

Wandering With/In the University of Alberta: Teaching Subjects & Place-based Truth & Reconciliation Education

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This manuscript unfolds in the context of a Faculty of Education course that was designed in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's call to post-secondary institutions to identify and meet teacher-training needs relating to the history and legacy of Canada's Indian Residential School system. The course instructor (Madden) begins by tracing how she is theorizing truth and reconciliation education through engagement with literature produced by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and those who respond to their efforts. The pedagogical activity Wandering With/In the University of Alberta animates how she attempted to mobilize these emerging understandings through course design. We then introduce the collective processes we carried out as co-authors (i.e., course instructor and three graduate students who completed the course): creating, analyzing, and representing data, as well as generating the knowledge claims offered throughout. Next, data fragments that weave photographs of and narrative writing about campus sites anchor exploration of three central themes: wandering in relation to (a) evolving understandings of self, (b) a situated and significant historical moment (i.e., Canada 150), and (c) the (imagined) classroom as a site of reconciliation. We conclude with a discussion that explores the relationship between Faculty of Education coursework, identity, and place-based pedagogies for truth and reconciliation education.

Cette étude s'est déroulée dans le contexte d'un cours offert par la Faculty of Education et développé en réponse à l'appel de la Commission de vérité et réconciliation du Canada aux établissements postsecondaires pour qu'ils identifient les besoins en formation des enseignants quant à l'histoire et les séquelles du système des pensionnats indiens au Canada et qu'ils répondent à ces besoins. La chargée de cours (Madden) débute en expliquant ses démarches pour théoriser l'éducation de vérité et réconciliation en se penchant sur la littérature produite par la Commission de vérité et réconciliation du Canada et sur la réaction des gens aux efforts de la commission. L'activité pédagogique Wandering With/In the University of Alberta est une animation de ses efforts pour mobiliser ces nouvelles connaissances par la conception de son cours. Ensuite, nous présentons les processus collectifs que nous avons entrepris comme co-auteurs (c'est-à-dire, la chargée de cours et les trois étudiants aux études supérieures ayant complété le cours): la création, l'analyse et la représentation des données, ainsi que l'élaboration des déclarations présentées dans l'ensemble du cours. Par la suite, des fragments de données tissent des photos et des récits narratifs portant sur des sites sur le campus et offrent des balises pour l'exploration de trois thèmes centraux: errer par rapport à: (a) une compréhension en évolution de soi-même, (b) un moment historique significatif (par ex., Canada 150) et (c) la salle de classe (imaginée) comme site de réconciliation. Une discussion portant sur le rapport entre

les cours de la Faculty of Education, l'identité et les pédagogies reposant axées les lieux au service de l'éducation de vérité et réconciliation vient terminer l'article.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC) national events, final multi-volume report, and recent *Calls to Action*, alongside Indigenous education policy across all levels in our local and provincial contexts (e.g., Cook, 2017; Edmonton Public Schools, 2016; Government of Alberta, 2018b) emphasize the central position of truth and reconciliation education (TRE) in healing colonial relationships as well as pursuing school improvement for Indigenous students and communities. This manuscript centres the experiences of a course instructor and three graduate students who analyze the relationship between a place-based TRE pedagogical activity and their shifting (teacher) identities. It unfolds in the context of a University of Alberta Faculty of Education course that was designed in response to the call to post-secondary institutions to identify and meet teacher-training needs relating to the history and legacy of Canada's Indian Residential School (IRS) system (TRC, 2015). The course instructor—Dr. Brooke Madden, Assistant Professor in the Department of Secondary Education and the Aboriginal Teacher Education Program—traces her de/colonizing theory of truth and reconciliation education (2019a). The pedagogical activity *Wandering With/In the University of Alberta* (U of A) animates how this theory is translated to higher education practice. Co-authors (i.e., course instructor and three graduate students who completed the course) then introduce how they create, analyze, and represent data, as well as generate knowledge claims. Three themes are explored through data fragments that weave photographs of and narrative writing about campus sites: wandering in relation to (a) evolving understandings of self, (b) a situated and significant historical moment (i.e., Canada 150), and (c) the (imagined) classroom as a site of reconciliation. A discussion that unpacks the relationship between coursework, identity, and place-based pedagogies for TRE concludes the article.

A Decolonizing Theory-Practice of Truth and Reconciliation Education (Brooke)

My name is Brooke Madden. I am from Tecumseh, Ontario, situated on the territory of the McKee Treaty of 1790 and the traditional land of the Wendat and the Three Fires Confederacy of First Nations—the Ojibwa, the Odawa, and the Potawatomi. I identify as a woman with Indigenous and settler ancestry: Wendat, Iroquois, French, and German on my mother's side and Mi'kmaw, Irish, and English on my father's side. I distinguish between ancestry and lived experiences of membership, Mi'kmaw or Haudenosaunee Nations in particular, in an attempt to acknowledge the complex colonial happenings—notably shaped by gender, class, and race—that produce my family's histories and my resultant positioning. My scholarship, inclusive of this article, often focuses on the relationship between teacher identity and teacher education on the topics of Indigenous education and TRE and is tethered to these complexities and related subjectivities that refuse to conform to an insider/outsider binary. I endeavour to hold space to honour my relations, while acknowledging privilege and resisting appropriation of traditional knowledges and experiences that are not my own.

In preparation to teach a graduate-level course in TRE, I set out to develop a theory that detailed how I understand prevailing constructions of truth and reconciliation in circulation given my decolonizing commitments. I identify four interrelated components that provide

orientations, challenges, and possibilities to consider when engaging theory building, community involvement, research design, policy development, and teaching for TRE (Madden, 2019a).

The first component is the TRC's interpretations of reconciliation and education for reconciliation that I suggest are best understood through a historical examination of the development of the Commission and its central initiatives. I argue that the TRC's interpretations cannot be uncoupled from the context of residential schools and focus on practices that pursue and uphold respectful and healthy Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships in Canada (e.g., [witnessing] truth telling; undertaking widespread, interdisciplinary, and systemic action). The second component is Indigenous land-based traditions (e.g., spiritual ceremonies, peacemaking practices, and stories) that have been used since time immemorial to establish and maintain good relations, restore harmony, heal conflict and harm, as well as practice justice. Reconciliatory journeying that challenges colonial relationships that have characterized engagement since contact creates space to conceptualize reconciliation as a process that also balances relationships with, and upholds responsibilities to, land and ancestors. The third component is Indigenous counter-stories of refusal, resistance, resilience, and restorying and resurgence. I hold that counter-stories offer the opportunity to imagine reconciliation, where Indigenous peoples are not characterized by the singularized image of victimhood (see also Madden, 2019b). The fourth component is critiques of the construction and enactment of reconciliation (e.g., reconciliation as emblematic of the "politics of distraction," [Corntassel and Holder, 2008]; the "compartmentalization" of reconciliation such that it is isolated from ongoing injustices, [Corntassel, 2012]). I stress that educators who are able to survey, appreciate, and relate to a landscape of engagement with truth and reconciliation initiatives are well equipped to facilitate complex teaching and learning about a topic that cannot be disconnected from ongoing colonial relations of power and the injustices they continue to produce.

As I designed coursework for students who were simultaneously enrolled in graduate studies and working as practicing educators in Alberta—herein referred to as *graduate student educators*—I held my emerging decolonizing theory of TRE close. I organized my course outline in an arc that closely aligns with the four components, carefully considering how I might invite graduate student educators to join me in exploring a notion of reconciliation that honours the legacy and initiatives of the TRC, Indigenous land-based traditions, IRS counter-stories, and critiques of the construction and enactment of reconciliation. One approach I conceived of named *Wandering With/In the U of A* (for a deeper analysis of the process of designing this TRE pedagogical activity see Higgins and Madden, 2017) invited students to:

1. Wander in groups through the U of A while paying attention to the architecture and adornments of our places of learning.
2. Take one photo per group member that represents:
 - Celebration and contestation;
 - Beliefs underlying colonization;
 - Colonial legislation, policy, tools and/or techniques; and/or
 - TRC's *Calls to Action*.

3. Collectively prepare a short artistic statement (~100-200 words) outlining what your group is attempting to capture, your group's aesthetic/creative/artistic choices, and how your group is responding to the prompt. (directions offered to graduate student educators in class on July 7th, 2017)

The remainder of this manuscript focuses on the experiences of members of one group of graduate student educators (Craig Michaud, Tarah Edgar, and Jenny Jones) who engaged this theory and prompt, as well as my related responses as course instructor.

Methodology

Course materials (e.g., course syllabus, lesson plans, and associated resources), instructor's reflexive writing about the course, photos taken by graduate students while Wandering With/In the U of A, student assignments (e.g., students' artistic statements, individual course journals), and audio recordings of co-authors' meetings following completion of coursework and submission of final grades comprise the data.

Data analysis is guided by Jackson and Mazzei's (2012) methodological and philosophical approach *Thinking with Theory* (TWT). Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari (1987), Jackson and Mazzei positioned this approach as explorations of "reading-the-data-while-thinking-the-theory" which is marked by moments "of plugging in, of entering the assemblage, of making new connectives" (2012, p. 4). Several analytical questions emerged in the middle of plugging in our data alongside Madden's decolonizing theory of TRE. For example,

- What U of A sites do graduate students recognize as significant when constructing understandings of TRE?
- How are colonial logics transferred onto and reproduced through our own places of learning?
- How are living places agential in constructing differential bodies of learning? Where and how are counter-stories and critiques revealed?
- How does relationship between place and learning shape understandings of self as teaching subject produced through material-discursive relations? How does it shape both what and how we learn about and imagine Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations?
- How does wandering as pedagogy create space to pursue a decolonizing approach to TRE?

Guided by these theoretical and methodological frames, over a one-year period we spent time with memories and photographs of three campus sites: *The Visionaries* (Patterson, 2015) monument (September-December 2017), a Canada 150 event (January-May 2018), and Rutherford House (June-August 2018). For each place, we began by individually re/stor(y)ing our relationship according to theme through narrative writing informed by the data listed above. For example, we often returned to course readings to negotiate theory-practice, as well as daily journal entries completed as one component of coursework in an attempt to (momentarily and imperfectly) witness shifts in our respective (teacher) identities. We then came together as a group where we read our contributions aloud. Read-alouds offered each narrator the opportunity to spent time with the memories, musings, and embodiments of co-authors, as well as exquisite attention (Lather, 2007). Of the last process, we honoured the pleasure and productivity of attention through witnessing each other's most salient contributions given our



Figure 1. The (Re)Visionaries: Craig Michaud & Tarah Edgar engaging *The Visionaries* (Photo taken by Jenny Jones and used with permission)

collective intentions; posing questions of substance, clarification, and provocation; and offering input regarding which of the gifts an author shared might appear, and in what order, in our collaboratively written manuscript. Our most recent narrative attempts are included, as well as the original photographs taken during the Wandering With/In activity. We hold that meaning-making is enhanced across distinct narratives and photos.

In the following section we explore three central themes: Wandering With/In the U of A in relation to (a) evolving understandings of self (*The Visionaries* monument), (b) a situated and significant historical moment (a Canada 150 event), and (c) the (imagined) classroom as a site of reconciliation (Rutherford House).

(Re)Visionaries: Wandering and Evolving Understandings of Self

Craig. The name “Visionaries” both titles the bronze sculpture in Figure 1, and embodies the spirit, intention, and meaning of our enacted photograph and collective conversation during the Wandering With/In activity. Three individuals travelled together differently on a single journey that day; the intersection that *The Visionaries* occupies—a convergence of a particular time, place, ideal subject, relational ethic—acts as metaphor for the multiple positionalities from

Indigenous, white, unsettled settler. Venturing onto campus, where my footprints had left tracks for many years, I was not sure exactly what I expected as we approached a statue named *The Visionaries*. A palpable degree of shock, sadness, and frustration entered my body, and I was struck and unsettled by my own new sense of a place I thought I knew well. This space was an obvious first site for ponderance.

The monument is an oversized version of obviously important, non-Indigenous, white, male, colonizers, and the notion of “unsettling the settlers” was our decided-upon mission for the three of us, in that moment. Coincidentally, I was carrying *Thunder Boy Jr.* (2016), written by Sherman Alexie and illustrated by Yuyi Morales; the book tells the story of an Indigenous boy who carries the same name as his father, but desperately wants his own name. Almost in a child-like fashion I stretched my arms up to share the book with the men represented in this monument. My aim was to spend this captured moment teaching these men how identities shift, how spaces change, and how we reconcile by beginning to unsettle our stagnant, monumentalized, and colonial visions.

When passing this monument now, my relationship to it is different. I take pictures when I see children climbing on it, as they are inclined to do, and I wonder about the visions of how this space and land will shift in the spirit of reconciliation. Thinking back to when they envisioned this land as a future home of scholarship, I ask, what were these men looking towards as they imagined a future? Did it include space for Indigenous ways of knowing in academia and for a de/colonization of this land they “worked for”? Were their identities able to shift, as mine had so much, in this university space of learning and becoming?

Jenny. As we left the safe and collegial space of the classroom there was a natural ease to our conversations flowing between our developing understandings of reconciliation, each other, and ourselves. I was in the process of understanding my own history in relation to and with truth and reconciliation. My father is an English and Irish second-generation Canadian who met, married, and moved my mother—an Italian immigrant from Montreal, Quebec—to where the streets were “paved with gold”: Fort McMurray, Alberta. They moved in 1981, at the end of the second Oil Sands boom because the growing population needed teachers, and my trained-teacher parents needed jobs. I grew up in a city with a significant Cree, Dene, and Métis population, my brother and I often bore witness to significant disparities between the Indigenous peoples and settlers.

As Tarah, Craig, and I were moving on that warm July day, I was filled with tension in my head and my heart. I was beginning to acknowledge the stereotypes of Indigenous peoples that I had carried from my youth, through my undergraduate and graduate degrees, and into my career as an educator in Edmonton. We were going to interrogate the U of A campus, a place that I had traversed thousands of times as a student and pedestrian. I was trusting the process, but I had some doubt that I would find something I had not seen before. Unbeknownst to me, I was travelling with new eyes. I cannot recall the chain of events that brought us to the statue, *The Visionaries*, but then there it was.

As Craig and Tarah were positioning themselves to unsettle these settlers (Regan, 2010), I was reading and rereading the nearby plaque. The title, *The Visionaries*, and a seemingly simple statement “Rutherford ... worked tirelessly to allocate River Lot 5 ... as the University of Alberta’s future home” was unsettling me (Patterson, 2015, para 1). I turned those words over and over in my head, and I began to feel frustration and anger. The plaque was celebrating Canada’s colonial agenda. The simple statement “Rutherford ... worked tirelessly to allocate River Lot 5” failed to recognize that the land had already been occupied for thousands of years

by diverse populations of Indigenous peoples. The plaque had no recognition of the fact that the land being “allocated” was the traditional meeting grounds, gathering places, and travelling routes of the Cree, Saulteaux, Blackfoot, Métis, Dene, and Nakota Sioux peoples. Moreover, the plaque and statue were dated 2015, which was the same year the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada was issuing their final report, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*. This statue was neither honouring the truth nor reconciling the future. I now recall this moment as the conscious beginnings of my reconciliation journey.

Brooke. While the graduate students wandered, I focused on preparing our space for the next activity. The coffee and tea pots needed to be emptied and cleaned, the ashes from our sage smudge collected so I could offer them to a favourite Manitoba Maple on my way home, and my Meme’s¹ blanket that grounded our circle’s centre smoothed and freed from the fragments of morning learnings. “Buzz!” My iPhone vibrated against the table. “Buzz! Buzz!”

I began to scroll through photos sent by students. One was the iconic Red River cart that was gifted to the Faculty of Native Studies from the Métis Nation of Alberta, signifying “partnership ... and recognizing the presence of and contributions by Métis people at the university” (Stirling, 2015). Another was *Sweetgrass Bear*, carved in granite by Stewart Steinhauer, that invites “present moment participants” (Steinhauer, 2016, para 4) to consider what the sculpture can teach about our relationship to Treaty 6 and the traditional teachings of this land. I paused at what we as coauthors now refer to as *The (Re)Visionaries*, using my fingers to zoom in. Was Craig sitting on Rutherford’s lap?

Figure 1 was the first photo I received that day that included humans. A few more did come in; in the end, four of the nineteen captured students actively, visibly, engaging with/in The U of A. I’ve since done this activity with approximately 100 undergraduate and graduate students and received an even greater proportion of photos devoid of obvious human-other-than-human relating. It makes me curious about the assumptions and understandings that are being “captured” and communicated when students actively excise themselves from the frame, remaining only as spectres behind the lens. Do they see themselves as in and of this place? Continuously and (un)consciously shaped by its layered stories, de/colonizing commitments, and (not so) monumental celebrations and contestations (Higgins and Madden, 2017)? Conversely, through playing and being played with by *The Visionaries*, how were Craig, Tarah, and Jenny learning from, participating and implicated in, as well as responsible for constructing our places of learning?

This photo elicited a truly delightful moment as a pedagogue. It brought with it the overwhelming sense that I, in part, created the conditions to cultivate meaning-full relationships with a curriculum of place often hidden in plain view. I marveled at how the group used their bodies and belongings to reconfigure settler colonial logics and ways of being in relationship. For example, interacting with the bronze sculpture in ways that transgress the norms of engaging with monuments and shift what it means to “vision” in the process, “schooling” *The Visionaries* using a children’s book written by Indigenous author Sherman Alexie, and angling the camera such that the size of humans is brought more closely in alignment with the “larger than life” (Rodrigues, 2015) bronze figures. It also caused me to pause and question what I might offer to propel students beyond these largely symbolic gestures towards substantive action that challenges whiteness; land dispossession, disputes, and devastation; injustices centred on diminishing Indigenous self-determination; and the deeply-learned divides that persist between Indigenous peoples and settlers.

Colonial Cake: Wandering During a Situated and Significant Historical Moment

Brooke. In designing the course, it was important to me to create space to take up critiques of the construction and enactment of reconciliation. Heeding critique is imperative since efforts to challenge and pursue reconciliation within colonial systems are often embedded in those very same systems. Western political, judicial, economic, and educational systems continue to contribute to the “cultural genocide” (TRC, 2015) of, and land theft from, Indigenous peoples, as well as the fractured Indigenous-settler relations that rightfully result. I have referred to truth and reconciliation education as de/colonizing to underscore the complexity and, at times, incongruity of the colonial logics, structures, and practices of educational institutions and the Indigenous, decolonizing, and reconciliation initiatives² they pursue (Higgins and Madden, 2017; Madden, 2019a). Such a notion suggests that decolonization need not be (and perhaps cannot be) constructed in neat opposition to colonization.

This work, I suggest, is nonetheless worthy of pursuit. De/colonizing calls for consistent examination of the ways in which, our intentions and plans notwithstanding, Indigenous education and teacher education³ often becomes marked by hybrid experiences of colonizing and decolonizing. Critiques shine light on the sites where current conceptions of reconciliation are exceeded by Indigenous experiences, requirements, and commitments. They also offer frames to map and facilitate complex teaching and learning about a promising process that cannot be disconnected from ongoing colonial relations of power and the continuing injustices they produce.

The critique at front of my mind in July 2017 was the “compartmentalization” (Corntassel, 2012) of reconciliation such that it is isolated and disconnected from ongoing injustices. Following monumental nationwide celebrations of Canada 150 many were asking, myself included, how can we concurrently celebrate the era of reconciliation and 150 years of occupation of ancestral territories (e.g., Belcourt, 2017; #colonialism150⁴; Gaudry, 2017)?

The temporality of Canada Day and the course start date falling three days apart seemed to sink in as I sat in Rogers Place on July 1st, 2017. I was surrounded by hand-held Canadian flags; kids slicked with greasy face paint and temporary tattoos; and a minimalist image of a maple leaf emblazoned on Solo cups, banners, t-shirts, caps, and silicone wristbands. Forever altered by Lilith Fair 1997, I was there to be moved by (white, cis, straight, patriotic, educated) Canadian treasure Sarah McLachlan. Nonetheless, I consented to participate in the spectacle beforehand. Three days later as we opened our course in a talking circle, I sensed students were engaged in their own processes of discomfort as they attempted to negotiate the weekend’s celebration and the first 100 pages of the TRC’s *Final Report*.

To me, this tension is captured in the Colonial Cake photos [Figures 2 & 3]: the image of celebratory Canadians commemorating 150 years since the *Constitution Act* (1867) neatly opposes the image of dissenting Canadians deeply unsettled by their nation’s enduring history of settler-colonialism⁵. I’ve witnessed students, in equal parts, fiercely desire and claim one image over the other, as well as don the armour or suffer the dissolution of self that is required to uphold either “normalizing fiction” (Britzman, 2003). While awareness and even impossible occupation of celebratory Canadian/dissenting Canadian are important decolonizing processes, I’m interested in pedagogical activities that involve students in exploring the dominant sources of knowledge that shape Canadian subjecthood (like the university event photographed for example). While Vowel (2016) argues that “Canadian” is most often used as marker of identity that obscures colonial logics, strategies, and subject positions, I wonder, what might be made



Figure 2. Colonial Cake 1 Canada 150: A celebration? (Photo taken by event organizer on Jenny Jones' phone)

possible through refusal and resignification of the current usage of Canadian? Can this term be recovered to instead refer to those who know the truth about and actively engage in reconciliatory and anti-oppressive action that challenges Canada's imperial legacy and ongoing assault on Indigenous land and life? What unnamed privilege is entangled in this pursuit?

Craig. I left *The Visionaries* electrified by our conversation, and a short walk led us to the front step of the Administrative building. We were immediately greeted by Canada 150 celebration banners, excited smiles, "colonial" birthday cake, and a handful of university representatives eager to commemorate Canada's 150th year as a country. My fervor for the moment outweighed my desire for cake, and I immediately sensed the university had missed an opportunity to create a space to reconcile settler-Indigenous relations by only presenting a "settler-centric" perspective of Canada's colonial roots.

Centered at a moment and location of significance for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people were sights, smells, tastes, and feelings that represented a Eurocentric perspective of Canada's settler history; a scene that disregarded any consideration of Indigenous histories or counter-stories was on display before us. Having spent previous days reading, writing, talking, and reflecting on the troublesome history and legacy of Indian Residential Schools, the Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and the



Figure 3. Colonial Cake 2 Canada 150: A contestation? (Photo taken by event organizer on Jenny Jones' phone)

Commission's *Calls to Action*, my colleagues and I were of a different mindset than the hosts at this birthday party. Feeling somewhat provocative and intuitively thinking as one, we set out to (re)story the moment. Grabbing the photo booth props provided, Tarah, Jenny, and I posed for pictures in ways we felt provoked, questioned, and challenged the event. To address the questioning looks the representative taking our pictures projected, I respectfully explained that, with the *Calls to Action* in mind, we were wandering the University with the purpose of considering the juxtaposition that exists in the space between celebration and contestation of colonialism. The response provided was polite and uncertain.

Most disappointing in this encounter was the sense that this event—a representation of the values held by our higher education institution—did not take the opportunity for reconciliACTION. I wondered, how could this “celebration” have been (re)storied in a way that attempted to create opportunities to address the colonial relationship that persists between Indigenous peoples and settlers? For example, educating party-goers and passersby about knowledge of Indigenous histories on this land? Land that, as I learned from Dr. Dwayne Donald (2004), once belonged to the Papaschase Cree. Land taken during a time of settler ignorance toward Indigenous rights.

As an educator of youth, I realize that the work of addressing truth and reconciliation cannot be reduced to practice alone. Healing is a process that requires questioning, reflecting, improving, learning, modeling, listening, and building respectful relations. The event we witnessed was not representative of a healing Canada.

Jenny. All that I knew of Canada shifted in the summer of 2017.⁶ While most Canadians were celebrating the 150th anniversary of our Confederation, I was beginning to understand Canada as country built on racism, whiteness, Eurocentrism, and colonization.

I distinctly remember what drew us to the Canada 150 celebration. It was nothing grandiose or even “on-task” for our wandering activity, it was ... cake, and coffee, but mostly cake. It was one of those big white slab cakes with sharp corners, flawless white icing, and symmetrical, colourful flowers: the kind of cake I would have wished for as a child to mark my own birthday. University employees were busy cutting the slab into even pieces for those who were lined up in straight, orderly lines to receive their piece of Canada 150. As I ate my (unfortunately stale) cake, we began discussing the Canada 150 celebration on campus and our own experiences of celebrating the past weekend. We noted that all the commemorations we participated in separately had all the bells and whistles but lacked substance; the festivities we attended were convenient, comfortable, designed to entertain, but superficial. Much like the colonial cake being enjoyed by a University community in the bright sun, they literally and symbolically reflected and reproduced colonial lines and logics.

The slogan “Canada 150” alone exemplifies how the Government of Canada, and most Canadians, overlook the Indigenous population that have lived in-relation with the land we now know as Canada generally, or in relation to nation building through settler colonialism specifically. As others have called out (e.g., Belcourt, 2017; Stirling, 2017) in 2017, the “hypocrisy of concurrent celebration of the era of reconciliation and 150 years of state occupation of ancestral territories” (Madden, 2019a, p. 19) is startling.

Craig, Tarah, and I began wondering—whose footsteps have marked these lands we call home? What layered stories reside on this land? What wisdom and gifts are contained with and on this land? Why were these stories not part of Canada 150 celebrations? And, how many Canadians acknowledge themselves as settlers? These wonderings inspired us to add the question mark to the prepared sign in Figure 2. Though a symbolic act, creating “Canada 150?” produced space—space for discussion, and space for wondering.

A full year after *Wandering With/In the U of A*, I am still left wondering how do I hold space to both celebrate and contest Canada’s history? How do I merge these two uncomfortable truths of Canadian identity together? How do we move forward with reconciliation in the future without an acknowledgement of the past?

Tarah. Wandering away from this first moment of re/considering our campus, we were drawn towards the Administrative building by the rumour of cake. The cake was generously provided to us as a way of celebrating Canada’s 150th year, however, I was immediately discomfited by sharing in the festivities in the same way I jovially may have in the past. I wondered, what are we celebrating here?

Looking back, I had always constructed myself as a Canadian, proud of my place and heritage, and what it stood for as I traveled to other countries in the world. The reputation of my country preceded me and opened borders to lands my heart desired to go, and yet, I inquired again, what are we celebrating here?

Instead of heading straight for cake, the three of us engaged with the props representing this Canadian celebration. The top hats, maple leaves, and signs that shouted, “Eh!”, were not

representative of what I believed Canada to be, and our colonial past was clearly and systematically obscured from us yet again. Being able to travel on a widely accepted passport, carry a reputation of peace and politeness, support of a government that is inclusive to newcomers, revel in our diversity and equity, and uphold values that supported and recognized its people, all of its people, is the Canada I was proud of.

Recalling new understandings of Canada's disconcerting past—including the forceful acquisition of land from Indigenous peoples and the systematic assimilation regime that developed thereafter—tension manifested reflections of how to enact reconciliation more readily. I could not reconcile taking part in this celebration here. These threads of both celebration and contestation pulled at the wholeness of my Canadian identity and distinct feelings of unravelling and reconstruction formed in their midst.

The three of us mutually insisted on a photo of our disgust and disapproval alongside the happy play-along photo that was typically taken to memorialize such a celebration. I am not sure if we realized at the time how unsettling our purposefully depicted sadness and discomfort might have been for the kind volunteer taking the photos and giving out cake. I wonder now, how she might have considered or re-storied this colonial holiday differently as a result. And so, the privileged, colonial question rang in my mind, "Can I have the cake and eat it too?" I thought about our journey toward reconciliation, healing, allyship and could see the distance we had to go. I knew if I could not honestly and with good conscience answer, "what are we celebrating here?" the cake would never taste as good again.

Rutherford House: Wandering and the (Imagined) Classroom

Jenny. We were nearing the end of our allotted wandering time, but we continued walking; as we rounded the corner, we knew why ... colonial house, I mean Rutherford House. A house dressed in its Sunday finest—red, white, and blue—the Union Jacks and Red Ensigns proudly on display. However, almost comically, the wind and blistering summer sun had turned Rutherford's Sunday finest into the crumpled pile of dirty laundry one finds on their bedroom floor. The flags were faded, undone, and twisted [Figure 4].

I had visited this site numerous times before, but at this moment I felt I was pulling back the layers allowing Indigenous histories and memories "to show through in the official history of Canada" while "conceptual holes in the historical narratives" became obvious, and this caused me "to look more closely to see what has been missed" (Donald, 2004, p. 23). Rutherford was merging into both the family man and passionate naturalist I learned about in my youth, and the systematic and violent colonist I learned about in adulthood. Holding and negotiating conflicting truths of Canada that were illuminated by this encounter as I stumbled forward as a Canadian and an educator.

As with many school playgrounds, the first snowfall of Fall 2017 brought about issues of snow, specifically, snow forts. Snow "stealing," inclusion/exclusion in snow fort building, and snow fort demolition became regular sharing circle topics called for by Grade 1 students. Following a couple days of recess arguments and heated discussions in circle, I decided to intervene. My goal after completing our truth and reconciliation education course was to infuse more Indigenous content into my elementary classroom, so this seemed like a good time to introduce the idea of treaties. I suggested we put our learning into practice and create a snow treaty. The snow treaty created guiding principles around the use of snow in our field. The first guideline being, "No one owns the snow, it doesn't have your name on it."



Figure 4. The Rutherford House: State of the Rutherford House on July 7th, 2017 (Photo taken by Craig Michaud and used with permission)

The snow treaty was not perfect but did ease some tension. At least until the following week when I decided to “seize” the opportunity to unsettle the snow settlers. I ventured out into the snow settlements with my homemade sign simply saying “Miss Jones.” I looked around and found the largest, most elaborate snow fort: the walls were almost Grade 1 height, inside was complete with an entrance way and what looked like a couple chairs. I put my “Miss Jones” sign in the entrance way. Now the snow had someone’s name on it—mine. I spent the rest of the recess sending away students who tried to enter, claiming it was now my snow settlement.

Upon returning from recess, several students demanded a sharing circle. They were outraged! This sharing circle centred around feelings of injustice resulting from broken treaty promises (e.g., “you tricked us”) and the abuse of power within our relationship (e.g., “it’s not fair, you’re a teacher”). Less than a month later, when we discussed Treaty 6—the treaty that allows us as settlers⁷ to live and prosper from what many of us think of as our “home” land. The outrage from the snow treaty experience gave my students a window to conceptualize the experiences of Indigenous communities at the time of treaty signing and thereafter. These lessons feel like steps towards healing the colonial relationships, towards reconciliation. However, there were (and still are) stumbles backward as I continue my journey to provoke, take ownership of, and transform the settler within (Regan, 2010).

Craig. The Rutherford location represented a personal paradigm shift that encompassed my Wandering With/In of the U of A experience; Brooke's course on reconciliation; my personal and professional understanding of Canada's colonial legacy, Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations; and my approach to pedagogy. For me, Rutherford House, the images we captured, our group dialogue, and the walking with/in assignment stands as an example of how transformative pedagogical practices act as a catalyst for my evolving pedagogy.

Customarily, Rutherford House is a respected site of historical significance frequently visited year-round by elementary students on field experiences that explore local and national history. The house is the embodiment of colonial splendor, celebrated and adored; tall and poised with stoic solid brick walls, framed in whitely painted pillars, and blanketed with a broad second floor balcony. The house is a monument to colonialism; perched at the edge of a precipice overlooking the outspread river valley, the flowing North Saskatchewan (kisiskāciwani-sīpiy) river, and the land on which the city of Edmonton exists. A city layered in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous histories, and a location once predominantly Cree and Blackfoot territory; the house overlooking a shallow river crossing, buffalo jumps to the east, and a fort to the north. The Rutherford House is designed in such a way that it calls to mind (body, heart, and spirit) a sentry standing guard over subjects, claiming land and people, and exerting control and power over territory and tenant.

I coined our encounter at Rutherford House a "territorial pissing" and viewed the scene as a metaphor for a young nation waking up on its 150th birthday hungover, messy, discombobulated, and unsure of where it had been the night before; or where it should now proceed. My inclination was to begin by cleaning up the mess. As with our previous destinations, I was once again left disappointed by our experience. This was due in part to my evolving understanding of the relationship between the legacy of colonialism and our national call for postsecondary institutions' responsibility toward supporting reconciliation. The spectacle we witnessed was reminiscent of the aftermath of a drunken frat boy party; banners dangling, flags draping, and celebratory fragments adorning the brick structure. Comparable to the current state of national relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, this young Canada was waking up from the party with a hangover and realizing the error of its ways. I think we can all agree, it is time to restory the narrative.

For our nation, and the nations within, it is time to move forward by pulling down the banners, reveal the layers of a grisly past, and begin a new co-written, co-constructed narrative. A recounting of our history that demonstrates honesty and humility, acts on promises, and embraces reconciliation. The assignment of walking with/in the university not only highlights the need for post-secondary institutions to mobilize on the *Calls to Action* that meet the needs of Indigenous peoples and educators alike, it is also a personal claiming to become a tool for substantive action. As an educator, I am compelled to undertake the challenge of building Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships and to educate for reconciliation. This journey to improve my understanding of indigenous history propels my pedagogical approach to challenge privilege; confront and discuss land disputes and dispossession with my students; support the resurgence of Indigenous identity in classrooms; and work to acknowledge, understand, and begin to repair fractured colonial relationships. My restor(y)ing now involves land-based education that includes river walks; inviting Elders and knowledge carriers into my school and classroom; locating, reviewing, adapting, and including resources that represent Indigenous voices and counter-stories; and encouraging brazen, honest personal reflection and discussion between myself and students. Perhaps most importantly, I choose to model, encourage, and

teach my colleagues how they might do the same, differently.

It is a challenge to consider the future. As a queer teacher who experiences ongoing homophobia and heteronormativity, I feel somewhat accordant with the struggles of the distinct, yet related, oppression experienced by First Nations people. Additionally, I am confronted by the tensions marked between my selfish “settler” desire to claim the land I own, holding onto the associated power and privilege of ownership, while at the same time embracing the loss of power, control, and land I know is required for true reconciliation. The truth is likely that we are all here to stay and we must come to terms, as nations within a nation, with how Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples might walk together ethically, critically, and relationally into an uncertain future deeply tethered to the past.

Brooke. “It looks phallic to me. The way it pierces the landscape.” Perhaps it was Craig’s comment that equated the Edwardian-era Rutherford House to territorial pissing that precipitated this observation by another student. The imagery that was being conjured through our class dialogue transported me to conversations I’d participated in both academic and community spaces. The recurrent message across contexts was not to view parallel violence against Indigenous land and against Indigenous women and girls as coincidental. As Leey’qsun scholar Flowers synthesized, “The process of colonization is intimately linked to patriarchy and capital” (2015, p. 34). She continued,

When we account for settler possession as a structure that continues to dispossess peoples from the land, there is a clear connection between land and the bodies of Indigenous women. Often, Indigenous women’s bodies are explained in symbolic terms, as a microcosm of Indigenous lands; her body is where our sovereignty begins. Indigenous women represent our political orders, our political will, our cultural teachings, our laws, and the power to reproduce Indigenous life. (p. 41)

Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar, writer, and artist, Simpson moved this argument towards necessary contestation with settler colonial power:

I don’t think we’re having the right conversations in this country. We’re talking about reconciliation but we’re not talking about land. We’re talking about missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls but we’re not talking about the land. The root causes of every issue that Indigenous people are facing right now in Canada come from dispossession ... from erasure ... from the system of settler colonialism that keeps us in an occupied state. (Adams & St. John, 2017, 25:28-25:50)

These provocations offered by Indigenous feminists support me in attuning to the ways in which capitalism, whiteness, Christianity, patriarchy, and heteronormativity collude in the production of settler colonialism. Further, at the heart of Indigenous resurgence⁸ is land and Indigenous women. Without either, there cannot be Indigenous sovereignty; without sovereignty, the symbolic and material impacts of settler colonialism and its agents are greater, particularly for those who are constructed as their objects.

Nonetheless, it was this excessive moment (Orner, Miller, & Ellsworth, 1996)—equating the decorated Rutherford house one student group encountered during wandering with a white phallus—and not the curriculum I designed that provoked us to consider the omnipresent heteropatriarchal colonial logics in our everyday curriculum encounters. I am troubled by my own myopic focus on a notion of reconciling settler colonialism that rarely included attention to gender and sexuality and speculate what was lost through this omission. For example, in preparing this manuscript, I learned that the current Grades 4-7 school program offered by the

Rutherford House Provincial Historic Site is called *Upstairs, Downstairs*. Its official description suggests that students are invited to uncritically recreate gendered and classed “historical” roles:

The Rutherfords welcome you into their home. Your students arrive as guests for one of Mrs. Rutherford's “At Home” tea parties, and settle in to discuss the war, the latest fashions, or the new movie at the Princess Theatre with a member of the Rutherford household. A mix-up brings the guests into the kitchen with the maid, and before Mrs. Rutherford comes home they will see parts of the house that the public is never supposed to see ... (Government of Alberta, 2018b, para. 4)

As I continue to theorize and enact a philosophy of truth and reconciliation education that responds to my de/colonizing commitments, I hold the teachings that emerged from Rutherford House close. Three questions that guided the Summer 2018 revision of the graduate course discussed in this manuscript are:

- Why is it that analysis of gender and sexuality is so often obscured in Indigenous education generally, and truth and reconciliation scholarship specifically?
- How might I work with teachers to prepare them to deconstruct colonial beliefs, agents, and strategies that impact the gendered and heteronormative regulation of Indigenous identity and Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations in Canada?
- What new analytic frames are produced through “thinking with” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2011) feminist and/or two spirit Indigenous scholars to reconfigure and redress colonial relations of power in pursuit of reconciliation?

Tarah. Despite the limited time we were given to interrogate our campus, there was an insistence on Craig's part that we take a few extra moments to forge northeast to consider Rutherford House. I could not recall ever having noted this building, as it was far from those where I typically attended classes, but I trusted Craig's desires and was not disappointed by the opportunity to consider this place.

As we turned the corner, there was a collective gasp of horror and shock. The opulence of the building alongside the prestige and privilege of location were enough to astound, but to add to this, the building was draped with several bright colonial flags, further adding to my own wish to nearly cower from embarrassment and repulsion.

I was surprised by this feeling to cower; this feeling of shrinking, recoiling, making oneself smaller amid this boastful monument. I covered my own face, my own mouth. As if to silence my balking outrage. It occurred to me, as a woman, how my own body rejected the notion of pride and empowerment and literally shrunk in the presence of this obnoxiously patriarchal feather fanning. It bumped against my sense of identity, as a woman constructing my graduate path in a place once reserved and tailored to the learning needs of men. Who was I becoming in a place that still had so far to come?

The colonial gendering of this land itself came to mind. Mother Earth, loving and giving, renewing and replenishing her funds for her relations to survive with. Indigenous views support a land to be nurtured, respected, sometimes even feared not owned, and yet here, in pondering this erection of pillars and its ostentatious suggestion of ownership, I could see the cowering of the Earth itself, as it bowed to the colonialist ideals.

I wonder now, why we chose not to insert ourselves into this picture, as we had the prior ones. Was it a sense of shame on behalf of our campus, as its colonial past had yet to be subverted or interrogated in a way that suited our forward-looking stories? Was it our own sense

of shame in not being able to support that change or even be aware of it until we considered the impact of place in our learning and identity-making? Was it, for me, that sense of cowering and silencing that disallowed engagement with this historical father figure and the fear that was attached to that? Was I fearing what had not changed, or what might never?

A direct line of sight from Rutherford House reveals the river flowing and I take comfort in this, in the knowledge that there are powerful forces of nature that persist despite oppression and repression of colonial ways of being. *kisiskâciwanisîpiy*, the North Saskatchewan River, works tirelessly to flow, to move, to nourish, to transport, and to aid the inhabitants of this place, and so must I, as a woman, an educator, and an academic.

In connecting my identity with this place of learning and the layered and complex history of place, the work that needs to be done became apparent. As I look forward, I have established a pedagogical sense of responsibility to the land and its stories. I consider how we build and shift our sense of pride in who we are as settlers of this land, through necessarily coming to understand and reconcile our past wrongdoings and transgressions. I must move and flow through these academic spaces with the knowledge that there will be dams of colonialism, privilege, and power that I encounter and that, at times, I too may act as agency in constructing these dams. I must nourish the learners before me and come to understand from Elders and knowledge holders who nourish my pedagogy and understanding. I must help to transport learners down pathways that they may not have been prepared for, and at the same time, help them to arrive in new places on their journeys through reconciliation.

Conclusion (Craig, Tarah, and Jenny)

Conventional wisdom tells us that compelling, effective pedagogy originates with/in the teacher, and ends with the transformation of the student. However, our experiences of truth and reconciliation education coursework generally, and *Wandering With/In the U of A* specifically, blurred the images of teacher and student we held in addition to the hierarchical relationship assumed between the two. Similarly, our collaborative efforts revealed the nebulous characteristic of transformation. We often felt as though we were oscillating between compliance and resistance, symbolic gestures and tangible action, as well as knowledge and ignorance. Did Brooke know the gifts that might be produced through curating the pedagogical activity we explored in this manuscript? Could such gifts ever “really” be predicted beforehand or even “fully” known through the collective processes we engaged as co-authors? Stemming from the intersection of the theoretical lens cultivated through coursework, pedagogical activities, writing as inquiry, and developing relationships with both self and colleagues, we evolved as educators within our respective university and school contexts. The *Wandering With/In* activity acted as a pivotal shift in perception marked by seeing sites of settler pride become sites of possible reconciliation and considering land as a site of pedagogy. While wandering we (re)encountered familiar places and stories alongside *The Visionaries* monument, a Canada 150 event, and Rutherford House. However, we were (re)viewing our colonial landscape—both inherited and agential in shaping our current perceptions—with a new lens. In this manuscript we have shared our respective approaches to reconciliation that precipitated evolving understandings of self, a situated and significant historical moment, and the (imagined) classroom as a site of reconciliation.

What started as a forty-five-minute walk, resulted in profound shifts in our personal and professional identities. Through the indeterminate and recursive processes of wandering,

relating, creating, analyzing, and writing, we have come to see discomfort as a central teacher that gives shape to who we are becoming as settler-partners in reconciliation. Formed anew, we are fundamentally changed in terms of who, how, what, and why we teach. We continue to question what is the relationship between discomfort and theory? Discomfort and pedagogical activities? Discomfort and inquiry? Moreover, how might we cultivate discomfort differently for ourselves and our students within our respective educational contexts? Of the links between discomfort and theory, pedagogy, and inquiry, we suggest all three relationships are necessary and continuously inform one another. We developed a critical and positional lens of reconciliation through engagement with Brooke's de/colonizing theory of truth and reconciliation education and the four components she offers (i.e., TRC, land, counter-stories, critiques). Simultaneously, she curated specific pedagogical activities like *Wandering With/In the U of A* wherein we could encounter everyday colonial texts (e.g., places of learning in the examples explored) with new theoretical eyes. The dissonance produced as a result of making the familiar strange (see also Higgins, Madden, and Korteweg, 2015) registered as discomfort. This tension alerted us to the very possibilities that we were engaged in the act of being unsettled and that our perspectives were shifting. We were called to slow down; attend to how meaning making was registering on our minds, bodies, hearts, and spirits; and explore what it was that might be happening through various inquiry processes, notably narrative writing and read-aloud. It was amid theory, pedagogy, and inquiry that our respective reconciliatory lenses took shape and were refined.

Relationships—with Indigenous peoples and land, as well as our own histories, positionalities, and geographies—matter; they are deeply shaping our continuing truth and reconciliation work. A key learning catalyst within the context of this activity was relationships among co-authors, as well as emerging understandings of relationality and associated responsibilities we hold therein. Following the *Wandering With/In the U of A* pedagogical activity, we continue to make great efforts to remain connected, regularly challenging and holding each other to account and encouraging each other's efforts to translate theory and practice within our respective school and university contexts. Relationships started in the course, solidified through wandering, evolved through writing, and flourished through practice; creating and sharing this experience of inquiry supported us in exploring, articulating, troubling, and enacting priorities for reconciliation and decolonization. We have come to find comfort in discomfort; a sort of dis/comfort where we can navigate whiteness, Eurocentrism, patriarchy, and heteronormativity and process feelings of ignorance, guilt, shame, fear, and hope. This work in relation is motivated by the desire to show up for reconciliatory initiatives as aspiring allies who understand what it means to be beneficiaries of the colonial status quo and navigate unequitable relations of power in collective work. As white settlers, this is our work to undertake. It does not require an Indigenous initiator or necessitate additional labour of Indigenous peoples. Our efforts pursue the goals of preparing to respectfully respond to the priorities articulated by Indigenous peoples and collectives we seek to serve. We also aim to model what it might mean for all non-Indigenous students and educators to differently engage in truth and reconciliation education in ways that attend to their own unique positionality, gifts, and relationships.

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Notes

1. Mémé is an informal French term that refers to grand-mère, which is French for grandmother.
2. I do not intend to suggest that these three terms can and/or should be used interchangeably. I understand that the assumptions, discursive practices, key scholars, purposes, and approaches are distinct across these related fields and work is required when they are put in conversation. Instead my usage signals the diversity of approaches employed to pursue Indigenous initiatives in higher education.
3. I use the term Indigenous education and teacher education to refer to Faculty of Education coursework for initial teacher qualification and graduate studies, as well as professional development or leadership development/learning for in-service teachers. It comprises curriculum designed specifically for Indigenous peoples and contexts (e.g., Aboriginal Teacher Education Program), as well as programs that target all educators and centre Indigenous perspectives, histories, knowledges, and pedagogies.
4. #colonialism150 is a popular social media hashtag intended to subvert Canada 150 celebrations through drawing attention to 150 years of state-sanctioned settler occupation of Indigenous territories.
5. Flowers (2015) explained that “settler colonialism is invested in gaining certainty to lands and resources and will achieve access through the [physical occupation of land and] dispossession of Indigenous peoples, violently or legislatively” (p. 34).

6. I am beginning this way to mirror the words used by Richard Wagamese (2012) to open his novel *Indian Horse*. My intention is to pay homage to these great teachers (both the author and the text) whose work propelled and supported the shift I discuss.
7. No students self-identified as Indigenous that school year.
8. Indigenous resurgence emphasizes “regeneration of Indigenous knowledges and ways of being in the world, as well as their necessary contestation with settler colonial power” (Wildcat, McDonald, Irlbacher-Fox, & Coulthard, 2014, p. IV). It is important to note that while it certainly can inform and may be/become part of institutional education, some resurgence scholarship and efforts may never come within the bounds of such programs.

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