The NIC nursing curriculum was to undergo a few changes in the next 15 years. The adoption of a BSN degree as entry to practice for all registered nurses in 2012 led to a reorganizing of the CNP. The curriculum was also revised to respond to the changing context of nursing practice and theory. The new partnership emerged as the Collaboration for Academic Education in Nursing (CAEN). NIC established a degree-granting relationship with the newly established Vancouver Island University (VIU) previously known as Malaspina College. The CAEN partnership no longer remains,

although the NIC nursing curriculum, now shared with VIU, is still based on its progressive foundations.

In 2001 as I was reading through the curriculum guide in preparation for my job interview, I felt a sense of coming home to a place of belonging. The philosophical foundations of the guide aligned strongly with my own values and beliefs for nursing practice. I was discovering that there was a language for what I had learned over the previous 15 years from practicing community nursing. The foundational perspectives of feminism, critical social theory and humanism were important in my development as a nurse and educator.

Feminism in the 1997 CNP philosophy was concerned mostly with issues of gender inequity and the promotion of equal rights (p. 20). The focus was based on the oppression of women, especially as it related to nursing as a predominantly female occupation (Chinn & Wheeler, 1978). Updated revisions of the curriculum guide considered feminism theory from a variety of perspectives including liberal, socialist, cultural, radical and postmodern feminism (CAEN, 2015). Feminist theory, as it was defined in the CAEN curriculum, was focused on the liberation of all people and being inclusive of all values for people. At the same time, it recognized “the gendered history of nursing, nursing knowledge, and the gendered perspectives that continue to dominate health care and health care delivery” (CAEN, 2015 p. 2-11). I see feminist theory as useful in understanding the dynamics of gender oppression in nursing, particularly as it intersects with, and is compounded by, the experiences of colonization.

Critical social theory in the original CNP (1997) curriculum was based on the ideas of Giroux (1983) from his earlier book, *Theory and Resistance in Education: A pedagogy for the Opposition*. The focus was on developing an understanding of the dominant social structures especially as they constrain people from their health and healing practices. It incorporated the ideas of Freire (1993) as it described caring as a process of conscientization; compelling “moral, ethical and just” action to liberate both nurses and their clients from oppressive structures (CNP, 1997). At the time critical theory and the ideas of “ pedagogy as freedom” were instrumental in developing my approach to nursing education and the development of the immersion learning experiences with Indigenous people. However, as I will discuss later in this chapter, I am continuing to learn about the assumptions of critical theory from Euro-western

perspectives and about how Indigenous perspectives may offer alternatives to these assumptions.

Humanism, as described in the CNP (1997) curriculum, incorporated Carl Rogers' (1961) ideas of authenticity or congruence, empathetic understanding and unconditional positive regard in self-actualizing relational encounters. I was familiar with Carl Rogers' ideas through my masters work in education. They also resonated with me as a nurse because they focused on empowerment in the relational encounter between people. A seminal book, *Humanistic Nursing* written by Paterson and Zderad (2008), describes humanistic nursing as

embrace[ing] more than a benevolent, technically competent, subject-object one-way relationship guided by a nurse on behalf of another. Rather it dictates that nursing is a responsible searching, [intersubjective] transactional relationship whose meaningfulness demands conceptualization founded on a nurse's existential awareness of self and of the other. (n.p.)

This quotation acknowledges that nursing is grounded in phenomenological theoretical assumptions. It also however exposes the limits of humanism in addressing Euro-western assumptions that are also embedded in nursing theories.

Later editions of the *CNP Curriculum Guide* removed humanism as an explicit concept. I was curious as to why this might be, so I explored humanism further in the literature and discovered that its roots can be traced back to the Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle. Its origin is summarized in a well-known quotation attributed to Greek philosopher, Protagoras, (490-420 BC) who claimed that "man is the measure of all things" (Bunnin & Jiyuan, 2009, p. 570). This quotation which is widely interpreted to mean that all knowledge is subjective, has led to neo-liberal assumptions about the individual agency of humans. As Campesino (2008) and others point out, there is the risk in humanistic theories of understanding individual rights and freedoms as a common human experience, without regard for the complexities of racial, ethnic or class distinctions that are imbued with power differentials. Humanism has also led to anthropomorphic interpretations of reality through the belief that man (and his ability to reason) is the source of all knowledge. Greek philosophy holds anthropomorphic assumptions about the supremacy of humans over all other natural things, which is antithetical to Indigenous philosophy (L.T. Smith, 2012, pp. 100-101). I have gained

more insight into how humanism can lead to ingrained knowledge assumptions that contribute to cognitive imperialism and the colonization of Indigenous people. Although I remain compelled by the ideas of humanism, especially as they pertain to self-actualization and unconditional positive regard, I am also wary of the individualistic, neo-liberal and anthropomorphic views of reality embedded in humanistic theories.

What I discovered from looking back at the history of nursing curriculum as it relates to pedagogical theory is that it has helped me to understand how I have enacted my practice as a nurse and educator over time. It has helped me appreciate the epistemology, ontology and axiology of my praxis as I am bearing witness to my own transformation. It has also helped to illuminate tensions and contradictions that I experience with living my pedagogy on a daily basis. It is these tensions that I will discuss in more detail now.

The current NIC/VIU nursing curriculum, which is still based on the 2015 CAEN curriculum, addresses colonization and reconciliation through a “postcolonial” lens as one of the curriculum’s perspectives. The curriculum guide explains:

There are different ways that the “post” of postcolonialism can be understood. Anderson (2004) and Browne, Smye, and Varcoe (2005) refer to Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) and Cathryn McConaghy (2000) in holding that post does not represent a period of time after colonialism, or mean that we have moved beyond or past colonialism and colonial practices, but rather, it refers to the idea of working “against and beyond colonialism” (Anderson, p. 240). (CAEN, 2015, Part 2, p. 11)

Postcolonial perspectives are explained in the curriculum guide in the following way:

Postcolonial perspectives bring our attention to the social conditions related to colonization and racism (Doane & Varcoe, 2005). Colonialism encompasses the process by which a foreign power dominates and exploits indigenous groups and more specifically refers to these processes enacted by European powers between the 16th and 20th centuries (Henry, Taylor, Mattis & Rees, 2000 as cited in Doane & Varcoe, 2005). This attention to the dominance of a “foreign power” and its taken-for-granted cultural norms and mores - enacted as truth and used to sustain power - provides nurses with a metaphor applicable to many experiences and forms of professional and corporate oppression associated with nursing and health care. Said (1990), for example, argued that colonizing ideologies were implicit in language. Processes for dealing with and overcoming the effects of colonialism provide nurses with strengths and strategies essential to their own health and leadership potentials when working under these conditions. The multicultural nature of Canadian

society and the importance of the historical experiences of the Indigenous groups in Canada make this an important lens for considering nursing practice. (CAEN, 2015, Part 2, p. 11)

The guide provided a progressive platform from which to engage with the subsequent conversations concerning Truth and Reconciliation in Canada. However, for all the reasons outlined above, enactment of a post-colonial, Indigenizing, decolonizing or reconciliation vision within nursing education has been problematic. We have been constrained by our historical roots, epistemological assumptions, and ingrained social structures from making any substantially progressive changes. Limiting the expanded theoretical and practice terrain of nurses has severely affected our role and ability to respond to the complex health contexts of Indigenous communities. This is a concern that has been identified by multiple health critiques and nursing scholars across Canada (Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada et al., 2009; Browne, 2017; Rowan et al, 2013). Finding *ya'xan k'angextola* (my blanket) as a nurse educator has been a search for a nursing pedagogy that is based on realizing the historical roots of nursing education in order to reconcile a healing praxis that is capable of responding to the complex realities of contemporary people and communities in relation to each other and the environment.

When I started teaching in 2001 the CAEN curriculum was generally well aligned with my personal values and theoretical beliefs about practice that I had developed from working as a nurse. But, I had yet to learn how to put the paradigm I was reading about into practice as an educator. The first class I taught was a first-year nursing class called “Self and Others”. The overall “ends in view” for the course were to “explore self and identity as a relational person, to develop relational ways of being with others (individuals, family and groups) and to begin to develop a caring identity” (CNP student resource packet, 2001, p. 68). I had spent a good deal of time over the summer preparing for the course and especially working on a lesson plan for my first class. The first class was the morning of September 11, 2001 or what became commonly known as 9/11. I woke up early and heard the news as it was happening. One of the twin towers in New York had been hit by an airplane and the second plane was just about to hit the second tower. Although I heard the news, I was so focused on the task of teaching that I did not take in the significance. On arriving at my workplace, located just up the road from the Canadian Forces Base in Comox, it finally hit me. The Dean and Department Chair were waiting outside my office discussing what we should do to ensure the safety

of ourselves and our students. In that first class there were students who identified as Muslim and also students who identified as American. We were all afraid and unsure of what would happen next. My well-prepared lesson plan would not help me. I needed to teach the class relationally in a way that we could authentically discuss our feelings and our fears. This was a powerful learning experience for me. It was the beginning of a process of co-constructing curricula with students, of creating space for authentic discussion and of being aware of the context and significance of what was happening in people's lives. What I had learned as a nurse about practicing with an ethic of caring and health promotion needed to be integrated into my practice as an educator. I was learning to practice education with an ethic of freedom.

Practicing education with an ethic of freedom is a sensibility I am continuing to develop. Maxine Greens (1988) seminal work *The Dialectic of Freedom* provided me with new insight to the nuanced and complex ideas of freedom. She discussed the neoliberal constructs of freedom that have informed American education and identity. She describes how when freedom is conceived as autonomy and freedom of choice it inevitably risks the alienation from and of community. She offers an alternative understanding of freedom as that which is co-created with community. Having recently completed a Master's Degree in Education, I was familiar with (and inspired by) the work of Paulo Freire (1993) and bell hooks (1994) related to education as freedom. All of these authors express the importance of understanding pedagogy as a political act. If we depoliticize education, we also decontextualize it. Education is always political because it is connected to the acquisition of agency, the ability to struggle with ongoing relations of power, and is a precondition for creating informed and critical citizens (Freire, 1993 & hooks, 1994; Giroux & Giroux, 2008). Maxine Greene (1988) considers education for freedom to be "a reawakening of the consciousness of possibility ... that brings together the need for wide-awakeness with the hunger for community, the desire to know with the wish to understand, the desire to feel with the passion to see" (p.23). I appreciate the paradox and possibility of Greene's vision that includes both a belonging to community with the desire for freedom and the possibility of mutually creating something new.

In nursing education, where the goal is to educate people to care for and promote the health of individuals, communities and societies the moral imperative of practicing with an ethic of education as freedom could not be stronger. What I discovered was that the curriculum I was being introduced to in 2001 incorporated both

the nursing philosophical foundations of health promotion and caring with a pedagogy of freedom. Freedom is considered by nurse theorists Bevis and Watson (1989) to be an act of resistance to the dualistic, neoliberal, and mechanistic assumptions that are common in nursing practice and education. They state that:

the dominant approach separates fact from value and meaning, separates subject from object, focuses on value-free intellectual, factual, technical education and pedagogies to the exclusion of the intentional, the relational, the intersubjective, the contextual, the evolving, growing human consciousness, and the realization that all knowledge is constructed as a human endeavor, just as teacher-learner is a profoundly human and moral endeavor. (Bevis and Watson, 1989, p. 38)

In that first encounter with students in a classroom setting on 9/11, I was learning to teach as I had learned to nurse. I was recognizing that education, like nursing, is a moral endeavor and that an ethic of caring and of being health promoting in the nursing context is linked to a pedagogy of freedom in the education context. As Donald (2009) states “teaching is a responsibility and an act of kindness viewed as movement towards connectivity and relationality” (p. 19). His words resonated with me because they connected my ethic as a nurse with my ethic as an educator. Integrating my practice as a nurse and educator meant fully engaging with a relational ethic of meaning making to understand myself in relation to others. What I experienced on my first day of teaching was that racism in all its forms was a barrier to creating learning spaces where people could be both safe and courageous enough to learn.

As a new educator I still had much to learn about addressing racism in the classroom. In my first classroom on that first day, I saw racism in clear view triggered by the fear that the events of 9/11 generated. Our fear, while we waited with the rest of North America for what would happen next, was sharpened by our proximity to the Comox Forces Air Base. This was a challenging situation in which I wanted to create a safe place where we could learn in relationship with others about our own values, biases and beliefs. I had little experience or theory to support me but opened the conversation with the intentions of the course, to understand ourselves in relation to others. We started the class as I had planned with the opportunity for each student to share who they were and where they came from. The tension as students talked about their identities and what that meant to them grew quickly. What I realized was happening was that students who lived with white privilege in the Western world were experiencing their

own vulnerability as an identified cultural group, possibly for the first time. We had all lived in the Western world with an assumed sense of security that was severely threatened on that day. In the classroom, I began to understand that people were afraid and looking for someone to blame. That first day of teaching still stands out for me as one of my greatest learnings. I learned that I lacked understanding of the complexity of racism or how to address it safely in a dynamic nursing classroom. The most important thing that happened for me that day was that I experienced my own vulnerability as an educator with white privilege.

3.2. Unravelling Ya'xan K̓angextola as a Nurse Educator

As I developed my skills as an educator, I came to realize that racism in nursing education was and still is, often taken up simply as the discrimination of one person against another without adequate exploration of the historical and social context of oppression (Browne, 2017). Inevitably, there are white students who feel threatened by what they perceive as “reverse racism” in the classroom when they are exposed to Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing. White fragility (DiAngelo, 2011) and the effects of microaggressions (Fleras, 2016) are rarely addressed in nursing classrooms but they are very often experienced. White fragility, as described by DiAngelo, is the result of defensiveness to stress experiences when non-racialized people become aware of the extent to which racialization plays a role in the power structures of social organizations. The threat of disruption to these power structures triggers a range of defensive moves such as “the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium” (DiAngelo, 2011, p. 54). “Micro-aggressions consist of those words and interactions perceived as racist by racialized targets that rarely reflect vindictive intent yet, inadvertently inflict insult or injury” (Fleras, 2016, p. 1). As a new nursing instructor, I learned that I needed a deeper understanding of the complexities of systemic social injustices and the layers colonial oppression in order to address the realities of what is experienced as racism in practice and in a typical nursing classroom (Blanchet Garneau, Brown and Varcoe, 2018).

As I became more aware of the rich debate on how to engage with ant-racist pedagogies in the classroom, I also discovered that there was no way of ensuring safe

and transformative learning experiences for everyone in a diverse group of students. DiAngelo and Sensoy (2014) explain how strategies to establish “safety” for anti-racism pedagogies in the classroom serve largely the safety of students who experience white privilege at the expense of those who are racialized.

In practice, the expectation that safety can be created in racial discussions through universalized procedural guidelines can block students of Color from naming the racial violence they experience on a daily basis, as well as the racial violence they may experience in the discussion itself. (pp. 105-106)

DiAngelo and Sensoy (2014) go on to conclude that:

While the feelings may be real for White people struggling with a sense of safety, it may be useful to consider what safety means from a position of social, cultural, historical and institutional power. If one does not fear actual physical harm, then some reflection on what one does fear can be a rich avenue of self-knowledge and social insight. (p. 127)

What I was to learn is that having safe learning experiences where students can examine both experiences of white privilege and racial oppression is a complex and risky endeavor. As an educator it required me to experience my own vulnerability and examine my own racial identity and positionality. I found, as I will describe in Chapter Six and Seven, that these learning spaces had the potential to be transformative when we engaged fully with the paradox of being both safe and vulnerable in our relationships with others.

What I was to find is that even though nursing has a strong ethic of social justice it is often understood from neo-liberal and multiculturalist ideologies (Hilario et al., 2018; de Leeuw et al., 2013). The multiculturalist assumptions found in transcultural theories as conceived by nurse theorist Leininger’s (1988) conceptions of cultural competence are omnipresent in nursing curriculum. Nurses are encouraged to practice cultural sensitivity and competence in their interpersonal relations using transcultural nursing theories (Blanchet Garneau, Brown and Varcoe, 2018). These theories promote an “us and them” binary of understanding difference because they are embedded in positivist knowledge assumptions and essentialist ideas of culture (Blanchet Garneau, Brown and Varcoe, 2018; Hilario et al., 2018; Milton, 2016). What these theories lack is the ability to address the deep subjectivity and power relations that are ingrained in all nurse/patient/client (interpersonal) relationships. They allow for a simplistic, essentialist

understanding of differences without recognizing our own locations as colonizer/colonized and the unique politics of the relationship of Indigenous people to the institutions of health care and nursing.

Although (and maybe because) nursing sees itself as a socially just profession, it tends to deny its own colonized context and often takes up an ethic of colour-blindness and political correctness. Nursing's view of itself as socially just can inhibit the ability for nurses and nurse educators to see the need for the enactment of anti-racist pedagogy (Hilario, et al., 2018). In nursing when we tell ourselves stories, grand narratives, about how we are health promoters who empower others to overcome social inequities, we risk not turning the lens on ourselves and our own complicity in creating the social order of inequities in the first place (Blanchet Garneau, Brown and Varcoe, 2018). Many nursing textbooks and pedagogies continue to support essentialist assumptions of culture (Milton, 2016). Often nursing education blindly promotes white privilege through its history of neo-liberal white feminist influences (Kirkham & Browne, 2006). The problem with these ideologies is that they can lead to an understanding of health inequities, as stemming from ethnocentric differences without adequate regard for systemic power differentials and the context of colonization (Blanchet Garneau, Brown and Varcoe, 2018; Campesino, 2008; Gustafson, 2007). Nurses have the opportunity to move beyond essentialist and dualistic assumptions about culture (Blanchet Garneau, Brown and Varcoe, 2018). These embedded assumptions focus our attention on differences between people and perpetuate Euro-western knowledge hierarchies and social inequities (Milton, 2016). Instead we can focus more attention on the systemic power differentials and the complex intersectionality of our identities within separate world views in order to heal the effects of colonization on nursing practice.

Nursing and education theorists frequently draw from Buber's ideas about I-thou relationships, as opposed to the objectifying of others in I-it relationships (Buber & Smith, 2000). Nursing theorists Doan and Varcoe (2015) explain how understanding ourselves as nurses in I-thou relationships, supports understanding culture, identity and context as fluid and interdependent (p. 187). This means relating to patients from a place of mutual understanding of their health experience, rather than from the position of expert nurse. Blenkinsop and Scott (2017) extend Buber's ideas in the context of education to seeing ourselves as being in I-thou relationships with minerals, vegetables and animals. Their point is to "[offer] a description of other-than-human encounters that do not assume a

hierarchy based on a certain response” (p. 455). Through offering possibilities for developing mutual and reciprocal relationships that do not objectify other than humans, we can understand how to “become bound up in relation with an other-than-human existence” (p. 426). They provide a compelling vision for dislodging anthropomorphic assumptions that privilege only interpersonal (between human) relationships. Ecological understandings have the potential for healing relationships, not only between people but also between people and the earth.

Relationally complex and ecological understandings of identity and culture are essential elements for reconciling educational and health care institutions. Now, in the context of Truth and Reconciliation, many academic institutions are attempting to “Indigenize” their curricula. What “Indigenization” means often remains unclear. I have seen Indigenization enacted in many ways most of which do little to transform academic institutions. For example, I have been on committees where Indigenization is taken up as an occasional formulaic land acknowledgment or an item on an agenda that is addressed superficially. More commonly, in nursing education we go further and try to insert Indigenous content into a curriculum in the way that Marie Battiste (2013) has referred to as the add and stir methodology. This type of insertion adds Indigenous content without much attention to the pedagogical, contextual and structural changes that also need to happen (Battiste, 2013). Unfortunately, what I have witnessed in the classroom as the focus shifts from multiculturalism to Indigenization is that the stirred pot boils up with expressions of white fragility and microaggressions. I am frequently asked by students, “Why do we spend so much time learning about Indigenous culture when we will be working with people from all different cultures in our practice?” Countering these responses requires raising consciousness about the epistemic, systematic and structural forms of racism that have been entrenched in nursing curriculum and practice throughout our colonial history (Blanchet Garneau, Brown and Varcoe, 2018).

Throughout my journey of becoming an educator I have been searching for ways to develop understandings that decolonization and reconciliation can happen through personal engagement and an openness to personal transformation. I have found that it helps to start with providing learning opportunities where students can recognize that we are all bearers of culture. When we come to understand ourselves as also bearers of culture influenced by values and beliefs then we (nurses and students) can see ourselves as equally and fully entwined in healing relationships with the people we care

for. When we approach our practice relationally we begin to see people as more than the labels they are described by or the cultural stereotypes that are attributed to them. We come to know people in relationship to ourselves by engaging in a continuous process of reflexivity. If nursing education is able to adopt a more complex and co-constructed understanding of culture and identity within the context of colonial Canadian and local history we may find new opportunities to transform ourselves and our relationships. Transformative reconciliation is possible if we can move beyond the neo-liberal and neo-colonial assumptions that drive our institutional processes and inevitably perpetuate the unequal power dynamics that we are trying to address (de Leeuw et al., 2013; L.T. Smith, 2020).

A learning I had about the complexities of anti-discriminatory pedagogies happened early in my career as a college instructor. I was using a common exercise designed to illuminate how we are all bearers of culture and expose the impacts of systemic discrimination and social hierarches. The activity involves participants starting in a line across the middle of the room. As the facilitator I read out a list of life opportunities that are related to the social determinants of health. For example, statements such as, "One of your parents received post-secondary education." The participants must step forward or backward depending on how they choose to relate to the indicator read out. I was aware that much of the students' beliefs, values and identities were hidden to me and that the exercise could trigger emotions from traumatic life experiences. Careful parameters were put around participation requirements to respect choice and safety. Students were told they could choose how and if they wanted to participate in the way they responded to each question. However, what I discovered was that although the experience was powerful for those who participated, it was also traumatic for some participants. In one case, a participant had to choose to "out" an aspect of her identity that made her feel vulnerable. Her other choice would indicate to her friends who knew her that she was not brave enough to disclose "the truth". This exercise triggered multiple issues. It stirred up both feelings of vulnerability and defensiveness, leading to the expression of microaggressions. Although this was a powerful learning experience for many of the students who were unaware of the extent of their privilege, the effects were traumatic for those students who were all too familiar with the experience of systemic discrimination. I learned from this experience that such public and personal exercises for examining privilege within diverse groups are

performed at the expense of those who experience racialized or other forms of oppression. Addressing racism in a classroom is fraught with ambiguities and the potential to inflict unintended harm. Addressing racism on an institutional level can also be fraught with similar challenges.

A typical response has been the call for Indigenization of academic institutions. However, Indigenization can also become a form of violence when it is reduced to the inclusion of Indigenous people and perspectives into a colonized system. In order to address this we can challenge simplistic ideas about the Indigenization processes and recognize how immersed we all are in colonization. Sandra Styers (2019) defines Indigenization as “the process in which the institution, as a network of relations of power and privilege, takes the position that it will be both responsive to and responsible for moving the self-determining interests of Indigenous communities forward” (pp. 51-52). Indigenization can become a problematic process when it remains centered in Euro-western ideas and processes of decolonization. The risk is that when it is approached as a blending of knowledges, Indigenous knowledge systems inevitably become subordinate to the well-established Euro-western ones. Even with the best intentions, when Indigenization happens in Euro-western academic institutions it can result in the tokenizing and commodifying of Indigenous people and knowledge.

I think back to the many times I have asked Indigenous people and knowledge holders to come into “my” classroom as a “guest speaker” to teach “about” Indigenous people and knowledge systems. Have I fully considered the potential harm that my good intentions can perpetuate? I can be sure that they did not learn “how to be Indigenous” in a classroom setting. Am I aware of the expectation I have that they will be able to translate what they know, how they know it and even how to teach what they know into our way of learning in a western classroom? Yet there are many people who are very good at it and I am grateful that they have the courage and the expertise to do the hard work with us. Let me just reflect on what it likely took for them to be able to come and speak to a class of nursing students. First, they likely survived years of intergenerational trauma and cultural genocide. Then they needed to develop the capacity to hold onto and uncover what knowledge and ways knowing they could. Often, they also experienced years of Western education where one way of knowing is seen as superior to all others, without losing respect for traditional knowledge. After all this they still have the courage to come to our class and share what they know. They teach, not with the

expectation that we will become knowledgeable in Indigenous ways but simply with the hope that we can glimpse our ignorance and develop a respect for the existence of complex knowledge systems beyond our own. To add to all this, they often do their best to be careful not to provoke our white fragility so that we can listen with an open mind and heart. I hold my hand up to these wise people and thank them. I also ask them to forgive us for our ignorance and the way that we continue to perpetuate the violence of epistemic and systemic racism in all our relationships. Transformative reconciliation can happen when we are able to learn from, with and through Indigenous knowledge systems, not just about them using Western pedagogical approaches.

Addressing racism, colonial trauma and colonization in a classroom is fraught with complexities and ambiguities. Cote-Meek (2014) has uncovered many of these in her research on the experiences of Indigenous students and faculty in postsecondary Canadian classrooms. She identifies the issues of learning about colonialism, truth and reconciliation in a mixed classroom setting where Indigenous students are subjected to “listening to your own story in a space when you are under constant threat of having to defend yourself against racism (p. 142)”. Non- Indigenous educators who engage in decolonizing and antiracist pedagogies have a responsibility to consider the experiences of students who are directly affected by the experiences of racism in the classroom. Cote-Meek implores us to be prepared to address any incidents of racism that come up in the classroom and not deny or silence their existence. It is also important to not put Indigenous students in the position of being “ Native informants in the classroom” by asking them to talk about or represent Indigenous knowledge or culture (Cote-Meek, p. 142). As King et al., (2019) state: “*Indigenizing* and *decolonizing* are terms of academia and it will not work to use those words with Elders. The University will only be on a good trajectory when the voice of the Elder comes through it” (p.131). My experience of transformative reconciliation in nursing education has happened when I have the courage to experience my own vulnerability and disequilibrium as I uncover ingrained power structures and social hierarchies that have enabled my privilege.

An important development for me in finding my path towards addressing the complexities of racism in all its forms, in the context of a nursing classroom, happened in 2006. I had the honour of participating in a scholarship group intended to explore the meaning of cultural safety for nurse educators in a Canadian context. The group’s intention was to create a collaborative approach for increased scholarship within nursing

education (Cash & Tate, 2008). This opportunity arose shortly after the book *Cultural Safety in Aotearoa New Zealand* was published by Wepa (2005). The ideas presented in this publication, originally developed by Maori nurse scholars in New Zealand, were just beginning to be recognized globally. I had the opportunity to join with a group of eight nurse educators from different geographical and cultural locations. Over the next five years, from 2006 to 2011, we engaged in a process of writing, reflection and discussion about what cultural safety meant to each of us. What emerged was a method of raising social consciousness through writing as inquiry. We asked ourselves and each other “if we were able to find spaces in which we felt culturally safe, what would these spaces look and feel like?” (Cash et al., 2013) I came to understand how relational experiences are ambiguous, contentious and changing. I saw cultural safety as a political act of resisting the forces that distance and marginalize others and of seeking places and opportunities for connection and belonging together (Cash et al., 2013). We wrote about cultural safety as a relational process and a praxis of freedom which has continued resonance for me today.

Pausing to contemplate the meanings of cultural safety helped to unfold parallel journeys for us all. As Watson (2005a) might suggest, we acted with mindful presence; a sharing in life itself (Gadamer 2004, p. 211); in looking into another’s soul realizing that their soul is also our own (Watson, 2005a). We have created deep connections by constructing a relational process. To be culturally safe, a relational process becomes a praxis of freedom. This existential experience helps us to seek the self in the others’ identities and see ourselves. It is the point of (re)connection experienced as both movement and gaze shift backwards and forwards between the self that I am, the you in me, and the me in you. ‘When we look into the face of another person we look into the infinity and mystery of the human soul; it mirrors the infinity and mystery back into our soul’ (Watson, 2005b, Track 5), these are moments of relational (cultural) safety. (Cash et al., 2013, p. 835)

I have come to understand the praxis of freedom in education as a paradox between creating spaces of belonging and safety where learners feel free to transform (Freire, 1993; hooks, 1994; Giroux & Giroux & 2008 Greene, 1988).

Cultural safety was originally described by Maori Nurses from Aotearoa, New Zealand as that which does not diminish, demean or disempower the cultural identity of an individual or a group (Papps & Ramsden, 1996). Rather than centralizing the nurse in the relationship as culturally competent or not, cultural safety puts the person receiving the nurse’s care at the center and gives the care recipient the right to decide if the

relationship is culturally safe or not (Papps & Ramsden, 1996). It contests the essentialist assumptions embedded in cultural competency that can result in overlooking the unequal power relationships and structural inequities between colonizer and colonized people and communities (Papps & Ramsden, 1996). Cultural safety exposes the epistemic and systemic racism that is embedded in the health care system and nursing practice.

Cultural safety was taken up quickly by Indigenous health providers and organizations in Canada. The National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO) developed a position statement in 2008 that stated:

Cultural safety refers to what is felt or experienced by a patient when a health care provider communicates with the patient in a respectful, inclusive way, empowers the patient in decision-making and builds a health care relationship where the patient and provider work together as a team to ensure maximum effectiveness of care. Culturally safe encounters require that health care providers treat patients with the understanding that not all individuals in a group act the same way or have the same beliefs. (NAHO, 2008, p. 19)

Shortly after that, what was then the Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada (ANAC) [now the Canadian Indigenous Nurses Association (CINA)], described cultural safety in its practice framework as a focus on the nurses' role in addressing unequal power relations and in recognizing that all nurses and patients are bearers of culture (Hart-Wasekeesikaw, 2009).

In the subsequent years, however, cultural safety has not been well understood or enacted by nurses and nurse educators in Canada. Critiques of cultural safety come from generally three perspectives. I have added a fourth. One perspective raises questions about the use of the word "culture" and its meaning in cultural safety. The term was originally derived by Maori Nurses to address the inequities that resulted from the Treaty of Waitangi in the New Zealand context (Wepa, 2005). It has not been easily transferable to the colonized, multicultural and multifaceted context in Canada (Allwright et al., 2019; Blanchet Garneau, Brown and Varcoe, 2018; Cash et al., 2013). It remains largely associated with addressing only colonial-Indigenous relations rather than the full range of racist and discriminatory practices that are inherent in health care (Allwright et al., 2019). It also has not successfully disrupted essentialist notions of culture that

continue to permeate nursing ideology (Blanchet Garneau, Brown and Varcoe, 2018; McGibbon et al., 2014; Browne, 2017)

More recently, ideas of cultural humility have received some traction with nurses and nurse educators as a way of countering essentialist ideas of culture and addressing unequal power balances in all relationships. Cultural humility, as described by Foronda, Baptiste, Reinholdt, & Ousman, who did a comprehensive concept analysis in 2016, is “a process of openness, self-awareness, being egoless, and incorporating self-reflection and critique after willingly interacting with diverse individuals. The results of achieving cultural humility are mutual empowerment, respect, partnerships, optimal care, and lifelong learning” (p. 213). Cultural humility has been described as the process of engaging in relationships with cultural safety being the intended outcome (Allwright et al., 2019; First Nations Health Authority, 2016). But by focusing only on interpersonal relationships, the risk is that deeper structural and social inequities will remain overlooked and unchanged.

A second critique is that cultural safety may not be a meaningful or useful term for Indigenous people in the context of understanding nursing practice. Lisa Bourque Bearskin, an Indigenous Nurse scholar, described this concern in her dissertation when discussing the usefulness of a culturally safe approach:

My concern with this approach is that, from an Indigenous perspective, the concept of culture alone does not fit with the development of Indigenous knowledge. Indigenous knowledge is the manifestation of human knowledge, heritage, and consciousness and is a means of ecological order (Battiste & Youngblood Henderson, 2000). However, if nursing were to put cultural safety foremost in knowledge development, I wonder whether it would keep people safe and reduce health inequities or generate more stereotypes. (Raymond, 2014, p. 86)

The Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada along with the Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing and the Canadian Nurses Association, published a joint paper in 2009 where they use the language of “cultural safety” interchangeably with “cultural competence”. Follow up research done by nurse scholars from both organizations found that neither term was sufficient to describe nursing practice with or by Indigenous people (Rowan et al, 2013). More recently the First Nations Health Authority released a campaign *#itstartswithme* in an attempt to address the lack of up-take of cultural safety

in the health care context (First Nations Health Authority, 2016). They referred to the lack of uptake of cultural safety as an issue with health literacy and suggested:

There is a common assumption that in health care encounters, individuals and their families need to become more health literate in order to accurately interpret information given by their health care professional. While increasing the level of health literacy among First Nations people is important, health care professionals must also work to increase their level of health literacy in working with First Nations people, which includes understanding what wellness means from First Nations perspectives and how poverty, education and housing, among other determinants of health and wellness, influence a person's health. (First Nations Health Authority, 2016).

The *#itstartswithme* campaign was designed to promote political action to advance the uptake of cultural safety and humility for the benefit of Indigenous people, in BC health services (First Nations Health Authority, 2016).

Related to the above two critiques of cultural safety, is the third perspective. Because cultural safety focuses on unequal power differentials, and addresses these differentials by putting the power in the hands of the recipient of care to determine what is safe, it is difficult for nurses to articulate what it means for their practice. It requires recognition that the nurse, the nursing role and the system (no matter how well intentioned) still has the potential to be determined as unsafe by the recipients of care. Putting the power into the hands of others to determine what is safe is challenging for individual nurses, it requires a particular type of vulnerability that is uncomfortable for anyone who sees themselves as responsible for the care of others. Putting patients in control of what is considered to be safe practice is even more challenging for health systems. As larger health organizations and health authorities in Canada adopt the language of cultural safety, it also remains at risk of being co-opted by a business model. What I have often witnessed in the application of cultural safety to nursing practice is a checkbox-style approach where cultural safety is reduced to a list of actions or measurable outcomes. This approach becomes very different and detached from the original intention of the Maori Nurse educators who developed these ideas in the first place. I am concerned that academic institutions are lured by the ease and efficiency of taking superficial approaches to cultural safety that absolve us from engaging in the complexity of the personal and political changes that are needed for transformative reconciliation.

Finally, I would like to add to these critiques a fourth concern: the paradox regarding the use of the word “safety”. Often when we talk about culturally safe spaces or relationships, it is with the realization that we feel safe enough to be vulnerable and therefore to take risks. We are saying that these spaces are where the unsafe can happen, where we are safe enough to grow to transform and perhaps to become something new. So, when we talk about safety, we may be talking about a lived experience that feels anything but safe. When we talk about culturally safe learning spaces, I propose we are talking about spaces where we feel safe enough to take risks. I will explain how I consider these spaces to be healing learning spaces in the final section of this chapter.

In June and July of 2019, I travelled with colleagues to New Zealand to present our work with immersion learning and nursing students at the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA) conference. This was the first time the conference was being held outside of North America. The Maori hosts paid special attention to structuring the conference in a way that was attuned to Indigenous processes and values. While attending the conference sessions, I heard the latest global discourses on Indigenous Education and so much more. I paid particular attention to the relationship between identity, power and voice. I listened to people who identified as Indigenous share their vulnerability and feelings of unsafety. I listened to people who identified with the colonizer share their vulnerability and privilege. Andrea Breen (2019) shared her story, which has also been recently published, about how she identifies as a white settler but finds the label uncomfortable, like wearing an itchy sweater (NAISA, 2019). She told the story of her young son grappling with understanding Canada’s colonial history and the legacy of residential schools. He asks his mother, “What do the bad guys look like?” As a mother, she worries about how her answer will characterize her son as being a “bad guy” (Breen, 2019, p. 57). I could relate to the anguish of a mother trying to guide their children to become advocates for social justice in an unjust world. How can we explain the nuances of white privilege and our role in reconciliation to our children? Do we even understand it ourselves? I sat in my discomfort at the conference and asked myself what I needed to learn. This was an experience where I saw cultural safety being enacted in the way that Indigenous people and ideas were privileged and occupied the space of how the conference was organized, how ideas were shared, and who was sharing them.

I learned more about cultural safety through the process of preparing and presenting our session at the conference. Evelyn Voyageur and Paul Willie, the *ni noxsola* I work with, were the co-chairs of our presentation. Our team also included a nursing student who identifies as Indigenous, a recent graduate of our program who identifies as Non-Indigenous, and me. I was challenged to navigate my role; not wanting to assume the power afforded to me by my position as the faculty representative from NIC. I consciously tried to step out of my usual decision-making role and to quiet my voice so that others would be heard. Giving up control also meant that I worried that our presentation would not come together in an organized and meaningful way for our audience. In the end it did come together in a way that I would not have expected. Although the priorities were different from what I may have chosen to share and how I may have chosen to share them, I saw how our presentation resonated with many of the Indigenous people in our audience. I learned from this process and from my co-presenters about new ways of sharing our story that were authentic and genuine. Following our presentation, under the direction of *noxsola* Paul Willie, we sat together for a debrief. My learning from that experience was invaluable. I do not remember a time in the past where I have purposefully sat with a group of presenters and shared what we had learned from the experience.

During and after the conference, I had the honour of learning by traveling through the Aurora/ New Zealand geography, while listening to Elders tell stories of how the mountains, rivers, plants, birds and people came to be where they were and who they are. I gained a timeless appreciation for the land as the Maori Elder told stories of mountains having love affairs and as a result, rivers changing course. I had the opportunity to talk with Maori scholars and nurses about how cultural safety was being taken up in the New Zealand context of health care and education. What I learned is that many of the challenges they face are similar to those being experienced in Canada. The ideas of cultural safety in New Zealand, as in Canada, are often reduced to an essentialist understanding of culture that limits it being perceived as useful for working with people who experience other diverse and intersecting forms of oppression. The language of cultural safety is also at risk of being co-opted by a business model, driven by economic efficiencies and reduced to measurable concrete outcomes. I can see the possibilities for transformative reconciliation through embracing the healing power of being in a deeply ecological (I-thou) relationship with each other and the natural world.

Although cultural safety has the potential to lead us there it is also fraught with limitations.

Nevertheless cultural safety has had a great deal of significance for me in how I have come to enact my practice as a nurse and educator. I developed deeply personal and relevant ideas of what cultural safety means to me as a result of five years of dialogue and reflection with the nurse educators scholarship group. It is through understandings of cultural safety as a critical theory and the examination of how power is mediated in relationships, that I have found pathways to decolonize myself, my practice, and the institutions with in which I work. I have also become increasingly aware of the limitations of cultural safety and critical theory in general for doing transformative reconciliation work. I have witnessed the potential for critical theory, when enacted through discriminatory pedagogies, to re-traumatize and to perpetuate the very oppression that it is trying to address. Critical theory focuses my gaze on the problem and deconstructs it in order to expose power differentials. I have come to realize that focusing on the problem and its parts may not lead me to where I want to go. Instead, I have come to appreciate how relational theories focus on the potential of making connections that illuminate possibilities for healing and wellbeing in a holistic way. As much as cultural safety has been an important thread in weaving *ya'xan k̑angextola* (my blanket) as a nurse educator, I am now re-weaving it with new understandings of relational theory and Indigenous pedagogies. I am developing relationally accountable and ecologically reciprocal ways of knowing and being. *Ya'xan k̑angextola* is taking form as I am awakening.

3.3. Re-Weaving Ya'xan K̑angextola as a Nurse Educator

What I have discovered from looking at how *ya'xan k̑angextola* (my blanket) is woven and unraveled by a praxis of nursing and education is that I have some strong threads with which to work as I reweave it with the intention of transformative reconciliation. I am becoming increasingly awake to how *ya'xan k̑angextola* (my blanket) must be rewoven to reconcile many of the ingrained and colonized assumptions I have about teaching nursing. I am learning to understand education as freedom and as a political act. I am finding ways to align the moral imperative I have as a nurse to be health promoting and caring with being ecologically reciprocal and relationally accountable. I seek out opportunities to engage alongside students, educators,

administrators, and all of those involved in reconciliation in a very personal, public and political way. I believe we are in another period of transition in education and more generally in society at large. With this transition comes the opportunity to realign our curriculum with emerging theory and the complex practice realities that nurses face today. We have the opportunity to become awake to the impacts of colonization and to engage as nurse educators in an expanded vision for what nursing can be.

This journey starts with ourselves and our willingness to see ourselves, no matter how we identify, no matter what our histories, as colonized. I am interested in how, in my role as an educator, I can co-create learning spaces for students who are on this journey as well. In a classroom, we are all at different places of understanding, accepting, and taking responsibility for the impacts of colonization. The journey to what is described as becoming awake to our own colonization is not a linear one (Giddings, 2005, p. 277). Some students are in a place of being largely unaware or unawake to their own colonization. These students tend to hold on to the belief that there is only one universally accepted reality and it is the one that they have been socialized to believe in. There is little awareness of a social order beyond their own that has legitimate ways of understanding the world. These students want us to teach them the one best way to be a nurse. They expect that, as a nursing instructor, it is my role and within my capacity to give them the right answer, the “clinical pathway” to address all of the complex ethical, moral and unjust situations they will face in their future practice.

An awakened social consciousness happens as students become aware that there is a different social order (Giddings, 2005, p. 230). In nursing school, this often happens when they are exposed to people who experience inequities in their community practice settings. The awareness of structural inequity with the associated feelings of resistance such as anger, blame and guilt (Giddings, 2005) can be particularly challenging in a classroom setting. Some nursing instructors call for the incorporation of a critical anti-discriminatory pedagogy in nursing that investigates the complex intersectionality of racism and health inequities (Blanchet Garneau, Brown and Varcoe, 2018). Rather than understanding relationships from individualistic and binary positions, the nurse, instructor and student can see themselves in multiple positions of experiencing oppression and privilege all at once and in context as well (Blanchet Garneau, Brown and Varcoe, 2018).

Anne Bishop (2002), in her book *Becoming an Ally*, has contributed some practical steps for educators who are dealing with learners' resistance in doing anti-oppressive work. Her book has been widely interpreted as a "how to" for decolonizing work. Unfortunately, there is also a risk that her ideas, and the ideas of other anti-discriminatory and racist pedagogies, can be adopted uncritically by potential "allies" who want to feel competent rather than be open and vulnerable in their relationships with power and difference. It takes courage to engage in unknowing and being vulnerable in the complex and chaotic context of our relationships instead of looking for the safety of "how to" solutions. When we are able to expand our social consciousness and move beyond a sense of guilt, which limits our capacity to act, we can move towards a sense of responsibility where we are compelled to act. Having critical conversations on race and racism in the classroom creates vulnerability for both the instructors and the students who can have multiple and often undisclosed feelings, values and identities related to how they perceive race, racism and all forms of discrimination (Brookfield, 2007, p. 359). These conversations hit close to our heart, they impact our sense of self (our taken-for-granted grand narratives) and the agency or power (based on privilege and exclusionary power structures) we have to realize our dreams. Instructors and students can develop the courage to engage with unknowing, unlearning and vulnerability together. Co-creating transformative learning spaces offers us the freedom to become awake and to expand our social consciousness.

Transformative learning spaces with the potential to expand social consciousness happens in a classroom when the instructor and student embody an understanding of social relatedness and that understanding is contingent on the context of the relationship (Giddings, 2005, p. 233). There is active respect of others and a willingness to engage with discomfort and dwell in ambiguity. Together we become comfortable in our discomfort and experience both an individual and collective process of meaning making (Giddings, 2005, p. 235). Weir (2013) explains that

understanding identities as sources of freedom requires that we differentiate identity as *category* from identity as *connection to and identification with* ideals, each other, and defining communities. Thus, it involves a shift from a metaphysical to an ethical, and political conception of identities, and to a focus on practical, ethical, and political identifications as practices of freedom. (p.3)

Nursing students often gain the best opportunities to expand their social consciousness in practice when they are exposed to the stories of people whose experiences are different from their own. What becomes important is not only the difference but the points of connection that students can find in their social relationships. Identity transformation happens through stories that lead to thought and action within the complex ambiguity of each social context (Archibald, 2008, p. 90). As Giroux and Giroux (2008) state: “Public education is about more than job preparation or even critical consciousness raising; it is also imagining different futures and politics as a form of intervention into public life” (p. 187). An expanded social consciousness is a phronesis that is both personally transformational and a call to social action. It can be a path towards transformative reconciliation in nursing education.

Although pedagogies with the intention of creating social justice are common in nursing education there has been less attention to the importance and relevance of place-based pedagogies. I have been particularly interested in the connection between place-based pedagogies and Indigenous pedagogies. I am also interested in the potential of place-based Indigenous pedagogies as a pathway towards transformative reconciliation in nursing education. Greenwood (2019) suggests that

[p]lace-conscious educators concerned with decolonization face at least three related pedagogical challenges, and each may require very different skills and dispositions: (1) we need to develop critical analyses of colonial culture and understand its prominent features across time; (2) we need to develop practices that support this work as a learning process beyond the critical rhetoric, and (3) we need to develop practices that continually support our own ontological becoming—in relationship with ourselves, each other, the land, and the cosmos itself. (p. 369)

What Greenwood’s (2019) ideas offer is a way of developing a social consciousness through learning not only about place but from place. I understand place based pedagogies as having the potential to not only heal our relationship with the land but also with each other. As Greenwood (2019) proposes “place-conscious learning could be a meeting ground for diverse people to inspire one another” (p. 358). He explains that “ [p]edagogically, the language of place can meet learners wherever they are because everyone experiences directly a host of relationships to place, even when that connection comes through urbanization, displacement, or estrangement” (p. 368).

I am learning to co-create space for Indigenous pedagogy in my practice as a nurse educator in a classroom, in a practice setting, and in an immersion learning environment. Cajete (2015) explains that, “Community is what we teach and learn and community is how we teach and learn” (p. 109). He describes Indigenous pedagogy:

simply as the process of coming to know, honor and apply essential principles of ecological relationships in a way that honors the continual enactment of human relationships to each other and the natural world. It is education for life, community and ensoulment. (p. 4)

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2020) further explains:

by Indigenous pedagogies I mean the purposeful relationships that involve learning and teaching as a decolonizing negotiation of power relations, and recognition and re-energizing of Indigenous ways of knowing and being that occur within and across multiple contexts of education. (p. 49)

Tuhiwai Smith explains how Indigenous pedagogies are diverse and comprehensive. She describes them as much more than “simply the opposite of standard Western public pedagogies” and how they “may be similar to conventional schooling practices. (p. 49)” Indigenous pedagogies are also always based on relationships. They include ceremonial dimensions that connect learning with spirit and with land in ways that conventional western education does not (L.T. Smith, 2020, p. 49).

The pedagogical processes I aspire to are connected to person, land and spirit in a holistic way (Battiste, 2013; Cajete, 2015). They are expanded to include “a critical pedagogy of place” (Gruenewald, 2008; Greenwood, 2019) and those described by Freire (2000); hooks (1994); Giroux & Giroux, (2008) and Greene (1988) as pedagogy of freedom. Cajete (2015) talks of Indigenous pedagogy as more than a transformative process that never moves beyond cognitive rationalism but as a “soul journey” (pp. 24, 79). Indigenous pedagogies such as Cajete’s and Battiste’s see the necessity of learning that is deeply connected to the land. Learning doesn’t happen simply on or about the land; it happens with, in, and from the land (Cajete, 1994, Greenwood, 2019; Meyer, 2008). Teachings of the land are often learned directly through an embodied relationship before they are theorized, interpreted and reified by language symbols that cannot fully depict them (Abram, 1997). Graham Smith (2020) describes this kind of learning as so embodied that it literally leaves “blisters on your hands” (p. 123) from the doing of it. There is an important epistemological difference between this kind of learning and

learning from textbooks or in classrooms. The importance of this way of learning is best described by Tommy Akulukjuk, an Inuit educator, who said

To educate by books about the environment is to belittle the environment, to make it less than us: and makes us think that we are the kings of this world and we hold the fate of this world. Little do we know that the environment holds us rather than us holding it. (Rasmussen & Akulukjuk, 2009, p. 289)

As a nursing instructor, I have come to see the value of learning that is experiential and contextualized, in order to learn, not only new ways of thinking, but also new ways of being. Nursing education has always had a heavy focus on practice experiences in hospitals and in communities. What I have experienced is a holistic and healing pedagogy that even goes further through learning with, in and from the land (Cajete, 1994). As Meyer (2008) states, “Land as an epistemological cornerstone to our ways of rethinking is all about relating in ways that are nourishing, receptive, wise. Knowing with land should help you find out more about your own self” (p. 219). This is essential learning for nurses whose role is to nourish, to relate and to be wise in how they care for society and, by extension, the earth we depend on for life. Indigenous pedagogy is transformative. Donald, (2021) shares how moving through the land has contributed deeply to his way of knowing and learning. Greenwood (2019) describes this as place conscious learning. I have experienced this same phenomenon walking through the land. I will share how I have incorporated this as a methodology for my inquiry or an “earth dance” in Chapter Four. I also have experienced this as an earth dance learned through the pedagogical experience of the field school as I will share further in Chapter Six. I have come to understand my journey as an earth dance that has led to my own transformation. What I have experienced through Indigenous pedagogy is transformation that is connected to the natural world in a way that changes not only my head, but my heart and my soul.

The transformational potential of Indigenous pedagogies was described by Tanaka (2016) during an *Earth Fibers* course designed and implemented by Lorna Williams, Wanosts’a7, Lil’wat scholar and professor emerita at the University of Victoria, B.C. Tanaka describes the experience as “walking alongside” where the “heavily experiential nature of the course helped participants to grasp more fully the unfamiliar and sometimes conceptually challenging notions of Indigenous pedagogy” (p. 197). Indigenous pedagogy is lived in the way that it is taught. It is an embodied way of

knowing where you experience the pedagogy as you learn in an a very authentic way. Tanaka explains “The participants weren’t told about Indigenous pedagogy; rather, they experienced it directly as the Indigenous knowledge keepers did what they considered to be good pedagogical practice” (p. 196).

Authors such as Donald (2009; 2012), Lowan-Trudeau (2015), Ermine (2004) and Bhabha (2011) have contributed ideas related to a pedagogical space where transformation is possible. They all see the potential for bringing worldviews together to create something new and, at the same time, leave space for what is unique and sacred. Lowan-Trudeau (2015) discusses learning spaces that bring two worldviews together in such a way that they largely remain as separate entities but with a dynamic relationship to one another. For example, people who live in First Nations communities and work in Euro-western oriented institutions, need to navigate their world by moving between two worldviews. Lowan-Trudeau describes this as the common experience for people with Métis heritage who have learned to live “inter-culturally” (p. 95). Lowan-Trudeau expounds on this idea and states that there is also a possibility of living transculturally through métissage (p. 95). Métissage is described by Donald and Lowen-Trudeau as the process of braiding worldviews together. Donald goes on to explain how métissage comes from a deep understanding of the complexity of human relationships as an ecology.

I use the term ‘ecological’ in association with this concept of human relationality to draw attention to the complex interrelationships that comprise the world as it is understood in Plains Cree and Blackfoot wisdom traditions. Ecology, in this case, does not refer to concerns about the natural environment separate from the lives of human beings. Rather, human beings are seen as intimately enmeshed in webs of relationships with each other and with the other entities that inhabit the world. (Donald, 2012, p. 353)

Bhabha (2011) has contributed his ideas of a third space where something new is created when worldviews are brought together. He describes the third place as a place of paradox where the way we recognize ourselves and each other needs to be consistently negotiated (p. 6). Ermine (Ermine, W. Sinclair, R., & Jeffery, B., 2004) sees this as an ethical space where power relations need to be made explicit and contended with, throughout the process of creating a new space.

The nursing literature has contributed to this idea of ethical space and third space, largely through the discourse on relational ethics and cultural safety (Bourque Bearskin 2011; Doan & Varcoe, 2015; Papps & Ramsden, 1996). Bourque Bearskin describes relational ethics as an action ethic that occurs in the spaces between nurses, patients, families, health care professionals, administrators and others. She expands on this idea to include an indigenous perspective which honors indigenous people's connection to self, others, the environment, and the universe. Bourque Bearskin along with Papps and Ramsden describe relational ethics as a process of coming to know yourself in a way that recognizes the importance of autonomy, personhood, interdependence, and power in fostering mutual respect. With self-understanding, the concept of autonomy becomes relational. It becomes a way of connecting to others by seeing difference rather than by separating from others through avoiding difference (Bourque Bearskin p. 553; Doan & Varcoe). What remains lacking in the mainstream nursing literature and that I will address in Chapter Six and Seven is an exploration of ethical relationality with ecological understandings that are deeply connected to the land.

The important realization for me is that transformative reconciliation can happen in learning spaces that are new, paradoxical and ecologically connected to the land. It is new because it did not exist before the relationship, in it we are becoming something that we were not before. It is paradoxical because it happens when we are safe enough to shed our grand narratives about each other. At the same time we can be brave enough to take off our protective cloaks so that we can truly see each other and each of our authentic selves. It is supported through being in an ethical ecological relationship with the land and each other. I propose that it occurs through co-creating healing learning spaces where transformation can happen. I will describe this vision for my practice as an educator further in Chapter Seven. I endeavor to join with all the participants to relationally co-create a learning experience where we all can feel safe enough to be vulnerable, to be authentic and to become whole.

As I wrap *ya'xan k'angextola* (my blanket) as a nurse educator more tightly around me, I am aware of the warmth and comfort it gives me. Some of the threads, such as those of cultural safety, are old and familiar; a little worn out but they still have their purpose. Other threads are new and shiny to me, such as métissage and Indigenous pedagogies. They excite me when I see them woven into *ya'xan k'angextola* (my blanket) because they hold new possibilities for who I am becoming and where I

might go. Yet other threads, I know, are still invisible to me; woven in between the weft of health promotion and the warp of caring. These are the habits of knowing, being and doing that I may not yet be aware of. Sometimes my habits of knowing, both consciously and unconsciously, contribute to my vision for co-creating healing learning spaces and sometimes they pull me back from it. When I wear *ya'xan k'angextola* (my blanket) as a nurse and educator, I can feel myself dancing. My dance has become uniquely my own as I find myself nearing the alpine of my journey up a mountain. The learnings I have had from the people I walk with, the land I walk on and the scholarship I have read can only take me so far. Now high on the mountainside the trees are thinning out and the view is becoming more expansive. The path is not as well established. I can see the odd cairn left by those who have found their own way ahead of me but it is only a rough guide towards where I am going. I must navigate the bluffs and ridges to find my own route. This is my path towards transformative reconciliation in nursing education. I am dancing an earth dance towards my purpose.

Chapter 4.

Ya'xan Yaxw'anye': Learning to Dance

while I once sought the whole

I only ever found holes

because I can never tell

a whole story, I seek fragments

Since I am an incomplete sentence

I seek communion with others

like the possibilities of conjunctions

ghosts are everywhere, everywhen

as they call us eagerly to connect

like bridges that lean on light

with invitations to walk in places

where we have been but never been

conjunctions invite us to know inter-

connections, even if our eyes are dim

Carl Leggo (Chambers, Hasebe-Ludt, Leggo and Sinner, 2012, pp. 5-6).

4.1. Finding my Style

For many years I have known that I had something to share about my story of facilitating field schools with First Nations communities and the effects that these experiences had on me and all those involved, but I didn't know how to share these experiences. I started the EdD program at SFU in Culturally Inclusive Place Based Learning in 2015 with the hope that I would learn how to share my story in a useful way. I have learned so much more than that and I am still learning how to share it. I realize now that this chapter, although it was the first one I started writing, has become the last one that I finished. It is my dance with inquiry, and I cannot know the whole of the choreography until it is done. The methodology I have used for this inquiry has emerged idiosyncratically over a period of time, through a process of coming to accept and explore my own subjectivity in relation to others. It is a story of transformation. The methodology emerged as I danced it. As I danced it, I became it. It became my earth dance.

As my inquiry is situated in Indigenous communities and with Indigenous people, I have purposefully oriented myself within Indigenous Research Methodologies (IRM). As my experience with and understanding of IRM grew, I found myself endeavoring to become an Indigenist researcher in the sense it was intended by Shawn Wilson. He states "that it's a philosophical issue, not a claiming of ownership by one group of people. You can be a white Indigenist just like you can be a male feminist" (Adams et al., 2015, p. 20-21; Tanaka, 2016 p.11-12; Wilson 2008). As Wilson and Hughes (2019) explain, an Indigenist researcher may or may not be Indigenous but that Indigenist inquiry has the following principles:

- knowledge comes from the land and has agency, choosing who it reveals itself to and under what circumstances;
- knowledge is relationship-based, often intersectional;
- has a value system based in beauty, utility, and service to the community, rather than knowledge for knowledge's sake;
- ways of knowing are based on participation, experience, ritual, story, art, and spirituality, as well as cognitive processes such as logic and reason;

- engages respectfully and acts with integrity towards Indigenous knowledge, Indigenous peoples, and the values and protocols of the communities. (p. 8-15).

As an Indigenist, who is not Indigenous but is learning through my experiences in Indigenous communities, I am accountable to all of my teachers, to every person who shares their knowledge and experience with me, as well as the whole knowledge system and the community that I am learning from. I can only share my own perspective, it is neither complete or unilaterally true. I share what I have learned with you knowing that you will take into consideration what you understand of who I am and where I come from. I trust that you will use what is useful to you in the context of your own relationships. All my relationships must have integrity, they must be true to who I am and where I come from, if the knowledge I share in my writing is going to have meaning and be useful for anyone.

Shawn Wilson (2008) describes an Indigenous research paradigm where ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology are all connected in a circle of relationships. He has an ecological understanding of a research paradigm based on an indigenous relationality (p. 70). This is described by Rix et al, (2018) as more than engaging in relationships and, in fact, “being the relationship” (p. 259). Wilson describes this concept when he states that “ontology and epistemology are based upon a process of relationships that form a mutual reality” (p. 70). Reality is understood as a relationship between the knower and knowledge, rather than something that is “out there”. This idea helps me to understand how I am my relationships and how this inquiry happens through being in relationships. For example, locating myself in this inquiry means more than simply explaining who I am and where I come from as being dependent on my ancestry and where I live. Instead it involves spending time with my parents and my family exploring who I am as I develop new understandings of my history and my primary relationships. It involves spending time with Indigenous knowledge holders, students, and colleagues who change how I understand the world and, as a result, how I understand myself. It involves spending time on the land and water where my mind, body, and spirit is connected to everything. At times I have felt great joy in understanding something new that is useful for who I want to become. At other times I have felt great pain in finding something old that needs to heal before I can grow any further. In my inquiry I pay attention to how meaning is made through being in relationship with

everything and how the meaning I make changes who I am. It is not just a journey of my mind, it is also a journey of my body, heart and soul. As Wilson explains:

If you conduct research to gain enlightenment or to build a better community, to improve and maintain relationships, then that is a ritualized process. You must access liminal space, or create that space by setting a time or place for ritual, in order to be open. This creates a process whereby the sacred miraculous can become physical. The miracle of the ceremony of enlightenment takes us to a place where things shift and tie together, and then there is a translation process whereby the knowledge becomes cognitive. (Adams et al., 2015, p. 20)

Locating myself in my inquiry is a form of everyday ceremony as I witness my own growth as a human being and become increasingly awake to my purpose (Cajete, 2015; Wilson, 2008).

The way that I am approaching my research is fundamentally connected to the Indigenous people and ways of knowing in a specific land-based context. So, although inspired by the deep situatedness and contextually relational aspects of IRM in general, it is also idiosyncratic to me and my own cultural location. It represents who I am, how I know, and where I come from. After exploring different methodologies, I originally settled on portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann, 1997) to inform my inquiry. However somewhere along the journey I realized that *métissage* (Donald, 2012; Lowan-Trudeau 2015) had always played a significant role in the how and why of my inquiry process. Later I discovered life writing as a method to share my learnings. (Chambers et al., 2012). I found that as my inquiry developed, I came to understand a deeper form of relationality and meaning that is connected to both place and possibility in ways that I did not fully appreciate before. I was developing an ecological awareness of my accountability to the people I was learning with and the land I was learning from. I was becoming an Indigenist researcher (Tanaka, 2016; Wilson and Hughes, 2019). My dance as an inquirer, as a nurse educator, and as a person has become one which is in a reciprocal relationship with everything and everyone. I have become increasingly connected to the land that I inhabit and that holds us all. Through the process of my inquiry I have gained new understandings but also new ways of being. I walk differently in the world now. Ultimately throughout the process I found myself doing and experiencing transformational inquiry. My dance has become an earth dance.

Initially I was attracted to portraiture as a research sensibility. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffman (1997) describe portraiture in their book, *The Art and Science of Portraiture*, as a method of inquiry that uses words to paint an artist's view of a complex and aesthetic pedagogical experience (p. 9). They consider it, like nursing, to be both an art with an aesthetic appreciation of the whole and a science with a discerning attention to detail. It is affirmative in the way that it looks for beauty and is intended to "lift up" the participants (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann, 1997). It does not ignore the difficulties and challenges of human experiences but provides a broader palette of beauty and possibility for the participants to see themselves portrayed on (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann, 1997).

Focusing on the beauty and complexity in relationships allows for multiple viewpoints of what is found to be good in and good for the research (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann, p. 9). This is a contrast to positivist research assumptions where success is predetermined as a unified goal to be searched for (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann, p. 9). This appreciation is consistent with how I have approached the field school from a health promotion perspective. There is a focus on success and on looking for wellness rather than illness or dysfunction in the community. Health and illness are not seen as a binary but rather as a relationally complex experience. Lawrence-Lightfoot describes portraiture as "an intentionally generous and eclectic process that begins with searching for what is good and healthy and assumes that the expression of goodness will always be laced with imperfections" (p. 9). This is consistent with ideas of "unconditional positive regard", attributed to educational theorist Carl Rogers, which have permeated relational theory as a central aspect of patient centered care and health promotion in nursing (Doan & Varcoe, 2015, pp. 363-364). Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffmann are careful to point out that seeing the good in its complexity does not idolize the experience or minimize the weaknesses but rather sees them as an essential part of the beauty and complexity of life.

Finally, I was attracted to the tradition of portraiture to speak to the field rather than just the academy. This means using words and a writing style that are accessible to the people I am working with and to potential readers who may find inspiration in this work for their own purpose. Broadening the field of potential readers beyond what is typically a select group of academics is consistent with my pragmatic nature and the pragmatic tradition of nurses. Knowledge in nursing is valued based on its usefulness

(Doan & Varcoe, 2015, p. 21; Weaver & Olson, p. 465). It is an important ethical stance for me to write in a way that is meaningful for, and transparent to, the people I am working with. This is consistent with Dwayne Donald's (2012; 2021) ideas of ethical relationality and Shawn Wilson's (2008) ideas of relational accountability in the Indigenous context. My process of inquiry includes transparency and integrity as I share and seek guidance from students, faculty members, community members, advisors, and mentors throughout the inquiry (Wilson, 2008, p. 102).

As I mentioned, my initial intention was to work with Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffmann's (1997) process of portraiture as a methodology and as a method of gaining a deeper understanding of the field school experience. Eventually I realized the palette of a painter felt for me to be too unidimensional to sufficiently portray the depth and dynamic nature of the experiences I was wanting to explore. After reading Meyer's (2013) writing *Holographic Epistemology: Native Common Sense* I tried to think of portraiture as more of a holographic representation where the whole is seen in each of the parts. As Meyer (2013) explains a holographic epistemology

is about hermeneutic rationality and emancipatory rationality. It is about my own authentic interpretation and the freedom experienced when I render it clearly with an interest, reverence and understanding of context/content. That has indeed changed everything. (p. 96)

Although this helped me to gain insights into how the whole could not be separated into the parts and that my understanding of everything is in a reverent relationship with context, I remained at a loss as to how to represent what I was learning in a meaningful way. Painting is not a familiar art form for me. However, I could envision myself co-creating a beautiful tapestry where the texture could be felt and seen in the process and the product. Rather than the small and precise movements I would expect from a portraitist, I see my movements as large and dance-like in relationship with others as I work with a variety of people, materials and space. I incorporate my whole body as I embody my relational experiences and my learning. For a while, the idea of a tapestry resonated with me. I began to consider a representation for the work where different materials (such as wool, wood or shells) held different meanings and could be woven into a representative whole. I played with this idea for a while; beginning and not finishing my own projects. Again, it felt like I was missing something. I could not conceive of the tapestry as a whole. As I started work on any one piece, it felt like I was

mechanistically separating the whole into parts. I felt the same way as I looked for individuals to interview about the field school experience.

Eventually I realized that the relationship of the painter to the painting or weaver to a tapestry, although deeply involved in the subjectivity of creating the image, did not sufficiently describe the subjectivity and involvement I felt in co-creating the experience itself. My vision became limited by the perception that I needed to be the artist that created something that could represent all of what could be learned from the field school. I assumed that this meant I would need to inquire into the experiences of others and portray their experiences, while keeping a somewhat distant and discerning view of the experience myself. As Jessica Hoffman explains, “The portraitist is an outsider to the scene and needs to accept and exploit that perspective, not only in writing, but in the initial introduction to the site” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann, 1997, p. 69). Yet I am part of the field school experience and my role as a facilitator alongside others means that I have an influence on the experience at the same time as it has an influence on me.

Representing my work as through portraiture, even in the form of a tapestry, was leading me to assume that I would need to find a few key players or “actors” whose experiences of the field school I would portray. I struggled to decide on who to recruit as participants in the portraiture experience. Knowing that I wanted to cover the communities’ perspectives, students’ perspectives, and institutional perspectives, I found it difficult to find a common thread that would tie all of these perspectives together. I considered inquiring into the experiences of participants of the field school who identified primarily as Indigenous. Then, thinking about turning the lens away from the potential to “other”, I decided it would be better to inquire into the experience of participants who, like me, do not identify as Indigenous. I considered focusing my inquiry only on the experience of faculty who had participated in the field school. I thought that focusing on the experiences of faculty may help me gain a broader perspective on my own experiences as an instructor. Recognizing that I needed to trust that the journey would lead me, I tried to jump in and ask someone to try out the method with me. In the end, I kept hesitating and holding back. I kept tripping on the unknown terrain. I was worried that my assumptions, based on my colonized view of the world, were leading me astray. No matter what approach I took for my inquiry, I risked recreating the power structures and assumptions that I wanted to let go of.

There were two major tensions in my journey. The first is described by Carl Leggo's poem in the introduction of this chapter by the words "looking for the whole and only finding holes" (Chambers, Hasebe-Ludt, Leggo and Sinner, 2012, pp. 5-6). I couldn't find a way to look at my inquiry that didn't reduce it into separate parts. If I looked at another person's experience, I became trapped in the binary of the relationship. Inadvertently, I othered or essentialized the relationship by attempting to interpret my experience of it. Instead of looking at the parts of the experiences and the binary of the relationships, I wanted to look at the relationships as a whole.

The second tension was a matter of letting go of power and control without losing my voice. Doing this inquiry is fundamentally only my journey because it is a dissertation. It is the story of my way finding written mostly from my point of view. Eventually I realized that in order for me to be fully accountable for my own subjectivity, I needed to step into the relational space. Yet I was reluctant to do so as, in order to truly hear the voice of others who have been silenced by colonization, I felt I needed to quiet my own voice. Eventually, it became clear that I cannot write about a relationship while still trying to hide from my role in it. I needed the courage to paint myself into the picture or weave myself into the tapestry. It is my dance with the in-between spaces of the relationships that I wanted to share. So, I began to write and share my own stories of being in relationship as a form of inquiry.

It was at this time in my journey that I realized my inquiry had become a form of *métissage*. I originally learned about *métissage* as a pedagogical process from colleagues at NIC in 2012. As a group of faculty, we asked students to braid their stories together as a written or oral presentation of their different experiences working and learning in community nursing practice. On doing further research on *métissage* as a process for inquiry I discovered that it has its origins in the Canadian context within the distinct group of Metis people (Donald, 2009; Kelly, 2012). The word *métissage* has Italian origins as described by Hasebe-Ludt and Jordan (2010).

The word origin of *métissage* comes from the Latin *mixticius*, meaning the weaving of a cloth from different fibers (Mish, 1990). In Greek mythology Metis was an ancient Titaness, the primordial figure of wisdom, descended from Gaia and Uranus. Metis was also a figure of skill and craft, and of cunning, a trickster with powers of transformation who resisted notions of purity by weaving and blurring textiles (Harper, 2001). *Métissage*, derived from these origins, is an artful craft and practice, an active literary and

pedagogical strategy for negotiating conflicting or dichotomous value systems. (p. 3-4)

Kelly (2012) refers to métissage as “weaving the multi-coloured threads of various identities and ways of knowing and being, and ... braiding the strands of overlapping stories” (p. 367). In learning more I discovered that the scholarship of métissage is inherently filled with its own contradictions, discourses and idiosyncrasies. My use of métissage as a sensibility for inquiry is based on understandings of a relational whole that is dynamic, full of unknown potential and greater than the sum of its parts (Donald, 2009, 20012; Hasebe-Ludt, Chambers, & Leggo ,2009). Importantly, métissage is not simply bringing differences together into the same space, as in the traditional use of the word multiculturalism (Vieira, 2014). Nor does it refer to dualistic and static notions of culture and identity consistent with ideas of hybridity (Donald, 2012; Vieira, R. 2014). Donald explains that “Métissage, as research praxis, is about relationality and the desire to treat texts – and lives – as relational and braided rather than isolated and independent (2012, p. 537). Métissage purposefully illuminates juxtapositions and contradictions rather than promoting sameness in an ethical space (Donald, 2012; Ermine, Sinclair & Jeffery 2004). As Donald (2012) states, “these influences come together to support the emergence of a decolonizing research sensibility that provides a way to hold together the ambiguous, layered, complex, and conflictual character of Aboriginal and Canadian relations without the need to deny, assimilate, hybridize, or conclude” (p. 536). I see métissage as a dynamic relationship between perspectives and people in transformation where the possibility of new understandings and relationships can occur (Vieira, 2014).

Métissage began to resonate with me as a way to engage with the complexity of the experience I was having on this inquiry journey. It illuminated the tensions and possibilities for transformation within myself and my relationships as I wove, unwove and reweave who I was becoming. I was able to draw on my early understandings and experiences of métissage as a pedagogical process. Students were able to work with their differences and similarities without having to resolve them and provide a unified front as to what would ostensibly be considered the best result for a good grade. Métissage afforded students the opportunity to highlight their different experiences and opinions in order to learn from each other and present a more complex and diverse understanding of the whole. I recognized this as the same process I was going through within myself. A process where I didn't have to other myself or assign value to one

aspect of my understandings over another. Instead I could sit with the conflicts and tensions within myself and my relationships so that I could learn from them. What was an externally useful pedagogical process became an internally useful inquiry process.

As much as I was learning about and becoming more comfortable with *métissage* as the orientation I was developing towards my inquiry, I was still struggling to find a way to authentically and respectfully share it. The sharing of my story involves being vulnerable and illuminating truths, often hard ones, in a way that is ethical and meaningful. I was encouraged by my academic supervisor Vicki Kelly to read some examples of and then try life writing as a way to share stories from my inquiry. I found that life writing took a great deal of courage; the courage to reconnect with the innocent child within me who proudly wrote poems for my grandmother. As Chambers et al., (2012) stated, life writing is about getting “to the heart of the matter, with matters of the heart, often filled with pain” (p. xxiii). I found that I was doing “soul work” in the way that Michelle Tanaka (2016) describes the soul work of transformative inquiry and Cajete (2015) describes the soul work of Indigenous Pedagogy. My inquiry became a transformative experience itself as I became my story in the telling of it (Archibald, 2008). As Jo-ann Archibald states “stories have the power to make our hearts, mind, bodies, and spirits work together” (p. 12, 2008). Life writing became a process for helping me find my way into transformative inquiry.

I am referring to transformative Inquiry in the way that Tanaka (2016) describes it as “A mindful approach to inquiry that is highly informed by and embedded in an Indigenist sensibility (p. 202). What I discovered is that the process of my inquiry journey only became clear after I had walked through the landscape of it. The process itself changed and changed me as I became more familiar with it. It is only now after I have experienced it that I am able to see more clearly what it was and how I could describe it. It is only in the final stages that I am discovering that my inquiry is completely idiosyncratic to me, who I am and who I am becoming. What and how I have learned comes from the unique land and people I am in relationship with. My inquiry is a deeply involved praxis and a personal form of everyday ceremony that is holistic and relationally accountable (Adams et al., 2015, p. 20; Tanaka, 2016, pp. 202-203).

My inquiry has remained oriented in IRM generally. I have orientated myself through portraiture and then *métissage*. What I found was an alternative epistemology to

the mechanistic way of knowing familiar to those of us in biomedical sciences. It is a way of resisting our tendency to want to understand interpersonal relationships as simple cause and effect relationships and as the sum of the parts. I found that both portraiture and métissage provided me with an understanding for working in the relational space that exists between Indigenous and Euro-western worldviews. I started with portraiture as a methodology because I was drawn to the aesthetic way it drew my attention to the beauty, complexity and potential of relationships. Then I moved towards understanding métissage as an inquiry sensibility where I was able to engage with the full intricacy of the field school experiences and with my situatedness in it. Eventually I was led through métissage to discover life writing as a way to portray the beauty and paradox between social context and identity (Chambers, Hasebe-Ludt, Leggo and Sinner, 2012). Life writing became a way of sharing my stories and learnings authentically and accountability within a complex and at times conflicting web of relationships. Throughout the experience I have learned and I have changed. At the heart of my inquiry process I have experienced transformative inquiry. In the next section of this chapter, *Learning the Moves*, I will describe the process or method of my inquiry. In the final section, *Moving with Grace*, I will describe in more detail the ethical tensions and principles that have guided my process.

4.2. Learning the Moves

The method for my inquiry is an iterative, collaborative and accountable process. Over the years of deliberating on my process, I continued to facilitate yearly field schools in the two original Wuikinuxv and Dzawada'enuxw communities. In 2019, we also expanded the field school experiences to include two new communities and to involve nursing students in the first year of the program. During this time, we engaged in various forms of assessing and evaluating the field schools. From the first field school in 2007 I kept extensive notes and journals. In 2016 I began practicing being a portraitist and writing with intention according to Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffmann's (1997) ideas of portraiture. My journals evolved to include more contextual descriptions and discerning details. Over the next few years, I started to develop my journals by adding what I was learning from reading about life writing. I continued to develop a practice of writing and reflexivity as I developed my praxis as a nurse educator. Overtime I developed the gift of storying myself through my writing and sharing my stories as a form of pedagogy with

my students. I began to take note of the stories that became useful as teaching stories and I continued to learn from them about my own transformation as an educator and inquirer.

In 2017 and 2018 we received ethics approval to formally evaluate the field school experiences in Wuikinuxv and Dzawada'enuxw territories respectfully. We worked with community advisors to integrate Indigenous methodologies into the evaluation processes. Other faculty were involved in gathering information as they attended the field schools and learned from the community and student participants. Together we worked through and stumbled over the tensions of integrating principles of IRM within the context of understanding immersion learning experiences. I will share some of these findings along with my reflections in Chapter Six.

In 2018, we successfully received a Community College Social Innovation Fund Grant from SCERC for a larger inquiry project, *Raising Student Nurses in Remote First Nations Communities*. This project involved developing immersion learning experiences in remote First Nation communities for students in the first year of the nursing program and making them available as part of a core nursing course. We were able to draw on our previous experiences and relationships to develop a team of inquirers and co-explorers consisting of community members, Indigenous mentors, nursing faculty, and nursing students. The topics we were hoping to explore included understanding the benefits, challenges and opportunities for remote communities in hosting early immersion experiences for nursing students. We were also concerned with how to promote the success and sustainability of supporting immersion learning experiences in remote communities. We realized that there are many institutional challenges that need to be overcome in doing so. Importantly, we wanted to further understand the effects of these learning experiences on our curriculum and, potentially, on nursing practice as well. This project was an opportunity to see if exposing students in first year as part of a core nursing course would provide even greater benefits to the ones we had already identified in our previous evaluations from a fourth year elective course. Finally, we were interested in learning more about doing community-based inquiry with Indigenous communities using IRM. The process of working with this inquiry team has given me immeasurable insights. In 2020 we published the story of our inquiry process, *Nurses Learning Our Way, From the Land, With the People* (Fraser, J., Voyageur, E., Willie, P.,

Woods, P. R., Dick, V., Moynihan, K., Spurr, J., McAnsh, H., Tilston, C., & Deagle, H., 2020) explaining how;

We purposefully designed our inquiry process to incorporate the time necessary to develop authentic relationships. Our first step was to hold an initial gathering between the partnering communities, Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, NIC faculty, nursing students, and research advisors to discuss Indigenous research methodologies and to learn about the knowledge traditions and protocols that would be important for doing research together. This gathering started with a highly regarded member of the Nuuchahnulth community giving us a lesson on the important protocols for working together. (p.33)

...

Following this initial larger gathering, the inquiry team has met once a month in person or through communication technology to discuss our processes, learn from each other, and develop a research methodology that is accountable, ethical, and meaningful for all those involved. We all needed to discover our own role in the process of reconciliation and learn how to move forward with decolonization and Nation building. (p. 35)

The insights and relationships that I gained through this experience and other research projects and collaborations I have been a part of during this time, have had a profound influence on my inquiry journey and my personal transformation as an inquirer.

The realization that I needed to focus my inquiry on my own experiences in relationship with the field schools as a whole came for me in the fall of 2018. I was at a writing retreat with my colleagues who were a part of the EdD cohort at SFU. During the retreat, I decided to try writing about an ethical dilemma I had experienced during a recent field school. I wanted to try and write in the way I was learning to do through life writing with as much description and meaning as possible. I focused my writing on the contextual detail of the experience, including describing the physical setting, who was involved in the story, and the types of feelings and thoughts I was experiencing. I also attempted to write the incomplete and contingent aspects of my personal truth and my vulnerability into this story. As described by Chambers et al., (2012), life writing is an "individual and collaborative bodily knowing...one that comes from the body, heart and the imagination, from having our feet firmly planted in the humus of day-to-day, lived experience" (pp. xxiii-xxiv). My first attempt at life writing became known as *Bear Story*. I crafted the story carefully and then sent it out to the two *ni noxsola* I worked with and who were both present during the field school. The feedback I received became invaluable for my own learning. I rewrote the story addressing some of the ethical

tensions I had exposed. My intention was to rewrite the story until it was ready to share with the community at the next field school planned for June 2020. Unfortunately, this did not happen as the field school was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Instead I have shared this story with key community members for their feedback and approval.

In 2019, I wrote a second story, known as *Frog Story*. This story came from re-reading my journal entries from my first trip to Rivers Inlet to initiate the field schools in 2007. I shared this story with the *ni noxsola* and then with some nurse educator colleagues. I found that the story resonated with educators and I felt like I was beginning to find a path to sharing my inquiry. In the summer of 2019, I had the opportunity to stand in the Bighouse and retell this story with the Wuikinuxv community in Rivers Inlet during a celebratory dinner. As I stood in front of the fire looking into the faces of the people who sat around the benches, I could feel the power of the sacred space in the Bighouse. The four poles stood in each corner holding up the building and I felt also holding me accountable and responsible for my words. The *Sisiutl* pole reached across the corner poles tying the building together. The face of the sea serpent on the cross pole glowed in the fire light, reminding me that we are all related and that my words and actions in this place would have effects beyond my knowing. My feet were bare on the dirt floor, I could feel my connection to the earth. My vulnerability was powerful and I drew strength from it as I began to dance my story by reading aloud. As I spoke, I tried to move without being constrained by the computer tablet in my hands. The tablet felt cold and hard, like it didn't belong in this energetic space. Yet I danced as encumbered as I felt, stiffly at first and then as I gained warmth from the fire I gained freedom in my joints and muscles. My body came together with my words and moved with them as I relived the memory feelings they invoked in me. When I stopped, I felt a rush of energy from the room enter through the top of my head, streaming through my body and back into the earth. I breathed in. I breathed out. I was grounded in the centre of that room. When I looked out towards the people sitting on benches, I could see that it was their energy that had entered me as they had also been moved by my words. I felt truly seen. Hasebe-Ludt et al., (2009) explain that "in performing our subjectivities we assert the relevance, the legitimacy, indeed the necessity of including the full range of our humanness in our work of re/membering ourselves in/to the world, embracing the world, with all our relations" (p. 10). In that moment, I knew I had the community's approval and support. The feedback was largely non-verbal but profound. We were all in this together.

Over the past two years I have completed two more stories: Wolf Story and Buffalo Story. Although I have not been able to return to the communities to offer these stories in a way that respectfully honours my accountability to the whole community, I have shared them with colleagues and community members whenever I have had the opportunity to do so. In this way I have done my best to be relationally accountable for the stories I share. The stories I have written, as well as the writing of this whole dissertation, is more than a story of what happened; it is transformative process in and of itself. Through the writing I have been compelled to act. I am not just bearing witness to the story; I am braving action. I am becoming transformed by the story and I am transforming my relationships. I am bearing witness and engaging in transformative reconciliation.

Throughout the whole process of conceiving and writing this dissertation, I have remained attuned to the natural world around me and how I move through it. As I have learned from Vicki Kelly (2021):

To be attuned to Creation is to entrain with the sounding rhythms and echoes of the created world – to resound with both the acoustic sound of the listening ear as well as the felt sound or resonance as perceived by the open heart And when we open our hearts, we feel united to the cosmic heartbeat of Creation. We sing and through our sounding become both the instrument and the song. (p. 145, 146)

An important reflective experience for me has been taking long walks and letting my mind wander with me. I find that moving on the land is a way of intentionally attuning myself to relationships and learnings. Donald (2021) writes about this as a way of “walking as attuning to life” and questions why we don’t spend more time learning on the land instead of on chairs in classrooms (p.57). Walking has always been a way of engaging in deep reflective learning for me. It feels as if the connections between what I am thinking and feeling come together with ease for me when I am moving on the land. My walks are often through the rich rainforest that surrounds our island home. Sometimes I also walk along the cobblestone beach near where we live. This beach is the manifestation of geological events happening over an unfathomably long period of time. It is measured not by human life spans but by ice ages. The beach’s stones, ranging in size from grains of sand to massive boulders, are each strikingly unique in their colours and composition. I was to discover that this uniqueness is because each of these stones have traveled from different mountain homes. The glaciers of the last ice

age scraped the mountains of Bute Inlet, eventually depositing their haul in the terminal moraine that eventually became known as Quadra Island. Now, the large cobblestones lying in the intertidal zone take all my focus, as I pick my way along the shore. Each time I walk along this beach, my path is different depending on the tide. The rhythm of stepping from stone to stone is so purposeful and so absorbing that I sometimes forget to stop. When I do remember to look up, I must secure my footing and balance first so that I can take in the full enormity and beauty of what surrounds me. My vision travels across an expanse of heaving ocean over the surrounding islands and up to where the peaks of the coastal mountain range meet an ever-changing sky. It is during walks like this that I make meaningful connections between my thoughts and experiences. Sometimes they are fleeting like the movement of a bird that I cannot quite see in the trees. Sometimes they are solid and defined like a large boulder that pushes against the splashing of an incoming tide. When these thoughts are relevant to my scholarship, I pull out a scrap of paper and record them. This way I can write them into my dissertation when I return home.

The process of my inquiry has developed as a journey along a path up a mountain. At first the best route was unclear to me. I tried a few trails that didn't lead to where I wanted to go. It is only now, in looking back on it, that I can see how my method has developed alongside the development of my practice as a nurse educator. The path was already laid out on the forest floor for me to find. As I become clearer in where I am going, I become clearer in how to get there. The patterns of the forest became familiar and helped me to find the best route.

4.3. Moving With Grace

The experience of co-creating immersion learning experiences with Indigenous communities, and engaging in this inquiry has transformed me. Through these relationships, I have gained understanding of relational accountability and engaged with ethical protocols from the community perspective, as well as the academic institution. As described by Ermine, Sinclair & Jeffery (2004), I have been a part of a dance where power relations are made explicit and differences are not denied. We are dancing towards an ethical space where we can recognize ourselves and each other without diminishing either one (Donald, 2012; Papps, E., & Ramsden, I., 1996; Wepa, 2005). I have discussed my process and shared my thoughts with numerous people involved in

developing, facilitating, participating in, and evaluating the field school experiences. It is these relationships that have transformed me as I am dancing towards my own becoming.

Wilson (2008) describes the axiology and methodology of an Indigenous research paradigm as being based upon maintaining relational accountability. I have danced my way into and through this inquiry by orientating myself towards being relationally accountable (Wilson, 2008). Wilson's (2008) ideas of relational accountability have been fundamental to the field school experience and have also become fundamental to my inquiry process. He describes relational accountability as situationally and contextually determined. The paradox is that it loses the essence of what it means by describing it out of context (p. 99). It is a form of paying attention to respect, reciprocity and responsibility in your relationships throughout the research process. Part of the relational accountability I have as an Indigenist researcher, is to use my growing understandings for the benefit of the Indigenous people and communities with which I work. I seek opportunities to be caring and health promoting in all my relationships. I continue to find ways to engage in healing and transformative reconciliation in my work. As I have engaged with increasing understanding, I have endeavored to become increasingly effective at making personal and institutional changes. Although my work is done with good intentions, I am aware that good intentions are not enough. At times my good intentions have resulted in unintentional harm. Being effective at healing and transformative reconciliation work requires a willingness to be vulnerable and uncomfortable. The paradoxes of reconciliation work become increasingly evident as I become increasingly immersed in it. Perseverance, transparency and a desire to remain open to learning, even when the terrain is difficult, is part of my commitment to relational accountability. In the final three chapters of this dissertation, I will be sharing more about my vulnerabilities, my unintentional mistakes, and the paradoxes I experience in doing transformative reconciliation work.

As an inquirer who does not identify as Indigenous, I have been thoughtful in how my inquiry is informed by and through Indigenous Research Methodologies. I have started by considering the ethical and epistemological tensions of locating myself methodologically as a person whose ancestors do not come from the land I inhabit, while working with indigenous people whose ancestors do. Recognizing the limitations of labels such as Indigenous or non- Indigenous, I have oriented myself according to the

relationship that these labels describe, rather than to the binaries they invoke (Jones & Jenkins, 2008). I am cognizant of my inability to fully take up IRM when I do not have a “tribal epistemology”. Kovach (2009) indicates that a tribal epistemology is a central tenet of IRM. It involves more than the relational accountability we might experience as a mother, daughter, or a friend (Kovach, 2009, p. 36). There is a different kind of relational accountability that comes from belonging to a place (Kovach, 2009, p. 36). I have learned that there are specific protocols around kinship and how to be a good relative attached to the ethical relationality of belonging to an Indigenous community (Donald, 2021). Bourque Bearskin (2011, p. 8) explains a tribal epistemology as belonging to a place through your ancestral connections. Tribal epistemologies influence who you are, your language, and the way you find meaning in your world (Kovach, 2009). I am aware and respectful of the fact that many of the people I am working with and portraying in my research do have such a tribal epistemology. I continue to learn from and within an Indigenous epistemological orientation with a desire to be relationally accountable to the Indigenous people and communities I am in relationship with.

I remain open to the existence of other ways of knowing that are different from my own. Some I am unaware of, some I cannot fully comprehend, and some may challenge my values, but I endeavor to respect them all. I understand that what I share in my writing is my own idea of what is profoundly relevant knowledge within my inquiry process. To leave room for other ways of understanding the world, I have endeavored to provide the reader with the context behind my thoughts and the stories behind my experiences so that they can remain open to different interpretations. Life writing provides the potential to honour my experiences, my relationships and the many potential interpretations through which meaning can be made of them.

I am also aware of the ethical tensions of doing Indigenous forms of research within a Euro-western oriented academy. I have been thoughtful about the ingrained power differentials that expect IRM to fit inside an established Euro-western system. I have worked hard, alongside and with the support of many others, to make space within the academy to maintain the integrity of Indigenist research. I also recognize that many forms of Indigenous inquiry must and do remain outside of academic institutions. In order to be relationally accountable, I have considered the following questions posed by Shawn Wilson throughout my inquiry process: “Am I fulfilling my responsibilities to my relationships? Is this of benefit to the community? Am I being true to my values? Am I

being true to the values and wishes of the community with whom I am working? Is this research approach enacting an ethics of care?" (Wilson & Hughes, 2019, p. 13).

An important aspect of the field schools since its inception in 2007, has involved developing a shared understanding of the four "Rs" of "Relationship", "Respect", "Relevance", and "Reciprocity" (Kirkness and Barnhardt, 1991). These "Rs" have guided us in developing ethical relationships between all those involved in the field school. They have also guided me in addressing the above questions and developing an ethical understanding of my inquiry. At the start of each field school experience, we spend time communally discussing what the "Rs" mean. In this way we develop a shared understanding between students, community members and facilitators of how we want to be together. Originally the four "Rs" were described by Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) as principles for Indigenizing postsecondary education. The meaning of the "Rs" have specific relevance for the field school experience. Relationship invites us to experience a deeper connection to the environment and to all living systems. We have learned from community members that we are not in relationships; we "are" relationships (Wilson 2008; Wagamese 2016). Respect is seen as unconditional positive regard for all people because they are human. Respect is also recognized as essential in sharing the deeply personal nature of each other's stories (Archibald, 2008). Relevance is found in the authentic relationships that are developed based on the real experiences of community members and participants (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991). Reciprocity reminds us to be aware of the moral and ethical impacts of our relationships with each other, and of the need to actively engage in decolonizing ourselves and our institutions (L.T. Smith, 2012). Additional "Rs" have subsequently been added by community members and participants. "Revealing" was added to mean exposing power, using understandable language, and recognizing differences in assumptions, values, and beliefs. Community members also talked about the right to be who you are, to be visible, and to respect yourself. "Reverence" reminds us to be open to wonder and appreciation for the unknown and unexpected. Importantly, from an Indigenous perspective, reverence means gratitude. (Willie, 2007). I have also heard from community members that the word reverence triggers thoughts of control and domination by the church as it invokes memories of "The Reverend" at residential schools. I am careful about using this word and instead choose to talk about a state of wonder. "Rights" are an important reminder to knowing our history, particularly as it pertains to the rights of Indigenous people. These principles are interconnected, and they became incorporated into every aspect of the field school. My

understanding of these principles, developed over years of discussion with community members and field school participants, have also become ingrained in the way I enact my inquiry process.

The meanings of the “Rs” are embedded in the field school and have become inherent to my inquiry process. For example, during the field school there is always a member of the community who is our fire keeper. The fire keeper bears witness to our conversations on behalf of the community. At the end of the field school, we host a feast for all the community members. During this feast we are guided by *noxsola* Evelyn Voyageur in a gift-giving ceremony, where we formally recognize the contributions of community members for our learning. Shawn Wilson (2008) describes how this form of relational accountability demands integrity of the researcher and educator (p. 102). The formal and informal ceremonies and protocols we engage with in the Bighouse and in the community connect us to the place and people we are learning with. The protocols we experience teach us about the accountability we have to the community for what we have learned while we are there.

The “Rs” continue to guide my processes as I find myself walking into the unknown potential of my inquiry. My inquiry has become both a literal and figurative journey. It is a walk up a mountain or along a beach. It will not end but instead will come to a resting place where I can build a fire, dance my earth dance, and sing my fire song for you. Through coming to know and be *ya'xan yaxw'anye'* (my dance), I have come to understand a deeper form of relationality and meaning that is connected to both place and possibility. I am embracing an ecologically reciprocal and relationally accountable ethic of practice as a nurse, educator and inquirer. Respect has led me to see the value of all my relationships even when the meaning is not immediately evident to me. I have held onto the intention to listen respectfully to the stories of students, community members, *ni noxsola* and colleagues as they have shared what is in their hearts and minds with me. I have noticed when I am not fully present, because I am preoccupied with the importance of my own agenda, and then refocused my attention on the relationship. I am continually learning about reciprocity, often through the eyes of my students. Students express how they struggle with receiving the generosity of the community when they perceive that they have so little to give back. They even talk about how they are concerned with perpetuating the colonial violence in their relationships through unintended, but well-established, power structures that place them in positions

of authority. Through the eyes and reflections of my students, my blind spots are revealed, and I see how my own power is echoed and amplified in the relationships I have. My ego is calling out for others to appreciate how much I have done to address inequity and my students are saying we have not done enough! I find myself continuously in a process of acknowledging and perceiving deeper levels of understanding. I need to be patient with myself and my students as we stumble on the terrain of reconciliation. This revealing of my blind spots is one of the ethical intentions that I hold.

The more I understand my identity as a becoming through my relationships the more I reveal myself in my relationships and the more I become my authentic self. When I feel myself feeling hurt or defensive because a weakness has been exposed, I work towards finding the wonder in the relationship and my gratitude for all that has been revealed. I am reminded to think about rights and the right we all have to be our authentic self. I value relationships that promote inclusion and connection. However, I am also respectful of the inherent rights of Indigenous people who have both unique and common human rights (United Nations, 2008). I am conscious that there are also places of exclusion, and even the ideas of inclusion and belonging can be held lightly or even contested when necessary.

Throughout the process, I have been thoughtful about Indigenous ways of knowing, what traditional knowledge is and when it is considered sacred. I am aware that there are protocols for sharing knowledge, especially traditional and sacred knowledge that I must attend to. My accountability to the community involves being respectful of the limits of my relationships and the limits of my knowledge as someone who is not from the community and does not live there. I have asked myself, how do I engage with Indigenous people and their knowledge systems in a positive way? What ways of doing, being and knowing that I have experienced and learned from and about, might be considered sacred, and what is appropriate for me to share? Jacquie Green (2020) shares what she has learned from her Haisla relatives and teachers about these questions. She defines sacred knowledge as “intimate specific cultural teachings that are kept within clan, ceremony, family or community” (p. 56). It is important for me to consider what I share, how I share it, and for what purpose.

Throughout my inquiry process I have been careful to portray only what I am given and to the best of my ability in a way that is respectful of the community's

protocols and traditions for knowledge sharing (Wilson, 2008). My ethical orientation is towards a respect for difference. I use *métissage* as a way to portray not only points of connection but also places of dissention (Hasebe-Ludt et al., 2009). Donald (2009) states that “*métissage* is focused on relationality and the curricular and pedagogical desire to treat texts—and lives—as relational and braided rather than isolated and independent” (p. 9). Through sharing my stories, my tensions and the many things I continue to wonder about, I engage with multiple viewpoints that bring forth, not only similarities, but a profound respect for difference (Donald, 2009, p. 8). Through *métissage* I share my stories as life writings in a way that honours them by not pulling apart or disembodimenting the greater context and complexities of the field school experiences and the multitude of viewpoints held within them.

I have learned from my work as a nursing educator that in order to be respectful of Indigenous knowledge traditions and relationally accountable to communities an important question I must ask is; How do I avoid imposing my own ideas on Indigenous knowledge systems in such a way that they are not imposed on or taken up by those systems? Meyer (Cajete, et al. 2021) implores us (academics) not to share our ideas, stating “even if it is a good idea don’t give it to us”. The risk is that external ideas are taken up as belonging to the cultural lexicon of specific Indigenous knowledge systems. I have learned that knowledge that is useful to the communities must come from the land and the unique experiences and relationships of each community. Academia, no matter how well intentioned, is in a position to easily disrupt the knowledge systems that are embedded in the language and the land of each community. When these knowledge systems are strong then they are better able to determine for themselves what externally derived information is useful and how it is best put to use within the context of their own communities.

I have done my best to be relationally accountable to the people and communities involved in my inquiry. I have avoided sharing any stories or parts of stories that may have ethical concerns or may result in potential for harm to the community, its members or participants in the field school. All of the stories I have written and shared are utterly subjective. I have focused on my own experience, thoughts, feelings and understandings from my lived experience. In coming to know myself through my relationships with others I have sought out the deeply personal in order to connect to the universal (Meyer, 2008). My ethic of story-sharing has required a type of imagination, a

wayfinding, that never diverges from the hard truths of my own experience (Hasebe-Ludt et al., 2009). At the same time, I am always conscious of what is mine to share while laying bare the incompleteness of my own truth and the inevitable assumptions I hold. I am always cognizant of the potential my stories have to honour and also to harm those from whom I have learned. At times, I have used poetic forms of storytelling, imagination, generalities, and spaces to share my truths and vulnerabilities without exposing others. Unless I have specific permission to do otherwise, I have described my relationships and who was involved in any interactions I had, in as general a way as possible, using terms like “community member” and “student” rather than specific names. At the same time, I have recognized people’s right to be credited for their knowledge, ideas and influence, whether or not it has been published. For this reason, I have acknowledged my relationships and shared the names of many of the people who have played a role in my story, always with their permission and my appreciation.

I have sought out opportunities to share my stories verbally within communities as a way of seeking ethical approval for my inquiry. Sharing my stories orally in the Bighouse is a form of ceremony and a way to formally thank the people who have been instrumental in my journey with food and gifts. Sharing my stories with the community is an opportunity to receive feedback, encouragement and questions in a cyclical way. Because I was not able to do this publicly during the COVID-19 pandemic, I have sent copies of this inquiry to key people, along with gifts that acknowledge their contributions to what I have learned. The process of being ethically and relationally accountable to communities has at times challenged the taken for granted way of doing things in Euro-western orientated institutions. I have had to learn and find new ways which have at times challenged or been at odds with the normal expectation of the people and institution I work for. This process, the relationships I have developed over time and the new ways of doing things we have found together have led to new conversations that are more accessible to and respectful of people who are not part of academia. They have resulted in a form of resistance that privileges public conversations and “not just academic dialogue” (Jones & Jenkins, 2008, p. 50). Shawn Wilson (2005) describes this form of relational accountability as a type of ceremony in the way that we live our research journey together.

During the writing and dancing of my stories I have drawn on principles of relational ethics from my nursing practice that are similar to what is described by

Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffmann (1997) in the process of portraiture. For example, I consider my relationships with all the people involved with unconditional positive regard and respect. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffmann (p. 4) describe the feeling of being a subject of portraiture as being appreciated and not objectified, always seen as a person of strength and vulnerability, beauty, imperfection, mystery and openness. Although I have not focused in depth on any one person in my portrait, I do consider the relational spaces in the field school itself to be the “actor” or subject of my stories. As in a health promoting relationship, the intention is that the participants find the process to be “clarifying, energizing and inspiring” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffmann, p. 153). As I am writing and orally sharing my stories, I am aware of my professional responsibilities, not in a way that is intended to separate but rather in a way that asks the question: Whose needs are being met here and for what purpose? In this way I am being relationally accountable by ensuring there is reciprocity and usefulness to the community and the participants within the process of my inquiry. As I move through my inquiry, I pay attention to the aesthetic, ethical and spiritual dimensions of my relationships. Being accountable and reciprocal in all my relationships means living with the integrity of being who I am and doing what I am meant to do. When I am on the right path towards finding *ya'x̱an yiyaḵwima* (my gifts from the Creator). I am dancing with grace.

I am grateful that at the conference in 2006, on the banks of the Cowichan River, that I was called to account by Frank Johnson and Evelyn Voyageur. I was given the opportunity to find *ya'x̱an yaxw'anye'* (my dance) through co-facilitating a field school for nursing students with and within remote First Nations communities. The writing and sharing of these stories have become an essential aspect of my transformative inquiry. Through writing the story and engaging in the ethical terrain of my relationships, I have become the story. I continue to enact and embody my practice as a nurse and an educator with a vision towards co-creating healing learning spaces for transformative reconciliation. Through writing my stories I am finding my soul work, *ya'x̱an yaxw'anye'* (my dance) is my purpose. In Chapter 5 I will share four stories from the field school with you. Through writing my stories I am also finding my way of sharing my purpose with you.

Chapter 5.

Yaxw'anye': Dancing Together

In the Land of the Hamast'a
You learn to walk with the Grizzly Bear
It takes respect, awareness and courage
But we have done it.
We are stronger and safer because
When we walked with the Grizzly Bear
We did it together

Joanna Fraser (2007) written during the first field school experience

We have come to a resting place on this journey. The sun is warming a rock outcropping where we can look through the tree branches onto the expansive landscape around us. This is where we can rest awhile and replenish our energy with food and water. I will share some stories from the journey that has brought us here. The first story is about the time when I first arrived in the Wuikinuxv community at the head of Rivers Inlet with the intention of developing a field school together. I was full of excitement and hope. I was unsure of what my role would be, I was aware I had much to learn. It is a story about beginnings, sitting with discomfort and experiencing transformation.

5.1. Wakes (Frog) Dance

Our plane, a Drummond Goose, lands with its belly in the water, it doesn't have pontoons. I know this but am still a little startled when the water splashes up past my window. A man on the dock pulls up his jeans and settles his belt loosely on his hips, ready to go to work. He has mouths to feed, communities to build, fish to catch or trees to fell. These men are the link between the land and our ability in more urban

(disconnected) areas to feed and house ourselves. It's obvious here, in the hinterland of British Columbia's central coast, that our lives are in the hands of the people who work here and that they always have been.

Evelyn Voyageur and I are on the "milk" run. Our plane stops at numerous logging and fishing camps, picking up and dropping off essential supplies and people as we make our way up the coast. Evelyn has roots here. This is the homeland of her great great grandmother, the land of the Wuikinuxv people. She also worked in these villages as a nurse with Health Canada, fighting for the health of her people. This is my first trip to what we presumptuously consider, from a centralized urban perspective, the "remote" village of the Wuikinuxv in Rivers Inlet.

When we are up in the air again, I see the ocean winding its fingers through the rugged mountain inlets. There are dots of human activity, fish farms and logging cut blocks, all over this vast wilderness. From the tiny seaplane, I look down at the water's surface and in the shining reflection of the sun off of the wind-blown water below, the shape of a frog sparkles back at me. I laugh at it, thinking about both the significance and insignificance of my being there on this trip with Evelyn.

Our next stop is Rivers Inlet, the only stop on the run up from Port Hardy with its own airstrip. When we land in the middle of a dusty looking clearing, I wonder where the village is. I am not sure why it is so dry in April. There are boxes, lots of boxes, to be unloaded from the plane. I help, feeling useful and useless at the same time. I wonder where all the boxes are going and why are there so many. Where am I going? How am I getting there? I ask which boxes go in which truck. I wonder if I am to get in the van with the boxes. I worry that I am asking too many questions. Then, as I will do often over the next few days, I follow Evelyn's lead.

We drive off quickly with the dogs running behind us. The van has no seatbelts, the door doesn't close properly, and the middle seat is broken. I am told that this is both the ambulance and the mail truck. The road turns past the garbage dump. I am told to look for grizzly bears, although they are unlikely to be spotted in the heat of the day. The Wannock River is running fast beside us now. The mountains rise straight up from the other side of the bank. Towering stone cliffs hold up shiny white glaciers above our heads. I breathe deeply and relax. I feel uplifted by the natural world around me.

We pass one house, a second house, and then that is it, we stop. There must be more houses somewhere further down the road. Eventually I realize what is obvious to everyone else, this is the house where we are staying. Inside there is a warm reception from our host. After lugging our suitcases up the steep stairs, I notice broken eggshells covering the surface of planted pots. I feel surprisingly at home. This house is full of art, masks, carvings, baskets and cedar weavings. There is a wolf hidden partially behind some pictures. It draws attention. I see a drum with two salmon. Afterwards I see a frog, unpainted in the middle of the drum. Frogs have been coming up for me lately.

I recognize the patterns of stories that happen around me as our host greets Evelyn and family updates are given regarding who is home in the village and who has a story to tell. I wonder how much I am in the way of those stories being shared. I sip my tea. That night we eat a big meal of beef, potatoes, cauliflower and green salad. The milk is sour. It expired a week ago, although it only just arrived with us on the flight. Now the number of boxes is explained. I understand how perishables arrive in the village. I appreciate the value of a fresh salad. I am told there is an extra dollar of freight paid per pound on groceries (that was many years ago). Some of the eggs arrived broken so they will be scrambled for breakfast.

The first night I stayed inside, unsure about going for a walk, I had heard stories of bears from locals. I also had heard stories from friends of dogs who barked and nipped at your heels as you walked down the road. These were from friends who worked in the logging industry, not locals. They had their own ideas and concerns for me traveling to a “remote reserve on my own”. My questions about the village are waylaid by watching endless episodes of CSI with my host on TV. That first night I slept badly and woke full of adrenaline.

In the morning I walked. The village sits in the middle of a tight valley beside the river. Houses are jumbled along the road with projects and boats pulled up on the bank. There was a large unfinished dock and a long unfinished dugout canoe. Very few people were outside. One boy wearing camouflage gear walked by. I felt like a curiosity, like people were watching me from behind curtains. I was too uncomfortable to take out my camera, although I wanted to take pictures.

That day we had a meeting with the council and the health committee. We started with a prayer. There was a short introduction. I tried to explain why we were there and then the stories began. The stories of loss, break up and break down. The personal stories of abuses faced in residential school. Stories of ongoing trauma at the hands of health care and education systems. I listened with my heart to the personal stories of betrayal experienced at the hands of nurses and teachers. The offences still happening, the distrust still evident. As we spoke, Evelyn is called away to advocate for a young woman with back pain. She has been prescribed more painkillers, but no one knows what is causing the pain. Evelyn talks to the doctor to have her flown out. Evelyn's presence has power here. Before we leave, we hear that the young woman has been diagnosed with a kidney infection and put on antibiotics. I learned that you cannot call 911 from the village, but you can from the logging camp down the road. In the village there are more steps to go through, justifications to be made before something can be considered an emergency. The stories buzzed around my ears. I opened my heart and let them into my body; they tightened around my neck and shot down my left arm. I held onto them there, curling my fist under the table.

This meeting lasts all day, there is much being done at once: sharing stories, checking values, questioning beliefs, coming to understanding, sharing hopes, clarifying expectations, making plans. Questions are raised from complex to practical. Someone asks, "What do you think about sharing our medicine with non-natives?" Someone asks, "Where will the nurses stay?" I am learning, stumbling over my inability to translate my words from academic speak to the language that is used here. I say, "We need to educate nurses differently if we want them to practice differently. We want to bring students here to learn from you, from your way of doing things, from your stories." Ideas are raised about teaching "our ways", about balance with all things and the spirit world, and about teaching that Indigenous communities are more than "created by crisis". Questions are asked about how we can change the way Indigenous children are taught. "Why won't parents participate in our school? How do we teach our children our way?" Answers are left heavy in the air, suspended there by the stories that have already been shared.

Before we close, there is concern for how drained I look. We hold hands and say a prayer. Evelyn tells me to go and wash the pain from my arm in the river. Sitting by the river I feel its power, the ancient rhythm of the people living here, longer and stronger

than I can comprehend. Walking back, I bump into a few people. I relax, now they are people I know. The young female teacher waves at me, I notice a white face. Suddenly I recoil at my own comfort/discomfort, realizing my racialized self-consciousness. Before going to sleep that night, the last words I wrote in my journal were, "The spirit log looking over my bed tells me to respect that there is a world I am not a part of and not meant to share".

I dream of wakes (frogs).

Interlude

I have come to understand frogs as being able to move between environments from water to land. Through the experience itself and through the writing and sharing of this story I am receiving gifts from the frog. I am learning to let go of old parts of myself that are no longer useful and I am learning to grow in new ways so that I can be of service to the people of this place. My dance is with the unknown, with relationships and with my transforming self. Frogs are also known for their voices. Something I am still needing to learn is how to share my voice in a relationally accountable way so that I can also be of service to the greater community of nurses and educators.

The next story is drawn from a series of journal entries that I made over the first ten years of experiencing the field school from 2007 to 2017. I am becoming more familiar with my role and my dance in the field school and yet with familiarity grows expectations and anxieties. There are growing tensions in my relationships as I come to a fuller and more complex understanding of my accountabilities and what I have to offer to the community, the people who live there and the student participants.

5.2. U'ligan (Wolf) Dance

I am noticing now looking back on my diaries, that each time as I leave home for the field school, I write of my apprehensions. Each time, it is as if I have forgotten the feeling from the time before. One year, I write:

I left home feeling less excited and more apprehensive than I have in the past. I am reluctant to be away from home. I am apprehensive about how things will go. Everything [with the planning] has gone as normal so far but I am worried about the community's commitment. I am asking myself,

“Have I done enough connecting and organizing behind the scenes?” Have I left too much up to others? I am worried that if I do more, I will be stepping on people’s toes. I want to leave enough space for others to work freely, but then I feel I have let people down by not doing enough. (Joanna Fraser Personal Diary, 2013)

I remind myself that the hardest part is making it to the starting line. Each year after all the organizing, the packing and the paperwork is done, I load myself into a car and head off to a boat dock on the north end of Vancouver Island. When I am finally on the water with the students, I find their excitement starts to rub off on me. I am always surprised by how different they are in person from the assumptions I have made, having met many of them up to this point only online. For those whom I have already met in person, I know our relationship will change and grow over the next week. Far beyond the possibilities afforded by a classroom, I will begin to truly see them.

It is when we are loaded on the boat and cast off from the shoreline that my own transformation begins. In 2010 I wrote in my journal:

Setting off in the soft rain, calm waters and misty land masses, connecting myself with place, people and spirit, breathing slowly. We pass the usual colony of sea lions and this time we are lucky to see a humpback whale. The boat unloading is the usual shemozzle. My attempts to organize the students into an assembly line for moving our baggage along the dock and up the ramp has failed again. Eventually our gear and bodies are unloaded from the water taxi and, if we are lucky, organized into the right groupings corresponding with the house where each person is staying. (Joanna Fraser Personal Journal, 2010)

My journaling about arrivals are always punctuated with my feelings of being welcomed, happy to see people, most of whom I have not seen in a few years. I am struggling to remember names and working hard to do so, knowing how important it is to be remembered. There is the occasional feeling of not being acknowledged, someone doesn’t make eye contact, and I don’t know why. Then the settling of everyone into the billet houses begins. This process never goes smoothly. There are always surprises and problems to be solved.

One year I write:

I am searching the wet ground for four leaf clovers while I wait beside the dirt road for someone to show up with a key. There is a break in the rain which has been falling softly all morning. Eventually, someone I know comes by to tell me where the keys are and says, “Let yourself into the

house, no one is there.” So I do. When I open the door there is a group of women sitting in a circle, the air is heavy with their confidences and I feel my intrusion deeply. I go to sit outside again beside the dirt road in the now heavily falling rain and wait for the house to be free. Mud is splashing on my legs and my raincoat is starting to soak through. Cold rivulets of water make their way down my neck. When the key is brought, my apologies are spoken and forgiveness is given, the feeling I have of apprehension lifts itself slightly from the pit of my stomach and adjusts itself more comfortably in my body. The fear that I will cause unintended harm is always hugging my insides during the field schools, it never goes away entirely.

I remember once, while settling a group of students into a house that hadn’t been lived in for some time, how the first order of business was a massive cleaning job. Another time, the health risks were too large, and we needed to make other living arrangements. These are difficult conversations for me. I am navigating multiple levels of expectations and different values. It is in these discussions that people’s vulnerabilities and differences are truly evident. I need to carefully negotiate conversations between what makes some people feel comfortable and others feel judged. I am always thankful for Evelyn’s guidance as we navigate these tensions. In the end, I recognize that it is my role to represent the institution and to ensure that the students’ comfort and safety is attended to within the context of respecting the community. This responsibility is why there is always some tension that remains curled up around my insides.

One day I write in my journal:

The day started slowly, we went to the school and watched as the “little wolves” began their day together in much the same way as it’s done in primary classrooms across the Westernized world. The room is a typical classroom. Windows on one side above a counter with projects displayed on top and supplies well organized below. There are small chairs, tables and shelves arranged to create a variety of spaces for little people to explore in. The children gather in one corner of the room in a squirmy circle with mats on a carpet surrounded by adults on chairs. The nursing students and I make ourselves as inconspicuous as possible, moving into the edges of the classroom trying not to interrupt their circle. The wiggling intensifies as the children move closer together pushing and pulling at each other for space. The teacher regains their attention pointing to a calendar and selecting those whose turn it is to fill in the numbers for the day and the symbols for the weather. For me there is comfort in this routine. I am at once a child wanting to be the special one, chosen for a day, and a parent watching my children become enculturated into the school system. Now I wonder why the pattern has endured, over time and over place. I see myself in the teacher orienting the students to the routines and also inevitably acculturating them to fit into a colonized world. However, in this room, far away from all the others, and unlike those of my childhood and my

children's childhood there are traditional Indigenous knowledge holders sitting around the children. The knowledge holders are speaking the language of this place, interpreting and connecting the children to who they are and where they come from. I wonder at the learning spirit. Will these children learn what they need in order to navigate the complexities of the worlds they inhabit? (Joanna Fraser Personal Journal, Sept, 21, 2010)

I wrote in my journal about how, on the first night of the field school, after everyone is settled into their homes, I spend my time reviewing notes about the history of colonial relations in Canada. I re-read and try to memorize important details and dates of the significant events in history that affected the wellbeing of Indigenous people. The next day I talk about white papers, red papers and constitutional acts. That night I wrote in my notebook that "my talk on colonization fell flat, [and was] not as thought provoking as I had hoped it would be. How can this be made better?" (Joanna Fraser Personal Notebook, Sept 19, 2010). Another time I write in my notebook about the nursing students who have come here with me, "The students seem engaged and although the pace is slow, the learning is less visible. Their openness to just be and to let things come to them is astonishing". One time I write:

Before we enter the Bighouse, we knock on the door. There is a rhythm for letting the ancestors know we are here. It is familiar to me this time. I feel calm and nervous at the same time as we enter this sacred space. My calmness grows as I walk around the Bighouse, acknowledging the poles. We settle into a circle on chairs set up beside the fire. We are being taught about the Bighouse and the meaning of the four poles. The *Sisiutl*² that lies across the poles connecting them together stares down at us. It is mentioned but not explained. My nervousness increases as what I see as the crucially important teachings of the *Sisiutl* are wanting to burst out of me. I think it would be a good idea for the students to know more about the *Sisiutl* but then I realize the time will come. I am learning to wait and to be patient. I calm myself again looking at the *Sisiutl* for guidance and am reminded of balance.

Our introduction circle involves field school participants and community members together. We talk about who we are, why we are here, where we are from, and our hopes for the future. I hear community members who have been committed to the field schools for some time talk about their own transformation, from sitting on the sidelines to

² A two headed sea serpent, the cross beam connecting two corner poles in the Bighouse, a complex teaching about paradox and balance.

sharing their stories with the nurses fully. Someone shares how they have been learning more so they can teach it to us. In my journal I write:

My hope for crafting a space for co-teaching where community members learn from each other and from teaching us, a healing space for us all, is seeing its fruition and yet it feels presumptuous of me to assume so. But how often do community members take this time from their day to day lives to think about and share what they know with each other? I am not sure. People are quick to give credit to outsiders who are recognized to be experts on Indigenous knowledge and medicine. The medicine wheel is used for health teaching although it may be useful it is not from here. Evelyn worries about this. What is the danger of the community's blind spots to its own knowledge and healing potential? How can people become in tune with the healing energy and knowledge that is already here?

As I read through my journals, I wonder about my role in facilitating the field schools. My job seems to be to get out of the way of the learning that happens when people are in relationship with each other and the land. This happens when I let go of a need to be in control and my fear of not meeting everyone's expectations, including my own. I feel like I am doing the best job when I have managed to make myself invisible and redundant. Yet, I also know that I am doing my best job and fulfilling my purpose when I know without reservation that I belong. I am learning the teachings of the *Sisiutl*.

Interlude

What I have learned from wolves is the responsibilities of belonging to a pack and the paradoxes of being wild and free. This story is full of the paradoxes and tensions I experience during the field school. Wolves are known for their intuition as they navigate through the wilderness. I am learning to dance with a desire for freedom and belonging.

The next story is about a central experience I had with Indigenous pedagogies during the field school. In this story I have become more in tune with Indigenous pedagogy and knowledge. I am beginning to see how the sacred is experienced in everything we learn and do. As I encounter the contradictions in myself and my way of knowing I begin to embrace myself more whole heartedly. This self-understanding helps me to walk beside others who are also experiencing personal transformation.

5.3. Buffalo Dance

Buffalo aren't from around here. I don't know why they were in my dream, but I think the dream was about keeping them away. It was a powerful dream that I still remember more than ten years later or at least I remember the story I tell myself about it. It happened when I was planning for the first field school in Rivers Inlet with the Wuikinuxv. What I remember is a fire burning in the center and a group of people standing in a circle around it. The people were all in shadows; I couldn't see who they were. They all faced inwards together, focusing on the fire. I was in the circle too, but I faced outwards. I was holding my arms upwards, my hands flat, pushing hard against something intangible. Then there was a rush of wind, a storm coming towards us. Out in the storm was a herd of stampeding buffalo. They were heading towards the circle. My job was to push hard with all my might to keep the stampeding beasts away. I needed to let what was happening in the circle happen without disruption. It was taking every bit of energy I had.

Just after having that dream, we arrived in Rivers Inlet with students for the first time. Chief Frank Johnson was there to greet us. It was Frank's idea (at that conference in 2006) to bring students to Wuikinuxv Territory, where I first met him on the banks of the Cowichan River. After a year of planning, we had finally come. Frank spoke two words in greeting. His words had a profound effect on me. They were "welcome home".

Each year we start our field school in the Bighouse in a circle around the fire. Each year as I sit in the circle trying to figure out what my role is, I think of the buffalo dream. When we first walk into the Bighouse, we are taught how to enter it with reverence for the place we are in. As we enter, we acknowledge each of the four corner poles. Starting with the pole on our right, we turn in a circle, our right arm stretched out towards the pole. As we turn, we draw our hand in towards our heart. Then we walk counterclockwise around the great room with a dirt floor, stopping and circling in front of each pole. We come to learn that the four poles represent the families that live there and the specific responsibilities to the community that each of the family groups has. Once we are done, we come to sit in a circle with *ni noxsola* and wait to begin. Sometimes I feel self-conscious in this process, unsure of myself, like I don't belong. It raises questions about my inner turmoil about my identity and my purpose. This ceremonial beginning can amplify my sense of unease with my role here. At other times, I feel

overwhelming gratitude and joy for being where I am and doing what I do. As I walk around the Bighouse, reflecting on my purpose, I feel fulfilled, like I am in the right place at the right time. I know I am meant to be here, that we all are. I feel a profound sense of belonging. Our circle will start with a prayer and an expression of gratitude, often spoken by Evelyn in her language around the fire. Sometimes community members, or students will take a turn in leading the morning ceremony and sharing words of prayer or gratitude from their own cultural traditions.

For some, this experience brings up something deeper than they knew existed. I remember a student who could not stop shaking after she entered the Bighouse. She was very quiet while she sat in our circle but seemed fully present. Each day, as we shared ourselves with each other she would visibly calm down. Eventually, on the fourth day, she let us know that something profound was happening for her. Every time she entered the Bighouse it felt like her boundaries, her sense of herself was made thin. She felt porous as if something or someone was moving through her as she walked in a circle. At first, she didn't understand it and she didn't feel comfortable with it at all. However, as she shared her story of dislocation from her own Indigenous roots with the group something changed. Now, when the energy she felt in the Bighouse entered her, she embraced it. What she shared was that, by embracing herself with all her mixed ancestries, she was experiencing for the first time a profound sense of belonging.

It was many years after that first field school in Wuikinuxv territory that I finally realized that I had come to terms with my own ancestry and colonial history. I was standing in reverence around the fire with the students listening to the teachings. We were talking about how the fire is a connection to the ancestors and we were talking about respect. All of a sudden, I felt the presence of my maternal grandmother. With her presence I felt a rush of emotions: love, fear, respect, and even a little bit of shame for what she represented in me. We always called her Granny-far-away as she lived in South Africa. Often, she would be brought up at the dinner table as a lesson to remember our manners, "What would Granny-far-away say?" But here she was, in this Wuikinuxv Bighouse on the west coast of Canada, as far away from South Africa and all of the contradictory feelings I had about what she represented in me, that she could possibly be. In that moment, with my grandmother beside me, I reconciled who I was and felt nothing but love for (and connection with) my ancestors. Over the years, I have

witnessed the profound effect that entering a space such as this can have on people, no matter where they come from or who and what they bring with them.

We usually start on our first day in the Bighouse in a circle together with an introduction of who we are and why we have come to be in this place. Sometimes each person is invited to introduce us to their grandmother or a grandmother figure. Recognizing that not everyone has known a grandparent, this can be anyone who has had some influence on who they have become. What transpires as we invite our ancestors and role models into our circle is a profound sharing of ourselves with each other. It might take us most of the morning to complete the circle. What I witness is a yearning for connection. We all want to belong.

Over the week we spend some time each day in our circle talking intimately, intensely sharing our thoughts and stories. We also spend some time learning in the community and with the land. We may go berry picking, crab gathering, looking for medicines or walking around the village site. We are invited to spend time outside just being, journaling or sitting by the river. Sometimes we are invited into people's homes or to join in community events. We may play soccer or other games together and we often share food. The stories I hear most often when people are truly present with each other are stories of yearning to belong. No matter what people's ancestry or where they come from, we all want to be seen by each other, to know that we are welcome here. There are people who talk about their Indigenous ancestry and share the shame they feel for hiding who they are and for not knowing their language. There are some who have been able to remain deeply connected to their Indigeneity, and some who also carry intergenerational trauma from the legacy of residential schools. There are people who carry guilt for not realizing the source and extent of how society has been organized to benefit them over others. Some people have even shared how their ancestors worked in residential schools or worked in "Indian Hospitals". There are people who have immigrated here or whose ancestors fled from other countries due to unrest. They carry anger or guilt because they did not know that they had come to a country with its own trauma and injustice. There are people who were born here, whose ancestors immigrated here generations ago, and it is only now that they are becoming truly awake to what has happened before and what is still happening now. I hear stories of guilt, of shame, of entangled histories and identities. Some people are not able to forgive themselves for who their ancestors are and were. Some carry shame for becoming

disconnected from who they are and where they come from. What I witness in myself and others is a yearning for forgiveness, to forgive and be forgiven, and always the search for belonging.

One student had taken up a project of making her own button blanket as part of the individualized preparation component of the course that happens before attending the field school. I was worried that she had taken on this project without any cultural understanding of the significance of a button blanket, *k̓angextola*, and the protocols that are important to wearing one. When she pulled it out to show us at the beginning of our journey in the water taxi, my initial reaction was to cringe at what I saw as blatant cultural appropriation. I hoped that *noxola* Evelyn may provide her with some guidance. Instead Evelyn commented on her handiwork and we carried on. I wondered what my role should be, should I share my thoughts? As I have been taught to do, I waited for the teachings to come at the right time, in the right way. Yet, I wondered how she would learn. Who would her teachers be? Over the next few days, I did my best to set the stage in our discussions. I purposefully looked for ways to find cues and ways to talk about the importance of respecting cultural protocols. In the end, once again, the teaching I was looking for was for me. Eventually when the student felt safe enough to know we would understand, she shared her story. She had reconnected with a “distant” relative over making the button blanket. She had sat sewing and talking while she learned, re-learned, about her own and previous unknown Indigenous ancestry. This is something she carried some shame about, and with each pull of the needle she was reconciling that shame. She was healing.

What happens at the field school is we bear witness to each other’s stories. We hear not just with our ears but with our hearts. We speak not just from our mouths but from our souls. Time stands still as we hear each other express our true selves, our pains and our desires. Our vulnerability is held carefully by the power of the Bighouse. We sense the oneness of everything. In this potent space of timeless connection, we feel the presence of our ancestors with as much certainty as we feel the smoke from the fire burning our nasal passages, entering our bodies and becoming one with our being. We know we are changed.

Every time I come to Wuikinuxv territory to teach the field school, I become a witness to transformation, and I go through my own transformation. I witness the

struggle we all have with our identity and our need to belong. I witness the effects of Indigenous pedagogy as we work to reconcile who we are with who we are becoming in relation to the people we meet and the experiences we have. I sit in the circle doing my best to keep the stampede of colonial agendas and assumptions about how to be a teacher from disrupting what is happening in the circle. Each time I arrive, Frank Johnson is there to welcome us with open arms, and with that certain smile on his face. I remember that, no matter who we are or where we come from, we all belong. “Welcome home,” Frank says. “Welcome home!”

Interlude

What I am experiencing in this story are the lessons of strength and vulnerability, characteristics I associate with a Buffalo. As I am embracing myself whole heartedly and walking beside others who are growing through personal transformation, I am learning to see the sacred in all our relationships. I see the courage and the vulnerability that comes with personal transformation. For me to be present to the experience of learning with and through Indigenous pedagogy, I am understanding my role as both a protector of and a vulnerable participant in the learning experience. It is in this story that I am learning to dance with forgiveness and healing. It is what I will describe in more detail in Chapter 7 as a “home coming story” (Greenwood 2019).

The next story is also a story about a specific time during the field school. This story is about grappling with ethical relationality, relational accountabilities and the tensions I experience in doing so. It raises questions for me about the ethics of my practice and who I am accountable to. It is a story of walking with the grizzly bear. I cannot stay clear of taking risks or making mistakes, every move is a dance with the unknown. It is also about respecting the power of those around you. This is what it feels like to me to walk down a road when you know there is a grizzly bear walking beside you.

5.4. Gāla (Bear) Dance

The students, the *ni noxsola*, and I sit inside the Bighouse where the fire burns steadily, warming our voices. The smoke circles around us, insidiously working its way into our bodies through our ears and throats, stinging our nasal passages and making our eyes water. We are talking intensely about our shared humanity and our experiences of spirituality. We are each thinking deeply and connecting with ourselves and each other in a circle beside the fire. It is the fourth day of the field school in a remote First Nations community.

As we emerge from the Bighouse for a mid-morning break, we blink our eyes and deeply breathe in the fresh moist air. The big mountains tower above us on both sides, cradling us in the bottom of the valley. I can feel my spirit lift, lighten slightly and then fly a bit upwards, expanding towards the sky. I pause for a moment, taking in the gratitude that I feel for being here, for feeling connected in this place, with these people, at this time. There are ten of us in the group. Some move away, sitting or standing quietly alone with their thoughts. Others gather together, sharing a release of lightheartedness with easy chatter.

Two women are approaching the Bighouse. They walk along the dirt road from the health centre, moving slowly with an air of solemn cautiousness. I previously invited them to join our circle in the Bighouse and am hopeful that they are coming now to be with us. I break away from the group of students and go to approach them. They smile and, without words, open themselves for me to approach. I unconsciously slow my pace from the light-hearted revelry of the students I had been chatting with to the reverent concern I feel from these two women.

They are curious about what we are doing. I again invite them to join us inside the Bighouse. I explain how we are learning about spirituality from the *ni noxsola* and that our plan after lunch is to visit the grave site that sits up the hill from the village. When I say the words grave site, I feel a physical jolt between me and one of the women. My stomach tightens. I continue on talking, reactively defending myself, justifying my actions, and explaining how and why we are going. I explain that the *ni noxsola* know that we are going, that we have been there many times before, and that we are planning on going with a man who lives in the village. And then I stop talking. I

catch myself and take a breath, intentionally reconnecting myself with the relationship. I open myself to learning by letting go of my own self-consciousness and the need to be doing the right thing. I consciously allow myself to feel vulnerable, so I can hear if I am making a mistake, and to feel grateful for the learnings I am receiving. I become more tuned into the concern of the woman and ask her to explain.

I learn that this person is not from this community but that she has concerns for our safety and the safety of the community if we are to visit the grave site in the afternoon when the spirit world is closer to the human world. I thank her for sharing her concerns with me. As I walk back to the Bighouse, I am preoccupied and my steps are deliberate. I am worried that we are making a mistake. I feel accountable to the group, to the community, to the *ni noxsola*, and to the ancestors for the choices that I must make. As I enter the Bighouse, I barely remember to acknowledge the space, the fire and the four poles that are our teachers. Remembering, I begin the ritual, still focused on my concerns. I walk into the Bighouse around the fire the way we have been taught. I look at each pole, one by one, remembering why we are here. I feel my heart beat slow down and my thoughts steady themselves. I go to sit by the two *ni noxsola*. In a moment of eye contact with them, I feel my strength return and my mind open again. I feel connected to a universal wisdom. I feel safe enough to face my fears, to speak of my vulnerabilities, to share my concerns and to be received in a good way.

When we are all seated in a circle again, I ask for guidance about visiting the gravesite in the afternoon. The *ni noxsola* explain some of the protections and considerations that they have put in place for us to visit the grave site safely. We are going directly after lunch when the spirit world is still more separate from the human world. We are going with a man who lives here, who will witness our experience and provide us with guidance as needed. The *ni noxsola* feel it is safe for us to go and they reassure the students that it is alright. I look around the circle, trying to connect with each person's feelings, to understand or glimpse their concerns through the expression of their bodies. How do they feel? How much do they know about what is being said and what remains unsaid? What is my responsibility to each of them and to everyone else? I do three intentional things. Firstly, I make it clear that the students know that there are people who may be concerned that we are visiting the grave site and that we need to consider our responsibility and accountability to the community. Secondly, I make it clear that each student has a choice to decide their own comfort level, their own moral stance,

and how they want to act. Finally, I go to talk with an Elder who lives in the community to make sure she knows and is comfortable with our decision to go to the grave site early that afternoon.

One student expresses her reservations by stating that she had no fear before our conversation but now she is nervous about going. There is gentle laughter around the circle as we all feel our own vulnerability and humility in the situation. After lunch we meet at the head of the path leading to the grave site. We check in with each other again and with the man who is taking us. I share that we have permission from the Elder who lives here, as well as the *ni noxsola* who are our guides. We all choose to go and head thoughtfully up the trail. We walk quietly, paying attention to the natural world around us. We are thankful for the salmonberries and their exquisite bursts of flavour with each one we pop into our mouths. We are aware of the bears living in the valley, who will also be filling their bellies with berries to keep themselves alive over the long winter months to come. The trees become taller as we walk up the trail towards the mountain. The berry bushes thin out and are replaced by a carpet of sword ferns. Great cedars tower above us, their branches covered with silver lichen. The canopy filters the light into multiple beams, each highlighting a piece of the natural beauty that surrounds us. All of this casts a magical spell of reverence on us as we continue on our path with good intentions, into the unknown. As we walk along towards the gravesite, I feel connected to this place, to these people, to my role as a teacher and learner here. I feel my spirit soar.

Interlude

For me the lessons of the bear are about living in the sacredness of relationships and living with gratitude, respect and humility. I am learning to understand my journey as interdependent with the world around me and all my relationships as sacred experiences. The bear is powerful, frightening and majestic. I am learning to dance in the in between spaces of my relationships and through my dance I am experiencing the wonder of finding *ya'xan yiyak'wima* (my gifts from the Creator).

5.5. An Earth Dance

The experience of co-facilitating the field schools, with the guidance of *ni noxsola* and the gifts from the community, the land, the students and all my relationships has led

me to finding my earth dance. My dance is a transformational dance as I encounter parts of myself that are no longer useful and embrace new ways of being that will better help me on the journey of being of service to the communities. The journey is complex and full of paradoxes. I must grapple with a desire to be free of social constraints, to be my authentic self, and at the same time to belong. I experience the need to be strong enough to protect the learning space from Euro-western educational assumptions and ways of doing things that are not helpful. At the same time I need to experience and share my vulnerability as I walk beside others who experience the vulnerability of transformation. Through co-facilitating the field schools, I am learning to forgive and to be forgiven. I am experiencing the beauty and the pain of healing. The biggest teaching for me is through experiencing the sacred wonderment of all my relationships and the integrity of being accountable to them all as well. It is what I have been taught is my purpose, a gift from the Creator. I have learned to receive this gift with humility and gratitude. It has made me who I am and given me a sense of belonging and purpose in the world. Because of this gift I am better able to be of service to all my relations, the communities and people that have so generously gifted me. This is my earth dance. Now it is time for me to find my voice and sing my song. I do it with the intention of helping us all find our way towards transformative reconciliation in nursing and education.

Chapter 6.

K̓amd̓am: Singing Together

KEEP WHAT'S TRUE in front of you, Old Man
said. You won't get lost that way. I was asking
about making my way through the bush. He
was talking about making my way through life.
Turns out, all these years later, it was the same
conversation. (Wagamese, 2016, p. 72)

6.1. Learning to Sing

Now it has come time to share *ya'x̱an k̓amd̓am* (my song). I have shared my journey towards transformative reconciliation starting with asking myself who am I? Where do I come from? Where am I going? Now I am ready to explore why am I here? In this chapter I gather all the learnings that have been so generously gifted by the land and the people through all the relationships we have nurtured from offering the field school. I gather learnings from the stories that have been shared in the previous chapter. I gather these learnings with the intention of making them useful. I offer them with the hope that they can guide us on a path towards transformative reconciliation in nursing education.

It has not been easy to take what I have learned in my heart and in my soul and put it into words. I have found it challenging to share the learning that is so deeply connected to a place and a people in a way that is ethical and useful to those of you who have not been there. These learnings come from the soil and the sea of First Nations' communities on the West Coast of Canada. They have been taught to me patiently, gently and generously by the Wuikinuxv and Dzawada'enuxw. The lessons come from being in a relationship with people who live in the place of their ancestors and honour the traditions and practices that come from that place. We call these communities remote, but I have learned that they are at the center of our relationship to the land and ultimately at the heart of what sustains all of who dwell in the world. The people who live in the place of their ancestors hold a sacred wisdom. It comes with knowing who you are

and where you come from. Evelyn has always been clear with us. The learning needs to happen in the “remote” communities. In these communities you cannot survive without being connected to the land that holds you.

I will share the learnings from co-facilitating the field schools as a journey hiking up a west coast mountainside. I envision us looking for a route through a coniferous rainforest towards an alpine mountain peak. Our journey is towards transformative reconciliation. In order to stay on the path of healing as transformative reconciliation in nursing education, I have been taught to do three things. The first is, to take the lead of Indigenous people who know the terrain. The second is to orient ourselves through our relationships to all things. The third lesson is to seek out wellness and lift each other up. If we are able to find and share our greatest strengths we will make it through the toughest terrain together.

6.2. Following the Lead of Indigenous People

In Chapter One, I shared my journey of becoming awake to how I have been shaped by the ongoing historical legacies of colonization in Africa and Canada. Engaging in my own transformation through walking on this path towards truth and reconciliation has taken courage and humility. I am vulnerable in the unknown landscape as I search for learning pathways and curriculums for truth telling and transformative reconciliation. I have learned to trust in the *ni noxsola* to help me find the pathways. If I assume I know the way, I will likely go astray and, even with good intentions, end up on the well-trodden, easy to find colonial paths that dominate the academic landscape. Without the guidance of Indigenous people, I may not see the trails, hidden by the underbrush, that lead to new patterns and pathways for transformative reconciliation in nursing education.

As a nursing instructor who is also accountable to an academic institution and its traditions, I have many things to learn and challenges to overcome when it comes to following the lead of Indigenous people. I was once asked during a presentation we were giving about the field school what I did to make the field school work. My answer in a moment of clarity was, “We go with an open mind, we go with an open heart, and we go with Evelyn.” Those words were simple and spontaneous, but they resonated because they spoke my truth. The core of what going with an open mind means to me is being

ready to engage in a process of becoming awake to the social contexts that have shaped us all. It is about engaging in the “truth” of reconciliation work. Going with an open heart is about being willing to be vulnerable and authentic in our relationships so that we can grow and be transformed through them. Going with a traditional knowledge holder, or in our case Evelyn, is essential for finding pedagogical pathways that are relationally accountable for the way we are learning, for what we are learning, and to where we are learning it. I have found that going with an open heart and an open mind as well as a knowledgeable guide and teacher are three key aspects of following the lead of Indigenous people.

Going with an open mind is supported by the learning that occurs before the field school. Each student prepares in the way that best suits them through designing their own learning plan. The intention is to recognize that we are all from different places, we walk in different ways, and there are many paths to becoming awake. There are three foundational learning areas, originally developed by First Nations people (and supported by the University of Victoria and Thompson Rivers University) that are used as the structure for developing a learning plan. They are: the colonial history of Canada and the effects of colonization on Indigenous People; contemporary experiences of oppression and the effects of institutionalized racism on the health of Indigenous people; and contemporary Intersections of health and healing related to Indigenous people (Dick et al., 2006). Details and resources are provided in each of these areas for students to develop their individualized learning plan. If students feel that they have a foundational knowledge in these areas already, they are invited to pursue a related topic of interest or line of inquiry in more depth. The pre-work is done online and incorporates discussion, which allows us to begin developing a learning community of people who live in different locations. Students are encouraged to engage with Indigenous people, resources and events from around their local communities as part of their preparation. Suggestions include going to museums that are focused on Indigenous culture or attending Indigenous-led public events near their own homes. The individual learning plan encourages students to come to know (if they don’t already) the Indigenous people and place names from around where they live. It also prepares them to open their minds through engaging with Indigenous people and scholarship, before attending the field school. This sets the groundwork for the field school where they are offered the potential

to continue to open their minds and their hearts through land based Indigenous pedagogical experiences.

Participating in the field school with an open mind and heart involves having the humility and courage to be vulnerable. One student reminded me about how vulnerable they felt coming to live and learn in the community. The four-hour boat ride in a small water taxi from Port Hardy, around Cape Caution and up Rivers Inlet was new to them. They were seasick and afraid of the swelling ocean waves, the unpredictable winds, and the strong ocean currents. When we arrived, they did not know if they were safe in the house they were assigned to stay in. They were afraid of the dogs and the bears on the road. They did not know what was expected from their hosts and were worried about offending them. However, this student said, “I kept thinking that my fear is nothing compared to what the children would have felt when they were taken away to residential schools” (Fraser & Tate, 2018). During the field school we are guided to continue to open our minds and hearts through Indigenous pedagogical experiences.

Sharing our vulnerabilities with each other takes courage. Most of us have put years of protection around and numbed our hearts. From the time we were young we have been socialized to curtail our emotions and our needs, in order to conform to and fit into our social groups. The struggle to belong to a group and yet to also have the freedom to be ourselves is a paradox that, on some level, we all must grapple with. For some, the process of socialization and the pressure to suppress parts of our authentic self in order to belong has been violent and extreme. All of us have hidden aspects of ourselves from view. As American poet Robert Bly (2012) states, “we spend our lives until we are twenty deciding what parts of ourselves to put into the bag, and we spend the rest of our lives trying to get them out again” (p. 7). Opening our hearts and sharing our authentic selves takes the courage, humility and self-compassion to reveal what has been hidden. We may need to grapple with thoughts and emotions that make us uncomfortable, that we worry will make others uncomfortable or that we didn’t even realize we held. Learning to love all aspects of ourselves is a beautiful and painful part of the healing journey that opening our minds and hearts can offer us. I have heard so many times that if you are not authentic the Elders will know. I have also seen that, if you are not able to be your whole self, the Elders will be gentle with you and will help you find the parts of yourself that remain hidden. What it means to me to go with an open mind and heart is to go with a willingness to be vulnerable, to share my imperfect, fallible

self with others and to be willing to grow and learn. It is the authentic sharing of ourselves with each other that offers us the potential to forgive, to be forgiven and to become fully human.

The pedagogical processes we experience during the field school are guided within an ecology that includes, learning from the land, sharing stories and being in ceremony together. Within this ecology led by Indigenous people we learn how to open ourselves for the potential of transformation. This can be profoundly uncomfortable as well as beautiful as we unmake and remake ourselves in relationship to all we experience. Tanaka (2016) describes how an important outcome of an Indigenous pedagogical experience was understanding that “relational accountability happens when we speak to be revealed and listen to be changed” (p. 194). Each time I experience the field school I am seeking to unlearn/learn/relearn who I am in this world and how I am in relation to the land and all those who dwell there. Sometimes this learning can open wounds, but it is done carefully in a way that has the potential of also healing them. Often we will come to know and respect a community member and then hear a story about the abuse that they have suffered and the intergenerational trauma they have endured. We are likely to hear firsthand stories of pain and violence experienced at the hands of health care professionals as a result of the systemic racism in health care. These stories can be hard for us to hold. For many nurses it is profoundly unsettling to realize how they are associated with a system that does harm. For many the process of witnessing the stories of others who have experienced trauma can lead to feelings of guilt, shame, denial and anger. As *noxso/a* Paul Willie (2019) explained, he doesn’t share his stories so that you will pity him. Healing does not come from seeking pity, blaming others, or trying to “save” them. I often find myself reflecting deeply on my role in helping to hold these stories often with students who are hearing them directly for the first time. I have learned to start by honoring the courage of the person who is telling us their story. I encourage us all to sit with and to pay attention to the meanings and feelings that come along with being a witness to the stories we hear. I connect with myself and hold on to myself so that I do not react with emotions of anger, shame, guilt, denial, or even pity. When I hold onto myself, rather than react to my emotions, I can feel compassion and gratitude for what I am learning. I acknowledge that it is my role and my responsibility to learn from people who have experienced colonial trauma and violence in the health system. I try to understand my own entanglement with it on a deep level.

Healing from the colonial violence that has both privileged and oppressed us comes from forgiving ourselves and forgiving each other. This is where matters of the head become matters of the heart. John Borrows, an Indigenous scholar, shares how forgiveness is a teaching built into pedagogical experiences of the land from an Anishinaabe perspective.

There is a time in the early Ontario spring when cold and warm air masses intermingle, causing fine mists to rise over the earth. The word used to describe this phenomenon is *aabawaa*, which means “warm and mild.” At these moments winter starts to loosen her grip on the land. The snows melt, and waters start to flow. Sap can begin running through the trees as nature prepares to nurture new life. Interestingly, the Anishinaabe word for forgiveness is related to this moment; the word for forgiveness is *aabawaawendam*. Thus, forgiveness can be analogized to loosening one’s thoughts towards others; to letting relationships flow more easily, with fewer restrictions. Forgiveness is a state of being warmer and milder towards another; it signals a warming trend in a relationship. Notice that forgiveness, like the clearing of early spring mists, does not occur in an instant. Heat and the warmth need to be applied through a sustained period of time for mists to clear. Clarity of vision takes a while to develop; time is often needed to “clear the air” and bring fairer views. (Borrows, 2018, p.67)

We have the potential to heal ourselves and our relationships with each other when we are prepared to enter into relationships over time with an open heart and an open mind.

Once you have committed yourself to an open mind and an open heart, you are ready to learn in a new way that is guided by Indigenous people, places and pedagogies. As a nursing instructor, this has meant letting go of the expectation that I am responsible for the learning experience of others and learning to respect that we are all on a learning journey together. This has not always been easy for me and I have made many mistakes. Sometimes I find myself feeling responsible for what the students are learning and sometimes I feel that others expect me to hold that responsibility. I feel tension when I think I should make a connection between what we are learning through Indigenous pedagogy and nursing theory. If I interject my thoughts I risk disrupting the pedagogical processes that are being led by Indigenous teachers. Another tension can happen when I remember a teaching I have learned on previous trips and think it is important for these students to hear about it now. I must find my way between whether or not to ask for the teachings or to be more patient and wait for the teachings to come. I remember one poignant learning I had when trying to share what I thought I knew, because I had heard it many times before from Evelyn. We were on a boat and were

taken to a seaside cave. It was a sacred place where the ancestors had taken the bodies of children who had died in their first year of life before their ten-month naming ceremony. This year Evelyn was not with us and so I felt that I should try and explain what she had often taught us in the past. I explained how the people from here believed that children remained close to the spirit world for a time after their birth and that during this time they could be “called back”. Evelyn’s granddaughter, who was in the boat, gently corrected me with the words, “They can choose to go back.” In that moment I was profoundly aware of how easily I could miss the most important cultural resonance of a story. I was reminded that this is not my story to tell. I was also reminded to trust that the universe will find our teachers and the timing for our teachings as well.

Learning with an open mind and heart means letting go of the need to control. It means trusting that each person will find their teachers and learn what is needed in their own way and at their own pace. When I let go of feeling responsible for the learning experience of others there is an increased potential for meaningful learning to happen sometimes in surprising and unexpected ways. Each of us has the potential to learn much more of what is relevant for us when we let go of the expectation of their being “a teacher” and instead trust in the universe to find many teachers for us both human and more than human.

Although I have had many teachers it is *noxsola* Evelyn that has offered me the opportunity to learn what I needed to learn by trusting in the universe to teach me. I would not have had any of these experiences if I had not had the courage to introduce myself to Evelyn and then to ask for her help. The first time I met Evelyn was in the Wei Wai Kum’s Bighouse in Campbell River in 2004. I had heard about her before when I was working as a community nurse and then as a diabetes educator on the northern end of Vancouver Island in the 1980’s and 1990’s. Evelyn was a nurse working for Health Canada at the time, but we had never met. My practice as a provincial nurse was in the small communities of the North Island, mostly with people of Euro-western ancestry. Her practice was in the same area but with Indigenous communities. The services at that time were even more separate and segregated than they are now. What I knew about Evelyn was that she was speaking up about the ongoing and systemic effects of colonization and residential schools on the health of her people. She had just finished her PhD in Psychology and had presented a comprehensive account of the effects of colonization on herself and her people. This was at a time when there was very little

scholarship in Western academic institutions written by Indigenous people about their experiences. It was also at a time when there was little awareness by the majority of health providers about the violence of colonialism, our own privilege, or our role in perpetuating systemic racism. Evelyn was making a lot of health care providers feel uncomfortable.

It was not until 2004 that I was to first meet Evelyn in person. I recognized her name as she was introduced at a Bighouse ceremony for the signing of the second Aboriginal Education Enhancement agreement with School District 72. I have to admit to feeling very intimidated by what I knew of who Evelyn was and the reputation she had. After the celebration I decided to introduce myself and explain what I was doing as a nurse educator at North Island College. Evelyn graciously joined our efforts, eventually taking on the role as our first Elder in Residence at North Island College. Since then she has led us in her vision of making nursing education more inclusive and equitable for all people (Voyageur & Fraser, 2020).

Evelyn was the right teacher for me at the right time. Her ability to guide me in my role has been profoundly essential for the work I do. I am often asked by other nurse educators: How can I do something like you are doing where I live and work, when I do not have Evelyn? I believe that having the courage to walk on a path towards transformative reconciliation means trusting the universe to find your own teachers so that you can do the work you need to do in your own way. I know that when those of us who work within institutions making space for Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing, are willing to open our hearts and minds and to be led by Indigenous people, then we will find a way towards healing pedagogies that serve us and all our relations in doing the work we need to do.

Following the lead of Indigenous people starts with having a knowledgeable guide who is connected to the community, places and traditions that you are learning in. The field school is planned in a way that is relationally accountable. It would not happen without the role that Evelyn plays. When she asks someone from the community to participate, I see how they respond in correspondence with their accountability to Evelyn and their other community relationships. Community members are also relationally accountable for the knowledge that they choose to share, and how they choose to share it. When a person explains who they are and where they come from, by sharing their

ancestral history they are also explaining the authority with which they speak. They are acknowledging the ancestors and teachers who have told them what they know. Rather than the individual authority we have to share our knowledge within the academy through a credentialed system and hierarchy, authority for knowledge in Indigenous communities is given and shared communally. The relational accountability for what is shared with us during the field school comes from the community's wisdom. I have witnessed how, when mistakes are made, it is the community and specifically the recognized knowledge keepers who receive an apology. Amends are made through specific and formal community protocols and mistakes are treated as learnings for growth.

Following the lead of Indigenous people, during the field school experiences, has led to possibilities for learning that I could not have imagined. Even something as foundational as learning in the Bighouse was something that I knew nothing about. When I started, I didn't know that we could do that. I didn't understand the role of the "Fire Keeper" or the well-established protocols for learning that are already part of the Bighouse traditions. I didn't know how to incorporate ceremony as a pedagogy for learning. All of this was generously offered by the people and communities we were learning in. I would not have been able to learn any of this if I thought that I was responsible for designing the educational experience.

During the field school I have been taught many things by following the lead of Indigenous people. One of the greatest gifts I have been given is the experience of healing ourselves, each other and our communities through ceremony. We learn how to heal ourselves through ceremonies such as brushing with cedar boughs and going into the river. Ceremony becomes a way of life during the field school. It is not something we are there to observe but an experience we can choose to live by. For example, on the first day we learn the ceremony of entering the Bighouse. Each of us can choose to enter the way we are taught by asking for the ancestor's permission and support in helping us learn well together. We are also taught to circle to the right in front of each corner pole while we reflect on what they represent. Ceremony is incorporated not only in discussing community protocols and forming ethical relationships but also in how we discuss them. It is part of the way we open and close our circles together and how we take turns sharing our thoughts. Ceremony becomes a way for us to share our gratitude for being together and our openness to learning with and from each other. Indigenous

pedagogies are enacted ceremoniously and, as a result, we are invited to see ourselves and our learning as a ceremony that is connected to all our relationships.

Through following the lead of Indigenous people, we all learn to be ethically and relationally accountable to the community for what we learn (Donald 2012; Wilson, 2015). We learn what knowledge is for us to share and how to share it. We learn what knowledge is not ours to share. Yet the learnings can be ambiguous and full of paradox as we navigate the different worlds we inhabit. There is specific contextualized and traditional knowledge about the place, the medicines, the art, and the people that are clearly not ours to share. Some of what we learn is so embodied that it can only be shared by our actions, our way of walking in the world. These are the learnings that become enacted in our practice. Still there are other learnings and teachings that remain in the ambiguous space between what is ours to share and what is not. These might be specific to the place and also connected to the greater spirit of humanity that is in all of us. These are the teachings I am concerned with sharing in a good way.

I have become increasingly aware of my accountability to the knowledge, or gifts, I receive but also for how I am changed by the gifts to be of service to the community. There are in the lessons from the *ni noxsola* and the experience of the field school some universal ideas and teachings that we may not have the words to explain or we may not know how to share but they become useful in guiding our way of being in the world. As Meyer (2008) eloquently describes in the following quote, these are the universal teachings that stir in my soul and connect me in useful ways to my own truths.

Function is a higher vibration of an idea, not the lower. How one defines function is first discovered in its meaning and then its interpretation. Here it is! Here is where the cosmological clashing began, not with the word but with its meaning. This is why we go to epistemology and then, inevitably, to hermeneutics. This is where Descartes's error comes to light. Cogito ergo sum – I think therefore I am- does not divide us from our embodied selves; it can unite us in a wisdom that is embedded in usefulness, awareness, and function. This is edging into a universal epistemology. It's all about function. And as aloha is my intelligence, well I guess this means you can use my board. (Meyer, 2008, p. 221)

Meyer speaks of the generosity of wisdom and the necessity for all of us to engage with the usefulness of a universal wisdom that is shared.

In academia we are often at risk of incorporating cultural knowledge and rituals into classroom environments, without understanding the specific political and social structures to which they are accountable. There is a danger of disrespectfully taking up pan-Indigenous ideas that are disconnected from the contexts in which they have been developed. During the field school we are offered specific teachings in specific ecologies. It is important to be respectful of where and how Indigenous pedagogies are offered. Without being in relationship with Indigenous people and without following their lead, we are likely to be unaware of the protocols and tacit infrastructures that are to be respected along with the teachings themselves. It is important that we respect relationally accountable ways of engaging with traditional knowledge, sacred knowledge, and the specific context in which knowledge is offered.

Furthermore, it is important to realize how conceptual models and frameworks used by academics such as myself to explain theoretical relationships can become abstracted from lived experience and specific contexts. The risk is that models and frameworks can then become not just imposed on Indigenous communities, but eventually taken up and reified by Indigenous communities as their own. It is ethically imperative that I do not project my theoretical frameworks onto the communities or people with whom I work, no matter how useful they are to me. When these ideas replace the unique traditional knowledge that comes from a community, it is a form of perpetuating the epistemic violence that is a part of colonialism. Evelyn explains how this happens with the example of the “medicine wheel”. The medicine wheel is not a universal concept, although it is often universally applied by health organizations to represent an Indigenous way of thinking about health. Evelyn explains how she was taught to think of health through an understanding of the poles used in the structure of the Bighouse. She worries that the traditional knowledge, found in the teachings of the four corner poles and the *Sisiutl* cross beam, will be replaced in her community by the teachings of the medicine wheel.

I have a responsibility to engage in transformative reconciliation work that is relationally accountable to the places and the people with whom I am connected. This responsibility is exemplified by the comments of a student following the field school experience:

I believe that the gift we were given is rare and special, and that it was given to us by the people of Wuikinuxv, not lightly, but with the responsibility to carry it with us into our practice. No book or history lesson could have touched me so deeply. What is our social conscience? Our ignorance is not excusable, our silence stings (Fraser, Tate & Bowers, 2008)

It is our responsibility to follow the lead of Indigenous people and, in doing so, to learn how to humbly and courageously assist with carrying the burden of truth and reconciliation.

Following the lead of Indigenous people means having an open mind and an open heart. I am always learning. I am uncovering my blind spots and seeing things with new eyes. As explained by Gaudry and Lorenz (2018), following the lead of and learning from Indigenous people requires academics to confront their own ignorance. This is the respect of being a good learner. I have been taught that showing courage and integrity in the face of my own vulnerability is respectful. When I am following the lead of Indigenous people, I can use my voice in a respectful way. A respectful way that understands the limits of my knowledge and also is ethically accountable for the power that is afforded to me in my role as a nurse educator. When I walk carefully with these tensions, when I know who I am and can hold space for others to be themselves, I can help to carry the burden of truth and reconciliation in a good way. This is how I try to serve the gifts I have been given on the path towards transformative reconciliation.

6.3. Orienting Through Relationships

The second teaching I have been gifted as a pathway towards transformative reconciliation in nursing education is to orient myself through all my relationships—including human and more than human relationships. I have heard over and over again how you can't learn this from a textbook. You must learn it through your experiences, through viscerally feeling your connection to all things, by being in relationship. As discussed in Chapter Three, learning with, in, and from the land is transformative. We are changing more than our way of thinking. We are changing our way of being; the heart and soul of who we are. The land is our most important teacher in this work, always.

We have yet to learn how to include land based ecologies and pedagogies in typical nursing curriculum. However, the more we build in connection with the land, the

more it will teach us what we need to know. As I was unweaving and reweaving my blanket in Chapter Two I came to appreciate how profoundly Nurses have been subjected to cognitive imperialism through the advancement of a medical model and science based systems over all other ways of knowing and knowledges. I began to see how in modern institutions we have been broken down into pieces and expected to work like an efficient machine. Our value has become measured by the sum of our parts, the tasks that we do and the outcomes we have. We have been organized into hierarchies and housed in institutions. I began to despair when I saw how we have been literally torn apart and contained. However, I also saw great hope and potential in the foundations of nurses' ways of knowing and relationally ethical practices that have remained central to nursing philosophy. I believe we have the potential to heal ourselves and serve our communities by choosing to reconnect with nursing theory in a deeply relational way through the human and more than human world. What I have experienced during the field school through Indigenous land based pedagogies is a way to reconnect ourselves as nurses to our healing potential. We remember with our hearts why we want to be nurses. We reconnect with our ancient selves, no matter where we are from or how disconnected from our Indigenous roots we have become. We reconnect with a universal and ancient healing wisdom that was once connected to the land and whole. We learn what our gifts are and how to put them into service for our communities

Orienting through relationships is essential to the field school experience. It is not always easy for this to happen when a course is offered through Euro-western academic institutions with their own set of assumptions, policies and procedures. I am continuously learning, alongside the other people involved with the field school, how to navigate the tensions between orientating ourselves to the academic institution and orientating ourselves with Indigenous people, communities and pedagogies. In 2007, after the first field school experience, I described this as being much like building sandcastles that can be washed away by the tide. In 2007, I wrote:

As a nursing instructor I felt accountable for the success of this course, to the organizations within the community, and to the individuals involved. I found myself caught between the academic world of evaluation, standards and measurable learning outcomes, and the need to value other ways of knowing and doing. My role, as I saw it, became a crafter of learning spaces where other voices could be heard, and individuals would feel safe to examine their own cultural assumptions and identify their own learning. I felt my own vulnerability in the process of letting go of my assumptions

about my role as a nurse educator. I found myself in a continual process of building structure with the community, the organizations, and the individuals involved with what we would be doing and learning. At the same time, I was tearing down those same structures because of the assumptions and expectations of learning embedded in them. It was more like building with wet sand than strong beams. (Fraser & Voyageur, 2017, p. 6)

Letting go of an externally pre-set agenda has presented its challenges, not only for me, but for all those involved with the field school. The Euro-western world view embedded in our existing curriculum assumes that we know what will happen and when it will happen. This presents a tension with co-creating a curriculum that is oriented towards the land and that is in relationship with the people. A community member described it this way:

It is sometimes hard to figure out what can be spontaneous and what needs to be structured for the field school. It always seems to work out but we keep trying to think of more things to give back to the nurses, so they have good learning and experiences. We try to be caring and responsive to whatever need is present. (Fraser & Tate, 2018)

I am learning how to dance with the curriculum in a way that is oriented towards the relationships we are immersed in. What the field school offers, through being in relationship with the land, Indigenous people and each other is an opportunity to experience the sacred as we dance synchronously and synergistically together. I have learned that when we do this well together we are “sand shifters”.

Understanding how an orientation to relationship with Indigenous communities is sand shifting is a teaching I had from ?eh ?eh naa-tuu-kwiss, Marlene Atleo, (2020), who is a member of the Ahousaht First Nation. What she described as sand shifters are people in the interface between Indigenous communities and Euro-western oriented institutions who are working towards transformative reconciliation. In their relationships they move grains of sand one by one. While they work the tide comes in and the tide goes out and everything is changed. However, the sand shifters keep going, tirelessly moving each grain of sand. Marlene also described that there is a role in the Nuuchah-nulth traditions known as “Beach Keepers”. It is important to explain that I do not have a full understanding of the cultural protocols around Beach Keepers. What I understood from Marlene’s description of the role of Beach Keepers, in relation to outsiders coming into the community, was a useful idea for me. On the beach are the community Beach

Keepers or the key community people who make contact with those of us who come from outside the community. In this metaphor, the role of Beach Keeper symbolizes the way any Indigenous community member chooses to engage with the people who come to the community. It represents the responsibility and accountability Indigenous people have for making sure that whatever comes in on the tide is in the community's best interests. Beach Keepers are also accountable to their community for sending whatever is not useful to the community out with the tide. For those of us from outside the community, the important thing to know is that this work, often largely invisible to us, is always being done. Meanwhile sand shifters from inside and outside the community are working in the intertidal zone. We work together in the interface between the institution's and the community's protocols, standards and ways of doing things. It is a dynamic role, influenced by changing relationships, both on the individual and institutional levels. To do this, sand shifters and Beach Keepers are working with understandings of synchronicity and synergy. I see us working together, diligently shifting sand and doing what Nepo (2019) describes in the quote "Become a shore and against all likelihood your voice will rise like gulls that ride the waves (Nepo, 2019, p. 135). I have come to understand that working in the intertidal zone with synchronicity and synergy is sacred. It is the experience of being relationally oriented that leads us towards "becoming the shore".

Synchronicity is about being in touch with the when and what of how things are done, or the natural rhythms in the community. What I have been taught is that these rhythms are based on the tide, the weather, and the goings-on with the land. Instead of being in sync with the clock, those of us from institutions need to learn a new kind of synchronicity that is in touch with the natural world and the relationships we have with each other. I have noticed how Indigenous leaders will wait for the right energy and for the right people to be present before we begin the formal part of a meeting. There is a great deal of respect for relationships with each other and the environment in this type of synchronicity. As *noxola* Paul Willie (2007) taught us at the field school, when and how you show up is about being respectful of all these things. It is not about being late. I remember once how, during the field school, a group of students did not arrive on time for our opening circle. I was getting anxious and feeling responsible for what I saw as being a potential lack of respect. When they arrived about fifteen minutes later, according to the clock, we were to discover how they had waited in their accommodation

for a grizzly bear to move on before venturing outside. Paul, with his characteristic good humour, often announces my arrival when I am running late with the words, “Here is the late Joanna Fraser.” I can’t help but think how an orientation to the clock above the environment in these circumstances could make such a proclamation all too drastically real. Synchronicity means that we need to orient ourselves to our relationships with each other and the land rather than a preset agenda that is oriented to a clock.

In the field school, the land and place need to be as much a part of what will happen and when, as the people are. Going up the river by boat must be coordinated with weather patterns and tides. Harvesting food, picking berries, or looking for medicinal plants are all dependent on what is happening seasonally with the land. If we ask someone to share cedar bark weaving with us, they need time to prepare. Not only must the bark already be gathered in the right season and available for our use, it must be soaked overnight. If someone is willing to take us on a field trip, or to come and talk with us to share their knowledge, we must respect their time. Many people are navigating a job that is oriented to the clock, as well as their many roles within the community. As much as we need to communicate what is going on, and to be clear with people about what we are asking them, we cannot be in control of an agenda. While some things need planning, others require spontaneity. What will happen and when, is always dependent on the land and in relationship with the people. Synchronicity requires paying attention to the ebb and flow of the community. During the field school I need to slow down and be in sync with what is happening around me. I am reminded of the understanding that “here we go with the tides not by the clock”.

Synergy is also an important part of orienting myself through relationships. It requires a desire to be tuned into the who, how and why of things in the community or to the cultural norms. A synergistic relationship is at the heart of the healing potential of nursing praxis. To seek synergy is to seek the healing potential of orienting towards a holistic relationship. When synergy is present, I feel joy, when it is absent, I feel apprehension and unease. The stories I have shared in Chapter Five show how I am moving continuously between these experiences as I navigate my relationships during the field school. It is the feeling of disease that can settle in my gut as in the Wolf story on page 133.

Over the years of conducting the field school, we have developed synergistic ways of doing things that integrate institutional policies with the community's existing standards and protocols. Evelyn has taught us how to adapt our role as visiting learners from an academic institution to what is expected of being good guests in a community. For example, we have learned many things about our cultural assumptions and blind spots through gift giving. Every year we are guided in hosting a community feast to thank the community members for all of the learning and support they have given us. The first year I had prepared for this by bringing gifts and honorariums that were supplied by the college. What I hadn't prepared for was the deep sense of gratitude we would all experience and with it the desire to give something back in a more personal way. Some students went as far as having flowers flown in that they could give to their host families. Now we prepare ahead of time by suggesting that students bring gifts with them. During the field school Evelyn sits with us to help us organize and understand our role in the community feast and gift giving. We prepare by placing everything we have with us on a table and then we begin to fill gift bags and write cards for our hosts, teachers, guides and Elders. The remaining gifts are put in two bins, one for adults and one for children. Evelyn guides us in organizing the gifts and also in how we go about giving them out.

In academic institutions we determine the size of an honorarium by the credentials of a speaker and the time they spent speaking. I have learned that remuneration for Indigenous community members through honorariums and gifts are not solely based on the time or effort that we have seen being spent for our benefit. Gifts are not considered to be transactional interactions based on material assumptions such as the worth or economic value of a relationship. There are many other interrelated factors and cultural protocols that we need to learn. A gift economy comes with a "bundle of responsibilities" attached to the relationships we have (Kimmerer, 2013, p. 28).

One learning we had is that instead of bringing gifts independently to give to our host family, we would give them communally. Giving gifts in the Bighouse, as part of a ceremony that acknowledges everybody, has far greater impact. Giving gifts from all of us, rather than from one individual to another, acknowledges the relational aspects of our learning. We have also learned to respect the community protocols by giving gifts to the knowledge keepers. It may be that we have not met a knowledge keeper while we are there, but we respect that their knowledge is embedded in the community and in the learnings we have received while we are there. One time we carried the bins around

letting people choose what they would like from them. Evelyn explained how each gift should be given to a specific person with intention. Each gift is also received with the same intention not to be returned or exchanged. There are many cultural nuances and protocols we learn by participating in a gift giving ceremony. I have over the years found myself being guided in learning how to be a good guest. Each year I have been given more and more responsibility for doing so in a way that is in synergy with the community.

Finding ways to integrate institutional ways of doing things into the community's way of doing things within a contemporary context is important. This is the essential work that Beach Keepers and sand shifters continue to do. The pathway is not always clear as in many cases it has not been walked on before. Together we are finding respectful ways of being in a relationship. I have learned that there are both formal and informal processes to attend to. In the formal relationship, I begin each year with a letter addressed to the chief and council. I wonder about how this connects with the traditional and contemporary protocols that would be expected when one community wanted to come and visit another community. An important part of the communication in the formal letter is that we have done our work to prepare to come with open minds and hearts. We come knowing the truth of colonization and its impacts on health. I also need to let the community leaders know why we are coming and what we are hoping to do while we are there. This must be communicated carefully so that our request to learn from the community, in a way that is in sync with the community, is clear. During the field school there are important protocols for acknowledging and thanking the community for having us there. Each year I learn more from the community about how to be in sync with the formal expectations and protocols that are expected of a good guest. Each year I have been given more responsibility for upholding community protocols. Now, when we are in Wuikinuxv territory, the Bighouse becomes transformed from the Wuikinuxv house of Nuakawa to the University of Nuakawa. In Chief Frank Johnson's words:

I can't stop smiling about how good the field school has been. I tossed the ball at that conference and NIC caught it and carried it with our help. I want to thank the instructor and elder from NIC for catching the ball and running with it. *Gianakaci* [thank you] to those nurses who attended and graduated from the University of Nuagawa! (Fraser & Tate, 2018).

Through our formal relationships we are learning (and in some cases developing) new and respectful ways of being together.

The informal ways of being in community are often more subtle and difficult to describe. They are the ways that we are in sync or not. I find myself genuinely coming to know people, to be interested in people's lives, and to feel a part of the community. This relationship goes beyond that which is typical of a professional working in a community. It challenges the colonial assumptions related to separating your work from who you are and your profession from your friendships. Being in sync with people in the community means being willing to share my whole and vulnerable self with people in order to develop authentic relationships. By orienting through our relationships, we have begun to be more accountable to the community for what we are doing there. This has taken time. I am developing my understanding of the synchronicities and synergies of being a good guest in the community.

Visualizing my role as working together with community members on a beach to move grains of sand has helped me to visualize the sacred and shifting nature of being in relationship with the community. Everything is in a process of shifting each time the tide comes in and each time the tide goes out. Each time I come to the community the people I see will be different, the realities of the community will be different, the priorities people have will have changed. I will be different, everything will change. We are often expected to think of "the community" and the institution we represent as static entities. We talk about things such as having approval from the community or the best interests of the community as if they are tangible and cohesive goals. We are all working within the shifting sands and changing tides of our relationships. The process is rhythmic and continuous. It requires me to let go of a preset agenda and tune into the ebbs and flows of the community. There are sand shifters who pay attention to the patterns and Beach Keepers that keep us on the right track. Orientation through relationships means seeking synchronicity and synergy in the work we do together towards transformative reconciliation. When I am orienting through the relationship, I feel a deep gratitude for all my relations, the human and more than human teachers that help me find my way. I experience a state of joy and awe at the beauty of the path we are on and the strength of those who help to carry the burden. In these moments I feel connected to the sacred through the ecology of our relationships. I am present to all our *yiyakwima* (gifts from the Creator) and I feel connected to serving a purpose far greater than myself. Being in relationship with gratitude and joy is the source of mutual healing. This is when I know I am on the right path towards transformative reconciliation.

6.4. Seeking Out Wellness

The third important orientation that is an essential aspect of the field school experience, is to always seek out wellness. It is easy to lose my way on the path towards transformative reconciliation by looking for what needs to be fixed, instead of seeing what is working well. We will not find the path towards transformative reconciliation by looking for weakness instead of strength or illness instead of wellness. As a result of colonization, nurses have an ingrained mindset towards addressing health-related (or, more accurately, illness-related) needs. The community has come to expect that and to see the nurse's role as limited to addressing an individual's health or illness needs. The field school experience endeavors to focus on the strengths of the community and to see people and their relationships as whole. Like the teachings of the *Sisiutl*, about living with paradox and complexity, seeking wellness does not imply that we only see what is healthy and ignore what is not. It means that we seek to understand individuals and communities through their strengths, resilience, and capacity for actualizing wellness. Two learnings related to seeking out wellness are seeing the community as the source of wellness and seeing Indigenous pedagogy as a way towards wellness.

What we notice during the field school is that the health center is always a bustling hive of activity. There is much more that goes on there than appointments with visiting health care providers. One student asked me why it is called a health center. She was challenging the idea that health services (and by association a focus on disease) should take up such a central space in the community. Why isn't it a community center or, even better, some other name that comes from the language of this place? This student was able to see the community as a source of wellness rather than as a consumer of health services.

When we engage in the field school within the community, we are there to be in a relationship with the community and to see the community as the source for wellness. We are taught that health is about learning to be human and learning to live as an integral part of the whole ecosystem. I remember how Chief Frank Johnson (2009) once came to talk to us about the eulachon summit he had recently attended. The *dzaxwān* (eulachon) is a small oily fish used to make *tl'ina* (eulachon grease). Over the previous few years, the *dzaxwān* had stopped coming to spawn in many of the coastal rivers. Frank described how he was working with other Nations and organizations on the coast

to understand why and what could be done to regenerate the *dzaxwān* run. We learned about how the *dzaxwān* run, even in recent times, would bring people back to the home territories to harvest and process the *tl'ina*. We would hear stories about how everyone, from the young to the old, would play a role in this process. The *dzaxwān* run has always been a time of great connection, learning and sharing. It is a time of gaining prosperity and health for the community. Sitting in the Bighouse listening to the origin story of the Wuikinuxv and Dzawada'enuxw, we would come to understand that the people lived here on the bank of the Wanock and Gwa'yi rivers because of the presence of the *dzaxwān*. It was what kept them alive and well through the winter. The shelters and grease bins are still waiting on the side of the Gwa'yi river for the *dzaxwān* to return. When *tl'ina* is shared at the thank you feast, we would see how precious it still is especially to the Elders. We come to understand how something as seemingly insignificant as a small oily fish can have deep and resonating impacts on the cultural health of a whole community. It is in these moments that we feel our accountability to each other and the land. We see that when things are out of balance globally, the effects are local and personal. The teachings of the land and the Bighouse resonate in our hearts as we understand the meaning of "All my Relations". As Richard Wagamese (2016) explains in his book *Embers: One Ojibway's Meditations*:

I've been considering the phrase "all my relations" for some time now. It's hugely important. It's our saving grace in the end. It points to the truth that we are all related, that we are all connected, that we all belong to each other. The most important word is "all". Not just those who look like me, sing like me, speak like me, dance like me, ALL my relations. That means every person, just as it means every rock, mineral, blade of grass, and creature. We live because everything else does. If we were to choose collectively to live that teaching, the energy of our change of consciousness would heal each of us – and heal the planet. (p. 36)

The experience of the field school is an opportunity to witness *akeialxa* (culture as a foundation for wellness). We see how the community, in its relationship with the land and each other, is a source of healing and wellness.

Seeing the community as the source of wellness often means, for me, getting out of the way of what students are learning from being in the community. As a nurse and an educator, I am in a position to inadvertently perpetuate the dependency on outside experts for all health related needs. As explained in Chapter Two, this is a sad legacy of colonialism. Much like the teaching I was gifted about digging for clams (shared on

pages 55 and 56), we can find other ways that do not perpetuate the idea of the community as needy and dependent on outsider solutions and resources. During the field school, we spend very little time engaged with health providers, visiting the health center, or learning from the nurses and other health professionals about their role in the community. Instead we may visit the daycare and the schools or spend time on the land. We may learn about health issues, health services and the lack of access that community members experience; however, we learn through the stories that are shared with us in the context of the community's resilience and strength in regaining its own knowledge and autonomy for healing and wellness. This is very different from a typical preceptorship learning model where a student nurse is placed in a First Nations community under the supervision of a practicing nurse. It is also different from a community development model where learners support the community by taking on a project or addressing a community-identified issue. As Paul Willie (2017) has told us, "You will lose the energy of your own humility if you do acts of service while you are here." We purposefully avoid taking on the expectations of what it is to be a nurse so that we can experience the vulnerability of confronting our own ignorance.

A common experience for Indigenous nursing students who attend the field school is feeling a sense of pride in seeing Indigenous people and their ways of knowing being recognized by nurses and nursing education as a source of strength, resilience and knowledge. A student once expressed to me the trauma that she experienced from reading in textbooks and learning in classrooms about the inequities faced by Indigenous people and the resulting health-related issues they experience. The health of Indigenous people is often taught from a deficit perspective. When this student tried to present another perspective and share what she knew from her relatives about wellness, she felt ostracized and alone in a class that did not understand or appreciate the type of knowledge she had to share.

During the field school, we purposefully turn our attention towards learning how the community cares for itself. This may include participating in healing ceremonies and gathering medicinal plants. It is, however, so much more than this. We may have the opportunity to witness how community coming together in ceremony to celebrate a transition, to mourn a loss or to right a wrong, is a powerful form of healing. When these opportunities are offered to us, we learn to experience and appreciate them within the ecology that they are gifted. Every field school experience offers a unique opportunity to

experience culture as the foundation of health just by being immersed in the community on a daily basis and through intentional Indigenous pedagogies. Often we will walk around the village looking for specific plants. Evelyn will guide us in how to find and collect the plant medicines she is looking for. Sometimes we will go with other knowledge holders. The way we learn is by watching and doing. We are not told that we must do it this way or that; we are not told to be grateful to the plant; and we are not told what the plant can teach us. I am always struck by the healing potential within the process of gathering medicines and sharing medicines. It is in being immersed in the process that we are offered the opportunity of having gratitude for who and where they come from. Once, as we were walking through the rich forest looking for *'mumtāni* (balsam bark), a student exclaimed with such wonderment, "I have never looked so closely at a tree!" What we witness is the respect and gratitude that our teachers have for the plant medicines around them. Later as we sew what we have picked into medicine pouches with Evelyn we may hear stories about what they are used for and we may learn about some of the protocols that go along with using them. We see how medicine is so much more than just what is in a plant. We start to glimpse how there is a whole process of ecological reciprocity and communal effort that goes into the healing relationship developed with plant medicines. One knowledge keeper told us how the land is so in sync with our health that, when you are out of balance, the plants you need to restore your balance will start growing around where you live. What I have learned is a deep respect for the people who hold traditional healing knowledge. What I have gained is an understanding of how much more there is to that knowledge than the pharmaceutical components of a plant.

The field school offers nurses an opportunity to open our hearts and minds to another worldview. We learn to be thoughtful (relationally accountable) about what we learn, how we learn it, and what is appropriate for us to share with others. We develop a great respect for Indigenous knowledge and its relationship to wellness. It is in understanding this relationship, not in the specific aspects of what is experienced in ceremony or what we learned on the land, that we transform our practices as nurses so we can be useful in serving all communities.

While it is important that we are seeking to learn from the community about wellness, I am also aware that there is a risk that seeking out wellness can also highlight how many people within the community feel the loss and the associated shame of being

disconnected from their traditional knowledge and language. If we come to the community to offer our services as an expert who hides behind a professional mantle of knowledge, we will inevitably increase the ingrained feelings of shame and dependence that have been instilled in the community through colonization. In order to be relationally accountable to the community, we need to let go of the savior complex that has been doggedly instilled in us as nurses. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2020) says, “It is important to be informed by more than good intentions. Don’t try to save us. Don’t try and save us from ourselves” (p. 50). If we engage in our relationships as vulnerable and imperfect human beings who do not have all the answers but are also there to learn, we can share our healing potential with each other. As the well-known quotation attributed to Muri poet and activist Lilla Watson says, “If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. If you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.” I have witnessed how the *ni noxola* have guided specific people in the community to believe in themselves and to learn how and when to share their knowledge. Our presence in the community, if it is done in a good way, can join with the community in mutual healing and transformative reconciliation. Paul Willie (2007) invites us to “come and have a relationship with the community, don’t come as a nurse first”. We were told to remember that the community we were learning in was not created by crisis even though what they experience most often now is the community coming together to address a crisis. As nurses we need to remember that it is the relationship itself that has the potential to be health promoting. During the field school we see community as a source of wellness and a mystery to be experienced rather than a problem to be solved.

I have also heard from community members that there is some reciprocity in these teaching/ learning relationships. Community members have found that the field school offers them the opportunity to revitalize their knowledge through the sharing of it. A community member, who has been involved with the field school since its beginning, shared that:

Culture is the basis of wellness and the field school evolved based on the premise that one becomes a better health care provider by being a better human. Over the 10 years I have evolved too and so have other community members. Everyone learns and evolves and it has helped the community focus on the healthy aspects of our community. A challenge is to keep being focused on our strengths not our deficits to keep moving forward and

I think the relationship building with the nurses helps that, our strengths get reinforced. (Fraser & Tate, 2018)

We have witnessed community members developing a belief in the value of their own knowledge and their ability to heal themselves. Remaining focused on wellness is an important aspect of the field school for healing.

Finally, what I have come to learn and to witness during the field school is how Indigenous pedagogy in itself is a way to wellness. Indigenous pedagogy, as described in Chapter 3, is connected to land, story, relationships and ceremony in ways that are specific to each community. Indigenous pedagogy offers, in Kimmerer's (2013) words, "a pharmacopeia of healing stories that allow us to imagine a different relationship in which people and land are good medicine for each other" (p. x). I have seen how the most profound learning happens from being on the land and listening to stories. Once, when we were standing in a circle learning about the healing qualities of stinging nettle, I was surprised to learn that some students immediately touched the plant not realizing what it was. The simple shock of a stinging nettle can be a lesson in humility and the relationship between harm and healing. I have witnessed how, as Evelyn taught us, "learning comes naturally during times of busy hands". I have seen how people experience a profound transformation through telling their own stories and hearing the stories of others. When people are moved to tears, the *ni noxsola* thank them and teach us all to feel gratitude for how they have shared themselves with us. They teach us not to take the important energy of the tears away by hugging or consoling. I have experienced the wonder of healing my own pain through participating in ceremonies. The stories I have shared in Chapter Five are all stories of the power that Indigenous pedagogy has to heal. I experienced the healing potential of Indigenous pedagogy when I reconciled my relationship with my maternal grandmother as shared in the Buffalo story on page 138.

What I have come to understand and experience is that Indigenous pedagogy inherently values everyone's life story. We learn at the field school to examine our stories in relationship to the stories of others without the good or bad label that colonial discourse has tended to ascribe to us. At the field school we have the opportunity for deep relational engagement that helps each of us share and reflect on the complexity of our cultural identities. What we discover is what has been pointed out by Greenwood (2019) as the healing effects of "place conscious learning". Greenwood describes how

“[w]e need also to apprentice ourselves to [places] directly, and through this apprenticeship learn to care for our mutual wellbeing (p. 365). What I have witnessed during the field school is a universal and cosmic healing energy born from our relationships when we trust in the wisdom of Indigenous knowledge and the land.

When we participate in the field school we are learning through ceremony in a way that is connected to spirit that many of us have not experienced before. Each day begins with a prayer of hope, often spoken in Kwakwaka'wakw while standing around the fire in the Bighouse. Together we share our intentions for how we want to be with each other and what we hope will come from all our relationships each day and in the future. During the daily closing circle, we share our learnings and our gratitude for the many gifts we have received. We experience how ceremony is built into our daily life; from feeling gratitude for a visit from a whale on our way into the community, to leaving the Bighouse on our last night with full bellies and hearts. I remember one year, during the field school, I walked home just as dusk was settling into the village. It had been a particularly full evening of celebration and food, followed by a rousing game of *lahal*³. Having just said goodbye to those of our group who were staying in homes up the river, I turned to follow those who were heading home downriver. The steady rhythm of the water could be heard flowing beside us but everything else was quiet. No one spoke, no birds chattered and everything was calm. Instantly, I was overcome with joy, I felt a profound sense of being in the right place at the right time. I felt that I belonged. In that moment I knew I was part of an ancient parade of people. We walked together on that small dirt road, each of us feeling the flow of the river gently and persistently guiding us home. This river, like rivers all throughout the world, has always been there, moving through the landscape, carving out paths, guiding us home. Indigenous pedagogy is, in itself, a way to wellness for ourselves, our communities, our institutions, and our planet. It is a way for us to find our homecoming story (Greenwood 2019).

What I have witnessed during the field school is that Indigenous pedagogy is uplifting, holistic, place based, imbued with ceremony and embedded in the day-to-day life of the community. I remember an instance when a man from the village, who was just coming back from a day of fishing, came up to the students and me as we walked

³ Lahal is a guessing game involving two teams sitting across from each other. Traditionally played with bones.

down the dirt road. He greeted us in a friendly manner and with curiosity about what we were doing in the village. Then he asked us, “How are you looking after yourself while you are here?” I wondered how often nurses are asked this question. I also realized how important it is for us to know the answer. As we have been taught, and as explained in Chapter Three, looking after each other and the ecosystem is a primary concern of Indigenous pedagogy. I have found that, when working in an Indigenous community, you are not just a nurse from nine to five. Instead you are yourself, always. The community cares for your well-being, just as you are expected to care for theirs. This does not mean that you give too much of yourself and become exhausted, it means that you hold onto yourself and become strong. During the field school the students learn this dance, the dance of becoming a healer by being in a sacred, synergistic and synchronistic relationship with a community. Like the tides it is a movement in and out of relationships in a constantly changing landscape. When we seek out wellness through our relationships with each other and the land our dance is full of hope, gratitude and joy. We become part of a sacred dance that is timeless and universal.

6.5. Experiencing Discord and Singing in Tune

The role I have as a nurse educator during the field school is to stay out of the way of letting Indigenous pedagogy happen. This means navigating through, and pushing back against, Euro-western educational assumptions in every aspect of the educational experience. Euro- western assumptions of how things will be done during the field school come from the education institution, as well as from my own, the students, and the community members’ ingrained expectations. Many of these assumptions are so ingrained and accepted as essential institutional policies and procedures that it is difficult to see that they are even there, let alone interfering with the potential of Indigenous pedagogical processes. Some of the biggest challenges for me can be found in addressing practices related to risk management, academic integrity, and reciprocal partnerships.

The field school would not happen without some risk. There are inherent risks involved with opening ourselves to new experiences in new environments, however the learning can be very profound. My role as a nursing instructor is to navigate the physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and financial elements of risk associated with the field school. As I have learned through the teachings of the *Sisiutl*, about paradox and complexity,

that we can embrace vulnerability and safety together. When we go to the community, we soon realize how dependent our safety is on the knowledge and the resources of the people who live there. We are traveling across remote and unpredictable terrain by road and water. There have been some years where changes in the weather have meant we needed to stay in the community longer than planned. One year we were evacuated by helicopter alongside community members because of a flood. The natural world can offer threats that we are unaccustomed to, such as being in close proximity to grizzly bears. There was a time when we walked down the road with a grizzly bear following in the bushes beside us. It was late in the evening after we had shared some time around a fire with some of the community's children. It was the children who guided us together in walking down the middle of the road to safety. We all felt our vulnerability. Being exposed to these unfamiliar risks is a juxtaposition for nurses who work in a hospital environment. In the hospital patient's safety depends on nurses and their knowledge. In a remote community it is the other way around. Field school participants feel their humility as the tables are turned on them. We learn to face our own vulnerability in order to experience the full potential of the field school experience.

My role as the course instructor in managing safety and risks is complicated. Often the safety related decisions I need to make have both financial and social implications for the community members. At times, the existing institutional policies that I am accountable for are made without attention to the unique contexts that we are exposed to during the field school. Safety protocols that are urban and institutionally centered can have hidden risks and unintentional consequences for remote communities. For example, hiring professional drivers to access remote communities has added costs and as a result added barriers for students being able to participate. When we are billeted with community members, we might be in people's homes that do not meet the same safety standards that we are used. Sometimes this is a result of different values and sometimes it is also due to systemic inequities that result in adequate housing options not being available. In many cases the communities do not experience the same basic services and community infrastructure that we are used to having in more central locations. Institutional policies and guidelines around risk management are often based on centralized and urban realities. When risk management decisions are made, is anyone thinking about the long-term effects of not having nursing students access remote communities? What are the potential harms of disconnecting nursing education from remote communities and the Indigenous people who live there?

Safety discourses that are focused on centralized, urban and institutional concerns can have unintended and long-term consequences for communities and people who live outside of these geographical and organizational norms.

In order to be accountable for students' safety and for the institutional safety protocols, I do house inspections and check in with students regularly. I make sure that everyone wears a Personal Flotation Device (PDF) on the water. I do as much as possible to prepare students about the risks in advance and I have them sign liability waivers. At times I have needed to make last minute changes in accommodation, moving students from one home to another because of safety concerns. These decisions have both financial and social implications for the community members involved. The importance of communicating these decisions respectfully, while understanding the implications of perpetuating dominant relations and historical trauma (shaming), is critical.

Many of the risk management decisions that I need to make also have financial and liability implications for the institution. An example of this was related to the decision to make the field school a theoretical course rather than a practical one. The need to distinguish between the two types of courses is an example of the artificial constructs of Euro-westernized educational institutions that have little relevance for Indigenous pedagogies. The learning is embodied, experiential, and holistic as discussed in Chapter Two and Three. The decision to structure a course as theoretical or practical has cost implications for the institution. Practical courses have smaller instructor to student ratios and higher workload hours attached to the instructor's time. Also, in order to have the course considered a practical course, we need to establish an affiliation agreement with each practice setting. The affiliation agreement is a legal document that lays out rights and responsibilities between the college and a practice agency. It covers things such as privacy and confidentiality, conflict resolution, suspension and removal, insurance coverage, and termination. When we considered asking the community to sign an affiliation agreement, we were unable to resolve many of these issues because of the neo-liberal Euro-western assumptions embedded in them. One of the unresolvable tensions was around risk management and insurance coverage issues. The community did not hold any applicable insurance coverage. In the end it was decided that this course would be a theoretical course, so it did not require an affiliation agreement. This was a practical solution at the time, even though whether the course was considered

theoretical or practical did not change the actual risks to the participants (students, community members, and faculty) during the field school. Since the original offering of this course we have worked with the Provincial Post-Secondary Risk Management team to develop affiliation agreements that take the context of the communities we work with into consideration.

Institutional risk management policies that do not take into account the context of remote communities often leave me with little guidance when I am in the community. The sustainability and success of the field schools depends on the institution being willing to take on some of the risk management and financial burden inherent in this type of learning. This becomes increasingly challenging as academic intuitions become dependent on a business model mindset that promotes risk aversion and fiscal scarcity. Committing to truth and reconciliation will require a shift in organizational values. It will require academic institutions to value the inherent benefits of land-based learning, especially those benefits that come from being situated in a remote community. Sharing my voice is about living up to and speaking up for the commitment to truth and reconciliation within nursing education. As a nurse educator I see this as essential in providing an education that contributes to wellness in all communities and for all people.

The second area I find myself navigating, in order to get out of the way of Indigenous-led pedagogy, is related to policies that support the academic integrity of theoretical courses within the institution. An example of how Institutional processes and educational assumptions can get in the way of Indigenous pedagogies happened early in the development of the field school. Standard academic policies around quality assurance require accredited courses to have approved course descriptions with clearly outlined learning outcomes, instructional methods and assessment measures. When we first presented the course for approval at the North Island College Curriculum Committee and the Education Council in 2007 (both of which are bodies responsible for quality assurance and course approvals) we met with resistance. There was a lack of understanding of Indigenous pedagogical processes and the course did not fit within many of the established parameters for course delivery. It took a great deal of time and work to explain the value and importance of maintaining the pedagogical integrity of the course and the communities' control over how and when it was delivered. Since 2007 there has been increased understanding of the inherent value of Indigenous pedagogical processes. There have been subsequent courses approved throughout the college that

incorporate various forms of Indigenous pedagogy. We are learning to navigate the tensions and the hegemony inherent in academic institutions, but we still have a long way to go in order to value and promote authentic forms of Indigenous pedagogy.

For me, one of the biggest tensions that remains with having this course approved by the institution as a theoretical course rather than a practical course, is the requirement and expectation that each student receives a grade. Many students find the experience of learning without any clear, pre-established criteria for success given to them by the instructor to be one of the most challenging aspects of participating in the field school. After years of receiving a Euro-western education, students have grown to expect that their learning will be rewarded by a grade that measures their success against the success of other students in the course. Shawn Wilson observed:

If the goal of education is to provide Western qualifications then it might seem reasonable to use Western methods of assessing it. But if the goal is Indigenist qualifications, then you don't need Western qualifications. Instead, if you're studying Indigenist ways of knowing, you need Indigenist assessment methods. (Adams et al, 2015, p. 23)

There are many other ways of knowing and learning that occur during the field school. Steinhauer and Lemouche (2018) explain:

with Indigenous program design, delivery and evaluation processes understanding is based in meaning as opposed to measurement and in process as opposed to outcome – and it is in these differences that the expectation of different and better outcomes will result. (p. 83)

The participants receive feedback and assessment on their learning throughout the field school in ways that are consistent with Indigenous pedagogy. It happens in the circle, it happens in ceremony, it happens in reflection, and even the land gives us feedback.

What I have found is that requiring a grade for the field school gets in the way of developing an authentic and vulnerable co-learner relationship with students. The expectations that come with grading also creates a competitive relationship between students. I remember one year a group of students voiced dissatisfaction with another group who had not joined in the ceremonial bath in the river. Their complaint was that the students who did not participate should not get full credit for the course. Sadly, assigning a grade no matter how carefully it is done can reduce all the rich learning a student may have to that which can be measured by a single number or letter. It predetermines what type of learning is valuable and what is not. This creates a lack of

internal motivation and a lack of trust in the student's own agency to determine how and what they need to learn. All of this is destructive to the relational learning that happens through Indigenous pedagogical processes.

I have used a variety of methods for coming up with a grade that is as congruent as possible with Indigenous pedagogical values. This has included methods of self grading and ungrading (Blum, 2021). The closest I could find is from Zander and Zander's (2000) ideas of giving an "A". In this case an "A is not an expectation to live up to but a possibility to live into" (p. 26). They go on to explain that " When you give an A , you find yourself speaking to people not from a place of measuring how they stack up against your standards, but from a place of respect that gives them room to realize themselves" (Zander & Zander, 2000). No matter what methods I try, some students are unable to trust that I don't have hidden criteria from which I am evaluating their learning. In some ways they are right, because no matter how hard I try to keep the institutional pressures from driving the learning experience, in the end, because this is a theoretical course, I must put a number in a box and a letter beside a name. This is one "buffalo" driven by institutional hegemony that keeps getting through and disrupting the learning experience.

The third challenge for me, in my role within the institution, is navigating and maintaining reciprocal relationships between the institutions and the partnerships we have with the communities who host the field school. Since its inception the field school has been considered as belonging to the community and not just to the institution. Decisions around the offering, timing and course delivery have always been discussed mutually and with respect for understanding of the communities' interests. This can be a challenge when institutional processes, policies and values don't always align with the communities'. For example, due to the nature of the course, there are often small enrollment numbers compared to more conventional and accessible nursing electives. Barriers students face include the financial costs of the field school, the ability to be away from other commitments for a week, and, for some, a lack of appreciation of the relevance of the course to their area of interest for practicing as a nurse. When we have been able to eliminate the financial costs through grants or donations, we have found that the field school enrollment increases substantially. However, there have also been times when the enrollment numbers are very low and the institution has had to maintain its commitment to its relationship with the community despite the costs and effort that the

field school requires. The ongoing commitment to the field school, by both the institution and the community, requires a willingness to see beyond the immediate benefits to the small number of students who are able to participate in it in a given year.

What we have learned from formal and informal evaluations of the field school is that there are benefits for the host community, the college and the nursing curriculum. Community members have shared with us how there has been a change in attitude towards health care providers generally, including increased levels of trust in nurses specifically. The following quote from a community member exemplifies this attitude. “Now my people are learning to speak up and learning to say no and they learned this through the relationships with the nurses who came to the field school and being believed and respected by them” (Fraser & Tate, 2018). Because community members have had the opportunity to come to know a variety of nursing students and have felt respected when they share their stories with them, they believe that they will be heard and respected by nurses outside of their community as well. They also express feeling more confident in speaking up for themselves when they experience racism in the health system. The communities have also experienced increased opportunities for hiring nurses to work in the communities. The majority of the nurses hired by the two First Nations communities during the first ten years of hosting the field school have been past participants in the field school experience.

The college as a whole has benefited from the relationships that have been developed between the nursing program and the field school host communities. Staff and faculty from other college departments have had the opportunity to attend the field schools. What we have learned as an institution from offering the field schools has led to progressive changes that support reconciliation in many departments and programs within the college. The experience with the Education Council (as described on page 176) is one example of this. There have been similar processes and institutional learning throughout the college infrastructure including in the Student Services/Registrar, Research Ethics Board, Health and Human Services and the Indigenous Education Department. Being able to offer the field school requires that we examine many of our taken for granted processes and policies within the institution. Reciprocity between the college and the host communities’ is experienced through the relationships we develop at the institutional and community level. The benefits for the organization go far beyond the immediate and obvious impact it has on the student participants each year.

The NIC nursing curriculum has also become increasingly inclusive of Indigenous ways of knowing and learning largely as a result of the partnerships and understandings that have been created through the field school experience. With Evelyn Voyageur's support we have integrated Indigenous pedagogy throughout our curriculum. We have also had nursing faculty from other institutions across Western Canada attend the field school. We have shared our learnings from the field school in numerous conferences and publications. The gifts from the field school experience continue to be spread throughout our curriculum at NIC and nursing education in general. With these gifts comes the sacred responsibility of walking on the path of transformative reconciliation in nursing education so that we can better serve all our communities.

After the field school the students in the course are asked to do a final project. It is called a reciprocal learning project where they give back or share what they have learned from the field school in some way that is useful for others. Many students choose to share the impact of their experience with future students. They want to share the meaningfulness and relevance of this experience personally as well as for nursing practice and the wellbeing of society more generally. They are also committed to reducing financial and institutional barriers so that more students can attend. Reciprocity is about the relationship and it has benefits beyond what is known. In a community member's own words:

The things nurses learn here is not just about Indigenous people, but it impacts how they nurse with all people – it is good for everyone. We do the work together and everyone benefits – it is reciprocal – we all tell stories and we all learn (Fraser & Tate, 2018).

It is through learning to be in tune with both the community and the institution that we will find a path towards transformative reconciliation in nursing education. To do so, we must navigate practices related to risk management, academic integrity, and reciprocal partnerships. Once again I am guided by the teachings of the *Sisiutl* to experience the complexity and paradoxes in my role as a sand shifter between the academic institution and the communities we learn in.

6.6. Raising our Voice

I have discussed the learnings I have had from teaching the field school as following the lead of Indigenous people, orienting through relationship, and seeking out

wellness. Underlying them all is the idea that everything is in relationship with everything else. Every learning is a tension without a clear path, it is full of paradoxes and choices, mistakes and rewards. It takes courage to engage in these relationships and I am grateful for every opportunity I have had to do so. I am grateful for every person who has also taken the time, shared their gifts and embraced the opportunity to engage in learning together. It takes courage to stay on the path of transformative reconciliation. When we were leaving the Wuikinuxv community for the first time, I was given a responsibility, one for which I still feel accountable. It is why I have been on this journey to find *ya'xan yiyakwima* (my gifts from the Creator). It is why I feel a great responsibility to share them. While standing on the dock waving goodbye a *noxola* looked at me with a timeless seriousness in his eyes. His parting words resonated all the way through my body. He said, "When you get home, tell people you have been to the land of the *Hamast'a*"⁴

Turning towards the buffalo and walking into the storm means advocating loudly for the benefits of the field school and other similar Indigenous led, relationally oriented, wellness focused learning opportunities. This is my offering from the gifts I have been given by the communities I have learned in and people I have learned with. I feel a deep sense of responsibility and accountability to share the learning that I have been gifted. My learnings from teaching the field schools are for all of us, from wherever we are and on whatever path we have chosen to take, to be walking together towards a vision of transformative reconciliation in nursing education. Together we will find our way by following the lead of Indigenous knowledge holders who know the land we are on and can guide us in experiencing a pedagogy for opening our hearts as well as our minds. We can orientate ourselves by being in sacred, synergistic and synchronistic relationships with the communities we learn from. Finally, if we see the community as the source of wellness and Indigenous pedagogy as a way towards wellness then we can help carry the burden of transformative reconciliation by sharing our strengths, believing in our possibilities, and always seeking wellness together.

⁴ The *Hamast'a* is dance that is very spiritual to the Wuikinuxv and Kwakwaka'wakw. The mountain where the very first *Hamast'a* originated is near the Wuikinuxv village further up the valley.

Chapter 7.

Ya'xan K̓amd̓am

When Johnathan Seagull joined the flock on the beach, it was full night. He was dizzy and terribly tired. Yet in delight he flew a loop to landing, with a snap roll just before touchdown. When they hear of it, he thought, of the Breakthrough, they'll be wild with joy. How much more there is now to living! Instead of our drab slogging forth and back to the fishing boats, there's a reason to life! We can lift ourselves out of ignorance, we can find ourselves as creatures of excellence and intelligence and skill. We can be free! We can learn to fly! (Bach, 1970, p. 30)

...

You have to practice and see the real gull, the good in every one of them, and to help them see it in themselves. That's what I mean by love. It's fun, when you get the knack of it. (Bach, 1970, p. 123)

...

Fletcher Seagull suddenly saw them all as they really were, just for a moment, and he more than liked, he loved what he saw. His race to learn had begun. (Bach, 1970, p. 127)

7.1. *G̓ilakas'la*

I have been taught that *G̓ilakas'la* is a Kwak̓wala word that does not mean “hello”, but English is sorely lacking in an appropriate translation. I have been told that it means both “welcome” and “thank you”. It also means something similar to “come in your greatness, you are welcome to be your whole self here and to share your gifts with us”. I began to learn a few words of Kwak̓wala when I first started working as a nurse educator with Kwakwaka'wakw. As I traveled to the communities of Wuikinuxv and Dzawada'enuxw I started to hear more language and I started to make connections between the importance of language and cultural revitalization. I developed a great respect for the language but also reticence about learning it. I was concerned with the boundaries of what was a respectful way of being in relationship to the language. In the spring of 2020 an opportunity arose for me to join a language class. The language class was being offered online for the first time. Evelyn was the fluent language speaker who provided both language and pedagogical guidance for this class. Students from across the Kwak̓wala speaking territories including those from a variety of remote communities

were enrolled in the class. During the online classes we talked about the nuances of respect and appropriateness of language acquisition. The stories we shared of language loss and of language revitalization were heart wrenching. What I came to appreciate was the accountability and responsibility to learn the language of the place that I inhabit. I do this with deep gratitude and respect for those who teach me and learn with me. Being a part of language revitalization is an act of transformative reconciliation. Abram (1997) furthered my understanding of how language both connects and disconnects us from our relationship with the land (p. 95). He illustrates how the sense of being immersed in a sentient world is preserved through oral languages that are developed from a reciprocal relationship with the natural world for survival. Abram proclaims that “[l]anguage, for oral peoples, is not a human invention but a gift of the land itself” (p. 263). Beginning to learn the language of the people that come from where I live, is a way of becoming an inhabitant. By learning Kwakwala I am seeking an ecologically reciprocal and relationally accountable way of living. As I walk through my neighbourhood, calling what I see by the Kwakwala name, I am connecting to the land that I inhabit more deeply. But I must also be patient. I was given an important teaching about respect for language revitalization by my Kwakwala teacher. As I was writing this dissertation and beginning to learn words and simple phrases in Kwakwala, I wanted to say more. I became excited by the notion of expressing the key ideas from my writing in Kwakwala. My Kwakwala teacher gently reminded me that I am just a novice and that to use words for complex ideas without a good understanding of their meaning only renders them meaningless. So, I received a learning in humility and respect. I treat each word and simple phrase as a gift for which I am deeply grateful. A gift that must be treated with the respect and honour it deserves. As excited and impatient as I am to learn this language, I must learn first to be in relationship with it. I must listen, I must be patient, I must practice so that when the opportunity is offered, I am ready to learn more.

I will begin by introducing myself, who I am, where I live, where I was born and where my ancestors come from, as I am learning to do in Kwakwala. *Gilakas'la*, *Nugwa'am* Joanna Elizabeth Fraser. *Gukwalaṇ lax Tsa-kwa-luten*. *Ma'yudlaman lax* Nukuru. *Gayultṭan lax* Europe. This story towards finding *ya'xan yiyakwima* (my gifts from the Creator); *ya'xan dligam* (my name), *ya'xan k'angextola* (my blanket), *ya'xan yaxw'anye'* (my dance) and *ya'xan kamdam* (my song) began for me where I was born in Nakuru on an escarpment above the Rift Valley of Kenya, East Africa. This is where my

parents and grandparents came, along with other white farmers and eccentric outcasts from Europe, to farm the rich soil. Consistent with the ethos of the Europeans who settled in Africa and North America, they believed that the land belonged to them. They were seeped in colonial relationships with the Kikuyu and Masi people who already belonged to the land. Soon after I was born, during a time of unrest when the settler community was being displaced, my family left their farm and it was returned to the Kikuyu people. I was raised on the west coast of Canada, on land that had also been stolen from Indigenous people. But this time the severing of the people from the land had been so severe, so complete, and so deliberately hidden that we, as Euro heritage Canadians, could ignore or forget the people who had been displaced. I grew up with privilege in this beautiful “new” country. From my family, I developed a great love of the land and the sea. When I met my husband, we were already destined to become joined on a journey of fulfilling our purpose together. We had a shared desire to live in a way that was connected to the land and our yearnings led us towards transformative reconciliation. We raised our children, grew our food, tended to our home, and developed our careers, with an intention to contribute to a more just and sustainable world. We inhabit the land where we live in the traditional territory of the We Wai Kai people. The land here knows me and my family, it has shaped us as we have shaped it. The relationships I have are who I am. I have come to understand this through what I have been taught by the *ni noxsola* as “finding my name”.

Perhaps it was the colonial violence that my family witnessed when I was a baby and the way I was raised in our new home that set me on the path to find *ya'xan yiyakwima* (my gifts from the Creator). It may be because of my ancestors, who knew from experience that we will never belong until we all belong. Finding *ya'xan k'angextola* (my blanket) led me to become a nurse and a teacher. The people I met as a result of my education began to reveal Canada's colonial history that had been hidden from me. As a nurse I learned about caring and health promotion, but I could see the holes in what I had been taught. As a teacher I looked for a pedagogy to repair those holes and found it in an Indigenous understanding of relationship, connection and holism. Throughout my education and practice as a nurse, the voices of Indigenous people called out to me with stories of oppression and inequity. My privilege and entanglement in Canada's colonial history became louder and more visible. I began weaving a deeper understanding of

relational accountability and ecological reciprocity into the *k'angextola* I wore as a nurse and educator.

Eventually, I was able to find my teachers and uncover the truth of my own colonization. I began to learn *ya'xan yaxw'anye'* (my dance) from my teachers. This was my dance towards co-creating healing learning spaces as transformative reconciliation in nursing education. Through offering the field school we strived to co-create learning spaces where people could uncover their own truths of who they are and where they come from. These are learning spaces where people could also find their gifts and use them to fulfil their purpose. This is the story of how I am learning the gift of *ya'xan yaxw'anye'* (my dance) through Indigenous-led, relationally oriented and wellness-focused learning experiences. I have shared the journey of finding *ya'xan yiyakwima* (my gifts from the Creator); *ya'xan dligam* (my name), *ya'xan k'angextola* (my blanket), *ya'xan yaxw'anye'* (my dance) and *ya'xan kamdam* (my song) through being a part of the field schools. It is this learning that guides me on the path towards transformative reconciliation in nursing education.

In this chapter, I will share what I have learned from the field schools that may be useful to nurse educators more generally. Firstly, I will help you tune into the words I use and the way I use these words so that you can see how my worldview has informed my hermeneutics lens. Then I will share a vision with you of co-creating healing learning spaces for transformative reconciliation in nursing education. Finally, I will share the way I enact what I have learned, in my practice as a nurse educator. By doing so, I am addressing the quintessential question: how do nurse educators, who like me mostly identify as white cisgender women meaningfully and respectfully engage in transformative reconciliation? I have reached the alpine on my mountain journey. It is time to set up camp and light a fire. I will share the final gift I have been given, *ya'xan kamdam* (my song), a fire song.

7.2. Tuning into the Lyrics

As stated by Nepo (2019), “I wasn’t sure how to put into words something so essential and yet rendered so invisible that I have devoted my life to uncovering it” (p. 85). It is my intention to share what I have learned with English words even though they feel wholly inadequate for doing so. When I can, I have used the Kwakwaka'wakw word that is

more closely tied to the land of the place and the people that I have learned from. How can I express the preverbal wonderment of a child experiencing the world for the first time before they have developed the language necessary to symbolize and theorize it (Abram, 1997)? How can I explain the grace of a stone that lives with the integrity of knowing its cosmic purpose? Or how can I talk about the generosity of that same rock that gives off stored heat from a fire? All these words such as “grace”, “integrity” and “generosity” can only be understood through our human and anthropomorphic interpretations. How would a rock, or a fire, or a bird explain their cosmic purpose? What language would they use? What I am asking you to do is to tune into my words, as if every word is a symphony of paradox with its own dynamic meaning unencumbered by the limits of English interpretations. Each word holds a particular harmony and hermeneutic that has temporal and contextual relationships to an idea. They are in a dynamic relationship with time (past, present and future) and with the where and who of our context (land and identity). Like the teachings of the *Sisiutl* about complexity and paradox and like Euro-western understandings of the confluence of time and space, these ideas exist within an area and era that is always on the horizon. We are always moving in time and space to the horizon of our understanding. Let’s rest on our journey now and settle into a camp by our fire. We can see the expanse of the world reaching out in every direction around us. We have walked a long way up through the steep forest and now we are reaching the Alpine. We have covered a lot of terrain to arrive here. From where we stand on an alpine mountain ridge we can move toward the horizon in every direction but we can never reach it. I breathe in and breathe out deeply attuning myself to the fresh air, the crisp smells, the resounding resonance of an unimpeded wind sweeping over the landscape. I am ready to sing a fire song loudly into the ever-expanding universe around me.

In order to share this song in a good way I must ask you to tune into the words I use and how I use them. For example, I have learned to listen differently when *noxola* Evelyn Voyageur speaks of “inclusiveness” versus when an administrator bound in the cultural assumptions of a Euro-western institution uses the word. The administrator is likely thinking about inclusion as an invitation to people who represent diverse and specifically oppressed groups to be included in institutional decision making. From a Euro-western worldview inclusion means inviting everyone to sit at the table, but the table has often already been laid with the utensils needed to eat the meal. The menu

has likely been determined. What I have learned is that inclusion from an Indigenous worldview can mean something very different. I have found that there is not a preset table to sit at, more likely we are all at a picnic, some of us have brought blankets to sit on and food to share. Some people might be foraging for what can be found in the woods. We each place our blanket in relation to the people around us, where we feel most comfortable. Now, when I hear about inclusion, I think of radical inclusion, where difference is included as much as similarity is. It is with this understanding of the limits of written language, that I invite you to tune into the lyrics behind the words I use to sing the fire song.

I would like to start by sharing what I understand about two Kwakwaka'wakw words that don't have simple English translations. The first is the *Sisiutl*. I have used this word many times already and I am grateful for your patience in waiting for an explanation of what it means to me. It is the Kwakwaka'wakw word for the cross beam in a Bighouse that balances between the four corner poles and holds everything up. On it is carved the image of a double-headed serpent. *Noxola*, Paul Willie (2019) explains the teachings of the *Sisiutl* as one of balance, not binaries. He states that "wherever our right hand goes, our left hand must follow. Wherever there is darkness, there is also light". What I have learned about this word is partial and incomplete. My learning is in the context of my experiences with the people and on the land. It is my own interpretation of something that I do not fully understand. I can draw parallels between Taoism and the idea of yin yang but I am not a scholar of Eastern or Indigenous thought. I can see that the word offers an alternative to the Cartesian dualism rooted in Euro-western thought. However, to even describe the *Sisiutl* as an opposing philosophy is itself a contradiction of its meaning. I am aware that the meaning of the word is about relationality, complexity, and ambiguity and that understanding the word is itself a complex and ambiguous endeavor. It is a word that folds into itself in the time/space continuum and for which understanding is always on the horizon. It is a word that requires respect and patience, and it means these things as well.

The second Kwakwaka'wakw word that I would like to share is "*he'istalis*". Up until now I have used English words and phrases such as "earth", "land", "environment" and "universe" instead of the more accurately meaningful word "*he'istalis*". There is no English translation that eloquently describes our relatedness to everything around us in quite the same way as this word. It comes from an Indigenous way of knowing that is

based on our interrelated subjectivity to everything. It does not see humans as separate from the world. To share my vision more accurately, I will use the word “*he’istalis*” (the world around us) to describe this orientation.

Next, I would ask you to consider the meaning of all the words within the vision of “co-creating healing learning spaces for transformative reconciliation”. It is through tuning into a shared meaning of these words that we can find a way for the learnings of the field school to become useful for nursing education more generally. Co-creating a learning space recognizes that an educator cannot create the space alone but rather helps to shape it by being attuned to the energy, patterns, and flux that happens within all relationships. In this way, the space is collaboratively formed by all those involved. It also invites everyone who is in the learning space to be as authentic and vulnerable as they are able to be. A space that is collaboratively created has the potential to be a dynamic space where opposing and unresolvable dilemmas and differences are experienced. It is a radically inclusive space because it invites paradox and sees knowledge as ambiguous and contingent on context. It is where learning fulfills a deep yearning in all of us to belong, to be free and, by becoming both, to become whole. It is a place for growth, for imagining our purpose, and for becoming fulfilled.

“Healing” is a word so commonly used in health literature and Indigenous scholarship that it has become ubiquitous. The Kwakwaka’wakw word for healing is “*e ki la*”. The English word “healing” comes from the old-English term “*haelen*”, meaning “wholeness” (McMaster University, n.d.). Florence Nightingale used the word “healing” to describe the work of nurses in bringing the mind, body, and spirit together in a holistic way during the Victorian era (McElligott, 2010). A concept analysis by nurses describes healing as “a holistic, transformative process of repair and recovery in mind, body, and spirit resulting in positive change, finding meaning, and movement toward self-realization of wholeness, regardless of the presence or absence of disease” (Firth et al., 2015, p. 49). The idea of healing is ancient, and it transcends disciplines and knowledge traditions.

What is important to my understanding of healing is that it is a growth process of moving forward in a good way toward something better and sustainable. Anishinaabe legal scholar John Borrows affirms:

We need to draw strength from one another and think of law as medicine. Among our other duties to one another is one to act in healing and life-affirming terms. Like the plants, we must find ways to appropriately give ourselves so that others may grow. We must draw others to the sources of healing found in the earth and Indigenous laws around us, and we must do this sustainably. (Borrows, 2018, p. 55)

When we stop healing, we stop growing. It is a positive process that recognizes and addresses the traumas of our past. It is not a nostalgic process of wanting to return to a time when we were all whole. Rather healing, as a vision for transformative reconciliation, recognizes that the human species has always been searching. For some, this searching has been migratory, moving across continents and countries. For others it has been situated, staying in the place of their ancestors. We have all learned something; we all have gifts and we can all choose to use our gifts for healing together in a good way. Healing is a movement towards self-actualization and becoming whole.

Another important aspect of how I understand healing is in seeing it as a complex and holistic process rather than a controlled and linear process. It draws on the unknown, the great mystery, and spiritual energy, as well as human agency and knowledge. Even healing something as seemingly simple as a chronic wound in our skin is a process that still remains beyond the realm of scientific knowledge. We know the multiple physiological systems that are involved in healing wounds and, for the most part, how they work together to heal the human body. Yet the sum is greater than the parts and we do not yet know the great mystery of why some wounds heal and others won't (Menke et al., 2007). Unhealed chronic physical wounds continue to pose a significant human and economic burden in health care (Menke et al., 2007).

I also understand healing as an ecologically reciprocal process. The power of healing is relational. It happens between people, between people and the *he'istalis* (the world around us), and without humans at all (Kreitzer, 2017, p. 255, 266). In the Euro-western tradition, the word "healing" is often used to describe an interaction between a health provider and a patient or a person and an illness. An ecologically reciprocal understanding of healing is consistent with what many Indigenous authors describe as a healing that is connected to a cosmic energy in all of our relationships, including the *he'istalis* (the world around us). For example, a healing ecology is embedded in Meyer's (2008) seven categories for "organizing systems of consciousness" (p. 218) as discussed in Chapter Two, pages 64 and 65 of this dissertation. Meyer emphasizes an

ecology of healing that is connected in a deep way to the land and ocean. Healing is a reciprocal relationship. Unlike caring or curing, it is not limited to describing the actions or agency of a nurse towards a patient. We all have the potential agency to engage in healing. Healing is a relational energy. It is universal, and it is shared. No one person has responsibility for it as we are all in it together and, through our relationships, we are responsible for healing ourselves. Nepo (2019) tells a powerful story of the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche who, nearing the end of his life, felt such compassion for a horse that he tried to stop it from being whipped. Nepo ends the story with the words, “healing is the moment when the center of life moves through our center as we stand between the whip and the whipped” (p. 248). This moment resonates with me as an embodiment of transformative reconciliation. It is the essence of understanding that we are all on this together and our healing will happen when we connect ourselves to a universal healing energy that is at the center of life. We engage in healing with and between each other and the *he’istalis* (the world around us) in an energetically mutual and reciprocal way.

It is important to understand that when I use the word “healing” I am referring to a complex, ecologically reciprocal relational process of positive growth. For too long healing in the context of colonization has been used to concoct an identity of victimization and inferiority (Cote-Meek, p 35, 2014). As a result, it has been attributed to something that only Indigenous people must do. It has become clear that healing in the context of transformative reconciliation is something we all must do. It is my intention to co-create learning spaces that lead to healing of and within nursing education.

A “learning space” is anywhere that learning occurs. I have been drawn to the learning spaces that happen on the land and with Indigenous people. There are however no boundaries or borders, and especially no classroom walls, that confine where learning happens. Nursing students and instructors learn together in classrooms, in hallways, in offices, in laboratories, in hospitals and in many community spaces. Learning is a personal, social and political happening that occurs everywhere (Freire, 1993; hooks, 1994). Even in a classroom, the learning is influenced by the personal, social, institutional and political contexts that surround it. hooks describes her experiences of learning about her own oppression and through theorizing developing understanding of how it affected her. She “learned from this experience that theory could be a healing place (p. 61). “Wherever we work with nursing students I propose that we

can co-create healing learning spaces that engage us all in fulfilling our cosmic purpose and finding our *yiyakwima* (gifts from the Creator).

Healing learning spaces allow us to understand the world and our relationships within it as complex, ambiguous, and contingent. These are the teachings of the *Sisiutl*. In this way, healing learning spaces provide us with the ability to both be free and to belong at the same time. The paradox of a healing learning space is that, when people feel that they belong, they become safe enough to be vulnerable. It is within this vulnerability that they are free enough to engage in transformation. Healing learning spaces always have the intention of transformation as a positive growth experience. We experience the freedom to be and to become who we are, rather than the need to conform to social pressures. We also experience the security of knowing that we belong and that what we bring and what we share is respected and honoured. Healing learning spaces are courageous spaces where we dare to share our wholehearted selves, and where we are brave enough to listen carefully and compassionately to others who also share from the heart. When we are in a healing learning space, we are all lifted up, we see the beauty in ourselves, each other and the *he'istalis* (the world around us). A healing learning space is a place where we can connect with the sacred. What we experience is wonder, gratitude, and joy because we are fulfilled. We become *synala* (whole).

“Reconciliation” is also a word that has caused much debate around what it means and in how it is used. The editors of the book *Research and Reconciliation* (Wilson et al., 2019) explain how reconciliation can be “used as a shield, like a protective armour of good intentions, when the work that is being done isn’t always different from other ugly things that came before” (Wilson et al., 2019, p. xiii). I am aware that some people have no interest in reconciliation, only revitalization and resurgence for Indigenous people in a space where those labeled non-Indigenous do not belong. As Borrows and Tully (2018) explain, the binary of “colonization/decolonization and friend-enemy...can fatally conceal and obscure a complex intersectional field (p. 7)”. I agree with their conclusion that:

Separation, while powerful and sometimes necessary, must be applied with care to the context in which it is inserted. While measured separation may be very appropriate in some settings, it cannot be regarded as a

comprehensive strategy that is healthy in all circumstances. (Borrows & Tully, 2018, p. 7)

So it is with sincerity that I acknowledge that there are places of exclusion to which I do not belong. These are places for resurgence where people with Indigenous identity need to “turn away” and do the inner work required to heal themselves (Taiaiake, 2005, p. 139). Alfred Taiaiake (2005) explains that Indigenous people must focus on resurgence work that, in his vision, needs to be done before Indigenous people can reconcile themselves with a colonial state. I am cautious about reconciling my own relationships and longing to belong, in order to not disrupt the sovereign spaces of others who are also needing to be free and to belong.

The TRC report also acknowledges that reconciliation is a contentious word that can be (and has been) used in many ways to support different agendas. Reconciliation is described in the TRC report *What We Have Learned: Principles of Truth and Reconciliation* (2015) as being

about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, an acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behavior. (p. 113)

My intention is to purposefully and cautiously see reconciliation as a path for healing, to “move things forward rather than move things back” (Wilson et al., 2019, p. xiii). I use the words transformative reconciliation together to bring forth this intention. I do so with purposeful caution and ask those who do not find reconciliation to be a useful word or find the way that I have used it to be appropriate, to forgive me. I know that reconciliation can be used in a check-box like way or fashion to show how we are following the recommendations of the TRC, when in fact we have done little to shift and therefore we continue to perpetuate colonial relations. I have heard people explain that reconciliation is the wrong word to bring us together because we never had a relationship in the first place. For some, reconciliation cannot happen without adhering to UNDRIP by giving back “their/our” land. Senator Sinclair (2020) explains that UNDRIP was never intended to be a legal document that created division over fighting for resources nor for providing a legal veto. UNDRIP was intended to resonate with a higher level of human consciousness. “It was meant as a framework for reconciliation” that would bring us together over a shared purpose, rather than tear us apart (Sinclair, 2020). Tully (2018)

explains reconciliation as having two processes - the formal legal process and the informal relational process. He considers transformative reconciliation to be enacted within the relationships we have with each other and with the land. He points out how our relationship with the land cannot be separated from our relationship with each other. He also suggests that transformative reconciliation needs to be done with Indigenous people who have place-based knowledge (p. 83).

I have shared my intention with the words used to describe a vision for co-creating healing learning spaces for transformative reconciliation. The words themselves are only symbolic interpretations of how we experience the world. The way I use them here is neither conclusive nor complete in their meaning. Some of the words I use have been extensively theorized by academics to have very nuanced meanings only understandable to a select few. Other words have cultural interpretations with such varied meanings that it makes it difficult for us to understand each other even when we speak the same language. I have purposely tried to use words from the Indigenous language from where I live and work, but my understanding of Kwakwaka'wakw remains limited. I respect that the words from Indigenous oral-based languages have a closer relationship to the teachings of the land from which they come from (Abram, 1997). The written words I use to communicate are rough instruments made even less effective by the necessity of writing them down. I find it difficult to share what is in my heart and soul in a way that reaches past the page, through the word to your mind and into your heart as well. We both need to stretch our imagination to see that we are in a relationship and to reach past the limits of the tools we have to communicate.

7.3. A Fire Song

When I began the process of writing this dissertation, I started with building a fire. I gathered stones and driftwood and laid out a fire pit as I have done in many places and throughout my life. The lighting of a fire is a daily exercise for me and my family in our home during the winter or on backcountry trips in the summer. It is an ancient occupation, one that has been carried out for eons and is at the very heart of the experience of being human. When I built a fire pit to begin my inquiry, I put stones in a circle around carefully piled wooden sticks. I gathered the people in my doctoral cohort around the fire pit to listen to the story of what I hoped to write. In some other language,

place and time this would be called my candidacy or comprehensive exam. I was not able to light the fire in this situation but I am ready to do so now.

On this journey, as with many journeys in my life, whether walking up mountains or along beaches, we have come to the time where we must pause and build a fire. There will always be more hills to climb and beaches to walk but for now we have reached a resting point. It is a time for reflection on the final of the four great questions I have been taught to ask myself. Why am I here? This inquiry has led me towards finding my voice so that I can share the gifts I have been given in a way that is useful to the communities I serve. This final Chapter is a sharing of the fourth *ya'kwima* (gift from the Creator), *ya'xan k'amdam* (my song). I will share what co-creating healing learning spaces for transformative reconciliation in nursing education means to me and how I foresee it can be useful for nursing education more generally. Firstly, I will build the fire so that, when I light it, we can share the warmth it reflects and consider the significance of what has been learned on this journey. Around this fire I will put stones. The circle of stones will protect us from the fire's heat. The stones have grace. They have existed in this physical form for longer than I can imagine, doing exactly what their gifts intended them to do. Then I will gather wood: small twigs to start the fire, larger branches, and finally logs to keep it going. All of this wood has grown here over a period of time, fulfilling its cosmic purpose. I use it now to keep us warm, while being aware of and grateful for the great reciprocity of my life on this earth. The wood offered by the growing vegetation around us, like my words humbly offered forth, will be used to stoke and nurture the fire. The flames themselves, as the fire burns, are the energy that transforms us, our words, ideas and actions. It is a healing energy that connects us to the *he'istalis* (the world around us) including our ancestors and a universal cosmic life force.

Here, by the warmth of the flames under the immensity of the stars above our head, we can reflect on what has passed and what is to come. We can wonder about the beauty of it all and our reason for being here and alive. It is in this place around a fire that we can feel part of something sacred, an ancient human experience where conversations, past and future, shape our world. Come and warm your face and hands, let the warmth soak into your body and your being. Feel the heat of the flames changing my words into an energy that is connected to the cosmos. Remember the stones that form a ring of protection, of truths beyond our human understanding. Trust the wisdom of the stones to keep us safe from the fire's heat. Remember our plant relatives who have

offered the wood to keep us warm. Remember the stars that watch over us. Feel the wonder of being alive in the *he'istalis* (the world around us).

It is time to share the teachings I have been gifted on this journey of co-creating healing learning spaces for transformative reconciliation. I see three landscapes that I have been guided to and through by all those involved with the field school. I call the landscapes of my inquiry, bearing witness, being an inhabitant and becoming Indigenist. My guides have taught me ethical orientations of being relationally accountable and ecologically reciprocal within the *he'istalis* (the world around us). The teachings of the *Sisiutl* support me on the journey. I have learned to embrace paradox, complexity and the unknown. It is on this journey that I have uncovered and continue to uncover my relationship to the four *yíyákwíma* (gifts from the Creator); *dligam* (name), *k'angextola* (blanket), *yáxw'anye* (dance) and *k'amdám* (song). The journey is driven by the forces of *e ki la* (healing), *na'ki'stamas* (to make things right) and *taxwálap'a* (to lift up and to love each other). This is what helps keep us going on the right path. The path is neither linear nor circular. It is a sacred way, a dance of synergies and synchronicities that are both personal and beyond personal. It has become a way to find and share our individual and collective gifts. It has helped me to become *synala* (whole). It is time to lift up our voices and sing a fire song.

7.3.1. Bearing Witness

One landscape I travel through, bearing witness, involves becoming awake to the ongoing truth of colonization as well as engaging in the personal and political process of transformative reconciliation. I have been taught by my Indigenous mentors that bearing witness means more than having a moral obligation to hear and see what is going on, it also means taking responsibility for the work being done and being relationally accountable for my actions moving forward. My understanding is that bearing witness assumes that we are all in a process of being transformed through our relationships. Bearing witness to significant events, ceremonies and unfolding stories carries the responsibility of sharing what you have learned through revealing how what you have experienced has changed you. Bearing witness to stories of colonial violence and racism requires a form of ethical relationality and relational accountability that leads us to engage in transformative reconciliation in an authentic way.

Transformative reconciliation involves moving synergistically and synchronically between the personal and political aspects of reconciliation work. On a personal level, I have deeply pondered about *ya'xan yiyakwima* (my gifts from the Creator) and how they can be of service to the communities I am in relationships with. I continually ask myself the four important questions of *ya'xan dligam* (my name), Who am I, *ya'xan kangextola* (my blanket), where am I from, *ya'xan yaxw'anye'* (my dance), where am I going, and *ya'xan kamdam* (my song) why am I here. It is a process of conscientization, of understanding my identity in relationship to everyone and everything else. When I bear witness to my own story of transformation as I listen to and bear witness to the stories of others, I am taking personal responsibility for doing reconciliation work. We often prefer to think of reconciliation work as being about addressing the harms of colonization by “helping” the victims of it (Tully, 2018, p. 83). The victims are assumed to be Indigenous people. It is time for us all, no matter who we are and where we come from, to take responsibility for how we all have been colonized. Greenwood (2019) states that we all have a homecoming story and it is important for each of us to learn and honour what it is.

That is, we need to develop practices that support our own becoming—in relationship with ourselves, each other, the land, and the cosmos itself. ...As I explore this vital terrain, I have given it the placeholder terms, cosmological homecoming, or, soul work. (p. 371)

I am in a continuous process of bearing witness to my own soul work and experiencing both the beauty and pain of it. For me, transformative reconciliation requires a constant unweaving and reweaving of *ya'xan kangextola* (my blanket) and the work of it leaves blisters on my hands (G. Smith, 2020). These blisters come from taking the responsibility of doing my own healing work. As nurses we like to think of ourselves as the healers in a relationship. From this position we risk separating ourselves from the people we work with. Bearing witness does not hold us apart, nor does it come with the expectation that we are solely responsible for fixing what ails others. Bearing witness allows us the potential for seeing ourselves as entangled together in the situation we find ourselves in and with the potential to change it. Bearing witness invites us to engage in mutually healing relationships.

A learning space that offers the potential for bearing witness is carefully and respectfully created together. It must be a place where people can feel safe enough to be open and vulnerable. They must also be able to grapple with their own desire and the

desire of others to belong in the learning space and to be free enough to express who they are. Learning spaces that are land based and Indigenous led have the potential to support all students (no matter their ancestry or cultural identity) to experience a holistic healing journey in relationship with each other and the *he'istalis* (the world around us). When a learning space supports learners to bear witness it becomes an important part of their journey to find their *yiyakwima* (gifts from the Creator) and become synala (whole).

I must be careful that, in the process of bearing witness in transformative reconciliation work, I do not further reinforce colonial relations in my practice as a nurse educator and the institutions I work for (L.T. Smith, 2020; Styres, 2019). If we focus the process of reconciliation on the decolonization of our practice and institutions, we risk remaining stuck in the type of thinking that has enabled those colonial relations of power to exist in the first place (Styres, 2019). The paradox of self-focused decolonizing work has been pointed out by many authors including de Leeuw et al. (2013). They argue that “new kinds of policies and practices ostensibly aimed toward addressing and ameliorating past wrongs...function to obscure ongoing harms and injustices of colonial practice, subverting the very good intentions they purport to represent” (p. 384). The problem is that “when we talk about decolonizing we are putting the colonizer at the center of the relationship” (G. Smith, 2020, p. 159). The centrality of focus on the colonized/colonizer experience will continue to reinforce the very relationship it intends to heal.

Transformative reconciliation is a call to revision and reimagine our relationships with each other and with all our relations. It must include all of us, however we identify. We all live with privilege and oppression, in all of its complexity and with all its intersectionality. In co-creating healing learning spaces, it is not my intention to step into spaces where Indigenous identity and sovereignty are determined and enacted. My journey has led me to pursue learning spaces that foster inclusion through fluid understandings of identity. I orientate myself away from engaging in exclusionary forms of identity politics. Weir (2013) describes this as “transformative identification”. She explains:

Transformative identification involves a recognition of the other that transforms our relation to each other, that shifts our relation from difference to a recognition of interdependence. Thus, identification with the other

becomes not an act of recognizing that we are the same, or feeling the same as the other, or sharing the same experiences. Identification becomes a process of meaning making. (p.78)

These are spaces of paradox and complexity where people can experience openness, vulnerability and safety in bearing witness to each other's stories. They are radically inclusive spaces that recognize the need for separate spaces and unique resources that are attuned to difference and diversity. I intend to help create learning spaces where all people can join in solidarity against and beyond the realities of racism and oppression and create a new way of being together in healing relationships with each other and the land. I have been taught to think of transformative reconciliation as bearing witness through *e ki la* (healing) and *naki'stamas* (make things right)

Naki'stamas (to make things right) I must become humbly engaged on a personal and political level. It is not enough for me to engage in reconciliation work in my practice as a nurse and educator. I must also become engaged in healing the systems in which I work. Tully (2018) explains that

the way to change the system is not only to think differently, as we have been doing so far. It is also necessary to act differently. This involves freeing ourselves from the ways of acting that reproduce the unsustainable system and its way of perceiving the world, and then beginning to act as plain, participatory members and citizens in the damaged and endangered symbiotic ecosystems and informal social systems we inhabit. As people act in participatory, interdependent, and mutually sustainable ways in more and more relationships, the way that the world is perceived and disclosed to them begins to change accordingly. In so doing, they begin to experience and be moved by the gift-reciprocity animacy of life itself. This regenerative movement of potentially transformative reconciliation-with is called the great "reconnection". (p. 111)

I am engaged in healing myself along with my relationships and the social structures of which I am part. Our institutions are more than the mortar and brick buildings that they may be housed in. They are also more than the mission statements and policy documents that we use to define them. Our institutions are us. When we change ourselves, we change our institutions. The institutions of health care and education can cause us to feel disconnected because of the hierarchies, power relations and bureaucracies that are a part of them. Taiaiake Alfred (2005) states:

The true spirit of revolt is not the motivation to crush or overthrow colonial structures and bring in replacement structures but an invocation to the spirit

of freedom, a drive to move mentally and physically away from the reactive state of being compelled by danger and fear and begin to act on intelligence and vision to generate a new identity and set of relations that transcend the cultural assumptions and political imperatives of empire. And therefore to be *free*. (p. 201)

We can change the structures and institutions in which we work by becoming connected through *taxwāla* (love). We can do this by reconnecting with each other and the specific land-based knowledge of the places we inhabit.

I have witnessed the work of Indigenous scholars who have found ways to engage community oriented, land based pedagogies in academic institutions (Cote-Meek, 2014; Kelly, 2021; Tanaka, 2016; Voyageur & Fraser, 2020). Through working with an ethic of relational accountability and ecological reciprocity, they have influenced cultural changes in academic institutions. These changes are in relationships and processes that are often not considered or recognized as being a formal part of an “Indigenization” process. Instead they are subtly and profoundly changing the way we are in relationship with each other and the culture of education. For example, Vicki Kelly (2021) my academic supervisor who is an Anishinaabe/Métis Scholar in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University found that

The ethical relationality of learning how to be, and to hold knowledges in ways that are resonant with the law of the land, invites us to create human dispositions and, yes, institutions that are resonant or porous to being endogenous or Indigenous to our places. (p. 191)

When we are in a relationship with specific people and places, we find solutions (for many things, including reconciliation) that are rooted in the unique relationships we have with each other and importantly, with the place we inhabit.

I have also witnessed how many nurse educators who want to engage in reconciliation work are hesitant to do so in a system which creates boundaries about whose work it is to do. Alfred (2005) advises against casting the colonizer as the enemy that needs to be battled against with hatred but instead seeks to transform through compassion, teaching and love (p. 201). We (nurse educators of all identities) can choose to join with Alfred’s (2005) vision of reconciliation as “a revolution of the spirit” and with Tully’s (2018) ideas of transformative reconciliation by reconnecting ourselves to each other and the land through healing and love. I remember a teaching from Paul Willie (2019) given often during the field school. He reminds us that all we need to do to

fulfill our purpose while on earth is to replace fear with love. It takes courage to step into the unknown and take up more vulnerable and authentic ways of being in our work and our lives. Instead of being afraid of what we will lose by relinquishing a lifestyle fortified by disconnection, institutionalized power and even greed, we can imagine what is gained through believing in a life invigorated by reconnection and love.

I see transformative reconciliation as learning *taxwālapa* (to lift each other up with love). As a nurse educator I am reimagining the role of nursing from being caring and health promoting to that of bearing witness and healing with love. The transformation of education and nursing have been described as embodied love (hooks, 2010), love as a cosmic connection and moral imperative (Watson, 2020, p. 700), and through an Indigenous nurse's lens as love in action (Sheppard, 2020). This is what I understand is the meaning of *taxwālapa*. This type of love is universal; it is a mind/body soul connection that comes from a cosmic relationship with the *he'istalis* (the world around us) as sensual beings. hooks (2010) shares how she enacts an anti-racist, anti-classist and anti-sexist pedagogy through love in the classroom. She concludes:

Love in the classroom prepares teachers and students to open our minds and hearts. It is the foundation on which every learning community can be created. Teachers need not fear that practicing love in the classroom will lead to favoritism or competition between students. Love will always move us away from domination in all its forms. Love will always challenge and change us. (p. 163)

hooks expresses love as an embodied experience of eros in a passionate relationship with students and learning in a classroom.

John Borrows (2019) talks about love as an Indigenous ethic that is sorely lacking in "legal language and debate" (p. 27). He explains how *zaagi'idiwin* (love) is one of the Anishinaabe peoples' Seven Grandmother/Grandfather Teachings (p. 37). One important point he makes is how Anishinaabe concepts of love come from being in relationship with the land. For example, he describes how he learned about love from his mentor:

Basil taught me that love, like a river, should continually flow to sustain those around us. Its currents should be strong and lay down layers of nourishment, as the forces of life course through us and strengthen others. Love is about the free flow of support to others, which should be strongest

where it meets others. It allows us to fortify those who gather around us. It creates a rich, varied, diverse, and abundant life. (p. 39)

Borrows (2019) asks, when speaking about judges and politicians who are beginning to see the meaning of Indigenous law, “will they see this is a love story?” (p. 49)

I could ask the same of nurses and nurse educators as we try to reconcile our relationship with Indigenous people and knowledges. Will we see the love story? One that means being in a profound relationship with each other and the *he’istalis* (the world around us). I am learning to understand nursing as bearing witness to each other and healing through the enactment of *taxwala* (love) in the way it was meant to be understood from the language of the Indigenous people of the land that I inhabit. Transformative reconciliation is a way of being. It is not just a process or a goal that we want to achieve some day. When we see transformative reconciliation as bearing witness through *e ki la* (healing) to *naki’stamas* (make things right) by *taxwala* (lifting up and loving each other) then, in the words of the wise seagull quoted above, we are already there.

7.3.2. Being an Inhabitant

Another landscape I am traveling through, being an inhabitant, is about understanding that we are all people of the earth and the *he’istalis* (the world around us). The land on which we live shapes who we are. It shapes how we relate to it through our relationships. We walk differently on a cobblestone beach than we do on a paved road. We all have a relationship with the land no matter where we are from or how we live. The land knows us all as human beings. We all belong in the *he’istalis* (the world around us) whether we are displaced, migrant, visitor, settler, guest or any other way we choose to describe what our relationship with the land is. In the following passage, Greenwood (2019) describes the tension of belonging, or not belonging, experienced by those whose ancestors come from somewhere else:

It is a common contradiction: as “settlers”...we feel we have a right to be here, but we are also somehow wrong to be here. Our inhabitation is surrounded by an ignorance and a complicity that, in our colonial minds, we resist and only vaguely understand. We want a way of being here that feels justified, but are not sure what that would entail. (p. 366)

In order to address this dilemma, I choose to consider myself an inhabitant. This does not negate the relational accountability I have with the land, which is perhaps made more explicit by choosing words such as visitor, guest or even settler. What considering myself an inhabitant also does, is recognize the responsibility I have to live in an ecologically reciprocal way with the *he'istalis* (the world around us) and all the other inhabitants of this land who live in this particular place with me.

In my personal search for transformative reconciliation, I have thought carefully about my relationship to the land that I inhabit. This is an important part of doing the “soul work” of reconciliation and of understanding my own “homecoming story” (Greenwood, 2019, p. 373). How do I reconcile a lifestyle in which I have become accustomed to having too much, to using too much and to wasting too much? I am afraid for the health of our planet. I am afraid for my life, for yours, and for the lives of our children. On an early morning walk around “my property” in the middle of summer, I was reflecting on my need for belonging to the place I live in and what that means for reconciliation. I touched the dew-laden petals from my grandmother’s rose, remembering how we had transplanted a cutting from the rose bush that grew outside her home in West Vancouver over thirty years prior. Nothing has a fragrance quite like an old rose. I found a slug happily devouring a lettuce seedling, and I removed it, so that the lettuce had a chance to grow. A small black-capped chickadee in the cherry tree we planted when my daughter was born came close to me. I stood perfectly still for a moment as we considered each other’s presence. With two sharp tweets it scampered higher up the tree, well out of my reach, to enjoy its share of the tree’s bountiful gift. Before going back inside for breakfast, I filled two bowls, one with the last of the strawberries and the other with an overabundance of raspberries. I noticed the plantain growing up through the strawberries. Even though it is considered by many to be a weed, I had left it there because it is a useful medicine. My mother taught me to rub the leaves of a plantain plant on any sting or insect bite in order to relieve the pain. While living on this land, I have been given everything I need to live comfortably and to actualize my dreams. I am fulfilled. I am grateful to live where I live, to receive the gifts of this land, and to be healed through my relationship with it. But at what cost? How do I reconcile my relationship with the land that I inhabit? How can I live in reciprocity with the land, unless I feel a sense of belonging to it? How can I belong to it when I recognize that it is the traditional territory of a people who hold it in trust for the next generation.

Later that same summer, I was to receive a teaching about belonging from the plantain growing in my garden through the words of Robin Wall Kimmerer (2013) while reading her book *Braiding Sweetgrass*:

From the east coast to the edge of the west he had walked here. Our people have a name for this round-leafed plant: White Man's Footstep.

Just a low circle of leaves, pressed close to the ground with no stem to speak of, it arrived with the first settlers and followed them everywhere they went. It trotted along paths and through the woods, along wagon roads and railroads, like a faithful dog so as to be near them. Linnaeus called it *Plantago major*, the common plantain. Its Latin epithet *Plantago* refers to the sole of a foot.

At first the Native people were distrustful of a plant that came with so much trouble trailing behind. But Nanabozho's people knew that all things have a purpose and that we must not interfere with its fulfillment. When it became clear that White Man's Footstep would be staying on Turtle Island, they began to learn about its gifts. In spring it makes a good pot of greens, before summer heat turns the leaves tough. The people became glad for its constant presence when they learned that the leaves, when they are rolled or chewed to a poultice, make a fine first aid for cuts, burns, and especially insect bites. Every part of the plant is useful. Those tiny seeds are good medicine for digestion. The leaves can halt bleeding right away and heal wounds without infection.

This wise and generous plant, faithfully following the people, became an honored member of the plant community. It's a foreigner, an immigrant, but after five hundred years of living as a good neighbor, people forget that kind of thing. (Kimmerer, 2013, p. 213-214)

Now, when I cultivate the soil each year for the strawberries, I give the plantain a little more care and attention too. I trust that the land is our greatest teacher. My journey of transformative reconciliation means "[t]o learn to live an examined life in relation to place" (Greenwood, 2019, p. 370). I wonder how long it takes to belong.

Again, I was to receive a teaching, this time from Paul Willie (2020) when asked by a student nurse about belonging. This is what I understood from his words. We can reframe our thinking about belonging if we reframe our thinking about both time and relationships. If we do not see time as linear but rather as happening all at once, then our belonging to a place is not connected to our idea of how long we have lived there. Instead belonging becomes related to how we are in relationship with the land in every moment of our unfolding being in time and our being in space. Secondly, Paul Willie explained that our belongingness to land is neither an individual nor a collective thing, it

is both of these things in relationship with each other. The two cannot be separated. Paul Willie's teaching was that we need to be the best individual person we can be in order to have a good relationship with all our relatives, human and more than human. He stated that, "Life is family and we all belong" (2020). When you feel like you don't belong, you need to remember to let go of fear. He asks us to pay attention to ourselves and if we are feeling fear, or specifically fear that we don't belong, he suggests we ask ourselves what it is we need to learn? Now with the teachings from the land and from wise teachers such as Kimmerer (2013) and Paul Willie (2007; 2020), I have rephrased my question about belonging. I now ask what my responsibility is to the place where I belong. What I have learned is that we become an inhabitant by going on a soul journey and falling in love with the place in which we live. This is the love that draws me outside on an early morning walk, to be in awe of the beauty that surrounds me and to experience wonder in the colours of the sunrise reflected off the back of a beetle. Being an inhabitant means developing, through reverence, an ecologically reciprocal and relationally accountable connection to the specific land and the *he'istalis* (the world around us) that I belong to. As I have been taught, being an inhabitant means living with the knowledge and responsibility of knowing that we all belong.

7.3.3. Becoming Indigenist

Finally, the third landscape I travel through is becoming Indigenist. To do so means living with the integrity that comes from bearing witness and being an inhabitant. It is about embodying the teachings from the land, from the *he'istalis* (the world around us) and from *ni noxsola* (wise teachers) so that they become a part of who I am and how I practice as a nurse educator. It is about living my values in an ecologically reciprocal and relationally accountable way. As I have been taught by Paul Willie (2019) in the Wuikinuxv Bighouse, there are two laws we all must live by. One is to look after the environment. The other is to look after each other. There are two tasks this requires, to let go of fear and to practice unconditional love. This understanding has profoundly influenced my practice as a nurse, educator, and inquirer. In intentionally living this teaching, I began to embody what Shawn Wilson (2019) describes as an Indigenist way of doing reconciliation. He describes this as "acting to restore healthy relations...it requires that we act: treat all with respect, responsibility, and reciprocity." (Wilson & Hughes, 2019, p. 17). As nurse educators we have a responsibility to reconcile nursing

education, this will require a transformative shift. We have the potential to shift from thinking about reconciliation as just a theoretical idea or simply a discussion item on a bigger agenda. We can choose to engage in transformative reconciliation on a personal and communal level through all our relationships in a way that changes who we are. If we change and grow individually we also have the potential to heal communally as a profession.

We have grown as a profession before and we can do it again. As nurses we have engaged in political movements such as feminism and environmentalism in order to disrupt power inequities, protect our values, and fulfill our mandate to society. We have also struggled with how embracing ideologies such as feminism has resulted in spaces of exclusion. Some people worry that the feminist values attributed to nursing exclude men. When we view movements such as feminism, environmentalism and Indigenization as promoting radical inclusion with love (instead of exclusion and fear), then we have the ability to disrupt power imbalances and uplift all of us collectively. I imagine the possibilities of nurse educators taking up being Indigenist just as we have taken up being feminist. If we engage with what it truly means to be respectful of Indigenous knowledge and pedagogies perhaps we can enact a collective vision for transformative reconciliation in nursing education.

Imagining nursing education from an Indigenist perspective means reorienting the way we think of ourselves as nurses and as educators. It starts with reconnecting ourselves to the land and honoring the web of relations this involves. This goes further than just incorporating land-based and Indigenous pedagogies into nursing schools. It means reconsidering what it means to be human in relation to the *he'istalis* (the world around us). As a result, it also means reconsidering what it is to be a nurse. I have found that our present Euro-western understandings of what it is to be a nurse are too limited to contain an expanding consciousness that is respectful and inclusive of an Indigenous worldview. Even after centuries of scientific thought and empirical discovery, we cannot yet fully explain who we are as humans or where we come from. We have begun to recognize what otherworld views may offer in this regard. As a nurse educator I have come to re-imagine the four metaparadigms of nursing: environment, person, health and nurse. I have needed to reconsider how my understanding of the metaparadigms in nursing have been shaped by a worldview limited by the assumption that Euro western thought is superior to all other knowledge paradigms.

The “environment” in nursing is often seen as the nurse’s context of practice, which has been increasingly limited to that which exists inside a hospital. In nursing education, we have almost completely disconnected ourselves from *he’istalis* (the world around us). We do not incorporate *he’istalis* into how we teach and seldom even into what we teach. Health care has persisted in the environmentally unsustainable use of plastics and the disposal of biohazards. We justify the short-term gains (based on the essential services of saving lives) without paying proper attention to the long-term consequences to our environment and, with it, the loss of many more lives. I feel it is time for all nurses, including those who identify as settlers, immigrants, newcomers, Indigenous, or any other label, to do as Tully (2018), Robin Wall Kimmerer (2013) and others implore us to do and restore our covenant of reciprocity with the land. We can heal ourselves by embracing our responsibility to not only care for humans but to care for and live in reciprocity with *he’istalis* (the world around us) as well. Nursing students often lead the way by taking on projects that address the effects of health care on the environment and the environment’s effects on human health. I have witnessed Indigenous nurses, who have an understanding of *he’istalis* (the world around us), enact this healing presence in their practice. I have seen how Indigenous communities connect by healing through ceremony and gratitude to *he’istalis* (the world around us). As a nurse educator, I feel a great responsibility to reconcile the relationship nursing has with *he’istalis* (the world around us).

In my practice as a nurse educator I endeavor to engage in transformative reconciliation through healing our understanding of “the environment” by including our covenant of reciprocity as humans (Kimmerer, 2013) to *he’istalis*. I endeavor to develop an understanding that does not only see “the environment” as needing to be healed, or as a tool that can be manipulated to promote healing, but also as the source and force of healing for us all. I engage with students in learning to see ourselves as engaged in an ecologically reciprocal and accountable relationship with the *he’istalis* (the world around us). As Robin Wall Kimmerer (2013) explains:

We are all bound by a covenant of reciprocity: plant breath for animal breath, winter and summer, predator and prey, grass and fire, night and day, living and dying. Water knows this, clouds know this. Soil and rocks know they are dancing in a continuous giveaway of making, unmaking, and making again the earth. (p. 383)

She implores us in the closing of her book, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, to remember our responsibilities to the covenant of reciprocity. Everyone and everything has gifts and we all have a responsibility to share them. Everyone has a purpose for our time on this earth and we are compelled to fulfil it. Kimmerer states that it is time for us to “honor our responsibilities for all we have been given, for all that we have taken. It’s our turn now, long overdue” (p. 384). My vision for transformative reconciliation in nursing education includes a philosophy of healing that is grounded in the land we inhabit and our reciprocal and interdependent relationship with *he’istalis* (the world around us). We can do this by seeing ourselves (for lack of a better English word) as earthlings “in the way that we are all full inhabitants and in a reciprocal relationship with *he’istalis*.”

Along with reconciling what is meant by the metaparadigm of the environment in nursing, I am re-imagining the idea of *person and health* in relationship to *he’istalis* (the world around us). I am letting go of reductionist ideologies that conceptualize the person as an individual that is separate from experiences of health and the environment. Instead, I am developing an ecological understanding of healing that is holistic and focused on wellness. By uncovering the humanistic and anthropomorphic assumptions embedded in nursing philosophy about the meta concept of *person*, I am undoing the ways my own understanding of my body has been inscribed with colonial, often racist, and stigmatizing theories, frameworks, and the practices they support. Instead, I am developing an ethically relational philosophy of what it is to be a person that is radically inclusive of all ways of being, knowing and experiencing *he’istalis* (the world around us). I am wondering what it means to live in I/Thou relationships, not only with other people but with *he’istalis* (the world around us) (Blenkinsop & Scott, 2017). I am re-imagining an understanding of the person as embedded within relationship and this living web of relationships as a community within a community. Cajete (2015) conceptualizes community as a way of being and a living pedagogical process for becoming. If we understand people as community and also as inhabitants of the earth (earthlings) in relationship with *he’istalis*, then we can imagine people/community as earthlings within a far greater cosmos or a multiverse (Cajete, 1994). Seeing people/community/earthlings as a relationally accountable and ecologically reciprocal ethic of being also brings into sight the healing power of being in relationship.

Becoming Indigenist has led me to reimagine the metaparadigm of health as a reconnection to the healing power of *he’istalis* (the world around us). This way of seeing

person and health in relationship with each other and *he'istalis* is about seeing people as relationships and relationships as having healing energy. There is no separation of the nurse from person or from health in a mutually engaged healing relationship. Re-imagining the paradigm of health therefore becomes part of understanding the healing potential of being a person/community/earthling who belongs to and in *he'istalis*. Healing ourselves means we can be compassionate and caring with all our relations (human and more than human) no matter how different or threatening they might be to our sense of self and our need for control. When we enter a relationship with the humility of understanding ourselves, our own need for healing and the potential of the human spirit and *he'istalis* to heal, then we are engaging in transformative reconciliation.

Becoming Indigenist has changed the way I think about the fourth metaparadigm of *nurse*. I needed to start with freeing myself from the limits that I have been socialized in the Euro western tradition to think of as nursing. It is time for me (and I believe all nurses) to shed the archetypes of the lady of the lamp, the angel of mercy and the handmaiden. Can we move forward from the symbol of a nurse with a lantern caring for the sick and injured and transform ourselves into something ancient and something new? Can we become more useful in joining with the healing energy that is needed in the cosmos today? I asked myself as a nurse educator and as a human the four questions: who am I, where do I come from, where am I going, and why am I here? I began to reconsider what it meant to be a nurse before we were severed by the medical model, which disconnects our bodies from our minds and our spirits. I asked who were we before we were co-opted by the business model of health care, which commodifies our relationships with patients and clients and disconnects us from our human potential to care and promote health and wellness. I wondered who were we before we were subjected to a behaviorist education model, which reduces us to cause and effect, to information in and information out. I searched for what our purpose as nurses is now. I want to know who do we need to become? I believe we have the potential as a profession to reconcile our moral imperative to care for and promote the health of individuals, communities and societies (Watson, 2020, p. 703) with the ancient covenant of reciprocity that we have with the planet (Kimmerer, 2013). Perhaps we need to take a radical leap and let go of the idea of what a “nurse” is, in order to break free of modernistic, humanistic and anthropomorphic frameworks and assumptions. Are we ready to “slash out” the word “nursing” as proposed by Jean Watson (1999, p. xxii), in

order to adopt a more inclusive and reconciled view of what nursing is? This would be a complete metamorphosis, one in which we let go of the old paradigms of what it means to be a nurse. We would create new relationships and roles that were attuned to the healing potential of the people and land we are in relationship with. I believe that nursing by any name and practice has the potential to hold a philosophy that includes all of *he'istalis* (the world around us) in a healing journey, to *na'ki'stamas* (to make things right) and *taxwala'pa* (to lift up and love each other).

It is time for us as humans, as nurses and as educators to gather around a communal fire and share the energy of our being with the energy of the *he'istalis* (the world around us). When we sit in unity around a communal fire as humans have been doing for eons, we have the potential to reconnect with the universal human spirit and the healing potential of *he'istalis*. I believe we can engage in transformative reconciliation if we are willing to re-imagine the very foundation of what nursing is, and what we really mean when we proclaim to be caring and health promoting. Can we transcend our history as nurses in order to hold onto an old truth, a cosmic truth that is connected to a universal healing knowledge beyond the limits of being a nurse? Nursing is a living (intersubjective) complex practice that is filled with paradox. We have the potential to transform ourselves when we teach nursing in the way that I believe it is meant to be enacted. Education has the potential to heal when we create learning spaces together with vulnerability, courage and love. Through my relationships, I have become more in sync with the generalities and specifics of Indigenous knowledge, protocols, and pedagogies. As I learned from the people and *he'istalis* (the world around us), I became better able to put what I was learning into my practice as an educator. My journey led me towards *na'ki'stamas* (to make things right) and *taxwala'pa* (to lift up and love each other). It is about experiencing the teachings of the *Sisiutl* by embracing ambiguity and complexity. I have learned that we are all on a sacred journey of finding our *yiyak'wima* (gifts from the Creator) so we can become *synala* (whole). I have learned this from working with *ni noxsola*, with students and in communities. I have learned this from the *he'istalis* (the world around us). I have learned this from traveling through the landscapes of bearing witness, being an inhabitant and becoming Indigenous. Transformative reconciliation in nursing education happens through co-creating healing learning spaces. This is the fire song that I have been taught and that I have been given a sacred obligation to share.

7.4. Dancing my Song

We have come a long way together on our journey and, as we rest by the fire, I can feel how the stones have soaked up the heat, giving off their own warmth now. If it gets too hot, you can move away. If you want more warmth, move in closer. There is always room by the fire. I am moving now around the fire in a counter-clockwise direction, as I have been taught to do by the *ni noxsola*. I am dancing an earth dance and singing a fire song. It is time to share some stories about how I have experienced co-creating healing learning spaces for transformative reconciliation in my practice as a nurse educator. There is no one-size-fits-all approach. There is no how-to book or checklist to follow. What is useful to each community must come through being in a respectful relationship with the land and the people of the community within which we each live and work. I share these stories with you imagining we are sitting around a communal fire. You will notice that every now and then, I throw on a new log and the fire cools for a moment until the flames reignite and it heats up again. The logs I put into the fire are the principles and values I hold. I will give them names. As they burn, they are turned into energy, and they change their form. The energy of who I am remains constant but, like logs in a fire, my identity is transformed by the relationships I have. Come, let the communal fire warm you while the sun sets on our journey together. The darkness with all its mysteries is closing in around us. Tomorrow, a new sunrise will light our travels as we go our separate ways.

The first log on the fire is *nala*. It means “being brave enough to do something or having courage”. Oh, but be careful! Along with courage comes vulnerability. Courageous learning spaces are full of paradoxes. We need to feel safe enough so that we can be brave enough to learn together. Can a nurse make a patient safe, or a teacher make a student safe? Transformative reconciliation takes courage because it is about working towards a mutual vision that might feel risky. We talk about being culturally competent, culturally safe, or having cultural humility. Yet I experience unknowing rather than competence; it is risky to be safe and humility leaves as soon as you try to claim that you have it.

Here is a story about the paradox of safety and vulnerability. As a nursing instructor, every time I walk into a classroom, I feel vulnerable. I never know what will happen. I purposefully try not to be armed with a powerpoint presentation full of details

to cover and I never have a solid agenda. Last year, I started each class with a story. The first was a local story from the K'omoks nation. I wasn't able to find a representative who could come to the class, but I asked for permission from a local Elder and shared a story that was published on the First Nations' official website. After that, I shared fables, fairy-tales and folk stories from all around the world. I was not sure what all the students thought about spending the first 15 minutes or so of class listening to what some people might call "children's" stories. I was worried that some would see it as a waste of time, but I saw it as a way to help us all settle into the learning experience together and to reconnect us with a universal type of wisdom. I felt a desire to start our class in the imaginative landscapes of traditional stories that are the teaching stories of a people. It takes courage to be seen as not knowing and instead to co-create a learning space where anyone and anything can be a teacher.

Having courage as an educator means letting go of control over the learning experience. Education designed to control will teach us how to think and to conform. It is not education for belonging and freedom. I am weary of an education system that can promote Euro Western pedagogies and knowledge systems over all others. Education designed for freedom will give us the power to re imagine ourselves and our worldviews and to ultimately find our *yiyak'wima* (gifts from the Creator). It is my hope that this will give us purpose and belonging. Letting go of control is difficult in nursing education when we fear and project our fear onto students that "if you don't know what you are doing, you might end up killing your patient". It feels much more comfortable to be told what we need to know, to learn it well and then to think we have all the tools needed to act in a crisis. The reality is that nursing is never straightforward. There is no universally sufficient algorithm or clinical pathway for how to be a nurse. It is not, as we have been socialized to believe, the uncritical carrying out of doctors' orders as directed like a handmaiden to the medical model. It is not the self-sacrificing disembodied angel of mercy that can do no wrong. Nursing is a complex practice that draws on a multitude of diverse philosophical traditions. Can we shed some of our old frameworks and by doing so the potential of colonial oppression imbued in them and aspire to take up expanded ways of knowing and being that is enacted as a wise practice?

Co-creating healing learning spaces means embracing our unknowing with humility and having the courage to be vulnerable. When we do this, we invite others to also let go of the need to be right, the need to always know what to do, and the need to

be in control. Indeed I learned this when I sought to become an expert diabetes educator as in the story told In Chapter Three on pages 73 and 74. My experience was that no matter how well I learned one area of practice, I still needed to embrace my unknowing and to engage with the mysteries of life. I needed to find a way together of being in healing relationships. Just as we ask students to be open and vulnerable, we must also give up our own need for control and join with our students as co-learners. There is a paradox in the experience of letting go of control and of not being the expert. I feel it now, as I try to share my learnings from this inquiry without writing them as a list or a checkbox that tells you how to co-create healing learning spaces. Learning how to be in a healing relationship cannot be taught with a how-to list or a checklist of communication skills. Communication tools can often work to build an armour that distances us as nurses from others as patients. When nurses and students take up that armour they can often experience ethical and moral dissonance. This experience can lead away from healing and into burnout. Instead we can choose to engage with the complexity of being in mutually healing relationships as person/community/earthling. When we allow ourselves to be open and vulnerable in our relationships, we can discover the reverence, joy and love that can be experienced as deep learning. This is what it means to learn without predetermined outcomes but instead with potentials and possibilities. Come in closer to the light of the fire, the darkness around us is closing in a bit more now.

Let's warm ourselves with a log called transparency. Inviting difference into the learning experience requires an ability to make power dynamics as transparent as possible. Transparency is needed to confront the systemic forms of racism that assume one type of knowledge and one type of person's knowledge is more important than another's. Transparency means bringing students into the conversation about what institutional accountability and relational accountability means and how they can be in conflict with each other. It invites students to engage in the power relations found within nursing education, in order to make the hidden curriculum more visible.

Co-creating healing learning spaces means letting difference and diversity stand in their own inherent sovereignty. I have needed to overcome my discomfort with conflict and my need to avoid or resolve it. We teach that holding two conflicting ideas is called cognitive dissonance, a state of discomfort that needs to be resolved. Instead, I embrace ambiguity as I consider it to have learning potential and the possibility of healing within it. As an instructor, I endeavor to co-create a learning space that is fraught with ambiguity

and, as a result, also vulnerability. This opens us up to the possibility of unknowing and unlearning with the potential to learn and grow anew. I knew that I had been successful when I received anonymous feedback from a student who said, “She is very ambiguous, I don’t know if that is a good thing or a bad thing.”

Here is another log. It is called compassion. As we watch it burn we can imagine what it would look like to teach in a way that is compassionate to ourselves and our students. What if we didn’t feel a need to prove ourselves to our students and in turn didn’t expect our students to prove themselves to us? What if we replaced the competitiveness embedded in Euro-western education systems with a collaborative and cooperative process? On the first day of a class, I try to avoid talking about “expectations” as I orient students to the learning experience. Expectations can often enforce hierarchies and can create disconnection from being in relationship with each other. For example, instead of saying, “I expect you to be fully present and put aside your cell phones for the three hours you are in class”, I might say something like, “I hope that you are so engaged by each other and the learning in this class that you will be as present as it is possible for your learning to occur given all that may be going on in your lives as well”. I ask students to consider what it will take to create that level of engagement? I will often invite students to figure out what the rules are, which ones need to be followed, and which ones we follow just because that is the way we have always done things. Doing this collaboratively can help to raise all of our consciousness (conscientization) and open up new possibilities for learning. The students often help me to uncover my own blind spots and imagine new ways for co-creating a learning space.

A particular challenge I encounter is avoiding the neoliberal competitive assumptions that are embedded in Euro-western forms of evaluating learning. I have previously discussed how I do this in the field school, but I have to acknowledge that I have yet to find a way that works in all of the courses that I teach. I work hard to balance the amount of structure that I provide with the amount of freedom the students have to design and provide their own assessment criteria and processes. This includes how they will receive feedback, from whom, and when. The more freedom a student has in their own assessment processes, the more relevant and meaningful the learning experience will be. Grades provide a false sense of security for educators and students, in the belief that they can prove something measurable has been learned (Blum, p.10, 2021). They also encourage students to avoid risk and vulnerability in their learning and instead focus

on the safest path of figuring out what the instructor expects them to know (Blum, p. 13, 2021). I have found students are often afraid of not knowing what the expectations are and can be distrustful of the power they are given to self-grade. Incorporating assessment processes that don't get in the way of the freedom to learn is an ongoing tension for me. Even in the healing learning spaces that happen during the field school we are unable to completely free ourselves from the feeling that there are invisible expectations we need to measure ourselves up against. I will burn another log that relates to this tension later.

The fire needs some more logs. Let's throw in "relevance", "meaningfulness", and "useful learning". Making learning experiences and assignments useful invites excellent potential for learning. However, I have noticed that when students have the freedom to take on assignments that are useful, it can create all kinds of unanticipated problems. In part, this is because there is an artificial theory-practice divide in our courses, and we all start to get a little confused. Useful projects require us to be in relationship with the community, and that means letting go of control of what (or how) we will learn.

Here is another story about letting go of control and learning to be in relationship with the community. I often have students who, when learning about issues such as discrimination in health care in a theory class, want to take action and advocate for change. Without the supportive structures of a practice course, where they are usually working under the guidance of an organization or agency, all kinds of ethical and safety issues can arise. My first encounter with this problem was when a group of students decided to go to the local pubs to raise awareness about the "date rape drug". Their advocacy hit the newspapers before I knew about it. This was many years ago. Now I know how important it is to have conversations about ethics, safety, and access when working on meaningful and useful projects that cross the theory-practice divide. Did you feel that burst of heat as the courage and compassion logs rolled in on each other? The fire is heating up and burning through the bigger wood now.

I will add two more big logs "synergy" and "synchronicity". Into the flames they go, causing a lot of sparks. The fire is going to get really hot now. I have mentioned the sacred in synergistic and synchronistic relationships. How do we engage in sacred relationships with students, colleagues, community members and even our educational institutions? I have experienced this yearning especially after I return from the field

school and become acculturated back into my every day life and world. I try hard to hold onto the sacred in my relationships and engage whole heartedly with the complexity and ambiguity of being able to do so. Synergy and synchronicity are about being relationally accountable. Here is where the tension with grading in healing learning spaces comes in again. How can we be relationally accountable when we are expected to assess and therefore judge a student using grades? How can we decide on learning outcomes and create assessment activities before we have even met the students we will be working with? Do we think that every student has the same learning needs and style? What do we know of the students' gifts and experiences and what they might contribute to the learning experience? How do we create a learning experience where every student is not expected to begin at the same place, to walk on the same path, to cover the same distance, or end up at the same destination? Indigenous pedagogies that support transformational learning require us to let go of the need to grade students (Tanaka, 2016 p. 198- 191). There is still much to be thought about when it comes to evaluating students. I continue to look for ways in pedagogical scholarship that offer strategies to focus on learning and decenter the Euro-western focus on grades. I am wondering when the institutional structures will support some alternative pedagogies by decentering grading criteria for measuring and rewarding student success. How do we honour and nurture each of our learning spirits (Battiste, 2013)? How do we uplift the sacredness of the teaching/learning relationship. Enacting Indigenous pedagogies within our current educational milieu is a topic of ongoing trial and discovery through which many Indigenous scholars continue to patiently guide us.

In respect of those who show us the way to engage with the sacred in our learning spaces, let's enjoy the warmth that is still coming from the synergy and synchronicity logs. I am thinking about what it means to respond to the existing energy in the learning space, rather than having a preset agenda that is organized according to the clock or a class syllabus. Wow, that vulnerability log just flared up again. To be in sync with my students, I need to share who I am as an instructor. I need to share my values and acknowledge my own subjectivity. I need to walk into the margins of my discomfort and be transparent and vulnerable there. This is the beginning of developing a rapport with the students. If it is done with integrity, it will lead to the trust needed for everyone to bring their whole and authentic selves into the learning space. The learning space that I value is one that allows us to be human, to be fallible, and to prioritize our

relationships with each other. Importantly, I believe that we need to create learning spaces that are holistically (mentally, physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually) healthy. There are ways that we can intentionally create such spaces in the classroom, such as with ceremony, with mindfulness, with story, and by learning on the land. These methods require the disruption of how we usually do things and the courage to try something new. Why is it so difficult for us as nurses, who embody caring and health promotion in practice, to do so in a classroom? We have lost our way by taking up the competitive and hierarchical values that are so deeply ingrained in our academic institutions.

Ouch! I just was burned by a spark from the fire reminding me of the need to evaluate again. I am feeling the warmth of the synchronicity log and wondering how I can better structure the relevance of pedagogical outcomes and the timing around assignments. When it comes to assignments, some students struggle to do what is asked of them. Instead, they explore all kinds of interesting but unrelated paths, and they exhaust themselves in order to hand something in on time. They sometimes apologize for it not being their best work. There are others who will procrastinate and then, at the last minute, they hand in something that brilliantly meets all the criteria of the assignment, but we both know that they have not learned very much. Some will have a life event that will disrupt their plans no matter how organized or engaged they have been from the beginning. Just as I ask students to engage with me in examining the protocols around designing assessments, I ask them to do the same around external structures such as due dates and assessment rubrics. Even when considering things like managing the workload (my own and theirs) and being fair and accountable to each other, I find there is a lot of room for flexibility. Valuing kindness, compassion, and caring in teaching opens possibilities for the freedom to learn.

Into the fire goes another log. This one is about “being relationships” and not just “being in relationships”. I have talked about how healing as transformative reconciliation is about being relationships. It is not only what I teach, it is how I teach. It is not uncommon for students in their third year community practice course to come to me with concerns about what their role is as a nurse. Students often feel that there is an expectation that they engage with the community agencies and clients in a certain way. This often involves doing an assessment of their health needs in order to be useful in addressing them. When I find students grappling with their role, I consider it time for a

clam digging teaching (as discussed in Chapter Two, p. 55 and 56). I ask why they assume that they need to address a health issue? I ask what would happen if they didn't feel the need to ask questions about health needs or design an activity. What would happen if they went there just to be in a health promoting relationship? The students often struggle with the lack of direction and ambiguity of what this means for their practice but sometimes they are willing to give it a try. When they have the courage to let go of the expectation of doing nursing and instead engage with people authentically by joining with them in whatever they are doing they have the potential to be in healing relationships. For example, a student may engage in an art project at a transition house. They may join in for lunch at a senior's centre. They may participate in exercise classes at an afterschool program. Often, when they are willing to let go of "doing nursing", they are surprised by how much they are able to learn. They are able to listen to and for other people's concerns in the stories they hear. They can also often discover the potential of deeper understandings and mutual alliances with the people they are engaged with. What I find is that students change from wanting to fix people by addressing their health needs to wanting to engage with people in healing relationships. Sometimes they find ways to engage with people in addressing health inequities and the social determinants of health. Sometimes they also recognize the healing benefits of simply bearing witness to someone else's story. When I am prepared to let go of the expectation that students should demonstrate their nursing competencies in concrete and measurable ways, they then have the freedom to transform their practice and engage with the paradox and complexity of what it means to be in a healing relationship.

The fire is burning through its own fuel quickly now; we will need another log to keep it going. This is a large fir log. I will put it bark side down so it can simmer slowly. This log is called "accountability". It has been here all along in the teachings of the *Sisiutl* and in the paradoxes we have discussed so far. Relational forms of accountability are imbued with ambiguity. This log simmers away slowly, always expecting us to grapple with complexity whether we like it or not. Learning spaces that are full of relational accountability are also inclusive learning spaces. They are inclusive of contention, contingency, and difference. A desire to be inclusive, without considering difference and exclusion, can become wrought with issues of good intentions. In education we continue to try to make room for equity-seeking and racialized populations to feel included but

only if they are able to accommodate to the colonizing frames and structures we inevitably impose on them.

As a nursing instructor, I have a particular responsibility to “bear witness” in the way that I have been taught by my Indigenous mentors. In a classroom setting bearing witness is something that happens when I hear and share first-hand stories, films, literature and other media resources from First Nations people. I am also accountable to guide students as they develop the skills of bearing witness. This means learning to hear a story with an open heart that does not discount or judge the lived experience of others. It also means considering how the stories we hear resonate with us personally and collectively. Bearing witness means taking responsibility for learning to carry the story in a good way and learning to share the significance and personal impact the stories can have on us. When we respectfully bear witness to what is learned it becomes more than a happening in the past but through our personal transformation it becomes an action in the future. As an educator I have an ethical responsibility to co-create learning spaces that guide others into understanding the responsibility and accountabilities of bearing witness (Cote-Meek, 2014, p. 250).

I remain committed to co-creating learning spaces where we travel through the landscapes of bearing witness together because I understand the even greater harms in not having the courage to do so. This is an area of ongoing turmoil for me. I share in the struggle of how to engage in conversations about truth and reconciliation in the classroom without re-creating the very ingrained power structures that we are trying to dismantle. I do not find that sitting around the fire right now sharing what I have learned from co-facilitating the field school is the best time or place for a fulsome discussion on the dimensions of what we call anti-racist education. It feels like it would be a disruption of the sacred space we have created together. However, I would like to share a little about how teaching the field school has influenced the way I orientate myself in a classroom. What I have learned from co-facilitating the field school is that traveling through all three of the landscapes is best done in land-based Indigenous-led learning spaces. Indigenous pedagogies hold space for this learning in a healing way that is connected to ceremony and *he’istalis* (the world around us). If I cannot bring the students to learn from and in community, I do my best to bring community in to how we learn within the classroom. Every move I make to contribute to a healing learning space, in a complexly diverse and often charged environment comes from the way I have

embodied the teachings from the field school. I begin whenever possible by co-teaching with an Elder. I respect that the Elders who have chosen to work in educational institutions bring a very specialized knowledge with them about how to navigate the complexities of walking in both worlds. We start by grounding ourselves with the students in ceremony. I endeavor to be transparent and open, honouring our personal and collective vulnerabilities with compassion. I am intentional in the way I engage with knowing and unknowing when I respond to and correspond with students. I embrace the teachings of the *Sisiutl* in engaging with complexity, ambiguity and unknowing. The teaching that happens in a classroom is imperfect but there is ongoing learning that can expand beyond it. I am realizing that there is, and helping to further create, a community around this learning where students can continue to grapple with their own transformations.

Cote-Meek (2014), whose research focused on the experience of Indigenous students in transformative and decolonizing learning spaces, suggests offering students the opportunity to debrief their experiences together in a “community of memory (p. 152)” with an Indigenous knowledge holder and/or faculty member can be very helpful. At the same time Cote-Meek warns about the double bind of providing additional cultural supports for students who identify as Indigenous. While it is found to be supportive it can also further create a shadow side by continuing to stigmatize them as victims. We try to offer and encourage all students opportunities to engage with ongoing learning opportunities, debriefing sessions, Elder support, and wellness -focused activities as they take up the role of bearing witness to and for themselves and others in a community of learning.

I am interested in developing a community of learning spaces like at the picnic described on pages 187 and 188, where there is the opportunity for spaces of both inclusion and exclusion. These are spaces where we can grapple with identity, assimilation, hybridity, and sovereignty. Healing learning spaces are more than just spaces for critical reflection about diversity and difference; they include liminal spaces for deep reflection and action because of the differences and diversity of the people within them. In healing learning spaces, differences are seen as a resource for transformation and spiritual growth because of the paradox and ambiguity required to cultivate them within an ecology of diverse relationships.

The fire is smoldering well now, we have time to really think about relational accountability in education and who we are accountable to. How do we navigate accountability to students, communities and the educational institution? I often find that policies, such as safety protocols and confidentiality agreements, that are intended to manage risk and reduce institutional liability, can also have unintended harms. I have experienced the impact of increased formality in developing and enacting policy around confidentiality. The result is feeling increasingly isolated and disconnected from my colleagues as we refrain from discussing our practice issues and experiences because, by doing so, we may be breaching the confidentiality rights of our students. We also become less concerned with important personal challenges and events that may be happening in each other's lives as we avoid the risk of sharing them in case we are breaching confidentiality or being accused of "gossiping". Peggy Chinn (2004), who writes from a feminist perspective, challenges the notion of gossip and its negative connotations:

Gossip is linked with women's talk. Gossip, like women, once had a positive meaning that has now been distorted to a negative meaning. Originally, the word gossip was a noun for the woman who assisted the midwife at the time of birth. The gossip was the labor coach, and after birth she went into the community to spread the news about the birth. She was considered a very wise woman who could communicate the wisdom of the stars. (p. 92)

I have found that the relationships between faculty members, and between students and faculty members, are becoming more professional and less authentic. This has had devastating effects on the relational aspects of our curriculum. As nurse educators, it is time for us to reclaim our right to hold meaningful conversations and to "gossip" in a way that is relationally accountable within the community of our practice.

Can we reorient ourselves to be relationally accountable with each other? Relationally accountable communication would mean that we share what is useful in a relationship with an intended positive purpose. We share where the information is coming from and we own our own subjectivity in the interpretation and in the meaning we make of its relevance. This does not mean that people do not have a right to their privacy or that privacy is not respected. Relationally accountable communication means engaging with complexity and ambiguity with compassion. What it means is that we trust each other to navigate the complexities of relationships within a specific context. It means orienting ourselves to our relationships and reconciling our relationships within

our institutions. It may mean challenging universal and authoritarian institutional policies and practices that limit our ability to be in accountable relationships with each other. Relational accountability is a collaborative rather than competitive process, and it ultimately results in building healthy communities.

Another important question to ask is how educators can be ethically relational and relationally accountable with Indigenous people and communities when we include Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing in nursing education. The questions I have asked myself about being relationally accountable with my inquiry in Chapter Four on page 121, are similar to what I would like to ask all of us now. How do we engage with Indigenous people and their knowledge systems in an ethically relational and accountable way? What is the nature of Indigenous knowledge and how, when, and by whom should it be taught? Which ways of doing, being, and knowing are for us to share, and which are sacred? How do we avoid appropriating ideas, or imposing our ideas on Indigenous knowledge systems in such a way that they are reified by or within those systems? In Chapter Six, I shared how I grappled with these dilemmas during the field school and now I would like to talk about how I grappled with them in the larger context of nursing education.

In previous chapters, I discussed how my role within reconciliation is not about sharing specific Indigenous teachings. My role as a nurse educator in transformative reconciliation is about reshaping the whole experience of education. It is about reconnecting education to identity (who we are) and the land (where we come from). I would like to suggest that we be thoughtful about inviting Indigenous knowledge holders into the classroom in the first place. We often expect Indigenous people to translate their knowledge into the institutional context. Is it even possible to do this when the power dynamics are inevitably skewed in favor of Euro-western centric values? Is it possible for us to instead be respectful guests in an Indigenous space? Can we, as Frank Johnson (2006) suggested years ago, integrate nursing education into Indigenous culture, land, and communities? We are doing this when we go to learn from Indigenous people on the land, in the community, and in the Bighouse. This takes a commitment to the relationship but my experience shows that it is truly possible. We can do it in big ways such as through the field school but it can be done in small ways as well. We can find ways to connect with the land and with Indigenous people locally, in our communities, and on their terms. As a person who has experienced the privilege of existing colonial power

structures, it is my responsibility to attend to power imbalance, challenge the way we have always done things, and the lens through which we interpret our actions. Instead of asking Indigenous knowledge holders to translate their knowledge (and the way that they share it) into the existing structures of education, we can find ways to co-create learning spaces and contexts that offer genuine opportunities to learn with Indigenous people in an Indigenous way.

Here is a big log; it will keep us warm for a while. It is about our relationship with the land and ecological reciprocity. I have talked about how important reconnection with the land is for nurses and nursing education. But how do we reconnect with the land in an institution that has become so disconnected? How do we acknowledge the land we are learning on within the context of our political and social histories? I have been taught to recognize, not only the Indigenous people who belong to the land, but also the responsibilities we all share with the honour of living on and within it. When we officially recognize the traditional territories, we also have the opportunity to speak to our relationship with, and responsibility to, the land that we inhabit. If we are going to heal our relationship with the land, we need to find every opportunity in nursing education to let the land be our teacher. I am learning to find ways of connecting students with the natural world, including time spent outside in reflection, practical experiences in the natural world, and bringing natural materials into the institution to learn from. I have purposefully encouraged land-based learning throughout our curriculum. Starting in first year, students learn about wellness in the Bighouse, on the land, with the Elders in our college, and with other local knowledge holders. In community practice courses, students learn from farmers and environmental activists about the connection between land and health. I have taken students outside to practice observation in an inquiry class, mindfulness in a health promotion class, or a team building game in a leadership class. I have incorporated ceremony and acts of gratitude for the land into who I am and, as a result, through the way that I teach. I have become more intentional and courageous about how I go about it, even when others question my priorities. Increasingly, the way my mother taught early childhood education has become connected to the way I teach nursing. With reconnecting myself and my practice to the environment, I am becoming whole again. How do we make sure that students, instructors, and administrators know how important and relevant land-based learning is for healing? How can we embrace the full healing potential of nursing by reconnecting ourselves to the land?

I have another story that might be useful here. I once had a group of students express interest in organizing a cleanup of dirty needles in the local park. They wanted to do the cleanup with their family and friends, including their children, because they saw the opportunities for learning and being health promoting together. I was wary about the regulations and safety risks that may encumber the students' plans but I decided to let them carry on with exploring their project idea anyway. Learning in the community can be chaotic and complex, and the learning can happen in surprising ways. The students were not able to achieve their goal in the way that they had envisioned. However, in the end, these students learned more about poverty, addiction, safety, and institutional liability than any of us had expected. The needles were cleaned up, but by park employees. The students ended up in the park with their families to share good food and to play. The more freedom we are able to give students to design their own projects and learning experiences, the more meaningful, relevant, and useful the learning experiences become. Often the pedagogy lies within the process itself and it can proceed in unexpected and exciting ways .

I have learned in the field school that a connection with the natural world is a healing pedagogy. I have experienced how going into the river as a cleansing ceremony fills my senses and heals my wounds. When I touch the river with the intention to heal, its persistent roar fills my ears, its moist air fills my nose, its constant movement fills my eyes, and I take it all into my body and become a part of it. The cosmic healing energy of connection to the natural world is a common human experience that is beyond theorizing. When healing is grounded in our relationship, in the land, when we are the relationship, then our learning is so deep that we cannot feel it, touch it or see it because it has already become a part of us. In learning from the land, you can accept the gift of learning like a child who has not yet come to interrupt or interpret their experience, you are just absorbed by the experience.

Imagine a nursing education that was connected deeply to the land. Imagine if we started by learning from the Indigenous people who come from where we live, whose language tells the teaching stories of where we live, whose knowledge holds the healing potential of where we live. We would learn through ceremony and with gratitude. We would understand the reciprocity of our relationship with and live in an ecologically responsible way within *he'istalis* (the world around us). In order to heal our environment and to be healed by it, we need to deepen our relationship with the land. The land would

teach us how to develop an ecological sensibility for nursing that would profoundly inform our practice in a deeply relational way. If we became reconnected with the land and *naki'stamas* (made things right) with all our relations we would become *synala* (whole).

Imagine a nursing education that is ethically relational and accountable to the communities in which we learn. In this type of education, all people, their knowledge, types of knowing, and ways of knowing would be valued and seen as being in relationship with each other. We would see ourselves as belonging to the community of people we were learning with. We would not decontextualize knowledge from the people it comes from or belongs to. We would bear witness to our collective stories in accountable relationships with one another. We would understand ourselves as people/community/earthling. If we are our communities, then healing our communities benefits all things, and the health of our communities reflects our own health. We would *taxwalaḗa* (lift all of us up together with love). If we *taxwalaḗa*, we would become *synala* (whole).

Imagine a nursing education that nourished our mind, body and spirit. One where we felt free and encouraged to be our whole authentic selves. In this learning space we would be open to taking risks and we would be willing to be vulnerable enough to grow and to transform in powerful ways. Learning would be a collaborative journey of inquiry with the intention of finding our *yiyakwima* (gifts from the Creator). We would uncover who we are, where we come from, where we are going and why we are here. We would be unencumbered by the fear of not measuring up or not knowing what was expected of us. We would be brave enough to be comfortable in our unknowing and with the alchemy of our very becoming. We would be courageous enough to engage with paradox and complexity. As nurses and educators we would enact a wise practice with the integrity of being what we know and deeply knowing what we do. We would feel useful, joyful, and fulfilled. It would become a sacred practice.

It is coming to that time of night where the warmth from the fire has seeped into our bones. We have become comfortable here, nestled in around the rocks. Our faces are all glowing softly in the fading light of the fire. I am at peace with you here in this circle and grateful for the love that I feel. Tomorrow we start climbing again, each on our own path. My path is towards co-creating healing learning spaces for transformative

reconciliation in nursing education. I am grateful to those of you who have accompanied me on this profoundly significant and life fulfilling journey. The load is much lighter when we carry it together and when we do what we can to help each other find our way. I have shared this earth dance and fire song in the hope that it adds genuine warmth for you and tinder for the collective fire needed to heal all our relations.

7.5. H^{al}akas'la

I have been taught that *Halakas'la*, the Kwakwaka'wakw word for “goodbye”, means more than that. It means, “Go in your greatness. Choose what you take from our time together. Choose how it will change you”. This is how my journey towards transformational reconciliation in nursing education has changed me. I am not the same person who started walking up the mountain years ago looking to heal the pain of disconnection and trauma I felt in the world. Writing this dissertation has been a process of healing in itself. During this time, I have had to consider who I am, where I come from, where am I going, and why I am here. I have been on a journey to find our *yiyakwima* (gifts from the Creator). I have had to both forgive and celebrate many aspects of my identity as I have reconsidered my personal history, who my ancestors are and how they have influenced who I have become. I have woven, unwoven and rewoven my blanket as a nurse and nurse educator in order to see how my education has influenced who I have become. Throughout my journey, I have found places of belonging and freedom. I have also found myself in places and relationships that have threatened both. I have witnessed racist ideologies and acts and have learned to stand up and speak up. I have been in spaces where people considered non-Indigenous are not wanted and I have had to quiet down. I have confronted blind spots and wounds in my sense of identity. I have come to realize how sometimes my good intentions harmed others. I have experienced fear, and I have experienced love. I have made mistakes. I have had to heal my own hurts, and I have needed to forgive myself. In writing this dissertation I have been on a soul journey to find my own homecoming story.

I started at NIC teaching in the BSN program on 9/11, 2001, the day people who had not felt vulnerable in North America before, felt targeted and communally shaken. From my first day I knew that I needed to learn how to address the complex issues of identity and antiracism in a classroom. I had not met *noxso/a* Evelyn Voyageur yet, but I had heard about her and her work in bringing awareness of the impacts of racism and

residential schools on the health of Indigenous people. She was doing this work long before we (those attuned to the mainstream health system) were willing to or even capable of listening. Evelyn sparked something in me that made me want to learn more. Perhaps it stemmed from my own history as a child immigrant whose family left a country torn apart by colonial relations. Perhaps it was because I grew up with a family that was profoundly connected to the land we lived on. Perhaps it was because I had a yearning to heal something in myself I did not fully understand or recognize.

I was hired to teach nursing when the BSN program at NIC was expanding from a diploma to offering the full degree because I had the needed background in community health. At the time I felt that the curriculum I was learning about honored my values as a nurse, ones I had learned on the job from rural, remote and First Nations communities. It was a good fit and I grew to learn more under the mentorship of wise nurses, educators and mentors. Early on in my teaching career I was put in the role of teaching a course on “Aboriginal Health”. I moved uncomfortably into this role, asking permission and making mistakes. Phyllis Jorgenson, an Indigenous nurse and mentor, was my teacher. I call her name out now to thank her even though her physical presence has left this world. Her spirit remains with us all. I apologize now to you for the potential discomfort or even harm I may have caused you and the *ni noxso/a* you brought with you each week to teach me and the students in a way that we were comfortable with within the Western education system. We sat in a classroom listening to you translate your way of knowing, your way of being, everything that mattered deeply to you, and then we gave you a mug. I did not fully appreciate how generous and courageous you all were. *Gilakas’la!*

Knowing full well that there was something I needed to change about the way we were teaching “Aboriginal health” in nursing, I started with what I knew how to do. I took a community engaged approach to learning more. The first step was gathering Indigenous nurses, students and faculty to talk at the inaugural meeting of what was to become the Learning Circles for Indigenous Nursing. Our motto that came from an Indigenous nurse Ina Seitcher was “Changing minds, Changing hearts”. I call your name out now so that you too can hear how you continue to change nurse’s hearts from the spirit world. *Kleco Kleco!*

In 2006 the Creator showed me another way, a way that was far more powerful than addressing racism in a classroom. This was the beginning of bringing nursing

students to remote First Nations communities to learn from the land and the people who lived there. We began what Frank Johnson (2006) suggested at a Learning Circles Conference on the banks of the Cowichan River “to integrate our practice as nurses into the culture of First Nations People”. As a result I found myself traveling with Evelyn Voyageur to the Wuikinuxv and then the Dzawada’enuxw communities. We met with Paul Willie, Frank Johnson and many others from these communities. There are too many names to call out but I want you to know that you have set many nurses on a path of healing. Those of us that have learned from you know we are also accountable for transforming a health care system where racism still exists. *Gianakaci! Gilakas'la!*

I started this dissertation with the intention of telling my story and sharing the learnings gathered from co-facilitating the field schools in remote First Nations communities. My hope was that what I had to say would be useful particularly for nurses and educators who want to engage in new ways of doing reconciliation work. Eventually through métissage I found a way to share my story and to live my inquiry that was authentic to the way I experienced my own transformation. I asked *ni noxsola* Evelyn Voyageur and Paul Willie how to share what I had learned from their teachings. I asked their permission to use my understanding of the gifts from the Creator as a way to see into my journey of transformation and how it has become manifested in my practice. Through this process I came to understand that I am my relationships, and that the only story I can authentically tell is my own.

Now looking back on this inquiry journey, I can see that métissage has become a path for healing within myself through the weaving, unweaving and reweaving of my stories. The journey has led me through discovering and exploring many paradoxes. I have shared them as life writings both humbly and proudly as I embrace the beautiful wholeness of my becoming with all my gifts and imperfections. As a result, I have created a new story that includes all of the complexities and tensions within myself as revealed through my relationships. This involves embracing those parts of myself that come from a family history of migrants who left their homelands in Europe over many centuries to live in Africa and then Canada. It also involves considering how colonial relations have influenced who I have become as a nurse and an educator. I have had to both love and forgive myself for all of who I am in relation to Indigenous people and the land I now live on. I sensed I was healing when I felt my grandmother’s presence joining me around the sacred fire in the Wuikinuxv Bighouse. I have witnessed the profoundly

transformative power of ceremony as pedagogy during the field schools. The teachings are about being in relationship with complexities and contradictions within ourselves and our relationships through witnessing each other deeply. Through understanding we can create new possibilities for healing without trying to fix or resolve our differences. Living in complexity with relationality are the teachings of the Sisiutl. These are teachings that I continue to walk with in order to further my understanding of the complexity and potential of healing within the ecology of our relationships.

Through my experience with *métissage* as a methodology, process of inquiry and a pedagogy, I have become increasingly clear about how it can be useful and why it matters for nursing education. As I engaged in a process of life writing and sharing my stories, they came to life for me as key teaching stories. It was these stories that I wove into my practice as an educator. The teachings of the Sisiutl through *métissage* can guide us in engaging in relationally complex and ethically accountable ways with Indigenous and Euro-western knowledge systems. *Métissage* as a methodology has guided this inquiry and it has also become a process and praxis for my work as a nurse educator. What has come to light for me is a new story with greater possibilities and potential for transformative reconciliation in nursing education. The story of my inquiry and the transformation of my praxis as a nurse educator has become my earth dance.

I have offered my learnings and the gifts I have been given from co-facilitating field schools in remote First Nations communities. I also have shared what the learnings from the field schools taught me about co-creating healing learning spaces for nursing education more generally. From the field school I learned to follow the lead of Indigenous people. This involves valuing and coming to know the specific protocols and placed-based knowledges of the people and the land that I am living, working and learning on. I learned to orient myself through relationships. I became increasingly aware of the interrelatedness of everything and the sacred importance of synergy and synchronicity in all my relationships. Importantly, I learned to seek out wellness, to see people in their beauty, to see the community as a source of wellness, and to see Indigenous pedagogy as a way to wellness.

The learnings from the field school led me towards a vision for the transformative reconciliation of nursing education in the context of my practice as an educator. Transformative reconciliation is needed to reconnect with the potential of the human

spirit and the *he'istalis* (the world around us). I experienced it as a personal and politically transformational journey through three landscapes, bearing witness, being an inhabitant and becoming Indigenist. I have shared how we can *naki'stamas* (make things right) through *taxwala'pa* (lifting up and loving each other). I have shared the teachings of the *Sisiutl* by embracing ambiguity and complexity. I have learned that it takes courage to be open and vulnerable in order to feel safe. I have witnessed how many nurses and educators from Euro-western backgrounds have become increasingly aware of the inequities faced by Indigenous people. There is a desire to engage with reconciliation work in new and transformative ways. However, I have also seen how there is hesitation and caution around engaging without being invited to do so or without having the relationships that we feel are necessary for doing so in an ethically accountable way. Our institutions and systems can inadvertently set up forts or silos for who's work this is and who's it should be. We are looking for ways to do the transformative work together without reestablishing colonial power relations or paralyzing ourselves within the politics of identity. I believe we are all on a journey of striving for the freedom of being and belonging together. As nurses and as educators many of us have chosen our purpose, or our profession, with the desire to help and to be useful. I propose that what we are also in search of is a longing to heal so that we can be of better service to all our communities. If we draw on the power of our relationships with everyone and everything then we can engage together in a mutually healing way. My hope is that nursing will embrace the teachings of the *he'istalis* (the world around us) and reimagine itself as being in a healing relationship with person/community/earthling. This is how we can co-create learning spaces that help us all on the journey to find our *yiyak'wima* (gifts from the Creator) so we can become *synala* (whole). I have learned this from working with Indigenous knowledge keepers and mentors. This is a fire song for transformative reconciliation.

As I am writing this final chapter, we are facing a global pandemic and we are not fully aware of how it will change us, but we know that we are changing. As a society we are facing a kind of pervasive and universal despair as we look at what we have done to our planet and our human and more than human communities. Many of us need to let go of habits and ways of knowing that have given us a false sense of entitlement and security. We can see the flaws in our armour when we hear words such as “climate change”, “idle no more”, and “black lives matter” getting louder. Our need to consume

more than we need is driven by the fear that we won't have enough health or wealth to protect us from suffering, loss, and ultimately death. Ironically, it is our greed as a society and existential fear that is ultimately threatening our survival. We know we are standing on the edge of a precipice. Do we have what it takes to experience the anguish of being open, vulnerable and letting go of our collective fear? Do we have the courage to heal ourselves, each other, and in doing so ultimately heal our relationship with the *he'istalis* (the world around us)? Will we learn to walk in a way that is attuned to the teachings of the land and the people or will we remain tone deaf to each other and the context specific knowledge that can be found through love and reverence in all our relationships?

In sharing this earth dance and fire song, I hope to illuminate a vision that will unite us all in our universal quest for healing. I am aware of the trauma I can perpetuate when I theorize transformative reconciliation as healing through love and seemingly ignore the violence, trauma, and greed that has got us here in the first place. I understand how reconciliation can be taken up in an uncritical way that is steeped in location and positionality. I fundamentally believe however, that it is time for all of us, no matter who we are or where we come from, to join in solidarity with a universal healing purpose. To realize a mutual healing energy that embraces our unique differences and experiences along with our gifts. The children are asking this of us. Are we brave enough to walk in unfamiliar landscapes together so that we all help to carry the load left by a legacy of colonial relations? As I share my journey of co-creating healing learning spaces for transformative reconciliation in nursing education, I ask you to witness the blisters on my hands from the hard work I have done to transform myself and my relationships. It takes courage to face into the storm, to turn towards the buffalo, and push back against the power of colonialism. I have felt the ice cutting into my skin. When I see hurt and fear lash out in our relationships and I choose to respond with love and patience, I am not forgetting that racist backlash is very real and continues to be potentially deadly. I am not forgetting my responsibility or my culpability. I have stood by and watched when people are being hurt, I wanted to step in but didn't know how. I am learning to forgive myself. With forgiveness comes healing and with healing comes love. With love comes the potential to transform ourselves and our societies. Reconciling nursing education through the process of co-creating healing learning spaces offers us a wonderful possibility. It offers us the potential to be a part of a sacred, beautiful,

reciprocal, and timeless journey. A journey with the planet and all of its creatures including humans towards a great and beautiful mystery. I believe we are each here at this time because we have a cosmic purpose. When we have the courage to look deep inside ourselves at our own hurt and pain, we have the potential to learn and to heal. When we are willing to be open, vulnerable and forgive ourselves and each other for the pain and harm we have unwittingly inflicted, we will find our teachers all around us. We will find and fulfill our cosmic purpose when we are willing to trust each other and the universe to heal us.

What I have learned from the *ni noxsola* who have experienced cultural genocide is the courage to look despair in the face and feel hope anyways. I am learning when to speak up and I have noticed that I am learning to speak more generously. I am learning when to be quiet and I have noticed that I am learning to listen more carefully. We may complain about how difficult it is to stay together on a path towards transformative reconciliation. We may see ourselves as too small and insignificant to make a difference. When I feel despair and find myself complaining that it is too much and too hard for me to do, I remember the words of *ni noxsola* (Paul Willie and Evelyn Voyageur). They remind me that negative thoughts bring about negative results.

So, I choose to evoke transformative reconciliation by focusing on bringing people together rather than pulling us apart. I remember the shared joy that I have experienced in the most profound moments of being fully present in my relationships. These are the moments when I am most connected to my cosmic purpose. I feel love when we sit in the Bighouse and open our hearts to each other. I feel love when we are united by the wonder of a small plant sharing its medicine with us. I see the yearning in every student I teach, in every person who sits in a circle in the Bighouse, or in rows in a classroom. I see the yearning to belong, to be free, to *e ki la* (heal), to *taxwala* (love), and to become *synala* (whole). There is an exquisite and beautiful elegance in the belief that we all have unique gifts and that we are here on the earth at this time to fulfil a cosmic purpose. It is an understanding of the universe and our place in it that is beyond what scientific thought can explain or the human mind can always comprehend.

As I was finishing this dissertation, I learned about the Eighth fire from Vicki Kelly my academic supervisor and now I hope that my fire song can join with others to become a spark for the Eighth Fire. We have come to a time in our human relationship

with the world around us where we are in desperate need of a healing fire. Drawing from Kimmerer, (2013). Vicki Kelly (2021) explains:

The Elders tell us that in our time, we stand before a fork in the pathway of humanity. This fork is a choice between the charred road of materialism that threatens the land, the people, and the green path of wisdom, mutual respect, and reciprocity that is held in the teachings of our Ancestors and the first fire at the beginning of time. It is said that if the people choose the green path, then all races will go forward together to light the Eighth Fire, the final fire of peace and brotherhood, forging the great nation of humanity that was foretold long ago. (p. 200)

There is no greater time than now to hold onto our need for truth and transformative reconciliation in nursing education. The decisions we make now, as we respond to a global health crisis, will expose the values we choose to live by. We are in a time when we can choose to be driven by fear or by love. I choose love. I hope that nursing will, along with the rest of the humans on this planet, see what it is we can let go of and see what it is important to hold onto. It is a time for a radical leap and a time for action. I have laid out the evidence held within the stories I have shared for why the process of co-creating healing learning spaces has the potential of transformative reconciliation in nursing education. It is more important now than ever that I share my vision with others who, like me, would like to look despair in the face and learn to see hope. Nursing has the opportunity and power to transform and grow in order to fulfill our cosmic purpose. Our purpose has always been to promote health and wellbeing. It is important that we understand our purpose in a deeply relational way where humans are entwined with each other and the cosmos. Our health is interdependent on the health and wellbeing of everyone and everything. If we lose sight of this purpose, then the writing is on the wall and we, the humans, may not survive. As nurse educators, we have an important role to play in healing ourselves and the *he'istalis* (the world around us). I see my role as bearing witness, being an inhabitant and becoming Indigenist. Whatever your path is, together we can gather around a communal fire of wise practice. The last words, as always, are from *ni noxsola* Evelyn Voyageur and Paul Willie. The teachings of the *Sisiutl* tells us that this time is neither good nor bad. It is a time of paradox and possibility. *Halakas'la!*

References

- Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada, Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing, & Canadian Nurses Association. (2009). *Cultural competence and cultural safety in First Nations, Inuit and Métis nursing education: An integrated review of the literature*. Ottawa, ON: Author.
- Allan, B., & Smylie, J. (2015). *First Peoples, second class treatment the role of racism in the health and well-being of Indigenous Peoples in Canada*. Toronto, Ontario: The Wellesley Institute.
- Allwright, K., Goldie, C., Almost, J., & Wilson, R. (2019). Fostering positive spaces in public health using a cultural humility approach. *Public Health Nursing (Boston, Mass.)*, 36(4), 551-556. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phn.12613>
- Abram, D. (1997). *The spell of the sensuous: perception and language in a more-than-human world / David Abram*. (1st ed.). Vintage Books.
- Adams, Dawn Hill, Wilson, Shawn, Heavy Head, Ryan, & Gordon, Edmund W. (2015). *Ceremony at a Boundary fire: A story of Indigenist Knowledge*. <http://hdl.hanle.net/2123/13689>
- Aoki, T., Pinar, William F., & Irwin, Rita L. (2005). *Curriculum in a new key : the collected works of Ted T. Aoki. / edited by William F. Pinar and Rita L. Irwin*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410611390>
- Archibald, J. 2008. *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the heart, mind, body and spirit*. UBC Press
- Arnone, JM., & Fitzsimons, V. (2015). *Plato, Nightingale, and Nursing: Can You Hear Me Now?* *International Journal of Nursing Knowledge*, 26(4), 156-162 6p. <https://doi.org/10.1111/2047-3095.12059>
- Atleo, C. Ahousaht First Nation. Oral teaching. personal communication. April 18, 2017
- Atleo, M. Ahousaht First Nation. Oral teaching. personal communication. February 4, 2020
- Atleo, E. R. (2004). *Tsawalk : a Nuu-chah-nulth worldview / Umeek (E. Richard Atleo)*. UBC Press.
- Attewell, A., Dorsey, B., Selanders, L., & Beck, D. (2010). Florence Nightingale's Relevance to Nurses. *Journal of Holistic Nursing*, 28(1), 101-106. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0898010109357245>
- Avery, A. (1996). Eco-wellness nursing: Getting serious about innovation and change. *Nursing Inquiry*, 3(2), 67-73. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1440-1800.1996.tb00016.x>

- Bach, R. (1970). *Johnathan Livingston Seagull: a story*. Avon Books: New York.
- Battiste, M. (2013). *Decolonizing education: Nourishing the learning spirit*. Saskatoon: Purich Publishing.
- Benner, P. (2000). The roles of embodiment, emotion and lifeworld for rationality and agency in nursing practice. *Nursing Philosophy*, 1(1), 5-19.
<https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1466-769x.2000.00014.x>
- Bevis, E., & Watson, J. (1989). *Toward a caring curriculum: A new pedagogy for nursing*. New York: National League for Nursing.
- Bhabha, H. K. (2011). *Our neighbours, ourselves: Contemporary reflections on survival* /Homi K. Bhabha. De Gruyter.
- Bishop, A. (2002). *Becoming an ally: Breaking the cycle of oppression in people (2nd ed.)*. London: Zed Books.
- Blanchet Garneau, A., Browne, A., & Varcoe, C. (2018). Drawing on antiracist approaches toward a critical antidiscriminatory pedagogy for nursing. *Nursing Inquiry*, 25(1). <https://doi.org/10.1111/nin.12211>
- Blenkinsop, Sean, & Scott, Charles. (2017). Becoming teacher/tree and bringing the natural world to students: An educational examination of the influence of the other-than-human world and the great actor on Martin Buber's concept of the I/Thou. *Educational Theory*, 67(4), 453–469. <https://doi.org/10.1111/edth.12258>
- Bly, R. (2012). *The long bag we drag behind us*. Sun (Chapel Hill NC), (440), 18.
- Blum, S. (2021). *Ungrading: Why rating students undermines learning (and what to do instead)*. West Virginia Press: Morgantown.
- Borrows, J. (2018). Earth-bound: Indigenous resurgence and environmental reconciliation. In M. Asch, J. Tully & J. Borrows (Eds.), *Resurgence and reconciliation: indigenous-settler relations and earth teachings* (pp. 3- 25). University of Toronto Press. <https://doi.org/10.3138/9781487519926-004>
- Borrows, J. (2019). *Law's Indigenous Ethics*. University of Toronto Press.
- Borrows, J., & Tully, J. (2018). Introduction: reconciliation and resurgence in practice and in question. In M. Asch, J. Tully & J. Borrows (Eds.), *Resurgence and reconciliation: indigenous-settler relations and earth teachings* (pp. 3- 25). University of Toronto Press.
- Bourque Bearskin, R. Lisa. (2011). A critical lens on culture in nursing practice. *Nursing Ethics*, 18(4), 548–559. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0969733011408048>

- Bourque Bearskin, R. Lisa, Cameron, Brenda L., King, Malcolm, & Weber Pillwax, Cora. (2016). Mâdawoh Kamâtowin, "Coming together to help each other in wellness": Honouring Indigenous Nursing Knowledge. *International Journal of Indigenous Health*, 11(1), 18-33. <https://doi.org/18357/ijih111201615024>
- Bramadat, I., & Chalmers, K. (1989). Nursing education in Canada: Historical 'progress'--contemporary issues. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 14 (9), 719-726. <https://doi.org/0.1111/j.1365-2648.1989.tb01636.x>
- Breen, A. (2019). You do not belong here: storying allyship in an ugly sweater. In Wilson, S. Breen, A. & DuPré, L. (Eds.) *Research and reconciliation: Unsettling ways of knowing through indigenous relationships*. (pp. 49-60) Canadian Scholars.
- British Columbia Ministry of Education (n.d.). *B,C,'s redesigned curriculum an orientation guide*. https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/Curriculum_Brochure.pdf.
- British Columbia Ministry of Health (2020). *In Plain Sight: Addressing Indigenous-specific Racism and Discrimination in B.C. Health Care*. <https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/613/2020/11/In-Plain-Sight-Summary-Report.pdf>
- Brookfield, S. D. (2007). *The power of critical theory for adult learning and teaching*. Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press, McGraw-Hill Education.
- Browne, A.J., Smye, V.L., & Varcoe, C. (2005). The relevance of postcolonial theoretical perspectives to research in Aboriginal health. *Canadian Journal of Nursing Research*, 37(4), 16-37.
- Browne, A. J., Smye, V. L., Rodney, P., Tang, S. Y., Mussell, B., & O'Neil, J. (2011). Access to primary care from the perspective of Aboriginal patients at an urban emergency department. *Qualitative Health Research*, 21(3), 333–34. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732310385824>
- Browne. (2017). Moving beyond description: Closing the health equity gap by redressing racism impacting Indigenous populations. *Social Science & Medicine* (1982), 184, 23–26. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2017.04.045>
- Buber, M., & Smith, R. G. (2000). *I and Thou / Martin Buber; translated by Ronald Gregor Smith*. (1st Scribner Classics ed.). Scribner Classics.
- Burnett, K. (2010). *Taking medicine: Women's Healing Work and Colonial Contact in Southern Alberta, 1880-1930*. UBC Press.
- Bunnin, Nicholas, & Jiyuan Yu. (2009). *The Blackwell dictionary of western philosophy*, John Wiley & Sons.

- Cajete G. (1994). *Look to the mountain : an ecology of indigenous education*. Kivaki Press.
- Cajete, G. (2015). *Indigenous community: Rekindling the teachings of the seventh fire* / Gregory A. Cajete, Ph. D.; foreword by James Sa'ke'j Youngblood Henderson. (First ed.). Living Justice Press.
- Cajete, G., Meyer, M. A., & Kelly, V. (2021). Cluster of Research Excellence in Culture, Creativity, Health and Well-Being: Virtual Roundtable Discussion - May 19, 2021. <https://eminencecluster.weebly.com/group-presentations.html>
- Campesino, M. (2008). Beyond transculturalism: Critiques of cultural education in nursing. *The Journal of Nursing Education*, 47(7), 298-304. <https://doi.org/10.3928/01484834-20080701-02>
- Canadian Nurses Association. (2015). *Position statement: Primary health care*. Ottawa: Author. https://hl-prod-ca-oc-download.s3-ca-central-1.amazonaws.com/CNA/2f975e7e-4a40-45ca-863c-5ebf0a138d5e/UploadedImages/documents/Primary_health_care_position_statement.pdf
- Carper, B. (1978). Fundamental patterns of knowing in nursing. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 1(1), 13–24. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00012272-197810000-00004>
- Cash, P., & Tate, B. (2008). Creating a community of scholars: Using a community development approach to foster scholarship with nursing faculty. *International Journal of Nursing Education Scholarship*, 5(1), 6-11. <https://doi.org/10.2202/1548-923X.1454>
- Cash, Penelope Anne, Moffitt, Pertice, Fraser, Joanna, Grewal, Sukhdev, Holmes, Vicki, Mahara, Star, Ross, Charlotte, & Nagel, Dan. (2013). Writing reflexively to illuminate the meanings in cultural safety. *Reflective Practice*, 14(6), 825–839. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623943.2013.836086>
- Chambers, C. Hasebe-Ludt, E., Leggo, C., and Sinner, A. (2012). *A heart of wisdom: Life writing as empathetic inquiry* / edited by Cynthia M. Chambers [and others]. (Complicated conversation: a book series of curriculum studies; v. 39).
- Chinn, P.L. (2004). *Peace and Power; Creating leadership for building community*. Jones & Bartlett Learning.
- Chinn, P.L. (2020). *Decolonizing nursing*. Nursology Blog. <https://nursology.net/2020/01/14/decolonizing-nursing/>
- Chinn, P. L., & Kramer, M. (2018). *Knowledge Development in Nursing: Theory and Process* (10th ed.). St Louis: Elsevier.

- Chinn P.L., & Wheeler C.E. (1978). Feminism and nursing. *Nurs Outlook*. Mar-Apr;33 (2):74-7.
- Collaborative Academic Education in Nursing, (2015). *CAEN curriculum guide*. Victoria, BC: Author
- Collaborative Nursing Program of British Columbia. (1997). *CNP curriculum guide*. Victoria, BC: Author.
- Collaborative Nursing Program of British Columbia. (2001). *Student resource packet*. Victoria, BC: Author.
- Cote-Meek, S. (2014). *Colonized classrooms : racism, trauma and resistance in post-secondary education*. Fernwood Publishing.
- COURT OF MANITOBA. (2014). *Brian Sinclair*.
http://www.manitobacourts.mb.ca/site/assets/files/1051/brian_sinclair_inquest_-_dec_14.pdf
- Coulthard. (2014). *Red skin, white masks: rejecting the colonial politics of recognition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- de Leeuw, S., Greenwood, M., & Lindsay, N. (2013). Troubling good intentions. *Settler Colonial Studies*, 3(3-4). <https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2013.810694>
- Dewey, J. (1934/1935). Having an experience. In Neill, A., & Ridley, A. (1995). *The philosophy of art: Readings ancient and modern* (pp.59-74)
- DiAngelo, R. J. (2011). *White fragility: Why it's so hard for white people to talk about racism*. Allen Lane, Penguin Books.
- DiAngelo, Robin, & Sensoy, Özlem. (2014). Getting slammed: White depictions of race discussions as arenas of violence. *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, 17(1), 103–128. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2012.674023>
- Dick, S., Duncan, S., Gillie, J., Mahara, S., Morris, J., Smye, V., & Voyageur, E. (2006). *Cultural safety: Module 1,2&3: People's experiences of colonization*.
<http://web2.uvcs.uvic.ca/courses/csafety/mod1/index.htm>
- Diekelmann, Nancy L., Ironside, Pamela M., & Gunn, Jennie. (2005). Recalling the curriculum revolution: innovation with research. *Nursing Education Perspectives*, 26(2), 70–77.
- Donald, D. (2009). Forts, curriculum, and Indigenous Métissage: Imagining decolonization of Aboriginal-Canadian relations in educational contexts. *First Nations Perspectives*, 2(1).

- Donald, Dwayne. (2012). Indigenous Métissage: A decolonizing research sensibility. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 25(5), 533–555.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2011.554449>
- Donald, D. (2021). We Need a New Story: Walking and the wāhkōhtowin Imagination. *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*, 18(2), 53–63.
Retrieved from <https://jcacs.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/jcacs/article/view/40492>
- Duncan, S. (2019). *Public Address Why then and why not now?*
<https://mediasite.audiovisual.ubc.ca/Mediasite/Play/4bcf8fc726a84d06b05d8576b7a2305a1d>
- Duncan, Susan M., Mahara, Star, & Holmes, Victoria. (2014). Confronting the social mandate for nursing scholarship – One school of nursing's journey. *Quality Advancement in Nursing Education - Avancées En Formation Infirmière*, 1(1).
<https://doi.org/10.17483/2368-6669.1018>
- Doane, G. H., & Varcoe, C. (2015). *How to nurse: Relational inquiry with individuals and families in changing health and health care contexts*. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
- Ehrenreich, B., & English, D. (2010). *Witches, Midwives, & Nurses (Second Edition)*. The Feminist Press at CUNY.
- Eisner, E. (2002). The educational imagination; on the design and evaluation of school programs; 3d ed. (2002). *Reference and Research Book News*, 17(2). Ringgold Inc.
- Elkins, C. (2005). *Imperial reckoning: The untold story of Britain's gulag in Kenya*. 1st Ed. New York: H. Holt.
- Ermine, Willie, Sinclair, Raven, & Jeffery, Bonnie. (2004). *The Ethics of Research Involving Indigenous Peoples*. Indigenous Peoples' Health Research Centre.
- First Nations Health Authority. (2016). *#itstartswithme creating a climate for change: Cultural safety and humility in health services delivery for First Nations and Aboriginal peoples in British Columbia*. Vancouver, British Columbia.
<https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-Creating-a-Climate-For-Change-Cultural-Humility-Resource-Booklet.pdf>
- Firth, Kimberly, Smith, Katherine, Sakallaris, Bonnie R, Bellanti, Dawn M., Crawford, Cindy, & Avant, Kay C. (2015). Healing, a Concept Analysis. *Global Advances in Health and Medicine*, 4(6), 44–50. doi:10.7453/gahmj.2015.056
- Fleming, G. (1932). The survey of nursing education in Canada. *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 26(4), 471-4

- Fleras, A. (2016). Theorizing micro-aggressions as racism 3.0: Shifting the discourse. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 48(2), 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1353/ces.2016.0011>
- Foronda, Cynthia, Baptiste, Diana-Lyn, Reinholdt, Maren M., & Ousman, Kevin. (2016). Cultural Humility. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing*, 27(3), 210–217. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1043659615592677>
- Freire, P. (1993). *Pedagogy of the oppressed translated by Myra Bergman Ramos. (New rev. 20th-Anniversary ed.)*. Herder and Herder, New York.
- Fraser, J., Tate, B., & Bouwers, A. (2008). *Learning from and with indigenous peoples: Evaluation report on Nursing 410 health and wellness in Aboriginal communities*. Unpublished report.
- Fraser, J., & Tate, B. (2018). *Ten years of Co-Facilitating a Culturally Inclusive Field School with Indigenous Communities: An Inquiry into curriculum reconciliation and possibilities*. Unpublished report.
- Fraser, Joanna, & Voyageur, Evelyn. (2017). Crafting Culturally Safe Learning Spaces: A Story of Collaboration Between an Educational Institution and Two First Nation Communities. *Engaged Scholar Journal: Community-Engaged Research, Teaching, and Learning*, 2(1), 157–166. <https://doi.org/10.15402/esj.v2i1.204>
- Fraser, J., Voyageur, E., Willie, P., Woods, P. R., Dick, V., Moynihan, K., Spurr, J., McAnsh, H., Tilston, C., & Deagle, H. (2020). Nurses learning our way, from the land and with the people. *Witness: The Canadian Journal of Critical Nursing Discourse*, 2(1), 25-38. <https://doi.org/10.25071/2291-5796.54>
- Gaudry, Adam, & Lorenz, Danielle. (2018). Indigenization as inclusion, reconciliation, and decolonization: Navigating the different visions for indigenizing the Canadian academy. *AlterNative : an International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 14(3), 218–227. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1177180118785382>
- Giddings, Lynne S. (2005). A theoretical model of social consciousness. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 28(3), 224–239. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00012272-200507000-00005>
- Giroux, H. A. (1997). Rewriting the discourse of racial identity: Towards a pedagogy and politics of whiteness. *Harvard Educational Review*, 67, 285–320. <https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.67.2.r4523qh4176677u8>
- Giroux H.A., & Giroux, S.S. (2008). Challenging neoliberalism's new world order: The promise of critical pedagogy. In Denzin, N.K., Lincoln, Y.S. & Smith, L.T. (Eds.), *Handbook of critical and Indigenous methodologies* (pp. 471- 486). Sage Publishing.

- Government of Canada. (2016.) *Statement on the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decision on First Nations child and family services*.
<https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-northern-affairs/news/2016/01/statement-on-the-canadian-human-rights-tribunal-decision-on-first-nations-child-and-family-services.html>
- Government of Canada (2021). *Implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Canada*.
<https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/declaration/index.html>
- Green, J. (2020). Noosa – A Haisla paradigm of sacred storying practices for (re)searching teachings shared by glasttowk askq Ray Green and bakk jus moojillth, Mary Green and written by Kundoqk, Jacquie Green. In T. L. Ormiston, J. Green, & K. Aguirre (Eds.), *S'TENISTOLW: Moving Indigenous education forward* (pp. 53-73). JCharlston Publishing.
- Greene, M. (1988). *The dialectic of freedom*. Teachers College Press.
- Greenwood, D. A. (2019). Place, land, and the decolonization of the settler soul. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 50:4-6, 358-377.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00958964.2019.1687412>
- Grosfoguel, R. (2007). The epistemic decolonial turn: Beyond political-economy paradigms. *Cultural Studies (London, England)*, 21(2-3), 211–223.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380601162514>
- Gruenewald, D. A. (2008). The best of both worlds: A critical pedagogy of place. *Environmental Education Research*, 14(3), 308.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13504620802193572>
- Gustafson, D. (2007). White on whiteness: Becoming radicalized about race. *Nursing Inquiry*, 14(2), 153-161. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1440-1800.2007.00365.x>
- Hampton, Eber. (1995). Towards a redefinition of Indian education. In M. Battise and J. Barman (Eds.), *First Nations Education in Canada: The circle unfolds*. UBC Press
- Harrison, H., Kinsella, E., & Deluca, S. (2019). Locating the lived body in client-nurse interactions: Embodiment, intersubjectivity and intercorporeality. *Nursing Philosophy: An International Journal for Healthcare Professionals*, 20(2), e12241–n/a. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nup.12241>
- Hart-Wasekeesikaw, F. (2009). *Cultural Competence and Cultural Safety in First Nations, Inuit, and Metis Nursing Education*. Ottawa: Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada.

- Hasebe-Ludt, Chambers, Leggo, Chambers, Cynthia, & Leggo, Carleton Derek. (2009) *Life writing and literary métissage as an ethos for our times*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Hasebe-Ludt, E., & Jordan, N. (2010). "Opening"—May we get us a heart of wisdom: Life writing across knowledge traditions. *Transnational Curriculum Inquiry*, 7(2), pp. 1-4.
- Hilario, C., Browne, A., & Mcfadden, A. (2018). The influence of democratic racism in nursing inquiry. *Nursing Inquiry*, 25(1), Nursing inquiry, January 2018, Vol.25(1). <https://doi.org/10.1111/nin.12213>
- hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. Routledge: New York.
- hooks, b. (2010). *Teaching critical thinking: Practical wisdom*. Routledge: New York.
- Idle No More. (n.d.). *The vision-idle no more*. <http://www.idlenomore.ca/vision>
- Jaramillo, N. & McLaren, P. (2008). Rethinking critical pedagogy: Socialismo nepantla and the specter of the che. In Denzin, N.K., Y.S.Lincoln & L.T.Smith (Eds.), *Handbook of critical and Indigenous methodologies* (pp.191-210). Sage Publishing.
- Johns, E. (1919). *Speech cradle to grave [Address to staff and pupils of the Training School and Members of the Training School]* <https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/historyofnursinginpacificcanada/etheljohns/items/1.0051553#p8z-7r0f>:
- Johnson, F., Wuikinuxv Nation. Oral teaching. personal communication. April 6, 2006.
- Johnson, F., Wuikinuxv Nation. Oral teaching. personal communication. June 16, 2009
- Johnson, G., Wuikinuxv Nation. Oral teaching. personal communication. June 12, 2007
- Jones, A., & Jenkins, K. (2008). Rethinking collaboration: Working with the Indigine-Colonizerhyphen. In Denzin, N.K., Y.S.Lincoln & L.T.Smith (Eds.), *Handbook of critical and Indigenous methodologies* (pp. 471- 486). Sage Publishing.
- Kelly, V. (2012). A Metis manifesto. In C.Chambers, E Hasebe-Ludt, C.Leggo & A. Sinner (Eds.), *A heart of wisdom: Life writing as empathetic inquiry*, (pp. 363-368). New York: Peter Lang.
- Kelly, V. (2021a). Kizhay Ottiziwin: To walk with kindness and kinship. *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*, 18(2), 138-149. <https://jcacs.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/jcacs/article/view/40617>

- Kelly, V. (2021b). Radical acts of re-imagining ethical relationality and trans-systemic transformation. *Engaged Scholar Journal: Community-Engaged Research, Teaching, and Learning*, 7(1), 183–202. <https://doi.org/10.15402/esj.v7i1.70759>
- Kelm, M., (1998). *Colonizing bodies: Aboriginal health and healing in British Columbia, 1900-50*. Vancouver B.C.: UBC Press.
- Kimmerer, R. (2013). *Braiding sweetgrass; Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge and the teachings of plants*. Milkweed Editions.
- Kinsella, Elizabeth Anne, & Pitman, Allan. (2012). *Phronesis as professional knowledge* (1. Aufl.). Sense Publishers.
- Kirkham, Sheryl Reimer, & Browne, Annette J. (2006). Toward a critical theoretical interpretation of social justice discourses in nursing. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 29(4), 324–339. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00012272-200610000-00006>
- Kovach, M. (2009). *Indigenous methodologies: Characteristics, conversations, and contexts*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Kreitzer, M.J. (2017). Reflections on healing from a nursing perspective. *Explore (New York, N.Y.)*, 13(4), 265–266. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.explore.2017.04.010>
- Lavoie, Josée, G. (2013). Policy silences: Why Canada needs a national First Nations, Inuit and Métis health policy. *International Journal of Circumpolar Health*, 72(1), 22690–22690. <https://doi.org/10.3402/ijch.v72i0.22690>
- Lawrence-Lightfoot, S. & Hoffmann, J. (1997). *The Art and science of portraiture*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Learning Circles for Aboriginal Nursing. (2008). <http://www.lcan.ca>
- Leininger, Madeleine M. (1988). Leininger's Theory of nursing: Cultural care diversity and universality. *Nursing Science Quarterly*, 1(4), 152–160. <https://doi.org/10.1177/089431848800100408>
- Loppie, S., Reading, C., & de Leeuw, S. (2014). Aboriginal experiences with racism and its impacts. Prince George, BC: National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health. http://www.nccah-ccnsa.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/131/2014_07_09_FS_2426_RacismPart2_ExperiencesImpacts_EN_Web.pdf
- Lowan-Trudeau, G. (2015). *From bricolage to métissage: Rethinking intercultural approaches to indigenous environmental education and research*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

- McBain, L. (2012). Pulling up their sleeves and getting on with it: Providing health care in a northern remote region. *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History = Bulletin Canadien D'histoire De La Medecine*, 29(2), 309-328.
<https://doi.org/10.3138/cbmh.29.2.309>
- McDonald, L. (2009). *Florence Nightingale*. Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- McDonald, Lynn. (2014). Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole on nursing and health care. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 70(6), 1436–1444.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.12291>
- McElligott, D. (2010). *Healing*. *Journal of Holistic Nursing*, 28(4), 251–259.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0898010110376321>
- McGibbon, Elizabeth, Mulaudzi, Fhumulani M, Didham, Paula, Barton, Sylvia, & Sochan, Ann. (2014). Toward decolonizing nursing: the colonization of nursing and strategies for increasing the counter-narrative. *Nursing Inquiry*, 21(3), 179–191.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/nin.12042>
- McMaster University. (n.d). Healing. *Online etymology dictionary*.
<https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=Healing>
- McMaster University. (n.d). Nurse. *Online etymology dictionary*.
<https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=Nurse>
- McNally, Mary, & Martin, Debbie. (2017). First Nations, Inuit and Métis health: Considerations for Canadian health leaders in the wake of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada report. Healthcare Management Forum, 30(2), 117–122. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0840470416680445>
- McPherson, K. (1996). Nurses, archives, and the history of Canadian health care. *Archivaria*, (41), 108-120.
- Memmi, A. (1965). *The colonizer and the colonized*. New York : Orion Press.
- Menke, Nathan B., Ward, Kevin R., Witten, Tarynn M., Bonchev, Danail G., & Diegelmann, Robert F. (2007). Impaired wound healing. *Clinics in Dermatology*, 25(1), 19–25. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clindermatol.2006.12.005>
- Merleau-Ponty, M., & Landes, D. (1962/2012). *Phenomenology of perception* (A. Donald & A. Landes., Trans). New York: Routledge.
- Meyer, M.A. (2008). Indigenous and authentic: Hawaiian epistemology and the triangulation of meaning. In L. Smith, N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of critical and Indigenous methodologies* (pp. 217-232). Sage Publishing.
- Meyer, M.A.(2013). Holographic Epistemology: Native Common Sense. *China Media Research*, 9(2), 94.

- Milton, C. L. (2016). Ethics and Defining Cultural Competence: An Alternative View. *Nursing Science Quarterly*, 29(1), 21–23.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0894318415614624>
- National Aboriginal Health Organization [NAHO]. (2008). Cultural competency and safety: A guide for health care administrators, providers and educators. Ottawa, ON: NAHO.
- National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (n.d.).
<http://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/>
- Nepo, M. (2019). *Drinking from the river of light: the life of expression*. Sounds True.
- Nightingale, F., & Skretkiewicz, V. (2010). *Florence Nightingale's notes on nursing what it is and what it is not & notes on nursing for the labouring classes; Commemorative edition with commentary / edited by Victor Skretkiewicz*. New York: Springer.
- Nuu-chah-nulth Nursing Program (2017). *Nuu-chah-nulth nursing services to improve quality and access to care in rural and remote areas*. Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research, 2017 Convening & Collaborating (C2) Award
- Papps, Elaine, & Ramsden, Irihapeti. (1996). Cultural Safety in nursing: The New Zealand experience. *International Journal for Quality in Health Care*, 8(5), 491–497. <https://doi.org/10.1093/intqhc/8.5.491>
- Parse, R. (1987). *Nursing science: Major paradigms, theories and critiques*. Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders.
- Parse, R. (2002). Transforming healthcare with a unitary view of the human. *Nursing Science Quarterly*, 15(1), 46-50. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08943180222108769>
- Paterson, Josephine G., & Zderad, Loretta T. (2008). *Humanistic nursing*. Project Gutenberg.
- Paul, J. (2017). *I need an accomplice not an ally*. Blog Post. <http://efniks.com/the-deep-dive-features/2017/9/6/i-need-an-accomplice-not-an-ally>
- Province of British Columbia (n.d.). Great Bear Rainforest.
<https://greatbearrainforest.gov.bc.ca/>
- Rasmussen, D. & Akulukjuk, T. (2009). My father was told to talk to the environment first before anything else. In McKenzie, M. et al. (Eds.), *Fields of green: Restorying, culture, environment and education*, (pp. 279-292). Hampton Press.
- Ragen, P. (2010). *Unsettling the settler within: Indian residential schools, truth telling, and reconciliation in Canada*. UBC Press.

- Raymonde L. L. B. (2014). *Mâdawoh kamâtowin: Coming Together To Help Each Other: Honouring Indigenous Nursing Knowledge*. (Doctoral dissertation). University of Alberta.
- Reading, C. (2014). *Policies, Programs and Strategies to Address Aboriginal Racism: A Canadian Perspective*. Prince George, BC: National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health.
https://www.nccih.ca/495/Policies_programs_and_strategies_to_address_anti-Indigenous_racism_A_Canadian_perspective.nccih?id=132
- Reading, C. (2018). Structural determinants of Aboriginal peoples' health. In M. Geenwood, S. de Leeuw and N.N. Lindsay (Eds.), *Determinants of Indigenous peoples' health: Beyond the social*, (pp. 3-17). CSP Books.
- Reed, Pamela G. (2017). Translating nursing philosophy for practice and healthcare policy. *Nursing Science Quarterly*, 30(3), 260–261.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0894318417711763>
- Rix, Elizabeth F., Wilson, Shawn, Sheehan, Norm, & Tujague, Nicole. (2018). Indigenist and decolonizing research methodology. In Pranee Liamputtong (Eds.), *Handbook of research methods in health social sciences* (pp. 253-267). Springer Singapore. doi: 10.1007/978-981-10-5251-4_69
- Rogers, M. E. (1992). Nursing science and the space age. *Nursing Science Quarterly*, 5, 27-33. <https://doi.org/10.1177/089431849200500108>
- Rowan, Rukholm, E., Bourque-Bearskin, L., Baker, C., Voyageur, E., & Robitaille, A. (2013). Cultural Competence and Cultural Safety in Canadian Schools of Nursing: A Mixed Methods Study. *International Journal of Nursing Education Scholarship*, 10(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ijnes-2012-0043>
- Sheppard, D. A. (2020). Getting to the heart of cultural safety in unama'ki: Considering kesultulnej (love). *Witness: The Canadian Journal of Critical Nursing Discourse*, 2(1), 51–65. <https://doi.org/10.25071/2291-5796.57>
- Simpson, R., Hanna, G., Dyke, E., & Emory, F. (1932). Public health nursing: The survey of nursing education in Canada. *Canadian Public Health Journal*, 23(4), 195-198.
- Sinclair, M. (2014). *The Manitoba Teacher*. V 93, no.3
<https://www.bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/POH/ManitobaTeacher.pdf>
- Sinclair, M. (2020). *Implementing the 94 calls to action: A progress report*. [Iona Comagnigo Lectures]. March 5th 2020 Courtenay B.C.
- Small, H. (2000). Florence Nightingale revisited (Reply to Lynn McDonald). *TIs-The Times Literary Supplement*, (5100), 15.

- Smith, G. (2020). Transforming practice from discourse to enactment. In T. L. Ormiston, J. Green, & K. Aguirre (Eds.), *S'TENISTOLW: Moving Indigenous education forward* (pp. 122-129). JCharlston Publishing.
- Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples* (2nd ed.) Ed. New York: Zed Books
- Smith, L.T. (2020). Critical Indigenous pedagogies that support being and doing Indigeneity. In T. L. Ormiston, J. Green, & K. Aguirre (Eds.), *S'TENISTOLW: Moving Indigenous education forward* (pp. 48-52). JCharlston Publishing.
- Smye, V. (2006). *Report on the findings of the 'Integrating culture into practice workshop'*. Duncan, B.C. Unpublished report.
- Steinhauer, E. & Lemouche, J. (2018). miyo-pimatisiwin "A Good Path". In M. Geenwood, S. de Leeuw and N.N. Lindsay (Eds.), *Determinants of Indigenous peoples' health: Beyond the social* (pp 80-92). CSP Books.
- Styres, S. (2019). Pathways for remembering and (re)cognizing Indigenous thought in education: Indigenizing teacher education and the academy. In Zinga, Lilley, Styres, Tomlins-Jahnke, Zinga, Dawn, Lilley, Spencer, Styres, Sandra D., & Tomlins-Jahnke, Huia (Eds.), *Indigenous education : New directions in theory and practice* (pp.39-82). University of Alberta Press.
- Taiaiake Alfred. (2005). *Wasáse: Indigenous pathways of action and freedom*. University of Toronto Press.
- Tagalik, S. (2018). Inuit knowledge systems, Elders and determinants of health : harmony, balance, and the role of holistic thinking. In M. Geenwood, S. de Leeuw and N.N. Lindsay (Eds.), *Determinants of Indigenous peoples' health: Beyond the social* (pp 93-101). CSP Books.
- Talaga, Tanya. (2018). *All our relations: Finding the path forward*. House of Anansi Press.
- Tanaka, Michele T.D. (2016). *Learning and teaching together: Weaving Indigenous ways of knowing into education*. UBC Press.
- Thayer-Bacon, B. (2003). *Relational "(e)pistemologies"*. P. Lang.
- Thorne, Sally. (2018). But is it 'evidence'? *Nursing Inquiry*, 25(1).
<https://doi.org/10.1111/nin.12229>
- Thorne, Sally. (2020a). Rethinking Carper's personal knowing for 21st century nursing. *Nursing Philosophy*, 21(4). <https://doi.org/10.1111/nup.12307>
- Thorne, Sally. (2020b). On privilege and fragility. *Nursing Inquiry*, 27(4).
<https://doi.org/10.1111/nin.12386>

- Thorne, S., & Sawatzky, R. (2014). Particularizing the general: Sustaining theoretical integrity in the context of an evidence-based practice agenda. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 37(1), 5-18. <https://doi.org/10.1097/ANS.0000000000000011>
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action. (2015). *Honouring the truth, reconciling for the future: Summary of the final report of the truth and reconciliation commission of Canada*. McGill-Queen's University Press: Montreal & Kingston.
http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Final%20Reports/Executive_Summary_English_Web.pdf
- Tully, J. (2018). Reconciliation here on earth. In M. Asch, J. Tully & J. Borrows (Eds.), *Resurgence and reconciliation: Indigenous-settler relations and earth teachings* (pp. 3- 25). University of Toronto Press.
- United Nations. (2008). *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf
- Van Manen, M. (2016). *Phenomenology of practice : meaning-giving methods in phenomenological research and writing*. Routledge.
- Vieira, R. (2014). Life stories, cultural métissage, and personal identities. *SAGE Open*, 4(1). <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2158244013517241>
- Voyageur, E. & Fraser, J. (2020). The community is our classroom: A story of nurses living and learning with First Nations. In T. L. Ormiston, J. Green, & K. Aguirre (Eds.), *S'TENISTOLW: Moving Indigenous education forward* (pp. 130-141). JCharlston Publishing.
- Wagamese, Richard. (2016). *Embers: One Ojibway's meditations*. Douglas & McIntyre
- Watson, Jean. (2020). Nursing's global covenant with humanity – Unitary caring science as sacred activism. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 76(2), 699–704.
doi:10.1111/jan.13934
- Watson, J. (1999). *Postmodern nursing and beyond*. Churchill Livingstone.
- Willie, Paul. Dzawada'enuxv Nation, Oral teaching. personal communication. June 27, 2007.
- Willie, Paul. Dzawada'enuxv Nation, Oral teaching. personal communication. June 27, 2017
- Willie, Paul. Dzawada'enuxv Nation, Oral teaching. personal communication. June 11-16, 2019.
- Willie, Paul. Dzawada'enuxv Nation, Oral teaching. personal communication. October 26, 2020.

- Wilson, S. (2008). *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous research methods*. Fernwood Pub.
- Wilson, S., Breen, A., & DuPre, L. (2019). Introduction. In Wilson, S. Breen, A. & DuPré, L. (Eds.), *Research and reconciliation: Unsettling ways of knowing through Indigenous relationships* (pp xi-xvi). Canadian Scholars.
- Wilson, S. & Hughes, M. (2019). Why research is reconciliation. In Wilson, S. Breen, A. & DuPré, L. (Eds.), *Research and reconciliation: Unsettling ways of knowing through Indigenous relationships* (pp. 5-20). Canadian Scholars.
- Weaver, K., & Olson, J. (2006). Understanding paradigms used for nursing research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 53(4), 459-469. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2006.03740.x>.
- Weir, A. (2013). *Identities and freedom: Feminist theory between power and connection*. Oxford University Press.
- Wepa, D. (2005). *Cultural safety in Aotearoa New Zealand*. Pearson Education.
- Wesley-Esquimaux, Cynthia C, & Snowball, Andrew. (2010). Viewing violence, mental illness and addiction through a wise practices lens. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 8(2), 390–407. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-009-9265-6>
- Wilde, M. H. (1999). Why embodiment now? *Advances in Nursing Science*, 22(2), 25-38.
- World Health Organization. Regional Office for Europe. (1984). *Health promotion: A discussion document on the concept and principles: Summary report of the working group on concept and principles of health promotion*, Copenhagen, 9-13 July 1984. Copenhagen : WHO Regional Office for Europe. <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/107835>
- World Health Organization. (1986). Ottawa charter for health promotion. Author. <https://www.who.int/teams/health-promotion/enhanced-wellbeing/first-global-conference>
- Wytenbroek, L. & Vandenberg, H. (2017). Reconsidering nursing's history during Canada 150. *Canadian Nurse Blog*. <https://www.canadian-nurse.com/blogs/content/2017/07/03/reconsidering-nursings-history-during-canada-150>
- Zander, B. & Zander, R.S. (2002). *The art of possibility*. Penguin Books
- Zawaduk, C., Duncan, S., Mahara, S., Tate, B., Callaghan, D., McCullough, D., Chapman, M., & Van Neste-Kenny, J. (2014). Mission impossible: Twenty-five years of university and college collaboration in Baccalaureate Nursing education. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 53(10), 580-588.