

**Disrupting Colonialism: Weaving Indigeneity into the Gallery in  
Schools Project of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria**

by

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B.Ed., Vancouver Island University, 2009

B.A., Simon Fraser University, 2000

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## Abstract

In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission made their final recommendations for Canadian society to address cultural genocide: by affirming stories of survivors, taking personal and professional inventory of their practices and making concrete steps to meet the *Calls to Action*. In particular, the TRC recognized damage done by museums and art galleries to perpetuate colonialism and yet, believed that these institutions could be sites of justice, particularly in relation to arts and artists

The Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, an institution steeped in colonialism and under pressure to create accountable relationships with Indigenous communities, began to act by revamping their education program for school age children entitled the *Gallery in the Schools* art program. My study asked Indigenous artists and educators to contribute their ideas for a new art program. I used a blended research of community based and decolonizing research models, contextualized within decolonizing and critical theoretical frameworks. Overall, research findings suggest that process is as important as the end product in the context of reconciliation and decolonization. Significantly, relationships were esteemed over the concept of reconciliation. These finding further imply that a successful art program would ground pedagogical content within a critical historical framework, be informed by a fluid understanding of identity and search out possibilities of hope. The theoretical implications of this study support increased contributions by Indigenous artists as key policy makers, who will challenge the deeply embedded power structures of institutions and offer alternative ways to share power and support Indigenous envisioned futures.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

In spring 2014, I discovered a mixed media course on social justice at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (AGGV). I enrolled my daughter in the hope she would learn about social justice, and I would learn more about their art classes. The AGGV was in a time of transition and eager to offer programs that engaged learners with critical thought through art. From my curiosity and the openness of the new educator of school and family programs, Jennifer Van de Pol, I was invited to undertake this study which focuses on the ideas of Indigenous teachers and artists who have been associated with the AGGV and how they believe the *Gallery in the Schools* program can be Indigenized. Taking direction from the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015a) the AGGV acknowledged the need for Indigenous collaboration not only in terms of exhibitions, but also their art education programs for community and schools. As a teacher who uses art to disrupt the normative problematic narratives in schools, I was drawn to the gallery's intent to completely restructure their programs.

### My Location in the Study

My identity as a Canadian has been deeply impacted by place. Chartreuse green fields of tidy, square acreage lots with placid cows placed beside goldenrods of corn in tight order and vast West Coast forests where moss drips off ancient trees command vivid memories of growing up, both in Quebec and BC. I identify as a settler woman of Irish and French heritage and spent my childhood on a farm just outside Montreal. Only recently, I learned that my home was on Iroquois territory. I had to intentionally seek out this information from Iroquois Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred, as any appearance of an Indigenous community had been erased in colonial history. Indigenous researcher and filmmaker

Karmen Crey (2014) writes, “It is critical that an understanding of the historical and social contexts be accompanied by an awareness of how individuals interpret this information and position themselves in relation to it” (para.8). Consistently, from my experiences with Indigenous scholars, colleagues and community, self-identification is not only an important Indigenous protocol but essential in my research, specifically my position in education.

My love of learning has led me to a career in education, most recently as a public secondary teacher and art, as an educational tool for decolonization and social justice, is central to my teaching practice. I came to value arts-based pedagogies from powerful personal experiences such as practising Capoeira, an Afro-Brazilian emancipatory dance and martial art form created by slaves who disguised fighting techniques with dance. I spent time learning and assisting with a Capoeira community project in the favelas (shanty-towns) of Sao Paulo, with children who were mostly African heritage and minoritized members of Brazilian society and were empowered through its rigour and discipline. From this and other experiences, I became fascinated with the power of art to counter oppressive and dehumanizing narratives in society and the educational potential of art to create social change. I have also learned that as a member of white privilege, I need to commit to a personal process, both active and reflective, of decolonization.

However, as a teacher in a school with a large Indigenous community, I have encountered colonialism in the form of oppressive institutional structures, ingrained narratives of deficiency, and a lack of voice for Indigenous students. My desire to understand the experiences of these students led to my personal journey and this study as a settler teacher, living and working on WSÁNEĆ territories. I was encouraged by a local Indigenous educator to reflect on questions of best practices and to reach out to local

Elders for insight. In meetings with Elders, I heard how Indigenous families and students connect current schooling systems to the trauma of residential schools, and most importantly, I began to be able to identify how schools continued to support power structures of oppression. Nonetheless, I sensed urgency within Indigenous communities for schools to become places of hope that provided opportunities for meaningful learning.

I have witnessed the potential of art for Indigenous students—in dance, poetry, and visual arts—to offer a means toward resilience and agency. In April 2014, I facilitated a school-wide mural project on the concept of resilience to strengthen a sense of belonging in my school community. Indigenous students from the SENĆOTEN language class and First Nations Department created beautiful, intricate murals that projected ideas of strength, resilience, and interconnected community. I was curious when the words and images on their murals spoke to a deeper voice of knowing beyond the boundaries of schooling. The visions on the murals resonated with resilience and challenged the prevalent school narratives of Indigenous students and their communities as being deficient and broken. As a teacher, as an advocate for social justice, this project turned my world upside down. These responses from students to a school-wide art project collided with and ruptured the structures in schools where Indigenous students are silenced by a colonial system of education. Where the dominant stereotypes in school languages held that Indigenous students lack resources or abilities, these students articulated how family, community, land, language, and cultural practices were places for learning and success. As other education scholars have noted (Fettes, 2015; Iskes-Barnes, 2003; Mackinlay & Barney, 2014; Tanaka, 2009; Yunkaporta, 2009), art is able to provide a venue and space for voices and articulations of strength and agency that challenges the negative stereotypes of deficiency that dominates school discourses of

Indigenous students. As a non-Indigenous teacher, I have a responsibility to learn how I can, as an ally, support interruptions to colonialist structures of power by Indigenous peoples. Additionally, I need to continue to strive for opportunities of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

### **Contextualizing the Study**

#### **Direction: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada**

Direction for this study comes from the final report by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) in 2015. The goal of the commission's work states that "[t]he truth telling and reconciliation process as part of an overall holistic and comprehensive response to the Indian Residential School legacy is a sincere indication and acknowledgement of the injustices and harms experienced by Aboriginal people and the need for continued healing" (para.1). According to the TRC website, the residential system removed children from their families, community and culture with results that included abuse, complete disconnect from identity and in many cases, death. In June 2015 Supreme Court Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin affirmed that "[t]he objective [of residential schools]– I quote from Sir John A. Macdonald, our revered forefather – was to 'take the Indian out of the child,' and thus solve what was referred to as the Indian problem" (Taylor, 2015, para.10). McLachlin went on to affirm that residential schools were an act of cultural genocide against Indigenous peoples. To rectify this terrible and shameful time period, the TRC put forward a document entitled, "*Calls to Action*" in 2015, with a list of 94 actions for governments and institutions. My study responds to two specific calls for action to schools and museums and art galleries that challenge them to revise their relationships to, and their stories and representations of Indigenous peoples. For example, *Call to Action* # 62 calls for "age-appropriate curriculum on residential

schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students" (2015, p. 8). While schools have begun to consider this call to action, there are still some serious obstacles. For example, I attended recently a presentation by middle-school students, all of settler heritage, who presented their new awareness of the residential school system. At the conclusion of the presentation, students asked the audience of educators to crumple up small pieces of paper and argued that this crumpled ruination represented Indigenous children who could never be whole (or smooth) again. Their presentation, led by a non-Indigenous teacher, presented Indigenous communities as only being wounded, unable to ever recover from trauma and thus without agency or identity beyond that of being 'victims'. Lacking were opportunities for critical conversations about White power and privilege alongside the richness of and resilience of Indigenous traditions, cultures and arts. Students were left accepting blatant negative stereotypes of Indigenous children which James and Shadd (2001) remind us "can have serious, negative consequences on individuals and groups" (p. 6). When I objected to this presentation, with an Indigenous colleague, I was told that the children were making a heartfelt attempt at reconciliation. Yet until we begin to engage in actions that make substantive changes, the worth of Indigenous communities will continue to be evaluated within Eurocentric narratives and power structures. Razack argues that "[as] long as we see ourselves as not implicated in the relations of power, as innocent, we cannot begin to walk the path of social justice and to thread our way through the complexities of power relations" (cited in Keleta-Mae, 2011, p. 41).

The TRC also recognizes the value of education beyond school settings, stating that "educating Canadians for reconciliation involves not only schools and post-

secondary institutions but also dialogue forums and public history institutions such as museums and archives” (p. 117). It goes on to say that “Properly structured, [galleries] can also invite people to explore their own worldviews, values, beliefs, and attitudes that may be barriers to healing, justice, and reconciliation” (p. 178). The TRC is assertive as well recognizing in the damaging role of museums, including galleries, to cover up the racism of Canada’s history, and yet, holds up the potential of these spaces to create substantial change.

The second call to action builds on the above and is supported by Indigenous communities for public museums and art galleries to include Indigenous voices, arts, and stories from their own perspectives (e.g., Janes, 1995; Phillips, 2011). These scholars point out how, while significant in their role to perpetuate racism and colonialism, museums are beginning to acknowledge poor decision making and exhibits. This *Call to Action #67*, contextualizes the motion for change within the AGGV:

We call upon the federal government to provide funding to the Canadian Museums Association to undertake, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, a national review of museum policies and best practices to determine the level of compliance with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and to make Recommendations. (2015a, p.8)

Finally, for the purpose of this study, the deep connection between art and social change is affirmed by the TRC (2015a): “creative expression can play a vital role in this national reconciliation, providing alternative voices, vehicles, and venues for expressing historical truths and present hopes” (p. 178). This affirms that deep engagement with the arts can support human rights, dignity, and Indigenous identity in the face of injustice. And it also

argues that “first thing that is taken away from vulnerable, unpopular or minority groups is the right to self-expression” (p. 179). This study with Indigenous artists and its resulting recommendations directly responds to this problem and how to support radical change.

### **Place: The Art Gallery of Greater Victoria**

The second context of this study is the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (AGGV), which sits on the territories of the Lekwungen peoples, today known as the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations. Clover and Bell (2015) argue that “conceived in elitist provenance [public art galleries] have been charged with everything from social exclusion to sanitizing history, from legitimizing what counts as knowledge and has cultural and aesthetic value to reinforcing existing power structures” (p. 1). This statement fits the AGGV as, like most other public art galleries, it has been a traditional bastion of colonialism. The main building of the gallery is a mansion, built in 1889 and donated in 1951 by the Spencer family, Welsh settlers to Victoria. The gallery has added buildings to the mansion, but the imposing colonial architecture is a reminder of early British hegemony in Victoria. It was founded at a time when Indigenous peoples did not have the right to vote—that would not come about until 1960—and the neighborhood surrounding the gallery upheld a whites-only policy.

In trying to understand where my study is of value, it was important to understand the content and scope of the gallery’s art program for schools. The gallery had been going through a number of changes, after the hiring of a new chief curator Michelle Jacques in 2012 and subsequently, bringing onboard Jennifer Van de Pol as the educator for school and family programs in 2014. The AGGV’s educational program for school children, titled *Gallery in the Schools*, had been running for approximately 35 years with no

updates to either the curriculum or pedagogical delivery. The package consisted of a thematic series of two-dimensional images that were delivered to students through visual thinking strategies for half an hour, followed by art making for another half hour. The images in the boxed set were Eurocentric in nature and reaffirmed a colonial narrative of Canada. The program was a one-time offering, implemented by a large team of volunteers who were almost entirely of European ancestry. Volunteers learned about the subject matter with directions on teaching children. There were no follow up learning sessions for educators as they were expected to follow a fairly rigid script. For delivery, educators would pick up the package at the AGGV, drive out to schools and deliver the curriculum to children. For busy teachers, the program was quite well received as it could fit easily into their teaching schedule. While the program was successful in terms of the numbers of schools and children reached, for many reasons it was not being adapted to include an Indigenous worldview or respond to the challenges set out by the TRC or Indigenous communities.

The task was not to tweak but to begin the creation of an entirely new art program that would begin to mirror the other activities in the AGGV and to challenge normative colonial narratives. In 2014, for example, the AGGV co-curated the exhibit *Urban Thunderbirds/Ravens in a Material World* with Coast Salish artists lessLIE and Dylan Thomas and Kwakwaka'wakw artists Rande Cook and Francis Dick. The work of these artists shattered many of the restrictive narratives of Indigenous art as mere relics of the past as they provocatively explored issues of identity. In November 2015, the AGGV offered "Performing Femininity". Led by Mohawk artist Lindsay Delaronde this workshop explored issues of identity across Indigenous and settler women's lives through art-making. In 2016, the installation of the *sauna/smokehouse Pałsĩžalma (The Fire is*

*Just Starting*) by artists Klehwetua, Rodney Sayers, and Emily Luce disrupted the sanctity of the colonial mansion space. This study was a natural fit with the AGGV's shifts to include Indigenous installations that centred Indigenous voice and provoked discussions around colonialism.

### **Research Question and Objectives**

The broad question that guided this study was: "How do the values and beliefs of Indigenous artists and educators indigenize and decolonize the AGGV Gallery in the Schools program and thus support its goals for cultural justice and change?". Related to these concepts, I also considered a secondary question: "How can a new arts-based curriculum that emerges from an historically colonial space become a tool for justice, decolonization, and empowerment?"

My main objectives were:

- To learn from Indigenous artists and teachers what changes should be made to the AGGV School program
- To provide recommendations to the AGGV as a way to strengthen and build the school program curriculum.

This study also aims to contribute to literature on art gallery pedagogy. While the number of studies of critical social practices in art galleries and museums is growing (e.g. Clover, Sanford, Bell & Johnson, 2016; Sandell & Nightingale, 2012), there is a paucity of research on Indigenizing pedagogies within these institutions, particularly through the recommendations of Indigenous artists and educators.

To better understand the needs and goals of the AGGV, my first participant was Ms. Van de Pol, Educator, School and Family Programs at the AGGV. Together, we identified a number of Indigenous artists and educators who had either exhibited, worked

or volunteered with the gallery. Additionally, it was important that my study participants be familiar with the TRC and current discourses around decolonization. While the gallery is not exclusive to local artistic representation, I was fortunate to secure two participants from the Lekwungen and WSÁNEĆ communities. Finally, I ensured there was a balanced representation of gender among participants, including four females and three males.

### **Overview of the Research Project**

In chapter two of this study, I outline my theoretical framework and provide a survey of relevant literature through the lenses of decolonizing and critical theories. First, as my study examines social justice within an art curriculum, I consider social justice debates within the current Canadian context and in particular, why a better understanding of justice theories is essential for decolonizing work in art galleries. Next, I examine themes in the literature related to how art education can work to challenge colonialism. Finally, I focus on the possibility of true Indigeneity in museums through: activist art, Indigenous art education and teaching education to implement Indigenous-centred pedagogy in museums. Throughout this study, I use the terms museum and gallery interchangeably.

In Chapter Three, the methodology and methods chapter, I describe my blended research model. The overall framework of my study is ‘community-based research’, which has at its core “a focus on social change, transformation or resistance by those whose knowledge has been marginalized or excluded “(Tandon, Hall, Singh & Lapore, 2016, p. 28). The primary principle of community-based research (CBR) is that knowledge originates in the community and it is this knowledge that one can use to make change that benefits the community. Connected to the premise of CBR, this study was grounded in decolonizing methodologies to recognize and respond to the challenges

faced by Indigenous peoples from historical traumas and ongoing colonialism. Additionally, as a Non-Indigenous woman, decolonizing methodologies created a greater degree of ethical accountability with my participants. In this chapter I also outline how I gathered the data through interviews with Indigenous artists and educators who had a recent relationship with the AGGV.

In Chapter 4, I describe how I analyzed my data and Chapter 5 is a discussion of my findings. Chapter six concludes my study, and in this chapter, I make recommendations for the AGGV and suggestions for future studies.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study, as a specific response to calls for Indigenous justice, contributes to knowledge and support wider movements for educational reform. It responds directly to the ground breaking TRC (2015a) *Calls for Action* and *Final Recommendations* reports. The TRC invited artists to submit works related to their experiences at Indian residential schools, including the schools' legacy or impact. The commission made a strong statement on their website to the importance of art in the healing process: "The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) believes that artists have a profound contribution to make in expressing both truth and reconciliation" (2013, para. 1). I believe this study can serve as a useful guide for curators and educators in their integration of the TRC's recommendations. The research and literature on how the TRC recommendations, especially in the arts, are being implemented is just emerging. My study will contribute to these very important discussions by giving clear examples of how art in an educational context will support reconciliation.

This study is also important because museums and art galleries are under pressure to create new and more accountable relationships and programmes with Indigenous

peoples. But the gallery must work hard to gain their trust, and this project contributes to the development of authentic relationships by engaging a group of Indigenous teachers and artists in conversation. As the AGGV enters into dialogue with Indigenous artists and educators to create curriculum, the gallery will need to redefine their relationships and outdated hierarchies of knowledges. Fromm, Golding, and Rekdal (2014) outline how these initiatives may look through the negotiation of power and control in museums and call out for more scholarly debates on justice. While some momentum has been achieved in beginning to address wrongs in these cultural institutions, I have identified from my literature search a lack of academic research related to ways an Indigenous centred art program can work towards the goals for decolonization set by museums and galleries. This study provides clarity about the potential for cultural institutions to build accountable relationships with Indigenous communities as clear acts of decolonization that can begin to create strong, pedagogically sound art programs.

This study is significant as well in that it contributes ideas that can be taken up in the education of the educators and facilitators who will deliver the AGGV's Gallery in the Schools program. Curriculum in British Columbia is currently undergoing transformation to include Indigenous perspectives, learning principles, and content. As stated in the BC Ministry of Education document *Aboriginal Worldviews and Perspectives in the Classroom: Moving Forward*, "The First Peoples Principles of Learning provided a crucial lens for their teacher teams when drafting curricula, and all curriculum teams included Aboriginal representation" (p. 7). The new K-9 curriculum was voluntary with support offered to teachers in 2015 and became mandatory for the school year as of September 2016. Secondary education followed with implementation from 2017 until being finalized for all grades in the school year starting in September

2019. Therefore, to offer programs that are relevant to schools in BC, educators and volunteer educators at the AGGV will benefit from the recommendations of this study.

Finally, my research contributes to the current movement in critical pedagogies (Guilherme, 2017; Rexhepi & Torres, 2011; Tarlau, 2014). First, by recognizing how Indigenous voices enrich and deepen education, the potential to recognize further minoritized and subaltern voices is affirmed. Learning becomes an ethical space, as defined by Kerr (2014): “The ethical space comes into being by the affirmation of alternate world views, characterized by different knowledge systems, cultural philosophies, and practices, beyond the predominantly Eurocentric underpinnings of many current, publicly funded institutions” (p. 251). Second, educational institutions may integrate values that create caring communities rather than continue to exist as conveyor belt institutions, where both students and teachers are dehumanized (Dewhurst, 2010; Burgess & Addison, 2007). As an alternative to the Western values, the 3Rs, Indigenous values of relationship, responsibility and reciprocity may be woven into school curricula (Cottrell, Preston, & Pearce, 2012). Finally, discourses of justice, service, and praxis are well served in the arts and will encourage creative and imaginative thinking. As Audre Lorde (1994), African American poet and feminist, eloquently stated, “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house” (p.110). While art can of course uphold dominant power relations, what the participants of this study show is it that it can also be the right tool to disrupt and dismantle those shackles of power.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

I begin this chapter by outlining the theoretical framework in which this study is grounded. I then outline some of the colonial antecedents of museums and the literature of scholars who call for museums to be more socially responsible. Most specifically, I explore how new forms of museum education are needed to decolonize these institutions. Next, I move to a discussion of studies relevant to this study of museum art education and their 'Indigenization'. As the Art in Schools program crosses both schools and the AGGV's program I examine discourses of art education that link art education to social justice and change in diverse contexts, bringing particular attention to the literature on Indigenous art education studies. Of ultimate importance in this study and for museums is how these programs might be implemented and from the literature, gallery educator education is considered to be a crucial aspect to implement any new art program. Therefore, I conclude with a discussion of how educators can implement an arts education program like the AGGV's "Gallery in the Schools" based on suggestions from recent literature. Woven into my discussions are statements from the TRC since this is, as noted in the introduction, a primary context of this study.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is grounded in two key theories: decolonizing theory and critical theory. Colonization, according to scholars such as Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2000), is the domination and exploitive takeover of land and Indigenous peoples. The antidote, decolonization, works to re-localize Indigenous struggles, centre Indigenous peoples and their relationships, and compel accountability in both formal and informal settings

(Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel, 2014). Morgensen (2012) adds that decolonizing theory “seeks to fundamentally transform the institutional and epistemic conditions of life and thought for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people on lands where all live relationally, in ways that settler societies and their governance cannot contain” (p. 806). In other words, for settler institutions such as the AGGV to authentically respond to pressures to change, they must work through the lens of decolonizing theory and be informed by Indigenous scholars, researchers, and communities. Tuck and Yang (2012) further complicate the challenges of decolonization, stating that “Decolonization brings about the repatriation of Indigenous land and life; it is not a metaphor for other things we want to do to improve our societies and schools” (p. 1). While this definition of decolonization is clear, it is difficult to materialize. However, any other consideration, according to Tuck and Yang, risks the cloudiness of “metaphor invad[ing] decolonialization” or the danger of “recenter[ing] whiteness” (p. 3). Therefore, it is a complex process for the AGGV and other cultural institutions to create pedagogy that supports the goals of decolonization.

Even when institutions and white settlers are open to change and relinquishing control, Indigenous scholars, including Alfred (2009), Tuck & Yang (2012), and Corntassel (Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel, 2014), suggest that settler communities must struggle with the concept of incommensurability. Incommensurability represents the unsettled state of land claims in Canada. For Tuck and Yang (2012), “an ethic of incommensurability” clearly frames these complicated discourses, and additionally prioritizes what is distinct and sovereign for decolonization in social justice projects. This concept also implies how differences must be recognized and discussed for any authentic actions and praxis towards justice to be taken. Corntassel (2012) identifies how the

concept of sovereignty is a guiding beacon to restore and regenerate Indigenous nationhood. The definition of sovereignty, articulated by Joanne Barker (2005) of the Lenape nation, supports the focus of my study. Barker (2005) first points out that not all Indigenous people share the same concept of sovereignty and, like the term reconciliation, sovereignty evolved out of colonial legal and theological discourses (Alfred, 2005; Barker, 2005). However, while complicated, Barker (2005) defines sovereignty as the legal and social rights for political, economic and cultural self-determination (p.1). As I will point out in my discussions chapter, sovereignty is an important term to evaluate how Indigenous voices will inform pedagogy at the AGGV.

Critical theory is a social and pedagogical theory that emerged from a Marxist analysis of the power dynamics between capital and labour; it expanded the concept of power and sought to examine underlying relations between peoples, to get underneath the capitalist social structure, to demystify surface forms of equality, and ultimately to support radical social transformation (Devetak, Burke, & George, 2015; Giroux, 2003; Keeling, 2014; Morrow & Brown, 1994). Critical theory does not propose a rigid, prescribed framework as it crosses disciplines to interpret meaning in human life, and include intersectionalities of race, gender, and class (Morrow & Brown, 1994). Giroux (2003) adds that because we cannot escape historical conditions, we need to take a critical approach in our explorations of contemporary contexts and political moments. Critical theory effectively supports my research to contextualize the recent work by the TRC, the calls by Indigenous communities for museums to decolonize, and the AGGV's intent to create a responsive and critically centred pedagogy.

Critical theory includes education as an essential site for social analysis and change. Essentially, critical pedagogy is concerned with power and politics in education

and is concerned with the ability to critique and question power relations (McLaren, 1994; Carr, Pluim & Howard, 2014). Based on the foundational work of Paulo Freire (2000), two ideas define critical pedagogy. First, teaching is a political act and education is not neutral or value free (Rhem, 2013). Therefore, when teachers present material through a critical lens that examines power, representation and voice, students will learn to think critically about social and philosophical issues (Guilherme, 2017). Scholars point out the importance of linking pedagogy to social change, contextualizing critical learning in the experiences and histories of students, and viewing institutions as sites of contestation, resistance, and possibility (Breunig, 2005; Freire, 2000; Giroux, 2003; Rexhepi & Torres, 2011; Tarlau, 2014). When students are able to make personal historical connections to social issues, they will have more motivation to develop critical lens and identify the formation and implications of social issues. Equally important is the inclusion of students who have been marginalized by class, race, and gender and who are seldom invited to participate in educational discourses, pedagogical practices, and institutional relations (Giroux, 2003). This is a salient point for my research: to consider how curriculum might honour the voices of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students who have been silenced in education and how their contributions can create a richer learning environment. While not a technique, an example of critical pedagogy that centralizes student voice would be Freire's (2000) concepts of dialogue, where learning shifts from a banking model of education to cooperative and collaborative models. As such, Guilherme (2017) proposes that teachers should follow Freire's suggestion to teach students to "read" the world with a critical lens, and "write the world" in a new, more just way. This proposal works well in art education, as students learn to analyze (read) artworks and create (write) art that speaks to justice. I will expand on critical pedagogy

related to the types of education needed for facilitators and teachers to deliver programs like the AGGV.

While the lens of critical theory is essential to this study, I am aware of ways that critical theory, emerging from Eurocentric thought, can potentially act as a colonial replacement and re-assimilate Indigenous theory (Tuck & Gaztambide- Fernandez, 2013). Additionally, while critical theory can help me analyze how power is used to fuel oppression and deny the rights of Indigenous peoples, it cannot help me understand how healthy conceptions of power are defined by Indigenous communities, or how changes in power structures led from Indigenous standpoints can lead to true justice in Canada.

### **Museums and Colonialism**

The commissioners who wrote the final recommendations for the TRC (2015) and other scholars (Phillips, 2011; Clover and Bell, 2015; Janes, 2009; Marstine, 2017; Fromm, Golding & Rekdal, 2014) draw attention to the deep colonial antecedents and roles of museums. Problematically, Indigenous art and culture have been used as tools to support these narratives, to encourage assimilation and a “unified” Eurocentric vision of Canada, or appropriated to enforce imperialist nostalgia, and the view that Indigenous people would soon vanish from North American society (Hutchinson, 2000; Lonetree, 2012). Museums have been implicit in this narrative and must take responsibility for their role in perpetuating colonialism. As Johnson (2016) argues, “museum[s] makes certain discourses, representations, behaviours, and interactions available and curtails others; however, power circulates within and outside the museum” (p. 132). Likewise, the TRC affirms that while “the responsibility of all museums [is] to keep historical archives, yet in the past, museum documentation has supported an “architecture of imperialism” (p. 132). Global discourses around colonialism in museums have been similar, and served to

uphold museums as elitist and exclusionary spaces, to be repositories of power for a select and privileged audiences (Clover, 2015; Fromm et al., 2014). Yet, museums have a choice, to either remain entrenched in colonialism or to reinvent their purposes and document society in a way that forwards equity and social justice.

Increasingly, museums have come under a great deal pressure to be accountable to the calls for justice in society, within their own walls and beyond. This is partially why the AGGV is looking to change and a major reason for this study. A number of scholars outline the ways in which museums can be more responsive to issues of social justice (Phillips, 2011; Clover and Bell, 2015; Janes, 2009; and Fromm, Golding & Rekdal, 2014). For example, Golding and Rekdal (2014) argue that as historic sites of oppression, museums must seek to include the perspectives of those who have been subjected to injustices in society and museum discourses. Marstine (2017) asserts that museums who authentically seek reconciliation will employ a critical theoretical framework to move towards co-creative engagement -- “[C]ritical practice is such an effort towards reconciliation and generates the potential to reinvent museum spaces in which similarities and differences are articulated and felt, towards constructing new shared imaginaries” (p. 27). In *Museum Pieces: Toward the Indigenization of Canadian Museums*, Philips’ (2011) explores how Indigeneity in the museum space addresses issues of power imbalances inherent in colonialism. She highlights the act of inviting communities to centre their worldviews in decision-making and to create relationships of accountability as ways to reimagine how museums can better reflect the full richness of Canadian history.

Other studies illuminate, however, the challenges in museums as they strive to change their institutional goals and practices. Ash-Milby & Philips (2017) and Wrightson

(2017a, 2017b) show that settler colonialism and liberal values of recognition and inclusion in art museums too often fail to disturb ongoing colonial power relations. Ash-Milby and Philips (2017) challenge us to ask, “On whose terms should inclusion take place? What does sovereignty look like in terms of institutional practice?” (p. 12).

### **Museum Education**

The TRC (2015c) makes a strong statement on the complementary roles of museums and education to contribute to a more just society when it states: “educating Canadians for reconciliation involves not only schools and post-secondary institutions but also dialogue forums and public history institutions such as museums and archives” (p. 117). A number of scholars also challenge museums to change their pedagogies to become more inclusive and meaningful educational opportunities and to position them as sites of struggle (e.g. Clover, 2015; Johnson, 2016). For example, Johnson (2016) argues that as “spaces of cultural politics, museums are not merely sites for the consumption of dominant ideologies and race, class, and gender biases, but locations for struggle, debate, dialogue, transformation, critical questioning, and ideology critique” (p. 133). Hubbard (2009) adds that museums need to promote critical thinking, which can be enabled through arts-based practices, but points out the necessity for carefully and intentional planning these if they are to intervene and challenge oppressive practices. What is missing from the literature that calls for critical education in museums is attention to children and younger learners.

The *Calls To Action* brought forward the need to create spaces of equity and healing in museums, yet Indigenous communities had long before opened the doors to engage with museums as contested learning spaces. The Indians of Canada Pavilion at Expo 67 was a pivotal moment for Indigenous activism and concurrently, sought to teach visitors about the atrocities of residential schools (Philips, 2012; Ruffo, 2008; Miller &

Rutherford, 2006). The Canadian government aspired to include a deep Indigenous presence but only as a sterile and positive one-sided narrative of Indian Affairs policies (Rutherford & Miller, 2006). The outcomes proved otherwise, as “the Indians of Canada Pavilion at Expo 67, an Indigenous-led celebration of survival, mounted a critique of historical and present-day settler colonialism nested within the Centennial’s unabashed patriotism” (Griffith, 2015, p. 172). Griffiths (2015) illustrates how the main intent for Indigenous organizers was pedagogical, aiming to expose the damaging effects of residential schools. While the government reined in control on what was happening outside the exhibit space, by some oversight Indigenous communities had complete autonomy in the pavilion. While visitors saw stereotypical and safe images of Indigenous peoples around Expo 67, inside the exhibit “they were also confronted with images of unsmiling children in tattered clothing on impoverished reserves, and by a gauntlet of signs that challenged their comfortable delusions about Canada's 240,000 Indigenous citizens” (*After 150 years*, 2017, n/p). This exhibit was a monumental turning point as Indigenous communities learned to activate around political issues and create an intentional critical learning space.

The second exhibit that had interesting pedagogical outcomes was the poorly planned Glenbow exhibition in 1988 entitled “*The Spirit Sings: Artistic Traditions of Canada’s First Peoples*”. While the curative goals of the exhibit were to educate the public on the richness of Indigenous cultures during the Olympics, the real outcomes were activism, dissent and boycotts by Indigenous communities (Johnson, 2016; Wrightson, 2017; Philips, 2006). Misrepresentation was one contested issue in the exhibit. Additionally, as Shell Oil had sponsored the exhibit, Indigenous activists protested the effects of oil drilling on their environment and community well-being.

Ultimately, Indigenous communities learned how to further their sovereignty in museum spaces, and museum officials gained awareness of the education needed for staff in order to create respectful consultation with Indigenous communities.

### **Art That Challenges Oppression & Art Education**

A number of studies point to the potential of learning through art and art-making to bring about change. Naila Keleta-Mae (2011), for example, has discovered how art opens spaces that dominant discourses attempt to foreclose; in her theatre classes she challenges students to examine historical, political, and cultural discourses. According to Clover and Stalker (2007), through their study of fabric arts & gender justice, making art creates opportunities for women to discover counter-narratives that are emancipatory and empowering. Similarly, Darts (2004) proposes how art projects that counter hegemony and oppression provide examples of participants who begin to resist ideology and assert their power.

For scholars who see the potential of art education, the concept of imagination is often central. Métis scholar and artist David Garneau (2012) argues that “what art does—and what is difficult to measure—is that it changes our individual and collective imaginaries by particles, and these new pictures of the world can influence behaviour” (as cited in Hill & McCall, 2015, p. ix). The ‘uncolonialized imagination’ is a term used by literature educator Van Zanten Gallagher (2007), who challenged her students to examine their assumptions and make the familiar -- the colonial world -- strange. Likewise, Iseke-Barnes (2009) found through her storytelling research that art serves as a tool for remembering the past and can assemble the collective imagination required to engage in contemporary struggles. Wyman (2004) calls this process the “defiant imagination” that can “defy the constraints of the everyday” toward a new, realized life (p. 6). To envision

change, Haiven and Khasnabish (2014) propose the radical imagination as a means to “allow us to project ourselves beyond our physical and temporal limits, it also allows us to envision the future, individually and collectively” (p. 14). Finally, Gallagher (2007) sums up how these different ideas around the imagination are powerful: “[t]hese dramatic imaginations are not just statements; they are actions that draw on the conscious and the subconscious to envision new possibilities” (p. 86). Stimulating the imagination through art can transform students from passive onlookers to engaged and active change makers.

Art education that begins with a student’s experiences offers the chance for self-reflection and identity formation (Dewhurst, 2011; Darts, 2004). As such, students can achieve a deepening awareness of the social realities that shape their lives and enable them to “learn to resist oppressive power that subjugates or exploits [them] or other people” (Garber, 2004, p. 375). When students map out their identity through art, an opportunity arises for them to challenge their political, historical, and cultural frames (Keleta-Mae, 2011; Leake, 2014; Stewart, 2012;). Vettraino, Linds, and Goulet (2013) affirm the potential for self-determinacy in art education: “Students’ freedom and authority to choose what story they will share or show means authority is always being negotiated in the in-between space between the stories of the students and the structure of the activities” (p. 195). According to these scholars, introspection is a necessary step in critically informed art education.

Dewhurst (2011) weighs out the potential of social justice art education, stating that, “as long as the process of making art offers participants a way to construct knowledge, critically analyze an idea, and take action in the world, then they are engaged in a practice of social justice art making” (p. 2). Clover and Stalker (2007) challenge the assumption of art making as only to further artistic skills or to produce a product, and

point out the links between art, education, and social justice by referring to culture as a tool and site for critical learning. When people gain the skills to challenge knowledge claims, they may shift from being passive, uncritical viewers of art to learn the “required intellectual and creative tools to examine, challenge, and transform themselves” and be able to challenge societal inequality (Darts, 2004; Dewhurst, 2011). Consequently, when the act of art making opens up a discourse in an oppressive environment, it becomes an act of defiance that allows students not only to document social change but potentially to challenge conditions of inequality and to inform and shape social discourses of justice (Darts, 2007; Dewhurst, 2011; Martinez, 2007; Stewart, 2012). Darts (2004) further supports this claim as students learn to “[open] up education spaces to examine the layers of sociocultural, political, aesthetic, historical and pedagogical complexities so that students might perceive and meaningfully engage within in the ideological and cultural struggles embedded within the visual” (p. 319).

While the possibilities of art are tremendous and appealing, scholars remain vigilant on the potential of art education realigns oppression rather than act as a liberating force. Gaztambide-Fernandez (2013), for example, warns against simplistic pro-arts educational rhetoric which could hold up neoliberal agendas of privilege and as a consequence, continually reify hierarchical conceptions of artistic practices in education and broader society. Additionally, Keleta-Mae (2011) looks at the products of traditional art education and reacts against goals that are focused entirely on Eurocentric aesthetics.

### **Indigenous Art Education**

Literature on Indigenous art education is limited in Canada because as Art History professor and mixed blood scholar of Lakota/Scottish descent Robertson points out, most writing by Indigenous artists is not published in academic texts but appears in exhibition

catalogues (2012). For Snepvangers (2016), 'Indigenous perspectives' is a coined academic term that allow us to discuss decolonizing efforts in curriculum and pedagogies. This is critical because Indigenous people have had little choice but to engage with Western institutions and are under pressure to teach Indigenous art, history and media that fits into Eurocentric models. Gaztambide-Fernandez (2013) suggests how the rhetoric of art education gets caught up in a positivist logic that enforces normative views, disregarding the complexity of culture, and therefore only serves to reinstate social hierarchies and narrow assessments of learning. As an example, in the Latrobe art gallery program of Australia, inquiry is a central focus of the gallery's pedagogy (Edwards & Foster, 2014). While consultation with Indigenous elders is mentioned as "time to time" and the programs use Indigenous narratives, these programs appear to be independent of colonialism and somehow politically and culturally more neutral. Yet, neutrality is not an option in Indigenous art education. As Freire (2000) points out education always carries value and without direct challenge, will reaffirm oppressive narratives.

Contextualizing Indigenous art education in historical discourses may push back at Eurocentrism. In the past, art history focused on Western knowledges, which appeared as essentialist, separate from social, political and cultural contexts (Turketo & Smith, 2014; Robertson & Weber, 2007; Smith, 2010; Snepvangers, 2016; Lovell, 2014). Art was seen as devoid of any social context or responsibility for perpetuating racism and stereotypes. Situated in Western hegemony, these portrayals of art were an abuse of power, particularly when historians and educators supported these representations to the public and inevitably reinforced one-sided narratives (Iseke-Barnes, 2009). Indigenous art education must be contextualized politically and culturally, particularly within the historical discourses of colonialism (Smith, 2010; Robertson,2012). Consequently,

educators will draw attention to “the implications of the historically layered convergences of Indigenous and Western meanings that come to constitute understandings of Indigenous peoples and social realities” (Nakata, Nakata, Veech & Bolt, 2012, p. 14). In this light, according to Nakata (2006), Indigenous art education has the potential to draw attention to how lenses of Western knowledge systems and ontologies have historically defined Indigenous identity. The result will be a richer understanding of Indigeneity as well as social injustices to Indigenous peoples. Without a contextualization of the deep history of racism and settler history in Canada, students will have no way to understand contemporary Indigenous art that ‘talks back’ to colonial history (Roberston, 2012).

The points of entry of Indigenous art education will be very different for students if they are Indigenous or non-Indigenous. Lovell (2014) values Indigenous Standpoint Theory, which locates the personal, cultural, social, historical and political experiences and attributes of each Indigenous person in relation to other knowledge systems and discourses. As art is a critical element of Indigenous identity, Indigenous students will gain faster entry into contextualized discourses of colonization and art (Turketo & Smith, 2014; Barton & Baguely (2017). Likewise, from a Maori perspective in New Zealand, Kiri Turketo and Jill Smith (2014) point out how Maoris will reach their potential when ‘Maori for Maori’ is recognized in art education and success is not limited or pre-defined and compared to the markers of colonialism. Alternatively, when Non-Indigenous students and teachers learn from this theoretical framework, Smith (2010) suggests they will be lead to through a search of self and identity to fully appreciate the context of Indigenous art and peoples. Iseke-Barnes (2009) advises how learners must engage with Indigenous peoples and knowledges from their local area and further, engage in projects where they explore their own relationship to culture and history. However, Clover (2015)

points out how the potential for systematic “othering” to uphold existing power structures is every present in pedagogy and we must ask “what is beyond othering?”. The implications are that Indigenous art education should lead to a deep personal reflection, from both Indigenous and settler students, in the deep complexity of Canada’s history.

The central concern of this thesis is how to re-image, through the eyes and ideas of Indigenous artists and educators, an Indigenous centred art education program for the AGGV. Battiste (2002) advocates for pedagogical values and modes that are inherently Indigenous such as collectivity, reciprocity, and respect. Yunkaporta (2009) proposes that western educators develop curriculum by using narratives, visualization through images, symbols and metaphors, place-responsive, environmental practice, and connections to local values, needs and knowledges through innovative and interdisciplinary approaches. Robertson and Weber (2007) advocate for primary sources of knowledge in art education such as language learning, diaries and films by Indigenous peoples with an emphasis on the presence of Elders. A final recommendation for Indigenous art education is from Iseke-Barnes (2009) who cautions, “The shallower the knowledge, the more difference is found between cultures. The deeper the knowledge, the more common ground is found between cultures” (p.161). Deep quality in learning experiences is far richer than numerous superficial learning experiences.

### **Facilitator Education**

To avoid re-colonising museum education programs, particularly arts-based education, scholars argue that there will have to be in place a cautious and thoughtful approach to teacher education in art education. Despite the importance of why Indigenous material must be delivered in art galleries, such as the TRC *Calls to Action*, there is a scarcity of research done to help museum educators understand their role and implement pedagogy.

While research exists for teachers to integrate Indigenous material and knowledges in formal school settings, Smith (2010) notes a paucity in theoretical and evidence-based research on how educators might deliver Indigenous education that is art-focused, particularly so in museums. However, it seems that while the setting -- (museum vs. school) and goals (formal vs. informal learning) -- may be different, there are enough parallels to consider how educators in art galleries may proceed with Indigenous art education.

An important determinant in critical pedagogy is the role and work of teachers. According to scholars, teachers will either work actively for social transformation or, often by default, support oppressive structures and ideologies that perpetuate poverty, racial apartheid, and inequality (e.g., Keeling, 2014). Teachers must be able to implement the lens of critical theory to resist pressures to be silenced in the top-down hierarchy of schools and support students “to learn a range of critical capacities to expand human agency and recover the role of teacher as oppositional technician” (Rexhepi & Torres, 2011, p. 7). However, Tarlau (2014) suggests that “while the hope is that critical pedagogy will offer teachers tools to help build a more equal society, scholars of critical pedagogy often fail to make the connection between radical educational practices and concrete examples of social change” (p. 372). Yet, as adult education scholars Clover, Sanford, Bell and Johnson (2016), Clover and Stalker (2007) and Freire (2000) argue, the arts and creative cultural institutions such as the AGGV have the potential to support radical change in teachers’ abilities to deliver critical pedagogy.

Even when teachers are open to change, studies indicate the inadequacies in teacher education. For example, in his doctoral research on the use of carving to centralize Indigenous knowledges, Yunkaporta (2009) found “[t]here is very little

information available to teachers explaining how to teach using Aboriginal perspectives, as opposed to simply teaching Aboriginal content from a western perspective” (p.161). Australian scholar Jill Smith (2010) argues that teaching about Indigenous art forms is different from making art forms that look Indigenous. She points to the example of using paper towel rolls to copy totem poles as an example of poor pedagogy. Interestingly, Iseke-Barnes (2009) takes up the idea of children making totem poles in her experience at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), where she discovered enormous papier mache totem poles in the teacher education library. As this art project was so disconnected from Indigenous teachings and knowledges, it only served to reaffirm stereotypes. Yunkaporta (2009) advocates that learners must go through Indigenous processes of learning for effective points of entry rather than just be presented with isolated Indigenous content. Even when a lesson is steeped in Indigenous knowledges, Smith (2010) asserts that Non-Indigenous students cannot directly create Indigenous art but can discover ideas and inspiration for personalized artwork. Likewise, students should not replicate Indigenous symbols and will avoid tokenism (recolonizing) through a deeper search into the meaning and messages of Indigenous artwork (Turketo & Smith; 2014; Smith, 2010).

Recognizing this gap in teacher education to integrate Indigenous perspectives and art making, Donna Matthewson-Mitchell (2008) identifies similar demands and challenges in museum art education. She points out how museum educators have experienced the following obstacles when working with school groups: minimal investment of effort by students, general rather than specific goals (ill-defined objectives) by museum administrators, and teachers’ inability to integrate museum material into classroom learning. As a solution, Rika Burnham and Elliott Kai-Kee (2005) assert the

importance of skilled educators: “As museum educators, we are obliged to create a structure of engagement, a means of inviting people to appreciate and understand great works” (p. 68). Further, Lauren Allen and Kevin Crowley (2013) point out how museum educators need a community of practice as well as a professional vocabulary and pedagogy to capitalize on the unique affordances of learning in informal settings.

Therefore, meaningful educational experiences for teachers and students will occur when there is sufficient educational programming focused on how to use integrated approaches between museums and schools, and where appropriate structures of support are in place. Teacher workshops with museums are increasing, with goals to share scholarship and skills, and to enlist teachers in planning their own use of museum resources (Sheppard, 2010). However, to date, as Clover & Bell (2015) point out, the potential for galleries and museums to embrace “critical, liberatory and confrontational pedagogical interventions” (p.14) has been under-explored and under-theorized.

How might this gap between critical pedagogy, decolonization and museum education be addressed? According to McLaughlin (2013), educators must begin with the social context of colonial history and impacts of racism. To aid this process, researchers Barney and Mackinley (2014) refer to Freire’s proposal for conscientization, implemented in critical pedagogy: “a process of developing not only consciousness, but a consciousness which is understood to transform reality and provoke social change – on the political projects of both decolonization and critical pedagogy and the critical pedagogy work of Giroux” (p. 120). Further, Joe Kincheloe (2005) stated that if educators try to keep politics out of learning spaces, dominant politics and status quo will remain the guiding force. Therefore, Non-Indigenous educators must consider Corntassel, Kaur Dhamoon, & Snelgrove’s (2014) concept of “insurgent education” as a guiding

force in which, as Morgensen (2012) writes, “discomforting moments of Indigenous truth-telling challenge the colonial status quo – inspire activism and reclamation of Indigenous histories and homelands, rather than just ‘recognition’ which may create a space where indigeneity makes no difference to settler rule” (p. 810). The idea of praxis posited by Freire, in his seminal work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2000), is well acknowledged in recommendations for educational institutions that are Indigenizing their programs. Before even considering how educators may implement programs, museums must act to increase the numbers of Indigenous educators (Iseke-Barnes, 2009; Nakata, 2009). Just as important is the social positioning of Indigenous educators within the organization of a museum (Nakata, 2007). Scholars argue that by consulting with Indigenous educators and communities, non-Indigenous educators can be equipped with knowledge and confidence to provide students with a culturally rich learning environment (Harrington & Chixapkaid, 2013; Ledward & McLaughlin, 2013). McLaughlin (2013) and Tanaka (2009) argue how teachers must give up being experts. This proposal ties to recommendations that educators must work through their bias through a critical lens that focuses on cultural position, power and bias (Smith, 2010; Tanaka, 2009; Nakata, 2007). Keleta-Mae sites Razack, “[as] long as we see ourselves as not implicated in the relations of power, as innocent, we cannot begin to walk the path of social justice and to thread out way through the complexities of power relations” (Keleta-Mae, 2011, p. 41). Therefore, practitioners must be “willing to cultivate an engaged practice of reflexivity; seeing oneself and other, oneself in relation to the other, interrogating assumptions, and remaining open to possibilities” (Saraeno, 2012, p. 263).

### **Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods**

In this chapter, I trace how I arrived at and applied a framework of decolonizing and community-based and participatory research methodologies, and outline the approaches to my study of Indigenizing the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. I begin by discussing the historical negative impacts and complexities of research with Indigenous communities and draw out insights of Indigenous scholars to situate the choices I made, to ensure that my research study was ethical and accountable.

#### **Impact of Colonialism: Creating Accountable Research**

Colonialism is inseparable from the evolution of scientific methods of research. Absolon and Willett (2005) point out how both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers who “tackle any facet of Indigenous study must have a critical analysis of colonialism and an understanding of Western scientific research as a mechanism of colonization” (p. 119). Additionally, Strega and Brown (2005) claim that researchers cannot remain neutral or hide behind a “methodological claim to objectivity, neutrality, and gender and race-blindness” (p. 5). Rather, these scholars suggest how “research cannot challenge relations of dominance and subordination unless it also challenges the hegemony of current research paradigms” (p. 10).

As Indigenous scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) states, research is a dirty word for many Indigenous communities. The contested nature of research is an outcome of Enlightenment scientific values that sought to categorize Indigenous peoples as subhuman. Additionally, Western dominant perspectives have perpetuated the notion of Indigenous cultures as relics of the past (Harrington & Chixapkaid, 2013). Research may do nothing to improve the lives of those who are the subjects of the research and simply

continue cycles of past oppression. Smith suggests that any researcher involved with Indigenous communities must have an analysis of imperialism and its consequences on Indigenous peoples to completely understand the complexity of research and of knowledge building. While critical qualitative methodologies have challenged the validity of and the power held by positivist methodologies, these critical methodologies continue to be centred by and compete with a universal Eurocentric model of research.

Marie Battiste (2013) takes this further, arguing that Indigenous epistemologies cannot just be seen as opposite to colonialism; they serve a far more complex role in terms of reconceptualizing the resilience and self-reliance of Indigenous peoples, and underscoring “the importance of their own philosophies, heritages, and educational processes” (p. 5). Likewise, creating Indigenous knowledge and research within Western institutions is bound by the limits of colonial languages (Kovach, 2005). These discussions represent the ongoing tensions to implementing a truly Indigenous-centred research framework. Additionally, any methodology and theory concerning Indigenous communities must actively seek outcomes that support decolonization. Therefore, methodology in this context is best guided by Smith (2012), who states “methods become the means and procedures through which the central problems of the researcher are addressed” (p. 81).

As I reflected on the complexity of research methods, I realized that using a strictly Indigenous methodology would not work for me as a non-Indigenous person working within a colonial institution. As a non-Indigenous researcher, I acknowledge that “qualitative research methods do not yet apply ontologically, epistemologically and axiologically appropriate methodologies of [I]ndigenous research” (Botha, 2010, p. 314). However, Indigenous researchers at UVic and in the local W̱SÁNEĆ community advised

me that I could do research in keeping with Indigenous research methodologies if guided by local protocols and relationships. Additionally, I was advised to self-locate to ensure accountability, build trust, and decolonize my research. Therefore, I used a blended approach of qualitative research methods for data collection.

For the remainder of this chapter, I describe how I combined elements of participatory community-based research and Indigenous decolonizing methodology to serve the best interests and full participation of both the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (AGGV) and Indigenous communities. I begin by locating myself and describing my specific application of these methodologies and their consequent limitations and delimitations. I also describe the potential implications of using decolonizing and critical methodologies specifically related to my primary goal of implementing Indigenous recommendations to create arts-based educational resources. From there, I outline my methods and the participants. In particular, I describe how I obtained participants for the study and procedures to collect data. In keeping with the accountability of my position as a researcher, how I obtained research data is as important as the final results of my interviews.

### **Position of the Researcher**

Any community-based research project with Indigenous communities must begin by considering the identity and role of the researchers. The complex relationships among institutions, settlers, and Indigenous peoples call for a methodology framework of accountability (Wilson, 2008). In every step of my research, I recognize how essential it is for me to work within the bounds of accountability. Self-locating as the researcher is the first step. This step challenges the dehumanizing confines of scientific positivism “by claiming personal space in research and writing [and it] counters objectivity and

neutrality with subjectivity, credibility, accountability and humanity” (Absolon & Willett, 2005, p.113). Not only does accountability create research that is trustworthy, it centres an Indigenous approach to relationships and research. The result may create reciprocity and common goals for researchers and community to work with “a shared imagination and a new language, struggling together to find liberating ways of interpreting and performing in the world” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 23).

My first step to address trustworthiness and credibility was to remain attentive to the unsettling nature of decolonization and the calls to action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC, 2015a). While a debate exists regarding who, whether government or Indigenous communities, led the initiative of the TRC and who maintains control of the findings, I am motivated by the concerns and recommendations of Indigenous communities as reported by the TRC. Consequently, I considered how to research without taking up space or recentring Whiteness. Through my experiences and teaching with local Indigenous communities, I have learned that transparency, trust, and respect are key elements to build relationships.

Location, as Sinclair (2003) points out, is a critical starting point in research and one where I began to understand how to review who I am, where I came from, and my experiences. Further, Datta et al. (2012) suggest that situating the researcher – that is, developing awareness of self as a researcher in terms of socialization, education, and professional pursuits – “contributes to knowledge production, validation and production of meaning” (p. 583). Concurrently, I am aware of the damage done in traditionally destructive relationships between Western researchers and Indigenous communities (McGregor et al., 2010). While I strove for transparency with my intentions and location, I acknowledge blind spots within my identity as a settler researcher.

My initial inquiries with WSÁNEĆ community members began as a personal desire to identify my place as a community member and my responsibilities of being a teacher in a school with a large Indigenous population. I sought out the advice of school cultural leaders, participated in community events when possible, and met with Elders for advice on culture and protocols. This work, a process of reflection and active engagement with community, gave me a foundation of accountability for my research.

My experience with the AGGV began out of personal interest in their art programs, especially those that focused on social justice and action. As a master's student, I sought to learn about the potential of art and decolonization through AGGV initiatives and programs. When I began to reflect on a research project with the AGGV, it made sense to continue to attend Indigenous art events and education workshops and to volunteer my time in their school-based projects. In all of these overlapping strands of my work as a teacher and experiences with the AGGV, I began to set my intention and commitment to transparency within these very different communities.

I have lived and worked on the territories of the Lekwungen and WSÁNEĆ peoples for over ten years. Koster et al. (2012) have stated, "when research is conducted with a community, time, honesty and transparency are required" (p. 204). My research as a graduate student is limited in time and scope, yet I will continue to maintain relationships through my work and life on these territories. It is important that not only have I taken time to build transparency and relationships to do this research but that I continue to consider my role and actions as an ongoing community member. Although I have developed different roles with the AGGV and local Indigenous communities, my aim within this research was to approach each community with respect.

### **Community-based and Participatory Research**

My study draws on community-based research (CBR) described by Etmanski, Hall, and Dawson (2014) as not a methodology but rather “a framework for generating the kind of boundary-crossing knowledge and community organizing strategies necessary for addressing multifaceted issues in the real world” (p. 7). One of the central methodologies that falls under the broad umbrella of CBR is Participatory Research which Green (2003) defines as “systematic inquiry, with the collaboration of those affected by the issue being studied, for purposes of education and taking action or effecting change” (p. 419). As Etmanski et al. (2014) further articulate, there are strong links between participatory models of CBR, pedagogy, and knowledge co-creation. PR exemplifies “a form of inquiry where subjugated people work together with [research facilitators] to gather information and implement solutions to their problems” (Gormley, 2001, p. 41). PR has become a particularly important tool for researchers interested in identifying and disrupting inequitable knowledge/power patterns. Through their work, participatory researchers strive to equalize uneven or unbalanced social relations, challenge inequity, and create spaces of exploration that allow people to exercise self-determination (Hall, 1994).

While a wealth of emerging research illustrates the scope of PR, various ideas are particularly important to my study. The first is to recognize the potential opportunity coming from the tensions of this study, as I, as a white settler, research for a colonial institution and with Indigenous communities. Loiselle, Taylor, and Donald (2014) point out how research like mine is “embedded in dominant systems of white, capitalist, hetero-patriarchy, which are powerful forces that produce(d) multiple and ongoing contradictions in our lives and in our critical research process” (p. 45). They draw on the

idea of a “third space” to move past dichotomized categories of reproduction and resistance. This “third space” requires recognition that an ongoing process of critical reflection and action is necessary. This praxis is useful because the AGGV and I can avoid a symbolic integration of Indigenous knowledges and ways of being or being complicit in resettling uneven power structures. A second concept in PR is the need to value knowledges that have been historically marginalized and delegitimized (Torre, 2009). Thirdly, Torre (2009) reminds researchers to interrogate and engage power relationships within the collaborative and throughout the research and to think through consequences of research and actions. Finally, PR asks us to engage in creative risk taking in the interest of generating new knowledge, in which the individual and the collective are “under construction” and ideas and opinions are in formation and expected to grow. Additionally, my research is consistent with PR because I strive to create a research-learning environment (Hall 1994; Gormley 2001; Lather 1991). The results of my study are not determinate, nor should they be seen as a check-the-box solution. Rather, this study will be beneficial if its recommendations are integrated as suggestions to create a fluid and continuing relationship of learning between the AGGV and Indigenous communities, particularly local communities.

### **Indigenous Decolonizing Methodology**

Smith (2012) identifies the purpose of decolonizing methodology when she describes it as a tool most able to take up the struggles of “[I]ndigenous communities’ decolonizing project to wage the battle of representation, to situate, place and contextualize; to create spaces for decolonizing, to create spaces for dialogue across difference; to analyze and make sense of complex and shifting experiences, identities and realities” (p. 103).

While there is no single definition of this methodology, some key features stand out. Most importantly is a philosophical or epistemological stance of relational accountability (Battiste, 2009; Kovach, 2005; Wilson, 2008), which acknowledges that Indigenous knowledges are based on relationships among all life forms, which in turn are based on respect for and appreciation of what each can provide (Kovach, 2005). Relational accountability reflects the core of Indigenous worldviews and epistemologies, which believe that life force, connection, and being are in all facets of existence. Therefore, Indigenous research methodologies are as much about process as they are about product. How research is done reflects a commitment to a moral praxis that encompasses issues of self-determination, empowerment, healing, love, solidarity, and respect for Earth and Elders (Denzin et al, 2008). How these commitments are integrated into Indigenous methodologies depends on specific local cultural values and behaviours (Smith, 2012).

A second important value in Indigenous methodologies, similar to PR, is the orientation to justice and action. Indigenous scholars assert that research involving Indigenous communities must support real change and better lives (Battiste, 2013; Denzin et al, 2008; Kovach, 2009; Smith, 2012). In this regard, Indigenous scholars have identified key guiding goals for Indigenous methodologies. First, research must in some way benefit the community. This means that communities must be consulted with and be given the opportunity to identify their needs. In this case, the community with whom I consulted consisted of Indigenous artists and educators who had worked with the AGGV. Communities must understand the intended outcomes and whom these outcomes will serve; the researcher must “be committed to dialogue, community, self-determination and cultural autonomy, must meet people’s perceived needs” (Denzin et al, 2008, p2.). As I discussed at the beginning of this chapter, locating who is doing the research is an

essential component of Indigenous methodology. Fixico (1998) asserts that one of the roles of ethical Indigenous research is to eradicate ethnocentrism and argues that this can perhaps be done if the writer reveals his or her epistemological location at the outset through a brief introductory autobiography. Finally, in Indigenous methodologies, the results of research are a key consideration. Some guiding questions are:

- What difference will the research make?
- How will we know it is worthwhile?
- Who will own the research?
- Who will benefit? (Denzin et al, 2008, p. 239)

A key value in my research was transparency. While the research would not directly impact local Indigenous communities, it would respond to the TRC *Calls To Action*. It was important that in my interviews I used these questions to explain the purpose of my research to participants and the intended outcomes.

### **Research Process**

The question that guided this study was: “How do the ideas of Indigenous artists and educators indigenize and decolonize the AGGV Gallery in the Schools program and thus support its goals for cultural justice and change?” My main objectives:

- To learn from Indigenous artists and teachers what changes should be made to the AGGV School program
- To provide these ideas to the AGGV as a way to strengthen and build the school program curriculum.

## **Research Questions**

As I will describe in my section on data collection, I created semi-structured interview questions. To organize my questions, I grouped them into thematic areas. For Ms. Van de Pol, the educator of school and family programs at the AGGV, I asked questions in the following categories:

- Background of the AGGV
- Art Education Resource
- Pedagogy

For the artists/educators, questions focused on the following categories:

- Personal Background with AGGV & education
- TRC and Issues of Justice
- Teachers and Students

While I created a list of questions for Ms. Van de Pol and an ensuing list for artists/educators, I did not ask every question on my list, as per the guidelines of using semi-structured questions. I chose questions that allowed participants to expand on their answers with a fair amount of flexibility and go into depth as seemed appropriate.

Please see Appendix A for a full list of interview questions.

## **Participants**

My invitation to undertake this study came directly from the educator of School and Family Programs at the AGGV, Jennifer Van de Pol. In keeping with the expectations of CBR, I began my interviews with Ms. Van de Pol to gain understanding of the school programs' potential and weaknesses, as well as the goals of the AGGV. To identify suitable artists for the study, I used a snowball method. Groenewald (2004) explains that “snowballing is a method of expanding the sample by asking one informant or participant

to recommend others for interviewing” (p. 42). According to Noy (2008), when viewed critically, this popular sampling method can generate a unique type of social knowledge that is emergent, political, and interactional. Ms. Van de Pol and I identified five Indigenous artists who had recently worked with the AGGV and, through their work, disrupted prevailing discourses of Indigenous art and artists. Ms. Van De Pol agreed to introduce me to these artists through a letter of invitation. In keeping with local Indigenous protocols, when I had to contact Indigenous community members, I did so in person as a step towards accountability and trust. In this case, I asked to meet with participants before our interviews, so that I could self-locate as a graduate student and also as a settler living on WSANEC territories. This step, although it required more time and energy than an email or phone call, seemed quite important for a number of reasons. While I had previously established relationships with some of the participants through my work, university, and community, I had not met some of the participants. Trying to clarify the purpose and aim of my research through an email or over the phone would not create complete transparency or centre my research in Indigenous ways of being. When we met, I explained to the participants how I would collect data, that is, through recording the interviews and my own reflections on the interviews, and then I answered any questions they had. I was able to meet all the participants before the interviews except for one couple who lived far from Victoria. We corresponded by email and then met in person for the interview.

The second set of participants for this study were Indigenous art educators. Using the same snowball method as with artists, I asked Ms. Van De Pol to recommend Indigenous educators who had been associated with the AGGV programs. In addition, I sought out suggestions from Nella Nelson, the Aboriginal education coordinator for

Victoria School District, who has worked with the AGGV. Because the Gallery sits on the same territory as the Victoria School District, it was in keeping with Indigenous protocol to first seek out the advice of those who lived and worked on the territory. I narrowed my search for Indigenous educators based on the following criteria (participants needed to meet two or more of the criteria):

- had taught art education in schools
- were familiar with the ‘Gallery in Schools’ program
- had engaged with the AGGV (or other galleries) in any respect (teaching, showing their own artworks [many art teachers are practicing artists], attending exhibitions and so forth)
- were familiar with the recommendations of the TRC regarding arts and cultural institutions.

To follow up with participants, I went through the same process of following protocols and meeting in person to describe my research and answer any questions. All potential participants agreed to an interview. I affirmed the essentiality of relationship-building in research projects, through my own outreach work and the referrals by Nella Nelson and Jennifer Van de Pol.

The AGGV does not focus exclusively on local Indigenous representation in their art exhibits and education packages, so the participation identities in my interviews were quite diverse. I was grateful to have had local representation from both Lekwungen and WSÁNEĆ communities. Additionally, I had almost equal representation of males and females. In total I interviewed eight participants, including one couple who had collaborated for an AGGV exhibit. While the couple was of both Indigenous and settler identity, we set our intention to focus on an Indigenous perspective in our interview.

While I began with distinct categories for artists and educators, many of the participants' roles overlapped, but for the purpose of this study I identify their role as either one or the other. Table 1 is an interview matrix that provides an overview of the study participants. I name only Jennifer Van De Pol because she invited me to do the study. Other participants remain anonymous because I hoped for completely honest reflections on the AGGV curriculum package.

**Table 1. Research Participants**

<b>Identity</b>	<b>Place of Birth/Nation</b>	<b>Affiliation with AGGV</b>
Van de Pol	Edmonton – European ancestry	Educator, School and Family Program
Artist (male)	'NAMGIS First Nation	Exhibition at the AGGV
Artist (female)	Mohawk- Kahnawake Nation	Adult workshops at AGGV
Artist (male) Artist (female)	Hupacasath First Nation European ancestry	Exhibition at the AGGV
Educator (female)	WSÁNEĆ–Tsartlip	Led school-age workshops and inquiry projects at the AGGV, language revitalization teacher
Educator (male)	Lekwungen–Songhees Nation	Art and culture educator in schools, university, and community
Educator (female)	Algonquin/Micmac and European ancestry	Art educator in schools

### **Interview sites and procedures**

While I was able to invite participants to the AGGV for their interviews, only one interview with the AGGV educator was done on site. For all other interviews, I gave participants the choice of meeting at the AGGV or at a site of their choice. All chose a location most comfortable to them. Interviews were done individually, except for the collaborating couple, and took place over a three-month time period, between September and December 2016. While I was diligent about keeping the interviews to one hour as stated in my ethics agreement, I was available if a participant wanted to speak for longer.

To be transparent and accountable, I provided a full transcript of the interview to every participant. I asked for feedback or clarification of the interviews, with a time limit of one week, or more if requested by the participant. Four participants expressed surprise at the depth of my transcriptions because I recorded every gesture and word from the interview, and they wondered how I would extract information. One participant felt that she needed to edit the transcript and felt burdened by the task. I clarified my responsibility to only pull out important themes based on the interview questions.

Additionally, I invited all participants to attend my thesis defense, and I will send the participants my thesis upon completion.

### **Data collection: Interview structure**

I used semi-structured interviews, which provided some structure based on research interests but are flexible to allow room for the respondent's spontaneous descriptions and narratives (Brinkmann, 2014). Through this method of asking questions, I hoped to "remain open to choosing ways of doing research that draw on ways of knowing/doing/perceiving/that those communities and those people who [I] am supporting and working with value and respect" (Hall, 2014, p. 163). My objective was to ground my research, subsequent interviews, and focus groups in the principles of community-based research.

I conducted my first interview with Jennifer Van de Pol. Before we met for an interview, I asked her to identify some key issues and gaps in their *Gallery in the Schools* packages. From her feedback, I identified points that would support the AGGV's desire to move forward with their curriculum revision while meeting the recommendations of the TRC's (2015a) *Calls to Action*. I relied on my theoretical frameworks to extract these points and create thematic categories of questions to pose in the subsequent interviews with artists and educators.

In my interviews with participants, I provided space for them to take the lead in the interview process. In critical methodologies, a critical Indigenous pedagogy respects an interpretative first-person method. Because I could not follow a pure Indigenous approach to research, I was aware of how my research process reflected an interpretive model. This awareness proposes research as a socially constructed act, influenced by the goals and worldviews of the researcher (Willis, 2012). However, as Willis (2012) points

out, a pure interpretive model would not take into account considerations such as oppression, bias, or abuse of power, as does critical theory. Therefore, through the semi-structured nature of my interview questions, I mitigated the reality that I could not possibly predict answers, as a settler researcher, but, at the same time, could contextualize my research results within the discourses of oppression and decolonization. I was conscious of the inevitable limits and subjectivity inherent in my questions, and so hoped that the semi-structured nature of the questions and my interviews would allow participants to expand on their answers and focus on questions that garnished their interest. While I did not provide the questions to the participants ahead of the interviews, I gave them to the participants at the beginning of the interview and allowed for time to read questions over and reflect before we began an audio-recorded interview. During the interviews, if a participant wanted to expand and/or focus on a question, I balanced out the remainder of our interview time by choosing fewer questions from the different thematic categories.

The concept of creating “voice” comes up often in discussions on decolonization and critical research theories. I created semi-structured questions so that participants would feel a sense of autonomy in their answers. Yet, I was aware of the potential limitations in my questions and how the confines of working in a colonial language and institution would limit voice. Further, as Fine (2002) points out, even an approach that supports voice “involves carving out unacknowledged pieces of narrative evidence that we select, edit, and deploy to border our arguments” (p. 218). Keeping Fine’s point in mind, I have been conscious of my potential subjectivities and diligent to remain true to the central aim of my research question: to centre Indigenous perspectives in pedagogy.

## **Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings**

In all qualitative studies, every stage of research allows opportunities for researchers to understand their beliefs and knowledge constructs while allowing themes to emerge from the data (Saldana, 2013). In this chapter, I outline the sequence of my research, explaining what is meant by coding and thematic analysis. While coding was an important step in my research, I sought to link codes to a deeper analysis of the data through themes. As scholars report, thematic analysis provides a rich and complex account of data (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). I then lay out the findings of my study with the eight participants.

### **Setting the Foundation for Research**

As I mentioned in my methodology chapter, the purpose of this research was to respond to the needs of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria through the recommendations of Indigenous artists and educators. To follow community-based research goals, my interviews began with Ms. Van de Pol so that I might clearly identify the needs of the gallery. I had met with Ms. Van de Pol on a number of occasions to familiarize myself with the art gallery and understand her vision for a new art program. Based on our conversations, I created a series of questions that linked to reformulating the art gallery's school program. Because Ms. Van de Pol's suggestions would be essential to structuring ensuing research with Indigenous artist educators, I sent her a draft of the questions for her interview, to gain feedback prior to our formal interview. After our interview, I spent time reading and rereading her answers until I could identify areas and topics to create a list of questions for the Indigenous artists and educators. I then went back to the major themes in my literature readings and grouped my interview questions under those

headings. The last step was to look for repetition in my questions, so I could create a succinct set of semi-structured questions, which would allow more participation from the interview participants and increase the chances for an emergent process of sharing information. Throughout the process of creating interview questions, I reflected on and organized information in a manner that would allow me to formulate codes subsequent to the data collection.

### **Coding**

To code simply means to create a category to describe a general feature of data (Castle & Newberry, 2013). Codes provide structure and break down overwhelming amounts of information into manageable pieces. As I transcribed every word of my oral interviews into written text, I needed a classification system to understand the data and to recognize significant comments in interviews. In general terms, coding provides a number of strategies to systematically identify categories by determining repeatable phenomena, such as trends, patterns, and frequency of ideas (Gibson & Brown, 2011; Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bonda, 2013). While these strategies are often used by quantitative researchers, in qualitative research the process is used simply to identify important information, which at times may include a quantifiable repetition of an idea. Additionally, Gibson and Brown (2011) point out that codes may be created from unusual or significant occurrences in interviews, such as something being said with intensity or strong emphasis, or perhaps a prolonged silence.

I began to formulate my research codes even before I began interviewing artists. The suggestion that code categories can begin in this manner (i.e., a priori) is recognized by a number of scholars (e.g., Castle & Newberry, 2018; Gibson & Brown, 2011). Gibson and Brown (2011), for example, explore the differences between a priori codes

and empirical codes. While a priori codes are defined prior to the examination of data and are geared towards a particular issue, empirical coding is emergent, generated through examinations of text (data). Empirical coding allows for ideas that may not have been foreseen in the original research design. In both methods, it is useful to have a sequential process to create organized accountability.

I was drawn to a coding process described by researchers Nowell et al. (2017). In the first phase of this process, a researcher must become familiar with the context of the research, and if the data is collected through interactive means, such as interviews, some prior knowledge of the participants is essential. Before my interviews, I read a wealth of relevant literature, learned about the cultural and social environment of the gallery through volunteer work, and became aware of the artists' objectives in their work.

In the second phase, the process of generating initial codes is a thoughtful process that occurs between the background work done and the data generated through interviews. Researchers must be ready to read and reread data to name codes and distinguish which codes are emergent or a priori. Additionally, while the process is reflective and allows for the emergence of ideas, codes must have explicit boundaries (Gibson & Brown, 2011; Nowell et al., 2017). In terms of a priori understanding, I was well supported by literature that describes goals for Indigenous communities, and so I had clear definitions for the first two codes in my data: decolonization and Indigenize. As a novice researcher, I wanted to begin with a few predefined codes, both for my confidence level and to ground my data analysis in my research question. That being said, some codes did emerge out of my interview transcripts.

### **How I created codes**

Each interview took roughly an hour to finish and transcribing the audio-recordings took at least double that time. While I transcribed, I would read and mark interesting points in the text to familiarize myself with participants' suggestions and begin to identify patterns, commonalities, and outstanding features in our interviews. To disassemble the data (Castle & Newberry, 2013), I went through the transcribed texts with highlighters, using different highlight colours to identify patterns and commonalities. Compiling these attributes while transcribing is an important part of disassembling data to create meaningful groups through codes (Castle & Newberry, 2013). Once I had finished highlighting, I created a rough list of words that could become codes. The next step for me was to cut up the interview transcripts and arrange sections of them onto a large sheet of paper. It was at this point that I could clearly designate codes. A priori labels and definitions were based on my literature review, readings, and experience as an educator. Emergent labels and definitions were created based on the information that had emerged from my interviews.

Table 2 below lists my research codes, defines them, and identifies whether they were a priori or emergent.

**Table 2: Research Codes**

<b>Label</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>A priori / emergent (with source)</b>
Indigenize	To centre the local knowledges, protocols of local Indigenous communities	a priori (research question & literature review)
Decolonization	Creating a new way of living that is not bound by colonialism	a priori (research question & literature review)
Resurgence	State of healing and agency for Indigenous peoples	a priori (literature review)
Institutions	Systematically impose colonial values and goals	a priori (literature review)
Pedagogy	Asserting Indigenous ways of learning	a priori (knowledge as a teacher)
Pedagogical relationships	Relationships in learning	a priori (knowledge as a teacher)
Development of self	Process to identify oneself and origins in relation to colonialism and work towards accountability and healing	a priori (literature review) & emergent
Indigenous knowledges	Teachings specific to a territory	a priori (literature review)
Appropriation	To adopt and copy without permission	a priori (literature review)
Indigenous art forms	Represents the culture of Indigenous community	emergent
Relationships	Connections between communities, and with the land they live upon	emergent
Virtues	Characteristics that are necessary for just relationships	emergent
Visual literacy	Framework to identify symbols in art and artistic storytelling, history and components of art	emergent
Art	Representation of culture, life, experience, environment, story	emergent & a priori (literature review)
Art process	The making of art and learning of self and community	emergent
Teacher training	Process for teachers to implement Indigenous art education	emergent
How to learn	The socio-historical community process whereby individuals and groups acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values	emergent

## Thematic Analysis

While the purpose of coding data is to identify and classify data through organized structures, themes offer a chance to draw connections between coded data and allow for new ideas to emerge. A theme is not only an outcome but a solid foundation for building a nuanced and sophisticated analysis of information (Braun & Clarke, 2006). DeSantis and Ugarriza (2000) define a theme as “an abstract entity that brings meaning and identity to a recurrent [patterned] experience and its variant manifestations. As such, a theme captures and unifies the nature or basis of the experience into a meaningful whole” (p. 362). From this conception, two sequential outcomes happen in the process of creating themes. First, themes capture patterns in the data, and second, they provide opportunities to develop deeper holistic interpretations of the data (Saldana, 2013; Patton, 1990; Braun & Clarke, 2006). Nonetheless, themes, like codes, must have defining qualities or will lack coherence (Castle & Newberry, 2018). Gibson and Brown (2011) advocate looking for relationships between codes to create boundaries that allow for emerging themes.

Thematic analysis is simply a method to identify and analyze patterns that may become themes (Castle & Newberry, 2018; Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). It is the search for and identification of common threads across interviews or sets of interviews and seeks to understand the significance of an idea (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Vaismoradi et al., 2013). Gibson and Brown (2011) point out that “thematic analysis refers to the process of analyzing data according to commonalities, relationships and differences across a data set” (p. 9). These scholars state that no text will provide a perfect definition of what exactly constitutes thematic analysis, but a description of how the thematic analysis was done should contextualize and clarify findings. Saldana (2013) stresses that while themes emerge from analysis of data, the real research value is in the

exploration and process in this search. Likewise, Vaismoradi et al. (2013) affirm the latent and manifest qualities of thematic analysis, but they point out that discovering themes is not a linear process from latent to manifest but rather a recursive journey, illustrated well in visual representations such as thematic maps. Thematic analysis fits well with a blended research framework because thematic analysis is not exclusively tied to one theory or epistemology (Boyatzis, 1998).

As with all research, some challenges exist in the use of thematic analysis. Nowell et al. (2017) note that very little literature exists on how to conduct rigorous and relevant thematic analysis, that is personalized and context driven. Additionally, Vaismoradi et al. (2013) contend that criticisms regarding rigor are unavoidable in thematic analysis. As a remedy, they suggest that in thematic analysis, researchers should look for alternative interpretations and contextualize their work with strategies aimed at ensuring dependability, confirmability, and transferability. These qualities closely align with the goals of decolonizing and community-based research (CBR), where researcher accountability is essential (Battiste, 2013; Smith, 2012). Moreover, Saldana (2013) stresses that thematic analysis tells more about the researcher than the participants. A research theme for Saldana is a product of interpretation and “elaborate[s] on the researcher’s interpretations of participants’ meaning in more nuanced and complexed ways” (p. 181). As a final challenge, and of concern for decolonizing and CBR researchers, Gibson and Brown (2011) argue that themes can be poor substitutes for the lived experiences of participants and may result in a generalized set of data that loses the particularities of each participant. As I will describe, I sought to identify commonalities through my findings and directly highlight responses from the interviews.

When I was ready to move ahead and create themes, I referred to codes displayed on a strip of paper, roughly four feet by six feet. This display of codes took up an integral space above my desk and so were clearly visible to read over as I worked. My first step was to read through categories without expectations, but to scan over responses until I identified reoccurring or significant ideas. While the codes were visually displayed as typed text, I chose to use a visual mapping process to encourage an emergent process as I created themes. Please see Appendix B and Appendix C for a code example and thematic visual map. As I moved over participants' suggestions, concepts began to emerge. I was repeatedly drawn to the quote "we will remember our humanity through art making" and painted the word "hope" in the centre of my visual map. The idea that collectively we can remember our humanity through art was significant. I was reminded of Freire's work in *Pedagogy of Hope* (1992), and in particular the idea that "hope is an ontological need that should be anchored in practice in order to become historical concreteness" (p. i). Throughout the analysis, by centring the concept of hope in bold purple, I would be drawn back to artist suggestions that we can reclaim our humanity in the process of creating art, regardless of our identity, positions of privilege, or ancestry. Yet, it was evident from my research on decolonization that how we might arrive at a place of equity and healing will be particular to each of the strands leading out of the central image.

In my analysis, the following themes emerged from codes:

1. The potential and challenges of art to work for decolonization
2. The importance of process in art-making
3. Alternative histories through art
4. Relationships over reconciliation
5. Process of art to encourage student identity

## 6. Educators must work towards accountability and praxis

### **Findings of the Study**

#### **The Potential and Challenges of Art to Work for Decolonization**

##### ***Art as resurgence***

From the comments of every participant, I learned that decolonization is a process rather than a pivotal moment or event. The artists/educators in my study viewed their role and work as an antidote to colonialism, as they polarized colonization as static and fixed against the organic qualities of art, culture, and identity. As articulated by one participant, art is the most obvious symbol of the destruction of life through colonization “so when we talk about life, culture, art, everything, it is a way of life. So, to have the art taken away is to take away our way of life.” Additionally, a few participants suggested that institutions like the AGGV are hegemonic gatekeepers of colonialism. Interestingly, one participant noted that art could be quite destructive. This participant believed when artwork was misrepresented or curated to compliment colonial settings rather than employed to promote critical discourses, artworks could encourage assimilation rather than fuel resurgence among Indigenous peoples. Another participant echoed this statement, by noting that “art is definitely a vessel to bring our truths forward, with the power to do so, you know, art has the power to do a lot of damage as well”. Yet, overall participants believed in the power of art to challenge colonialism. They esteemed the revitalizing qualities of Indigenous art to create opportunities for resurgence, over the stagnating imposition of the colonial story. One participant pointed out:

This generation is about art, resurgence about our art, our identity, as creators, right? Because that is what art is all about. Creating, right, and

our own voice. When we think creatively, with our creative minds, then we can start reconstructing, using old material and new, looking at the direction for the future, where we want to be.

Decolonization for these artists was very much summed up as an ongoing rejuvenation and celebration of voice as amplified through art and culture. Finally, while colonialism seeks to silence Indigenous peoples, art and culture represent the continuity of stories and community views. One participant described:

When I think about my culture, like as a whole, it is something that is living. Unlike where you are working towards one particular subject, trying to tell your story through one thing, ours is a way of life.

This statement eloquently captures the complexities of Indigenous relationships to art, or rather, how the narratives and therefore the nucleuses of communities cannot be separated from art. Whereas European culture has grown to rely on the written word to define and explain the world, Indigenous cultures draw from a multimodality of artistic expressions with no separation between art and life.

### ***The role of Indigenous artists***

While participants appreciated their work with the AGGV, there was a significant wariness towards galleries and museums, by recognizing the colonial history of these institutions. One remedy, according to a participant, is for artists in spaces like the AGGV to push boundaries and open spaces for decolonization:

Our job as artists is to be on the furthest edge that we can possibly be. So, the role of the gallery in my opinion would be, would be to start carving out what that path might look like.

This comment is particularly significant because it calls for the gallery to work as an ally with Indigenous communities and to be at the forefront of decolonization in gallery spaces. To do so, participants prioritized consultation through relationships with local communities and integrity in their decisions made as guests on the territory. Repeatedly, the idea of artists as bridging community to the gallery came up in interviews. Art and culture are inseparable according to participants, and so listening to the suggestions of artists could reach out to a wider audience beyond the gallery boundaries. Or as one participant recalled how government initiatives were summed up as, “the road to hell is being paved by good intentions” and what was really needed was authentic engagement with community.

### **The Importance of Process in Art Making**

To me, process implies a long-term commitment to educational practices that build toward respectful and restorative relationships with Indigenous communities. Additionally, mindfully integrating the concept of process in an art program will support actions towards decolonization, as describe by participants in my pervious section. As I will describe in this next section, participants agreed with my thoughts on relationship building through the process of art making but had further meaningful suggestions. A focus on process, rather than just end product, will lead students to a deeper sense of self and connections to local territory.

### ***Co-creating art with students***

One participant suggested how co-creating art with students is one way to challenge the Eurocentric divisive and hierarchical practice of segregating Indigenous and Non-Indigenous art. Building on this idea, process in art making was esteemed to be a valuable skill, “huge amount of skills developed in art making, the process of patience

and mindfulness in the actually making of art, is more important than the final product”. Co-creating could lead to a different future, as one participant suggested, “when we think creatively, with our creative minds then we can start reconstructing things, using old material and new material and looking at, you know, the direction for the future, where we want to be”. Significantly, co-creating with students could give space for relationship building, “really understanding what students want to invest their time in, because they need to be heard, giving them voice and agency in the classroom”. Just as importantly, as students begin to understand the diversity of their worlds, they would begin to understand how to approach unique cultural teachings infused into local Indigenous art.

### ***Relationship to self through art making***

Making art was identified as key to the journey of self-discovery. One participant referred to “finding purpose in these things and establishing relationships, and so art is a way, a beautiful way of self-expression.” Another participant said that the process of making art “is a way to teach about self. The evolution of art is the evolution of oneself. So as I grow as a human being, my art is going to continuously grow and evolve.” Again, the concept of self-reflection came up in art making. One participant said, “I learnt that it was, it wasn’t me going in and teaching about Indigenous art. I was like, here is the story, now from your own place as a human being in this world, make art from it.” I think about Freire’s (2000) proposal for the “true word” and when students situate themselves in history, they can move beyond the “unauthentic” word and strive for deeper true dialogue that requires faith in humankind and faith in their own abilities to remake the world. To me, this participant was affirming the ability of students while rejecting a banking model of teaching art. Or as another participant stated, art would lead to personal growth “the evolution of art is the evolution of self and so as students grow, they will look at their

lives” and educators must support rather than lead students in this journey. Likewise, one participant mentioned the value of Indigenous art to develop self,

First Nations ways of knowing and artwork as a way to help them develop projects that are invested in exploring self, their origins. There are a lot of beautiful things that can be discovered when you understand where you come from and that you have an origin.

Yet, as one participant observed, art education currently focuses on a rigid final product, “we think our concept is that we have a fixed itemized system that we want kids to create. We don’t give them the tools to be creative themselves and create their own artwork.” This statement implies that students need to learn skills to tap into the power of creativity, and self-reflection.

### ***Importance of Local Community***

Participants had very clear ideas of the outcomes of artmaking when respectfully situated in relation to community. When students start to gain an awareness of their location through local art, learning moves beyond the confines of classroom walls. One participant said,

I think specific to that territory that you are working [in] and the native art that you are looking at, will impact the way that students are interpreting the work, interesting to see how it would motivate them to explore their own culture, their own background, so then native art isn’t being deconstructed and recreated in the classroom.

Additionally, a holistic approach that focused on local communities was recommended by one participant:

To study Northwest Coast art, you really need to be centred yourself. And to really understand it, you need to dive into the balance and the structure of it and the philosophy, you have to connect with the spiritual, with the physical, to all the elements and then to yourself.

As a consequence of this embodied response to art, one participant stressed how students would gain deeper insight into Indigenous worldviews. I believe that students will better understand the importance of land to Indigenous communities. For the AGGV or schools taking art programs, these ideas offer learning beyond the confines of classroom walls, such as meaningful land-based learning opportunities. Another participant advised, “So as a guest in the territory, you have to figure out which cup you are allowed to use”. As educators and students begin to deepen their awareness of local territories, they will learn about how protocols and culture are specific to each community. This suggestion for conscious responsiveness to local communities was echoed throughout my interviews and supports a focus on process in art making. Clearly, consultation and as a participant stated, “land specific learning “ in collaborative art making with local communities should be a priority in any educational setting and would be particularly enriching for the *Gallery in the School* program.

## **Alternative Histories Through Art**

### ***Supporting alternative views of history***

History came up in the interviews, particularly as a construct that keeps Indigenous people bound to colonialism. As one respondent stated, “Canadian history is built in opposition of Native people.” As I kept reading through the coded sections of the interview transcripts, a theme emerged that seems best articulated as art bringing forward alternative histories to challenge the rigid colonial constructs of history. Quayle et al.

(2016) point out that the arts have the potential to interrupt overly simplistic narratives, and, as a place of interruption, allow a new story to emerge. One participant suggested that “art is a way to teach about the world, because you can take any point in history that we are in, you can transfer anything.” For the participants, art making could challenge constructs of history by retelling a story or validating one that had been previously silenced. Alternatively, for another participant, the process of deconstructing history must start with reflective self-examination, because colonial history severs personal and ancestral memory, “and it actually has been throughout the whole time and so it is not really a re-emerging of this, it is a remembering.”

A final suggestion nested under the code “Indigenization” was the idea that alternative histories could be learned through shared cultural values. As a participant suggested, learning the virtues of a culture -- “love, peace, tactfulness, joyfulness, friendliness, togetherness” -- would lead to a better understanding of history from an Indigenous perspective. As students learn more about their own unique histories, while respecting different narratives, they will be able to find common cultural ground through a deeper understanding of virtues that are shared to all cultures.

### ***The power of objects to teach history: Visual literacy***

How completed works of art could challenge history was up for debate among participants. One respondent pointed out that art from the past can provide a “re-learning or going back” for Indigenous communities to strengthen their identity, while contemporary art is an emergence of “so many political artworks that are coming from an Indigenous point of view.” However, another artist felt triggered by the labels of traditional and contemporary art, saying, “traditional art and art forms are contemporary. When you say something is not contemporary, it is almost like you are relegating

traditional art to the past, when it is not.” This artist felt that all Indigenous art transgresses colonial ideas of traditional cultures.

To open up and create an alternative view of history, participants centred art as needing to be responsive rather than reactive: “It is a physical, tangible, visceral process of responding to human history as human beings.” To another participant, art served as a catalyst to learn about the true diversity in history: “There is so much that you can extract, so art is a way of educating people.” The idea that art objects contain cultural teachings and so might tell a different history seemed to be an important consideration for participants. One stated,

In the oral tradition, art is a tool for the transmission of one generation to the next. It is alive and keeps the story alive. When you see a mask, carving, painting, it is not just there for aesthetic reasons.

This comment seems so ironic when I reflect on how museums and galleries have historically collected art, often stolen, and sever the connections that Indigenous communities had to their culture. As Philips (2011) describes, these practices had two consequences that continue to impact Canadian society. First, taking ownership of art and cultural objects by museums only reiterated the idea of Indigenous peoples as being “Other” in the Canadian landscape or worse, disappeared in history. Secondly, by removing art objects from the deep meaning held by communities, museums perpetuated the concept of Indigenous art as being relegated to the less esteemed category of folk art.

## **Relationships Over Reconciliation**

### ***Conceptions of reconciliation***

Reconciliation is central to the change we need to make in society today. It arose in the interviews as a concept tied to colonization but with mixed suggestions from participants

about the purpose and value of reconciliation. One participant stated: “So that systemizations, you know, reconciliation—you have to do this because the government says so. No, we don’t have to.” Alternatively, another participant reconceptualised the notion of reconciliation as a fluid dialogue, stating that “reconciliation is a way of life. It is like we are always reconciling with each other, to communicate, to better understand each other, reconciling with our pasts, with our past.” Ideas on healing and regaining what was lost, affirming the work required to do so, voicing an alternative history, and, most importantly, having the agency to do so apart from government agendas were offered up by participants as paths to an Indigenous-centred concept of reconciliation. The longevity needed for a true reconciliatory process was best identified by one artist who recognized the complex stages of healing and awareness: “So maybe the idea that this is a real-time conversation and there is a broad spectrum of experiences and people processing through it.” This statement captures the generosity of spirit and acceptance of this long-term process that I encountered in my interviews. Participants seemed keen to contribute their ideas and how their work need to be supported by patience and steadfastness.

### ***Value of relationships***

While reconciliation, as a government term, brought quite mixed feelings, participants seemed to move away from the concept of reconciliation and focus on relationship building. In fact, relationship was brought up much more often than reconciliation as a tool to centre Indigeneity, build bridges of understanding, and heal as a nation. When asked how an Indigenized framework would inform museum practices, one participant suggested, “relationships, because you cannot assume how to Indigenize without creating relationships and learning about that territory.” Equally important was participants’

distinction between past atrocities, represented by static ideas of reconciliation, and moving forward in a good way, represented by the idea of relationships. While one participant acknowledged the dark history of residential schools and the need to teach through the framework of reconciliation, relationships were presented as the future hope for Canadians. Another participant asked, “How do we exist as one? What are all the good teachings? Yes, this happened, but let’s reflect on this and how we can move forward.” Hearing these responses, I was struck by their optimism for the future.

Overwhelmingly, participants identified a deepened relationship with self as a priority to understand the bigger implications of reconciliation. One participant argued that “reconciliation is something that we want. It is not a definition, and it’s a process because people need to do that emotional journey themselves.” As with other ideas proposed by participants, process and a commitment to ongoing work, was a central theme is reconciliation.

## **Potential of Art to Encourage Student Identity**

### ***Points of entry for students***

During my initial investigation into the AGGV’s art package and through conversations with Ms. Van de Pol, the identity of students never came up as a topic of concern.

However, in my interviews, participants differentiated between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. One participant believed that it was important for non-Indigenous students to understand the dynamics of settler identity in their lives and understand how settler identity is framed within the continuum of colonialism. Likewise, for Indigenous students, the journey must begin with their own identity as they embark on healing journeys, but as another participant pointed out, trauma continues:

How do we reconcile with our personal histories, our family histories, because there has been a lot of trauma, so we need to be conscious. Self-awareness is so important and with that self-awareness, we can start looking outward and doing reconciliation outwardly.

I appreciated these suggestions and understood the vulnerability that students might bring as they worked through challenges of colonialism and reconciliation.

### ***Understanding worldviews: Avoiding appropriation***

As one artist suggested, students may begin to discern between different worldviews of Indigenous nations and their own cultures: “It is motivating them to be interested in their own cultures as well—show me something from your culture that reflects ideas that you get, and what you know. That is how we are going to learn cross-culturally.”

Alternatively, another artist suggested how, in this process of deepening cultural understanding, students would avoid directly appropriating Indigenous art forms: “I guess gaining respect for the art form and that it isn’t something to plagiarize or copy. It is actually expressing yourself. You change it and make it yours.” Finally, throughout these discussions, I was reminded of hope and, particularly, a deep sense of generosity for students to develop deeper bonds and relationships with Indigenous communities. In the words of one participant, “you know that we are a caring people, we are a kind people, we like building relationships because we build relationships to objects, and our land and each other. We have relationships with everything.” I find the juxtaposition between appropriation and genuine acts of expression to be fascinating. On one hand, students will sever relationships and offend through appropriation and on the other hand, will gain a deeper sense of artistic ability while deepening their connections to Indigenous communities.

## **Educators Must Work Towards Accountability and Praxis**

### ***Creating communities of learning***

With strong emphasis and intent, participants consistently brought up the role and work of educators. Linked to the ideas on relationship building, they encouraged educators to take account of their role with Indigenous communities and their students. While the above themes consider the systematic constraints of colonialism, this theme directly relates to the roles of educators as actors in colonialism. The importance of educator preparation was consistently repeated through my interviews. For example, one participant said:

And it was this idea that number one, do you have trained teachers to do it? Because the problem is that you can re-colonize the information, right? You can re-colonize, so somebody goes in and teaches something, and they have now taken our teachings and re-colonized them again.

I was clear that the art curriculum package would be implemented by volunteers at the AGGV, but participants seemed to insinuate that all educators who were connected to the art program, in the gallery and in schools, would need education. My impression from participants was that the art program serves a dual opportunity, as a program for children but also for educators to embark on personal journeys of decolonization and reconciliation. While participants were gentle in their approach to students, I noticed a shift in tone when they talked about educator awareness of colonial history. For example, one participant insisted:

I don't want children to get traumatized with residential school. But adults need to be, teachers need to be. They need to understand why children are scared to go to school even though they didn't go to residential school.

These comments were clearly focused on non-Indigenous educators and called for accountable actions and an open attitude. The challenges to implement these goals, with limited time and resources, were noted by one participant who said, “It is the reality and the other part of it is if we don’t make people aware enough because of the amount of time it takes to educate the educators.” Another participant noted with frustration that educators would just ask questions without taking time to research or acknowledge their personal responsibility to work for reconciliation. The need to guide teachers in how to have a respectful relationship was repeated by participants and particularly stressed in one comment: “The answer lay in having people educate non-Indigenous peoples on how to have a respectful relationship, because the system is so oppressive, still about hierarchy and not about people being equals.”

### ***Educator attitudes and comfort levels***

To resolve these challenges, participants did not focus on educator pedagogy or content, but rather on educator attitudes, and specifically their lens and bias towards reconciliation:

I think a lot of what needs to be invested in as helpers or working with others is our own prejudices. We are socially conditioned, and if we don’t actually recognize that and be put in a position where we actually explore our own prejudices and our own bias, then we will do harm.

When I looked over this comment, I thought about Freire’s suggestions in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2000). Freire sees the first step towards change in naming the “true word” and consequently following up with a practice of praxis in action and reflection. As such, participants recognized that educators are on a sliding scale of awareness and a broad spectrum of experiences and processing. One participant advised to “explain that to

teachers in terms of training, it is always going to be changing and [they] have to get comfortable with that.” Finally, one participant directly spoke to cultural values, stating, “If you want to Indigenize, learn those values. Those are what is important. So, if you want to teach, you know, the history of a culture, teach the virtues of that culture.”

### ***Optimism that educators can move forward***

Some participants seemed optimistic about the potential for non-Indigenous educators to deliver an art program. They recognized that teachers could have some experience with decolonization and possess the skills to continue learning about these difficult discourses. One participant pointed out that creating a safe atmosphere for teachers to unpack their position in colonization was important, and acknowledged the challenges for teachers, saying, “We’ve met with teachers for tea and had unconditional talks and they have literally broken down emotionally because of their caring for kids.” Another articulated the unique and esteemed role of educators in her culture. In her upbringing, to become a teacher was to be a respected member of the community, with the honour of caring for children. While participants held educators to be accountable to work towards decolonization, I sensed their deep generosity and hope for change.

### **Conclusion on These Findings**

Overall, the research findings centre the idea that process is as important as the end product in the context of reconciliation and decolonization. Interestingly, the two Non-Indigenous participants in this research study, Ms. Van de Pol and one artist’s partner, identified their work in decolonization as an organic and reflective process and were keen to listen to the Indigenous participants rather than speak out on their own ideas around the art program. This idea, process over product, is extremely interesting in the context of an art program. Tanja Schult (2018), research fellow at the Stellenbosch Institute for

Advanced Studies, proposes that process in art making works as a transformative agent and becomes as important as the final product, if not more important. In each of these themes capture the essence of praxis, as a balanced approach to social justice that puts aside predetermined outcomes by one party over another, and allows for opportunities to listen deeply to and respond mindfully, as ongoing mediations between reflection and action. From this discussion, clear outcomes emerged and have led to my recommendations for the AGGV in Chapter 6. Likewise, the themes in these recommendations tie directly to ideas around reconciliation and open up spaces for healing and voice for Indigenous communities. My impression from the interviews with artist educators and subsequent analysis as described in this chapter was that a successful art program would ground pedagogical content within a historical framework, be informed by a fluid understanding of identity and look for the possibilities of hope.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

In this chapter, I integrate components from the literature review and research findings. I will identify how, in a small way, this study contributes to the gaps in knowledge and secondly, to draw conclusions from this analysis for recommendations to the AGGV. In chapter two, I identified my theoretical frameworks and three main areas of concern: museum studies and education, art education and educator training. I use these areas as the foundation of my discussion, to contextualize the findings of my research interviews. As with my data analysis, I strive to prioritize the voices of the participants.

### Knowledge Gaps

The central concern of this thesis is social justice, to understand how the ideas of Indigenous artists and art educators can Indigenize and decolonize the gallery in the school program. The impetus to start this research was fueled by my role as a teacher, so that I could learn about the implications of reconciliation and identify how I might begin to take action as an ally. From my experiences, personally and professionally, I knew that art had a valuable role to play in this process. I was certain that centring the ideas of Indigenous artists, as voices who have been previously marginalized, would create change. In my initial searches, it became obvious that there was scant research on Indigenous art programs for children in galleries.

When I started this research project, political and social stakes in Canada were high. The TRC had just release their findings and the ensuing *Calls To Action*. While this study was contextualized by an academic knowledge gap, contextualizing the TRC lent to goals and recommendations that were action oriented. The driving impetus of my study was two-fold, specifically, through consultation with Indigenous educators and artists

(#62), and through requests that museums review their policies and practices to comply with the UN Declaration for Indigenous peoples (#67). As my research was driven by these *Calls to Action*, the concept of reconciliation was an important focus in my readings and interview questions. Interestingly, despite all the work that has been done on decolonization and the TRC in Canada, research findings on implementation of *Calls To Action* are only beginning to emerge.

### **Theoretical Implications**

Both decolonizing and critical theory are concerned with power. From this study, two points are important for current debates around power in a Canadian context. First, this research centres the voices of Indigenous artist educators. There is a wealth of pressure, both from academic dialogues and the public, for deeper consultation with Indigenous communities. The findings of this research directly challenge institutions where Indigeneity has been evaluated through Eurocentric narratives and power structures. According to Corntassel and Gaudry (2014), authentic Indigenous consultation ruptures these institutional barriers and implements the ideas of artists on Indigenous struggles and concerns. Historically and currently, to be an Indigenous artist by the fact of their very existence is activism, as stated by Indigenous artist Jesse Wenté (2015), "[t]he fact that we exist, persist, and continue to make indigenous art is in itself a political act, and in a way a resistance against the legacy of residential schools" (para.4). The participants in this study lived the challenges of colonialism and so, had carefully considered how solutions could emerge out of art and education.

Museums make choices and use their power to either remain bound by colonialism or responsive to change. One participant called cultural institutions "gatekeepers of power". Having recommendations from Indigenous artist educators

formalized in research gives museums a choice. They will either continue in ignorance, like the fabled Emperor in the Hans Christian tale, who believed that he had new clothes while he walked naked through town, or museums will be open to radical change. This statement by the Canada Council for the Arts (n.d.) on their website clearly articulates the present positions of museums and cultural institutions:

We are all agents of either stasis or change. For every act of political, social or cultural agency that challenges the status quo, there will always be opposing forces fuelled by colonial entrenchment/privilege, oppositional paranoia or, simply, inertia.

As research grows and the credibility of Indigenous artists, curators and museum directors gain traction, museums could lead the nation on equitable relationship building.

### **Implications for Critical Theory**

One concern of critical theory is how history has been shaped by power: what it means, who tells history and how it affects equity in society. Conceptions of time and history were consistently brought up in interviews. One participant asserted that in reconciliations, settlers and Indigenous peoples are working in real time as they approach difficult and painful topics. As such, time will not follow a predictable linear timeline. Concurrently, participants brought up how art opens up alternative histories and realities. These ideas around healing and the feasibility of histories beyond colonial imaginings push back against Eurocentric notions of time. Further challenged are ideas of progress in human development, which ultimately continues to support dominant, neoliberal culture. If art is to be a tool of activism and education, activists and educators must consciously work against modernist linearity and rationality (Etmanksi, Weigler & Wong-Snedden, 2012).

What are the alternatives to futures that are not determined by Western ideas of time? An Indigenous futurity breaks away from the narratives that sought to disappear or profit from Indigenous peoples. This future will support a new model of sharing power and be determined by “relations between land, sovereignty, belongingness, time and space, reality and futurity shaped by Indigenous research methods” (Tuck, 2016, par. 12). The arts can support this rupture of time to open up possibilities in individual and collective futures (Havien & Khasnabish, 2014).

Critical pedagogies are of concern in the current debates around education. A central focus of critical pedagogies is how to create pedagogies that encourage students to participate in educational discourses of social change in a way that centralizes their voices (Giroux, 2003). Strengthening voice empowers students to transform political spaces and move from being passive to critical thinkers (Darts, 2004; Dewhurst, 2011). I found it extremely interesting that participants differentiated between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous students, and I did not find any mention of these differentiations in any of the literature for this study. My overall impression was not that participants sought to further racial divides but to encourage student empowerment through a process of self-reflection and self-location. Through these experiences, according to my research findings, students might begin to develop a responsive rather than reactive use of power. Even more interesting, within the scope of critical pedagogies, are the outcomes goals that participants suggested for students to work towards social justice. Critical thought and a deep holistic understanding of Indigenous knowledges were encouraged, but so were goals for unity through virtues that would bind communities together such as love, trust, peace or as one participant stated, “beautiful things that cultures install”.

### Implications for Decolonizing Theory

Decolonizing theory localizes Indigenous struggles, compels accountability and seeks the repatriation of land and life. It may be obvious that an art education program will never bring about the repatriation of land and therefore might be dismissed from the conversations around decolonization. After all, Tuck and Yang (2012) declared that decolonization is not a metaphor, and art is obviously anchored in metaphor. Therefore, the debates around incommensurability, summed up as the continuing injustices of unsettled land claims, will seem untouched by this study. The question then, is what can this research and an art program contribute to these irreconcilable debates? Artists in my interviews weren't denying the injustices of land sovereignty and were vigilant to the issues at stake. In fact, as they pointed out, these tensions could create spaces of dissent and production. For some artists, art can best hold these incongruences, to "acknowledge the experience of colonialism as ongoing, and dissent as a righteous and productive space from which we might continue to forge a world together" (L'Hirondelle Hill & McCall, 2015, p. 4).

From the suggestions on deepening relationships brought up in this study, I am most drawn back to the proposal of Morgensen (2012) who argues how the transformation in decolonization will materialize from deepened relationality between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous peoples. Morgensen asserts that this metamorphosis will happen in a way that current society and governments cannot do. Likewise, artist David Garneau (2012) argues for art spaces that are managed by Indigenous peoples yet open to open to outsiders in conciliation rather than reconciliation, "potentially as places of cross-cultural exchange, in which historically entrenched roles are consciously challenged and re-imagined" (Shaw & Meade, 2011, p.38). These ideas of creating citizenship as

learning opportunities for all involved within the walls of museums will create very different relationships and power dynamics. Power shifts are more than just control of cultural heritage, as taken up in my literature review, they are about centralizing the ability of Indigenous artists and educators to push boundaries and create fundamental institutional shifts. This proposal is deeper than merely consulting with Indigenous artists or continuing to treat artists as outliers. Artists will be recognized as key players in the gallery and in turn offer advice on how to restructure the gallery for future generation.

### **Sovereignty in Museum Spaces**

In my literature review, the question of sovereignty comes up in the theoretical discussions of how museums can shift their practices and work with Indigenous communities. Ash-Milby & Philips (2017) ask what are the terms of inclusion and what does sovereignty look like in an institution? In other words, these scholars question how power structures can be unsettled to create agency for Indigenous artists and centre Indigeneity in the pedagogical packages, rather than recolonizing relationships and programs. Sovereignty is an important concept to articulate the right to self-representation and determination. While the specific term sovereignty did not come up in my interviews, I can make connections with participants' suggestions around decolonization. From the views of participants, it seems that in our present time it is impossible to create clear boundaries of sovereignty within colonial institutions. However, truth telling is the first step to begin discussing what authentic sovereignty means in the museum space. Additionally, identifying the evolution of Indigenous sovereignty along a historical spectrum is another step. As I described in my literature review, two examples of pedagogical interventions in museum spaces, at the Expo 67 pavilion and the Glenbow museum, show the evolution of Indigenous communities as

they carve out spaces of resistance and begin to define sovereignty. In the first, Indigenous communities recognized their agency by independently curating the exhibit and in the second, communities refined their abilities to protest against an exhibit that didn't represent their best interests.

## **Art Education**

### **Indigenous art education as an intervention**

In this case, an art program serves two overlapping purposes. First, centring Indigenous art making in the AGGV program will work towards the *Calls To Action*. Additionally, the unique features of an Indigenous art program will create a framework for pedagogical interventions to the oppressive historical narratives of Indigenous peoples in Canada. As I have mentioned in my thematic analysis, participants brought up the importance of presenting alternative histories. This idea is reflected in some decolonizing literature specific to the discipline of art history and yet does not appear in any art education literature. From my readings and the recommendations of participants, an Indigenous-informed art history in some capacity must be included in the AGGV's Indigenous art program. Euro-western knowledge systems appear to split art away from the context of history, and so will remove the contextualization of the impacts that colonialism and racism had on Indigenous communities (Nakata, 2006). A power structure is upheld which continues to silence the voices of Indigenous peoples. Including elements of Indigenous art education in historical discourses is one remedy to challenge normative views and the social hierarchies of Euro-Western knowledges (Roberston, 2012). Furthermore, when students learn about these histories through art, they will be in turn motivated to learn a deeper sense of their own history. Likewise, from interview findings, these connections with self will lead to deeper connections with community and an

understanding of land. The unique fluidity in art and making art creates opportunities to explore self and identity within a historical context. However, as participants stressed, children do not need to be traumatized by learning about cultural genocide. They stressed how art can open up these difficult histories in a gentler way, with clear points of entry for Non-Indigenous students and will serve as a reflective, collective remembering back for Indigenous students.

A second theme relates to how Indigenous art is complicated and in museum education, art programs should embrace complexity. This idea has not been addressed in art education, nor is it taken up in any of my literature readings. The recommendations of artists stress how important it is to integrate complicated concepts into the AGGV art program. While Indigenous art has been segregated to either ‘modern’ or ‘traditional’, the boundaries are much more extensive, and all of the participants challenged these divides. Further, the artist participants in particular spoke to the impact of colonization on the production and influence of Indigenous art. Indigenous art forms came out as an emergent category, defined as representing the culture of Indigenous communities. This reminds us to pay attention to the way that Indigenous artists and academics conceptualize their craft. Community can represent a diverse range of people and isn’t limited to traditional ancestry. Additionally, contemporary artists produce work that addresses genocide, land loss, ongoing assault and Indigenous sovereignty. Indigenous artists tackle traumas and dislocation, dispossession and ongoing legacies of colonialism, past to present, but at the same time look to the presence of Indigenous people now and their futurities (Morris & Anthes, 2017). Just as Indigenous art describes past, present and future, art can act as a bridge to embrace Indigeneity as central and vital in a multi-

centred contemporary world (Morris & Anthes, 2017; Trepanier & Creighton-Kelly, 2011).

To hold these complicated ideas, critical pedagogy is a perfect vessel for an Indigenous decolonizing curriculum. Critical pedagogies hold space for alternatives from the dominant discourses -- historical, political and cultural -- to offer students a way to construct knowledge, critically analyze ideas and take action. Bell & Desai (2011) point to the cycle of praxis, where the aesthetics of art and the narratives embedded in art serve to fuel reflection. While aesthetics can play a valuable role to challenge dominant narratives, ultimately it is the pedagogical potential in art that opens up possibilities for social justice (Enreich & Wergen, 2017). Integrating a wide variety of Indigenous art that crosses through barriers of time and expectations will create a rich learning environment.

In the literature, centralizing the process of learning and art making has not been applied to Indigenous art programs. From my participants, the process of art making was a central and essential focus. Participants suggested that to co-create with artists would lead to a better understanding of the unique differences in Indigenous nations and territories. The result is that the process will create an atmosphere of praxis where students engage in self-reflection of their identity and might take deeper risks with their art-making and relationships with the Indigenous artists. As a final note on process, participants stressed the importance of integrating local languages into art programs and to teach language to Non-Indigenous students. The Nanaimo gallery serves as an example, as the educators place emphasis on local languages and relationships. The gallery hired Arlene Deptuck, who is Kitsumkalum of the Tsimshian Nation as the Indigenous coordinator and worked to incorporate the Snuneymuxw Hul'q'umin'um'

language into the organization (Stern, 2017). Additionally, when events are happening in community, Deptuck looks for opportunities to include the gallery.

A question remains about the value of process in art: if the process of art-making is more important than product, how can we find evidence for change and development? Would not a shift in student consciousness result in their final art product? While a deeper focus on the Indigenous process of learning in art is essential, art programs cannot just present Indigenous content or allow students to make art that just looks like Indigenous art. Teaching about Indigenous forms is very different than copying Indigenous art. Australian scholar Jill Smith (2010) argues that teaching about Indigenous art forms is different than making art forms that look Indigenous. One participant in my study spoke about how students could learn about the forms and elements of Indigenous art with artists, and then make their own art. This approach would avoid tokenizing and appropriating Indigenous art and continue to honor the process of co-creating with artists.

Finally, the truth of colonialism can be overwhelming for young people (Morris, 2017) but as participants pointed out, creating points of entry for students will alleviate some of the discomfort and fear. Participants stressed that while introducing colonialism and the traumatic history of Indigenous communities, it is important to be gentle with students. These suggestions affirm the philosophies of Indigenous pedagogies that relate story to the participants' level of understanding (Littlebear, 2000). Finally, one participant pointed out that as knowledge deepened, particularly through the virtues of a culture, more common ground would be found between cultures. In this educational shift, dominant in my interviews was the proposal that while we cannot imagine the future, the power of art and imagination will open up discourses, offer alternatives and hopeful possibilities.

**Educator preparation: Much more than new curriculum**

In my section on shifts in the philosophical core of the gallery, creating a pedagogical focus for everyone in the gallery is an outcome of this study. The gallery must become a pedagogical zone, one that recognizes that everyone involved with the gallery will be committed to learn about reconciliation. I am reminded of a recent visit to a museum in Sao Paulo, where I discovered how all staff at the museum, from floor sweepers to upper management, received ongoing education on the exhibits and the museum's philosophy. The museum had an energy of engagement that I haven't witnessed elsewhere. While there are no recommendations directly in the *Calls To Action* for gallery staff or teachers, every Canadian has been called upon to increase their understanding of past traumas and actively work towards reconciliation. These ideas were echoed in my interviews, where participants stressed how the employees in the institution as well as any involved with AGGV's art program, including school teachers, must be learning about the issues around decolonization and their personal responsibilities in the *Calls To Action*.

While developing a culture of learning in the gallery is important, if educators did not take on politics, the status quo would remain in power (Kincheloe, 2005). Participants echoed this sentiment and stressed how educator attitudes and bias were more important than the actual pedagogy and content. Further, according to participants, these traits could be challenged through a deep and decolonial understanding of the historical influences and residential schools. This suggestion is echoed by McLaughlin (2013) who states that educators must begin with colonial history and a deeper understanding of racism. Additionally, in keeping with Freire's (2000) criticism of teachers who take on a role as knowledge experts, teachers must be willing to embrace unease and unknowing. Dewhurst (2010) explores shifting power relationships between students and teachers,

and identifies how teachers must be willing to take risks to create conditions where students can connect, question and translate their learning. The complexity of Indigenous art provides a perfect forum to explore this kind of shift in educational philosophy.

Developing communities of learning in museum spaces is one response to these challenges. Allen & Crowley (2013) strongly advocate for communities of learning to be developed in museums. Sheppard (2010) suggested that museums put on teacher workshops and as one participant suggested, workshops should be offered on a continuous basis. Participants affirmed the challenges in resources and time to educate staff but also pointed out the personal responsibility of teachers to pursue education and be updated on current research.

While it would be easier and convenient to create a one size fits all for adult education in the gallery, with educators ready to step out and deliver material to schools, both literature and participants assert that ongoing education is essential. Participants' suggestions reminded me of transformative practice zones which are spaces to share, listen to visions and ideas, commitments, and build relationships (Irwin & Chambers, 2007). Burgess and Addison (2007) propose an educational framework that advocates how art, craft and design are useful, critical and transforming, bridges themes in the literature and interview suggestions of this study. Educators would move through three important stages that begin with learning from experts, then move onto greater independence but finally, gain the confidence to deliver new programs while remaining connected to a community of learning. In the next chapter of this study, I take these discussions, synthesizing interview findings and current literature, to create specific recommendations for the AGGV.

## Chapter 6: Final Reflections, Further Research and Recommendations

My thesis stemmed from my observations of school environments. As a new teacher to the public system, I watched Indigenous students physically recoil as they entered the doors of these educational institutions and learned how these young people carried generations of ancestral trauma. Yet I witnessed, when offered opportunities for self-expression through art, these same students powerfully challenge oppression, racism and models of deficiency. I am finishing this study three years after the TRC made their final recommendations. Last year, in full collaboration with Indigenous students and community, an Indigenous leadership class was started at the school. The class, from the recommendations of elders, is called NIŁ SE TFE S,HIWEK E WŚÁNEĆ WILNEW, or in English, the future leaders of WŚÁNEĆ. Art continues to play a central role in this class. Song has broken through the binds of entrenched colonial rituals, as Indigenous students have sung at ceremonies, meetings or in the early mornings to greet all as they enter the school. Families have come into the school to teach art and have generously shared their culture with the entire school body.

Since I began this study, the AGGV has taken steps forward as well. Last year, a group of young women at the school worked with the AGGV to produce a multi-media art installation on the continuing phenomena of Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women (MMIW). Students continue to own space and call out racism in their efforts to educate teachers at staff meetings and in hallway conversations. The school community is slowly responding. The new curriculum for BC is finalized and centres Indigenous knowledges, worldviews and reconciliation. Indigenous artists were invited to transform the library into a space that artistically reflects local land and welcomes all students into an Indigenous centred hub of learning. A momentum for justice has begun and yet these

students must continue to courageously challenge, speak and act for change. In every step, art provides both refuge and strength.

### **Further Research**

My final reflection for this study considers how the TRC recommendations have transformed a school. I have witnessed the momentum for change and alternatively, believe that cultural and educational institutions have only begun their work. These areas for further research emerge from gaps in knowledge that I identified in my study. First, while the *TRC Calls to Action* are a central focus of current educational and cultural institutional discourses, it appears that very little research has been done to formally evaluate if institutions are responding and in what capacity are the calls being implemented. Further, research needs to be done on exactly how successful implementation is defined and according to whom success will be measured.

In keeping in line with evaluations of the *TRC Calls to Action*, further research is needed on Indigenous art education in both schools and cultural institutions. There is a plethora of funding for Indigenous artists through avenues like the Canada Council grants. Indigenous artists from coast to coast are producing work that disrupts narratives and fuels resurgence, well documented in texts like *The Land We Are* (L'Horondelle & McCall, 2015). The AGGV is creating educational art programs to replace the *gallery in the school* program. Nonetheless, research on Indigenous art education, in schools or museums, seems untouched. It is worthwhile to consider studies that examine the impact of Indigenous art education to create safer educational spaces for Indigenous students and enlighten Non-Indigenous students; framed by the current vibrant political discourses led by Indigenous artists around decolonization.

Research is needed to document and acknowledge the potential for Indigenous artists to work as key players in museums. In her work on critical practices in museums, Marstine (2017) brings up a concept called socially engaged practice that “rejects idealised notions of the artist as lone genius and instead fosters collaborative working relationships” (p. 14). When I’ve mentioned this idea to Indigenous artists, responses are similar. First, there is an eagerness to be involved with educational art projects and take on a greater position of responsibility. However, these same artists state how opportunities have not come up or happen only in small grassroots art programs. Research that considers the potential for artists’ roles to take on a deeper role in cultural institutions or to create communities of learning could push museums to shift their foundations and philosophies.

As a final point for research, an interesting outcome of this study was how participants encouraged cross-cultural learning environments, as one participant pointed out:

[it] is motivating them to be interested in their own cultures as well, show me something from your culture that reflects ideas that you get, and what you know. That is how we are going to learn across cultures.

These suggestions have far reaching implications. Since the advent of former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau’s policies on Canadian society in the late 1960s, the national identity of Canada has been presented as a multicultural mosaic. This idea has been pushed to the detriment of Indigenous peoples and has fueled a national lie that sought to disappear the unique nature and position of Indigenous peoples. Yet, I was perplexed by the generosity of participants in this study, who encouraged an environment of learning that celebrated diversity. It is obvious that we cannot fall back to government

created propaganda of multiculturalism and yet, solutions are unknown. Research could be done on how to centralize Indigeneity through consultation to envision how to situate and celebrate multiculturalism as a nation.

### **Recommendations**

1. **Prioritize Relationships:** The AGGV must develop and continue building relationships with local communities. It isn't enough to consult once; the consultation must be ongoing with the local territories. The first step is territorial acknowledgement, please see Appendix D for guidance. As a challenge to the gallery, working in community is one option to deepen relationships with Indigenous communities, and more, spending time in community may encourage visits to the gallery or participation in educational programming. Another suggestion to deepen relationships is to hold celebrations of learning or final exhibits of children's art work in community spaces.
2. **Employ artists as key players in decision making:** Include Indigenous artists on boards to work in active consultation with the AGGV. Not only should artists be teaching art programs, but they should be hired to determine pedagogical goals and curriculum content. Bring artists into dialogues on the choices for exhibits, curation and accompanying pedagogy.
3. **Centre Indigenous worldviews and pedagogies:** Integrate the *First Peoples Principles of Learning*, created by the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) (n.d.). Their comprehensive list of suggestions can be found on the FNESC website.

4. **Create a community of learning:** Offer education programs for the entire AGGV staff and community as well as professional development for teachers and not only teachers who will be involved with the *Gallery in the School* program. Research examples of communities of learning as they grow in other galleries and museums. Acknowledge the importance of ongoing learning rather than one-off training opportunities. Please see Appendix D for an introductory educator training framework.
5. **Allow for projects that are process oriented:** Implement learning projects that are long term rather than based on one visit to schools. Integrate guided reflective moments on learning. These initiatives will support artists proposals that art can create a responsive rather than reactive environment.
6. **Use art work to teach oral languages:** The AGGV holds a rich and diverse collection of Indigenous art. The AGGV can use their art work for restitutive purposes and to support the revival of oral languages. In education programs and throughout the gallery, match Indigenous oral interpretations and storytelling with art works.
7. **Engage in self-location activities:** For any of the art packages, begin with an activity that will engage teachers and students to engage in self-location exercises. Please see Appendix D for suggestions.
8. **Co-create with students:** Rather than have artists as figure heads or teachers who follow a banking system of education (Freire, 2000), create curriculum where artists and educators will co-create projects with students, as my participants suggested.

9. **Recognize differences in students:** While pointing out differences in student groups will only create a divisive environment, be aware of the differing points of entry for Indigenous and Non-Indigenous students into the curriculum. Understand how Indigenous students are working through ancestral trauma. Acknowledge that while these differences in identities require sensitivity and cultural competency, unity will happen when educators create an environment of hope.
10. **Integrate new elements of art history:** It is important to contextualize art curriculum with elements of art history that offers alternative histories through a variety of artistic modalities.
11. **Focus on virtues:** Throughout the art program curriculum, teach a deeper understanding of virtues to encourage hope as one outcome as well as strengthen cross cultural connections to Indigenous values and worldviews. The Virtues Project, created by educators Linda Kavelin-Popov, Dan Popov, John Kavelin and honored by the United Nations as a global educational program, may serve as a valuable resource.
12. The gallery will employ a new model of sharing power, one that centres Indigenous voices and concerns of Indigenous stakeholders. The gallery must consider a redefinition of core structures of power such as board members and authentically not only invite Indigenous community to participate but will open to new ways of governing the gallery. As a result, the gallery may become an institutional leader as museums seek reconciliation and provide frameworks for co-creative engagement that casts aside hierarchical models of power.

Please acknowledge that while this list may be useful, a check list is not a solution. This list is meant to provide suggestions for the *Gallery in the School* program but more importantly, encourage a reflective momentum towards new relationships and ongoing action.

### **Final Consideration: Connections to New Curriculum**

As a final consideration, a secondary focus of this study was to examine how an arts-based curriculum could support justice, decolonization and empowerment. As I mentioned in my introduction, a substantial transition has taken place in BC public school education that encourages critical pedagogy and imbeds deeper goals of social justice. It is worthwhile to consider how the outcomes of this study support the direction and goals of the new arts curriculum. I will briefly outline a few points from the new curriculum (Government of British Columbia, 2018b) with responses from my research. Most relevant to the recommendations from this study is the importance of incorporating Indigenous content, “[i]ncorporating First Peoples ways of knowing and the First Peoples Principles of Learning, the curriculum promotes informed and respectful engagement with First Peoples arts, artists, and worldviews”. Specifically, the new arts curriculum ties well to my research outcomes, “[t]he B.C. Arts Education curriculum is designed to enable students to explore the world through an artistic lens and to express their ideas, opinions, beliefs, and emotions”. As I have described, participants stressed how a deepened relationship to self through Indigenous art making and process will increase student confidence and agency. Additionally, according to the BC education website,

A strong arts education benefits all students, communities, and societies by contributing to the development of well-rounded, educated citizens.

The arts connect students with history, heritage, culture, and community, fostering an understanding of the diverse values and perspectives of global, Indigenous, and Canadian societies. (Government of British Columbia, 2018a, para. 1)

The recommendations of participants not only serve to increase a better understanding of Indigenous worldviews and knowledges through art but encourage a deeper understanding of self and society. Additionally, I have gained an understanding of how alternative histories can create critical discussions around the place of multiculturalism in Canada, one that centres Indigenous identity as unique to our national boundaries. Art installations and objects serve well to teach students alternative histories. As I pointed out in my recommendations, the presence and contributions of artists are essential to a respectful delivery of an art program and these ideas are mirrored in curricular recommendations, “when teaching students about culture-specific art forms and contexts, engaging with experts from the community is particularly important in order to avoid offence or appropriation or misrepresentation of culture”.

The new curriculum increases the scope and possibilities for the AGGV to impact a range of classrooms. The new arts curriculum encourages cross-disciplinary possibilities, “[t]hrough the curriculum’s unified design, teachers have the option of creating learning experiences that combine two or more disciplines”. The recommendations from this study serve as evidence of the potential in cross curricular learning through the arts. As one participant asserted, “artwork can be definitely transmutable into different subjects like science, math, history and English”. Another participant suggested that art learning should encourage, “more of the history who are the people, their stories, but expanding on their politics, government and spirituality”. Land

based learning and creating art outside of the schools, with communities, are further options of how the AGGV may work with schools. Ultimately, this study calls for a holistic art program that takes students beyond the institutional confines of classroom walls and out into the world with curiosity and wonder.

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## **Appendix A: Questions for Research**

### **Group 1: Jennifer Van De Pol, Educator School and Families, AGGV**

#### **Background**

What factors contributed to the GIS program entering a period of re-visioning in 2015/16?

The AGGV has a new Education/Programming Vision Statement, what is it and why this shift?

TRC

How has the AGGV responded to the TRC final recommendations? What support or guidance does the AGGV need to further respond to the TRC final recommendations?

How do you hope the new resource might respond to TRC recommendations and this important historical/ political moment of reconciliation between settlers and Indigenous peoples?

#### **Art Education Resource**

What are your hopes for the new art resource and the delivery of the resource? Objectives for the new resource?

How have you chosen the artworks for the new resource?

Can you describe why arts-based education can be a valuable tool for social change?

How does art open the door to conversations on power in society and how would you like education resources in the AGGV to include these conversations power- ie. Gender, class, and race?

How might an art education resource support the struggles of sovereignty for Indigenous peoples?

#### **Pedagogy**

What knowledge and themes will be represented in the new resource? Who will teach the new resources? What do the teachers need to know to deliver the resource?

Describe the relationship that you would like the AGGV to have with Indigenous artists and educators? How can the AGGV build better relationships of accountability?

Where do you believe the art resource could benefit from the advice of Indigenous artists and educators? Do you have any questions that you would like to be addressed by

Indigenous artists and educators?

Do you have any other comments?

### **Groups 2 & 3: Indigenous Artists & Educators**

Can you describe your work and involvement with the AGGV, or in education?

### **TRC & issues of Justice in Canada**

How might this art education resource respond to the TRC's recommendations for cultural institutions and education as described below: As the TRC has experienced in every region of the country, creative expression can play a vital role in this national reconciliation, providing alternative voices, vehicles, and venues for expressing historical truths and present hopes" (Truth and Reconciliation Final Report, 2015, p.178). And how important is it that the resource responds directly to the TRC?

How would you define the term Indigenization (and decolonization), and how could an Indigenized framework inform the educational art resource?

### **Art Resource**

Could you describe the potential of art as a teaching tool? And as a tool to support Indigenous ways of knowing?

How do you think art or these education resources can open up doors on conversations on power and society, like gender, class, race, particularly for Indigenous peoples?

How might an art resource encourage critical conversations to challenge negative narratives from media images, stereotypes and perceptions of Indigenous people?

### **Teachers and Students**

How can teachers engage with this material- keeping in mind they will download independently and most likely will teach without Indigenous support- what do teachers need to know as they approach this material? What training might they need before teaching these resources?

What could students be doing to respond to the art works, in a way that is respectful and does not cross lines of appropriation? Art engagement and production that isn't just two-dimensional responses? Incorporating different materials and different conceptual approaches?

How can students begin to understand concepts like decolonial, reconciliation, Indigenous/settler or to approach and how can they honour and respect Indigenous worldviews?

What would you love to have, to see young learners asking themselves as they engage with this resource?

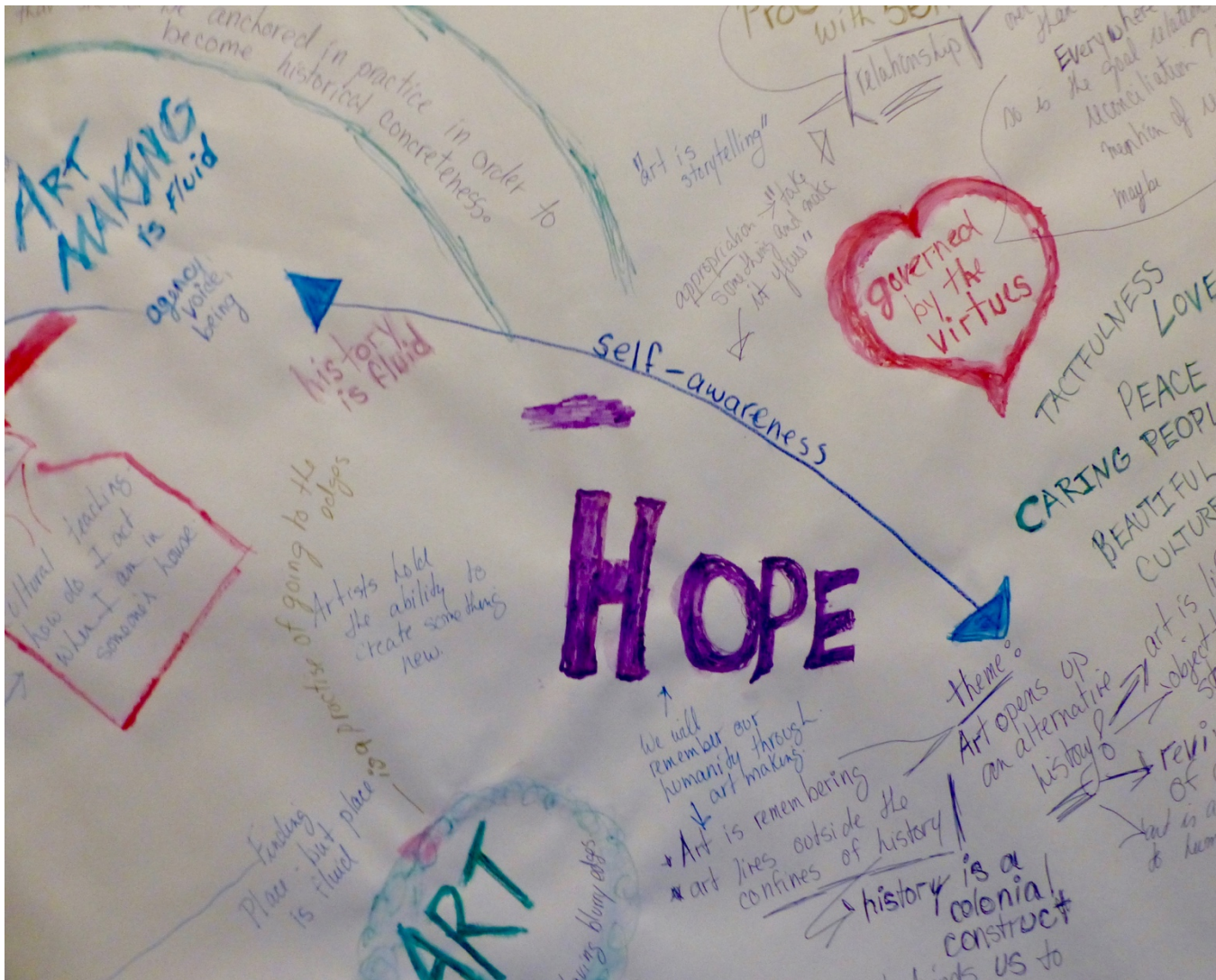
How can these resources be more accessible to communities and students who have been marginalized from art galleries (as colonial institutions)?

Do you have any other comments?

## Appendix B: Example of Coding

<p><b>Code: art</b> Representation of Culture, life experience, Environment, story</p> <p><i>Process of colonization</i></p>	<p>reconciliation isn't just a word, it is an action.</p> <p>art is definitely a vessel to bring our truths forward and so yah, that is definitely the power to do that and you know art has the power to do a lot of damage as well.</p> <p>art is you know, it exists in having blurry edges and conflicting conversations and the idea of an art resource for art teachers, to set those perimeters, you know, those baselines, I keep coming back to it, you know the idea that history is fluid and um, those conversations are always changing and in many ways it is a hyper-text and art is too, and that is ok and I is supposed to be that way. And to try to focus on trying to find wisdom or generosity or humor or you know, pathways through this stuff might be...</p> <p>art is a practice and also that it is a commitment, like I said before going to the edges or trying to understand the unknown, or uh, exploration, I mean everyone has their own ways, thinking about art as a practice, rather than a subject or a thing. If it is a practice, it is different.</p> <p>art is a response. It is a physical uh, tangible, visceral process of responding to human history as human beings. You know, what we are seeing, what we are experiencing we recreate so we have a personalized relationship to things. And so it could be so depersonalized, you know</p> <p>Art has the ability to transcend words and has the ability to have that, evoke that emotional response you need for true understanding.</p>
<p><b>Code: pedagogy</b> The process/methods Of teaching</p>	<p>teaching but also looking at you know, more of the history of who are the people, who are their stories so expanding art but also teaching about their politics and the way that they practice spirituality and what were their views on government, self-government and how did they govern themselves</p> <p>You know, uh, on things that they are interested and curious about. Um, really understanding what students want to invest their time in. .... so I think co-creating projects and co-creating</p>

Appendix C: Thematic Analysis Visual Map



## Appendix D: Introductory Training Guide for Educators

The purpose of this appendix is to provide background information and support for teachers who may be approaching and integrating Indigenous art programs for the first time in their classroom, and reflecting on their role, particularly for Non- Indigenous teachers.

### **TRC Importance**

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s final report and Calls to Action (2015) challenges both schools and cultural institutions to revise their relationships and representation of Indigenous peoples. The report values the power of art to create a space of healing. “As the TRC has experienced in every region of the country, creative expression can play a vital role in this national reconciliation, providing alternative voices, vehicles, and venues for expressing historical truths and present hopes” (p. 178). Further, the final report affirms how deep engagement with the arts supports human rights, dignity and identity in the face of injustice. As a guide for education in the gallery, the final report states: “Properly structured, they can also invite people to explore their own worldviews, values, beliefs, and attitudes that may be barriers to healing, justice, and reconciliation” (p.178).

### **Local Protocols**

#### **Territory Acknowledgement**

Acknowledging territory is an essential step to creating respectful relationships. According to Canadian Association for University Teachers (CAUT) president, James Compton. “Acknowledging territory shows recognition of and respect for Aboriginal Peoples, which is key to reconciliation.”. An acknowledgment of traditional territory takes place at the beginning of courses, at meetings or any public event. The following link is intended for universities but provides important examples for schools:

<https://www.caut.ca/news/2016/05/27/territorial-acknowledgement-guide>

Here are some examples of acknowledging local territory by organizations on Vancouver Island:

<http://www.vnfc.ca/>

<http://www.vipirg.ca/territories-acknowledgement/>

<https://www.uvic.ca/hsd/socialwork/home/home/welcome/index.php>

#### **Protocols**

Understanding, acknowledging and referring to local protocols is a first step to engaging with any Indigenous centred education. If you aren’t sure how to acknowledge territory or integrate local protocols, seek out Indigenous educators and leaders in your community. If you are a Non-Indigenous educator, please read the following guide by Lynn Gehl, Ph.D., Algonquin Anishinaabe-kwe, to learn how best to develop respectful working relationships:

<http://www.lynngehl.com/gehl-ally-bill-of-responsibilities.html>

## **Indigenous Knowledges & Worldviews**

While each the knowledges and worldviews of Indigenous nations are unique and must be acknowledged as such, Indigenous scholars are identifying common elements. Themes that are emerging from Indigenous literature include, first, the holistic nature of knowledge, as summarized by Indigenous scholar Leroy Little Bear (2000), who describes recurrences in seasons, animal migrations, renewal ceremonies, songs, and stories. Second, spirituality emerges as an interrelated sacredness of place with sentience in all things (Grace, 1986; Little Bear, 2000; Miller, 1996; Tanaka, 2009). Indigenous scholar Vanessa Watts (2013) points out that Indigenous knowledge systems see all life as interconnected and writes that “habitats and ecosystems are better understood as societies from an Indigenous point of view and so have ethical structures, inter-species treaties and agreements” (p. 23). Finally, story-telling and narratives are essential to Indigenous knowledges and peoples (Alfred, 2009; Little Bear, 2000; Trepanier & Creighton-Kelly, 2011). As a teacher, looks for these themes in the art pieces held by the AGGV and you will begin to truly unravel a story.

First People’s Principles of Learning: <http://www.fnesc.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/PUB-LFP-POSTER-Principles-of-Learning-First-Peoples-poster-11x17.pdf>

## **The Journey to be an Ally**

### **Self-Location**

The purpose of self- location ties closely to acknowledging territory. As defined by Indigenous Foundations of UBC, self-location for Indigenous communities is identity within a particular family, clan, band, or nation and using many traditional terms and names that locate them within those circumstances. When introducing themselves, people may identify themselves by their genealogy and ancestors or by the traditional name of their community or nation. Those identifications, however, often have deeper dimensions and reflect a strong and spiritual connection to the land and other cultural traditions. However, from the ruptures of residential schools, the sixties scoop and continued forced apprehension of Indigenous children by the state, self-location may be a complex journey of discovery and healing.

For Non-Indigenous teachers, self-location is an important step to building accountability, trust and transparency. Additionally, self-location exercises as a teacher and community member help us to understand our position but also the uniqueness of Indigenous peoples and their life experiences, as community members of different nations and territories, and as individuals with unique life experiences. Alternatively, we can begin to see patterns and identify where our stories fit into the bigger picture of colonialism and Canadian history.

The following activity with permission to use, comes from the teachings of Dr. Sandrina de Finney, Associate professor with the School of Child and Youth Care, at the University of Victoria.

## **To explore and reflect upon your social location:**

### **Step 1:**

- Locate the First Nations/Indigenous territory(ies) and communities for the location where (1) you grew up and (2) you live now. On whose lands have you lived, and which Indigenous communities live in or around these territories? Consider your ancestors' history and your family's history of living in Canada in relation to these territories and the history of colonization in Canada.
- How does your own history and experiences in relation to the following 'social categories' that shape identity: Gender, race, ethnicity, language(s), citizenship/nationality, ability(ies)/disability(ies), social class/socio-economic status, age, and sexuality.
- What is your relationship status, parental roles, family and physical location origins?

### **Step 2:**

- What do your dimensions of diversity look like in your life? Which ones have you or can you change, and which ones are more fixed or problematic? How and by whom have these dimensions been shaped?
- What sort of power do you have or not have because of your class, age, gender, sexuality, ethnic background, religion, citizenship, dis/abilities? For example, how has/have your ethnic group(s) been treated historically and why?
- Try to find your own examples of how privilege, power and normativity operate in your life.

Think about how the different dimensions interact, intersect with and influence each other. How has your social position been shaped by history and social forces? How do you fit into the bigger picture of colonialism and the history of Canada? What do you still need to learn about this history?

## **Indigeneity**

Western perspectives have dominated education, which directly enforces power and privilege. The term Indigeneity considers the space between Western and Indigenous education, and how those two very differing education systems might incorporate Indigenous education without re-centring Western values. As Hohepa (2013) points out, Indigeneity creates a space for teachers in non-Indigenous environments to engage in ways that identify, emphasize, and articulate preferred values, beliefs and practices of Indigenous peoples. Consider how you approach Indigenous knowledges and learnings. Are you comparing Indigenous knowledges to Western knowledges or trying to fit Indigenous knowledges into Western education? Alternatively, are you able to acknowledge the uniqueness and value of Indigenous education systems?

## **Appropriation**

When thinking about Indigenous art and knowledges, it is important to evaluate if you are appropriating rather than respectfully approaching Indigenous artists and their work.

Consider if artists have given permission to have their work used in education. If you cannot contact the artist, have you spoken to Indigenous artists or educators within your local community. If you are creating Indigenous art, reflect if you and your students are just copying an artwork or if you are studying the piece deeply, investigating the elements of art involved and then creating from a place of inspiration and respect.