

Tukisiven:

Nunatsiavummiut Share Their Experience of Participating in a Nova Scotia Community College  
Child and Youth Care Diploma

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**Dedication**

R. Bruce Shaw August 22, 1952 – July 9, 2023

My Daddy; my biggest fan.

## **Abstract**

It is well documented that there are gaps in the research related to Inuit education and to Child and Youth Care (CYC) pre-service education. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was used to explore the experience of 4 Nunatsiavummiut who graduated from a Nova Scotia Community College with a diploma in CYC. Three superordinate themes and seven subordinate themes were interpreted with the Nunatsiavummiut participating as co-inquirers.

The first superordinate theme was powerful emotions; subordinate themes were identified as passion, doubt, and balance/unbalance. It was clear through the analysis of the interviews that the Nunatsiavummiut stayed engaged in a two-year college diploma because they were passionate about working with young people and they wanted to know more about how to do this better. They did find the programme overwhelming at times and doubted if they could stay and complete it. For a variety of reasons, throughout the diploma, the co-inquirers all experienced a sense of shifting between a need for balance and yet feeling unbalance.

The second superordinate theme was Our Land, Our People. The subordinate themes were shared purpose, and what I knew, I knew. It was interpreted that their knowing of Nunatsiavut and Nunatsiavummiut was shared collectively and supported them to know what they knew. They experienced having a shared purpose through the course work and the goal to support Nunatsiavummiut children, youth, and families. They were inspired and motivated by each other and learned together towards a common goal.

The third superordinate theme was empowered to advocate, I have voice. With subordinate themes identified as heard and supported, and transformed. They felt that they were heard and supported and experienced this as being empowered to have voice; they perceived that

their responsibility with this voice was to advocate for themselves; their communities; children, youth, and families from Nunatsiavut; other Nunatsiavummiut; and for the profession of CYC.

A deepened understanding of the experience of Nunatsiavummiut participating in CYC pre-service education in a post-secondary environment will enhance confidence for educators and policy makers that their decisions are supporting student engagement and success. This information may assist potential students in making increasingly informed decisions about post-secondary education programmes.

*Keywords: Child and Youth Care, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, Inuit, Post-Secondary Education, Nunatsiavut*

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I am deeply indebted to the Nunatsiavummiut who joined me as co-researchers in this dissertation. The dissertation was written by me, yet the commitment they gave was essential to its completion. Most recently supporting the title. Tukisiven—do you understand, was the first Inuttut word they taught me. I will be forever grateful for their generosity and kindness; for their willingness to hang in with me while I learned.

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My parents instilled in me at a very young age, a belief in myself and through this degree were there continuing to offer unwavering reminders and modeling of how to do hard things.

My children and my spouse didn't fully understand yet still accepted that this was something I needed to do. I could not have completed this journey without that support.

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## Chapter 1 Introduction

It is only within the last decade that the term Child and Youth Care (CYC) has become commonly used in Inuit Nunangat, the traditional territory—including land, water, and ice—of Inuit in Canada<sup>1</sup> (see Figure 1). It has been articulated by Inuit CYC practitioners that there are parallels between Labrador Inuit societal values and the values and practices that are commonly understood to underlie relational CYC practice (Modlin et al., 2020). For example, the Inuit traditional value of collaboration and sharing is consistent with CYC practice that emphasizes doing with (not to or for) and being with people as they live their lives (Garfat et al., 2018; Modlin et al., 2020; Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, 2006). CYC practitioners in Inuit Nunangat are typically hired for aptitude and then trained and educated by their employing organization (Modlin et al., 2020) or are flown in from outside the region. In many areas, congruent with the rest of the world, individuals are practicing CYC in Inuit Nunangat under various job titles, and until recently there was no opportunity for individuals living in Inuit Nunangat to stay in the region or territory while obtaining CYC education.

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<sup>1</sup> The term Inuit Nunangat is a Canadian Inuktitut term. This term encompasses land, water, and ice. Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK, 2023) explained that “Canadian Inuit consider the land, water, and ice, of our homeland to be integral to our culture and our way of life [therefore] it was felt that ‘Inuit Nunangat’ is a more inclusive and appropriate term to use when describing our lands” (para. 2). Approximately 35% of the land known as Canada and 50% of its coastline is Inuit Nunangat (Royal Canadian Geographical Society et al., 2023).

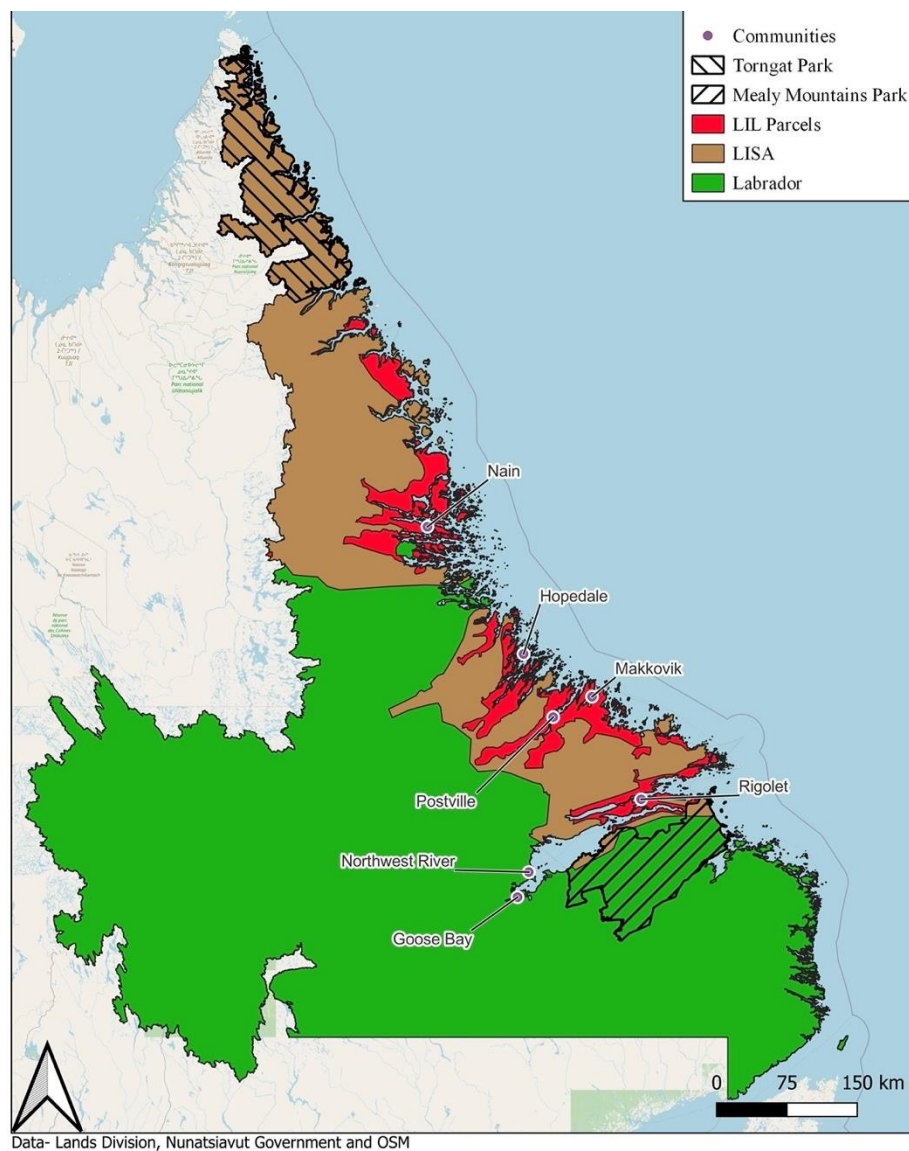
**Figure 1**

*Map of the Four Regions of Inuit Nunangat*



*Note.* Adapted from *Map 1 The Four Regions of Inuit Nunangat*, by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (n.d.). (<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-644-x/2010001/m-c/11281/m-c/m-c1-eng.htm>).

In the public domain.

**Figure 2***Map of Nunatsiavut*

*Note.* Nunatsiavut comprises the identified Labrador Inuit Settlement Area, including the five major towns shown (Rigolet, Postville, Makkovik, Hopedale, and Nain). Nearby Labrador towns of North West River and Happy Valley–Goose Bay are also represented. Map supplied by Nunatsiavut Government (personal communication J. Williamson, July 12, 2023). Used with permission.

In Nunatsiavut, the Inuit settlement region in Newfoundland and Labrador seen in Figure 2, the start of several new child and youth caring<sup>2</sup> programmes saw an interest sparked by programme operators and the Nunatsiavut Government (NG) in offering specific training to build capacity for Nunatsiavummiut<sup>3</sup> who wanted to work in a variety of existing and developing programmes (e.g., family-based foster care, youth programmes, family support, community health). In March 2017, I gathered with a group of Nunatsiavummiut from Northern Labrador in the Nunatsiavut capital of Hopedale to begin a 10-day introductory course in CYC that I facilitated. The course was offered in partnership with the NG, Health Canada, and the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC).

Unbeknownst to the student attendees, the intention with the partnership was that this introductory course would be the first in a series of courses that were designed to be delivered modularly in a blended format (both face-to-face and distance) over two years as outlined in Table 1. The completion of the full collection of courses would lead to a diploma in CYC conferred by the NSCC.

The Nunatsiavummiut flew into Hopedale from communities along the Northeastern Labrador coast to attend the introductory course. Some of them brought small children; many left their family supports behind in their home communities. The experience of 4 Nunatsiavummiut who continued from this course to graduate from the CYC diploma in 2019 is the focus of this dissertation.

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<sup>2</sup> An environment where children and/ or youth are cared for 24-hr per day seven days a week by CYC practitioners.

<sup>3</sup> An Inuttut word used to identify the people who inhabit Nunatsiavut. Inuttut (or Inuttitut or Nunatsiavummiutut) is the dialect of Inuktut spoken in Nunatsiavut.



**Table 1***Delivery Structure for the Child and Youth Care Diploma Partnership Between NG and NSCC*

Courses	Semester	Delivery	Attendees
Introduction to CYC Practice	Winter 2017	Hopedale NL	19
Introduction to Sociology	Winter 2017	Via Telephone	19
CYC Practice Milieu I	Winter 2017	Via Telephone	19
Writing Skills I	Winter 2017	Via Telephone	10
Teamwork for Relational CYC Practice	Winter 2017	Via Telephone	10
Introduction to Psychology	Spring 2017	Truro NS	10
Teamwork for Relational CYC Practice	Spring 2017	Truro NS	10
Children and Youth in Today's Society	Spring 2017	Truro NS	10
Service Learning	Spring 2017	Truro NS	10
CYC Relational Communication II	Summer 2017	Via Telephone	5
CYC Ethical Issues	Fall 2017	Happy Valley-Goose Bay	5
CYC Professional Development	Fall 2017	Happy Valley-Goose Bay	5
CYC Practice Milieu II	Fall 2017	Happy Valley-Goose Bay	5
Applied Relational Communication I	Winter 2018	Nain NL	5
CYC Ethics and Professional Practice	Winter 2018	Nain NL	5
Writing Skills III	Winter 2018	Nain NL	5
Developmental Psychology	Winter 2018	Nain NL	5
Placement Courses RPL	Spring 2018	Happy Valley-Goose Bay	5
Family Systems	Spring 2018	Happy Valley-Goose Bay	5
CYC Interventions	Spring 2018	Happy Valley-Goose Bay	5
Methodology I	Fall 2018	Facebook Live	5
CYC Practice Seminar	Fall 2018	Telephone	5
Activity Programming	Winter 2019	Hopedale NL	5
Group Facilitation	Winter 2019	Hopedale NL	5
Practitioner Identity Development	Spring 2019	Truro NS	5
CYC Relational Communication II	Spring 2019	Truro NS	5
Workshop Seminar	Spring 2019	Portfolio	5
Writing Skills IV	Spring 2019	Truro NS	5

## Purpose

Delivering NSCC's diploma in Nunatsiavut challenged me to think about CYC education; to think about service delivery in Indigenous communities from a broader education, health, and child welfare perspective; to think about my identity as a Kallunât<sup>4</sup> descendant from colonial invaders<sup>5</sup>; and to wonder about my moral and ethical responsibility to deepen my understanding of the experience of the Nunatsiavummiut in this diploma. This research emerged as my attempt to gain this understanding. I adopted a phenomenological research methodology incorporating interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA; Smith et al., 2009/2011) of interviews with graduates of this diploma programme to explore the research question:

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<sup>4</sup> *Kallunât (singular)* 1. Caucasian (n.). 2. a white person (n.). (Pigott, n.d.)

<sup>5</sup> I spent a lot of time choosing a term to describe my heritage. Settler, colonizer, and colonial-settler are all terms that are found in the literature to describe someone, such as myself who is an individual of European descent. I descend from New England Planters. My family still farms the original land granted them after the expulsion of the Acadians, and still lives in a house built by an Acadian colonizer. Guzman (n.d.) attests that “in order not to offend people, the English language created *euphemism*, a mild or indirect word or expression substituted for one considered to be too harsh or offensive when referring to something unpleasant or embarrassing” (p. 2). He goes on to quote Confucius: “if what is said is not what is meant, then what must be done remains undone” (Guzman, n.d., p. 5). In order to reconcile the harms done by the colonial invasion of this country, precise language needs to be used to describe and identify the behaviour of the people who claimed this land was unsettled. Coupled with this understanding, the term settler is problematic in reference to working in Labrador Inuit settlement regions. The Inuttut word, Kablunângajuit, which translates to settlers, is the term the Moravians (those who came to colonize Labrador) used to refer to the descendants of unions between European men and Inuit women (Kennedy, 2015).

*What was the experience of Nunatsiavummiut participating in a Nova Scotia Community College Child and Youth Care Diploma?*

### **Inuit Post-Secondary Education**

In their discussion paper on post-secondary education, prepared for the National Summit on Inuit Education at the request of ITK, Silta Associates (2007) identified the urgent need for further research around Inuit post-secondary education. The information in Table 2 illustrates that in the years since that report was published, research on post-secondary education across Inuit Nunangat is still lacking (compared to the rest of Canada). The table also shows that there has been much less research on education in the Nunatsiavut region than in other regions of Inuit Nunangat, reinforcing the recommendation made over a decade ago by Silta Associates. With the assumption that not all Canadian master's or doctoral research would be searchable in WorldCat, I also conducted a search of Theses Canada using the same search strings (see Table 3).

The information accessed through these searches included research grounded in empirical frameworks, annual reports from post-secondary educational institutions (e.g., Arctic College), position papers, and first-person accounts of experiences in education programmes. From these searches, it is reasonable to conclude that there has been minimal research completed on or about post-secondary education in Inuit Nunangat or with Inuit to inform post-secondary educational practices. This gap also meant that I had few resources to draw upon as I planned delivery for this diploma programme, so I felt compelled to direct my attention toward addressing this gap. This desire grew stronger as I listened to and learned from the Nunatsiavummiut who enrolled in the courses I was facilitating.

**Table 2***WorldCat Database Search Results for Inuit Post-Secondary Education*

Search Term	Books	Articles	Total (including newspaper, magazines, and AV materials)
Nunavut + post + secondary + education	27	50	82
Nunavik + post + secondary + education	9	7	17
Inuvialuit + post + secondary + education	5	3	13
Nunatsiavut + post + secondary + education	4	0	5
Inuit + post + secondary + education	129	120	267
Canada + post + secondary + education	4280	11284	16423

*Note.* Search results reported as of September 27, 2021.

**Table 3***Theses Canada Search Results Research About Inuit Post-Secondary Education*

Search Term	Master's Theses	Doctoral Dissertations	Total
Nunavut + post + secondary + education	3	1	4
Nunavik + post + secondary + education	1	0	1
Inuvialuit + post + secondary + education	0	0	0
Nunatsiavut + post + secondary + education	0	0	0
Inuit + post + secondary + education	7	3	10
Canada + post + secondary + education	---	---	7090

*Note.* Search results reported as of September 27, 2021.

**Framework**

Prior to taking on a research project, a researcher should ask themselves, why even do research? (Holden & Lynch, 2004). Kovach (2009) challenged researchers to adopt a “critically reflective self-location” (p. 112). It is through reflection that researchers have the opportunity to articulate their own motivation and intention, which supports ethical engagement (Kovach, 2009). It is at the beginning stage that the research question combined with the researcher’s understanding of epistemology and ontology guides them toward the framework or methodology that will offer foundation to the research and orient the researcher as they move into the project.

As a non-Indigenous researcher researching with Indigenous people, it was important for me to select a research framework that could be seen to align with an understanding of

Indigenous worldview yet not be appropriative. Kovach (2009), among others, has asserted that it is inappropriate for non-Indigenous researchers to assert that they are implementing Indigenous research methodologies. As Carlson (2017) argued, Indigenous worldview cannot be embraced by non-Indigenous researchers who have not had decades of immersion in Indigenous culture. Non-Indigenous scholars cannot offer interpretation or critique of colonial processes (education, for example) without input from those who have had the dominant/colonizer frame of reference imposed on them (Carlson, 2017). As further discussed in Chapter 3 Method and Methodology, a key aspect of the research framework involved engagement with Nunastivummiut participants of the NSCC diploma as co-inquirers to support my reflexive process and to strengthen research integrity.

In their research with Indigenous people in a North American context, Struthers and Penden-McAlpine (2005) identified a moderate level of fluidity between phenomenological research methods and Indigenous oral traditions. They argued that phenomenological approaches have the potential to support Indigenous people to share their experience through story (Struthers & Penden-McAlpine, 2005). Kovach (2009) noted that Indigenous methodologies build on phenomenological approaches (among others). A WorldCat database search found numerous examples of the application of phenomenological methodology in a research context with Indigenous community. For example, phenomenological methodology has been utilized to study Indigenous college graduates' experience of giving back to their communities (Salis Reyes, 2019), to explore how participation in a sporting programme during secondary school years influenced the development and educational engagement of Indigenous Australians (Fitch et al., 2016), to gain understanding of the link between social trauma and

gambling from the lens of Indigenous women (Hagen et al., 2013), and to explore the experiences of Australian Indigenous nursing students (Kelly & Henschke, 2019).

Reflecting upon my experience and reviewing related literature, I determined that interpretative phenomenology conducted with Nunatsiavummiut co-inquirers would provide a means to enhance my understanding of their experience of participating in the diploma.

### **Intending to Ally**

Bishop (2015) defined ally as “a member of a dominant group who works to end a form of oppression which gives them privilege” (p. 134) and suggests that it is synonymous in many ways to the word learner. McGuire-Adams (2021) identified that it is important for non-Indigenous people to own and act on the responsibility they have as treaty people, stressing the importance of engaging in learning about treaty, about relationships to Indigenous peoples and territories, and decolonization. Baskin (2016) recognized that, “White people standing beside Indigenous Peoples by educating other White people is the work that is required of a true ally” (p. 111). The Government of Nunavut has identified that being an ally to Nunavummiut is to teach and coach specifically Inuit Societal Values (ISV), which are also known as Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit (IQ) (Government of Nunavut, n.d.).

McGuire-Adams (2021) also outlined that allies of Euro-Western descent are not self-identified, rather they are created by consequence of their choices and behaviours. Regan (2010) contended that “settlers must take responsibility for decolonising themselves and their country” (p. x). Yet, Steinman (2020) reminded us that it is not necessary for one to be decolonized nor certain in their own unsettling to ally with Indigenous Persons in contexts of colonial oppression. Through the course of writing this dissertation, I have listened differently, I have noticed what I do not know, and I want to learn. Through collaboration with the programme graduates who

served as co-inquirers, my intention is for Inuit ways of knowing to be overlaid (or interwoven) with Western ways of knowing in this IPA.

It was intentional that the primary title of this dissertation is in Inuttut and is the title that was chosen in consultation with the co-inquirers. Tukisiven is the first Inuttut word that I remember the students taught me explicitly; it means do you understand? During the first course delivery in Hopedale, I thought that the contexts of the practice-based stories I used to support delivery of theory might be irrelevant to the Nunatsiavummiut who were in the course, and I noticed myself often asked them if what I was sharing was making sense. During the next course, a telephone-based course, after I had asked the group if what I shared made sense, one of the learners interrupted me. He said, “Miss, you do make sense but if you insist on asking us all the time you need to say, tukisiven. Then we will respond tukisivunga which means, we understand.”

This would not be the last time that this group helped me understand what they wanted and / or needed. They collaborated throughout the diploma (outlined in Chapter 5 Discussion), and (as mentioned) this dissertation was born from discussions with them and their expressed desire of wanting to help people understand their experience in the diploma.

### **Organization of This Dissertation**

To support the reader through the process of the research, this dissertation is organized into five chapters, including this first introductory chapter. Chapter 2 Literature Exploration includes a review of literature related to colonization in Labrador, education in Nunatsiavut, residential schools and their legacy, current CYC practice in Canada, and Canadian CYC pre-service education. Chapter 3 Method and Methodology presents the design of the study and offers an overview of IPA. The themes obtained from the IPA are shared in Chapter 4 Analysis



with co-inquirer voice to support the outcome of the IPA. The fifth chapter offers concluding comments with reflection and considers the theoretical and practical implications that arise from the IPA of the co-inquirers' narratives. Following Chapter 5 Discussion is the Coda where I present a version of my story of the journey alongside the diploma participants and into this research with the Nunatsiavummiut co-inquirers. The Coda is followed by a list of the references cited in this dissertation and finally, various supporting appendices.

### **Summary of the Introduction**

It is well documented that there are gaps in the research related to Inuit education, and CYC pre-service education. It is my intention to honour the experiences of the Nunatsiavummiut co-inquirers by using IPA to explore and interpret these experiences and to contribute to an evolving body of research. A deepened understanding of the experience of Nunatsiavummiut participating in CYC pre-service education in a post-secondary environment may support educators and policy makers in being certain that their decisions are supporting student engagement and student success and may support potential students in making increasingly informed decisions about post-secondary education programmes.

## Chapter 2 Literature Exploration

There is foundational knowledge that should be considered prior to embarking on an exploration of the post-secondary CYC educational experience of Nunatsiavummiut, including in particular information about colonization in Labrador, Inuit education past and current (primary, secondary, and post-secondary), and CYC practice and education. Sharing an understanding of these constructs will ensure a foundation for the discussion that will ensue with co-inquirers and position me to situate my research within an existing body of knowledge. This review also offers identification of the current gaps in research about Inuit post-secondary educational experience.

### Colonial Beginnings in Labrador

Moravian Missionaries first arrived near what is now Makkovik, Nunatsiavut (location shown on Figure 2) in 1752. They came from Greenland for a short visit, simply seeking trade with the Inuit of Labrador; in 1762 they returned—to stay. This time their intention was to establish a mission and bring Christianity to the Inuit. To do this, the Moravians supplanted the elements of Inuit culture that were in opposition to their Christian beliefs. The credibility of the Inuit angakok<sup>6</sup> and other legendary figures was eroded; drumming, dancing, and singing were forbidden (Rompkey, 2003). This was not the first colonizing encounter for the Indigenous people of Labrador, but it was the first that was year-round, and not solely connected to colonial desire for natural resources (see Procter, 2020, for a succinct summary of colonial contact in Labrador). This colonial contact was about educating Nunatsiavummiut and converting them to Christianity. The Moravians desire to be involved in educating Inuit and the ways they

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<sup>6</sup> An intellectual and spiritual figure embodied by a man.

supported residential schools is (in part) why awareness of the Moravian colonial influence is valuable as foregrounding for this dissertation.

### ***Residential Boarding Schools in Labrador***

By the turn of the 19th century, schools were well established in many communities. The Moravians had settled in West Greenland by 1733 (Toft, 2016) and learned the language spoken at that time by Greenland Inuit, which closely resembled Inuttut (Nowak, 1999), and therefore they taught in Labrador Inuktitut when they arrived in Nunatsiavut (Rompkey, 2003). This approach continued until the early 1900s, at which time Labrador Inuit began attending one of the five residential schools established in Labrador. Unlike in the original Moravian schools, the language of instruction in these schools was English except in Nain where education continued to be delivered in Inuktitut (Rompkey, 2003). These schools were administered by the Government of Labrador and operated either by the International Grenfell Association or the Moravians (Bartlett, 2017). Table 4 identifies the dates and locations for residential schools operating in various communities along the Labrador coast (drawn from Procter, 2020).

Residential schools were first established for First Nations youth and were primarily run and supported in programme by religious organizations, including Catholic and Anglican churches (Charles & Garfat, 2009). By 1920, Canadian federal law required mandatory attendance in these schools by First Nations children aged 7–16 (Union of Ontario Indians, 2013), but attendance was not enshrined in law for Labrador Inuit children until Newfoundland introduced the School Attendance Act in 1942 (Pauktutit Inuit Women of Canada [PIW], 2019; Procter, 2020). However, Inuit children had to attend these schools if they were to receive formalized education recognized by the government, and parents were coerced to have their children participate through the withholding of federal government assistance payments when

children did not attend (Facing History and Ourselves, 2019; Fine & Belec, 2018). In 1964, 75% of Inuit children were living in residential schools distanced from their families and isolated from their culture and community (PIW, 2019).

**Table 4**

*Residential Schools in Labrador*

Community (listed geographically South to North)	Years Operated	Operated by
North West River	1926–1980	The International Grenfell Association (IGA)
St. Mary’s River (now called Mary’s Harbour)	1931–1938	IGA
Cartwright	1920–1964	IGA
Makkovik	1914–1955	Moravian Church
Nain	1929–1972	Moravian Church

In 2008, when then Prime Minister Stephen Harper offered formal apology to survivors of the Indian Residential School system, on behalf of the Government of Canada, Nunatsiavut Inuit were not included because the residential schools they attended were not operated by the Canadian federal government (Crown–Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada [CIRNAC], 2019). These schools were established before Newfoundland and Labrador joined confederation, and they were run by the International Grenfell Association or by the Moravians.

In recognition of their exclusion from the 2008 Federal apology, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau offered formal apology in 2017 to the residents of Labrador, including Nunatsiavummiut, and spent time in 2018 participating in community healing and commemoration sessions in communities along Labrador's east coast as well as in Ottawa, and on the island of Newfoundland (CIRNAC, 2019).

Residential schools represent a particularly sharp contrast with traditional understandings of *suguset*<sup>7</sup>. Traditionally in Inuit culture, *suguset* are seen as a gift from the creator embodying the soul of a deceased relative and are treated as teachers to be revered (National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, 2012), which is counter to a Euro-Western view of the helpless child. Residential schools in Labrador might have appeared different than the residential schools in other jurisdictions, and children attended these schools for a variety of reasons (e.g., they came from a small and remote community that did not have higher grades, IGA or the government thought they should be removed from their home condition, they or their family member were receiving medical care at an IGA hospital); however, Shirley Flowers originally from Rigolet shared in her statement to the TRC in 2011 that the schools were “part of a bigger scheme of colonization ... with the intent to change people, to make them like others and to make them not fit” (TRC, 2015a, p. 47). Historically, Inuit children were rarely scolded by their parents for what would be viewed from a Euro-Western context as misbehaviour; instead, they were told fables as a way of supporting them to develop understanding of how to be, and what to do or not do (Doupleff & Greenhalgh, 2019). Food was consumed when one was hungry, and rarely limited; bedtime happened when one was tired. These practices were based on the belief

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<sup>7</sup> Inuttut word for children.

that the child knows what the child needs (Sprott, 1994). It is not difficult to imagine that this philosophy is contrary to the structure and routine in Christian residential schools. Survivors of the residential school system who are from Labrador share a lived experience parallel to survivors from across Canada (TRC, 2015a).

Residential schools in Newfoundland and Labrador began closing in 1955 and were all closed by 1980 (Procter, 2020). Procter (2020) identified four main reasons for these closures:

- (a) Local people protesting and campaigning for their closure (aligning at times with the Indigenous rights movement of the 1970s);
- (b) Students refusing to move away from their home to attend;
- (c) Resettlement (based on provincial government pressure) in larger communities; and
- (d) Changes in child welfare policy, which negated the need to house apprehended children because they were now placed in foster families.

The boarding home in North West River stayed open until 1980 because, until that time, schools in communities along the north coast of Labrador went only to grade 8, and education above this grade level was obtained by spending the school year in North West River and necessitated that children be placed in a staffed boarding home (Procter, 2020). Anthropologist, Peter Flanagan (as cited in Procter, 2020) identified that prior to 1980, opportunity for education, was often connected to social class. If a family could afford to not have their children involved in fishing or housekeeping, the children were allowed to go to school. School was typically attended in North West River or Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Attendance at Yale School in North West River required that a child stay in a boarding dormitory, while attendance at day school in Happy Valley-Goose Bay required the entire family to move so the child could continue to live at home (Procter, 2020).

Until the School Attendance Act was passed in 1942, attendance in day or boarding schools was voluntary (Procter, 2020). Yet even the School Attendance Act had little effect in Labrador because there were few schools and limited numbers of police officers to enforce the law. When Newfoundland and Labrador joined Canada in 1949, things changed and each family was entitled to a family allowance payment on the condition that their children attended school (Procter, 2020). Families that could afford to live without this government subsidy were differently positioned to resist government expectation that their children attend residential school than were families that needed the government subsidy for survival (Procter, 2020).

The Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement was ratified in 2004 and gave Inuit in Labrador authority over, inter alia, education. Almost 20 years later, education in grades K–12 is still offered by the Provincial Education Authority, yet now with significant collaboration from the NG. The NG Education Manager, Jodie Lane, shares that this partnership is intended to ensure language and culture are appropriately incorporated in multiple levels of education (Dyson, 2020).

### ***The Residential School Legacy***

In Canada, residential schools separated children from families and communities, forbade the use of language and ceremony, and effectively eroded language, values, and culture (Rowan et al., 2014). This forced separation continues. Across Canada, the rate of Indigenous children in care is approximately eight times that of non-Indigenous children (Government of Canada, 2019). Approximately 7% of children from Nunatsiavut are in the care of the province compared with just over 1% of children from the rest of the province (Office of the Child and Youth Advocate Newfoundland and Labrador, 2019). Pon et al. (2011) argued that the overrepresentation of Indigenous children in the child welfare system cannot be separated from

Canada's history of White supremacy that has very much been a part of the development of the nation, and specifically in reference to child welfare, the rise of the post-war welfare state.

Canadians might think we live in the era of Truth and Reconciliation, yet as recently as 2019 the Canadian Federal Government was found in violation of the Human Rights Act for their discriminatory practices affecting Indigenous children (Human Rights Watch, 2020). Human rights organizations (e.g., First Nations Child & Family Caring Society, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch) are consistently critical of the Canadian Federal government's inaction to ensure adequate funding that will allow appropriate resources for education, health, and child welfare for Indigenous children. Cindy Blackstock, an Indigenous children's rights advocate, stated that a recent ruling by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal demonstrates that the current child welfare system continues to fail Indigenous children; Canadians are beginning to see it, but the federal government remains silent (Blackstock, 2019). The legacy of the residential school era continues to be recognized as causal for the high numbers of Indigenous families involved with the child welfare systems, high suicide rates, low graduation rates, loss of language and culture, poor health outcomes, and over representation in the criminal justice system (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015c).

### **Contemporary Education in Nunatsiavut**

Primary, secondary, and post-secondary education have been identified as the greatest policy challenges for law and policy makers across Inuit Nunangat in part because 56% of the population is under age 25 (ITK, 2018). Globally, education in Indigenous communities has been used as an assimilative process (Rowan et al., 2014). Systems of education continue to be colonizing with their very functions fully embedded in provincial and territorial legislation. The foundation for current education systems in Inuit Nunangat is from a non-Indigenous, Euro-



Western context where colonial perspectives are perpetuated, in part, because of a lack of Inuit teachers (Berger, 2022).

### ***Primary and Secondary Education in Inuit Nunangat***

Education is a right upheld by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Canada signed in 1990 (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2019); yet high school completion rates across Inuit Nunangat are 38.1% (Landry et al., 2023). Nunatsiavut has the highest rate of school completion and post-secondary qualification across Inuit Nunangat (Statistics Canada, 2016). In Nunatsiavut, 77% of Inuit aged 24–34 have graduated from high school (Statistics Canada, 2019). Nonetheless, when this statistic is compared with high school completion rates of 92% (male) and 96.5% (female) in the entire province of Newfoundland and Labrador, the disparity is obvious (Uppal, 2017).

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Canadian constitution offer structure for Indigenous self-determination (Borrows, 2017). The Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015b) clearly outline the expectation of the federal government to partner with Indigenous people in Canada to ensure that policies, practices, and systems of education are changed to address the gaps that currently exist in K–12 and post-secondary education completion rates of Indigenous versus non-Indigenous students.

Public school education for Inuit students living in Inuit Nunangat is the responsibility of the education system within the specific province or territory. However, the Nunatsiavut Land Claims Agreement, which came into effect in late 2005, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous (UNDRIP), ratified by Canada in 2021, gives the NG the authority to take control of primary and secondary education in the region; although they have not yet done

so (Dyson, 2020). Currently, the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District Board operates schools in each of the five small communities that comprise Nunatsiavut as outlined in Table 5.

**Table 5**

*Schools in Nunatsiavut*

Community (listed geographically South to North)	Community Population	Number of Students enrolled	Grades
Rigolet	305	68	K–12
Postville	177	32	K–12
Makkovik	377	70	K–12
Hopedale	574	126	K–12
Nain	1125	228	K–12

*Note.* Information drawn from Department of Education (n.d.) and 2016 Census (Statistics Canada, 2018).

At the request of ITK, Lees et al. (2010) completed a literature review focused specifically on research related to capacity-building in Inuit education. Nelson-Barber and Dull (1998) identified that teaching success with Indigenous students was linked with the teacher's ability to create and implement meaningful curriculum that is linked with the students' culture, values, and ways of engaging with others. Berger (2022) wrote that the system of teacher education in Inuit Nunangat needs to shift entirely from a Eurocentric model and consider what

would be more in line with Inuit cultural ways of teaching and learning. This shift would benefit both teachers and learners. It is argued that replacing southern teachers with Inuit educators will strengthen not only the education system but also families and community (Preston, 2016). It has been highlighted that although the NG partnered with Memorial University to offer one cohort of an Inuit Bachelor of Education programme through the (then) Labrador Institute at Memorial University, it was not delivered in Nunatsiavut. The only region of Inuit Nunangat that has teacher education that is offered fully in Nunangat is Nunavut Territory.

### ***Post-Secondary Education as a Nunatsiavut Beneficiary***

Inuit students living in Inuit Nunangat pursuing post-secondary education are eligible for funding administered by the Region or Territory where they reside (Government of Canada, 2018). Those residing outside Inuit Nunangat can apply for funding administered by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) (Government of Canada, 2018). In Nunatsiavut, this programme is administered through the NG Post-Secondary Student Support Programme (PSSSP), which has guidelines parallel to the programme offered by ISC yet the way this programme has been structured has been credited (in part) for supporting Nunatsiavut toward a higher post-secondary graduation rate than any other region in Inuit Nunangat (ITK, 2005).

In 2007, ITK identified that the level of Inuit participation in post-secondary education was of concern. Silta Associates (2007) examined post-secondary education across Inuit Nunangat and identified 14 recommendations, including the importance of recognizing that education for Inuit adults is transformative and needs to be holistic, and that Inuit adult learners have multiple responsibilities, leading to the conclusion that funding needs to be adequate to allow time and money for students to fully engage in educational programming with less worry.

### *Options for Post-Secondary Education in Inuit Nunangat*

In Inuit Nunangat, Nunavut is the only region that has college campuses or learning centres in every community. According to their website, Nunavut Arctic College (NAC, n.d.-a) has five main campuses and Community Learning Centres (CLC) in every community across the territory; offering 30 different programmes a year. In Nunavik, post-secondary education can be obtained through the CEGEP system; however, Nunavimmiut<sup>8</sup> must move south to access this programming. Vocational training is offered in many communities through Kativik Ilisarniliriniq, the school board of Nunavik. Aurora College, the diploma granting institution in Northwest Territory, has a campus in Inuvik, the largest community in the Inuvialuit region, and College of the North Atlantic offers adult education programmes and a series of rotating trades programmes in communities in the Nunatsiavut region (Aurora College, 2023; C. Baker, personal communication October 16, 2019). In June 2021, ITK announced a partnership with the Mastercard Foundation and an intention to support the visioning and planning of a university in Inuit Nunangat (ITK, 2021). The absence of a university in Inuit Nunangat has been identified as a barrier to Inuit self-determination (ITK, 2018). Until 2020, when Yukon College, located in Whitehorse, Yukon Territory was granted university status, Canada was the only circumpolar country without a university in its Arctic region (Lees et al., 2010). While Yukon University is not in Inuit Nunangat, the creation of this institution did assure Canada a university in its Arctic region.

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<sup>8</sup> The term used to identify Inuit living in Nunavik.

### ***Getting a Degree***

Departments of education in two regions of Inuit Nunangat have liaised with universities and colleges in other areas of Canada to offer credentials that are meaningful and assessed to be needed to remedy skills gaps. NAC has partnered with the University of Saskatchewan, University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI), Memorial University, and Dalhousie University to offer degree programmes in Law, Bachelor of Education and Bachelor of Social Work, Master of Education in Leadership and Learning, and Bachelor of Nursing, respectively; however, the only programmes that are delivered entirely in territory is the Nunavut Teacher Education Programme conferred by the University of Regina until 2018 and now conferred in partnership with MUN (Nunavut Arctic College, n.d.-a, n.d.-b, n.d.-c; UPEI, 2019).

The NG partnered with Memorial University (MUN) to deliver an Inuit Bachelor of Social Work programme as well as the Inuit Bachelor of Education degree that had specific focus for the region and a parallel Inuttut language programme (MUN, 2019a, 2019b; Moore & Galway, 2018), with St. Thomas University to deliver a post-degree Bachelor of Social Work (Hillier, 2011), and with NSCC to deliver the CYC diploma that is the focus of this dissertation. All or some of the course requirements for these programmes occurred in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, a community in Labrador that is adjacent to Nunatsiavut, and in communities in Nunatsiavut; none of these programmes were delivered completely in Nunatsiavut.

### ***Experience in Post-Secondary Educational Environments and Factors Influencing Success***

The literature review commissioned by ITK on capacity-building in Inuit education identified a gap in the research related to understanding what factors promote Inuit students' academic and personal success (Lees et al., 2010). Since that review, faculty at Nunavut Arctic College who worked with students to document Inuit worldviews found that providing students

with time at the end of the school day to complete homework before they left for home was much more effective than requiring students to complete this work at home because of the multiple responsibilities the students had outside school, including taking care of family (Kublu et al., 2017). Silta Associates (2007) and Rodon et al. (2015) highlighted the importance of a cohesive group in the learning environment and concluded that it is through interpersonal relationships that learning is contextualized and knowledge is shared; in many contexts, learning and teaching roles are fluid (Silta Associates, 2007).

Traditional Inuit education (Isumaqsayuq in Inuktitut) focuses on Inuit values (Silta Associates, 2007), and is the way that knowledge is traditionally passed through watching and repeating, through relationship with both the environment and with people. It is important that Inuit values and traditional approaches to education are incorporated into the post-secondary learning environment (Silta Associates, 2007; Stairs, 1995). Much of the success of the Inuit teacher education programme has been linked to the community-based delivery of this programme in part because Nunavummiut<sup>9</sup> can complete the programme without having to leave home, thus allowing them to access their social and community support, maintain their links to land and culture, and balance family responsibilities (Malatest & Associates, 2004).

Lane (2013) outlined that the largest challenge in educational attainment for Nunatsiavummiut is supporting students to make the leap into a successful post-secondary career. Among other elements, Lane identifies that the barriers to pursuing and completing post-secondary education include not being able to go home every day at the end of class, lack of academic preparedness, and family responsibilities. She shares that barriers cannot be addressed

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<sup>9</sup> An Inuktitut word used to identify the people who inhabit Nunavut Territory.

if they are not identified as barriers, and it is up to all of us to share with relevant parties how certain circumstances are impacting engagement and for relevant parties to ensure consultation as they are working to change systems and historical processes and expectations.

In Hudson and Hanran (2013), Hudson outlined her experience of leaving Black Tickle, a small community inaccessible by road, located in NunatuKavut<sup>10</sup> (population 150 according to Statistics Canada, 2021), to begin her undergraduate degree in St. John's some 600 kms away. She shared that she went initially with someone from her community, yet walking into classrooms that held more students than were in her entire community was very intimidating. Hudson reported that when she had thoughts of quitting, she thought of her family and her community, and both weighed heavily in her decision making.

Lane (2013) and Hudson (as reported in Hudson & Hanran, 2013) shared experientially what was highlighted in a literature review completed by Atlantic Evaluation Group (2010). Atlantic Evaluation Group identified that in their review of the literature, individuals who live in remote Indigenous communities have limited input into decision making related to post-secondary programming that might impact or be available to them, and that relocating from remote and rural Indigenous communities to attend post-secondary education was a barrier to attendance and retention (Atlantic Evaluation Group, 2010).

Rodon et al. (2015) sought to gain an understanding of the experiences of Inuit students in post-secondary educational environments. The conclusion was that despite multiple barriers, most students had quite positive experiences. Programmes that had a focus on Northern context, had Inuit instructors or co-instructors, or were facilitated in Inuktitut as well as English had

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<sup>10</sup> NunatuKavut is the territory of Inuit who reside primarily in south and central Labrador (NunatuKavut, 2023).

increased relevance for Inuit learners and therefore the experience for these students was meaningful (Rodon et al., 2015). Inuit students outlined that it was important that they have choices for post-secondary programming. They did not want their only options to be programmes that were designed and implemented to meet the needs of the government; they also wanted programming that would meet their individual personal development needs as students (Rodon et al., 2015). Difficulty accessing programs, in part because they felt unprepared to encounter all that was required academically, socially, and emotionally (e.g., moving south, away from home) was also highlighted.

Most of the research focused on Inuit experiences in post-secondary education is general, not programme specific nor specifically focused on college or university. Given the themes that resonate across these studies, it is reasonable to assume that these factors could also apply to Child and Youth Care pre-service education.

### ***Working Post-Degree***

Indigenous individuals who are educated in a post-secondary system that is primarily Euro-Western and then return to their home community to work in systems that continue to be colonizing (health and education) express experiences of discrimination in those systems and share that in order to be successful upon return to community to work they needed to be able to navigate both Western and traditional worlds (Møller, 2013). Holding dual belief systems places Indigenous care providers in a position of brokering and mediating cross culturally (Kahn & Kelly, 2001).

Teachers in Nunavik share experiences of discrimination, of being ignored for promotion in favour of a Kallunât colleague (Fyn, 2014). Occasional exceptions occurred in circumstances



where leadership at the worksite was Inuit; in these exceptional situations, educators expressed that they did not experience racism (Fyn, 2014).

As a young teacher, Vicki Dull experienced tension between what was expected of her in the classroom as good teacher behaviour, and what she knew as a Yup'ik (Nelson-Barber & Dull, 1998). She wrestled with the children knowing her from the community and knowing her in the classroom where her behaviour was uncomfortable to her and unnatural for her students. She also felt pressure from community members to be different in her interactions with students than was expected from teachers from away. All these expectations led to her leaving teaching.

It has been noted in environments where there are Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff, the Indigenous staff are asked to deal with all things Indigenous, regardless of whether the topics or issues are directly associated with their jobs (Copeland et al., 2022). The addition of this expectation contributes to work-related stress that may influence Indigenous staff to leave positions where they could have influenced policy and practice.

It is evident that there is a distinct need for more educational programming and that this programming must attend to the broad-based needs of Nunatsiavummiut during and beyond the programme.

### **Child and Youth Care**

CYC has roots in residential group care, youth work, early childhood care, and education (Mann-Feder et al., 2017). It has been recognized that across the globe, there are over 60 different job titles that encompass roles where CYC is practiced (McElwee & Garfat, 2003). In Canada, CYC is practiced in hospitals, community centres, schools, streets, playgrounds, family homes, research, and pre-service training and education.

### *Child and Youth Care Practice*

One cannot engage in a discussion about Canadian CYC practice without first being explicit about some of the elements that make this discussion a challenging task. Canada is geographically, ethnically, and culturally diverse. We are the second largest landmass in the world, covering just over 9 million square kilometres (Statistics Canada, 2017), but with a very low population density of approximately four people per square kilometre (World Population Review, 2023).

Child protection, health, and education are government departments, systems, or services that each province and territory maintains legislatively and structurally. Each province or territory is responsible to fund and maintain these systems in the way that is determined by their government to be most meaningful to their individual jurisdiction or aligned with the ideology of the political party in power, which means they may not necessarily adopt rationales that are congruent with sound pedagogical or child welfare practices. These elements all affect the complexity of identifying CYC practice on a national level. As recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC, 2015b) are enacted, the legislations that influence CYC practice will be further complicated by the changes needed to reflect increased Indigenous sovereignty for child welfare services, education, and health.

Eight provinces have CYC professional associations<sup>11</sup>, and their advocacy for quality care for children, youth, and families is supported at the national level by the Council of Canadian CYC Associations (CCCYCA) (Shaw, 2019). Even with all this structure, there is still

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<sup>11</sup> At the time of writing this dissertation, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and the three territories did not have CYC associations linked with the CCCYCA.

lack of agreement on the elements that influence CYC practice in Canada (e.g., what theories are identified as foundational CYC theories, are CYC practitioners advocates or political agents, whose role is it to define the field), and these elements have been the topic of lively discussions when practitioners gather (Mann-Feder et al., 2017). A current definition of CYC practice outlined on CYC-Net (an international repository of CYC literature and documents) is as follows:

Through a commitment to caring for and about young people, Child and Youth Care practice (CYC) focuses on the developmental needs of young people and families across the globe with a commitment to social justice that recognizes oppression due to race, ethnicity, sexual-orientation, gender, disability, and socio-economic status.

Our practice involves the equitable, active, and engaged relationship between individuals to facilitate meaningful change that improves the lives of young people. CYC practitioners engage young people in their daily lifespaces to facilitate and support growth and development through the relational interplay between Self and Other.

CYC practitioners value individuals as capable agents of their own desired and positive change. (CYC-Net, n.d., para. 1)

I apply this definition of practice throughout this dissertation.

It is commonly understood that CYC practice occurs in the lifespan, an idea developed by Fritz Redl in the 1940s based in the work by Kurt Lewin (Maier, n.d.). Lifespace is loosely defined as the entire social, emotional, physical, organizational, and environmental context that influences a person's life (Maier, n.d.), and it is in this place that you will find CYC practitioners supporting children, young people, and families, with the intention that they will live their lives with less stress.

### *Child and Youth Care Education*

Preparing CYC practitioners in an educational environment is multifaceted and is ultimately about preparing individuals to practice in a very demanding and contextually complex environment. CYC practice is recognized as a unique way of helping children, youth, and families (Gharabaghi, 2010; Jones, 2007). Extant research about various aspects of CYC practice has highlighted the importance of specific education for CYC practitioners (see, for example, Garfat, 1998; Shaw, 2009; Stuart & Sanders, 2008), and educators have articulated best practices for CYC education based on their own experiences and professional judgements (Hills, 1998; Phelan, 2005; Shaw, 2011). An examination of the literature suggests that what is currently used in the field of CYC as models for CYC education is based on what colleges and educators believe works best relying on their broad range of experiences and professional judgements, rather than what has been explored from within a research framework (see, for example, Bellefeuille et al., 2008; Hills, 1998; Phelan, 2005; Shaw, 2011; Shaw et al., 2009; White, 2007).

The first documented formal CYC training in North America, was delivered in 1957 at Thistletown Hospital in Ontario and, at around the same time, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in Montréal was delivering a practical training programme as a foundation for people who were delivering programmes to adolescents (Brooker, 2016). The first college programme began at George Brown College in Toronto in 1967 and the first degree-granting programme at Toronto Metropolitan University in 1989 (Brooker, 2016). In 1990, a group comprised mostly of educators, organized to form the North American Consortium of CYC Education Programmes with the purpose of exploring accreditation standards for CYC education and in 1995 published four basic assumptions that were understood to be core for CYC

education: (a) care work as an interpersonal process, (b) contextual interactions in the milieu, (c) therapeutic interventions, and (d) indirect elements (Anglin, 1995). These assumptions have been expanded upon in Canada, and a model for educational accreditation has been developed (CYC Educational Accreditation Board of Canada [CYCEABC], 2019).

In keeping with the demands of the practice field that workers are qualified and trained, by 2009 there were college diploma programmes in 10 provinces, as well as several bachelor's and master's level degrees. In addition, the University of Victoria offers a Doctor of Philosophy in CYC, although intake is paused until 2024 (UVic.ca, n.d.)~~Stuart, 2013~~. Currently there are no CYC programmes offered in Inuit Nunangat. However, the NG sponsored a group of students from that region to complete a CYC diploma at the NSCC, which is the focus of this dissertation. This diploma was delivered via a combination of distance and face-to-face delivery. The students chose the location of the face-to-face delivery, with much of it occurring in the Nunatsiavut Region.

At the turn of this century, both educational accreditation and national practitioner certification processes were in infancy. The first Canadian practitioner was certified by the Child and Youth Care Certification Board in 2006 (A. Fournier, personal communication, October 6, 2019), and the first Canadian diploma programme was accredited in 2016 by the CYCEABC (CYCEABC, 2019).

As outlined previously, in Canada, CYC education is delivered at the diploma, advanced diploma, bachelors, master's, and doctoral levels. Some universities offer a diploma exit, from their bachelors in CYC. Some universities also offer a diploma entrance offering advanced standing into a four-year degree for individuals who have completed a diploma in CYC (and sometimes other related diplomas). One province in Canada—Ontario—also offers CYC as an

apprenticeship, recognizing Child and Youth Care as a non-compulsory skilled trade (Skilled Trades Ontario, 2022).

It is typically understood that diploma programmes prepare individuals for direct practice and entry into bachelor's programmes, and bachelor's programmes prepare individuals for direct practice and for further education and preparation for clinical and management roles or for the academy. The advanced diploma credential is only awarded in Ontario, and typically requires three years of study. As demand for CYC practitioners increases, educational institutions are being challenged to increase the number of graduates each year, and there are anecdotal suggestions that credentialing programmes are being pressured to find creative ways to speed the completion of qualification at the diploma level.

### ***Understanding Child and Youth Care Students' Experiences***

Scholars have highlighted and a recent WorldCat search confirms (see Table 6) that there is a limited number of empirical studies designed and implemented to assess the current learning and teaching practices in CYC and even fewer opportunities for empirical examination of students' experiences (Jean-Pierre et al., 2020). This situation contrasts with cognate professions of Nursing and Education, where scholar-practitioners have developed and researched their pedagogical approaches and are critical of educational models specific to the needs of students, the experience of students, and the work that they will be doing upon graduation (see, for example, Alsop et al., 2007; Mann et al., 2009). There is even less research or writing about Inuit student experience as illustrated by the results of a WorldCat search (see Table 7) and a search of Google Scholar (see Table 8).

Exploration of the five sources identified in the last search on Google Scholar (see Table 8) showed that they are linked to student experience; none of them were directly related to pre-

service CYC education nor solely focused on Indigenous student experience and certainly not on Inuit student experience.

**Table 6**

*WorldCat Search Results About Students' Experience in Post-Secondary Education*

Search Term	Books	Articles	Total (including newspaper, magazines, and AV materials)
Student + experience + post + secondary + education	2808	20026	23321
Student + experience + "child and youth care" + education	9	202	211

*Note.* Search results reported as of August 10, 2022.

**Table 7**

*WorldCat Search Results About Inuit Students' Experience in Post-Secondary Education*

Search Term	Books	Articles	Total (including newspaper, magazines, and AV materials)
"Indigenous student" + experience + "child and youth care" + education	0	0	0
"child and youth care" + indigenous + "student experience"	0	2	2
"child and youth care" + Inuit + "student experience"	0	0	0
"Inuit student" + experience of + "child and youth care" + education	0	0	0

*Note.* Search results reported as of August 10, 2022.

**Table 8***Google Scholar Search Results About Inuit Students' Experience in Post-Secondary Education*

Search Term	Items
Student + experience + post + secondary + education	2 880 000
Student + experience + “child and youth care” + education	9410
“Indigenous student” + experience of “child + youth care” + education	58
“child and youth care” + Indigenous + “student experience”	90
“child and youth care” + Inuit + “student experience”	24
“Inuit student” + experience of “child and youth care” + education	5

*Note.* Search results reported as of August 10, 2022.

A Google Scholar search for Indigenous child and youth care education revealed that three post-secondary educational institutions in Canada offer (or have recently offered) one- or two-year Child and Youth Care First Nations Diploma programmes, or one-year Indigenous specialization post-degree or diploma programmes in a human service area. Future Skills Centre is offering a community-based mentorship programme to upskill and offer a post-secondary certificate in Child and Youth Care through the Chang School of Continuing Education at Toronto Metropolitan University.

Child and Youth Care scholars have outlined that it is important for pre-service CYC students to be challenged in the context of safe and supportive learning environments (Ranahan et al., 2012) and that their learning is positively impacted by experiential and interactive methods



of teaching and learning (Mann-Feder et al., 2020). Child and youth care pre-service students have identified that they are impacted physically, emotionally, and psychologically by their learning experiences (Ranahan et al., 2012) and at times during their education programme find that their stress levels are very high (Mann-Feder et al., 2020). Students taking an advanced degree in youth work have shared that they experienced a sense of belonging and safety in their cohort that allowed them to engage in learning risks that supported their transformational learning (Stein et al., 2005). In an interprofessional context, students (including pre-service CYC students) identified their experience of and opportunity to participate in team work as essential to their success in both project and placement environments (Fortugno et al., 2013).

### **Need For Research About Pre-Service Child and Youth Care Education in Inuit Nunangat**

It has been identified that most research about Inuit education focuses on primary and secondary school, which is partially attributed to the lack of post-secondary institutions in Inuit Nunangat (Sallaffie et al., 2021). Tables 2 and 3 illustrate the need for further research on post-secondary education in Inuit Nunangat and Tables 6–8 outline the need for research on CYC pre-service education. Given that the focus of this dissertation is the experience of CYC students in and from Inuit Nunangat and that my area of practice is CYC pre-service education in a post-secondary environment, including in Inuit Nunangat, this dissertation is designed to address identified gaps, and is aligned with my interests and knowledge.

It has been highlighted that (in a pan-Indigenous context) Indigenous students compromise their worldview to have value and acceptance in Western educational institutions (Stewart & Reeves, 2013) and that inclusion of Indigenous perspectives was limited and tokenistic (Bishop et al., 2021) and often delivered by non-Indigenous faculty (Lawrence, 2019).

Nursing and pre-service teacher education have used research approaches that explore the experience of students engaged in those profession-specific education programmes as a way of informing their teaching approaches and evaluating their curriculum (see, for example, Herne et al., 2008; Scheckel et al., 2010). As a profession, Nursing has examined (for example) the use of land-based experiential learning and the experience for Indigenous nursing students (Sanderson, et al. 2020) and the importance of cultural capital and mentorship connected to the experience of Inuit nursing students (Møller, 2013) with recommendation to support student experience and changing practices to increase support for Indigenous students and service and support for Indigenous service recipients. Both cognate professions have also examined their pre-service education programmes from the lens of retaining and supporting Indigenous students (see, for example, Kelly & Henschke, 2019; Marom, 2019; Tranter et al., 2018; Trimmer & Wondunna-Foley, 2018). There is an evident need for comparable research about the experiences of Indigenous students, especially Nunatsiavummiut students, in CYC programmes. This dissertation is a mere starting point for addressing this lacuna.

An increased understanding of Inuit student experience in the context of a post-secondary CYC pre-service programme is an essential part of addressing this research gap. Having a deepened understanding of student experience can inform CYC pre-service educators in pedagogical decision making intended to meet the needs of Inuit students and increase opportunities for full engagement in CYC programmes. This research could support post-secondary institutions in creating programme offerings that better meet the needs of Inuit students more broadly than solely focused on CYC pre-service education. This research will offer policy makers empirical evidence to guide the development of systemic structures that will provide ground work for increasing student success and will also support funders in their

decision-making processes, while also offering support for Inuit students as they seek understanding of the resources needed to support their own success in post-secondary education and which institutions might best meet those needs.

### Chapter 3 Method and Methodology

Creswell (2013) cautions that in constructing the research design for a qualitative research project, the researcher must ensure that the purpose, questions, and methods are interrelated so that the project flows fluidly rather than appearing disjointed and disconnected. In my experience, the words methodology and method are often used synonymously. It is important to identify, however, that they are not the same. Methodology is the philosophical underpinning of the research, and method is the framework within which those assumptions are applied (King, 1994). The methods of the study should be articulated clearly, systematically, and explicitly so that they will be experienced as credible and dependable when applied in the methodological framework (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This chapter includes discussion of methodology and method.

Following Holden and Lynch's (2004) suggestion, I reflected on their question, "why even do research?" and my response is "to understand", which ties in with the research approach I have selected, and the title of this IPA given by the co-inquirers. I have a genuine curiosity about the world and about people in the world and, as a CYC practitioner, my professional orientation mirrors an interpretivist framework, which supports an ontological orientation and an epistemology that foregrounds the existence of multiple realities that are constructed and altered by the knower and are contextually specific (Laverty, 2003). Epistemologically, interpretivist frameworks imply a relationship between the knower and the known (Finlay, 2009b). Epistemology concerns the study of the nature of knowledge; that is, how we know what we know and, from a research context, how it is possible for us to increase our knowing of the world (Holden & Lynch, 2004).

Determining appropriate methodology as a non-Indigenous researcher and respectfully implementing that methodology is complex. Researchers who do research in Indigenous communities are supported by chapter 9 of the Tri-Council Policy Statement 2 (TCPS2; Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2022); the principles of ownership, control, access, and possession (OCAP; First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2014); the Four Rs of respect, reciprocity, relevance, and responsibility (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991/2016); and community-based participatory research (CBPR; Castleden et al., 2012); all of these guidance documents are aligned with the UNDRIP outlining control and self-determination (United Nations General Assembly, 2007). Still, it has been identified that the guidance outlined in these documents may not be enough (Bull et al., 2020).

Some non-Indigenous scholars assert that it is inappropriate to use Indigenous research methodologies as a non-Indigenous scholar because Indigenous research methodology is based on Indigenous worldviews (Carlson, 2017). Indigenous scholars have suggested that Indigenous methods should not be used unless one culturally identifies with the practice to ensure ancestral presence and the maintenance of knowledge transmission (Kovach, 2009; Luby et al., 2018). Without decades of immersive experience in Indigenous culture, language, and learning, it is impossible to know an Indigenous worldview (Hain-Jamall, 2013).

Deciding on a research methodology to frame a project is in and of itself a daunting task yet is essential to the direction of the project. It is important before a methodology is identified that the researcher can clearly outline their position on the nature of reality and the alignment of the methodology to that position (Al-Ababneh, 2020). This identification will ensure they understand what will happen when they research, and how they will make sense of the information they obtain through their research (Koch, 1996) because research methodology is

linked to an individual's philosophical perspective. Lavery (2003) further explains that "methodology is not a method to follow but a creative approach to understanding, using whatever approaches are responsive to particular questions and subject matter" (p. 16). It is the framework grounded in basic assumptions that offer foundation for the orientation of the researcher. The methodology for this dissertation research is phenomenology; the method Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The emphasis of a phenomenological research project is on description, meaning, and discovery; it involves exploration through a form of introspection rather than inference through observation (Osborne, 1994).

### **Positionality**

Sharing positionality is congruent with IPA and has been highlighted by Indigenous scholars as important when researching with Indigenous communities. This "self-location affirms perspectives about the objectivity/subjectivity conundrum in research" (Kovach, 2009, p. 111). Kovach (2009) further explains that positionality (or self-location) helps to expose our research purpose and motive, identifying the reciprocity with those who are sharing their stories with us.

I am a daughter, a partner, a mother, a friend. I am a certified Child and Youth Care Practitioner. I have practiced in child and youth caring programs, community-based family reunification, and my practice environment has included pre-service CYC education for 20 years.

For the past five years, I have been working in the sectors of child welfare and post-secondary education in Inuit Nunangat. From 2014 until early 2021, I was the consulting Director of Care to a company that was contracted to provide services for child and adolescent group treatment in Nunavut; in March 2017, in my role as faculty member at the NSCC, I began working with a group of Nunatsiavummiut to support their completion of a CYC diploma. Parts

of three courses were co-facilitated in Nunatsiavut with a colleague who was typically connected with student supports. The remaining courses were delivered solely by me.

Recently, a colleague and I were asked to author a chapter about working as CYC practitioners in Nunatsiavut for an edited book on CYC practice in Canada (Modlin et al., 2020). We partnered in this writing with two Inuit CYC practitioners from Nunatsiavut: Sheldon Lane and Jenny Oliver. Writing the book chapter illuminated how my thinking has changed since I first started working in Inuit Nunangat. Exposure to new information, critically reading about education theory, and reflecting on my own practice specifically in Inuit Nunangat exposed for me gaps in my knowledge, awareness, and understanding and offered opportunity to be thoughtful and critical of my own education. Writing about CYC practice in Inuit Nunangat for that book chapter, revealed links to worldview, meaning making, and learning that intrigued me and challenged my thinking as I reflected on the CYC diploma programme I had supported and the relevance of the pedagogy I employed.

As a descendant of colonial invaders who aspires to be an ally, I continue to learn about and understand the privilege of my whiteness and subsequently my responsibility. As I have continued my doctoral studies and, congruently, as I have deepened my engagement within Inuit Nunangat—always connected in some way to institutions and systems of colonization—my reflective process has exposed awareness of my responsibility to challenge back these institutions, making certain that their processes and expectations are not assumed, but rather explored and implemented with purpose and relevance. I have also become differently critical of some of the theoretical underpinnings of my profession and increasingly curious about the ways in which the theory and practice of CYC pre-service education translate culturally in this practice environment. All these experiences and reflections influence my researcher lens.

As a non-Indigenous researcher researching with/in Indigenous community, I must recognize my privilege and the complexity of my intention to ally (further discussed in the Coda of this dissertation) and ensure that my research centres the voice of co-inquirers. Inuit Elders admonish that one should never talk about what one does not know because sharing information “just from hearsay, it is too easy to speak a falsehood” (Kublu et al., 2017, p. 6). This caution reinforces the importance of ensuring a methodological approach that has first voice as a philosophical tenet (Snow, 2018). Further, it must be recognized that the way worldview influences language usage limits the ability to assume smooth and clear communication across worldviews (Hain-Jamall, 2013); language, ideology, and identity as a non-Indigenous researcher shape my positionality in engagement and analysis.

As a non-Indigenous researcher who is connected to but not immersed in Indigenous community, I opted to position in a Western framework that had first voice as a tenet and aligned closely in analysis and interpretation with the co-inquirers because it was important to me to assure that the stories that were shared with me were treated with the respect they deserved (Kovach, 2009) and that the Indigenous knowledge shared with me was not inadvertently exploited or misrepresented by me (Battiste, 2007). Engaging with the individuals whose experience is shared in this dissertation supports inclusion of Inuit worldview and offers further opportunity for reflexivity related to my assumptions. This idea is discussed more fully in a subsequent section of this chapter.

Non-Indigenous researchers need to have a deep understanding of the complicated history and continued colonizing impacts of research connected to Indigenous community. ITK recognizes the value of research as a tool for social justice, supporting social equity for Inuit and strengthening this position by including specific measures of social and economic inequity in



Inuit Nunangat in the National Inuit Strategy on Research released in 2018 (ITK, 2018). ITK (2018) posits that non-Inuit researchers actualize their own agenda and seldom focus on areas that Inuit identify as priorities: health and social science. Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2021) identified that even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the word research remains as a dirty word for many of the world's Indigenous people. Researchers continue to receive primary benefit from research involving Indigenous people, land, wildlife, and environment (ITK, 2018). The power to identify what counts as knowledge is still at the core of colonization (Smith, 2021), and while the body of information available about decolonizing and Indigenous methodologies is growing, there is less written about how to engage in this research, and it has been identified that the potential role for non-Indigenous partners in supporting Inuit self-determination is also underexplored (K. J. Wilson et al., 2020).

Recognizing that research has the potential to support reconciliation, S. Wilson and Hughes (2019) assert that researchers who are engaged with Indigenous community in research must recognize the importance of relationship, and that the accountability in relationship must permeate the entire research process. The TCPS2 offers ethical guidance for researchers; specifically in chapter 9 where the importance of respectful relationship is outlined (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2022).

### **Phenomenology**

Phenomenological research explores the way in which a “person experiences or understands their world as real or meaningful” (van Manen, 1997, p. 183). Dowling (2007) identified phenomenology as both a philosophical movement and a research method. As a research methodology, it is grounded in the philosophical history of phenomenology and,

consequently, to utilize a phenomenological orientation to research, it is helpful to have some understanding of the history of phenomenology as a philosophy.

As a philosophical approach, phenomenology is credited to Edmund Husserl, in the early 1900s (Moran, 2000). Phenomenology is best understood as follows:

Anti-traditional style of philosophizing, which emphasizes the attempt to get to the truth of matters, to describe phenomena, in the broadest sense as whatever appears in the manner in which it appears, as it manifests itself to consciousness, to the individual experiencer. (Moran, 2000, p. 4)

Simply put, phenomenology is the study of experience typically shared from the lens of the experiencer. More specifically, it is experience that is gained having lived through a particular phenomenon—thus not simply accumulated evidence or knowledge, but rather knowledge that encompasses the change that occurs within us when something happens to us (Friesen & Henriksson, 2012). Van Manen (2014) captured phenomenology as being “about wonder, words, and world” (p. 13).

Interpretative phenomenological analysis is a detailed exploration of the researcher’s views on the co-inquirers’ views on the topic under investigation (Smith et al., 1999); thus, in the analysis, the researcher’s own understanding is required. Kovach (2009) outlined that in all qualitative research, the researcher is present and must constantly position themselves in the research. In this IPA, it must be acknowledged that as a non-Indigenous researcher, I cannot access the worldview of the co-inquirers involved in this study without their support to ensure understanding. Throughout this work, I have asked myself repeatedly, do I understand and consulted regularly with the co-inquirers to ask if I do understand and if I am making their

perspectives clear. This continual focus on confirming understandings is the reason tukisiven became the guiding light and title of this dissertation.

Over the past century plus, phenomenology has evolved from the position that Husserl first ascribed of solely exploring, analyzing, and describing an experience to also embracing an interpretative stance (Groenewald, 2004). The focus of interpretative phenomenology is to gain a deeper understanding of an experience grounded in the belief that individuals interpret and find meaning in the events of their lives and that the meaning people draw from these events affects the ways that they then move on to engage in their world (Matua & van der Wal, 2015). Recognizing that what is real for one person may not be real for another person does not make either experience more or less real (Osborne, 1994).

Several phenomenological orientations are now recognized, including transcendental, existential, hermeneutical, linguistical, ethical, and phenomenology of practice (van Manen, 2011). Confusion can quickly occur when examining the philosophy of phenomenology, the research methodology of phenomenology, and the research methods commonly associated with phenomenology because of the styles (e.g., existential versus transcendental), the labels (e.g., new phenomenology), and the phases of phenomenological thought (Finlay, 2009a). Finlay (2009a) identified that the diversity and complexity (and at times confusion) that is apparent when examining phenomenological philosophy is also revealed when exploring phenomenological research methodologies, which adds complexity for novice researchers. This complexity makes it a difficult methodology to access, and especially difficult for a new researcher who is still developing an understanding of phenomenology as a research methodology (Finlay, 2009a).

Fore-structuring or bracketing is an element of phenomenological research that refers to the responsibility of researchers to make explicit what they know and understand about the phenomenon under study (Tuohy et al., 2013). It is not expected that fore-structuring will decrease subjectivity; however, it offers the reader the opportunity to understand the researcher's position when they enter the exploration (Tuohy et al., 2013).

It has become more common for researchers to contest the possibility of fore-structuring and to suggest instead the importance of the researcher being visible in the research and articulating as clearly as possible how their interpretation and meaning are found. This positions the researcher as a subjective player rather than a detached seemingly innocuous observer. This perspective informs my approach to implementing IPA. I have taken care to explain my positionality and the ways that I worked with the co-inquirers to come to the understandings that I present through this work.

This broad overview of phenomenology as a method and methodology offers an introduction to the common philosophical underpinnings and the elements that differ across various approaches to using phenomenology as a research framework. Selecting a specific phenomenological method requires that the researcher understands the intended use of the method, and the underlying tenets that support the implementation of the method as well as the limitations of the chosen method.

### **Interpretative Phenomenological Method**

If choosing phenomenological methodology is the first step, then it is important to determine how this methodology will be applied within the framing of the research question. Since my intention is to explore the experience of Nunatsiavummiut who participated in the NSCC CYC diploma, an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) offers the structure to

support application through method. IPA is used when the intent is to explore in detail how individuals are making sense of their personal and social world with regard for the individual's personal recalling of the event (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Interpretative phenomenological research is, in essence, the exploration or study of the lived experience or life world, that is, the world as it is experienced by a person, not the exploration of a reality or the exploration of the world separate from that person (van Manen, 1997).

As with other methodologies that have evolved from Husserlian phenomenology, IPA is not about testing hypotheses, but about understanding personal experiences (Howitt, 2010). Researchers who employ interpretative phenomenology are especially interested in what happens when the everyday flow of lived experience takes on a particular significance for people (Roberts, 2013). Interpretative phenomenology recognizes that people live in a time and place, and that their experiences are influenced by the social, cultural, and political contexts of the world in which they live (Tuohy et al., 2013). Unlike descriptive phenomenology, which espouses that the essences of experience are static and unchanging, interpretative phenomenology considers temporality (Tuohy et al., 2013).

Grounded in social constructionist theory, IPA focuses on the effects of the language used by the participants yet in the researcher's analysis there is opportunity to offer meaningful insight in this language use (Smith et al., 2009/2011). The researcher is in the position to offer a point of view on what was shared by the co-inquirers by exploring what they have shared semantically and juxtaposing that information with existing theory (Smith et al., 2009/2011).

IPA emphasizes that "the research exercise is a dynamic process with an active role for the researcher in that process" (Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 53) and involves a double hermeneutic process (Smith et al., 2009/2011). Hermeneutics is the theory of interpretation. The double

hermeneutic process is the researcher making sense of the co-inquirer who is making sense of or finding meaning in the experience under exploration (Smith et al., 2009/2011).

### ***Reflexive Process***

Researchers who use interpretative phenomenology as the methodology for their work must identify their pre-suppositions, their assumptions, and their previous knowledge of that which they are exploring (Tuohy et al., 2013). They must examine their own worldview, including their influences and potential biases (Tuohy et al., 2013). It is this openness and exposure that supports the researcher to develop a phenomenological attitude in this interpretative context (Tuohy et al., 2013). It was the reflexive examination of worldview that supported my understanding of my role as a non-Indigenous researcher who descended from colonial invaders. Shedding of one's interpretative filters (as much as possible) through a reflexive process allows the researcher to explore in ways that might be hindered if the researcher's assumptions are not revealed, discovered, and set aside (A. Wilson, 2015).

Being so closely linked to the experience of these co-inquirers as they journeyed through their CYC diploma programme, it was imperative that I had a plan in place to support my fore-structuring as I engaged in this IPA. The development of this plan started long before I began the interviews for this dissertation. As outlined, in IPA it is understood that the researcher is intimately connected to the research process, and that bracketing or fore-structuring is not possible in the way that it is (or was) understood in other forms of phenomenological research (Sydor, 2019). The acceptance of the researcher's experiences, understanding, and meaning making are part of the process of the IPA and linked to the depth of analysis.

As a descendant of colonial invaders, I could never experience the same worldview as the Inuit who were co-inquirers in this project. It is therefore important that I outline in the

presentation of the themes from the analysis how my worldview influenced the analysis, and the ways that the co-inquirers offered input to ensure that the findings were grounded in their experience. Hain-Jamall (2013) outlined worldview as a “culture’s standard way of perceiving reality, of processing information, of approaching problems and interacting with others (p. 13). I come from a culture with individualistic tendencies, and it is suggested that this means I decontextualize information for analysis whereas the co-inquirers are members of a traditionally collectivist culture that has a holistic, contextualizing cognitive orientation (Hain-Jamall, 2013).

Indigenous and non-Indigenous critical friends (Costa & Kallick, 1993) played a keen role in supporting me as I analyzed. In these trusting relationships, I was able to share my process candidly while maintaining the confidence of the Nunatsiavummiut. I knew that these critical friends would ask thoughtful and evocative questions that would allow me to expose my previously held beliefs and, through the process, reveal assumptions and things I did not know. Sharing the transcripts from the interviews I conducted and the subsequent analysis regularly with my supervisor whose role was to support my scholarly growth also offered opportunity for another lens through which to challenge my meaning making and interpretative process.

Journaling is a way to support reflexivity. In the creation of a protocol to support qualitative researchers in documenting the trustworthiness of their research, journaling is clearly threaded throughout the research process (Amankwaa, 2016). Journaling is a habit I developed early in my career as a CYC practitioner working directly with youth and families. I found it helped build my reflective practice and development of my own self-awareness initially, then supported my reflexivity in practice (directly with children and families, supporting pre-service CYC education). Reflexivity is understood as an introspective experience offering the opportunity to acknowledge how one’s own agenda, experience, and motivation influence one’s

engagement (Chinn, 2007). I found that the habit of journaling was valuable because it offered me a tangible forum to examine my assumptions and expose my biases. Although I do not use material directly from my journals in this writing, the journals gave me a space to continue to explore my role and identity as a Kallunât researching in Inuit region. Research in Indigenous community is a privilege. As a CYC practitioner, I believe it is my responsibility to be reflective and reflexive in all contexts, and I needed to continue to expose my awareness of my identity as a colonizing invader.

It has been identified that the use of reflective journaling for IPA researchers supports bracketing or fore-structuring (Vicary et al., 2017). My journals were not field notes; they were about experiences I had parallel to the research, not about the research directly. The journals are personal reflections on meaningful experiences that when reread have (for example) helped me make meaning of my motivation, highlight my own learning, and recognize my assumptions (which is linked with bracketing; Tuohy et al., 2012).

### ***Accessing Insider Views***

Interpretative phenomenological analysis recognizes that while the intention is to gain an insider view of the experience, this cannot be fully realized because it is not possible to enter the mind of another and see their tangible experience (Smith, 1999). This is particularly evident for this study because I come from a different culture than the co-inquirers. These cultural differences increase the complexity for me of gaining an insider view because worldviews are so fundamentally influenced by culture and experience (Hain-Jamall, 2013).

Kearney (1984) suggested that worldview arises from experiences, the sensation of the environment, and the consequential perceptions and ideas within the mind. Essentially there can be no knowledge without experience. Systems of knowledge arise from activities and, these



activities in turn, organize behaviour (Kearney, 1984). Worldview refers to the way a group reflects their culture's values and the ways in which they support the shaping of those values across future generations by how they communicate with each other (Hain-Jamall, 2013). It is the way they approach problems, understand reality, and structure their ways of engaging with others (Hain-Jamall, 2013). Inclusion of Inuit constructs required me to link back with the co-inquirers and in some situations for them to consult (informally) Elders for clarity. Most often these Elders were their relatives.

In 1999, when the territory of Nunavut was formed, the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) (also referred to as Inuit societal values) were written with the intention of explaining Inuit worldview and serving as a bridge to create understanding across cultures (Johnston, 2014). The articulation in English of Inuit traditional knowledge was an attempt to explain a way of understanding the world from the Inuit context (Johnston, 2014). Qaujimajatuqangit, an Inuktitut word, means traditional knowledge; however, outlining traditional knowledge in a written document for non-Inuit interpretation has led to a perception that IQ is simply a set of principles that can be applied within Western systems of education, health, and child welfare (Johnston, 2014). Unfortunately, individuals who are not familiar with Inuit worldview may not understand that IQ is “both a concept and an application of a concept” (Johnston, 2014, p. 272).

IQ has been described by Elders as a philosophy for life, a framework for making decisions that are good and in the best interest of the present and future, a detailed plan for having a good life (Karetak et al., 2017). Because IQ is centred around four maligarjuat or cultural laws (as interpreted in English) when it is reviewed in a cursory way by Kallunât it is made sense of and shared through a Kallunâk worldview that is egocentric, and the principles of IQ articulated in English are separated and viewed in a linear fashion.

It is difficult for non-Indigenous thinkers to understand Indigenous knowledge because they are seeking to understand a cognitive system that is completely unknown to them (Battiste, 2005); therefore, a way of bridging two worldviews needs to be incorporated when a non-Indigenous researcher is working to construct knowledge with Indigenous community. Albert Marshall, a Mi'Kmaq Elder, who lives in Eskisoni Unima'ki (Cape Breton, Nova Scotia) suggested that Etuaptmumk, which incorporates the best of Indigenous and Western knowledges is the best approach to solving complicated issues of our world (Institute for Integrative Science & Health, 2006).

Etuaptmumk is “learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ... from the other with the strengths of Western knowledges” (Rowett, 2018, p. 55). Such an approach recognizes that there are many ways of looking at the world, and none is better than another; instead, the best of all should be incorporated in practice (Institute for Integrative Science & Health, 2006).

Culture affects the development of higher-level cognitive functioning and the environmental factors associated with culture have been identified as influencing what an individual thinks is typical or universal (Keller, 2011). Situated cognition is the impact that social contexts unconsciously have on thinking and behaviour (Keller, 2011), recognizing that cognition is not something that happens only in one's head. Rather it is linked to location, impacted by time, influenced by the environment, and embodied (Brown et al., 1989). Language carries cultural metaphor that influences thought, and the very cadence and construction of spoken language plays a role in cognitive development (Morris & Peng, 1994). The use of language and silence has been found to affect the ways in which individuals think (Hain-Jamall, 2013). Kim et al. (2000) attested that culture supports understanding how and when to

meaningfully communicate with others. Learning is inseparable from and distributed across the setting where the learning activity occurs, and the setting is comprised of the cultural complexity in which it is embedded (Morgan, 2017).

Researching in an Indigenous community without enmeshed engagement with community members supporting interpretation over language and cultural inclusion would risk misrepresentation and misallocation of Indigenous knowledge (Castleden et al., 2012). Western values have created, and are embedded in many academic research methodologies, and it is essential that Indigenous communities are not viewed as merely stakeholders or participants in research that involves them; they are rights holders and as such need to be fully involved in the process of research from start to finish (Bull et al., 2020). As I describe in the Methods section, working with the NG from the early stage of developing my research question through to disseminating my research, and engaging Nunatsiavummiut as co-inquirers are ways that I have sought to access insider views and maintain community involvement throughout my dissertation process.

## **Methods**

As mentioned, IPA is used to explore in detail how the co-inquirers are making sense of their personal worlds, and the focus is on purposefully obtaining a small homogenous sample (Smith & Osborn, 2008). As outlined, phenomenology is a methodology used to explore a unique experience, and therefore the individuals selected to participate must all have experienced the phenomenon under examination (Smith & Osborn, 2008).

### ***Sampling and Participant Recruitment***

A purposive sampling strategy was utilized. Participant selection in qualitative research is often based on accessibility, and this issue needs to be explored to explain the choice of

sampling for this dissertation (Patton, 2002). A purposive sampling method begins with finding and then inviting accessible individuals who meet the criteria (Smith et al., 2009/2011) for the research question being explored. Purposive sampling is often used by researchers who have special knowledge of a group and want to select individuals who are representative of the group (Groenewald, 2004) or in the circumstance of IPA, individuals who “represent a perspective” (Smith et al., 2009/2011). The rationale for the sampling strategy depends on the research methodology, and the resources available to the researcher (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). Given that IPA is used to expose and interpret experience, the restricted generalizability of purposive sampling is not a concern (Patton, 2002).

Participants in phenomenological research must be interested in, and able, to explore their own experience (A. Wilson, 2015). It is important that the approach to engaging participants is pragmatic, and it needs to be recognized that the sample will be limited in part by who is prepared to be included in the exploration (Smith & Osborn, 2008).

The Nunatsiavut Government Research Advisory Committee (NGRAC) supported the direction of this research. Consultation during the development of the research question included conversation around learning from strengths and successes. NGRAC input led to the research question that focuses on the experience of graduates of the diploma programme only and does not include those who left the programme before receiving a diploma. For this dissertation, there are a maximum of five individuals who have experienced the phenomenon under exploration (i.e., five graduates who received the diploma).

The focus of this research is the experience of Nunatsiavummiut who completed a CYC diploma programme. To be involved as co-inquirers, individuals needed to be graduates of the programme (June 2019) as outlined by the NGRAC, and needed to be available and able to

discuss their experience in and of the programme during the time the interviews were scheduled to occur in the Summer of 2020. Therefore, I approached individuals specifically who had this experience. I requested in a private Facebook group, where these alumni and I are the only members, for the email addresses of the five potential participants. If they provided their email, I sent a letter of invitation (Appendix A), and once they responded to the invitation, I sent a letter of informed consent (Appendix B).

It is recognized that a small number of participants in any research design can evoke questions. Interpretative phenomenological analysis is concerned with a detailed account of individual experience, and benefits from an intense focus on fewer individuals (Smith et al., 2009/2011). Small sample sizes are often associated with novel research or in circumstances where there are few individuals who have experienced the phenomenon under exploration (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). This dissertation focuses on the experiences of graduates of the first-known CYC programme offered in Inuit Nunangat, so there is a limited pool from which participants could be drawn.

### ***Participant Introduction***

Four of the five programme graduates agreed to participate. All identify as Inuit, Nunatsiavummiut, female, parents, partners, and speakers of English as a first language. Congruent with guidelines from the NGRAC, they are introduced and identified in this dissertation in the way they chose to be identified. They range in age from early 20s to early 40s and come from three different communities in Nunatsiavut.

Emily started the diploma as the mother of an infant. By graduation, she was a mom to two pre-school girls and at the time of writing this dissertation was working as a Child Services Worker for the NG.

Jenny is mother to a pre-teen son, and wife to Kim. Jenny worked as a Family Connections worker and is a part-time university student.

Mary is a parent to biological and foster children, and wife to Jobe. She worked at the airport when the diploma started and continues that job currently.

Ocean started the diploma as a mother to a toddler and was a mother of two when the diploma ended. She used her diploma in articulation towards a bachelor's degree, which she has since completed. She was working as a Youth Outreach Worker when she began the programme. At the time of writing this dissertation, she was working in a senior management role associated with Jordan's Principle and the Child First Initiative for Inuit and is mother to three daughters.

### *Participants as Co-Inquirers*

Central to my research approach as a Kallunât was the engagement of Inuit co-inquirers to support my interpretations at all stages of this work. The co-inquirers for this dissertation have all graduated with the CYC diploma offered by NSCC in the Nunatsiavut region. At this point, there are only five individuals from this region who have obtained this credential. The term co-inquirer honours the voices of these graduates as essential in the research process (Werder et al., 2016).

Congruent with Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), the collaboration with students or recent graduates should be recognized as complicated by power dynamics (Maurer, 2017). Collaboration in the context of this dissertation involves among other things, peer teaching, and thus the role of the parties involved should be acknowledged as parallel, whenever possible. In various ways and at different times, the co-inquirers share the position of most

knowledgeable person in the conversation. I hold knowledge of research processes and institutional policies; they hold knowledge about their experience and their culture.

After obtaining ethics approval from the NG and the two academic institutions that I am associated with, I made direct contact with these five individuals as previously outlined, communicating the intention of the dissertation. When they responded via email to the Facebook post and expressed willingness to engage as co-inquirers, I confirmed ethics approval and other details in a letter of consent (see Appendix B), and clearly outlined the commitment I intended through the course of the period we interviewed and analyzed transcripts. Each contact with co-inquirers resulted in a very quick response. All four co-inquirers responded within one day to the initial Facebook post where I asked if they were interested in hearing more. A request for validation of the themes received a written response including textual cues that were interpreted as favourable and meaningful (e.g., multiple exclamation marks, smiley emojis) from all four co-inquirers within an hour of posting.

Congruent with ensuring that the individuals who are invited to participate are offered space to fully engage in this dissertation as the experts on the circumstance under exploration, they are referred to throughout as co-inquirers. This dissertation is authored by me, yet the commitment they give is essential to its completion. Although not typical (but congruent with the attestation by Indigenous community that this contribution must be recognized), the co-inquirers have been acknowledged in the dissertation acknowledgement in the way that they want to be acknowledged, and I will invite them to continue engagement in any publications that develop from this research.

### *Interview Procedures*

IPA is typically done using the verbatim transcripts of semi-structured interviews with participants that are created from digital audio recordings of interviews. Because the intent of IPA is to understand the lived experience and point of view of the participants, a detailed IPA can also involve asking critical questions of these texts (Smith & Osborn, 2008). For this research, three of the semi-structured interviews were conducted using the chat platform Facebook Messenger, and one was conducted initially using the telephone. All follow-up dialogue occurred using Facebook Messenger.

When doing in-depth interviewing by instant messaging, it is important that all parties are familiar with the selected platform and understand the etiquette for using it (Deegan, 2012; Fontes & O'Mahony, 2008; Salmons, 2012a). Facebook Messenger was the primary means of communication during the CYC diploma, so it was the usual format for all of us. Dialogue with a research officer for the NG concluded with their approval of the continued use of this platform for communication and to gather information during my research. In part, this decision was reached because using an instant messaging platform in the context of this research will ensure familiarity and accessibility for the co-inquirers who reside in three different fly-in communities and face constraints in accessing many of the broad range of technologies available in urban settings. The individuals that I was inviting to become co-inquirers already had accounts on this platform and therefore did not need to learn a new system or enter an agreement or divulge information to a new third-party provider. This decision was also practical given that there is no cost to use Facebook Messenger, which is an important consideration for unfunded research.

The decision to use this platform was outlined in the letter of consent for co-inquirers (see Appendix B). The limits to confidentiality and privacy that are the reality when using this



Internet platform (Salmons, 2012b) were also clearly outlined. It was specifically noted that Facebook messages are private, and Facebook does not combine messages nor share them across participants (Facebook, n.d.); however, if someone takes a screenshot, the message may be shared. I also explained that I would not add anyone to a private message thread; however, if the co-inquirer chose to add someone to a thread, it would be possible for the newly added individual to view all previous messages in the thread (Facebook, n.d.). Again, these are not elements that were new to these experienced Facebook Messenger users; however, it was important that these ethical complexities were outlined since they were being invited to use the platform to communicate different information than they may have shared with me in the past and for a new purpose (research).

The use of Facebook Messenger resulted in discussions (guided by the interview questions outlined in Appendix C) that were already transcribed; another advantage to using a text-based interview format (Fontes & O'Mahony, 2008). Messaging platforms are also preferable to email when seeking in-depth responses (Fontes & O'Mahony, 2008). Researchers using messaging platforms found that discussions are dynamic, and the responses are typically more engaged than via email (Mann & Stewart, 2000), and the conversation varies from asynchronous to synchronous depending on timing (chance) or scheduling (arranging to meet online at the same time) (Fontes & O'Mahony, 2008).

One co-inquirer requested to have the initial interview using the telephone. We arranged a time when she would have approximately an hour of time available to meet synchronously. At the start of the call, I outlined again the consent statements and indicated that I was going to audio record the call and then transcribe it. I sent the question guide to her in advance, and when

we connected, the conversation followed the guide very closely. Follow-up conversations with this co-inquirer were conducted on Facebook Messenger as per her request.

Reflectively, it was noted that having time between question and response when using the chat platform resulted in more depth of response from co-inquirers than in the telephone format. The advantage that one has in text communication, to stop, think, type, read, and edit was apparent through depth of response from the co-inquirers and me in the Facebook Messenger transcripts. In contrast, many more rewording questions and statements to offer co-inquirer clarity were evident in the telephone transcript, yet it was not clear if this difference was related to the platform or to the individual who requested that we use the telephone. As a novice researcher, I found that this opportunity supported my understanding of my interview skills.

### ***Question Guide***

The first task in structuring a phenomenological research project is to ensure that the research question is phenomenological. The over-arching research question for this dissertation introduced in Chapter 1 Introduction—*What was the experience of Nunatsiavummiut participating in a Nova Scotia Community College Child and Youth Care Diploma?*—was structured with the goal of gaining insight into a specific human and lived experience. This question was carefully created to ensure that the phenomenological intent is clear. It is not enough to state a central question and assume that the discussion will unfold with a focus on phenomenological exploration (van Manen, 2017).

Questions developed for phenomenological research must be crafted with the intention of seeking rich, lived experience descriptions (van Manen, 2017). It cannot be assumed that these descriptions will simply appear—they must be intentionally sought. IPA requires the creation of broad and open questions that are typically used in a semi-structured interview format to explore

with participants the experience of interest (Smith & Osborn, 2008). The research question and guide, including prompts, were designed to follow chronologically from their start of the NSCC diploma to its completion. As is evident in Appendix C, the order of the guide is linked to significant markers along the educational journey (e.g., first class, first trip to Truro, graduation, certification).

The question guide was created in consultation with my dissertation supervisor, trusted colleagues, and the NG Research Officer. Congruent with research processes with Indigenous community, the NG Research Office were offered final approval of the question guide. Having a guide was important, yet it was my responsibility to monitor the rhythm of the engagement and reword the questions and alter prompts, depending on each co-inquirer's comments and responses.

An important part of the question guide was identifying the right flow and timing for asking questions in the different interview formats. I expected that the interviews conducted solely in Facebook Messenger would follow the model of our prior engagement using this platform to facilitate what would parallel a classroom discussion: asynchronous discussion occurred during the typical workday and usually concluded between 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. with an (approximately) 45-minute synchronous exchange. The first seven questions were each equal to about one day's worth of discussion; the final question involved synthesis and there were no structured prompts. Co-inquirers responded to the final question and wrapped their response in a few sentences within minutes. The gathering of the information for analysis lasted the equivalent of 7–10 days for each co-inquirer. Arranging a time for the telephone interview was more complicated as it required the co-inquirer to be available for an hour (or so) of synchronous engagement. Once the primary interview was over and transcribed, it was shared as a document

file with this co-inquirer over Facebook Messenger, and clarifying conversation continued using this platform at her request. Regardless of interview platform, I used the question guide contained in Appendix C.

### **Analysis Process**

Once the interviews reached a natural conclusion, I engaged in analysis. The analysis is the core of IPA (Smith et al., 2009/2011). Van Manen (2017) cautioned against the use of step-by-step processes or simplistic schemes for analysis in phenomenological research.

Congruently, there is no prescribed method for IPA analysis. Analysis is generally understood to be an iterative and inductive process paying attention to the co-inquirers' points of view and personal meaning making as they attempt to make sense of the experience under exploration (Smith et al., 2009/2011).

Interpretative phenomenological analysis does not follow a prescriptive process. As illustration, I offer a few documented examples of how different researchers have approached the analysis. Smith et al. (2009/2011) suggested approaching transcripts as follows:

1. Transpose the transcript onto a page divided into three columns using a shared word-processing document.
2. Share the word-processing document with the co-inquirers.
3. Number the lines of dialogue.
4. Identify experiential claims, concerns, and understandings.
5. Identify emerging themes in Column two.
6. Seek engagement from co-inquirers for input and feedback.
7. Identify researcher and co-inquirer thoughts, perceptions, reflections, musings in column three.

8. Organize the analyzed lines into a format that allows them to be viewed from initial statement to beginning analysis to theme identification.
9. Use supervision, collaboration, and the co-inquirers to support the development of a coherent and plausible interpretation. This process could span a few weeks of periodic engagement.
10. Develop a full and detailed narrative that would allow a reader to understand the experience under exploration.

Biggerstaff and Thompson (2008) identified the following four stages:

- (a) Read and re-read the text;
- (b) Identify initial themes;
- (c) Cluster initial themes together; and
- (d) Create a summary table of the themes.

McNeilly (2012) outlined eight steps for data analysis:

- (a) Personal journaling immediately following each interview;
- (b) Transcription;
- (c) Personal journaling following first read-through of each transcript;
- (d) Reading and re-reading, while listening to original audio;
- (e) Initial noting of descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual features;
- (f) Intra-case development of emergent themes;
- (g) Inter-case search for thematic patterns and clusters; and
- (h) Tabulating the themes in a summary table.

I used these suggestions as a guide in deciding on the following steps that I used for transcript analysis:

1. Cut and paste the dialogue out of Facebook Messenger. Take out extraneous conversation and comments (e.g., “bomby oh weather today”). Listen to the telephone interview recording several times and transcribe the interview verbatim.
2. Share individual transcripts with each co-inquirer for their additions or deletions (e.g., names they did not want included in any quotations used to support the research).
3. Read through each transcript several times.
4. Divide a page into three columns—with transcript text in the far-left column.
5. Read through transcript jotting notes.
6. Note descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual features (Smith et al., 2009/2011). These are descriptive yet important in supporting interpretation.
7. Using the exploratory notes and descriptive elements, offer a statement of the interpreted experience of the co-inquirer.
8. Condense the statement of experience by identifying intra-case emergent themes in the far-right column.
9. Complete for each of the four transcripts.
10. Share with supervisor.
11. Transpose intra-case emergent themes into a new three-column table.
12. Read through emergent inter-case themes and note synonyms.
13. Cluster inter-case themes.
14. Share with supervisor.
15. Tabulate themes in a summary table.
16. Share superordinate themes with co-inquirers.
17. Edit language based on co-inquirer feedback.

18. Identify subordinate themes.
19. Cluster subordinate themes.
20. Begin writing analysis.
21. Revisit themes; a consequence of the double hermeneutic element of IPA (Smith et al., 2009/2011).
22. Revise superordinate themes.
23. Share revised superordinate and subordinate themes with co-inquirers.
24. Incorporate feedback from co-inquirers sharing again until consensus is reached.
25. Identify final themes.

### ***Emergent, Superordinate, and Subordinate Themes***

As outlined in my process for analysis of the transcripts, the emergent themes became subordinate themes by identifying a synonym that effectively captured the clustered inter-case themes. Choosing a word or phrase to name themes, both super and subordinate, in IPA has been likened to a creative process (Chatfield, 2023). Alone, theme names should reinforce the story that is told in the IPA (Nigbur, 2023).

Once identified, the theme names were then examined and clustered, and a phrase that captured each subordinate cluster was developed. The three resulting phrases (Powerful Emotions, Our Land Our People, and Empowered to Advocate) became the superordinate themes. Further discussion of this process appears in Chapter 4 Analysis where each theme is presented with direct quotations from co-inquirers as evidence to support the analysis. In Chapter 5 Discussion, the themes are situated within extant literature to support the scholarly conversation surrounding them.

## **Ethics**

Research approaches with Indigenous people require Indigenous involvement from the conception of research to its conclusion and is consistent with the policy direction found in the TCPS2 (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2022). Brunger and Bull (2011) cautioned that Indigenous people have been the subject of numerous researchers' inquiries and projects, primarily related to exploring their health, education, culture, and traditions and delivered by government and academic institutions. Historically, community members were rarely included when decisions were made around the conduct of research explorations or policy (Brunger & Bull, 2011).

The National Inuit Strategy on Research identifies five priority areas for ensuring that research in Inuit Nunangat develops in an effective and useful way (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2018). The TCPS2 (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2022) offers recommendations for institutional researchers and institutional research ethics boards who seek to research with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities, specifically outlining that there must be evidence of community consultation and engagement. However, community consultation and engagement alone are not sufficient in addressing the OCAP principles (Brunger & Bull, 2011) since historically, the benefit for the academy has been disproportionate in comparison to the benefit for Indigenous peoples with whom research has been undertaken (Castleden et al., 2012). It was with these priorities, guidelines, and cautions in place that I reflected upon and sought deeper community engagement.

## ***Community Engagement***

The community engagement for this research began early in the delivery of the CYC diploma when the students from Nunatsiavut expressed value in the delivery of the diploma and



offered unsolicited comment on the ways they were experiencing the courses to be different from previous educational experiences. As we continued, they expressed interest in ensuring that the NG knew how the model was working for them, and at that time I reached out to the NG to share my initial thoughts about using my PhD dissertation to explore this diploma offering.

In March 2019, I met with representatives from the NGRAC and described my interest. Two members of the committee asked to connect with me to get more detail about my ideas and we spent a lunch time talking. At that time, I did not have a well-formed research question, yet I knew that I wanted to explore the experience of the students who participated in the diploma programme with a phenomenological approach. I began the discussion feeling embarrassed and thinking that I was wasting their time, yet they expressed very clearly that they wanted to be involved “early and often” and were happy to support me in formulating my question and to discuss how my research could benefit Nunatsiavummiut. Engagement with the research office continued via email and telephone, throughout the preparation of the research proposal culminating with a formal proposal submitted concurrent with the institutional research ethics board applications and via annual reports while the dissertation was being written. Their formal involvement will conclude with a presentation to be scheduled after this dissertation is defended.

### ***Ethics Board Approvals***

In addition to permission from the NG Research Advisory Committee, as a PhD student at Brock and a faculty member at NSCC, I required institutional research ethics board (REB) approval from both institutions. The REB applications included my understanding of the power dynamic as a Kallunât researching in Nunatsiavut, as well as the dynamic of my relationship with the co-inquirers, which at one time, was one with great perceived power because I was the facilitator who assessed and evaluated all their assigned work. The letter of informed consent

(see Appendix B) needed to clearly outline the limits to confidentiality, ensuring that the co-inquirers were fully aware that because of the small number of possible participants, the specificity of the research questions, and the intimacy of their communities, it was unlikely that confidentiality could be maintained. Aligned with feedback from the NGRAC, the individuals who chose to participate as co-inquirers in the research were offered the opportunity to determine how they would be identified in the dissertation and in any publications that may be prepared from this research, including decisions about whether to use names or pseudonyms and which potentially identifying details to include or exclude.

### ***Engaging Co-Inquirers***

Researchers connected to academic institutions are encouraged to critically examine the ways in which they can engage tenets of CBPR when working with Indigenous communities in research (Castleden et al., 2012). Engaging the tenets of CBPR means embedding community values and autonomy for the community in all stages of the research process (Bull et al., 2020). Ways in which there can be tangible benefit for the community should be part of the construction of the research design and implementation (Bull et al., 2020).

For the completion of this dissertation and the dissemination of the outcomes, the co-inquirers will be invited to co-write the report (for the NG) and co-present the research at a conference. Each co-inquirer was also offered an honorarium for their support of the completion of this research. Their involvement as co-inquirers meant supporting the analysis of the research transcripts. Engagement with the co-inquirers during transcript analysis offered opportunity for them to be introduced (in the ways that they wanted to be) to the logistics of transcript analysis. Questions asked by co-inquirers during the interviews offered opportunity to explain the question guide and different interview styles. It is anticipated that the outcome of this research will be

presented at a national CYC conference and, if possible, that presentation will be co-facilitated by co-inquirers aligning with expectations outlined in the TCPS2 (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2022). Securing funding for conference presentation may require grant writing. Following the defence of this dissertation, we will work collectively to create a way to ensure that the NG has access to the outcome of the research in the form of a report, and another form of distribution (determined by us collectively) so that Nunatsiavummiut can access the knowledge generated.

Because transcript analysis requires an understanding of the meaning that was intended to be transmitted rather than what is understood through analysis only, and because of the nature of colloquial language, it was important for the co-inquirers to support my interpretation of the transcripts. Grammatical and colloquial influences of culture can go unnoticed without intimate knowledge of these. Even more problematic, in the context of a non-Indigenous researcher researching in Indigenous context, there is potential for misrepresentation of metaphor, or the nuance attached to commonly used words, phrases, and silence (Hain-Jamall, 2013).

In the context of this research, there were several points where the co-inquirers prompted shifts in my interpretations. For example, the interpretation phase led me to identify a theme I tentatively labelled as pride. The co-inquirers supported my understanding of this word in their context. They explained that they would feel proud of a personal or individual accomplishment but would not express publicly that they were proud. They would express pride for someone else but not for themselves. Their description was not congruent with what I had been interpreting and led me to instead label this theme as transformed. As a second example, three of the four co-inquirers used the word “family” to refer to their cohort as the programme continued along. Exploring this word in the context of the lived experience of this group helped my interpretation.

They shared that the group felt like a family because they shared roles, and they supported and looked after each other. As well, there were occasionally Inuttut words used in the dialogue that I did not know (e.g., kujana, which means never mind), and colloquial expressions I did not know (e.g., go off, which means to venture onto the land hiking, snowmobiling, or on quads to hunt or fish; or go wooding, which means to get wood for home heating fuel). This was not new—they often interspersed Inuttut words and colloquial phrases in conversation and that often required an interpretation.

Miscommunication between students and facilitators in the classroom is not solely about language, it is also about implicit rules (Crago et al., 1997). Recognition of miscommunication requires reflection and—recognized (or not)—miscommunication often negatively impacts the racial or cultural minority or the individual with less power in the exchange (Crago et al., 1997). One of my earliest exchanges with this cohort involved one of them sharing, in a formal classroom setting, that they liked to go off. In my world that meant to lose your temper, so I made meaning from my own context, thanked her for sharing and turned my back to the room for a minute. One of the other students asked me if I knew what it meant to go off. I tentatively said that I did and was asked to explain. I explained; there were laughs. I was offered clarification. I expressed relief and gratitude for the investment in my learning, and this experience has become a memory we laugh about still.

The information shared during this exploration of the experience of Inuit participants in a CYC programme was framed in an Indigenous worldview and often linked with Indigenous knowledge. As a non-Indigenous scholar, it was critically important therefore that I took steps to properly authenticate Indigenous knowledge (Battiste, 2005) by staying connected with the co-

inquirers as I interpreted the transcripts and discussed that interpretation using extant literature written (mostly) by Western scholars.

### ***Dual Relationship***

It is well documented that once the research began, there was no formal dual role between the researcher and the co-inquirers, and no longer a formal power relationship. It is, however, realistic that there would still be a perceived power relationship. Although the Nunatsiavummiut who were invited to become co-inquirers were all alumni, employed in jobs congruent with their field of study, or engaged in completing further education, I am still someone from whom they might request a reference. The power of individuals engaged in a research environment where the researcher is invisible (e.g., in online research) is documented and is in addition to the power held by researchers in all interview scenarios (Niero, 2014). Individuals have the power to share only what they choose to, and this power is typically experienced more strongly when the interview is being done in a format other than face to face (Niero, 2014).

### ***Support for Co-Inquirers***

One of the characteristics of a phenomenological research approach is the potential for exploring difficult topics and evoking strong emotion. For this inquiry, it was anticipated that there were questions asked that could evoke passionate and frustrated responses based on my knowledge of and experience with the co-inquirers when the research began. I wondered how they would respond to the questions that linked to travel from their home community for the intensive two-week learning blocks; I wondered how they would respond when elements of the cohort development arose. Using active listening skills as a researcher allowed me to engage with the responses from the co-inquirers. This supported depth of sharing and offered space for

the co-inquirers to process the emotions that were evoked in response to some of the questions. I am curious how my pre-existing relationships with the co-inquirers influenced my understanding of some of their nuanced comments, and their decisions to share openly with me about their extraneous life events, and the influence of these life events on their engagement in research discussions. At some point in all the interviews, each co-inquirer needed to step away from our conversation for a day or two as they engaged in supporting family or community.

It was not anticipated that the strong emotional responses evoked by the research questions and the process of this research would be different than some of the emotional responses encountered during the programme (e.g., exploration of the colonial impacts of child welfare; exploration of individual family history). Regardless, co-inquirers were regularly provided the Hope for Wellness Help Line number (1-855-242-3310), and I was prepared to use my knowing of the co-inquirers, as well as my counselling knowledge and skills to ensure that the co-inquirers were provided with adequate time to debrief and process.

### **Trustworthiness**

Qualitative researchers have reasoned that using terminology and processes linked with quantitative research to describe the processes that ensure the integrity and thoroughness of qualitative research undervalues qualitative frameworks (Creswell, 2013), and expressed for clarity that there is a difference between not using positivist terms, and not demonstrating that a qualitative research project is rigorous. Lincoln and Guba (1986) outlined that qualitative research must demonstrate it is rigorous or trustworthy. Trustworthiness is a concept that has been adopted in qualitative research and broadly reflects the idea that the evaluation of the worth of a qualitative research project is based on the reader's judgement that the information has been presented to them in a convincing and believable manner (Levitt et al., 2018). There are certain

research procedures that strengthen trustworthiness, and those that were employed in this dissertation will be discussed within the processes outlined by Amankwaa (2016).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) outlined terms and processes for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Grant and Lincoln (2021) acknowledged these criteria continue to expand and have proposed changes to those criteria while at the same time recognizing that the changes are not yet ready for application and suggested that it is valuable for us to remain critical of the elements used to assess trustworthiness.

### ***Credibility***

Credibility in qualitative research is the assessment of confidence in the authenticity of the findings or outcomes of the research. There are a variety of approaches that a researcher can incorporate to support credibility of their research. Throughout this dissertation, I intended to share transparently by being intentional about the language that was used to identify my interpretation versus information shared by the co-inquirers, so that my role as the interpreter of the information shared by the co-inquirers was clear. I am an individual who is situated in a certain place and time with specific experiences (further outlined in the Coda) that have influenced my own meaning-making processes.

Creswell (2013) suggested that it is essential for the interpretative researcher to expose their socio-historical position given that their interaction with the subject matter is paramount to the interpretations that are ascertained. This practice aligns with the position of Indigenous scholars (see, for example, Kovach, 2009; S. Wilson, 2008) that non-Indigenous researchers reciprocate sharing of positionality and social location. Paraphrasing Kovach (2009), one should share information that is essential for the reader to make sense of the story you share, and to

assess you as the sharer. This sharing is important to Indigenous researchers because it also acknowledges relationship and responsibility (Kovach, 2009).

Because of the close relationship between the researcher and the co-inquirers in the interpretation of meaning during the data analysis for this dissertation, one of the most valuable ways to ensure credibility was to ensure that the themes that were distilled are congruent with the co-inquirers' meaning making (Creswell, 2013). During the data analysis stage, it was important that I maintained close contact with the co-inquirers and that I incorporated their continuing dialogue in the data analysis. As outlined previously in this chapter, it was also important that I engaged with critical friends and with my supervisor, engaging reflexively with their comments and questions about my thought processes and interpretations.

The processes outlined by Amankwaa (2016) include assuring multiple perspectives are offered by the co-inquirers (Creswell, 2013). The important question to ask here is the extent to which the group of individuals involved in co-researching represent a variety of voices and therefore perspectives. IPA is idiographic, typically used to deeply examine a unique experience. Hence, it is important that the participants have a similar lived experience thereby creating a high degree of homogeneity within the group of co-inquirers, (Creswell, 2013; Smith & Osborne, 2008). IPA favours a homogenous sample because the intention of this interpretative research is to deeply explore an experience that is shared by the individuals who are involved in the research (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012). The co-inquirers differ in the ways that co-inquirers might typically differ. They come from different communities, have different previous experiences in post-secondary education, have different family and community responsibilities, have different job responsibilities, and span several decades in age.



Member checking is also used to support credibility. While there is debate about the value of member checking in IPA, Lincoln suggests that qualitative researchers who intend to be supporting communities towards equity have a responsibility to share data and to support stakeholders' understanding of the data (Grant & Lincoln, 2021).

Credibility of interpretative research is also demonstrated by prolonged engagement with co-inquirers. Given it is the responsibility of the interpretative researcher to share what lies beyond the surface, it is important that ample time has been spent with the participants to build relationship and that time has been spent in the data analysis stage to ensure thoughtful results and reflexive processes (Grant & Lincoln, 2021).

I entered relationship with the co-inquirers in March 2017, and the interviews for this research took place in the Summer of 2020. I continue to have informal contact (mainly via social media) with all the co-inquirers on a weekly basis. I have returned to Nunatsiavut and Happy Valley-Goose Bay to deliver further training and have spent time with a few of them while there visiting. The writing of this dissertation has taken place over a few years and, as outlined, has required ongoing dialogue with them about language usage or knowledge translation.

### ***Transferability***

Transferability refers to the value of the research in other contexts, such as policy or future practice. The reader needs a variety of information to determine transferability including detailed information about the context of this research, co-inquirer demographics, and recruitment processes (Smith & Nizza, 2022). The inclusion of rich textual descriptions in reporting the data analysis and information on the length of engagement with both the co-inquirers and in the data analysis allows readers to make their own determinations about

transferability of the researcher's interpretation (Stahl & King, 2020). It is important to be mindful that transferability to other contexts cannot be extended past what is methodologically congruent yet when adequate information is provided, readers are able to determine in what ways the research can be applied to other circumstances.

Amankwaa (2016) suggested several activities to support the researcher in obtaining and presenting thick description. These procedures include crafting interview questions with a peer reviewer and as outlined in the question guide, the questions that supported my interviews were created with the support of my dissertation supervisor, the NG Research Officer, and critical friends.

Qualitative data analysis has been described as a creative process (Patton, 2002; van Manen, 1997). Phenomenological researchers often become wrapped up in their data, "questioning, mediating, dialoguing, daydreaming and indwelling" (Patton, 2002, p. 486) and while it clearly is not creative in the "making something out of nothing" sense, it is a creative synthesis, the result of which is the presentation of pieces from the individual transcripts woven together and presented as a fusion (Patton, 2002).

Having completed the analysis of the transcripts, I have an experiential understanding of the process and how it is consuming. Perhaps I was fortunate that my data analysis started during Covid. The time that we were directed to stay in our homes offered me space to cogitate on the transcripts, alone. I held the responsibility of interpreting what was being shared in the transcripts, and the 'ah ha' moments when the fusion, would be revealed as a meaningful image, or word, were not scheduled (Patton, 2022).

This fusion is what is then presented as thick description. Amankwaa (2016) outlined the difficulties with thick description and suggests that the elicitation of robust responses from co-

inquirers, starts with a well-thought-out question guide. Second, writing the fusion in such a way that using multiple direct quotations from various co-inquirers supports the creation of a rich narrative description that the reader can then use to support their assessment about the robustness and transferability of the research. In Chapter 4 Analysis, I present the interpreted superordinate and subordinate themes using direct quotations from the co-inquirers to support an understanding of how the words shared by the co-inquirers supported the interpretation.

### ***Dependability***

Dependability is defined by Merriam-Webster (n.d.-a) as “capable of being trusted or depended on.” Stahl and King (2020) highlighted that peer engagement with the research results is key to supporting dependability of research findings. They outline that this is aligned with member checking and with manuscript peer review and suppose that the awareness that a peer will scrutinize one’s work increases a researcher’s diligence in ensuring accuracy of findings, and transparency in interpretation (Stahl & King, 2020).

Dependability is established by documenting research procedures; being transparent in outlining the details of the process because it is this documentation that allows those external to the research to follow and critique the research process (Amankwaa, 2016). The analysis process for this dissertation is shared in detail in a previous section (Analysis Process) of this chapter.

### ***Confirmability***

Confirmability is sometimes captured as the degree of neutrality the researcher held in their analysis (Amankwaa, 2016). As mentioned, it is understood in IPA that the researcher is present, thus the challenge for the researcher is to be clear about any ways their assumptions or bias showed up during the interpretative phase of transcript analysis, and what processes were

put in place to support the researcher's reflexive process so that the reader can assess whether the research results are supported by the data provided.

For the research that is the focus of this dissertation, this is outlined in Chapter 4 Analysis. Elements of the Coda also support a broadened understanding of my context. It is this context and how that context influences my worldview that reinforces the importance of the inclusion of the Nunatsiavummiut co-inquirers.

### **Chapter Summary**

Many elements of CYC practice are aligned with general research principles such as being curious, observing, and systematically documenting those observations. Grounding exploration in an empirical framework, albeit one based in Euro-Western and colonial ways of knowing, strengthens it. Partnering with Inuit co-inquirers in a project that is ethical and supported by Nunatsiavummiut offers opportunity to address what has been identified as the criteria to ensure trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1986).

## Chapter 4 Analysis

As outlined in Chapter 3 Method and Methodology, the data obtained for this study were gathered from transcripts taken following the completion of the interviews conducted via Facebook Messenger and the verbatim transcript prepared after a telephone interview (supplemented with follow-up discussion via Facebook Messenger). These transcripts were then analyzed using a phenomenological qualitative approach: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

### Introducing the Themes

After completing the IPA outlined in Chapter 3 Method and Methodology, three superordinate themes and seven subordinate themes were identified. These are presented below in Table 9, which outlines how the themes were interpreted across and among co-inquirers. Following this illustration, a comprehensive discussion of the themes is presented with direct quotations (in italics for emphasis) from the co-inquirer verbatim transcripts along with my interpretation of the experience shared by the co-inquirers, leaving discussion and juxtaposition with extant literature for Chapter 5 Discussion as is typical in IPA studies (Smith et al., 2009/2011). Information contained in square brackets within the quotations is explanatory or additional material drawn from discussion with co-inquirers during their individual review of the themes. Throughout this chapter, the interpreted themes are discussed using both co-inquirer and researcher voice.

**Table 9***Superordinate and Subordinate Themes Identified in Each Co-Inquirer's Transcript*

Superordinate theme	Subordinate theme	Co-inquirer			
		Emily	Jenny	Mary	Ocean
Powerful	Passion		x	x	x
Emotions	Doubt	x	x	x	x
	Balance/ Unbalance	x	x	x	x
	Shared	x	x		x
Our Land, Our People	Purpose				
	What I Knew, I Knew	x	x		x
Empowered to Advocate (I Have Voice)	Heard and Supported Transformed	x	x	x	x

It is not necessary that all the themes showed up for all four co-inquirers yet perhaps because of the high degree of homogeneity within the group of co-inquirers in this IPA, many of the themes were pervasive across the group. The emerging themes had an element of chronology yet were not strictly isolated in chronological order from the beginning (getting ready to arrive in Hopedale) to the end (graduation/certification and the meaning the resulting diploma held for them). Most of the themes were interpreted throughout the interview transcripts with two exceptions. *Shared Purpose*, which was not interpreted until the questions referred to the time after the second face-to-face gathering (in Truro, NS) about four months into the programme; this subordinate theme was however interpreted consistently through the transcripts from that event forward. The subordinate theme identified as *Empowered to Advocate (I Have Voice)* was specifically interpreted in the discussion that ensued in response to the final questions in the guide, related to the end of the programme nearing graduation.

Although the themes are offered separately in this discussion and were separated during the analysis, many of them are connected as illustrated through the narrative account provided in this chapter. It is therefore important to view each theme in relation to the whole experience and the hermeneutic circle. This overlap is perhaps linked to Inuit worldview—the holistic ecocentric or cosmocentric way of thinking about self in relationship with others, the land, and the environment (Healy & Tagak, 2014; Kirmayer et al., 2011) and has been identified by other researchers engaged in thematic analysis of interview transcripts obtained when researching with Inuit (Kral et al., 2011).

Labelling themes was complicated by meaning making. Meaning making utilizes systems previously in place, embedded in culture and language (Bruner, 2002). Bruner (2002) suggested that meaning making is somewhat organic, and develops in a “slow, orderly, highly

systematic, but uneven development” (p. xvi) and that the uneven progression is “powerfully shaped by the demands of the culture in which we grow up” (p. xvi). Given that the co-inquirers share a culture that I do not share it was important that both the analysis and labelling of the themes was supported by the co-inquirers.

I interpreted interrelatedness and convergence with some of the themes; others were linked for me through follow-up discussion with the co-inquirers. For example, *What I Knew, I Knew* and *Our Land, Our People* were initially interpreted by me as distinct from each other. *What I Knew, I Knew* was about the articulation during the interviews of predictable school cues and experiences which (I interpreted) supported safety in the learning environment. In follow-up discussions, the co-inquirers offered more, outlining this concept was also about being at home on their traditional land while attending school and sharing that experience with a cohort of other Nunatsiavummiut. Upon review of the transcripts, with the perspective shared by the co-inquirers, it was clear to me that they articulated the importance of staying home while attending school yet without the follow-up discussion, I would not have linked it with this theme—rather in the initial analysis that I shared with them I linked these statements with *Heard and Supported*. The follow-up conversation that highlighted my misinterpretation prompted me to reanalyze.

My initial label for one of the subordinate themes (Transformed) was that the co-inquirers were proud, yet it was communicated by them that they would not express pride publicly. Further reflection on the language used by the co-inquirers in the sections of the transcript where this theme was interpreted, and some exploration of extant literature led me to label this theme as *Transformed*.



It is common for IPA to continue into the writing phase and, given the continued engagement with co-inquirers, the writing was occurring parallel to research (Smith et al., 2009/2011). The constant engagement between a part of the transcript and the whole transcript while revisiting the experience under investigation with the co-inquirers illustrates movement through the hermeneutic circle, continually moving between smaller and larger meaning units in order to determine the meaning of both (Smith et al., 2009/2011).

This situation also highlights the importance of having Nunatsiavummiut co-inquirers. As shared in the previous chapter, IPA recognizes that the lifeworld of the researcher cannot be left or bracketed (in a Husserlian sense). My reflexive processes exposed my awareness of ensuring the learning environment was reflective of the learners in the space and highlighted the interrogation of the relevance of some of the curricular elements, yet I have a non-Indigenous worldview and am privileged to see myself represented in dominant educational discourse. Evidently, this worldview influenced my analysis, and without partnering with co-inquirers, this element of research would have been missed.

The goal of writing an IPA is to present for readers who have no knowing of the co-inquirers a clear and full narrative account of the co-inquirers' world and what has been interpreted about how they make sense of that world (Smith & Nizza, 2022). What follows is a case-within-theme approach to writing IPA (Smith et al., 2009/2011). Each superordinate theme and the subordinate themes that relate to it are presented with evidence from co-inquirers' transcripts offering transparency of the analysis.

### **Powerful Emotions**

Although it was outlined by all co-inquirers at the start of our interview that they had agreed to come to Hopedale, NL for a two-week training, it was clear through the analysis of the

interviews that they stayed engaged when they discovered that they were in a two-year college diploma because they were passionate about working with young people and they wanted to know more about how to do this work better. It was articulated in the interviews and often during our time learning together that they wanted children from Nunatsiavut who were involved in the provincial child welfare system to be supported in Nunatsiavut, and they wanted to ensure that necessary services for children and families from Nunatsiavut were offered in region and included strong cultural components. They wanted to know more about child welfare. There was articulation of a strongly held belief that Nunatsiavummiut should and could look after and support the children within the region, and that Nunatsiavummiut should gain the qualifications to hold jobs that are identified as hard to hire. They stayed engaged in the early stages because they understood the CYC diploma was going to be offered entirely in Nunatsiavut (for detail on the delivery structure and location of all programme offerings see Table 1).

In conversations we had peripheral to the research interviews, the co-inquirers shared an understanding that part of the reason children were moved outside Nunatsiavut for care, and individuals were flown into Nunatsiavut to work in specialized support roles with children and families, in education, health, and child welfare, was because not enough Nunatsiavummiut had the education recognized by the regional and provincial government as a requirement for this type of work. Co-inquirers were confident that Nunatsiavummiut could look after children from this region, yet they had an awareness that they required a credential so that others also believed this. As they journeyed through the CYC diploma programme, they experienced many powerful emotions. I interpreted these emotions as passion, doubt, and balance/unbalance.

### *Passion*

Passion is defined as a feeling of intense emotion or a compelling desire for something; an enthusiastic enjoyment of an interest or activity (Merriam-Webster, n.d.-d). In the context of this research, passion was expressed in a variety of interpreted emotion words, including anger, tenacity, hope, as well as passion.

Three of the co-inquirers (Ocean, Mary, and Jenny) articulated clearly that they held passion, specifically for working with young people:

*I always had a passion for working with youth. (Ocean)*

Ocean was working as a youth outreach worker when she started the diploma and indicated that she had been working in paid positions and volunteering in roles directly supporting youth in her community since she was in junior high.

As a foster parent, Mary often shared how what she was learning in the diploma was helping her support the children she and her husband were raising:

*... excited 'cause it was a course that could help me with what I was already doing.*

(Mary)

Jenny talked at length about being activated when learning about how trauma impacts brain development and can influence relationship development:

*I was mad at the world at one point for me and my family/friends for what was imposed on us. (Jenny)*

This learning led her to explore more deeply the impacts of intergenerational trauma in her family, and community:

*To help my fellow Inuit – specifically Nain. (Jenny)*

Although this latter statement alone does not seem to express passion, it was a pervasive sentiment from Jenny and from two of the co-inquirers<sup>12</sup>: they wanted to learn more so that they could help other Nunatsiavummiut. One quotation from Mary captures this sentiment well:

*I felt like this was a gateway to my future. (Mary)*

Articulating that an education programme held the opportunity to serve as a gateway suggests that the co-inquirers experienced optimism and anticipated transformation. It is also possible that the expression of this significance could also hold a lot of pressure for academic achievement and may have influenced other powerful emotions.

### ***Doubt***

Although the co-inquirers responded to the first questions about our beginning time together in Hopedale with an expression of passion, they all quickly moved on to talk about their feelings of doubt as the actual class time began. For some co-inquirers, the theme doubt was prevalent throughout the entire programme whereas for others it was connected to specific events in the programme or in their lives parallel to and interwoven with the programme, which prompted an understanding that this feeling was most likely to be circumstantial and time bound; linked to that life event:

*Everyday questions being / staying in the program. It was hard. Going to work and doing schoolwork and busy in my full-time job. (Jenny)*

Jenny expressed how difficult it was to stay in the programme and linked this difficulty to balance (discussed below). The articulation of “It was hard,” as one sentence evoked my

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<sup>12</sup> I would interpret passion was also expressed in many conversations I had with Emily, yet this emotion did not appear in identifiable ways in the structure of the interview for this IPA.

curiosity; was this expression of emotion also about the schoolwork and/or the academic requirements? This co-inquirer did reference the difficulty of learning about herself in the teamwork aspects of the course, and expressed doubt mixed with anger (passion) as her learning about self led to exploration of the impacts of colonization on her family, her community, and herself.

The theme of doubt was interpreted from statements shared by co-inquirers in response to different questions illustrating that it was not one part of the diploma or one period that influenced doubt for the co-inquirers:

*I was nervous I didn't know anyone, it was different [after Hopedale, on the phone].*

(Mary)

*I was overwhelmed the whole time [in Hopedale].* (Emily)

Emily outlined that the feelings of being overwhelmed at the beginning were related to arriving in Hopedale and not knowing what was going to ensue, having to arrange childcare, and then suddenly juggling schoolwork on top of caring for her infant.

Jenny talked a lot about the size of the class (19 participants began in Hopedale) and how that influenced feelings of being overwhelmed, which linked to wanting to return home—to her supports and familiar environment:

*I wondered why I had to do this. I didn't like big groups. I wondered if I could just go home.* (Jenny)

Other co-inquirers also talked about the number of people in the class and how the group size caused them to question (in the beginning) whether they wanted to stay engaged. The group

size dropped by half before the second face-to-face intensive and then by half again (settling at 5)<sup>13</sup> after the second face-to-face intensive course.

Class size was not the only consideration that triggered doubt. Often personal circumstances played a role. For example, Emily experienced feelings of doubt when her second child was born. When she discussed this, she referred to giving up, signifying recognition of her control in this process:

*I can remember thinking once, frig it, too hard just gonna give up.”* (Emily)

For some, doubt was a more fleeting sense. Ocean, for example, outlined that she experienced doubt several times throughout the programme, yet the feeling was not pervasive, and she was able to release the feeling of doubt quite quickly:

*I wondered if I could stay in the program (this feeling usually passed quickly).* (Ocean)

The feeling of doubt was evoked for the co-inquirers because of the class size, the need to travel away from home community and family; it was embedded in the ways that these Nunatsiavummiut questioned their own ability to manage the workload, complete the academic work, be successful in the course, and juggle these undertakings with family and employment commitments. This subordinate theme was closely linked to the subordinate theme of balance unbalance.

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<sup>13</sup> The attrition rate for the regular delivery of the diploma in a full-time face-to-face format at NSCC is 50%. Given the fact that none of the original participants were aware in advance that the initial course that they attended was the first course in a two-year diploma program, attrition of 50% from that first course offering, and 50% again mid-way through the diploma programme seems comparable.

### ***Balance/Unbalance***

Throughout the diploma, the co-inquirers all articulated a sense of shifting between a need for balance and yet feeling unbalance. There were many factors that they attributed to supporting them to shift to balance when there was unbalance, and commonality in the elements. In follow-up conversations about the themes, the co-inquirers shared that without the acceptance that they felt in the group, there would have been more unbalance than balance and/or experiences of doubt would have been more lingering and occurred more often.

One co-inquirer described doing schoolwork around their “world schedule,” perhaps indicating that initially they did not incorporate their education into their world:

*In the beginning I actually did my schoolwork around my world schedule. (Jenny)*

The awareness of their school-based behaviours supported the co-inquirers to understand what was occurring for them:

*I'm a really bad procrastinator. (Mary)*

When probed for more information about how this awareness was helpful or not helpful in supporting them to find balance, this co-inquirer outlined that she knew to look at one assignment at a time, to ask for help in breaking the assignment down into manageable chunks, and to rely on the support that was available from classmates and the facilitator to support her to find balance. She elaborated further:

*Just took my assignments one by one. And asked for help, lots and lots of help. (Mary)*

The importance of being able to access support systems to aid in finding balance was pervasive across the face-to-face meetings as was evident from assertions such as the following:

*I didn't have my supports with me for the evenings – like my wife and family. (Jenny)*

*I stayed with family I wasn't familiar with. (Ocean)*

*... stressed because I didn't want to be away from home...* (Mary)

The ways in which the co-inquirers relied on each other shifted as their time together extended and their working relationships deepened, yet it was still to their primary support systems that they wanted to reach to help them balance their daily interactions in the world, including time in this programme.

When asked what she did when experiencing unbalance, Emily indicated she would:

*Talk to people close to me like [spouse] or classmates.* (Emily)

They also talked about wanting to go home when the course time was occurring outside their home community<sup>14</sup> because they missed family and had left family responsibilities to others. They missed their family support systems. This feeling of missing family did not change even when they articulated that the class was becoming like family:

*There was a lot of homework and full days ... in the classroom. I talked to [spouse] about feeling overwhelmed.* (Emily)

The co-inquirers are involved in many activities and hold multiple responsibilities outside family and employment as shared in the transcripts. It was the importance of these responsibilities along with the strong valuing of family, and the desire to enact their passion to work with children, youth, and families that created the tension of balance and unbalance outside the school experiences.

### **Our Land, Our People**

As a superordinate theme Our Land, Our People was about safety and familiarity. It was also about a belief that they should not have to leave their home communities, as remote as they

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<sup>14</sup> For an outline of the courses offered and location of each offering, please see Table 1.



were, to pursue post-secondary education. Throughout the diploma, there was discussion about the value held by the co-inquirers of being able to access the diploma via distance, and through intensive courses held in their communities. Even going to Happy Valley–Goose Bay—while advantageous to access resources (e.g., shopping without having to pay expensive shipping costs)—was leaving home and studying outside their homeland.<sup>15</sup> The co-inquirers must leave their home communities often to access healthcare and other services. Weather along the north coast of Labrador often causes flight delays that prevent Nunatsiavummiut from returning home (sometimes for several days). Access to health services is identified as a social determinant of health for Inuit (National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health, 2019). Having to leave home so frequently to seek medical care is articulated as an oppressive and marginalizing experience (Ansell, 2022), and it was my interpretation that having to leave to pursue post-secondary education was experienced similarly.

Being together as a cohort of Inuit learners was also articulated as important in follow-up conversations. They shared that knowing that their peers understood the complexities of living in Nunatsiavut was reassuring. The ability of this group to empathize and demonstrate compassion to circumstances of their classmates was educative for me. Missing class time on the telephone or face to face (because of medical travel, lack of childcare, work requirements, or

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<sup>15</sup> Many of the NG operations occur out of Happy Valley Goose Bay, yet it is not located geographically in the Nunatsiavut land claim. I have been part of conversations where Nunatsiavummiut (not specifically the co-inquirers) expressed their opinion on this circumstance. I have heard many stories of NG employees who work in Happy Valley Goose Bay who do not respect the complexities of living on the coast and avoid travel to the coast when possible, so that they do not end up on weather hold.

family responsibilities) was common, and was quite disconcerting for me as the facilitator, yet rarely caused other co-inquirers any concern.

This superordinate theme was also about loving Nunatsiavut and believing that it is important to love the land and the people in order to serve them. There is recognition that life in Nunatsiavut can be difficult, including a very high cost of living, and yet all the co-inquirers were clear on multiple occasions that they would not want to have to live anywhere else, and for them the benefits of being able to go off<sup>16</sup> after class were important to balance.

### *Shared Purpose*

The group as a cohort found strength, belonging, and motivation in their shared purpose:

*We all had our own things going on, but we all made it work.* (Ocean)

*We were all in the same boat.* (Emily)

This shared purpose was about the completion of the diploma as well as the strong desire and commitment to support children, youth, and families in Nunatsiavut:

*Knowing there are like-minded people that have the same goals and ideas as I do and are willing to put those and their education together to work in fields that will focus on and better the lives of children and youth.* (Ocean)

Knowing that they were sharing the same journey with other Nunatsiavummiut provided safety. This theme showed up after their second face-to-face intensive course, which occurred on the NSCC campus in Truro, NS. For many of the folks in this group, the face-to-face class in Truro was their first time visiting Nova Scotia. A group of NSCC Truro campus staff (student

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<sup>16</sup> As described earlier, going off is a colloquial term that means to go out of town using skidoo, boat, or quad to hunt, fish, or be on the land often participating in what might be captured as traditional experiences.

services and academics) worked diligently to arrange local transportation, accommodation, meals, childcare, and access to the events and experiences the group indicated interest in.

Through this shared experience, they saw themselves as part of a “family”:

*We started working together ... started becoming a family.* (Jenny)

*It was like a second family.* (Ocean)

During the time in Truro, not only did they spend eight hours a day together in class, but the group also lived together in residence, shared responsibility for all their meals, and supported each other after class time with childcare. They socialized together (going to a movie, swimming, and participating in a Mawio’mi<sup>17</sup>) and travelled on the same flight from their home communities to (and from) Halifax for their face-to-face class. The flight gathered classmates

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<sup>17</sup> The word *Mawio’mi* is derived from the Mi’kmaq language meaning gathering. In contemporary context Mi’kmaq use the term *Mawio’mi* to reflect the pan-Indigenous celebration of pow wow although pow wow is a colonial mis-interpretation, as pow wow is specific to “gifted people,” which is an Algonquin term (personal communication, N. Phillips, October 30, 2022). The event is intended to “showcase beauty, strength, spirit, and endurance of the Mi’kmaq peoples’ culture and tradition” (Mi’kmaq Nation, 2023, para 1). It has been explained to me that it is difficult to translate Mi’kmaq to English and maintain the same meaning. Further, a *Mawio’mi* is so much more than a showcase. It is a gathering of people to provide a way to socialize and reconnect. It does not have to be a “powwow” but can be a luncheon, a workshop, a family reunion, or a small get together with friends (personal communication, C. Lucio, September 24, 2021). The Nunatsiavummiut students were invited to the Canada Day *Mawio’mi* by the NSCC Campus Indigenous Student Advisor. The Nunatsiavummiut expressed excitement. One dressed her daughter in an *akulik* (a long-tail style *amauti* or parka worn by Inuit women) and when they returned for their final face-to-face class time in Truro, they asked if they could attend another *Mawio’mi*.

from Nain to Happy Valley–Goose Bay, on the way to Halifax, and dropped them off in reverse at the conclusion of their time together.

Given the ways the group demonstrated, both inside and outside the classroom, their reliance on each other during their time in Truro for the face-to-face course, Ocean’s articulation that regardless of what was going on for an individual they made the collective work, and Emily’s statements about being in the same boat could be related to both the learning environment and being a college student. The interpretation of shared purpose coinciding with the Truro face-to-face gathering was also linked with an experience of belonging (Jenny and Ocean both used the word “family”), and safety might have been needed given the unique elements of “unknown” connected with this specific face-to-face meeting.

It was also at this point in the programme that the group members settled out. Until this face-to-face course, 10 of the initial group of 19 people who started the course in Hopedale continued and showed up sometimes for phone-call classes, but the group was not yet consistent. The 10 participants who travelled to Truro had been consistent in attending phone-based classes, and this settling of the group influenced the co-inquirers to clarify their sense of shared purpose related to getting work done connected to the diploma:

*And most of the people left in class would join regularly. And we would get lots of work done... (Emily)*

The co-inquirers relied on each other in a variety of ways throughout the diploma. This reliance was partly a consequence of the delivery structure of the diploma—there were several group projects to prepare that were designed in such a way that the experience of teamwork was occurring while the theory of group process was being delivered. However, they also relied on

and developed trust in each other for support through significant life events that occurred peripheral to the diploma that impacted their engagement with the diploma.

When referring to the first face-to-face intensive, Jenny indicated:

*One [on] the positive side, we got closer as a group. We got to know each other. (Jenny)*

And yet regardless of where the class took place, the co-inquirers expressed enjoying the learning and linked that to the cohesiveness of the group:

*When we started classes on the phone I loved it. (Emily)*

*Knowing there are liked minded people that have the same goals and ideas as I do ...*

*even on the phone it was ok because we were all focused on the same goal. (Ocean)*

The recognition from the co-inquirers that each of them had complicated lives yet they were all in the diploma together and had the same big picture goals (to work in Nunatsiavut with children, youth, and families) and yet were committed to their short-term goals of completing assignments and learning more about how to work with children, youth, and families supported their experience of shared purpose.

### ***What I Knew, I Knew***

After our time together in Hopedale, the starting group of 19 became a group of 10, and after our second face-to-face intensive course, that group became the 5 who stayed engaged through the diploma and graduated. Of that five, four participated in this research as co-inquirers. These four co-inquirers encountered experiences and opportunities that they linked to their previous school experiences. These predictable experiences (guest speakers) and routines (what time we start; what time we break) offered them a sense of knowing what they knew and, in that, they felt some predictability and efficacy.:

*I felt most like a student out there [in the Truro face-to-face intensive classes]. (Emily)*

*I can remember putting [baby] to sleep and thinking oh my goodness I got to read a chapter yet. Then thinking if I'm going to be in college I better get up and start reading.*

(Emily)

*I quickly realized this wasn't training, but I'm an actual post-secondary student!* (Ocean)

When they drew on previous school experiences and the feeling of familiarity that was evoked, it sparked motivation and linked to experiences of comfort and predictability.

The connection between what they learned in the coursework and their current work and understanding of working with youth was also seen as familiar and supported them to feel confident in their decisions to stay in the course. This alignment offered opportunity for the co-inquirers to reflect critically on their learning as it linked to a practice environment. This approach supported emotional engagement and supported motivation in the diploma.

*My education helped me better the way I interacted and communicated with youth, as well as how I understood them and how to build strong, positive relationships and the importance of those kinds of relationships.* (Ocean)

Simply being in Nunatsiavut while they were doing course work offered familiarity and an opportunity for comfort:

*Face to face in our hometown was easy....* (Jenny)

Thematically the co-inquirers also shared that being in Nunatsiavut while they were going to school supported them to incorporate cultural values and traditions (Inuit ways of knowing; previous school and life or work experiences) into the information that was shared with them in the formal coursework:

*I connected the knowledge with cultural values and traditions.* (Ocean)

The recognition of an alignment of Inuit culture and values with characteristics of a CYC relational approach was shared freely from the group of co-inquirers as we got further along in the diploma and as the co-inquirers' understanding of CYC theory expanded and as the relationships between co-inquirers and the facilitator deepened. Ocean shared this sentiment in her interview, other co-inquirers shared it in discussions we had as a collective, and one of the co-inquirers coauthored a chapter that shares the alignment of Labrador Inuit values and CYC values (see Modlin et al., 2020).

Emily shared that being Inuit graduates:

*who are prepared to work in their beautiful land where we have lived all our lives is important.* (Emily)

She went on to share an understanding that Inuit service recipients would trust service providers differently than workers who come to Nunatsiavut for a few of months and then leave because, in part, being Nunatsiavummiut:

*We could build stronger relationship and trust with individuals we are working with.*

(Emily)

Nunatsiavummiut service providers would share lived experiences with Nunatsiavummiut service recipients.

While they were in Truro for their second face-to-face intensive class, the group prepared and delivered a presentation for campus staff about life in Nunatsiavut, showcasing the individuality and collective beauty and strengths of each of their beautiful communities. As a group, they prepared an interactive experience that simulated the high cost of living in Nunatsiavut. They were clear in purpose and worked diligently as individuals prior to arriving for this face-to-face intensive; gathering information and taking pictures. Watching them

prepare for this presentation offered insight into their knowing what they know in another way—wanting to share the beauty, wonders, and challenges of living in Nunatsiavut while ensuring that the takeaway message was that Nunatsiavut was their beautiful homeland and that is why it was important for them and other Nunatsiavummiut (e.g., Elders, children or youth needing care) to have the choice to stay living there.

It was during the debrief of this presentation that I learned that many of the individuals who were involved did not have familiar knowing of each other prior to coming together for the course just a few months earlier in Hopedale.<sup>18</sup> Yet they all lived in Nunatsiavut and had common language and experiences because of this. Their keen collaboration and single mindedness in ensuring the delivery of a common message in this presentation was quite powerful and illustrated this subordinate theme quite robustly.

### **Empowered to Advocate (I Have Voice)**

Empowered to Advocate as a superordinate theme was interpreted throughout the transcripts. In the early parts of the interviews, it was interpreted that feeling encouraged to apply to attend the programme by colleagues and supervisors was internalized by the co-inquirers as being valued in their role by their employer(s):

*My supervisors were very encouraging and ensured me that I would receive support from them in order to get through the program. (Ocean)*

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<sup>18</sup> This incident is an example of a situation where my assumptions were reflected back to me. For various reasons, I had assumed that they all knew each other, so I was prompted to spend time reflecting and processing how this mistaken assumption may have been influencing my engagement with the co-inquirers and where it might have formed.



As they continued in the programme, their experience of being empowered to advocate was reflected in their statements about having their expressed needs met when they travelled to face-to-face class times:

*Yous made arrangements easy. For being out there [Truro]. (Jenny)*

Nearing graduation, the co-inquirers communicated that they had accomplished their goal:

*I could help children and youth in Nunatsiavut.... I have my diploma and my kids watched me go to college. (Mary)*

And they saw their role as advocates for children, youth, and families from Nunatsiavut:

*One of my goals was to get some children or child out of Newfoundland, out of Roddickton<sup>19</sup> and when I finish the program right. I was able to do that. (Mary)*

*I felt educated and prepared to help my people. (Jenny)*

As well, they want to advocate for the practice of Child and Youth Care:

*The CYC approach and having people work in big positions with CYC backgrounds would really benefit our communities and especially our children. (Ocean)*

*This program should be offered to more beneficiaries in all 5 communities. (Emily)*

Subordinate themes that provided foundation for *Empowered to Advocate* were *Heard and Supported* and *Transformed*. It was the experience of the two subordinate themes that

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<sup>19</sup> Roddickton, a town on the northeast tip of the island of Newfoundland is home to about 1000 people, 5.5% of whom are foster children arriving from the eastern coast of Labrador. These children belong to Inuit and Innu families and communities. A CBC article reveals that foster care is an economic lifeline to this region of Newfoundland and Labrador (Roberts, 2017).

buoyed the Nunatsiavummiut co-inquirers to own power and recognize their agency, which influenced them to experience being Empowered to Advocate.

### ***Heard and Supported***

This diploma was offered by the NG via federal government funding. All the costs of the programme were covered by the NG, and the three co-inquirers employed by the NG were offered time in their work schedules to attend synchronous class time and to work on tasks and assignments, which contributed to their sense of empowerment:

*I felt encouraged rather than pressured. (Ocean)*

In follow-up discussion with the co-inquirers, the theme Heard and Supported was highlighted in two ways. First, the co-inquirers highlighted that during their time in the diploma, they felt supported in multiple ways from different individuals, including family and friends, employment supervisors, government officials, classmates, and the programme facilitator:

*I wouldn't have been able to do the diploma without my husband's support. (Mary)*

*I had my wife ... willing to support me through it. (Jenny)*

*I was urged by Deputy Minister of Health and my direct supervisor to fill out paperwork. (Jenny)*

*I had my ... workplace willing to help me through it. (Jenny)*

*With the help of you and my classmates, it didn't take much to catch up on info/material that I missed. (Ocean)*

*[In response to a prompt about who they talked to when they were struggling] ... yep, my classmates. (Mary)*

*There is no doubt that I struggled but I was never alone in the struggle and my instructor was kind and patient with me. (Jenny)*

It was also through the relationship with me as the programme facilitator<sup>20</sup> that the co-inquirers identified having CYC practitioner attributes modelled and saw characteristics of CYC practice enacted. They identified their relationship with me as key to their success:

*You were so understanding of not getting things in on time. (Emily)*

*I asked you for help. (Mary)*

*Your teaching style and the content you spoke about kept me intrigued. (Jenny)*

Second, they expressed that they experienced their voice as valued through the process of the diploma as they expressed their needs and received support in return:

*Everything else was arranged for us, travel, living arrangements and transportation.*

*(Emily)*

*My supervisors were very encouraging and ensured me that I would receive support from them in order to get through the program. (Ocean)*

*My workplace was willing to help me through it. (Jenny)*

Dates and locations of our face-to-face times were negotiated as a group, and decisions were made by consensus when possible. Assignment structures and due dates were discussed and individualized, respecting the strengths and needs of individuals and the collective. The NG was supportive and responded in a timely manner to the requests made by the co-inquirers for information and resources to support them in their learning journeys.

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<sup>20</sup> “Facilitator: someone or something that facilitates something *especially*: someone who helps bring about an outcome (such as learning, productivity, or communication) by providing indirect or unobtrusive assistance, guidance, or supervision” (Merriam-Webster,n.d.-b). Nunatsiavummiut used the word “instructor” when referring to me as the programme facilitator.

### ***Transformed***

The co-inquirer's internalization of being accomplished and qualified once they completed the diploma (and for some of them, the CYC Certification Board exam) increased their sense of accomplishment, having demonstrated to self and others their potential as students and as professionals:

*I was more aware of how I worked. I was applying stuff I was learning at home, school, and work. My brain was changing. (Jenny)*

*Seeing things in a different perspective (the way we talk to children, think of children interact with families etc.). (Ocean)*

*It's different now then at the beginning. I was realizing that all the hard work paid off.*

*All the struggle and sacrifices was all worth it. (Emily)*

*It was one of the best experiences in my life. (Jenny)*

*One of the hardest most rewarding things I've ever done. (Ocean)*

Given the chronological nature of the question guide, as we neared the end of the initial interview, the questions were linked to graduation. The responses the co-inquirers shared when asked what they noticed about themselves as an impending graduate (graduand) and an emerging CYC practitioner were linked to expressions of self-esteem:

*Doing the CYC diploma ... humbled me, it taught me more than I have ever learned and how to do things in a trauma informed way. (Jenny)*

*It was a great feeling of accomplishment. (Ocean)*

*I felt like this was a gateway to my future. (Mary)*

*After graduating from the CYC program, I can help and make a difference [in supporting children and families in Nunatsiavut]. (Emily)*

As outlined, there was a variety of external elements that collectively supported the experience of feeling heard and supported. Responses from family, colleagues, classmates, individuals within the NG (often expressed as support by the NG), and by individuals within a Western educational institution wove together to create a web interpreted by the co-inquirers as support that challenged previous experiences and contributed to a shift in thinking about self as powerful or reinforced an idea of self as capable of being an agent of change or an individual who had voice and could advocate for change in systems within Nunatsiavut.

### **In Conclusion**

Co-inquirers experienced powerful emotions, identified as passion, doubt, and balance/unbalance. Their passion was to help and work with children, youth, and families from Nunatsiavut, and this passion is part of what kept them going when they experienced doubt. They doubted that they would be able to manage their work and life on top of school commitments. For some co-inquirers, doubt was pervasive throughout the entire diploma; for others, moments of doubt were circumstantial and passed quickly. For all the co-inquirers, the feeling of doubt was in some way linked to the number of participants in the class when it started. Various elements impacted the experience of balance/unbalance, yet it was often linked to feeling disconnected from their primary support people and the safety of their family and community.

Co-inquirers experienced belonging and safety in the cohort of their classmates. It was interpreted that their knowing of Nunatsiavut and Nunatsiavummiut was shared collectively and supported them to know what they knew. They experienced having a shared purpose through both the coursework, and the goal to support Nunatsiavummiut children, youth, and families.

They were inspired and motivated by each other, and they were held accountable by each other. They learned together towards a common goal.

Throughout the diploma, the co-inquirers felt that they were heard and supported, which influenced their transformation through learning and an increased awareness of their voice. They experienced being heard and supported as empowering, and they perceived that their responsibility with this voice was to advocate for themselves; their communities; children, youth, and families from Nunatsiavut; other Nunatsiavummiut; and for the profession of CYC.

## Chapter 5 Discussion

One of the tasks of the phenomenological researcher is to gather and analyze data and then present that analysis in a way that will be meaningful to co-inquirers and readers.

Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to share the unique outcomes from the IPA conducted for this dissertation. Examining the interpreted themes in line with extant literature offers opportunity for evidence of how the result of this research supports what has already been published, further substantiates recommendations of previous research, and highlights the ways that this research addressed research gaps.

This dissertation was guided by the overarching research question:

*What was the experience of Nunatsiavummiut participating in a Nova Scotia Community College Child and Youth Care diploma?*

Revisiting the overarching research question at the beginning of this chapter offers a reminder that this research is open ended and exploratory. There is no hypothesis to test nor claim to prove rather an experience to explore with the intent of gaining a deeper understanding. IPA is idiographic. The intention of IPA is to deeply examine a unique experience and therefore the themes identified in this dissertation cannot be broadly generalized (Smith et al., 2009/2011) as representing the experience of individuals participating in a CYC diploma. Rather, what has been identified is that for the co-inquirers, these themes capture their experience of participating in this specific CYC diploma programme at this specific time.

It has been suggested that the themes generated in phenomenological research might ring true for individuals with a shared experience (van Manen, 1997); there are layers of shared experience here. Other Nunatsiavummiut alumni of a CYC programme may find these themes intuitively “ring true” for them as might other Nunatsiavummiut post-secondary students, or

perhaps generally, Inuit pursuing post-secondary education. There may be pieces that echo for post-secondary CYC students broadly, or Indigenous students without assumption that there is a pan-Indigenous perspective or lived experience. Non-Indigenous individuals who have been born and raised in Inuit Nunangat might find that the experience of the Nunatsiavummiut co-inquirers is echoed in their experience of potentially having to leave home to seek post-secondary educational qualification.

This dissertation is the outcome of interpretative research and congruent with the methodology, I acknowledge that I as the researcher am present in the research process and the interpreted meaning is co-created. The co-inquirers have supported the understanding and articulated meaning.

This chapter is organized around each of the superordinate themes in the order they were presented in Chapter 4 Analysis and juxtaposed with extant literature. Seeking to understand a worldview that is inaccessible is what has drawn questions about Indigenous knowledge and how to compare or contrast this with a Euro-Western knowledge system (Battiste, 2005). Discussing the experience of the Inuit co-inquirers in a CYC diploma, using literature that is primarily based in non-Inuit worldview has illustrated this for me. Seeking input from co-inquirers and their informal consultation with Elders and their community has allowed inclusion of Inuit constructs in a way that is intended to be accurate and honourable.

### **Analysis and Discussion**

The superordinate themes of this IPA are all broadly aligned with recommendations found in “Post-Secondary Case Studies in Inuit Education: A Discussion Paper” published by Silta and Associates (2007), and the results of research conducted by Rodon et al. (2015).



The three superordinate and seven subordinate themes are intimately connected. Collectively they capture the interpreted experience of the co-inquirers in a Nova Scotia Community College CYC diploma and are illustrated in Table 9. During their time in the diploma, the co-inquirers experienced powerful emotions understood as passion, doubt, and balance/unbalance. It was interpreted that they experienced powerful emotions and felt connected to their collective land and people in ways of knowing and understood that they had a shared purpose with their cohort. They felt an empowerment to advocate, a sense of having voice through an experience of transformation, while feeling heard and supported.

### **Powerful Emotions**

It was clear that a strong desire to help children in and from Nunatsiavut was a motivation for the individuals to attend and stay engaged in the CYC diploma (offered by the NSCC and the NG with support through federal government funding). The co-inquirers all expressed having received very little prior information about the training (and certainly about the diploma) yet understood it was going to offer learning about children and youth. As the focus of the training and eventually the diploma was revealed, their interest was cemented. The desire to gain the education, qualification, and knowledge needed to help in community is congruent with elements noted by ethnographer Deyhle (1995).

The three subordinate themes clustered under Powerful Emotions were Passion, Doubt, and Balance/Unbalance. Collectively the subordinate themes might align with Euro-Western constructs of resilience, perseverance, or grit. It has been argued that these constructs are synonymous (January, 2016); their common element is the ability to do well despite adversity (Kirmayer et al., 2009). Resilience theory is complex and, while grounded in an anthropocentric Euro-Western perspective (Kirmayer et al., 2009), has been examined by researchers across the

globe in multiple cultural contexts. Roots of Resilience, a nationally funded resiliency research collaboration that explored the factors that promote resilience among Indigenous people in Canada approaches resilience as an interaction of social and psychological adaptation and change (Kirmayer et al., 2011). Kirmayer et al. (2011) outline that because Inuit have a concept of person as ecocentric and cosmocentric, resilience in an Inuit context is about multiple factors (external more than internal) and strategies to support individual resilience. Ungar (2008) argued that resilience is always contextualized, and often what appears to be an individual characteristic supporting resilience is linked to community or culture.

Exploration of resilience as ecological is aligned with the Inuit worldview of person as ecocentric (Kirmayer et al., 2011) and the connection to culture and cultural identity (Crooks et al., 2017). Inuvialuit and Nunatsiavummiut Elders shared that, “We develop emotional strength and problem-solving skills when we observe that problems can be solved, when others make us feel loved and capable, and when we have chances to learn new things and to accomplish goals” (Korhonen, 2007, p. 6).

It has been outlined that as animists, traditionally, Inuit understand that there are many elements or forces that must come together to shape the world and that these elements are beyond one person’s control (Kirmayer et al., 2011). Kirmayer et al. also outline that the concept of resilience aligns somewhat with the Inuit concept of niriunniq, which can be understood in a Western worldview as hope. Co-inquirers in consultation with an Elder who is an interpreter of Inuttut, outlined the meaning of niriunniq in Labrador Inuttut as “to expect.” Hope is defined as a want or expectation that a certain thing will happen (Merriam-Webster, n.d.-c). There are parallels in these two culturally different constructs, and perhaps a view through two-eyed seeing would support an understanding that we are “always looking for another

perspective and better way of doing things” (Marshall et al., 2015, p. 18). The passion the co-inquirers had to help children and youth, Inuit children and youth, Nunatsiavummiut children and youth permeated every conversation and was one element that supported the co-inquirers to find balance when there was unbalance and challenged them to not dwell in feelings of doubt.

### **Our Land, Our People**

This superordinate theme was about an experience of safety and familiarity. It included the subordinate themes Shared Purpose and What I Knew, I Knew. From a pan-Inuit context, the Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit (IQ) Task Force (2002) identified that the first relationship an Inuk has is with the land, water, and ice. All other relationships flow from this foundational relationship: relationships with family, community, and one’s inner spirit all depend upon one’s relationship with the land, water, and ice (IQ Task Force, 2002). These four relationships are foundational to Inuit culture (IQ Task Force, 2002).

The importance of being able to stay at home and engage in a post-secondary education programme was clearly expressed by all the co-inquirers. They repeatedly articulated their belief that they should not have to leave home (unless they chose to do so) to pursue education. Community delivery of education programmes has been highlighted to bridge the gap that is often caused by relocation for education (see, for example, Malatest & Associates, 2004; Hudson, 2013, Lane, 2013, Rodon et al., 2015). Leaving home to study also means leaving friends, family, and social systems. It means leaving Nunangat. Given the expressed importance of the relationship with the land, water, and ice that comprises Inuit Nunangat it can only be imagined how this adds a layer of stress to what is commonly understood to be a stressful life transition.

Cognition is understood to be situated within culture because culture shapes the way one learns and influences what is understood to make one wise and smart (Keller, 2011). A cultural mindset is a mental representation or cognitive schema that contains knowledge about self and the world that is culturally congruent (Oyserman, 2011). Inuit are identified as a collectivist culture (McShane et al., 2011). Individuals from collectivist cultures structure ways of thinking about the world that attend to content, procedures, and goals relevant to increasing connection (Oyserman, 2011). Post-secondary education is typically very individual in its focus. The cohort-based approach and structuring of this diploma to include a number of group tasks and assignments might have supported the experience of shared purpose and the success of the co-inquirers in the diploma.

It has been highlighted that community-based education programmes increase the accessibility of training and education programmes for Inuit adults (Rodon et al., 2014; Silta Associates, 2007), increase opportunities for success in post-secondary education programmes (Malatest & Associates, 2004), and lessen the opportunity for culture shock (Silta Associates, 2007). In addition, the co-inquirers shared that having the diploma delivered primarily in Nunatsiavut, offered an opportunity to learn while staying on their land, which also linked to them knowing what they know. They could “go off,” staying engaged with the land as well as staying engaged in community and family activities while completing the diploma. They shared that the opportunity to stay connected with their land and community was very important to their well-being and was linked to supporting balance, a subordinate theme connected with Powerful Emotions.

In Indigenous society, the process of learning and knowing has always been place-based and linked with the environment (Kelly, 2020). Shared identification with a specific land is a

defining characteristic of Indigenous community, and Indigenous peoples often have a special connectedness and strong sense of stewardship for their locale (McInerney & Flowerday, 2016). The land also shapes in very dramatic ways both the perspective and identities of Indigenous peoples (McInerney & Flowerday, 2016).

Place-based education is an educational philosophy the tenets of which include grounding educational experience in the local community, solving real-life problems, and integrating traditional ways of knowing or traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) into formal school curricula (Mashford-Pringle & Stewart, 2019). Using socio-cultural and ecological settings to support learning is not new; educators have done this for a very long time yet the identification of the importance (in a K–12 context) of using place-based processes increased the application of theoretical knowledge in a community context; there is recognition that this supported students to have increased understanding of the ecology of their community in a national and global context (O'Connor, 2009).

Approximately 80% of the NSCC and NG CYC diploma was delivered without the co-inquirers having to leave Nunatsiavut. Projects were designed to meet outcomes while also supporting the co-inquirers to examine circumstances they identified as important in their communities, offering the co-inquirers opportunity to address situations or optimize strengths in their individual communities and across Nunatsiavut congruent with what is suggested by Wiseman (2018). Components of the diploma were delivered outside Nunatsiavut only when the co-inquirers chose that option, and in-person attendance was not mandatory for these off-site experiences. These out-of-region intensive times incorporated projects that were negotiated and led by the co-inquirers, including cultural experiences of the co-inquirers' choosing (e.g., attending Mawio'mi). It was shared with me that even though the Mawio'mi is not a traditional

Inuit ceremony, it is typical for Mi'kmaq to invite visitors from elsewhere to Mawio'mi with the intention of helping them get connected and feel welcomed and valued (C. Lucio, personal communication, August 18, 2022).

Most theory-driven classes were held online, in boardrooms, or classroom spaces (depending on location). Practical courses (e.g., activity programming) occurred outdoors (when possible), and as a cohort we participated in many events and activities in the community (e.g., Easter Games, dog sled races, Caines Quest celebrations) as well as community presentations (e.g., Caitlyn Urquhart from Public Legal Information Association of Newfoundland and Labrador). And as collections of individuals or groups (yet not the whole cohort), we also participated in honouring and celebrating individuals or their families (e.g., Nanook harvest, a baptism, birthdays).

Mowatt and colleagues (2020) suggested that “the immense tool of oppression that is Canadian education is mitigated, at least in part, by land-based learning” (p. 19). Aluli-Meyer (2008) suggested that land is more than a physical space; it is also a mental one shaping ways of knowing. Therefore, land-based learning does not always mean being physically on the land. Advocates of land-based learning suggest that incorporation of land-based learning can include incorporation of traditional flora and fauna (even as an image) (J. White, personal communication, January 25, 2023). Land-based learning is understanding the importance of how land (water, ice) shapes ways of knowing, doing, and being and it is important that non-Indigenous educators do not overstate or oversimplify the use of place-based learning given the complexity of the value in an Indigenous context (Wiseman, 2018).

Connection with traditional culture has been linked (in a pan-Indigenous context) to academic success (Crooks et al., 2017). Remaining on traditional land and experiencing learning

in an Inuit cohort might also link to experiences of success, shared experience, and community. Even when they travelled out of community for intensive coursework (to Happy Valley–Goose Bay or Truro), they did this as a collective and by choice; these intensive experiences were never mandatory.

Travelling to urban centres to pursue post-secondary education has been identified as a barrier to access (Deonandan et al. 2019). In part leaving one's home community brings with it a fear of lost support network and a fear of being misunderstood cross culturally (Deonandan et al. 2019). While not intentional, it was articulated that travelling as a collective and staying together when they were away from home provided a sense of safety and community; they formed a family and knew they were going to be together as Nunatsiavummiut sharing their educational experience.

The expressed shared purpose of wanting to support Nunatsiavummiut young people, children, and families gave the co-inquirers a point of connecting. Silta Associates' (2007) case studies in post-secondary Inuit education highlighted the importance of interpersonal relationships in the learning environment. These relationships support the contextualization of knowledge and learning, helping one to recognize how this shared purpose and the opportunities the co-inquirers were focused on could be related to a worldview that is developed around being cooperative. In an Arctic climate, Inuit traditionally rely on each other to stay safe, to be fed, and to be sheltered. This reliance on collaborative relationship has been demonstrated in other Inuit cohort programmes. Weber (1996) and Rodon et al. (2015), among others, shared that a close learning community contributed positively to Inuit student experience across a variety of post-secondary programmes offered both within and outside Inuit Nunangat.

I knew what I knew might also have been about the incorporation of their current roles and previous knowledge and experiences working with youth. Battiste (2013) contends that incorporating students' prior knowledge and incorporating culture and identity challenges cognitive imperialism and offers incorporation of multiple ways of knowing and being. In this diploma, we did that formally through NSCC's process for prior learning recognition (Appendix D) as well as informally by discussion and consultation of assignment construction (e.g., in an activity programming course, students hypothetically redesigned the playground space for the community we were spending time in while that course was being facilitated). Moore et al. (2016) and Sallaffie et al. (2021) highlighted that incorporating Inuit students' knowledge supports student engagement, motivation, and experiences of success.

This theme, Our Land Our People links closely with Powerful Emotions and Empowered to Advocate as it was the land and the people that supported them to stay engaged in their studies and to be well while they were completing the diploma and developing a sense of voice.

### **Empowered to Advocate (I Have Voice)**

Empowered to Advocate as a superordinate theme linked to experiences of change through the course of the diploma, experiences of success (academically and professionally), and identification that they had completed what they set out to when they decided they were going to complete a college diploma. The subordinate themes *Heard and Supported* and *Transformed* were connected to experiences in the classroom and in work or life events that occurred parallel to the programme.

Supporting students to develop higher-order thinking skills creates conditions for the development of autonomy through transformational learning. When an individual finds their current way of making meaning or sense of their world to be inadequate, it is replaced, through



transformational learning, with one that is changed (Merriam, 2004). Transformational learning is the consequence of an individual, reflective process; critically examining the nature and consequences of previously held assumptions, beliefs, and judgements (Mezirow, 1997). One of the outcomes of transformational learning is more autonomous thinking (Merriam, 2004). Autonomous thinkers are less dependent on others to form opinions and make decisions, which can be linked to the experience of the co-inquirers as empowered to advocate. It has been identified that autonomous thinking is necessary for engagement in a democratic society and for moral decision making in a society where there is rapid change (Gallardo-Alba et al., 2021). Autonomous thinking is also highlighted as important for academic decolonization and the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge systems (Shih, 2010).

Transformation theory is grounded in the assumptions that the way an individual interprets and reinterprets their experience is essential to their meaning making and therefore to their learning in a culturally and contextually unique way (Mezirow, 1997). Mezirow argues that “transformative learning is central to what adult education is all about” (p. 226). Participation in a transformative learning experience requires the learner to be critically reflective, examining the origin, nature, and consequences of their assumptions, beliefs, and judgements (Mezirow, 1997). Transformative learning acknowledges that the person changes and reconfigures over their lifetime and that this change is more significant than simply reconfiguring or reorganizing concepts and constructs that are already formed, it is rather changing the self (Bainbridge & West, 2012).

Thayer-Bacon (2012) challenged that education must be approached with a view for democracy. She contends that it is the responsibility and role of educators to interrogate and

verify; otherwise, students will be immersed in an environment that will likely bore them and stifle any desire they have to explore or create (Thayer-Bacon, 2012).

This diploma was facilitated in a democratic way with a developmentally responsive and relational approach that is linked to the four basic assumptions<sup>21</sup> that were identified in 1995 as underlying Child and Youth Care education (Anglin, 1995). These assumptions, outlined in Chapter 2 Literature Exploration, have supported the development of three ideas that CYCEAB have articulated as “crucial” to CYC pre-service education across all levels (diploma to PhD):

1. CYC pre-service programmes integrate academic and personal development goals (at the curricular level).
2. Practicum experiences are integrated and aligned in the curriculum.
3. CYC practice ethics are integrated into the academic curriculum and guide the programme’s implementation and operation. (CYCEAB, 2022)

The contextually situated worldviews of learners were recognized, at least to the extent that these worldviews could be recognized given that there were always layers of context that could not be known, and the worldviews of the learners and the facilitator were vastly different. The diploma was delivered by a CYC practitioner and since post-secondary, pre-service CYC education is identified as an arena of CYC practice (CYCEAB 2022) along with including the ideas outlined by the CYCEAB, the diploma programme also incorporates the 25 characteristics that are commonly understood to support relational CYC practice (e.g., being in relationship, connection and engagement, purposeful use of activities, reflection, strengths and needs based,

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<sup>21</sup> The four basic assumptions involve (a) care work as an interpersonal process, (b) contextual interactions in the milieu, (c) therapeutic interventions, and (d) indirect elements (Anglin, 1995).

intentionality, and being emotionally present; Garfat et al., 2018). The conscious inclusion of these characteristics supported the development of an environment where learners could engage in taking learning risks within the relational safety that is developed in the classroom.

The development of relational safety takes “intuition, courage, and observation ... and depends on the facilitator to demonstrate repeatedly that we are able to take responsibility for the risks assumed when we communicate” (Hernández & Rankin, 2008, p. 255). Thayer-Bacon (2011) challenged that facilitators must position for relationships of equality with learners; they must trust that learners want to learn and are equal with facilitators in intelligence and capability. In the context of teaching Indigenous students as a non-Indigenous educator, it was important for me to recognize the areas where I had knowledge and those where I did not. This recognition required reflexive engagement and cultural humility as the facilitator. The co-inquirers’ articulation of the support they experienced was (in part) linked as a subordinate theme because there was interpreted expression of feeling seen and cared for.

Facilitating democratically requires meeting learners where they are developmentally in a variety of domains: socially, cognitively (specifically related to metacognition), emotionally, and linguistically (i.e., with respect to communication and language development). The co-inquirers expressed their appreciation for the steps we took to accommodate their broad-based needs, including arranging flights, supplying toys and equipment for their children, and other such actions. Using this developmentally responsive approach is also a commonly understood characteristic of CYC practice and in the pre-service educational context supports the development of metacognition. Metacognition is the awareness and understanding of one’s own thought processes and requires an individual to understand knowledge, comprehend texts, have knowledge about self and others, engage self-regulation skills, and reflect on learning and

engagement in learning (Vos & de Graaff, 2004). Metacognition is a particularly valuable skill connected to critical thinking (Chew, 2010).

Another characteristic of CYC practice that is incorporated and modelled in the CYC diploma is using daily life events for therapeutic purposes. This characteristic is about meeting individuals where they are developmentally (in any given moment), applying whichever developmental framework you choose in the context to engage with learners, and using circumstances mindfully and intentionally as they arise as opportunities to support and facilitate change (Shaw, 2013).

This diploma was delivered using a collaborative approach. Engaging relationally in the classroom with a democratic intent really demands this. I worked hard to support students to identify assessment that was meaningful and would allow them to demonstrate learning outcomes. I encouraged them to challenge grading structures and to reflect on the ways that their choices aligned to CYC practice beyond the college. Modelling CYC supervision was imbedded in the curriculum as a process that supported students to have regular check ins on their progress in the programme and their skill development as it relates to their learning about CYC practice.

If metacognition requires increased understanding of the ways the human brain develops and is wired for growth throughout the lifespan, then the opportunity to participate in reflection on learning while using daily life events in the context of CYC pre-service education allows opportunity for the development of metacognitive skills and demonstrates, in practice, several characteristics of a CYC approach. CYC practice is about being in relationship to support meaningful change in others (and self) (Gannon, 2004). It is therefore appropriate for CYC pre-service education programmes to support the development of intense skills in self-reflection to

increase self-awareness, support the development of a reflective process, and increase critical engagement in students. Arguably, CYC pre-service education is all about metacognition.

Given that many of the classes for this diploma occurred in Nunatsiavut facilitated by a Kallunât, there existed many opportunities for the co-inquirers to use daily life events to support the facilitator's learning. For example, using environmental cues to signify when it was time to leave class and return home prior to a blizzard diminishing visibility for safe travel, knowing how to start a frozen skidoo<sup>22</sup>, as well as cuing the removal of outside footwear when entering certain buildings and not others.

The subordinate theme *Heard and Supported* was connected to the ways the Government of Nunatsiavut (NG) promoted this diploma and supported their employees once they were engaged as students. Inuit students have shared that their pursuit of post-secondary education has been positively influenced because the education/training was offered by their employer (Rodon et al., 2015). As well, adjusting the workday to offer this group of Nunatsiavummiut time in their workday to complete their schoolwork is aligned with the research findings of Kublu et al. (2017). Kublu et al. explored with a group of Nunavummiut students and concluded that offering students time at the end of the school day to complete school-based tasks allowed the students to focus on school at school and home at home. Given that the diploma experience under exploration was offered in modular delivery, the NG's position of allowing students part of their workday to complete homework or to engage in class work would be somewhat parallel to offering time at the end of a full-time school day to complete homework.

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<sup>22</sup> While often understood as a brand name, this term is used colloquially as a generic term for all snowmobiles.

The experience articulated by the co-inquirers as interpreted by me aligns with the recommendation that post-secondary education programmes for Inuit must be holistic (Silta Associates, 2007). Regardless of whether delivery occurs in community or outside, article 14 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) outlines that educational programmes need to be designed to allow Inuit students to address personal, academic, cultural, and financial areas of need (United Nations General Assembly, 2007).

### **Limitations of This Study**

This study may be limited because of the target population from which to sample (5 graduates) and the choice of sample strategy (purposeful sampling). Purposeful sampling is often used for IPA research because the goal is to focus on a very specific experience, thus the sample is typically homogenous (Smith & Nizza, 2022). This sampling strategy is used for studying information-rich situations and does not lend itself to generalizing results; that is not the intention of this type of research, which seeks to understand rather than to explain, and the sampling strategy is well positioned in the methodology and research questions (Smith & Nizza, 2022).

This research is interpretative. There has been much back and forth with co-inquirers clarifying and checking my interpretation as the researcher yet ultimately at the end of it what you read here is my interpretation of the co-inquirers' interpretations of their experience. IPA has been identified as an intimate and personal approach to research because it allows such in-depth exploration of the experience of the individuals involved.

The co-inquirers arguably represented a homogenous group. This could be seen as a limitation to this study given that it does not offer diverse perspective to the circumstance under exploration. IPA is described as a methodology that is idiographic in the way it supports the

examination of unique detailed experience of each participant prior to examining general themes across the group of participants, thus this is a recognized limitation linked with this methodology.

It needs to be recognized that there is a power dynamic when a researcher partners with former students as co-inquirers (Maurer, 2017). The co-inquirers were clear with me very early on that as a Kallunât and as a teacher, they were socialized to defer decision making, and I understood that they also would not challenge my authority. As outlined previously, while there was no legitimate power in our relationship during the research in the way that a research ethics board would describe, there still exists power, and that power could influence limits of this IPA. Although this IPA was not structured to limit inquiry toward positive experiences with the curriculum, it is highly unlikely that the co-inquirers would share their negative experiences of me or the courses I facilitated, which should be recognized as a limitation of this study.

### **Implications and Recommendations of This Research**

Once analysis of the transcripts is complete, the researcher has a responsibility to share interpretation of and implications from the research findings with the goal of situating the findings in the context of extant literature and previous research (Holley & Harris, 2019). The implications and recommendations are intended to support positioning the research results in the readers' current experience or interest and to support (for example) future researchers, educators, practitioners, theorists, and policy makers to apply the outcomes to their work.

#### ***Implications for Research***

Facebook Messenger proved to be a valuable tool in this research. It allowed an experience of ease of access to co-inquirers and yet it was asynchronous allowing the co-inquirers ultimate control of when they responded. Because the Facebook Messenger application

requires relatively little bandwidth (Kuhn, 2023), it was accessible in Nunatsiavut even prior to internet upgrades, which made it a preferable choice and an option that should be explored related to research in remote communities beyond Nunatsiavut.

At the conclusion of this research, I can confidently assert that IPA is a methodology that can support non-Indigenous researchers researching with Indigenous participants or co-inquirers. It is suggested that anyone using IPA and committed to decolonizing research should explore the foundations and protocols of Indigenous methodologies to build an enhanced understanding of IPA that prioritizes ethical approaches to inquiry (Emery & Anderman, 2020). Chilisa (2020) has identified some parallels between interpretative and Indigenous research paradigms. Broadly speaking, these paradigms are based upon understanding that there are multiple socially constructed realities, valuing difference (as opposed to distinguishing right and wrong), and recognizing that knowledge is contextual (Chilisa (2020). Furthermore, IPA is a methodology that uses first voice and positions participants as experts in their own lives, which provides a good foundation for enacting the OCAP principles of ownership, control, access, and possession (First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2014). Future research applying IPA in Indigenous contexts has great potential.

More research on post-secondary education in Nunatsiavut is desperately needed. Although the NGRAC supported the focus of this research to be about the co-inquirers who completed the diploma, Sallaffie et al. (2021) highlighted that the robustness of their research, engaging multiple stakeholders, offered a full picture of the complexity of the elements that support success or serve as barriers for Inuit students in Nunavut. Examining more broadly in a research framework the experiences of all the individuals who began the diploma to understand the opportunities and challenges more deeply would support further programme and policy



development across Inuit Nunangat. Understandings about the graduates drawn from that research can provide a foundation to explore with NGRAC appropriate ways to undertake comparable research with Nunatsiavummiut who start but do not complete this or any other educational programme.

Extant literature about place- and land-based practices in a post-secondary context is relatively limited. Given the colonial structures typically associated with post-secondary education, the sparse literature base was not a surprise. As more institutions take steps to decolonize and Indigenize, building and sharing a body of knowledge reflecting more broadly the value of these pedagogies and practically how they are incorporated would support institutions to adopt these pedagogies. Research on place- and land-based pedagogies using both Indigenous and non-Indigenous methodologies would build a body of knowledge and offer a broader and deeper understanding of these pedagogies. Place- and land-based pedagogies are about belonging (McInerney & Flowerday, 2016). Research in a post-secondary context would support colonial institutions to move towards reconciliatory practices that would also address the calls to action from the TRC (2015a) and the calls to justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) (Calls for Justice, 2019).

Kallunâk professionals who work in Inuit Nunangat express that they care about the individuals they are serving and supporting (Preston, 2016), yet individuals living in Labrador express tensions between themselves and those who come from away to work (Mullings et al., 2018). This IPA highlights that the experience the co-inquirers had of being heard and supported was (in part) linked to their interpreted experience of the caring behaviour of college staff and faculty. It is recommended that exploration of Inuit post-secondary student success linked with caring would be valuable in increasing the evidence base that supports pedagogy and policy

related to post-secondary Inuit student success. Further, research on pre-service CYC educator scope of practice and ways of engaging would support an increased understanding of CYC practice in the post-secondary milieu.

Recognizing that some of the extant literature used to support this IPA has been applied in a pan-Inuit context, one wonders how much other research in an Inuit or even broader Indigenous context is being used to support policy development and practice contexts across Inuit Nunangat. Research specifically in each of the diverse regions of Inuit Nunangat would support theory development and then policy and programming, ensuring the needs of Inuit in each region of Inuit Nunangat are addressed in meaningful ways.

### ***Implications for Practice***

The following implications for practice are not intended to be generalizations, yet readers may view these implications with an intent to assess their applicability in their own unique context(s).

A frontend awareness of the possibility of the powerful emotions that were evoked through the course of this diploma programme would support structuring institutional student supports and would prepare faculty to engage in supportive wellness activities with students, including on-the-land learning. It would also prepare faculty who are facilitating and advising students in asking questions and checking in about holistic wellness and referring to student supports in a timely manner.

Ideally, student supports would be Inuit-specific, yet at the very least, it is recommended that the student supports be Indigenous. It has been identified that the barriers encountered by Indigenous learners often leave them in positions of increased vulnerability because of the difficulty in accessing student supports (Brant, 2013). Pigeon (2016) has also stressed that for

post-secondary education to be relevant for Indigenous learners, post-secondary institutions need to be able to address the specific needs of Indigenous students.

Inuit women seek engagement with post-secondary education more often than their male counterparts and typically hold greater responsibilities for childcare and other family responsibilities. Post-secondary institutions outside Inuit Nunangat who intend to recruit and support Inuit students need to ensure they focus on what might be barriers and ensure they are removed or alleviated. As post-secondary institutions continue to grow within Inuit Nunangat, holistic approaches to programming need to remain a focus.

This IPA highlights that the co-inquirers' experience of being heard and supported was in part connected to feeling cared for, in particular when they came to the intensive face-to-face coursework in Truro the first time. Recognizing their unfamiliarity with the campus and surrounding community and appreciating that some of them were bringing their children, prior arrangements were made (in consultation with the co-inquirers) for childcare and access to appropriate accoutrements (e.g., playpens, car seats, highchairs) needed to be comfortable with their children. The intention of this support was so the co-inquirers would be able to focus on their coursework as much as possible. The provision of these supports is attuned to the recommendations made by Silta Associates (2007) about recognizing the multiple responsibilities of post-secondary Inuit learners. It is essential that learning programs designed for Inuit learners be holistic (Kublu et al., 2017) and that pedagogical choices made by programme designers and faculty attend to the ways that students are situated within families and communities.

Given that the powerful emotions were experienced (at times) because of the myriad responsibilities of these Inuit women (work, home, community, extended family, school), an

understanding of how these responsibilities might manifest would also allow faculty and institutional student support to be timely and responsive. Structuring delivery and assessment to be flexible and follow what might be ebb and flow of the season would ensure additional support. An awareness of what is happening in each learner's community will support faculty and other student support providers to understand what may be influencing students' choices and (perhaps) their capacity to engage in learning activities.

Rodon et al. (2015) and Sallaffie et al. (2022) shared that it was important to Inuit students at all education levels that they had teachers (instructors, facilitators) who were knowledgeable about the North regardless of their ethnicity. This suggestion is aligned with what was shared by the co-inquirers in this research; experiencing a facilitator who was receptive to student input in the classroom, curious about the co-inquirers' lives holistically, and respectful of these lives once shared, reinforced their appreciation for the beauty of their land and peoples and strengthened their sense of being heard and feeling supported. It is further recommended that having Inuit co-facilitators if Inuit subject-area specialists are not available would offer opportunity for Inuit students to see themselves reflected in the classroom and curriculum in multiple ways and could support embedding Inuit culture seamlessly in courses.

Numerous authors have outlined the importance of cultural humility and cultural safety when engaging with Indigenous community (see, for example, Carlson, 2017; Malatest & Associates, 2004). If a non-Indigenous employee cannot be humble, an employer may be faced with a circumstance where hiring an Indigenous employee who is differently qualified or leaving a position vacant may be a better choice than hiring a credential-holding individual (from away) who does not have sufficient cultural humility.

### *Implications for Theory*

The discourse that supports what is typically known as CYC theory has been criticized for its lack of diverse voice and its Western perspective (Gharabaghi, 2016). In response to this criticism, an essential piece has recently been rewritten with an intentional inclusion of multiple and diverse voices (Garfat et al., 2018) to expand beyond singular, Western voices. If we intend to engage in reconciliation of the wrongs done by our predecessors and to practice with First Nation, Inuit, and Métis children, youth, and families, there must be more Indigenous voices to support application of what is understood to be a CYC approach in more diverse contexts.

Advocating with Indigenous practitioners and programs is one way to behave with the intention to ally. This IPA was the outcome of discussions with and between the co-inquirers. Partnering with them (as articulated throughout this dissertation) in publication and presentation of the outcomes is aligned with OCAP (First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2014), the Four Rs (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991/2016), and is in line with what is outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN General Assembly, 2007). This partnership will support building the body of theory in the field of CYC pre-service education and pedagogy that offers a perspective other than Euro-Western.

Several authors have outlined the importance of incorporating prior learning and knowledge when supporting Inuit students in post-secondary educational programming (see, for example, Kublu et al., 2017; Møller, 2013; Moore et al., 2016). Continued articulation of the pedagogical elements, including those shared in this IPA that appear important to support Inuit post-secondary education programmes would further support regions of Inuit Nunangat to enact Article 14 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, establishing education in a manner appropriate to Inuit cultural methods of teaching and learning, and would

also address the calls to action from the TRC (2015a) and the calls to justice from the MMIWG (Calls for Justice, 2019).

To date, research about the resilience of Inuit has focused mainly on Nunavummiut. Resilience in this research context is embedded in an ecological framework, dependent on community efficacy and aligned with the Inuit constructs captured in the Inuktitut words *niriunniq*, interpreted as hope (Kirmayer et al., 2011), and *tunnngajuk* (Kral et al., 2014), which is understood in some communities in Nunavut and in Nunatsiavut to mean to have one's feet firmly planted on the ground. The outcomes of this resilience research are used to support theory (and practice) in a pan-Inuit context. An understanding of the heterogeneity of Inuit needs to be recognized in the articulation of resilience across Inuit Nunangat. As outlined in this IPA, the colonization of Nunatsiavummiut is different from the colonization of Inuit who reside in the Arctic region of Canada, and it stands to reason that their worldview and actualization of resilience might be different as a result. The experience of powerful emotion interpreted in this IPA then linked with resilience theory contributes to a theoretical understanding of how this Western construct is experienced by Nunatsiavummiut.

### **Summary**

The themes of this IPA presented here, juxtaposed with extant literature, are intended to illuminate the experience of Nunatsiavummiut CYC practitioners participating in a Nova Scotia Community College CYC diploma. Nearer the beginning of this dissertation, I shared that my rationale for doing research was to understand. Now that this research is complete, the analysis shared, and the findings examined against what was already thought to be understood, I understand more deeply, and I trust that this discussion has supported you readers to understand or to think about what you thought you knew and what you might now know differently.

The Inuttut title of this dissertation, tukisiven, was presented to me by the co-inquirers. It was expressed that it was meaningful to stand alone, and captured the intention of the exploration that is framed in this IPA.

The Nunatsiavummiut who participated as co-inquirers in this research expressed that they felt powerful emotions through the delivery of the diploma. These emotions were linked to how passionate they feel about supporting children, youth, and families in Nunatsiavut and how important it is to them that this support be offered as much as possible within region. They questioned their ability to juggle all the responsibilities they have while completing the programme and at times thought about withdrawing from the programme, yet they did not. They did not withdraw because they experienced voice and felt empowered to advocate for themselves in the context of the diploma with both the facilitator and their employers so that they could regain a sense of balance. They stayed because they experienced being surrounded by supportive people who were working towards similar goals. They stayed because they were home working on further education and because they were passionate. They stayed because they believe in and love their land and their fellow Inuit. They stayed because they felt empowered.

This research supported previous research claims and highlighted potential gaps that, if addressed in, research, practice, and theory would support Nunatsiavummiut (and other Inuit across and outside of Inuit Nunangat) to stay engaged in post-secondary education.

## Coda

It has been suggested that inclusion of my story might support readers of this dissertation to understand my positionality and my experience of this diploma offering. Positionality dually refers to a researcher's worldview and the way they locate I in the context of the research (Holmes, 2020).

When I began my doctoral degree, the experience of Nunatsiavummiut taking a CYC diploma was not what I intended to research. In fact, I did not begin working in Inuit Nunangat until after my coursework was finished, and I was preparing my candidacy portfolio in 2013. This research was very much born out of the delivery of the CYC diploma contracted by the NG in late 2016. It evolved out of conversations I was both a part of and apart from with the individuals who would become co-inquirers.

Nineteen individuals began the diploma as a 10-day intensive in Hopedale, NL. They came from (at least) four communities in Nunatsiavut. Many of them left family and community to engage in learning more about working with children and youth. They made the decision quickly and without a lot of information—having just a few days to apply before the start of the programme. Very few (if any) of the participants understood that they were starting a college diploma programme. With participation numbers dropping from 19 in the first course to 5 reaching graduation, the attrition rate may seem drastic; however, there are many factors that influenced the decisions made by the students. It is not appropriate to consider students who completed just the first course as having departed from the full programme when they had enrolled expecting that single course only. The attrition rate of the on-site CYC diploma at NSCC is typically about 50% over the two years of the programme. The highest numbers of students leave in the first semesters of the programme. The modular delivery of the offering in



Nunatsiavut still held the prerequisite course structure so, while higher, the attrition still somewhat mirrored the traditional face-to-face offering on campus.<sup>23</sup>

Because of the delivery model, the cohort to which the co-inquirers belonged spent a lot of time together in class, in accommodations where they stayed together if they travelled for intensive coursework, and in community activities that happened during the evenings of the intensive course delivery. Given that I often travelled to deliver the intensive courses, I also spent a lot of time with the cohort both in and out of class. The cohort was generous. They eagerly introduced me to experiences in their communities and answered my naïve questions with (what I interpreted as) patience.

I have facilitated NSCC's pre-service CYC diploma since the early 2000s and wondered about it for about that same length of time. I wondered about what pedagogical approaches best supported the development of CYC practitioners in a pre-service environment. I wondered about the ways in which characteristics commonly understood to underlie CYC practice could be incorporated pedagogically. Over the years, I have adapted and adopted various techniques I used in direct work with children, youth, and families for use in the pre-service CYC environment, and I wrote and published about some of these experiences (see, for example, Reid & Shaw, 2017; Shaw, 2009, 2011, 2019; Shaw, et al., 2013).

It is interesting to reflect on the ways what I learned about modular and distance or hybrid delivery in the offering of the CYC diploma for the NG were useful when we moved to online delivery in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. I had thought about the courses in a holistic way when I wrote the curriculum, yet I had not delivered them in a modular fashion until

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<sup>23</sup> The traditional face-to-face offering is course based and engages cohorts of mostly non-Indigenous students.

the NG offering. I had designed and implemented evaluation tools that assessed learning outcomes that were contained across multiple courses using authentic assessment<sup>24</sup>, but pulling outcomes to deliver as they lined up with these projects was new. In Winter 2020, when I (along with countless instructors around the globe) found myself suddenly facilitating in an online environment, I drew on my experiences delivering the diploma in a modular manner for the NG. I also capitalized upon what I had learned from delivering in an online environment and was able to pull in pieces of the assessments that were created for the Nunatsiavut cohort.

When I began working in Inuit Nunangat, I had encounters that challenged me to think about my practice (both directly with children, youth, and families and in various pre-service CYC educational contexts). I wondered if my practice directly with children and youth was relevant in an Inuit context and I wondered about the value of CYC education. As I listened to and participated in discussion with Inuit staff in 24/7 child and youth caring organizations, I thought about live-in caregiver models of out-of-home care for children. And when I was asked to facilitate pre-service CYC education in Nunatsiavut, I wondered about the potential for modular delivery and about possibilities for project-based and authentic assessment as pedagogical processes in this delivery context. I also wondered about access to technology and to written material in English within remote communities.

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<sup>24</sup> Authentic assessment involves curricular and pedagogical alignment that supports learning through the use of ill-structured tasks offered in authentic settings in which non-routine uses of knowledge, skill, and judgement are required (Wiggins, 1993); authentic assessment aims to evaluate students' abilities in "real world" contexts (Svinicki, 2004; Swaffield, 2011) and typically requires students to perform effectively with acquired knowledge (DeCastro-Ambrosetti & Cho, 2005).

During the facilitation and delivery of the diploma, I wondered about being the predominant facilitator and assessor. I worried quite frankly about the narrow perspective that this would provide. In all my practice contexts (directly with children, youth, and families, as well as in pre-service CYC education), I wondered how my ignorance influenced my continued involvement in colonizing systems in ways that were harmful and oppressive.

As I prepared to engage in this dissertation, I wondered about research ethics, and I examined my journals. I reflected upon several stories I recorded that so loudly illustrated my assumptions and bias. I explored to determine in what ways I was both an insider and an outsider (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009) in the context of this IPA.

Developing an ability to reflect-in-action (Schön, 1987) requires one to initially compare a new circumstance to previous ones. As a CYC practitioner, I had been educated and supported to develop skills of self-reflection, and this skill has served me in practice supporting me to be thoughtful and critical of experiences and meaning making as I have worked directly with children, youth, and families; facilitated pre-service CYC education; and conducted this research. Thus, when I encountered the feelings of discomfort, my response was to reflect and thoughtfully explore. As I encountered my *self*, I recognized that I had felt similarly before. Although the experiences and information to which I was being exposed were new to me, I could use my previous lived experiences as a template to support me to navigate the unknown waters somewhat. The ability to recognize a unique circumstance as something familiar yet with unfamiliar elements or characteristics allows for experimentation in the application of what worked in previous circumstances and one can then build to problem solve the unfamiliar and, in that process, create new knowledge and new experiences of self (Schön, 1987).

Dwyer and Buckle (2009) outlined that a researcher is an insider if they share trait(s), roles, or the experience under study with the participants. As previously outlined, I am a Kallunât descendant from colonial invaders. As a facilitator of the CYC diploma offered by the NSCC to a cohort of Inuit students created in partnership with the NG, there are many ways to identify me as an outsider yet, like my co-inquirers, I am a woman, a partner, and a mother. I travelled to participate in the intensive coursework of the diploma offering. During the diploma, I experienced geography and culture that were not like what I typically lived. Regardless of my intent to engage democratically with students, ultimately decision making rested with me (yet many times I did not have the knowledge to make the best decision), and I held power as the facilitator in assessment and grading.

I recently heard Dr. Afua Cooper talk about the development of her identity as a writer. She shared that her identities are not distinct from each other; rather her academic self informs her poet self informs her daughter self (A. Cooper, personal communication, July 2, 2022). Dwyer and Buckle (2009) posited that the notion of insider–outsider status as a researcher is dichotomous and restrictive. Rather than being one or the other, they suggest that it is the space between (the en dash if you will) that allows us to celebrate similarities and differences. Further, they advise that regardless of the ways you are an insider, the role of researcher takes you outside the group.

Examining positionality, like bracketing or fore-structuring requires constant interrogation of my beliefs, assumptions, and biases (Chammas, 2020). I began my PhD knowing I had White privilege, and that my education afforded me privilege, yet as a woman and the first university graduate in my family, I resisted being identified as such. I worked hard for everything I have and my life experiences to date have (at times) been a struggle. What became

apparent as I continued to unpack this resistance are the assumptions that I had about privilege. Some of those assumptions were easy for me to let go of; others I was more invested in, and they influenced my continued fight to fully recognize my privilege.

When discussing White privilege, Frideres (2015) explained that people who are White typically do not recognize their racial privilege because that racial privilege is normative. Applebaum (2008) contended that White privilege affords “White ignorance” (p. 296), which leads to the construction of a reality that is built and corroborated by dominant norms. The representation of White-skinned people in the media and in the education system is largely positive; White is the race against which all others are measured. Race is rarely used to identify White people—the assumption is that the individual discussed is White unless another racial descriptor is used. The behaviour of White individuals does not typically impact the race in entirety. It is in fact Whiteness that allows people the privilege of not having to see race and not having to be concerned with thinking about differences (Applebaum, 2008; Frideres, 2015).

Some of this is difficult to write. Putting words on paper makes them feel different to me. As a CYC practitioner, I link these pieces to my practice philosophy, and to what I believe about engaging in this work. As I have worked to foreground or bracket (to the extent that I can) my existing assumptions as they link to this research (and beyond) I have had to shed interpretative filters to put myself in the kamik<sup>25</sup> of my co-inquirers. Doing this has challenged me.

As previously articulated, at the start of this research, I *knew* I had privilege. What I did not understand was the responsibility or complexity of my privilege, and I had limited

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<sup>25</sup> An Inuttut word meaning boot.

understanding of how academic privilege came into play. All of this meant there was tremendous learning to be exposed. Working in Inuit Nunangat offered different context for learning. I learned customs (e.g., in which public building to take one's shoes off and when to leave them on) and safety (e.g., stay on the path because stepping off means sinking in snow to your waist) for contexts to which I had never been exposed. I learned humility. I will be eternally grateful to the co-inquirers for teaching me so many things during our time together in the programme and through the writing of this dissertation.

The sharing of the word tukisiven was a gateway for me. It was in the moment an ah ha that these folks were listening to me and had identified patterns in my way of engaging. It also seemed to open lines of communication for us to talk about different elements of their life as Nunatsiavummiut. This word was shared by someone who did not complete the CYC diploma yet remained connected to the ideas of the research. When I was searching for a title for this dissertation, I shared with the co-inquirers that I wanted to use the word tukisiven in some way. A few of the co-inquirers and I played with some phrasing in our FaceBook group, they consulted with Inuttut speakers. One of them sent me a private FaceBook Messenger message and stated that tukisiven alone is a meaningful title.

The outcomes of this IPA have challenged my practice. Completing this dissertation has deepened my understanding of the layers of student context that I cannot know. I assume less; I wonder more. Even as I position to have expert knowledge about the theory that underlies and supports CYC practice, completing this research has exposed ignorance and an understanding of that ignorance, and I partner differently with learners to explore their context and to create assessment experiences that might be more meaningful than what I would have created prior to having engaged in this research.

I am more thoughtful about assigning readings, and about incorporating supplies and textbooks generally. Having increased understanding of how unhelpful it can be to approach any circumstance with a pan-Indigenous or pan-Inuit lens has led me to seek out and consult experts more broadly and more often. It has challenged me to ensure that every selection of readings has readings authored by Indigenous scholars or practitioners. The understanding I have gained has increased my confidence in persisting in asking for response from my institution regarding the Calls to Action from the TRC and the Calls to Justice from the MMIWG, and to use my voice to offer education about the human rights cruelties that continue to occur in Canada.

Completing this dissertation has evoked conversation in my family. I learned that my maternal great uncle and his family lived and worked at the Indian Residential School in La Toque, Quebec. My maternal aunt, my namesake, stayed there with them for a few weeks in the mid 1960s. When I discovered this and asked questions about roles and experiences, I was asked for assurance that I was not going to share here anything disparaging about my now-deceased relatives. This request prompted interesting conversation about privilege, choices, and power. Had I not done this research, I might not have had those conversations in those contexts. I might never have known about this piece of family history, and it certainly would not have been recorded here.

As I have continued my practice of facilitating pre-service CYC students at the diploma level, I have also continued my journey towards reconciliation and truth. I have engaged in continuing to learn about the history of my profession, and the impacts of the colonial education system on First Nation, Inuit, and Métis individuals. I have discussed with my counterparts across the Commonwealth about the experiences of the Indigenous people in their countries. I have sought to incorporate readings from authors (unfortunately, often from outside the CYC

field because so little has been published within CYC) who represent diversity of voice. I intend to talk less and listen more.



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## Appendix A: Letter of Invitation

Date: May 11, 2020

Title of Study: Nunatsiavummiut Share Their Experience of Participating in a Nova Scotia Community College Child and Youth Care Diploma

Student Principal Investigator Kelly Shaw, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Education, Brock University  
Principal Investigator: Michelle McGinn Associate Vice-President Research  
Professor of Education, Faculty of Education, Brock University  
Faculty Supervisor (Same as PI)

I, Kelly Shaw, PhD Candidate, from the Department of Educational Studies, Brock University, invite you to participate in a research project entitled Nunatsiavummiut Share Their Experience of Participating in a Nova Scotia Community College Child and Youth Care Diploma.

The purpose of this research project is to explore your experience of participating in the CYC program at NSCC. Should you choose to participate, you will be asked to respond to a series of questions via Facebook Messenger. The questions relate to your time in the Child and Youth Care diploma from the first meeting in Hopedale through to your graduation in June 2019. As well, you will be asked to support me as the researcher in understanding the words and phrases that are used in responding to the questions that I might not understand because I am not from Nunatsiavut.

The expected duration of this research from start to finish is two months and will require about 10 hours of your time.

This research should benefit future Nunatsiavummiut who may attend post-secondary programs. It might also offer information on how to best deliver post-secondary education in the Nunatsiavut region.

It is hoped that there will be participants from several communities in Nunatsiavut in order to offer representation from various community perspectives.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact any of the following:

Nunatsiavut Research Centre (NRC) 709-922-2380, [research@nunatsiavut.com](mailto:research@nunatsiavut.com)

Brock University Research Ethics Officer: 905 688-5550 ext. 3035, [reb@brocku.ca](mailto:reb@brocku.ca)

Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) REB Acting Chair Dale Gruchy 902-680-8618, [Dale.Gruchy@nsc.ca](mailto:Dale.Gruchy@nsc.ca)

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me (see below for contact information).

Thank you,

Kelly Shaw

<p>Kelly Shaw Student Principal Investigator PhD Candidate Faculty of Education 902-899-7917 ks11be@brocku.ca</p>	<p>Michelle McGinn Associate Vice-President Research Professor of Education 905 688 5550 x 5024 <a href="mailto:mmcginn@brocku.ca">mmcginn@brocku.ca</a></p>
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This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through Brock University's Research Ethics Board [19-216 - MCGINN], has received a letter of approval from NSCC [May 7, 2020], and is endorsed by the NGRAC [March 9, 2020].

## **Appendix B: Letter of Informed Consent**

Date:

May 22, 2020

PROJECT TITLE:

*Nunatsiavummiut Share Their Experience of Participating in a Nova Scotia Community College Child and Youth Care Diploma*

STUDENT PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (PI):

Kelly Shaw, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Education, Brock University  
 Department of Educational Studies  
 Brock University  
 902-899-7917  
 ks11be@brocku.ca

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR & FACULTY SUPERVISOR:

Michelle McGinn Associate Vice-President Research  
 Professor of Education  
 Department of Educational Studies  
 Brock University  
 mmcginn@brocku.ca

INVITATION

You are invited to participate in a study that involves research. The purpose of this study is to explore your experience participating in the Child and Youth Care diploma at NSCC. Primary, secondary, and post-secondary education have been identified as sites for the greatest policy challenges of this time for law and policymakers across Inuit Nunangat (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami [ITK], 2018). It is possible that exploration on the experience of Nunatsiavummiut attending a college diploma designed to be delivered to a cohort, partially in community and partially via distance delivery could address this gap in research to some degree.

WHAT'S INVOLVED

As a participant, you will be asked to engage in a conversation on the telephone and / or Facebook Messenger.

Participation will take place over a few weeks and you can participate at times that are convenient for you.

If you choose Facebook Messenger, the interviews will take place over (approximately) 10 days for about a half hour or so each day in the conversational tone we have become used to.

The telephone interview will take place over a few calls that will total about 4 hours. The calls will be audio recorded onto my iPhone and then transcribed word for word. Once they are transcribed you will have the opportunity to review the transcript to ensure that everything you said is what you wanted to say and that you didn't miss sharing anything you intended to share.

Shortly after the interviews are all completed, I hope you will also help me in interpreting the interviews (to ensure I understand all of the words and terms you use). This will take approximately two more weeks no more than a couple of hours total. From start to finish, this process will take place over about two months – and will require about 8 hours of your time.

### POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS

Possible benefits of participation include the opportunity for you to share your experience during the program. This may include discussion about the way the diploma was offered, the materials that were offered, the structure, and the expectations.

While these are elements that you may have talked about in your class, gathering this information in a research format will offer the opportunity for you to share with a broader audience.

The Nunatsiavut government will see the results of this research.

It is possible that the information will benefit other Nunatsiavummiut if they choose to participate in post-secondary education. Your honest input – about the good and the bad, may influence the way in which the Nunatsiavut government delivers post-secondary education in the future. It may influence the delivery of Child and Youth Care education in Inuit communities.

There also may be risks associated with participation. Nunatsiavut is a small region. You know a lot of the people who live there. People from your community know you did this program – there are only a few graduates. This means that if someone from your community reads the results section of my dissertation or any publication associated with this research, they may be able to identify you. This is a limit to your identity being private or the information you share being confidential.

Every effort will be made (if you want) for your identity to be masked, yet it is possible that others will assume you said something that is captured in the research. If you choose to co-author or co-present the work with me (see the Publication of Results section below), then you will be named as an author.

It is also possible that the discussion we have will evoke passionate responses from you, and that you will experience strong emotions. It is my responsibility to check in with you when I sense that this has occurred, and to debrief the response fully. As well, I will make sure to remind you that you can access the Hope for Wellness Helpline at any time (1-800-242-3310).

### CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is gathered via Facebook Messenger will remain there indefinitely. Facebook does outline that Messenger conversations are private; however, they are not encrypted. This means that if asked by law enforcement, Facebook could release the contents of our conversation. This means that any conversations we have in Messenger will only be between the people who are in that Messenger conversation unless Facebook is subpoenaed to release the conversation. I will never invite anyone else to the Messenger conversations associated with this research. It is important to make sure you know that if you choose to invite someone to the conversation, they will be able to see everything that we have talked about – even the things we discussed before you invited them to join the discussion.

Data collected during this study will be stored forever on Facebook Messenger. Facebook stores its data on servers in The United States of America, Ireland, Sweden, Denmark, and Singapore. It is not possible to identify where the messages from the interviews associated with this research will be stored.

Regardless of where they are stored, they would be subject to the Clarifying Lawful Overseas Use of Data (CLOUD) Act because they are not encrypted. This means that US law enforcement can make US companies (like Facebook) release their information even if it is on a server outside the US. It is difficult to imagine a scenario where US law enforcement would have any interest in our conversations, but you should know they could access them.

Any quotations that are used in the reporting of this research, or in any future publications will be coded, and will not be able to be traced back directly to you, unless you indicate at that time that you want your actual name and not a pseudonym to be used. You will have the opportunity to review any information you provided for accuracy.

Access to our Facebook Messenger conversation will be restricted to you and me (unless you invite someone else). Occasionally I may ask my supervisor or members of my committee a question to ensure I am doing the best research I can. My supervisor or committee members will only see the discussion removed from Facebook Messenger, and if you want, your name will not be associated with the conversation.

If you share with me during the interviews, any information that indicates that a child or vulnerable person is being harmed or is at risk of harm, it is my ethical and legal obligation to share that with your local police, and I may have to disclose your identity. This is congruent with the limits to confidentiality outlined in our codes of ethics.

#### VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

When I was the facilitator for the courses you took during your diploma, we were in relationship where there was a power differential (because I was responsible for evaluating and grading you). Now that you have graduated, that power is no longer legitimate; however, could still be perceived. It is important to stress that your participation in this study is voluntary. Although I would love to hear your perspectives in the research, I fully respect that you may choose not to participate for any reason, which is absolutely fine to me.

If you wish, you may decline to answer any questions or participate in any component of the study. Further, you may withdraw from this study at any time up to the point that the information you have shared has been compiled with the information shared by others. If you withdraw, your transcript will be removed and no information you have shared will be used in the analysis phase. Withdrawing from this study will have no negative impact on you. You do so without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled, including the honorarium referenced below.

#### INCENTIVE FOR PARTICIPATION

If you choose to participate in this research, you will be offered a \$100 honorarium.

### PUBLICATION OF RESULTS

Results of this study may be published in professional journals and presented at conferences. I will make contact with you via Facebook Messenger to offer you information related to any publication or conference presentation and I welcome your participation in preparing publications (with recognition as co-author if you so choose) as well as support in any conference presentation (as a co-presenter). Once the research is finished, I will make the resulting discussion available to you electronically should you want it – please check the box below.

### STORAGE AND DESTRUCTION OF INFORMATION

All data from the research will be retained for 3 years after final publication. At that time all electronic files (stored on an external hard drive and locked in my home office filing cabinet) will be securely erased and all hard copy notes which will also be stored in my locked home office filing cabinet will be shredded.

### CONTACT INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE

If you have any questions about this study or require further information, please contact Kelly Shaw or Michelle McGinn using the contact information provided above.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through Brock University's Research Ethics Board [19-216 - MCGINN], has received a letter of approval from NSCC [May 7, 2020], and is endorsed by the NRC [March 9, 2020].

If you have any comments or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact any of the following:

Nunatsiavut Research Centre (NRC) 709-922-2380, [research@nunatsiavut.com](mailto:research@nunatsiavut.com)

Brock University Research Ethics Office 905 688-5550 ext. 3035, [reb@brocku.ca](mailto:reb@brocku.ca)

Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) REB Acting Chair Dale Gruchy 902-680-8618,  
[Dale.Gruchy@nsc.ca](mailto:Dale.Gruchy@nsc.ca)

Thank you for your assistance in this project. Please keep a copy of this form for your records.



CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate in this study described above. I have made this decision based on the information I have read in this letter. I have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted about the study and understand that I may ask questions in the future. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ (typing YES on this line and returning this letter via the email address provided to the student PI ([ks11be@brocku.ca](mailto:ks11be@brocku.ca)) can replace your signature)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- I consent to Kelly Shaw contacting me via Facebook Messenger to initiate discussion related to the interview questions.
- Please send me an electronic copy of the discussion resulting from this research.
- I give permission for Kelly Shaw to use a direct quote from me.
- I give permission for Kelly Shaw to use my real name in her dissertation.
- I would like to use Facebook Messenger
- I would like to use the telephone
- I would like to use both Facebook Messenger and telephone

### Appendix C: Question Guide

1. I want to talk about when you first started the programme—back in Hopedale March 2017. I wonder what you were thinking and feeling at the time?

*The focus of this question and the prompts is to explore their experience as they were beginning the programme and position them in a position to notice and talk about themselves as students in a college diploma programme.*

- a. Why did you decide to come? What were you expecting? Hoping for? What had you heard and how were you making sense of that information?
  - b. Do you remember preparing to come? What do you remember about that? Your feelings? The reactions of others? What did you do to prepare? Why?
  - c. Is there anything specific you remember about arriving in Hopedale? The first days of classes? Feelings? Emotions?
  - d. What thoughts and feelings were rising when we were together in Hopedale? Tell me about this part of the experience.
  - e. What do you remember physically? Psychologically? Spiritually? (Did you have anything going on in these ways that connected to the emotions?)
  - f. Did anything come up for you when a *Kallunât* walked in the room as the facilitator?
2. After I left Hopedale and we began to have phone calls, how did you experience this? Was it different or the same as when we were together in Hopedale?

*This question is intended to prompt thinking about how there was a change in the delivery and how they experienced that change and transition.*

- a. Did you think it was going to be the same or different than the time in Hopedale?  
...than other experiences you had of post-secondary education? It may be necessary to explore previous post-secondary experiences here. If they did not have previous post-secondary experience move on to next question.
  - b. What thoughts or feelings did you have about continuing in the programme?
  - c. What did you have to do to stay engaged?
  - d. How did you “prepare” to stay on in the programme?
  - e. What kinds of thoughts or feelings did you have at this point? Were you anxious? Curious? Excited? Scared? ...What?
  - f. Did you talk to anyone about these feelings? And if so to whom and why? Other students in the programme – your cohort; the F2F students? If not, move on to the next question.
3. When we got together in Truro in June 2017 – talk to me about that? How were you feeling at that time in the programme?

*The intention with this question is to prompt continued discussion of the journey toward the diploma.*

- a. Is there anything that really sticks out in your mind at that point of the programme?
- b. Did you think it was going to be the same or different than the time in Hopedale?  
...than other experiences you had of post-secondary education?
- c. How did you “prepare” to stay on in the programme?
- d. What kinds of thoughts or feelings did you have at this point? Were you anxious? Curious? Excited? Scared? ...What?

- e. Did you talk to anyone about these feelings? And if so to whom and why? Other students in the programme – your cohort; the F2F students? If not move on to the next question.
4. In the second year of the programme – did anything change about how you were experiencing yourself in the programme, with the programme?

*The purpose of this question is to support co-inquirers in talking about changes that may have occurred for them during the programme.*

- a. Did you notice any changes in the group?
  - b. If yes – How would you describe what you noticed about the group? If not – move on to the next question.
  - c. How did those changes influence you?
  - d. How did you interpret or understand these changes? If they did not experience changes, move to next question.
  - e. How would you describe what you noticed about the changes in yourself?
5. What were the elements (the times, the events) that impacted you most meaningfully?

*The purpose of this question is to support co-inquirers to share how they made sense of their experiences.*

- a. Was there anything that specifically supported you or challenged you? I don't mean necessarily good or bad – because both of these types of elements can be meaningful.
- b. In what way did it have meaning? Has your meaning of why the element was important changed over time? Why?

6. As you neared graduation, was there anything that you noticed about how you were experiencing yourself as a student? As a practitioner?

*The purpose of this question is to support co-inquirers to share what they noticed as this milestone approached.*

- a. You wrote your certification exam. What was that experience like? Talk about the meaning that held for you.
  - b. Were there times you wondered about your developing professional self as an Inuk CYC practitioner and how your education influenced that—maybe not at this point; at any point?
7. Is there anything else that you had hoped to share when you agreed to spend this time with me doing this research? What about the time that we spent together in the programme? Is there anything about that time that you hoped to share that I haven't asked about?

*The purpose of this question is to ensure that the hopes, wants, and wishes of the co-inquirers are addressed.*

- a. How do you see this (what they share) connected to your time as a CYC student in this programme?

Overall, how would you describe, in your own words, without my questions, your experiences in this programme?

## Appendix D: Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Policy



### 25.01 Prior Learning and Assessment Policy

<b>Executive Sponsor</b>	Vice President, Academic
<b>Policy Steward</b>	Director, Academic Equity and Quality
<b>Approval authority</b>	Executive Council
<b>First approved</b>	2007
<b>Last reviewed</b>	Feb. 2019
<b>Effective Date</b>	April. 1, 2019
<b>Next review</b>	2024

#### 1.0 Purpose

- 1.1** At NSCC PLAR is used to recognize and assess informal, non-formal and experiential learning that occurs over time regardless of context. PLAR may help a student gain admission into a program of study or reduce the number of courses required to complete a program. By making pathways into and through programming more accessible, PLAR can help expedite program completion and career success for students in their communities, this province and beyond.
- 1.2** In Nova Scotia, PLAR is recognized as a type of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) that ensures consistent, reliable, transparent, fair, and quality-assured assessment of relevant prior learning that has occurred in a variety of work, life and/or educational settings.
- 1.3** This policy establishes clear guidelines for how academic credit may be applied for and awarded through Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR).

#### 2.0 Scope

- 2.1** This policy applies to the assessment of prior learning acquired through informal, non-formal, and experiential learning experiences for the awarding of college credit. The scope of PLAR is limited by NSCC's Residency requirement, which is the percentage of total credits in a program of study that must be completed by a student through NSCC to be granted an NSCC credential. NSCC's residency requirement is 25%.

#### 3.0 Definitions

TERM	DEFINITION
<b>ACADEMIC CHAIR</b>	A College position that leads the delivery of high quality and consistent teaching and learning in programs assigned to their portfolio.
<b>ACADEMIC COURSE CREDIT</b>	Credit that is awarded in recognition of having met the conditions for passing a course in a program of studies.
<b>ADVANCED STANDING</b>	An academic status granted by NSCC to a student who holds a sufficient number of equivalent credits from a post-secondary institution to meet all