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A Settler Duoethnography About Allyship in an Era of Reconciliation

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As settler women, former teachers in First Nation communities, and scholars working in Indigenous education, we are responsible for engaging in the complexities of reconciliation through an allyship framework. In this article, we use duoethnography to critically engage in dialogue around the practice of allyship. In revisiting formative moments in our individual and collective teaching and research journey, we wade through some of the current tensions around solidarity work, problematizing the performative and binary approaches to allyship we see increasingly propagated across academic institutions and social groups. This critical dialogue illuminates how we might rethink becoming stronger collaborators with Indigenous Peoples and engage others in exploring their allyship practice.

En tant que femmes colons, anciennes enseignantes dans des communautés des Premières nations et universitaires travaillant dans le domaine de l'éducation autochtone, nous avons la responsabilité de nous engager dans les complexités de la réconciliation à travers un cadre d'alliés. Dans cet article, nous utilisons la duoethnographie pour engager un dialogue critique sur la pratique d'agir comme allié. En revisitant les moments formateurs de notre parcours individuel et collectif d'enseignement et de recherche, nous nous frayons un chemin à travers certaines des tensions actuelles autour du travail de solidarité, en problématisant les approches performatives et binaires de l'allié que nous voyons de plus en plus propagées dans les institutions académiques et les groupes sociaux. Ce dialogue critique met en lumière la manière dont nous pourrions repenser à devenir des collaborateurs plus solides avec les peuples autochtones et inciter les autres à explorer leur pratique d'agir comme allié.

Indigenous issues, specifically those in education, have garnered national attention in Canada with calls for all citizens to develop a stronger understanding of, and respect for, Indigenous histories and perspectives. This has specific and directed implications for educators and researchers. Several provincial and territorial policies and mandates have increased inclusion of Indigenous perspectives, resources, Peoples, and histories across the education system (Alberta Education, 2018; Assembly of First Nations, 2012; Association of Canadian Deans, 2010; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007; Pidgeon, 2014), raising the overall profile of Indigenous issues and agendas across the country.

There is a considerable body of literature documenting the devastating effects colonization has had on Indigenous Peoples (Battiste, 2013; Bishop, 2020; Gordon & White, 2014; Smith, 2013). Evidenced within these texts is a long history of assimilative and oppressive policies and practices intended to erase the cultural, social, economic, and political distinctiveness of Indigenous Peoples and their worldviews (Smith, 2013; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of

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Canada, 2015). One prominent example is the federal government's establishment and operation of residential schools, whereby Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their homes and communities with the intent to assimilate and colonize Indigenous Peoples into Euro-western society (Milloy,1999; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). Despite the Canadian government's repeated attempts to eradicate Indigenous Peoples as culturally distinct groups, measures described as "cultural genocide" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 1), it did not fully achieve its assimilationist agenda. Today, Canada's improved efforts in Indigenous education can be attributed to the resilience and commitment of Indigenous communities, researchers, educators, students, and their allies advocating for educational equity.

In June 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada released its final report outlining 94 *Calls to Action* with several directives aimed at transforming Canada's education systems. Almost immediately, a national conversation around what it means to advance the process of reconciliation was ignited. The TRC (2015) describes reconciliation as a commitment to

> establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples … In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour. (p. 7)

What ensued following this watershed moment was an outpouring of literature and strategic plans with terms such as "Indigenization," "resurgence," and "decolonization" infiltrating the pages (Alberta Education, 2018; Butler et al., 2016; Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018; Smith et al., 2019; Wilson et al., 2019). For us, who identify as settler scholars (Schultz, 2017), these documents serve as our compass. They motivate us to rethink and reform our approaches to education research, academic service, and university course design. They call on us to expose and interrogate the invisibility of privilege prevailing in higher education and compel us to extend this unsettling to our own understanding of settler allyship. It is imperative then, that we highlight post-secondary classrooms and institutions as sites where "narratives of colonial history and violence are told" (Cote-Meek, 2014, p. 33). In this article we use duoethnography to critically engage in dialogue around the practice of allyship. In revisiting formative moments in our collective and individual teaching and research journey, we wade through some of the current tensions around solidarity work (Corntassel, 2012), problematizing the performative and binary approaches to allyship we see increasingly propagated across academic institutions and social groups. This critical dialogue illuminates how we might rethink becoming stronger collaborators with Indigenous Peoples and engage others in exploring their allyship practice.

Negotiating Allyship

As scholars whose teaching and research lies at the intersection of education and reconciliation, we are committed to engaging in reflexive dialogue around the role settlers play in contributing to reconciliatory efforts. Early on, these conversations were sparked by being asked why are you, as white women, working in Indigenous education? Other times, it came from sharing with a student or colleague that our education careers began as teachers in a First Nations community in northern Ontario. During these conversations, we were often asked, how did you end up teaching way up there? What was that experience like? These questions prompted us to confront the intersections of our own settler identities and privileges (Burleigh & Burm, 2013; Burm & Burleigh, 2017).

Now, years later, we continue this important introspective work, delving deeper into the complexities of allyship. Broadly speaking, allyship, as defined in the scholarly and grey literature, maintains a focus on life-long learning, reflexivity, activism, and supporting work to change inequitable systems of governance, and oppressive power structures (Bishop, 2002; Gehl, n.d.; MacDonald & Markides, 2019; Osmond-Johnson & Reagan, 2010; Smith et al., 2015). As Bishop (2002) has written,

> Members of the ‘ally’ group … look at the world from a “structural” perspective. They have an understanding of themselves as part of a people of various peoples. They understand that if something is done to another member of their own group, it could have happened to them … They understand that they must act with others to contribute to change. They believe that to do nothing is to reinforce the status quo; not to decide is to decide; if you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem. (p. 110)

Yet, the work of allyship, the “how-to” of being an ally, can be fraught with uncomfortable realizations and moments. There exists a plethora of resources and workshops for non-Indigenous Peoples aspiring to become allies to Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous ally toolkits like Gehl’s *Bill of Responsibilities* and others (e.g., Montreal Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy Network, n.d.) provide a summation aimed at clarifying what constitutes allyship, outlining through numbered lists and definitive dos and don’ts, how to be a “good” ally in ways that can best support Indigenous Peoples. However, there exist many different, sometimes contradicting, definitions and descriptions on what it means to be an ally, making genuine allyship difficult to define and more so challenging to embody (Kluttz et al., 2019).

Nevertheless, an extensive literature has developed around the complexities of allyship. One tension that exists is in relation to the title of ally being claimed rather than designated (Montreal Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy Network, n.d.). The ally tool kit suggests that “being an ally is not a self-appointed identity and requires you to show your understanding through actions, relations, and recognition by the community” (p. 2). More recently, the term accomplice has been introduced in the context of social justice work. An accomplice “directly challenges institutionalized/systemic racism, colonization, and white supremacy by blocking or impeding racist people, policies, and structures” (Montreal Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy Network, n.d, p. 2). With both terms, principles of relationality and reciprocity are paramount and cannot be overemphasized.

Similarly, the centering of whiteness (Brown & Ostrove, 2013) is a recurrently identified issue in the allyship literature. Often, expressions of allyship foreground privileged identities, which in turn, minimizes and often invalidates the voices of those who are marginalized (Hiller, 2017). This can lead to surface level activism, or performative allyship, which we see increasing incidences of in the workplace, across education institutions, and on social media. These demonstrations of solidarity are often driven by external influences such as popular culture, donor interests, and/or maintaining a positive public image rather than an intrinsic need to rectify years of structural inequities. The ally industrial complex, pervasive in the grey literature, goes so far as to state that “the term ally has been rendered ineffective and meaningless” (Indigenous Action, 2014, para. 1), the argument being that the ally establishment depends on systems of inequality being maintained so to further exploit the oppressed groups claiming to be served (Indigenous Action, 2014). These commonly addressed critiques in the literature serve as an impetus for exploring our individual and collective experiences with allyship through duoethnography.

For reconciliation to flourish, it must be approached as an "ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 16), but what the process looks like and who it involves can be rather complicated, "depending on identity, experience and familiarity with issues of power and privilege" (Gaffney, 2016, p. 35). Inevitably, some perspectives will be silenced, interpretations misconstrued, and mistakes made. For us, it is not enough to say we are engaging in the process of reconciliation; a reconciling relationship requires a concerted effort to be proactive and a willingness to reflect on and unlearn the things we think we know. We approach this paper as an opportunity to revisit our learning over the past decade—to trace the origin of where our learning about allyship began and how it has evolved through each phase of our careers—first as teachers, then graduate students, and now as faculty members.

Reconciliation should not be the sole responsibility of Indigenous Peoples and communities. As settlers we are responsible for reconciliation and to do so requires unpacking our white privilege (Chung, 2019; McIntosh, 1989; Morcom & Freeman, 2018), and confronting our own white fragility (Di Angelo, 2011; 2018). The problem we address in this paper are the ways settlers negotiate their becoming as allies (Bishop, 2002). All too often allyship is claimed as an identity or an indicator of diversity and inclusion, both with performative elements (Hadley, 2020; McKinnon, 2017) that create benefit for those in privileged positions. Engaging a duoethnographic approach, we take a retrospective look back at our allyship journey as a means of exposing our becoming and practice. Now more than ever, it is imperative to deliberately focus on how we practice allyship in the day-to-day things we do and don't do and say and don't say.

Why Duoethnography?

The conversation that follows was informed by duoethnography, a qualitative methodology that explicates the process of how individuals make meaning of a particular phenomenon and how these influence their subsequent actions and the meanings they give to experience (Norris et al., 2012; Sawyer & Norris, 2013). Duoethnography "embraces the belief that meanings can be and often are transformed through the research act" (Norris et al., 2012, p. 9). This transformation occurs primarily through critical dialogue with one or more individuals. The voices of each researcher are juxtaposed against one another to stimulate critical reflection and assist themselves and readers in better understanding the phenomenon under inquiry within a broader sociocultural context (Norris, 2008; Sawyer & Norris, 2013).

Duoethnography as a methodology strongly aligns with our endeavor to reflect critically on allyship and reconciliation with an aim of shifting or changing our thoughts and actions (Norris et al., 2012). For several years we worked and taught together, serving as a sounding board for each other throughout our teaching and research pursuits, and ultimately, our becoming, as allies. Duoethnography affords a utility that generates the space and structure for us to continue this dialogue, as each of us pursue distinct fields of study. The flexibility duoethnography affords also embraces a narrative writing element that invites the reader to enter the conversation and make meaning of their context and position as we reimagine ours.

A critique of duoethnography is its perceived performative nature (Breault, 2016), which, in this duoethnography, is compounded by the performative critique of allyship, and thus requires some unpacking. Methodologically, this is best addressed by clarifying the purpose and intent of duoethnography. Duoethnography positions the researchers as the site of research rather than the subjects, thus maintaining focus on the critical dialogue and its transformative potential versus an emphasis on performativity. The resulting duoethnography serves as an invitation for readers to experience their meaning making alongside ours.

Doing Duoethnography

As with any qualitative research approach, it is important to clarify the duoethnographic process used to generate the critical dialogue throughout the remainder of this paper. We engaged in this method of storytelling with the solace and confidence that after ten years of friendship, there is no one else with whom we could have such emotive and personal conversation. Throughout those early years our personal and professional lives were often intertwined, having begun our teaching careers in the same remote First Nations community and then transitioning to graduate study each with an interest in Indigenous education. More recently our journeys have diverged, each of us pursuing professorial life in radically different disciplines. Despite these twists and turns, our conversations around what it means to be an ally have not subsided. On the contrary, they have intensified and grown more convoluted, prompting us to carve out time and space for continued dialogue. Throughout this duoethnographic process for example, we made it a priority to schedule time where we could be face to face, in the same geographic location without outside distraction. We audio recorded our conversations around allyship and reconciliation, cognizant that as our discussions unfolded, so too did our learning and thus we returned to these recordings to sort, label, interconnect, and work toward unearthing a deeper analysis and interpretation.

For several days we sat literally side by side, thinking, reading, listening, and questioning one another about how we came to be where we are and what early experiences led us there and generated each turn in the road. At the end of each day, we transcribed our conversations and began the next day listening to yesterday's conversation. More questions quickly arose, more reading, listening, and talking. Between the intensive dialogue we took breaks for lunch, went on walks, sipped tea and coffee, thought really big and then really small, fluxing between the macro and micro. The outside walks brought us to comment on the landscape and the different places we have lived and worked over the last decade. We explored how place shaped our allyship journey and came to realize we have wonderful photographs representing these places. We have incorporated these photographs to anchor and situate the dialogue spatially and temporally and to provide a visual element that situates the places and spaces that constitute our allyship journey. We have benefited from the people, places, institutions, and communities we have worked, taught, and researched within and value naming them. The directional elements, north, south, east, and west, along with the critical dialogue and photographs, represent not only a framework for exploring our conversations about allyship in an era of reconciliation but also map out our allyship journey over time.

A Duoethnographic Exploration of Allyship

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Fall 2019

Our conversation begins on a rainy October day in Halifax, Nova Scotia, where Sarah lives and works. Dawn flew in last night from Lethbridge, Alberta, because we knew writing this chapter was an endeavour that needed to be undertaken in each other's company. We start the day walking

Figure 1

Dalhousie University, 2019

Note. Photo by Dawn Burleigh

to campus, discussing the possibilities for this inquiry. As we settle in, on the desk in front of us lies copies of the *Indigenous Ally Tool Kit* and Anne Bishop's *Becoming an Ally* (Figure 1). With tea in hand, we turn on the recorder and begin.

Attawapiskat, Ontario, 2007–2010

Dawn: Was teaching the beginning? Was that the beginning of an allyship journey before we knew what allyship was?

Sarah: I think so.

We met ten years ago as new teachers in an isolated First Nations community in Northern Ontario. At the time, Sarah was teaching grade three and Dawn taught at the local high school. Looking back, we shared a lot in common: we were close in age, both growing up in Southwestern Ontario. We each left home to pursue teacher education, Dawn at Lakehead University and Sarah at the University of Ottawa. Outside the classroom, much of our time was spent talking through, making sense of, and questioning our experiences.

Dawn: Living and teaching in the community was a very real, eye-opening experience. I remember being struck by the inequities—social, economic, political, and geographic. These inequities stood out to me because of my own privileged upbringing. Experiencing the educational

Figure 2

Attawapiskat River, 2007

Note. Photo by Dawn Burleigh

context of a federal system alongside students was profound and unsettling. I started to see the oppressive structure of the system and began to acknowledge my role within it and my privileged position as a white woman. I know I have benefitted from my own privilege, white and socioeconomic, and it's what has afforded me the opportunity to become an educator and researcher (Figure 2).

Sarah: I certainly would not label that part of my life as allyship. There was no disruption of oppressive spaces on my behalf; I was the one who felt disrupted and uncomfortable. My white privilege shielded me. Every night when I came home from work, I literally closed the door on the blatant manifestations of systemic racism and oppression.

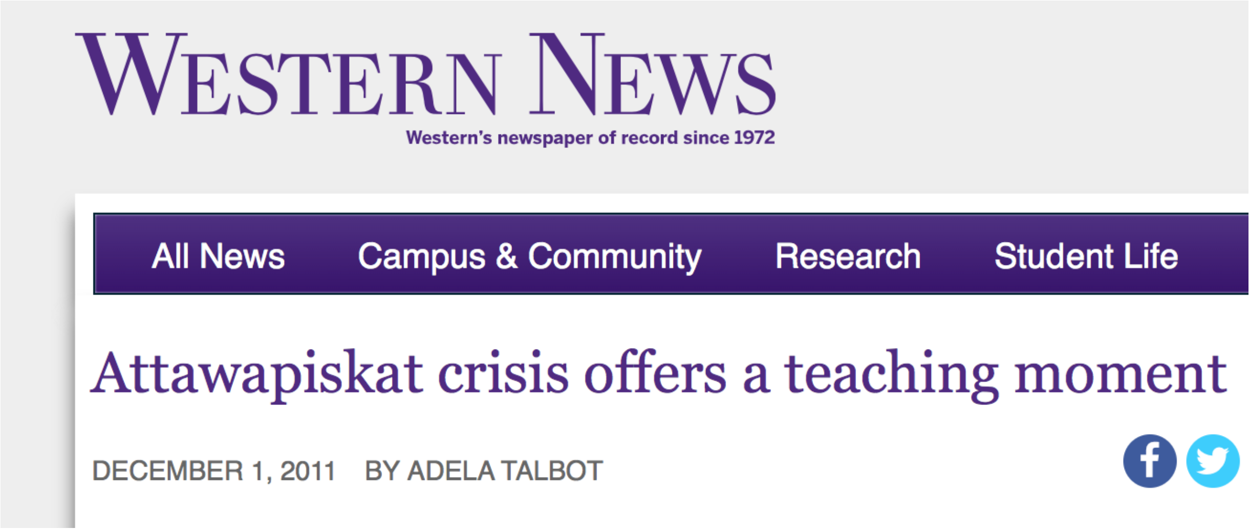
Dawn: We towed the line.

Sarah: We had to. I don't know if I felt I could have done anything differently.

Dawn: And that's where it became a bit tricky. We were living in the community, so we were also experiencing, arguably to a much lesser degree, the disadvantages of what this oppressive system generated. In those teaching years we didn't speak in terms of privilege, allyship, or reconciliation, but those ideas were grounded in our everyday realities. I would not say I was an

Figure 3

Western News Article



WESTERN NEWS

Western's newspaper of record since 1972

Attawapiskat crisis offers a teaching moment

DECEMBER 1, 2011 BY ADELA TALBOT

Note. The screenshot from the publication of the article was taken in 2011 and is being used with permission from *Western News*.

ally but teaching in the North was the launch pad to understanding allyship, especially as we embarked on graduate school. And it was home to some early understandings that the power and privilege I held could be utilized to potentially benefit other people.

London, Ontario, Fall 2010

Leaving the North and our teaching careers behind, we both began graduate studies at Western University in London, Ontario. It was a time of transition, substantial growth, opportunity, and critical engagement and we quickly came to realize that our teaching careers would never be left behind.

Sarah: Word spread across the Faculty of Education that we had taught in Northern Ontario. Do you remember us being interviewed by Western News about our experiences in the North? At the time, the community we taught in had garnered national media attention due to housing shortages and a clean water crisis. Now, looking at the article and the title—*Attawapiskat Crisis Offers a Teaching Moment* (Talbot, 2011)—makes me cringe (Figure 3). It neatly packages something that is so complex, tying it with a white ribbon: the white teacher spokesperson. A community's hardship becomes another's teachable moment.

Dawn: Thinking back, that was not allyship, perhaps it was our attempt at advocacy, and maybe this conversation and co-writing this chapter is not allyship either because we are benefitting from an experience that came on the backs of an oppressive system. It reminds me of that quote from Anne Bishop's book, when she outlined the first step to becoming an ally:

> As long as we try to end our oppression by rising above others, we are reinforcing each other's oppression, and eventually our own. We are fighting over who has more value, who has less, instead of asking why we must be valued as more or less. (Bishop, 2002, p. 19)

So, perhaps, the work of an ally is not merely the identifying and acknowledgment of oppressive structures and our privileges within them. Allyship is in the doing.

Sarah: Does engaging in critical dialogue like this change anything?

Dawn: It is changing us, but it may not be changing the institutions we work within.

Sarah: What graduate school did was equip us with a language to use.

Dawn: And theory to ground ourselves in. Those theories still serve us now and help us deconstruct and revisit some of our past experiences like the interview with Western News.

Lethbridge, Alberta & Halifax, Nova Scotia, 2014–2019

Every journey has a fork in the road. And for us, that fork came with new positions in different parts of the country. Dawn travelled West to the University of Lethbridge and Sarah went East to Dalhousie University. But the road between still connects us.

Sarah: Now you work in the Faculty of Education at the University of Lethbridge where much of your teaching and research is supporting undergraduate students in developing their understanding in the field of Indigenous education. How has your understanding of allyship and reconciliation evolved since beginning this role? (Figure 4).

Figure 4

Southern Alberta, 2019

Note. Photo by Dawn Burleigh

Dawn: In Alberta, not only is there a national conversation about Truth and Reconciliation but the province has newly mandated a *Teaching Quality Standard* (TQS) that includes a competency requiring all teachers to incorporate First Nation, Métis, and Inuit content (Alberta Education, 2018), across the curriculum from kindergarten to grade 12. The *Calls to Action* from the TRC, coupled with the newly revised TQS creates a heightened dynamic in the field of Indigenous education, one that calls on all educators to engage. Often non-Indigenous educators cite this as a time of precarity, where they are exploring their role in the context of their school setting, asking how they are equipped to demonstrate achievement of this competency while teaching subjects such as math, science, or social studies. The teachers in the field look to "experts" in the Faculty of Education for innovation, and the Faculty of Education looks to classroom teachers for leadership. It is a time of uncertainty and in the middle are student teachers, often non-Indigenous, bridging the space between the theory of the University and the practice of the classrooms.

Last Fall I was in my office about to head out the door to attend a symposium that was focussed on education and reconciliation. There was an opening address and a panel of experts, including classroom teachers. I was looking forward to attending and having the day to listen and learn. As I was about to walk out of my office, a student appeared, visibly upset indicating she needed to talk to me. The challenges she faced were clearly articulated; living as a student, a mother, an Indigenous woman, and in poverty, were just a few. She was considering leaving her final semester in the teacher education program, mere months away from graduating. She had been late to her practicum placement and explained that her vehicle had a flat tire, and she was depending on others to drive her the 45-minute commute to her school each day. I asked what I could do to help her, and she said, "I just need a new tire." I was struck in the moment, with my attention still somewhat diverted to the symposium I was planning to attend, but in front of me stood a student asking for help. What help could I offer? I could support her by leveraging my privilege, my voice, and my power. Together we decided to ask for help and asked for financial support from the University to purchase a tire. The funding came through quickly and the student was able to purchase a tire. She successfully completed her practice teaching and is now a certified teacher in Alberta.

Sarah: This story brings me back to the idea you mentioned earlier, that allyship is in the doing. You were looking forward to attending the symposium, but perhaps you didn't need to learn more on how to do allyship, but just needed to act. Allyship is in the choices we make each and every day, in this case, supporting a student. This situation highlights and reinforces the structural violence imposed on Indigenous students, often in academic institutions. Here is a student who just wanted to reach graduation day, yet at every turn encountered barriers that consumed her time and energy. These barriers remain invisible to most, but persistently impact the daily experiences of Indigenous students. In looking back at that incident, do you feel you were embodying what it means to be an ally?

Dawn: I'm not sure I am comfortable using the term ally as a result of what we talked about earlier. I think in that moment, I was trying to be a good teacher by being kind, supportive, and responsive to my student. Maybe being a good teacher is also good ally work. But then again, who even gets to decide what allyship is? Who gets to be called an ally and by whom? If it's us, it's certainly self-fulfilling and can protect and reinforce our own white fragility (Di Angelo, 2011). This is where the ally industrial complex emerges. In many ways we have to acknowledge that us exploring settler allyship is in part contributing to the conceptualization of it, and that is "a settler move to innocence" (Lee & Horn-Miller, 2018; Tuck & Yang, 2012). There seems to be a flux that

Figure 5

Polly's Cove, Nova Scotia, 2019

Note. Photo by Sarah Burm.

happens between allyship as it is espoused, written about, theorized, spoken about, and how it is enacted or embodied, and I think we need both of those ends of the continuum working in tandem.

You have recently transitioned into Medical Education which is a big shift. How have you seen your role in allyship change since making this transition? (Figure 5).

Sarah: At the time, what struck me almost immediately was the absence of conversation around allyship. I grew accustomed to having those conversations, be it with you, others in my doctoral program, or my supervisor; I felt a void. Entering medical education, I wasn't sure if those were conversations I could initiate, and for the first little while I didn't talk about allyship or reconciliation because I didn't know who I could trust. It didn't feel safe to have those conversations yet. I gradually started initiating those conversations, but they happened behind closed doors with colleagues for whom I knew social justice and equity were a priority. In many ways, I had to identify my own community of allies to gain any meaningful traction.

Dawn: The field of medicine is likely more positivistic and rests firmly in a Eurocentric way of knowing, and being so, there is a space there that needs bridging, and perhaps in new ways and at a different pace than you have experienced before. In the end though, it seems like allyship is a commitment to make, a responsibility to hold, and finding ways to bring that into our work each day is the challenge in front of us.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Fall 2019

From teaching in the North to graduate studies in the South and now as Professors in the East and West, these dialogic directions across Canada have offered us a framework and space to explore and expand our understandings of Indigenous allyship. We began writing this chapter with an essential question we both wanted to explore: How have we come to know and understand allyship?

Sarah: Coming into this writing experience, I knew how to do what I label as tick-box allyship, but as our conversation unfolded, I don't think I anticipated what we would collectively uncover. Specifically, the challenges and discrepancies that exist between what is espoused about allyship and what is embodied in ally work as white settlers.

Dawn: One of the key understandings I now have because of this dialogue is the limitations and the affordances of allyship tool kits. They are certainly a functional starting point but riddled with accountability and finality. Allyship in the way we explored it here isn't about checking off a list or adhering to a set of guidelines or principles with a goal of crossing the ally finish line. It is enacted and embodied in ways that often aren't included or represented in a tool kit. Those enacted elements aren't measurable, and as a result are often the most complicated to demonstrate or exemplify. And further, claiming the title of ally isn't something I will ever say about myself again. In fact, I think for me this will be the last time I write about it, for publication purposes. I will do the work, but I am not going to talk about it in a way that could yield measurable benefit for me.

Sarah: I don't think I will ever feel as though I have reached finality in figuring out what allyship means. This conversation has enabled me to see the evolution in my engagement as an ally, but the work of allyship is so contextual. There is an ebb and flow to this work that cannot be pre-determined or prescribed. It changes depending on the task at hand, the people you surround yourself with, the physical space you occupy, and the emotional bandwidth you have at that moment. Allyship cannot always be put into words; often, it is demonstrated through action and taking real moments of pause.

Conclusion

Our conversation reveals the deep-seated complexities of allyship, and through our engagement in duoethnography, we problematize how we have come to understand our practice and engagement in solidarity work. Duoethnography affords us the space and safety to explore both the conceptual underpinnings of allyship and the process of becoming an ally. Our efforts are supported through a strong dialogic approach, which embraces a critical and reflective dynamic, providing a strong commensurability with the exploration of allyship.

Our aim, in revisiting formative moments in our collective and individual teaching and research journey, was to reflect upon some of the current tensions we encountered and seen discussed in the literature around solidarity work. We are reminded that allyship requires establishing a firm knowledge base around what allyship, solidarity, and anti-oppression means to the Indigenous Peoples whose lands you are occupying. Understanding these terms is critical to understanding one's role in supporting Indigenous Peoples as well as other marginalized and oppressed groups.

In this paper, we problematize the performative and binary approaches to allyship by confronting critical moments as settler teachers and researchers where we were called to put our learning about allyship into practice. Very quickly, we realized that merely acknowledging another's experience of struggle is not enough. Allyship is in the doing. We also learned that performativity is closely tied to the claiming and designation tension related to the title of allyship. By unpacking how we understand the ally industrial complex and the centering of our own whiteness, we gained new understanding about our becoming and practice of allyship.

The future of Indigenous and settler relations rests in further understanding allyship and reconciliation relationships. Ongoing exploration and analysis of this dynamic, individually, collectively, and organizationally is required to establish stronger reciprocal relationships that bring about mutual benefit and disrupt the performative and inequitable nature of the ally industrial complex.

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