

Indigenous Students' Experiences in Physical Education: A Scoping Review

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Abstract

Positive experiences in Physical Education (PE) throughout one's childhood encourages life-long interest and participation in exercise and movement, as well as increased mental and physical well-being (Akbar & Tsuji, 2020). However, for many Indigenous students' this is not the case as these individuals experience much negativity, the most prominent one being racism (McHugh et al., 2019). Therefore, my study aimed to gain a better understanding of Indigenous students' prior experiences in public school PE across Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand.

A scoping review was conducted guided by Arksey & O'Malley's (2005) framework, while using a decolonial lens following Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2021). Data collection started on May 12th, 2023 and finished on August 19th, 2023. The search strategy identified 41 pieces of literature, after the title, abstract, and full-text was reviewed. And, upon more in-depth analysis a final list of 15 pieces of literature were identified that met the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the study. A descriptive analysis followed by a thematic analysis were conducted examining all 15 pieces of literature.

The descriptive analysis identified key descriptors from each piece of literature (i.e., document name, author, country where data was collected, etc.). Some examples of major findings included, 93% of the pieces of literature focused only on high school students and 60% of the pieces of literature were published pre-2012 and none since 2018. Based on the Thematic analysis two overarching themes were identified: (1) Experiencing a cultural disconnect in the PE curriculum and the content being taught; and (2) Connections between Students' and the PE Environment.

The results of this study demonstrate that although research presently exists with regards to Indigenous students' sharing their experiences in PE, there is still a need for considerably more work specifically focused on this topic. Sharing Indigenous students' experiences in PE may resonate with Indigenous researchers, scholars, teachers and beyond these groups as well. What this research offers is a pathway for future research with Indigenous and minority communities to provide a better understanding of the student experience in PE for current and future educators and administrators.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Growing up in Ontario and going through the Ontario public education system, I learned all the standard curriculum subjects which included mathematics, English, French, geography, the arts, science, history, and my favourite physical education (PE). However, it was not until the first year of my undergraduate PE degree at Brock University, in a political science course, that it suddenly clicked for me that I did not remember learning about Indigenous peoples and their communities during my elementary or secondary school education. The course at Brock was called Politics of Sport. In this course, we focused on comparing the National Hockey League (NHL) with Australian Rules Football, and through this, we learned about Indigenous peoples, specifically children's experiences in Indian Residential Schools (IRS), sport and physical activity, and PE. Throughout the course, I started questioning what I learned in my history classes. Maybe I missed that lesson, maybe it was glanced over? Regardless, I had minimal knowledge of Canada's Indigenous history.

After about two years of learning more and more about Indigenous peoples' and Canada's colonial history, I then took a course on gender studies and learned about Feminism, specifically Indigenous Feminisms. At this point I had developed a good idea of what I wanted to research if I were to do a Masters thesis. I then reached out to my great uncle who had been researching more in depth into our family's history. I consequently learned about my own familial ties and discovered my family's connection to Indigenous communities in Canada, and this is where I developed an interest in learning more about Indigenous communities and started diving deeper to understand my heritage. I learned about my great grandparents but specifically what I was most interested in was my great grandmother's history as she was Métis (an Indigenous person with historical homeland that include the Prairies, parts of British Columbia, the Northwest

Territories, Northwest Ontario, and the Northern United States) but, specifically she was Blackfoot, Algonquin, and English. Being Métis in a colonial society founded on hierarchical assumptions of the superiority of white, western Europeans and the inferiority of Indigenous peoples, I heard stories through my great uncle about how she was made fun of and bullied as a young Métis girl; her dark hair and skin were scrutinized and made her feel ashamed. She did not like being Métis and eventually she hid her heritage from her children and did not want to incorporate it into her life or her children's lives.

I started doing my own research and educating myself on Canada's colonial history. I did not know what Indigenous peoples and their communities had gone through and could not relate nor imagine what that could have been like. As a biracial woman with Filipino heritage, I choose to identify as Filipino because all aspects of my life have been immersed with the culture and I choose to practice aspects of my culture regularly. I choose everyday to celebrate my culture as a Filipino woman and live joyfully in the skin I am in, and a large part of why I did this work was not only because of my familial ties and passion for PE but also to demonstrate the power that voices, experiences, and stories have. However, because of my white-passing skin I have never experienced discrimination, and this is why I could not imagine the hardships that Indigenous peoples and my great grandmother went through. I understand and am aware of the harmful history of research that has been done on Indigenous peoples and their communities (Smith, 2021) and I acknowledge that I do not identify as an Indigenous person or researcher. That being said, once I learned about my family's history, it solidified the importance of working to become an aspiring ally. Peggy McIntosh (1989) mentions that through her schooling she was never taught to see herself as an oppressor, or an advantaged person. Through McIntosh's work and through my schooling I learned what it means to become an ally. The term 'ally' is defined as

someone who is working towards allyship, that is, an individual who stands up for a person or group that is targeted and discriminated against (Lowman & Barker, 2015). I now understand that you do not become an ally overnight or even by claiming the word. I am willing to do the work; I will do intentional and action-focused work to create space for Indigenous voices to be heard in PE, and not only for their communities and their people but for minority and equity deserving groups as well.

1.1 Colonization in Canada

Indigenous peoples in Canada have been marginalized by racist policies, programs and practices driven by various social, cultural, and economic concepts of colonialism and neo-liberalism in the development of capitalism by colonizers throughout history. Due to this, colonization remains one of the most destructive forces affecting Canadian society and Indigenous peoples today (Kubik et al., 2004). At the time, when capitalism was expanding in the 19th century in Canada, accumulation of wealth and power was at the forefront; the goal of the early colonizers who originated from Europe was to develop and expand new territories to make money and grow a western European society (Kubik et al., 2004). This involved white, European men in power taking over land that was not theirs and removing Indigenous peoples and their communities from it.

The *Indian Act* also forced Indigenous children into Indian Residential Schools (IRS) to become “pure” and “clean” of their culture. The Canadian government believed that Indian children were “dirty” and needed to be “saved”, therefore, it became illegal for Indigenous children to stay with their families and communities, and they were forced to attend the Residential Schools (Kubik et al., 2004). In Canada, Residential Schools first opened in the 1870s and not too long ago the last school closed in the mid-1990s (Truth and Reconciliation

Commission of Canada, 2015; Wilk et al., 2017). The IRS were operated by the Catholic, United Anglican, Methodist, and Presbyterian Churches and were extremely underfunded by the Government of Canada. The forced removal of Indigenous children from their homes leading to the lack of access to food and equipment leaving children in these schools in terrible living conditions (Corrado & Cohen, 2003; Wilk et al., 2017). These institutions were also referred to as boarding schools and many were near non-Indigenous towns and cities that were very distant from their communities leaving the children stranded there throughout the year (Forsyth, 2013). Often, some of these children experienced severe punishment for speaking their language and practicing any form of their cultures, and many faced various forms of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse (Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, 2002, p. 4; Kubik et al., 2004). Canada has now acknowledged the harms of the IRS and has committed to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and its various calls to action.

Overall, Indigenous peoples and their communities were made to feel inferior and less than by the colonizers. In 1876 the *Indian Act* was put in place by the Government of Canada to explicitly undermine Indigenous communities by removing their Indian status, removing their right to self-governance and to create and control reserve and treaty land (Coates, 2008). Indigenous peoples and their communities were banned from practicing and celebrating their culture, this included any religious practices, cultural gatherings, festivals, and ceremonies. Throughout the years from 1763-1985, Indigenous peoples and their communities fought for human rights, respect, and equity, and after numerous revisions to the *Indian Act*, in 1985 Bill C-31 passed bringing Indigenous rights in line with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. However, there were still outstanding issues and consequences to the Indian Act and its provisions (Canadian Encyclopedia, 2006). In 2011 and 2017, the government passed the *Gender*

Equity in Indian Registration Act, known as Bill C-3 granting status to grandchildren of women who regained their status after “marrying out” to a non-Indian man; however, this still did not address all the discrimination that was in the *Indian Act* (Canadian Encyclopedia, 2006). Still to this day, the *Indian Act* is in place regardless of numerous edits and suggestions. It has had extremely negative impacts on Indigenous peoples and their communities, their cultures, and ways of living for generations.

1.1.1 Colonization and How it Relates to Sport and Physical Education in Canada

The *Indian School Bulletin* was a newsletter that was published by the Indian Affairs Branch of Canada from 1946 to 1957 to be a resource for teacher candidates. This *Bulletin* was released five times a year; in January, March, May, September, and November providing between ten and thirty pages of resources and information regarding sport, PE, and recreation (Forsyth & Heine, 2017). The *Bulletin's* resources made it clear that organized sport, PE, and recreation should be dominant in ‘discipline’ and ‘citizenship education’. For example, the boys and girls at IRS institutions were separated and forced to participate in different forms of physical activity; the boys were trained in organized competitive sports, gymnastics, and militaristic drills to train them to be “obedient”, “disciplined”, and “civilized” (Forsyth & Heine, 2017). The organized sports that were incorporated into these institutions were team-oriented sports and emphasized competition and winning, some of these sports included football, baseball, cricket, and hockey (Forsyth & Heine, 2017). Organized sports and PE became a major feature in Residential Schools in the late 1940s, but especially after 1951, when the *Indian Act* was revised. This large push for organized sports and PE was for the sole purpose of advancing Indigenous children to continue their transition to Canadian culture (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015).

1.2 My Interest in Physical Education / My Why

Alongside my desire to become an aspiring ally working with Indigenous communities, I have always had a desire and passion for PE. PE was my favourite subject growing up as I was a very active child and youth participating in competitive sports such as hockey, softball, and dance. I also had one PE teacher in elementary school who inspired me to be just like him. He was everyone's favourite teacher; he encouraged us, coached us, and most importantly taught us that PE was more than showing up in your active clothes and playing basketball and soccer. I had always known from that moment on, even at a very young age, that I wanted to become either a PE teacher or somehow be involved in PE. However, I do recognize that not everyone has positive experiences or a positive view of PE, due to the settler colonial influence on PE practices which will be further elaborated. These are just some of the reasons why I have an interest in the area of PE and explains to some extent why PE is a central theme to my research topic. With everything that has been revealed through Canada's TRC and an expanding collective realization of the negative impacts of colonization on Indigenous peoples, I believe that to move forward as a country and as a society, we need to reconcile the past and pave the way forward for our students, specifically, equity deserving and marginalized groups and this includes the subject area of PE. In her R. Tait McKenzie Scholars speech, Halas (2014) noted that in order to begin; the journey toward reconciliation we have to sit with the uncomfortable truths of Canada's colonial history.

Therefore, with Halas' suggestion in mind and based on my personal background I feel that there is not only a general importance to learning about Indigenous peoples and their communities but also, I have a specific interest and perceive there to be considerable benefits to learning about Indigenous students and their experiences in school-based PE programs.

1.3 Purpose of this Research

Positive experiences in PE throughout childhood encourages life-long interest and participation in exercise and movement, as well as increased mental and physical well-being (Akbar et al., 2020). There is a lot of evidence indicating that Indigenous students have poor experiences in public education in Canada (Hare & Pidgeon, 2011), and according to Blodgett and colleagues' (2014) study involving Indigenous youth in the related area of physical activity, many Indigenous individuals experience much negativity, the most prominent being racism as this is part of the ongoing history of settler colonialism and the Indian Act. In addition, there is a need within education and curricula to incorporate Indigenous peoples' history, cultures, and traditions to provide an equitable space and positive experiences in PE as it is demonstrated how impactful culture can be in PA (Akbar et al., 2020). This is because most PE curricula in North America looks at supporting students' well-being and ability to learn, however, catering it to one population of students: white and middle-class and able-bodied students. This is not just prevalent in Canada or North America, but also historically in New Zealand where the curricular textbooks idolized the British race and deemed Māori peoples as aggressive and angry throughout history (Hokowhitu, 2003).

However, before changes should be suggested or implemented in Canadian Public schools it would make sense to first develop a better understanding of students' experiences in PE in general and more specifically the experiences of Indigenous students. Such knowledge could help inform administrators and future PE teachers on how to better support Indigenous students as well as ways to incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing into their pedagogy.

Unfortunately, at this time, it is challenging to establish a full and clear understanding of Indigenous students' experiences in PE. Within Canada, the considerable work of Halas and

colleagues (1991-2022) focused on Indigenous youth has provided immense insight and improvement in the areas of PHE and PA for Indigenous youth in Canada, including the development of a culturally-focussed after-school physical activity mentorship program for Indigenous youth. The context of Halas and colleagues' work is predominantly geographically focused on the prairie province of Manitoba. Given the highly diverse nature of Indigenous communities and cultures, much more research is needed to build upon Halas and colleagues' work to strengthen our understanding of PE for Indigenous youth and how this is affected by geography (e.g., within urban, rural and remote communities; across various countries), culture (e.g., for different First Nation, Metis and Inuit communities), and other factors. Furthermore, although much of Halas and colleagues' work is directly related to or has had impact on Indigenous student experiences in PE, additional research that specifically focuses on the experiences of Indigenous students in PE programs across Canada and beyond would help advance knowledge and an understanding in this area of study.

In related areas of study, such as Indigenous youths' experiences in sport, physical activity, and education in general, considerable research has been conducted and review articles synthesizing such research are fairly common (e.g., Anderson et al., 2022; Bruner et al. 2016; May et al., 2020; McHugh et al., 2019). However, when it comes to Indigenous students' experiences in PE no such syntheses specifically focusing on student experiences in PE exist. Part of the reason for this might be that research specifically related to Indigenous student experiences in PE can be challenging to find due to different terms for Indigenous communities being used historically and across various parts of the world (e.g., Indian, Native, Aboriginal; Native American; First Nations; etc.). The closest existing work related to this topic would be Halas and colleagues (2012a) in which they provided a summary of the research related to

culturally relevant PHE. Within this study, they discussed the challenges that Indigenous students faced and the best ways for PE teachers and sport coaches to understand where their students were at through the use of culturally relevant PE. Ladson-Billing (1994, 1995) defines culturally relevant pedagogy as, integrating students' backgrounds and community experiences into their teachings and incorporating and recognizing the diverse cultural identities and individuality of all students. This article is extremely valuable, but does not (and was not intended to) synthesize what is presently known in the literature about school-aged Indigenous students' experiences in PE programs. Therefore, the purpose of the present research was to expand upon existing knowledge by exploring the research that exists that directly focuses on Indigenous students' experiences in PE, both in Canada and internationally, and synthesize this work. To achieve this, a scoping review of the literature was conducted to provide a clearer understanding of what is known about Indigenous students' experiences in PE and to help identify gaps in this existing literature that future research should address.

The purpose of this scoping review was to examine and synthesize what is known about Indigenous students' experiences in PE in Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand within existing research and grey literature. The objectives are:

1. To provide a map of existing literature on the topic of Indigenous students' experiences in PE; including where such literature is coming from (i.e., countries in the world where literature is being produced) and what format it is being shared in (e.g., academic journals). Not all of the studies involved in the scoping review came just from academic journals but also grey literature and experts in the field.
2. To pinpoint and clarify the existing key concepts that have been identified with respect to Indigenous students' PE experiences.

1.3.1 Study Aims

At this point in my paper, I would like to acknowledge that it is important to recognize that Indigenous peoples are diverse, and their experiences should not be generalized into one universal experience. Therefore, moving forward I will be addressing each study that I mention with its respective Indigenous community and population clearly outlined.

The study's resulting data can provide greater detail and clearly synthesize what is presently known about the experiences that Indigenous students have in PE programs. This will help provide an understanding with respect to Indigenous students' experiences in PE and thus help support the need to have Indigenous students' lived experiences heard and at the forefront of our education systems. The research results will also help to establish areas where further research is warranted and has the potential to influence PE curriculum and how it is taught in public schools.

1.4 Significance

The significance of this research is that it will bring forth and clearly synthesize what is known about the experiences that Indigenous students have in PE programs from an international perspective. This will allow for a clearer understanding of what is presently known about Indigenous students' PE experiences while also helping to establish areas where further research is warranted. This research has the potential to influence PE curriculum and how it is taught in public schools.

1.5 Definition of Terms

This section highlights specific terms that are used throughout this thesis paper. They are listed in alphabetical order and are listed based on the existing topical research; *Cultural*

Practice, Culturally Relevant PHE, Generational Trauma, Indigenous Sport, Racialized Minorities, Indigenous Spirituality, and White Passing:

Cultural Practices: legacies that are handed down each generation from ancestors and community members. Not necessarily something physical and or a possession, (e.g., knowledge, teachings, and experiences) (Dalsgaard, 2009; Harrison, 2006).

Culturally Relevant PHE: a wholistic approach to teaching and learning, which emphasizes student success, student experiences, and affirms students' social identities through PHE (Chinn et al., 2022; Halas, 2006).

Generational Trauma: understanding the facts of traumatic event(s), how family members and families did or did not cope with the effects, and the lessons and survival that were passed down to the next generation (Thoreson et al., 2020).

Grey Literature: can be defined as government documents, dissertations, and articles that can be retrieved through the internet or specialized documents (Rothstein & Hopewell, 2009).

Indigenous Sport: a specific group of activities that represents Indigenous cultures and traditions (Beacom, 1998).

Racialized Minorities: people other than Indigenous or First Nations peoples, who are non-white in colour (Cukier et al., 2019).

Indigenous Spirituality: the spiritual beliefs, sacred teachings, and practices that Indigenous and First Nations peoples identify as traditional or custom to their culture (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2023).

White Passing: a person of colour belonging to a marginalized or racially minoritized community is perceived as white (Al-Qargolie, 2020).

1.6 Thesis Overview

The format of this thesis is organized into several traditional chapters. Chapter one serves as an introduction to the background and importance of my research topic. Chapter two discusses the current literature that will explore and justify the importance of Indigenous students' experiences in their PE programs while also discussing the barriers to PE (e.g., cultural oppression, lack of access, and the importance of incorporating culture). This portion of the paper will focus on a wide breadth of literature related to the topic of Indigenous youth and their experiences in education and physical activity, whereas, the scoping review itself is specific to the search terms that will be presented later on. Chapter three discusses my methods and methodology where I break down, present, and justify the qualitative research methodology and methods used for my research. Chapter four discusses the analysis and chapter five discusses the results of the thesis. In the last chapter, chapter six, I synthesize findings and discuss future implications for PE practice, research, and policy. Finally, the limitations are discussed, and I reflect on the research process and how this study applies to the future of PE and Indigenous students.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, there is a need to incorporate Indigenous knowledge, history, cultures, and traditions into the PE curricula of the various Canadian provinces and territories. Not only will this aid Indigenous students' experiences and have their identities reflected into the PE curricula but, it will also benefit non-Indigenous students to learn about Canada's colonial history and be self-reflexive. However, before changes to the curriculum can be implemented, it is necessary to gain a better understanding of what the current state of literature is regarding Indigenous students' experiences in PE. By doing so, more informed decisions will be possible regarding changes to PE curriculum and possible ways to improve PE teaching practices.

To help lay the foundations for the present scoping review on Indigenous students' experiences in PE it is of value to examine related areas of literature. Specifically, there is existing literature related to Indigenous students' experiences with physical activity and sport in Canada, as well as with the overall public-school education systems (not specific to PE). Furthermore, there is dedicated PE literature available focusing on other non-Indigenous minorities' experiences in PE globally. Examining this literature can assist with providing context and support for the present scoping review. In addition, knowledge of this literature will help to inform understanding of what it might be like for Indigenous students to experience PE.

2.2 Indigenous Experiences in Physical Activity, Sport, and Public Education in Canada

In this section I discuss Indigenous students' experiences in physical activity and sport, followed by their experiences in public education in Canada. I primarily focus on the importance

of their Indigeneity in these contexts and the importance of incorporating their culture within them.

2.2.1 Indigeneity and Connections to Sport and Physical Activity

I would like to acknowledge that Indigenous peoples did have healthy relationships with physical activity pre-contact with European colonizers. Though there are many Indigenous communities, not to generalize, they all had their own approaches to physical activity, games, and ceremonies. This healthy relationship was prior to colonization and much of that was lost and distorted once the colonizers arrived and banned Indigenous peoples from practicing their culture and attending cultural gatherings. Heine and Young (1997) mentioned that within Dene society (an Indigenous and First Nations community from the Arctic regions of Canada), their games focused mainly on physical skills and athletic abilities to be able to perform everyday tasks. Whereas, in Western society the emphasis of physical activity and games is on individuality, and winning; measuring success and failure, point systems, and trophies. Indigenous communities did not necessarily account for records, statistics, and medals as they were not a part of their traditional games (Heine & Young, 1997).

In a study conducted by Petrucka and colleagues (2016) Aboriginal youth described the importance of how relationships within their communities are central to exploring their Indigeneity and ties to their sport, recreation, and physical activity experiences. This is because they have become passionate, they have discovered themselves and their spirituality in ways they did not know existed before developing these relationships. Furthermore, Petrucka and colleagues' study demonstrated how relationships with family or community members of Aboriginal students make their sports and physical activity experiences more enjoyable. They enjoy participating with people who look like them because they feel welcomed and safe. Not

only did participants describe how relationships with community members help support their sports and physical activity opportunities, but also their overall relationships with their Indigeneity (Hayhurst et al., 2015).

In some traditional Indigenous cultures, sport is one of the main ways for people within their communities to connect to one another (Forsyth & Giles, 2013). Indigenous peoples were forced into Residential Schools where they were stripped of their cultures and taught to live a North American lifestyle. Participating in physical activity and sports class was a way some students could escape and have fun engaging in friendly competition but also it provided them with the opportunity to host their traditional ceremonies (Forsyth, 2007). However, research has demonstrated that this was not the case for all students. Arcand and colleagues (2021) described how Eugene Arcand (an Indian Residential School survivor) from St. Michael's (Catholic) Indian Residential School at Duck Lake was in Residential School for 11 years. Arcand learned very quickly that one of the only ways he would survive was by playing on his school hockey team, but what he did not realize was that, if you got injured, got sick, did not play well, etc., that 'special treatment' no longer existed (Arcand et al., 2021). Arcand remembered one of his teammates breaking his ankle during a game on a Thursday and did not get sent to the hospital or receive medical attention until the Monday. The student did not receive any medical treatment, he did not get fed, and was pushed off to the sidelines because he did not serve any value to the team (Arcand et al., 2021). These students knew that the preferential treatment they received by being athletes at Residential School was not something taken lightly, and they would not do anything to ruin that opportunity.

Indigenous students have also described how they mainly connect to physical activities that are more traditional or cultural. Specifically, in a study by Kerpan and Humbert (2015) one

of the participants mentioned how a new tradition that they had through sport with their mother was making outfits and going powwow trailing every summer. This was where they would gather with other Indigenous communities and celebrate their culture by dancing, singing, and enjoying each other's company. With discovering and building these relationships with their families and communities, Indigenous students have mentioned how they now feel at a place where they would like to be more involved culturally, get back to their beliefs and embrace their traditions (Ferguson & Philipenko, 2016). This connection to their culture has developed an eagerness to participate in traditional physical activities and encouraged them to discover and experience spiritual growth (Akbar et al., 2020). Indigenous students have expressed that participating in traditional physical activities was a way to express their peoples' teachings and culture. For example, Indigenous students cited the importance of learning from their father about the ways of hunting and fishing (Kerpan & Humbert, 2015).

Having Indigenous role models such as family and a community that supports them has been reported to be another important aspect for these individuals when pursuing sports and physical activity. Additionally, seeing Indigenous peoples in general such as at school and participating in physical activities, regardless of whether friends or family, has been suggested to allow Indigenous students to feel a strong sense of identity and pride in practicing their culture (Akbar et al., 2020; Pigford et al., 2012). However, for other Indigenous students, they enjoyed mainstream sports in their schools, such as volleyball, basketball, football, and soccer. For example, Halas (1999) reported that many male and female Indigenous students enjoyed playing basketball at school.

If we want to see Indigenous students thrive in spaces where they do not feel welcomed, we need to make them feel safe, we need to bring forth physical activities in the PE curriculum

that are familiar, and/or that they enjoy, and that will encourage them to grow and flourish like non-Indigenous students.

2.2.2 Overall Experiences in Public School Education (Not Related Specifically to PE)

It has been demonstrated that Indigenous students struggle to find their culture, traditions, and practices in Canadian public education as their communities and practices have been and are ignored. Due to this, Indigenous students experience low self-esteem, negative attitudes, and interactions with their teachers and classmates (Hare & Pidgeon, 2011). Hare and Pidgeon interviewed Indigenous students regarding their experiences in Canadian public schools and reported that these students indicated, regardless if discrimination was not explicit, they still felt as if they did not belong and did not fit in alongside their non-Indigenous classmates at school. For example, one student they interviewed mentioned being made fun of by other students for being Indigenous, having longer hair, having different coloured skin, etc. In addition, Hare and Pidgeon found similar negative perceptions and experiences when it came to Indigenous students and their public-school administrators and teachers. Specifically, students in this study indicated that they felt as if their teachers wanted to see them fail, and that they felt a level of bias towards them where they felt talked down to or dismissed completely. For example, one student from the study mentioned having an art teacher give them dirty looks and making them feel unwanted in their art class when they had brought in a handmade dream catcher.

Other researchers who have examined this topic have reported that racism towards Indigenous students in schools exists in multiple forms ranging from verbal racism (name-calling, racist jokes), behavioural racism (assault), institutional discrimination (denial of services), and macro-discrimination (media misinformation, biases on history) (Bodkin-Andrews & Carlson, 2016). Bodkin-Andrews and colleagues (2010) suggested that the result of racism led

to increased perceptions of racism in testing, teacher grades in the subjects of English, Math, and Science, and related to the increased patterns of academic disengagement among Indigenous students. These few examples demonstrate some of the ongoing negative experiences (e.g., day-to-day racism and discrimination) that Indigenous students have faced in public schools and what little is being done to help support them. The administrators and teachers in this study demonstrated little to no interest in helping their students feel safe and comfortable, and the Indigenous students in this study received maltreatment in several ways.

Another study by Berger, Epp, and Møller (2006) shed light on Indigenous students' experiences at a public school in Northern Canada. In this study the researchers found that the school used irrelevant curriculum and teaching approaches with their students. The school and teachers also did not value the Inuit community and their language which eventually resulted in the students lacking discipline, as well as demonstrating poor attendance, and overall academic achievement. For example, the administrators and teachers at this school expected students to abide by a Eurocentric lifestyle (e.g., being on time for class, abiding by rules, lining up in single file and straight lines, etc.) which did not align with these individuals' way of life and values. Furthermore, Inuit peoples also live in continual daylight for parts of the year where they may stay up at "night" and sleep during the "day" (Berger et al., 2006). Inuit peoples and their families value spending quality time with the land and with their families, therefore, staying up at "night" and sleeping during the "day" is not uncommon for them. Again, this does not mesh well with a Eurocentric lifestyle and school schedule, and consequently can lead to negative outcomes in the public school system for Inuit students. These problems help demonstrate the little to no interest, as well as the lack of knowledge, that the administrators and teachers in this study had on the population they were teaching.

It is extremely important that future teachers understand the experiences of Indigenous students in schools. Not only the students they are teaching and will be teaching in the future, but also the students that came before them in Residential Schools. School can be a traumatic and challenging space for many Indigenous youth; some of these children have extreme generational trauma (Barnes & Josefowitz, 2019). Therefore, by learning about their students' experiences, their students' grandparents' experiences, their students' parents' experiences, and other students' experiences at Residential Schools hopefully future teachers can come from a place of understanding rather than judgement when teaching Indigenous students. Such considerations should be made in all areas of education, including PE.

2.3 Issues Facing Minority Populations in Canadian PE Programs (Non-Indigenous)

In Canada, providing an inclusive and safe environment in PE can contribute to all students, and especially minorities, enjoying a positive school PE experience and encourage life-long participation in exercise and physical activity (Donnelly & Coakley, 2002). Therefore, examining the experiences of all racial minorities in Canadian PE is of importance and highly related to the focus of the present study. In a study by Taylor and Doherty (2007), they conducted focus groups with adolescents who were recent racial minority arrivals to Canada and examined these students' experiences in PE. The majority of these new arrival students mentioned the potential of PE for being emotionally beneficial, important for developing friendships, effective for providing physical/health benefits, and most importantly being valuable for learning about Canadian culture. In a study by Chinn and colleagues (2022), talking circles with female racially diverse students aged 18-20 were conducted, where they asked these students about their previous experiences in PE class. These students, which included young women who had recently immigrated to Canada (i.e., newcomers), expressed that they had passion and a genuine

interest for PE, and that PE class provided them with a sense of community. However, they also expressed the struggles of PE class regarding the Eurocentric traditions, rules, games, and activities they faced. For example, there would be numerous times where the newcomer students were told to play a sport or game of which they had no understanding of how to play it. One student mentioned how in her culture calisthenics and dance were large parts of her curriculum back home, and they did not always understand the games that were played in class. She felt that the ‘Canadian’ students were the ones who were enjoying themselves more in PE class as she usually felt like an outsider (Chinn et al., 2022). This demonstrates just how important PE can be for some minority populations, and how this value goes beyond just providing physical activity opportunities and knowledge related to human movement. But also, there is a need to enable students to feel just as comfortable and confident as their white middle-class counterparts. However, to achieve this the barriers that minorities face in Canadian PE programs need to be addressed.

2.3.1 Barriers Minorities Face in Relation to PE in Canada

It has been reported that participation in physical activity and sports, a major aspect of school-based PE in Canada, is especially beneficial to immigrant youth with respect to their physical and emotional health, as well as positive social interactions (Stanec et al., 2016). In a paper by Blackshear and Culp (2021), they question whether current and future educators are aware of anti-Black habits and practices. As previously mentioned, unlike Asian students who are stereotyped to excel academically and not in their ability to play sports, teachers tend to have low expectations of Black students’ abilities in the classroom and reinforce cultural stereotypes of their athletic abilities. Therefore, it is disappointing that research has shown that although some visible minorities (mainly Asian) in Canada fare better academically than their non-

minority counterparts, the contrary is true when it comes to these students' success in PE (Taylor & Doherty, 2007). This would seem to suggest that there are barriers specific to PE that some minority students are struggling with. The PE curriculum itself is one of these possible barriers. Specifically looking at the Ontario PE curriculum, it has been argued that it focuses too much on the healthy development of students at the expense of effectively preparing minority students to participate in the popular sports and physical activities in Canada that they are not familiar with due to cultural differences (Stanec et al., 2016). Furthermore, the current curriculum for Ontario PE (and most other subjects) does not account for Indigenous peoples' (let alone other minorities') practices, culture, and knowledge (Akena, 2012).

The curriculum may state what should be the focus of PE in Canadian provinces and territories, but what is actually being taught and how it is taught can also be a barrier. PE teachers spending too much of their active class time on popular North American white mainstream media sports (e.g., hockey, soccer, football, basketball, tennis) while neglecting other forms of physical movement for various reasons, could be a major disservice and barrier to minority students. For example, if we look at Ontario PE classes, it has been argued that dance, although part of the Ontario PE curriculum, is not taught by most teachers due to the affiliation of dance threatening masculinity; however, it is a prominent physical activity in many different cultures such as in Latin American and African cultures where such affiliation is not an issue (Gard, 2006; Stidder & Hayes, 2006). Unlike dance, you might be hard pressed to find many PE programs in Canadian schools that don't include floor hockey as part of every yearly plan. However, floor hockey is not a required activity for PE teachers to teach in any province. Most provincial PE curricula simply indicate team activities must be taught; so why should team activities more relevant to various minority cultures (e.g., lacrosse) not receive more attention? Not having culturally relevant

sports and activities in the PE classroom has a negative impact on all learners, as previously mentioned, specifically to minority and immigrant students, it does not provide a space for uniqueness and individuality, and disallows them to continue learning about their cultures, enhance their skills, and most importantly flourish and feel comfortable (Robinson et al., 2016).

In a study by Ruso and colleagues (2018), they looked at engaging South-Asian (SA) female students in PE. They mention that for minoritized students to feel more welcomed and motivated in PE, all students need to start on the same level or playing field. Some examples included student-led activities where everyone agrees on a sport or game they can participate in or just overall opportunities for students to socially interact and feel a part of the class and learning environment (Ruso et al., 2018; Stride, 2014).

Another barrier minorities face in the subject area of PE unfortunately comes from the racial composition of those individuals (i.e., teachers, teacher educators, administrators) who commonly oversee the delivery of PE in Canada. For racially minoritized students, they see minimal to no representation of teachers and administrators of colour because the schools these students attend are predominantly white (National Center for Education Statistics[NCES], 2017; Simon & Boyd, 2023). Furthermore, their teachers and administrators are white passing and typically have minimal experience working with racially diverse groups and students. These white passing teachers and administrators have been found to demonstrate a lack of knowledge regarding colonial history and how it impacts their students, a lack of experience working with minority students, and having low expectations for specific minority groups when it comes to PE (NCES, 2017; Simon & Boyd, 2023). Furthermore, this lack of racial diversity in those responsible for delivery of PE in Canada is not only evident in the elementary and secondary schools, but this is also evident at the University and College level. A study by Douglas and

Halas (2013), looked at how university Kinesiology and PE faculties lack cultural diversity among the faculty and staff. They found that racially minoritized students and Indigenous students did not see themselves represented in the faculty and in the curriculum and this left all students, including those from the racialized majority, feeling unprepared to teach diverse students once they started teaching PE post graduation. Furthermore, learning about diverse cultures and how to teach racialized minorities and immigrant students is not just incorporating culturally relevant sports and activities, it is about providing an environment for all students to feel acknowledged and seen and to eventually make connections with students from other communities (Robinson et al., 2016; Ruso et al., 2018). Encouraging comfort in PE classrooms starts with those responsible for the delivery of PE, therefore, it is their responsibility to ensure that PE promotes a safe space for all students. If this lack of cultural diversity starts at the university and college levels and is putting teachers at a disadvantage to teaching racialized minority and Indigenous students, there is no doubt that the students they teach will be put at a disadvantage as well (Douglas & Halas, 2013).

2.3.2 Lack of Cultural Diversity in Canadian PE and its Impact on Minority Populations

Earlier in this Chapter the important role that culture can play with respect to physical activity was discussed. Based on such understandings, it would seem logical that cultural diversity should also play an important role in PE and be accounted for in the PE curriculum. Yet, many schools do not offer enough opportunities for non-traditional white and Eurocentric cultural activities in either the PE programs being delivered or in extracurriculars like student-run groups (Akbar et al., 2020; Crowe et al., 2017). Furthermore, consideration for non-Eurocentric culture is presently absent from the majority of PE curricula across Canada (Halas et al., 2012b; Kalyn, 2014; Melnychuk et al., 2011; Robinson et al., 2013). In fact, as a specific

example, the Ontario education curriculum does not state the importance of students connecting and feeling connected to the curriculum (Health and Physical Education, 2019; Indigenous Education, 2020). The importance of all students seeing themselves in what is taught, how it is taught, and how it is applied to the outside world are important aspects of that connection (Health and Physical Education, 2019; Indigenous Education, 2020). However, PE and educational aims are different for minority students (Bodkin-Andrews & Carlson, 2016). For example, there are pre-conceived biases regarding Asian and Black students. Asian students are thought of as being more successful in the classroom rather than in sport and PE and Black students are associated with low academic success and increased exposure with the justice system (Blackshear & Culp, 2021). It is extremely important that minority students are respected, but also that their culture is respected and implemented into all aspects of the education system, including PE. They deserve to have the benefit of quality teaching and a space where they feel safe and can regularly attend school to experience these strategies (Bodkin-Andrews & Carlson, 2016; McRae et al., 2000).

During the 1950s, PE programs across Canada transitioned to a sports focused model which emphasized competition, athletic progress, medals, and awards which encouraged a more Eurocentric way of living (Forsyth, 2007). To this day, many Canadian public school PE programs still focus on students participating in more traditional white and European competitive sports which include basketball, volleyball, soccer, badminton, football, track and field, etc. Unfortunately, focusing on traditional white and European sports like these in PE might not be culturally relevant. Robinson and colleagues (2016) referred to Ladson-Billings' (1994, 1995) definition where they define culturally relevant pedagogy as not just utilizing students' cultures as a means of learning, but integrating students' backgrounds and community experiences into

their teachings. Culturally relevant pedagogy also incorporates and recognizes the diverse cultural identities and individuality of all students. Furthermore, although PE programs can bring forth new experiences for many minority and newcomer students, in the Canadian context the PE curriculum reflects North America and its Eurocentric society. Consequently, many minority students in Canada struggle with PE compared to other subjects (Taylor & Doherty, 2007). There needs to be a concerted effort to address the lack of cultural diversity in Canadian PE and significant consideration given to finding ways to overcome the common barriers that many newcomer immigrants and minorities presently face in the current Canadian PE context. Therefore, in my present research, when examining the literature regarding Indigenous youth's experiences in their PE classes it is important to consider how culture and Indigeneity have or have not been part of those experiences. And also, how their experiences shape their behaviours in schools and what can be done to best accommodate these students.

2.4 Chapter Summary

Throughout this chapter I have selectively reviewed the existing literature related to Indigeneity and connections to sport and physical activity, Indigenous students' overall experiences in public school education, colonization and how it relates to sport and PE in Canada, the importance of incorporating culture within physical activity, the lack of cultural diversity in PE, and common barriers that minorities face in PE in Canada. These areas of research are foundational to the present study as they provide the context for a review of Indigenous students' experiences specifically in PE.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Restatement of Purpose and Study Aims

The purpose of this scoping review was to examine and synthesize what is known about Indigenous students' experiences in PE in Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand within existing research and grey literature. The objectives were:

1. To provide a map of existing literature on the topic of Indigenous students' experiences in PE; including where such literature is coming from (i.e., countries in the world where literature is being produced) and what format it is being shared in (e.g., academic journals). Not all of the studies involved in the scoping review came just from academic journals but also grey literature and experts in the field.
2. To pinpoint and clarify the existing key concepts that have been identified in the literature with respect to Indigenous students' PE experiences.

3.2 Positionality

I am a biracial Filipino who passes as a white, cisgender woman and I have family connections to Canadian Indigenous communities. As previously mentioned, my Métis great grandmother disliked the body and skin she was in just because she was made to feel less for being Indigenous. As someone who celebrates my culture as a Filipino woman and lives joyfully in the skin I am in, a large part of why I did this work was not only because of my familial ties and passion for PE but also to demonstrate the power that voices, experiences, and stories have. I understand and am aware of the harmful history of research that has been done on Indigenous peoples and their communities (Smith, 2021) and I acknowledge that I do not identify as an Indigenous person or researcher. This work was approached through a decolonial lens which is emphasized and explained in the next sections. Furthermore, in the past decade or so, there have

been amazing individuals who have been paving the way for better research with Indigenous peoples and I am willing to do the work to become a part of that change.

3.3 Methodological Approach

The methodological approach for this study was a scoping review, however, my work stems from a decolonial lens and while my methods are not decolonial, my theoretical framework is. A theoretical framework can help support and explain the structure or theory of a research study (Varpio et al., 2020). My theoretical framework (see below) helped generate the research question that was informed by a decolonial lens, and the analysis incorporated a decolonial lens. Regarding scoping reviews, there is no concrete definition, yet there are common elements that make up a scoping review. This scoping review was developed using the Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) framework for conducting a scoping review as a foundation. Recommendations from Levac and colleagues (2010) as well as the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) scoping review methodology (Peters et al., 2021) also supplemented design of the protocol. Therefore, the review included the following steps: 1) identifying the research questions, 2) identifying relevant studies, 3) study selection, 4) charting and analyzing the data, and 5) collating, summarizing, and reporting the results (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Levac et al., 2010).

3.3.1 *Theoretical Framework/Decolonial Lens*

Decolonization can typically be understood as a way of challenging colonialism and racism in society (Jimenez et al., 2023). As mentioned, my research stems from a decolonial lens where I took a more holistic approach to my research process in terms of knowledge production. As Smith (2021) mentions, Indigenous communities have experienced oppression by Western research and researchers for a very long time, therefore, we can decolonize traditional research practices by incorporating Indigenous peoples, their knowledge and ways of knowing, and the

land, into our research processes (Datta, 2017). Traditionally in research practices, there are founders or philosophers, and certain Western educational practices lack a holistic approach in the classroom, putting power and control in the hands of white teachers and administrators (Akena, 2012). Instead of focusing solely on articles and citations as a traditional scoping review would, I dove deeper and connected with experts in the field such as Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Indigenous researchers. I consulted with these individuals during specific times throughout my scoping review, however, not during data collection or analysis. Through the conversations, it helped better shape this project; PE was more problematic than I had thought because my point of view was very different from the Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Indigenous researchers I had spoken with. They helped shape my research questions, the search terms I used and the approach to this project.

3.3.2 Key Characteristics

Scoping reviews aim to apply a thorough analysis to a research area through reviewing literature and different types of evidence available, specifically an area that can be complex and has been minimally reviewed (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). Scoping reviews are also conducted to identify key concepts, theories, and gaps in the literature (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Dault et al., 2013; Davis et al., 2009).

Scoping reviews differ from systematic reviews as they do not focus on one defined question, but a broader topic and potentially a few questions (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). Scoping reviews are also not as intensive or time consuming as systematic reviews, however, that does not mean they lack time or effort. The two differ solely on the process and purpose. It has been suggested that researchers may conduct scoping reviews as an alternative to systematic

reviews where the purpose of the review is to synthesize and scope a body of literature, clarify concepts, identify knowledge gaps or to examine research conduct (Munn et al., 2018).

Traditionally, scoping reviews do not include a quality appraisal of the evidence, rather scoping reviews provide existing literature without going through and weighing the validity of the evidence (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). Some researchers may be concerned with the quality of a scoping review due to these aforementioned characteristics and also due to the fact that scoping reviews often have different formatting compared to more traditional research papers where there is a step-by-step process and flow to how such papers are commonly written (e.g., introduction, literature review, methods, results, discussion). In a scoping review, there are a variety of different ways one can go about organizing the writing and sharing findings.

Regardless, appraising literature can be helpful and useful for policymakers, future research, and practice in general (Daudt et al., 2013; Levac et al., 2010). The purpose of the scoping review should be guided and connected to the research question and by doing this, it will increase the depth and quality of future research synthesis (Daudt et al., 2013; Levac et al., 2010; Shankardass et al., 2012). This review will examine research related to Indigenous students' experiences in PE.

3.4 Methods

Arksey and O'Malley (2005) provide a multi-step descriptive and analytical framework for scoping reviews which helps determine and develop a research question broadly and from a wide variety of literature. Arksey and O'Malley (2005) among other researchers (Levac et al., 2010; Pham et al., 2014), recommend the aforementioned four-step process for conducting scoping reviews.

3.4.1 *Research Question*

Step 1: Identify a broad research question. My initial intent was to investigate the existing literature regarding Indigenous students' positive and negative experiences in PE in Canada. As I progressed and dove deeper into the literature, my research question changed and evolved to exploring literature related to Indigenous students' experiences in PE across the globe. This was because there was not enough existing literature with this specific focus on Canada to support a scoping review. By making this adjustment, Indigenous Canadian students' experiences could still be identified, in addition to other Indigenous communities' globally (I.e., Africa, South America, Asia). With that being said, I want to clarify that, I am not claiming to have studied all countries globally, just the primary English-speaking countries with a history of colonization. I decided to consider research with Indigenous experiences in PE from all over the world as it could provide different perspectives. But also, it could demonstrate that regardless of where Indigenous students are in the world, they may share common experiences and while it would be difficult to generalize, it could give a sense of broad trends. Thus, taking a more global approach can help researchers, practitioners, and educators better understand what is presently known about Indigenous students' experiences in PE and also help paint a clear picture of the research itself related to this specific topic. The modified research question driving my literature became "What literature exists globally that is related to the experiences of Indigenous students' in their PE classes and what are the characteristics and thematic content of this literature?"

3.4.2 *Broad Identification of Literature*

Step 2: Identify relevant studies covering a wide variety of literature and sources via databases, reference lists, internet searches, or consultation with other academics in the field. Flexibility and thorough comprehensive searches are necessary for scoping review studies,

especially ones that require searches to engage in a reflexive way (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Daudt et al., 2013). Data collection started May 12th, 2023 and the searches for this review were not limited to scholarly articles or books, but also included a variety of sources such as reference lists and grey literature, to collect a wide variety of data. Grey literature can be defined as government documents, dissertations, and articles that can be retrieved through the internet or specialized documents (Rothstein & Hopewell, 2009). The review was conducted to create enough information ensuring the examination of Indigenous students' experiences in PE were highlighted. I systematically searched through scholarly and grey literature as well as the reference lists in relevant articles for information on a combination of Indigenous students and PE using a purposely broad list of key words, combinations, and phrases. It was important to ensure that I was reviewing each scholarly article, piece of grey literature, and all reference lists as thoroughly as possible to ensure accuracy within my analysis. I also consulted with an Indigenous expert in the field (Professor Emeritus specializing in research related to Indigenous peoples and PE) regarding any additional Indigenous research I may have missed in the initial searches which included forty-one articles.

Table 1 includes a broad list of the key words, combinations, and phrases that were applicable to Indigenous students and PE in combinations using 'AND'. The search strategy is included below. The following five databases, available through Brock University library, were included as search resources: PubMed, SportDiscus, ERIC, ProQuest, and iPortal. In addition, Google Scholar was utilized as a final database as it can be helpful for finding grey literature.

Table 1

Conceptualization of Search Strategy

Indigenous population Search Terms		Physical Education Search Terms
Searched with "OR"		Searched with "OR"
Indigenous students Indigenous youth Indigenous children Aboriginal students Aboriginal youth Aboriginal children First Nations students First Nations youth First Nations children Native students Native youth Native children American Indian students American Indian youth American Indian children Māori students Māori youth Māori children	"AND"	Physical Education

3.4.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Step 3: Identify inclusion and exclusion criteria as the review progresses, however, it is recommended that at the outset of the study, the inclusion criteria is established to yield relevant data and clarify the research question (Daudt et al., 2013; Levac et al., 20120). Inclusion and exclusion criteria were established prior to the onset of the review through consultation and discussion with my critical friend (identifies as a white heterosexual male and is an associate professor in the area of PE at Brock University) and an Indigenous Elder, but were adjusted throughout the progression of the review as well. Scoping reviews allow for the inclusion/exclusion criteria to be determined continuously throughout the screening process as familiarity of the literature expands throughout the review (McEvoy et al., 2015). Therefore, ongoing modifications to the search terms occurred throughout the scoping review to ensure that all forms of the literature both within the inclusion and exclusion criterion were met. My discussions with the Elder brought attention to the various terms and language used around Indigenous populations and their communities. This helped to make the inclusion and exclusion criteria more specific as I needed to recognize the differences in language globally and not just what we use in Canada. The documents included in the search must have met the following inclusion criteria:

1. The English terms identified in Table 1 were included as keywords, or in the title or abstract of the document.
2. Population included (Indigenous students, youth, and children, First Nations students, youth, and children, Aboriginal students, youth, and children, Native American students, youth, and children, American Indian students, youth, and children, and Māori students, youth, and children).

3. Selected documents were written in English.
4. Included Physical Education in the title

Pieces of literature were excluded from the search based on the following exclusion criteria:

1. Population did not include (Indigenous students, youth, and children, First Nations students, youth, and children, Aboriginal students, youth, and children, Native American students, youth, and children, American Indian students, youth, and children, and Māori students, youth, and children).
2. Pieces of literature were not written in English.
3. PE was not a measured variable or primary concept.
4. Pieces of literature that only focused on higher education/University and/or pre-school/early childhood student populations.

3.4.4 Data Collating and Comparison

Step 4: All documents meeting the inclusion criteria were entered into Zotero (Online bibliographic management and sorting program). Key descriptive features of each piece of literature were extracted. Extracted descriptive data included: the author, year of the publication, origin of the article, abstract, type of study (e.g., qualitative, quantitative), participants and methodology.

3.4.5 Search Methods

Four search methods were used for this scoping review: (a) searches of academic databases; (b) searches of peer-reviewed articles; (c) searches of grey literature; and (d) searches of the reference lists of the pieces of literature.

3.4.6 Revised Database Searches

My critical friend helped provide suggestions for a final set of revised search terms that would aid in the depth of articles I would hopefully come across. Further, an Indigenous expert in the field, and an Elder were consulted on the final set of revised search terms as well. The final revised search terms included: “Indigenous students”, “Indigenous youth”, “Indigenous children” OR “First Nations students”, “First Nations youth”, “First Nations children” OR “Aboriginal students”, “Aboriginal youth”, “Aboriginal children” OR “Native American students”, “Native American youth”, “Native American children” OR “American Indian students”, “American Indian youth”, “American Indian children”, OR “Māori students”, “Māori youth”, “Māori children” OR “physical education”. Searches of the databases with the added search terms extended my list from twenty-five to forty-one pieces of related literature (Twenty-one from Google Scholar, twelve from ProQuest, three from SportDiscus, three from iPortal, three from ERIC, one External, and one PubMed). The results revealed a wide breadth of literature from other countries as well (e.g., Australia and New Zealand).

Each document’s title, abstract, and full-text (when necessary/needed) was examined to ensure that it matched the criteria of investigating Indigenous students/youth/children’s experiences in PE. Pieces of literature that did not meet the criteria as mentioned previously were excluded. For example, documents that investigated teachers’ experiences, non-PE programming for Indigenous students/youth/children, and students who were above the ages of 20 years old or in post-secondary school were not included. To keep track of all identified relevant pieces of literature Zotero was used, and specific details related to each document that met the inclusion and exclusion criterion were noted as well (i.e., Author’s name, publication date, abstract, publisher, search terms used, etc.). Using Zotero allowed me to have a full record of the

documents I found and all the information pertaining to each piece of literature. This helped me keep track of all my search terms, authors, and duplicates.

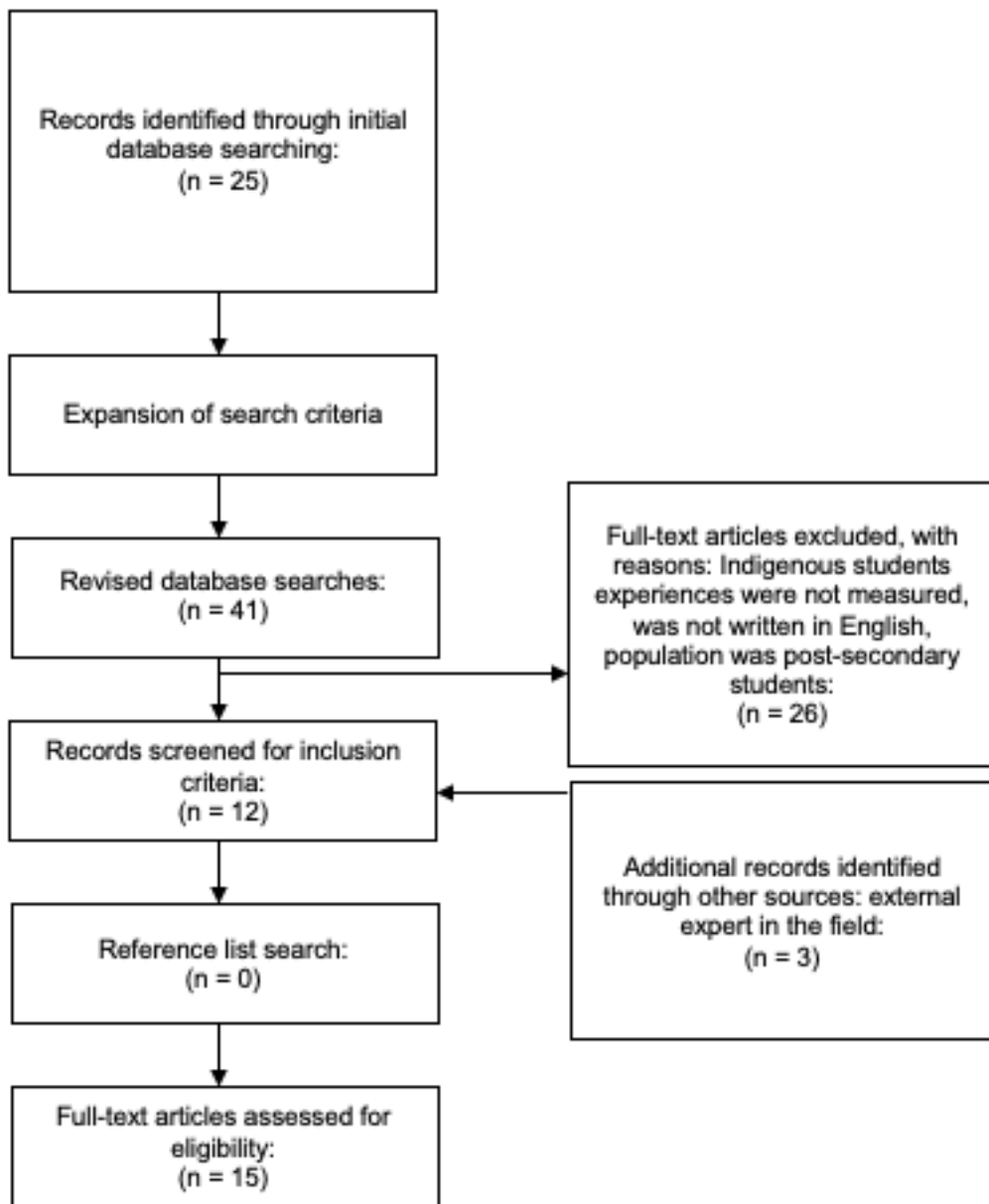
3.4.7 Included Literature

After a further analysis of all the pieces of literature were done (i.e., reading through each results section and going through duplicates), a final total of fifteen articles were identified that met the study criteria. The forty-one pieces of literature were identified based on the search terms and the initial examination of the titles and abstracts of these pieces of literature. However, further analysis, specifically a detailed examination of the methods and results sections, clarified which of the pieces of literature met all inclusion criteria. For example, Brown and colleagues (2005) was found within the 41 articles, due to the term ‘Aboriginal Youth’ being included in the title, however, through a deeper analysis it was determined that the youth in this article did not discuss their experiences in PE. These final fifteen pieces of literature are charted in the results below. A summary of the search process is outlined in the form of a flowchart in Figure 1.

The reference lists of the fifteen pieces of literature in this study were then reviewed to establish if any further articles that met the study criterion had been missed and should be included. No additional articles that met the study criteria were identified during this process and data collection was completed as of August 19th, 2023.

Figure 1

Summary of Relevant Search Sources



3.4.8 Analysis and Interpretation of Data

First, a descriptive analysis of the data was conducted. Specifically, I created an excel document where I coded each article based on the key descriptive features of interest identified above (i.e., Literature name, authors' names, country of origin, population/grade in school, year of publication, method type, literature type, journal publisher, and database it was found in). I then took the data and filed it in the excel document with its' specific descriptor, going through each piece of literature identifying the descriptors and from there I created an additional tab in the excel document to further analyse the pieces of literature for the thematic analysis.

Following the descriptive analysis, a thematic analysis of the content in each of the data sources was conducted. I used a reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) to analyze my data as it is known to be flexible and utilized for many different types of studies (Braun et al., 2016; Byrne, 2021). RTA can provide a research study with an analysis of experiences and processes or factors to an issue. It can also identify patterns in practices or behaviours, views, and perspectives (Braun et al., 2016). As a novice researcher, RTA aligned best with this research topic and research questions as it has a clear step-by-step process while also allowing for an open and organic analysis process (Braun et al., 2016; Byrne, 2021). RTA's flexibility can also be a limitation as it can lead to epistemological confusion where it is challenging to specify how RTA has been implemented (Braun et al., 2016).

For the RTA, I followed Braun and colleagues (2016) six-phase analytic process as well as remained reflexive throughout the entire analysis process, by checking in on myself, my biases, positionality, and privilege as a white-passing women. The first phase was familiarization, this process involved deeply immersing myself in the data to ensure I was extremely familiar with the content. I conducted this first phase by reading over each article

multiple times and jotting down additional notes into Zotero familiarizing myself with it, therefore, I remembered what each article was about and its context. Then I analyzed my data, alongside taking notes, jotting down patterns, and key words that could help me develop themes and answer my research questions (Braun et al., 2016).

Following the familiarization phase was the coding and theme development phase (Phase 2). Coding was very important and is a key step in RTA, as it allows one to identify and label interesting and valuable information in the data (Braun et al., 2016). I developed codes and themes through inductive open coding, where verbatim text highlighting Indigenous students' experiences in PE and their thoughts on PE for specific topics was identified throughout the documents. From each specific verbatim example/text, I then developed the codes that demonstrated the specific topics. For example, it looked like this "Students were required to do activities that they didn't like. In response, many would simply leave the class" (Champagne & Halas., 2003, pg. 88). I would highlight the phrase or term and copy each of these into an Excel file as a specific code. This step also entailed taking notes, jotting down patterns, and key words, clustering and organizing codes (Braun et al., 2016). Phase three involved theme development where I sorted codes into themes, sub-themes, and identified the meaning and relationships between the codes. Phase four involved refinement of those themes previously developed, where I also discussed the themes with an Elder and identified patterns of the coded data and reviewed the data set as a whole. Aside from the Elder during phase four, I also had a critical friend throughout data analysis to provide a potentially different perspective and help improve trustworthiness within the study. I consulted with both the Elder and my critical friend regarding the themes I had developed to discuss the processes followed to make sure I had completed this step of analysis in an appropriate manner, to gain different perspectives, discuss theme and sub-

theme name appropriateness, and discuss any possible considerations for revisions to themes and sub-themes.

Phase five involved naming the codes into “higher level patterns” or themes which relate to my research questions (Braun et al., 2016; Campbell et al., 2021). This also involved further refining theme names and identifying and naming sub-themes from the previously identified codes. During this phase (Phase 5) I went through the codes and reviewed initial themes and sub-themes, observed internal homogeneity within themes at the level one review (where knowledge was reviewed at a general level), while observing external heterogeneity among themes at the level two review (where knowledge was further reviewed and generated at a deeper level). Ultimately, the level one and two reviews were done to ensure that they fit well within the data and addressed my research questions (Braun et al., 2016). Again, the final themes and sub-themes were discussed and agreed upon with my critical friend as the final part of this phase (Phase 5).

Lastly, the final phase (Phase 6) of the analysis involved developing, editing, and writing up the results based on the data I collected, and the themes established through the RTA process.

3.5 Trustworthiness

To ensure trustworthiness throughout data analysis, a Microsoft Excel document was developed and shared with my critical friend who acted as the secondary investigator. Included in the Excel document was a chart with each theme that was identified throughout each piece of literature. Once all fifteen pieces of literature had been read and themes were created, I inputted the major themes and sub-themes into the Excel document, including the theme name, the author of the piece of literature it had come from, an example of text from the document supporting the theme, and the page number of that text. Lincoln and Guba (1989) suggest that to ensure

credibility, the primary investigator conducts the initial analysis and that they have a secondary investigator go through and verify the major themes and sub-themes. After the secondary investigator (my critical friend) conducted their verification of the analysis, a comparative analysis was conducted between myself (the primary investigator) and my critical friend to provide depth and additional insight to the analysis and creation of themes. This was an important step for my analysis as having a second set of experienced eyes on the data supported my theme development process as a novice researcher as suggested by Strauss & Corbin (1998). Lincoln and Guba (2000) also suggest the idea of reflexivity where researchers reflect on their personal biases, assumptions, background, and philosophical views. This idea of reflexivity is extremely important as a white-passing person conducting research with Indigenous peoples and their communities as it is important to first acknowledge the privileges and societal biases. This was addressed in the current study as I clearly identified my background, personal assumptions and biases, and philosophical views prior to the writing process as well as during it.

CHAPTER 4: DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The literature examined in this scoping review ranged in publication date from 1999 to 2018, and provided insight regarding the experiences of Indigenous students in PE across four different countries (Canada, The United States, Australia, and New Zealand). This chapter focuses on the descriptive analysis of the relevant literature that was identified as part of this review. Specifically, the descriptive characteristics of these pieces of literature were examined and shared herein as a means to address the first objective of this study (i.e., to provide a map of existing literature on the topic of Indigenous students' experiences in PE; including where such literature is coming from and what format it is being shared in).

4.1.1 *Identifying Relevant Pieces of Literature*

Initially, a total of 25 potential pieces of literature were retrieved from six databases. However, after consulting with my critical friend and an Indigenous expert in the field I expanded my search terms, thus achieving a final revised list of 41 pieces of literature. Once these were identified and retrieved, they were subsequently reviewed to examine whether they met all the inclusion criteria. I reviewed all 41 pieces of literature based on their title, abstract, and full-text (when necessary/needed) (Table 1 for search terms). Of the 41 pieces of literature, 15 met the inclusion criteria. Twelve of these were peer-reviewed journal articles, one was classified as grey literature (i.e., thesis), one was a book chapter and one came from an Indigenous expert in the field (i.e., published conference proceedings). The descriptive information of interest from each piece of literature was then entered into a Microsoft Excel document.

4.2 Charting of Sources

For each of the 15 pieces of literature included in the scoping review, Table 2 below provides the following descriptive information: (a) document name; (b) author; (c) country where data was collected; (d) population/grade in school; (e) year published; (f) quantitative/qualitative/mixed; (g) article/theses/book/other; (h) journal/book name; and (i) database used.

4.3 Descriptive Results

This section goes through the descriptive analysis results, discussing the *where and who* and *when and what*. The first sub-section of *where and who* discusses where the literature came from and the populations identified. The second sub-section of *when and what* identifies the year of publication for the pieces of literature, the type of method (i.e., qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods), and finally the journal for each piece of literature that was identified as an article.

4.3.1 *Where and Who?*

Upon examining where the pieces of literature included in this review originated from, it was found that all of them had been developed in one of four English speaking (as official language) countries. Specifically, it was found that 53% were from Canada (8/15 pieces of literature), 20% from New Zealand (3/15 pieces of literature), 13% from Australia (2/15 pieces of literature), and 13% from the United States (2/15 pieces of literature). The lack of literature from other parts of the world could be due to the inclusion criteria (i.e., only English articles), but the fact that over half of the existing literature comes from Canada suggests that the importance of understanding Indigenous students' experiences in PE is potentially highest there.

Table 2***Descriptives of Identified Literature***

Document #	Document Title	Authors	Country Where Data Collected	Student Population/ Grade in School	Year Published	Quantitative/ Qualitative/ Mixed	Article/ Theses/ Book/ Other	Journal/Book Name	Database
1	Claiming Space: Aboriginal Students within School Landscapes	Van Ingen & Halas	Canada	Aboriginal/ high school	2006	Qualitative	Journal Article	Children's Geographies	Google Scholar
2	Native American Students' Activity Preferences and Self-Reported Activity	Bycura et al.,	United States	Native American/ grade 4-12	2011	Mixed	Journal Article	Journal of Teaching in PE	Google Scholar
3	Aboriginal Youth and Their Experiences in Physical Education: "This Is What You've Taught Me"	Halas	Canada	Aboriginal/ high school talking about elementary PE	2011	Qualitative	Journal Article	PHEnex Journal/ Revue phénEPS	ProQuest
4	Advice for PE Teachers from Aboriginal Youth: Become an Ally	Halas et al.,	Canada	Aboriginal/ high school talking about elementary PE	2012	Qualitative	Journal Article	Physical & Health Education Journal	ProQuest
5	'I didn't even know that there was such a thing as Aboriginal games': A Figurational Account of how Indigenous Students Experience PE	Williams	Australia	Indigenous/ year 6-9	2018	Qualitative	Journal Article	Sport Education and Society	ERIC
6	A Figurational Analysis of how Indigenous Students Encounter Racialization in PE and School Sport	Williams	Australia	Indigenous/ year 6-9	2018	Qualitative	Journal Article	European PE Review	ERIC
7	Hauroa and PE in New Zealand: Perspectives of Māori and Pasifika Students	Fitzpatrick	New Zealand	Māori/ year 11-12	2005	Qualitative	Journal Article	Waikato Journal of Education	Google Scholar

Document #	Document Title	Authors	Country Where Data Collected	Student Population/ Grade in School	Year Published	Quantitative/ Qualitative/ Mixed	Article/ Theses/ Book/ Other	Journal/Book Name	Database
8	Brown Bodies, Racialization and PE	Fitzpatrick	New Zealand	Māori/ year 8-12	2010	Qualitative	Journal Article	Sport, Education and Society	Sport Discus
9	Physical Activity: What Do High School Students Think?	Hohepa et al.,	New Zealand	Māori/ high school	2006	Qualitative	Journal Article	Journal of Adolescent Health	Google Scholar
10	Maintaining Hózhó: Perceptions of Physical Activity, PE and Healthy Living Among Navajo High School Students	Jones	United States	Native American / high school	2015	Qualitative	Thesis	N/A	Google Scholar
11	Playtime at the Treatment Center: How Physical Activity Helps Troubled Youth	Halas	Canada	Native Children/ grade 6 – 11	2001	Mixed	Journal Article	AVANTE	Google Scholar
12	Pathologizing Billy: Enabling and Constraining the Body of the Condemned	Halas & Hanson	Canada	Native Children/ grade 9	2001	Qualitative	Journal Article	PHEnex Journal/Revue phénEPS	ProQuest
13	The experience of PE for Aboriginal Youth: the unfulfilled potential of physical education	Halas et al.,	Canada	Aboriginal/ high school talking about elementary PE	2004	Qualitative	Journal Article	Physical & Health Education Journal	ProQuest
14	The Quality and Cultural Relevance of PE for Aboriginal Youth	Halas et al	Canada	Aboriginal/ high school talking about elementary PE	2012	Qualitative	Book Chapter	Red and White: Aboriginal Peoples and Sport in Canada	ERIC
15	'I Quit': Aboriginal Youth Negotiate the 'Contact Zone' in PE	Champagne & Halas	Canada	Aboriginal/ high school	2003	Qualitative	Other	N/A	Google Scholar

Although there is an overall need for more research in the area of Indigenous students and their experiences in PE, one of the key specific descriptive findings from this review was that the analysis highlighted the lack of literature focusing on Indigenous children in elementary school and middle school (grades 1-8) PE. The population focused on or studied in 93% (14/15) of the pieces of literature were high school students (grades 9-12). Moving forward, it is important that all Indigenous children's experiences are being explored and discussed as the voices of young Indigenous students are just as important as their high-school counterparts. Also regarding population, the descriptive analyses revealed that 40% (6/15) of the pieces of literature identified used the term Aboriginal youth or Aboriginal students, 27% (4/15) used the term Native American or Native children, 20% (3/15) used the term Māori, and 13% (2/15) used the term Indigenous students. These findings demonstrate that historically, there have been a variety of different terms used for Indigenous peoples and their communities globally in the area of PE. Future research needs to consider all terms used by Indigenous communities as there is not one sole group of Indigenous peoples, as well as, getting to know the population and area you are working with to reduce generalization.

4.3.2 *When and What?*

Regarding when the various pieces of literature were produced, the descriptive results show that of the fifteen articles 60% (9/15) were published pre-2012 and none have been published since 2018. This suggests that much of the existing literature is somewhat dated. This is an issue, especially considering that in the past twelve years not only have PE curricular documents been updated in all the countries where this literature has been published, but awareness regarding Indigenous communities and the discrimination they have faced has

increased. Therefore, there is clearly a need for more current research with this population and their experiences in PE.

With respect to what type of research methods were most commonly employed across the literature reviewed in this study, qualitative designs were found to be the most common choice with 87% (13/15) of the pieces of literature employing strictly qualitative methods. Specifically, the qualitative data collection strategies most commonly used were interviews (semi-structured), cross-sectional surveys, and questionnaires. Conversely, 13% (2/15) of the literature followed a mixed-method design and none of the pieces of literature employed strictly quantitative methods. These findings related to a qualitative method dominance in this research area could be attributed to the importance of shared experiences and stories and putting the participants at the centre of the research process when working with and studying Indigenous populations. However, these results also demonstrate that although by no means required there is room for more variety when it comes to the methods researchers are selecting when doing work related to this topic.

A final descriptive finding was related to what publication venues authors used to share their work on this topic. Academic journals were the clear publication venue of choice with 60% (9/15) publishing their work through journals featuring an education focus (i.e., *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, *PHENex Journal/Revue phénEPS*, *AVANTE*, *Routledge Sport Education and Society*, *European Physical Education Review*, and *Waikato Journal of Education*). There was also one thesis and other (i.e., conference proceedings). As mentioned, 60% of the findings were published through journals with an education focus, this suggests that the topic of Indigenous students' experiences in PE has been perceived mostly as an educational concern and that work regarding PE is best shared with an education focused audience. In contrast to this, another prominent finding was that no books or book chapters specifically

discussed Indigenous students' experiences in PE was found. This demonstrated the minimal amount of focus given to Indigenous students' experiences in books and PE textbooks. In Canada, Robinson and Randall (2013) and Barrett and Scaini (2019), have clear sections in their PE textbooks regarding Indigenous approaches and practices in PE, however, no dedicated examination or discussion of Indigenous students' experiences in PE. Because these books do not provide discussion regarding what is known about Indigenous students' experiences in PE, context to help support the suggested approaches and practices is reduced. It would be beneficial to see Indigenous students' experiences outlined in textbooks as a way to help current and future educators gain insight on how to best teach this population and approach their teaching through a more holistic lens. Considering that textbooks are common sources of information for practitioners and future practitioners, the results from this review indicate that these individuals are potentially not being provided with the tools and resources that are needed to ensure they know and understand how to teach Indigenous students.

CHAPTER 5: THEMATIC ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

One of the main findings of this scoping review was the lack of relevant research regarding Indigenous students' experiences in Canada, besides Halas and colleagues' (1991-2022) work, which predominantly focused on the prairie province of Manitoba. After expanding the search terms of the scoping review beyond Canada to the United States, Australia, and New Zealand, more pieces of literature appeared and as previously mentioned, a final total of fifteen pieces of literature were identified and included in the study. Beyond the descriptive analysis of these fifteen articles (discussed in Chapter 4) a thematic analysis was also undertaken. The main purpose of the descriptive analysis was to address the first objective of this study (i.e., provide a map of existing literature on the topic of Indigenous students' experiences in PE; including where such literature is coming from (and what format it is being shared in), whereas the thematic analysis and was conducted to help address study objective two (i.e., pinpoint and clarify the existing key concepts that have been identified with respect to Indigenous students' PE experiences).

As previously mentioned, a decolonial lens informed my analysis, this entailed utilizing what I have learned through Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (2021) work and conversations with Elders, and Indigenous research experts. Conversations with Elders, and Indigenous research experts involved me listening to their experiences and stories. They would also force me to think about my life and how I position myself personally and academically. Some examples of questions I asked myself came from Jimenez and colleagues (2023) work; (What are my goals for social justice? How am I engaging with the BIPOC community and antiracist work personally and within research?). A decolonial lens involves considering who are in positions of power, making

decisions and creating research agendas; and commonly throughout traditional research practices, the participants' stories and experiences are being used for publication purposes, or they do not have a say on how their stories will be used (Jimenez et al., 2023). Therefore, my decolonial lens is centered around challenging power structures and equity, which is why throughout the thematic analysis I focused and prioritized Indigenous students discussing their specific PE experiences in the articles included in my review.

The following two major themes were identified, based on my interpretation of the data, through the thematic analysis: *Experiencing a cultural disconnect in the PE curriculum and the content being taught*; and *Connections between students' and the PE environment*. Within these two major themes I identified sub-themes which will be further explained in the following sections.

5.2 Experiencing a cultural disconnect in the PE curriculum and the content being taught

As Halas (2011) stated "PE is a culturally white space where Western values are emphasized; competition and winning are taught, the boys took weight room and the girls took gymnastics, the more skilled students are praised, and the less skilled students are not looked after" (p. 13-14). The theme of this section, *Experiencing a cultural disconnect in the PE curriculum and the content being taught*, follows in line with Halas' suggestions of PE being a space for Western and White values and specifically focuses on the emphasis of *Eurocentric PE Curriculum*, the *Absence of Indigenous Content*, and the *Disconnect of Activities in PE* that was described across the literature reviewed in this study.

5.2.1 Eurocentric PE Curriculum

Historically in Canada the education curriculum is Eurocentric in nature, putting a substantial emphasis on literature, math, and science (Halas et al., 2012; Kalyn, 2014;

Melnychuk et al., 2011; Robinson et al., 2013). Specifically, the PE curriculum is rooted in militaristic exercises, rules, and games (Chinn et al., 2022). In five pieces of literature (Williams, 2018; Halas, 2003; Hohepa et al., 2006; and Jones, 2015) out of the fifteen (33%) in the scoping review I identified the sub-theme of a *Eurocentric PE curriculum*.

One student mentioned that activities such as fitness and running should not be included and mentioned they would appreciate being involved in the selection process of activities they could do in class (Hohepa et al., 2006). Activities such as fitness testing, cardio training, and constant competition were used and forced on Indigenous children in IRS, demonstrating the Eurocentric nature of the PE curriculum (Forsyth & Heine, 2017). The expectation that teachers impose on their students regarding their fitness levels is not a fair expectation to have. In any other subject such as math, English, and science students are not expected to learn the same way, whereas in PE for some reason teachers expect their students to be able to perform at the same level and learn the same. For students who are not as athletic, having to participate in fitness testing and running can be an intimidating task, whereas for the students who excel athletically it can be seen as easy or fun competition, creating social division in the classroom between those who actively have the opportunity to engage in sport outside of the classroom and those who do not (Erdvik, 2020; Säfvenbom et al., 2015; Thorjussen, 2021). Students want to participate in activities and sports to have fun with their classmates; they want to feel a part of their learning process and feel a sense of belonging.

Another study that was part of this review emphasized Indigenous students discussing how the first year of high school PE lacked choice and a variety of non-Eurocentric activities and sports units that resonated with them. These students also mentioned wanting to participate in non-traditional activities as well, instead of basketball and soccer they suggested golf or lacrosse

(Jones, 2015). However, in the case where teachers tried to expand their repertoire of activities, they still were unable to connect with the students because they did not get to know them or ask for their opinions. Similarly, in another study, it was suggested that what Indigenous students learned in their PE class, lacked meaning and connectedness for them. They felt as if what was being provided and taught to them was unnecessary to all students (Williams, 2018).

It is very important that teachers are doing everything they can to make their classrooms a space for everyone, and that starts with the curriculum and content. As previously mentioned, the PE curriculum puts an emphasis on Eurocentrism, emphasizing competition and students who excel athletically to succeed (Erdvik, 2020). Further, Halas (2011), made the observation that PE promotes Eurocentric values such as competition and individualism and a space where hierarchies prevail (male students are often seen as more skilled than female students and the fit and athletic students receive good marks, and the unfit students get left behind). She also mentioned that there needs to be a shift towards a curricular focus on active and healthy living that will eventually create space for Indigenous values (i.e., mastery, independence, belonging, generosity) in the classroom (Halas, 2011). Not only does there need to be efforts made to move away from Eurocentric focused PE curricula, but moreover PE teachers need to provide diverse PE content within the confines of the curriculum that break away from traditional Eurocentric activities and more effectively resonate with Indigenous and other minority students. Furthermore, providing support for PE teachers to gain a better understanding of non-Eurocentric cultures and communities is needed so that teachers are then able to connect with minority students and have the conversation about what content they would like to see in PE class. Recognition for these students needs to be the first step.

5.2.2 Absence of Indigenous Content

Indigenous students struggle to see themselves in schools, whether it be through administrators or teachers, but also in the curriculum and because of this, Indigenous students struggle to find meaning in PE (Akbar et al., 2020). Three pieces of literature (Williams, 2018; Halas et al., 2012; and Fitzpatrick, 2005) out of the fifteen (20%) in this scoping review I identified the sub-theme of Absence of Indigenous content when discussing Indigenous students' experiences in PE programs.

In the study by Williams (2018), it was reported that Aboriginal students started learning about their community's Island games, specifically Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island games. However, a few of the students mentioned that not only was there minimal encounters with any Aboriginal content in their PE classes, they also were surprised to learn that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island games existed (Williams, 2018). This finding is interesting as, it demonstrates the lack of Indigenous content being shared and taught to students. Further, integrating Indigenous culture and history in an informed and meaningful way, can have a great impact as students gain exposure and are able to have a better understanding of culture and history; specifically Indigenous communities. Alongside learning about Aboriginal games, some other students mentioned that they also had never been taught Indigenous sports and Indigenous dance forms (Williams, 2018). As previously mentioned, many Indigenous students only experienced European and American physical activities, dance being one of them. However, the fact that these students and their non-Indigenous classmates have also clearly had little to no exposure to Indigenous activities throughout their PE experiences further demonstrates a need for more diverse and inclusive PE curriculum and content. These findings are not uncommon or surprising as it has been demonstrated that PE curricula in many instances lacks cultural

relevance and, in this case, Indigenous and Aboriginal content (Halas et al., 2012; Kalyn, 2014; Melnychuk et al., 2011; Robinson et al., 2013).

Halas and colleagues (2012), discuss Champagne's (2006) work that focused on PE teachers who successfully worked with Indigenous and Aboriginal students, and mentions: "the importance of teachers knowing their students in the context of the students' historical identities, and in the context of power dynamics between teachers and students cannot be overstated" (p. 16). As previously stated, in order to have Indigenous students feel seen and understood it has to start with the content being provided and the overall PE curriculum. However, it is not that surprising the literature reviewed suggested a lack of cultural relevance when it came to Indigenous students and PE curriculum. Leseth and Engelsrud (2019), emphasized the lack of overall cultural relevance (to all non-white minorities) not only in the PE curricula but also in PETE curricula. They mention that to enhance cultural sensitivity in academia, there needs to be more effort and attention put into learning about other cultures first (Leseth & Engelsrud, 2019). In order to help reduce the lack of Indigenous content in PE, there needs to be acknowledgement that starts with teachers, administrators, and policy makers understanding the colonial history of education and having an understanding of their social identity. Further, if teachers and administrators take the time to reflect on their social identities and the historical context of education, hopefully this will encourage them to create a more welcoming learning environment for their Indigenous students (Champagne, 2006; Halas et al., 2012). This concerted effort to reduce the lack of Indigenous content in PE has to come from current and future educators, as they are working directly with the students and are able to understand them on a personal level of their wants and needs. Future educators also need to want to develop a new era of teaching students and holding space for Indigenous and minority students in the classroom.

On a more positive note, the literature reviewed did provide one example where some students were exposed to Indigenous culture during PE and decided to take what they had learned about their Indigenous and Aboriginal culture and use it to better understand themselves and their education. In the study by Fitzpatrick (2005) that was conducted in New Zealand, incorporated in the PE curriculum was the model of Hauora which can be interpreted differently depending on the person. Two Māori students from this study who identified and recognized the concept of Hauora in their PE class, mentioned that they did not realize until later on that they use Hauora in their everyday lives. However, two other students did not connect with the concept of Hauora (one Cook Island student and one Tongan student) because they felt more confused with what the actual word meant as opposed to thinking about the bigger picture (Fitzpatrick, 2005). By incorporating Indigenous and Aboriginal students' cultures and ways of knowing into the PE curriculum, this allowed the students to develop a further understanding of their culture and themselves. However, when incorporating the concept or philosophy of Hauora in the secondary years of school where PE is optional, does not allow for all students to gain knowledge. There is still an absence of Indigenous content in this regard due to the fact that like most secondary school curricula, PE is optional beyond the freshman (grade 9; age 13-14) year. It is more than participating in culturally relevant sports and games but truly seeing oneself as a part of the content and curriculum that can impact a student's experience and outlook on their education.

5.2.3 Disconnect of Activities in PE

A final sub-theme related to *Experiencing a cultural disconnect in the PE curriculum and the content being taught* that I identified across the literature reviewed was related to how students having choice in the classroom can make one feel excited and valued, and it is not often

that teachers will provide students with the power to voice their opinions but if/when they do, it can impact a student's experience and strengthen educational spaces (Mitra, 2018). Based on my interpretation of the literature reviewed, some Indigenous students feel disconnected with the course content in PE, especially when they have no option or choice. Specifically, what I mean by disconnected is the emotional feeling of separation, to feel disconnected is not the same as physical separation. Feelings of embarrassment and judgement were some of the main reasons why students decided to not participate in PE but also why they felt disconnected. I identified four pieces of literature (Halas et al., 2004; Halas et al., 2012; Hohepa et al., 2006; and Champagne & Halas, 2003) out of the fifteen (27%) in my scoping review that included content related to my sub-theme of *Disconnect of Activities in PE*.

Based on the articles reviewed, some students mentioned that their positive feelings for PE diminished when they transitioned from middle school to high school as they felt that the activities they were "forced" to do were "irrelevant" (Halas et al., 2012). As previously mentioned, activities such as snowshoeing and hunting would be of interest and benefit to Indigenous students (Halas, 2011); they also mentioned potentially extending the sports units, participating in low-competition games, and activities, therefore, they could feel like they were learning more about the activities and new skills (Halas et al., 2012). Some students from New Zealand, specifically female students, also mentioned that they did not enjoy performing activities in front of their classmates and mentioned that their teachers never encouraged input from them and would tell them what they were doing in class that day (Champagne & Halas, 2003). By not engaging with the students or getting to know their likes and dislikes, students decided to not show up to class or just leave once they found out what they were doing that day, thus showing a clear disconnect between these students and the content being covered in their PE

classes. However, it is not surprising that once Indigenous students transitioned from middle school to high school that their interest in PE diminished, especially among Indigenous females. It has been demonstrated that in general current PE teachers display gender-biased behaviours and practices when interacting with some students in PE class (Davis, 2003), which may affect students' willingness and participation in PE. Furthermore, research has demonstrated that most female students (regardless of ethnicity) no longer participate in PE class in high school due to self-esteem, not wanting to sweat, and due to their physical appearance (Cicchillitti, 2015). High school PE can be an intimidating space for many young adults of all racial and ethnic backgrounds, and the literature on Indigenous students suggests that these students are no different. Some male and female Indigenous students were found to suggest that if they were not athletic, they would get made fun of and the students on teams would make them look bad in high school PE class (Hohepa et al., 2006). There is potential for Indigenous students to not feel disconnected and be made fun of, be neglected, or feel left out if they are able to use their voice in their PE classes when choosing activities and games to participate in. If these students are able to have choice in class, this could allow them to feel more comfortable, more motivated, and eventually more confident when showing up for PE class.

5.3 Connections between students' and the PE Environment

This section looks at a theme I identified within the literature specifically related to the PE environment and how students' connectedness shaped their experiences. Within this theme of *Connections between students' and the PE Environment*, again there were three related sub-themes that were identified within the data, these being an emphasis on students feeling *Discomfort in PE Spaces*, students seeing PE as a *Meaningful Space*, and students feeling *Stereotyped and Racialized* in the PE environment.

5.3.1 *Discomfort in PE Spaces*

When I considered the literature reviewed it appeared that for some Indigenous and Aboriginal students PE class can be an uncomfortable space. In addition to that, the changeroom can also be an uncomfortable space for students as feelings of embarrassment and shame about one's body becomes heightened (Champagne & Halas, 2003). I identified Six pieces of literature (Halas, 2011; Halas, 1999; Halas et al., 2004; Champagne & Halas, 2003; Jones, 2015; and Hohepa et al., 2006) out of the fifteen (40%) in my scoping review that included text related to my sub-theme of *Discomfort in PE spaces*.

Getting changed for PE class is not an uncommon task in the Eurocentric PE curriculum. For example, in Moen and colleagues' (2018) study, students were told that if they did not come to class with the proper uniform (i.e., school t-shirt, athletic bottoms, and running shoes) they were unable to participate in PE that day. In Halas and colleagues' study (2004), mainly female students mentioned feeling surprised that they had to change for PE class. Some students did not even have a change of clothes and because of this, students have become self-conscious about their own bodies when it comes to their peers. To avoid this feeling of embarrassment and judgement, students stopped attending PE all together (Halas et al., 2004). Something most teachers do not understand is the trauma that some Indigenous and Aboriginal students carry with them, specifically something as simple as getting changed for PE gets overlooked. One student mentioned that the change room was a scary space for herself and other Aboriginal youth because they have "scars" due to the intergenerational trauma and abuse from the IRS and colonization (Halas, 2011). It is not a surprise that changing in PE has been found to be harmful among Indigenous students, as what happens in the PE changeroom (i.e., feelings of embarrassment and judgement) translates further to what happens outside of PE. In addition,

previous research has shown that in general many females regardless of ethnicity or race have reported issues with changing for PE (Fisette, 2009).

Beyond the changerooms in PE, Indigenous students from the articles examined in the present study also appear to feel that sense of discomfort being translated in the PE class environment as well. Specifically, Hohepa and colleagues (2006) discuss how Indigenous female students perceived incompetence and perceptions of peer judgments as inhibiting their involvement in PE classes. Again, this finding among the Indigenous population seems to coincide with existing literature with other populations. Regardless of race and ethnicity, all students are not only judging other students in PE class, but also, they are judging one another for what they were wearing, whether they have shaved prior to class, different body types, etc., (O'Donovan & Kirk, 2007). It has also been demonstrated that there is an importance of clothing and how it is a reflection of 'oneself', suggesting that not only does clothing demonstrate your taste and interests, but further your socioeconomic status (O'Donovan & Kirk, 2007). This idea of 'self-image' starts to occur for many students and how they are being perceived by one another. In one of the articles reviewed, one Indigenous student mentions the importance of her self-image starting to occur in middle school PE and moving further into high-school. She began to feel alienated and like an outcast, not fitting in with the 'average' group of students and began to be perceived as less than by other students (Jones, 2015). Similar feelings of self-image related discomfort during PE, among adolescent females, are again not isolated to the Indigenous student population. Several studies have reported non-Indigenous adolescent females share in such feelings (e.g., Røset et al., 2020; Watkins et al., 2019).

The discomfort that PE appears to present for Indigenous students is clearly a concern, but it also seems that Indigenous students experience many of the same discomforts with the PE

environment as other non-Indigenous students. This finding is extremely important as learning about Indigenous and non-Indigenous students' experiences with discomfort in PE, will hopefully encourage policy makers, teachers, and administrators to listen to students' voices and enact change in the PE curriculum and environment.

5.3.2 *Meaningful Space*

The literature reviewed demonstrated that for some Indigenous students PE can also be a meaningful space. PE can bring forth positive emotions and experiences due to its perceived welcoming, supportive and meaningful environment (Fitzpatrick, 2010). I identified two pieces of literature (Fitzpatrick, 2010; and Halas, 1999) out of the fifteen (13%) in my scoping review that included content related to my sub-theme of PE as *Meaningful Space* to students.

Some of the pieces of literature reviewed reported students perceiving the gymnasium as a space that brought a sense of safety and enjoyment for them. This was due to team sports and activities where high fives and cheering are accompanied, and where students can break from their classes (Halas, 1999). Students in Halas' study also mentioned that they trusted the PE environment to be a space to simply have fun and be with their friends. Similarly, in the article by Fitzpatrick (2010) a Kikorangi student from New Zealand discussed how they strongly identified with PE as they found the environment welcoming, affirming, and all-around a meaningful space. This idea of PE offering comradery and a team environment has also been mentioned by non-Indigenous students as well. Specifically, Taylor and Doherty (2007) reported that recent racial minority students to Canada discussed how PE was important for them as it was emotionally beneficial, helped them develop new friendships, provided physical/health benefits, and allowed them to learn about Canadian culture. These are just a few examples of how PE can

provide a meaningful space for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Students are able to show up, destress from their other classes, and have fun learning and playing with their peers.

Alongside this idea of PE bringing forth a meaningful and team-oriented learning environment, other students in Halas' (1999) study mentioned that they felt a sense of safety in the PE environment due to perceptions that their teachers were more actively engaged in supervising the class during PE in comparison to other subjects. This helped them feel not just physically safe but psychologically safe in the gymnasium as well, which brings forth a whole new light to PE and how important a sense of belonging can be for students. All these examples support the sub-theme of PE as a meaningful space for all students, and teachers are a huge part in the creation of that space. When students feel safe, welcomed, and supported it shifts their perspectives. Through these examples of PE becoming a meaningful space, it appears that it was more than the physical space of the gymnasium that made students feel this way. It was also the environment that had been created (i.e., friendly, comforting, and fun) that made students feel this sense of meaningfulness.

5.3.3 Stereotyped and Racialized

The education system is culturally a predominantly white space whether its specific to curriculum or from the administrators and staff. Specifically, in PE there is a pre-conceived bias of who is naturally athletic or will succeed in PE and the presumption of who has that natural physicality is brown/black students (Harrison et al., 2004; Fitzpatrick, 2010). Such issues related to stereotyping and racialized beliefs were found to exist in the literature reviewed for this study. Specifically, two pieces of literature that I identified (Halas et al., 2012; and Fitzpatrick, 2010) out of the fifteen (13%) in this scoping review demonstrated support for the sub-theme of *Stereotyped and Racialized*.

Indigenous and Aboriginal students are presumed to be naturals in sport and PE, however, are presumed intellectually inferior from their white peers (Harrison et al., 2004; Fitzpatrick, 2010). Western society and the colonial world have stereotyped black and brown bodies as “naturally physical” instead of hard-working athletes (Hokowhitu, 2003) and because of this, schools often exploit black and brown athletes for their abilities (Hokowhitu, 2003; Fitzpatrick, 2010). For example, Halas and colleagues (2012) described how one student felt pressured to know how to participate in archery because they were Aboriginal, even though they had never tried it before. It is not uncommon that teachers will point to their students of colour for all of the answers as well, just because you have an Aboriginal student in your class that does not necessarily mean they know all there is to know about hunting or kayaking and that does not mean they have genetic abilities to certain sports (Carrington, 2010; Halas et al., 2012; McDonald, 2013; Sailes, 1991; Spracklen, 2008). Further, the notion that brown and black students will thrive athletically and not academically is simply not the truth and not one of the reasons why these students decide to take PE class. Some Māori and Pasifika students mentioned wanting to take PE class because they enjoy science and learning about the human body; another student mentioned how she took PE because it best aligned with what she wanted to study in university (Fitzpatrick, 2010).

Current and future teachers and administrators need to encourage comfort in their classrooms and promote a safe space for all of their students. It has been mentioned throughout this paper that there is a large disconnect between teachers and Indigenous and minority students and because of this disconnect it is putting both students and teachers at a disadvantage (Douglas & Halas, 2013).

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND FINAL WORDS

6.1 Introduction

Learning to relate to one another and teach in culturally considerate ways can benefit the whole learning community (Barnhardt, 2000; Kalyn, 2006). Further and further into this scoping review, I thought about what Barnhardt (2000), and Kalyn (2006) mentioned: “One of the first things to recognize is that the more you learn about another culture, the more you will find out about yourself” (p. 169). The purpose of this scoping review was to examine and synthesize what is known about Indigenous students’ experiences in PE in Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand within existing research and grey literature. Through identifying fifteen pieces of literature discussing Indigenous students’ experiences and examining both the descriptive features and thematic content of these pieces of literature, a clearer picture of Indigenous students’ experiences in PE has been provided.

6.2 Implications for the Delivery of School Based PE

In this study, the literature reviewed provided evidence for the existence of gaps or issues with PE curriculum and content and the PE environment as a whole, in how it is experienced by Indigenous students. The implications for these research findings, related to delivery of school based PE, are discussed in the following section.

The PE curriculum and content continues to put an emphasis on Eurocentric ways of knowing, resulting in a lack of Indigenous content, and leaving Indigenous students to feel disconnected and unacknowledged. Indigenous peoples have the opportunity to influence content and curriculum development in PE through teachers and educators implementing Indigenous ways of knowing and teaching into their pedagogy and classrooms, and also through ensuring they are consulted when new PE curricula are being established.

In order for this change to curriculum and content development to occur a few changes need to happen. It would be most beneficial for current and future educators and administrators to take the time to understand the history of Indigenous peoples and education to hopefully implement a more holistic approach to teaching in their schools. Further, this finding of a lack of Indigenous student experiences being discussed in texts is extremely significant as it provides current and future educators with the opportunity to gain a better understanding of where their students are coming from. With this, student experiences in texts such as in the PETE training textbooks, will allow future educators to adapt their pedagogy to a way that puts the students first.

It would also be beneficial to have Indigenous teachers, administrators, and coaches working in schools with students implementing Indigenous pedagogies and practices. Further, it would be beneficial for current and future teachers and administrators to build a working relationship with their students (i.e., get to know them on a personal level, and understand the history of Indigenous peoples and education). This would allow for a more positive and safe space in PE class, allowing students to feel seen and all starting at the same level regardless of athletic capabilities, socioeconomic status, etc.

Finally, members of Indigenous communities need to be consulted and be actively involved with future PE curriculum development teams to ensure that Indigenous culture and the needs of Indigenous students are being accounted for in the PE curriculum. The lack of Indigenous students' experiences being discussed in curriculum and content is of concern, as it has been demonstrated that the PE curriculum puts an emphasis on Eurocentrism and white-passing peoples. It is important for future policy makers and curriculum developers to

incorporate Indigenous peoples and their stories, therefore, current and future educators are able to gain a better understanding of Indigenous students' needs and ways of knowing.

The environment of PE has made Indigenous students feel discomfort with changerooms and the PE class setting, stereotyped and racialized, yet also has provided them with a meaningful space. It would be beneficial for all students (including Indigenous students) to have the choice of getting changed for PE class, as it has been demonstrated that the changerooms in PE not only impact students in PE class but also outside of it (i.e., in other classes, in the hallway, etc.). It would also be beneficial if current and future educators are provided with and utilize resources to create meaningful and safe spaces in their PE classes. This starts with teachers checking in on their biases and really trying to build a connection with their students and incorporating changes within curricular content and documents (i.e., photos of students from different racial and ethnic groups). By including students from different racial ethnic groups in teaching materials and in communications, this will allow for all students to feel seen in what is being taught to them. With a meaningful curriculum, and safe culturally affirming environment, Indigenous youth might have more positive experiences in PE. The onus cannot only be on teachers, it also has to come from administrators and policy makers. Racially minoritized students in PE need to feel seen, welcomed in the classroom, and in the content they are being taught. Through this, hopefully it will also reduce the issues of students being stereotyped and racialized in PE.

On the other hand, PE has also been a meaningful space for Indigenous students, providing a sense of safety and enjoyment. This is due to the team sports and activities that Indigenous students participate in, allowing these students to get to know one-another and collaborate during class time. It would be beneficial to continue encouraging team activities and

building team comradery for students to get to know one-another in a space that can be non-vulnerable and non-judgemental.

6.3 Study Limitations

With any research study, there are limitations and in this sub-section I will be addressing them. With this study only focusing on Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand Indigenous students' experiences in PE, the goal of this study was to not generalize or group these students' experiences into one but to further demonstrate the need for Indigenous students' experiences and voices to be shared. I acknowledge that a point of criticism could be that due to only focusing on four countries, this does not account for the many other Indigenous and Aboriginal communities internationally (i.e., Southern America, Africa, Asia, etc.), however, future research should look beyond North America and Australia and New Zealand as there still needs to be a focus on experiences globally. Similarly, because only literature written in English was included in this review it is possible that not all literature related to Indigenous students' experiences in PE that presently exists was found and included. The final limitation was the lack of experience that I have as a novice researcher. With this being my first in-depth academic written paper and it being a scoping review, not having any prior experience can present challenges when conducting a study that requires rigorous and transparent methods to ensure trustworthiness (Munn et al., 2018). Additionally, my critical friend was my Masters supervisor, which may create a power imbalance or influence my decision-making process. That being stated, taking strides to be transparent in the methods followed and ongoing discussions with others (i.e., Indigenous Elder; supervisory committee members) throughout the entire research process should help to address the concerns related to this particular limitation.

6.4 Implications for Future Research

This project supports the need for Indigenous students' experiences in PE and their stories to be shared and regularly considered by PE teachers, physical education teacher education course instructors, and PE policy and curriculum makers, but it has also shed light upon potential weaknesses or gaps in the existing literature on Indigenous student experiences in PE. Despite the years of research with Indigenous students' experiences in PE and sport, there is still a significant gap in the literature that exists regarding Indigenous students' experiences being shared in PE.

It is important for future research to conduct studies where Indigenous youth and children's experiences and voices are at the forefront of the research. This review has demonstrated that mainly Indigenous students in high-school or in their upper years of school has received almost all the focus of existing research on Indigenous student experiences in PE. Continued research in this area is important, however, a focus on younger age groups will help to provide a more well-rounded understanding of the full scope of Indigenous students' experiences in PE. Further, as mentioned, the importance of Indigenous students actually being spoken to and discussing their experiences needs to be addressed. There is limited research in this context, specifically in the province of Ontario where I am located. It is extremely important that student voices are being shared, as teachers' and administrators' perceptions regarding Indigenous students' experiences in PE are not enough to fully convey the depth of these students' experiences or accurately describe them.

Future research should also explore PE programs that have implemented Indigenous ways of knowing into their classrooms to gain a better understanding of its' successes or areas of improvement. Research has demonstrated teachers trying to implement Indigenous ways of

knowing into their PE classes (Fitzpatrick, 2010), however, because these classes have been at the high school level, it has not been as effective. It is best that students gain an understanding of these practices as early as possible. If we are able to gain an understanding of the successes and failures of implementing Indigenous ways of knowing into PE, it will have great benefits for current and future educators. Whether that is allowing them to gain a new perspective on teaching students and bringing a more holistic approach to teaching, or providing a space for Indigenous students, minority students, or all students in general to learn in a less colonial way.

Another suggestion for future research is the need to study curriculum documents for examples of programs that have implemented Indigenous content and its influence on Indigenous students' experiences in PE. For example, British Columbia, Canada, has the most updated PE curriculum in Canada, implementing Indigenous ways of knowing and practices into their curriculum. By studying and analyzing curriculum documents it will allow for administrators to gain a better understanding of how Indigenous ways of knowing and teaching can be implemented into the PE curriculum, and hopefully other areas of curriculum as well.

Additionally, there is also a need for future research to examine Indigenous and Aboriginal student experiences beyond North America and Australia and New Zealand. As the descriptive analysis demonstrated that 67% of this scoping review literature came from North America, 20% from New Zealand, and 13% from Australia and the most recent piece of literature being from 2018 (5 years ago). Expanding beyond these four countries will provide the opportunity for further research in this area from more Indigenous and Aboriginal communities as with the four that was examined and analyzed does not generalize all of the experiences. Countries and continents such as South America, Africa, and Asia could provide a different context of what PE looks like for Indigenous peoples.

6.2 Final Words

This study was a continuation of the important and impactful work in the area of Indigenous students' experiences in PE. This work also provided a summary of what existing literature has demonstrated regarding decolonization, working alongside and with Indigenous and Aboriginal communities to do better by them, and through a system that has oppressed them. Working with and alongside Indigenous communities in PE is ever evolving research, and through continued research in this area, improvements will be made.

The purpose of this scoping review was to examine and synthesize what is known about Indigenous students' experiences in PE in Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand within existing research and grey literature. The results of this study demonstrate that although research presently exists with regards to Indigenous students' sharing their experiences in PE, there is still need for considerably more work specifically focused on this topic. Sharing Indigenous students' experiences in PE may resonate with Indigenous researchers, scholars, teachers and beyond these groups as well. What this research offers is a pathway for future research with Indigenous and minority communities to provide a better understanding of the student experience in PE for current and future educators and administrators.

As I start to reflect on this research project and on my Masters program, I am more motivated than ever to continue in this area of research. Through the connections and relationships I have made, the conversations with peers and fellow academics in the field, it has left a lasting impact on me personally and professionally. On a personal level, I undertook this research project because I had felt that I missed out on a very crucial part of Canada's colonial history. I was curious to learn about Indigenous students' experiences in PE in Canada and then began to expand beyond that to the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. I have learned a

lot about the importance of student voice, especially Indigenous students and minority students' voices regarding education and I believe that we need to do better by these students and communities socially and within education. It is about time that we stop speaking on behalf of Indigenous peoples and talking for them, and start listening and working with them to create spaces where they know they are being seen and heard.

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