Reconciliatory Pedagogy: Teacher Perspectives and Practices

CLANCY EVANS
SARAH CHARLEBOIS

ABSTRACT: The release of the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Report in 2015 has prompted research and pedagogy that focuses on Indigenous education, updated teaching standards, and re-designed curriculum; however, experiences of teachers who have been called to act in the service of reconciliation have received minimal research attention. This study found that although the majority of educators believe in the necessity of this work, few are taking steps towards reconciliation through their work as educators. This study utilized an explanatory mixed method approach to gather survey and interview data into the reconciliatory practices, challenges, and successes experienced by grades 4-9 teachers. Overall, findings of this research suggest that educators who are committed to reconciliation, self-reflection, and collaboration are more likely to incorporate aspects of reconciliatory pedagogy into their teaching. This study informs teacher practice, pre-service teacher training, professional development, and ultimately aims to move the dialogue about reconciliation forward within Canadian education.

RÉSUMÉ: La publication du Rapport de la Commission de vérité et reconciliation du Canada en 2015 a suscité des recherches et une pédagogie axée sur l'éducation Indigène, des normes d'enseignement mises à jour et un curriculum reformulé; cependant, les expériences des enseignants qui ont été appelés à agir au service de la réconciliation n'ont reçu qu'une attention minime. Cette étude a révélé que, bien que la majorité des éducateurs croient en la nécessité de ce travail, peu prennent des mesures vers la réconciliation par leur travail d'éducateur. Cette étude a utilisé une approche explicative à méthodes mixtes pour recueillir des données d'enquêtes et d'entrevues sur les pratiques de réconciliation, les défis et les succès rencontrés par les enseignants de la 4e à la 9e année. Au total, les résultats de cette recherche suggèrent que les éducateurs qui se sont engagés à la réconciliation, à l'autoréflexion et à la collaboration sont plus

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susceptibles d'incorporer des aspects de la pédagogie de la réconciliation dans leur enseignement. Cette étude renseigne la pratique des enseignants, la formation initiale des enseignants, le perfectionnement professionnel et vise ultimement à faire avancer le dialogue sur la réconciliation au sein de l'éducation canadienne.

In 2015, after six years of listening and bearing witness to the experiences of residential school survivors, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) released its final report. In the report, reconciliation is defined as "establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country" (TRC, 2015, p. 3). In this spirit, the TRC called upon Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians to engage in relationship building and counter the legacy that colonialism has left on Canada. Through 94 Calls to Action, the TRC directed all levels of government, including the educational sector, to change their frameworks and practices. In response, education ministries, school boards, and universities have developed Indigenous and reconciliation strategies, teaching standards, curriculum, and research initiatives. Canadian educators are poised at the forefront of responding to the TRC (2015) which calls on educators to consider their practices from Indigenous perspectives and incorporate reconciliatory practices into their classrooms. For the purposes of this discussion, we utilize Poitras Pratt and Danyluk's definition of reconciliatory pedagogy as "all learning related to reconciliation" (Poitras Pratt & Danyluk, 2019, p. 10). Reconciliatory pedagogy may involve disrupting colonial approaches to education; making space for Indigenous stories, aesthetics, and knowledge; building relationships; and critical self-reflection (Battiste, 2013; Donald, 2009; Little Bear, 2009; Poitras Pratt & Danyluk, 2017; Regan, 2010; Robinson & Martin, 2016).

Promising reconciliatory practices with pre-service teachers are becoming clear through the literature, as are models for reconciliatory pedagogy. Poitras Pratt and Danyluk (2017) shared encouraging findings from their study on the decolonization of pre-service teacher training. They found that "for the majority of participants in this project, evidence of significant learning occurred through a growing awareness of the complexity of First Nations schooling and their own positioning relative to this work" (Poitras Pratt & Danyluk,

2017, p. 20). In subsequent writing, the authors proposed the Approaches to Reconciliation Model (2019), for individuals entering into reconciliation. Furthermore, Siemens (2017) shared a pedagogical model for reconciliation whereby Canadian educators may utilize Indigenous knowledges to critically analyze "systems of injustice, while offering the possibility of a deeper relationship" (p. 133). Although extraordinarily important and promising, these models have yet to reflect the experiences of K-12 teachers who have been presented with new models of curriculum, teaching qualification standards, and who have been called to act in the service of reconciliation.

This study explored the extent to which teachers have been engaging in reconciliatory classroom practices and the conditions that have supported their work. An explanatory and sequential mixed methods design was used to collect quantitative data from 90 grades four to nine teachers and qualitative data from four of those teachers. This study found that specific conditions foster an increased likelihood that teachers will engage in reconciliatory practices.

Positionality of Researchers

Simpson (2014) reminds us, as non-Indigenous educators, to see our practices through a decolonial lens. That is, we seek to build relationships with Indigenous peoples within our Treaty area, avoid perpetuating colonial attitudes in our teaching, and authentically infuse Indigenous perspectives into our classrooms. We are not experts in the field of reconciliatory practices, rather curious and hopeful educators aiming to support our fellow educators in their reconciliatory endeavours. We acknowledge that this work is not new, but builds upon the work of teachers, Indigenous and allied, who have been working to decolonize education and make space for Indigenous perspectives and knowledges for decades. We engaged in deep self-reflection prior to and during this research to remain conscious that we would not assume settler roles and act as benevolent peacemakers (Regan, 2010) pushing forward nothing but a 'well-intentioned' reconciliatory agenda. We acknowledge that Indigenous cultural practices and teachings are not ours to claim nor share and are not within the scope of this research.

Relevant Literature

The impacts of colonization, realized through the imposed policies of "extermination and assimilation" (King, 2012), on the Indigenous peoples of Canada were made starkly visible by the work of the TRC (2015). Through the report, all Canadians have been asked to bear witness to the systemic abuse of Indigenous peoples in this country and the intergenerational and historical trauma (Yellow Horse Brave Heart, 2000) that continues to impact individuals, families and communities. Central to reconciliation is a shared belief that "we are all treaty people" (Williamson, 2012) and that the work of reconciliation requires the involvement of all people in Canada. There is an ethical imperative that non-Indigenous people educate themselves about the mistreatment of Indigenous peoples within Canada understanding that the colonial mindset and power relations of this country are still alive and pervasive (Davis & Shpuniarsky, 2010; Regan, 2010). As "education makes up almost one fifth of the TRC's 94 Calls to Action" (Siemens, 2017), educators hold a significant role within reconciliation and with the development of reconciliatory pedagogy. In what follows, we thematically examine key components of reconciliatory pedagogy in the extant scholarship.

Critical Self-reflection

To understand one's place within history as well as one's current role within reconciliation, one must engage in deep learning and critical self-reflection. This involves understanding how non-Indigenous people have been implicated in history, being critically reflective on their roles, learning to listen to Indigenous peoples, and approaching work with humility (Regan, 2010). All of this will undoubtedly unearth feelings of unsettlement, but this is crucial to the work of reconciliation. The Ally Bill of Responsibilities, as published by scholar Dr. Lynn Gehl (n.d.), guides non-Indigenous people to be reflective of their position within power structures. Celia Haig-Brown (2010) also shares that as non-Indigenous people build relationships and learn from Indigenous peoples, they must be self-reflective. She offers concepts of responsibility and respect as guideposts to understand how Indigenous "people see themselves and choose to be represented" (p. 939). Poitras Pratt and Danyluk (2019) are clear in their recommendation that educator self-reflection of their positionality, perspectives and responsibilities are a requirement for positive movement towards reconciliatory

pedagogy.

Educators have been called to decolonize the current industrial model of education by engaging "critically with the colonial nature of the relationships connecting Aboriginal peoples and Canadians" (Donald, 2009, p. 6). In order to do so, educators must change their own "conceptions about First Nations students, their heritage, and their contributions to society" (Battiste, 2013, p. 177). Susan Cipolle (2010) guides students and teachers "to examine issues of power, privilege, and oppression" (p. 5). However, as noted by Paulette Regan (2010), learning and reflecting upon history is not enough: "failure to link knowledge and critical reflection to action explains why many settlers never move beyond denial and guilt, and why many public education efforts are ineffective in bringing about deep social and political change" (p. 23). In fact, transformative educator Daniel Schugurensky stated that individual critical reflection alone is not likely to yield any kind of transformation and actually may lead to individuals not doing anything at all (2002). Therefore, decolonizing and moving towards reconciliation will require reflection and action (Freire, 2000; Regan, 2010). Within an educational context, this is paramount to a reconciliatory pedagogy. For students to gain a deep understanding of reconciliation, this learning must be theoretical and praxis-based, and they must be critically reflective of themselves within both realms (Poitras Pratt, Y., & Danyluk, P., 2019).

Collaborative Relationships

The concept of relationship is woven through reconciliatory and Indigenous pedagogies. Relational experiences invite learners to build layers of new meaning and an appreciation of diversity, while being guided to resist dichotomies (Battiste, 2013; King, 2014; Louie, Poitras Pratt, Hanson, & Ottmann, 2017). In a discussion of naturalizing Indigenous knowledges, Leroy Little Bear (2009) stated that because "Aboriginal people understand the world in terms of relationships, the inclusion of community in the learning process" (p. 22) is fundamental. In their Approaches to Reconciliation Model, Poitras Pratt and Danyluk (2019) explained the role of non-Indigenous people as they move forward on their reconciliatory journey by describing how they may listen to, walk with, learn from, and work with Indigenous peoples. The authors implemented this pedagogical stance with their graduate students as they committed to praxis-based service learning experiences to

"ignite transformative learning" (Poitras Pratt, Danyluk, Beech, Charlebois, Evans, Fehr, Nielsen, & Sanregret, 2019). Service learning challenges educators to "acknowledge that they are systematically embedded in mindsets, worldviews, values, and experiences" (Brown, 2005, p. 156), encourages relationship building, and provides the right conditions for transformational learning. When educators make space for transformational learning experiences, they are attempting to embody what Ermine (2007) describes as an ethical space between worldviews, which is central to all practices of reconciliation through education.

Making Space

Indigenous experiences, perspectives, and pedagogies need to be integrated into classroom practices to expose all learners to epistemologies other than western perspectives (Louie, Poitras Pratt, Hanson, and Ottmann, 2017). Leroy Little Bear (2009) shares that "the incorporation of the approaches and traditions of Aboriginal people regarding education are a natural fit to Canadian education" (p. 18). This can apply to the inclusion of Indigenous learning processes, knowledge, and content (Little Bear, 2009) into the K-12 classroom; however, there is a need for vast improvement in regards to cultural understanding (Bissell & Korteweg, 2016; Oskineegish, 2015; Poitras Pratt & Danyluk, 2017). Educators need to understand that Indigenous pedagogy is holistic (Little Bear, 2009). It is built on relationship and various aesthetics and it includes all aspects of the individual: the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual. Another aspect of holism in Indigenous pedagogy is the importance of the environment and community in learning experiences. To better understand holism, educators may turn to visual models, such as the Medicine Wheel or the circle. The rich and complex teachings of these models may be learned through specific relationships with Elders, local Indigenous communities, and the land. Engagement in professional development and relationship building with local Elders is paramount in preventing tokenistic additions to the classroom. In diverse and complex Canadian classrooms, opening up authentic space for Indigenous ways of knowing is beneficial for all students.

Indigenous Aesthetics

Making space for Indigenous perspectives may be furthered through the integration of arts-rich experiences. Understanding the experiences of Indigenous peoples in Canada as "embodied by [their] voices" (Graveline, 1998, p. 41) involves making space for Indigenous literatures which can draw readers "into a sense of relationship with and responsibility to Indigenous communities" (Hanson, 2019, p. 313). Indigenous writers are dedicated to an oral aesthetic that challenges western literary convention (Blaeser, 1999). This aesthetic includes the ability to "write voices speaking" (p. 61) which turns the story into a participatory event and can incite a "response or a sense of response-ability in the listener" (p. 54). Indigenous poetry builds on the storytelling traditions and helps to "decolonize the imagination" (Cariou, 2014, p. 32) as it moves "readers out of their accustomed realities" (p. 36). Stories are a lived experience in which individuals and groups can learn and develop a collective understanding while simultaneously sharing and caring for them (Poitras Pratt & Lalonde, 2016; Simpson, 2014). Central to decolonial thought and practice, Indigenous narratives and pedagogy stress that honouring voice is foundational and may be integrated into learning on and from the land (Martineau & Ritskes, 2014). For it is not just enough to know about places, but through stories, learners "experience them both physically and emotionally" (Little Bear, 2009, p. 21).

Further to literature, the visual and dramatic arts "have the power to both propel and lure people into the work entailed in responding" (Hanson, 2019, p. 312) to the TRC's Calls to Action. The visual arts provide rich experiences for tackling the topics of colonialism and for creating an entry space for the topic of reconciliation. For example, deep noticing and appreciation of Indigenous works of art (exhibitions, public art, cinema) that examine controversial social issues can introduce Indigenous perspectives and invite personal responses from students in ways that traditional history or current events lessons cannot. This common space facilitates both Indigenous expression and transformative learning. In viewing Indigenous arts, non Indigenous people enter into the Indigenous world as outsiders and may be challenged to look at the Indigenous experience in new ways and "more fully understand that the impacts of colonialism are ongoing and continuous" (Robinson & Martin, 2016, p. 11). Lawrence (2012) shares that due to its sensory impact, the arts

provide an avenue for working with conflict, creating awareness and inciting positive change. Although Simpson (2014) shares that "making is the base of [Indigenous] culture" (p. 112), educators must be cautious not to "reappropriate, assimilate, subsume/consume and repress Indigenous voicings and visuality, their forms and aesthetics" (Martineau & Ritskes, 2014, p. I). Teachers are invited to incorporate Indigenous experiences and voices into the classroom to challenge the "tipis and costumes approach" (Donald, 2009, p. 5) to education and instill more relationality to learning. The concept of Métissage, as an aesthetic practice, can further provide direction on how to weave together multiple perspectives (Chambers, Hasebe-Ludt, Donald, Hurren, Leggo, & Oberg, 2008; Donald, 2009; Simpkins, 2012). The arts can be utilized to disrupt colonial hegemony, support Indigenous communities, and provide opportunities for the inclusion of multiple experiences and perspectives in the classroom (Lawrence, 2012; Martineau & Ritskes, 2014). Based on the literature presented, it is clear that educators who aspire to utilize a reconciliatory pedagogy need to decolonize the classroom through the intentional integration of land-based learning, Indigenous voices, and historical and contemporary Indigenous arts.

Method

It is unclear what conditions support teachers and students who have begun a journey into education through reconciliation. In an attempt to uncover these conditions, we conducted a study utilizing a sequential explanatory mixed methods approach. As such, initial quantitative survey data are explained further with subsequent qualitative interview data. Our cross-sectional survey research solicited a quantitative description of trends, attitudes, and opinions of a sample of teachers working within a large school board in western Canada, regardless of their experience with Indigenous pedagogy and reconciliation. The subsequent qualitative interview research generated more personalized and detailed data from self-selected teachers who are currently engaging in reconciliatory pedagogies. The interviews followed a descriptive phenomenological approach which aligns well with reconciliatory and decolonizing research as it recognizes the inherent value of participants and is open to multiple findings (Creswell, 2014).

Data Collection

In order to mitigate ethical considerations of confidentiality and coercion, data were collected anonymously or by using pseudonyms. We gathered anonymous online survey data (see appendix A) through the voluntary participation of 90 grade four to nine teachers. To support a cross-sectional design, we included data from seven schools from different areas within a large urban district in western Canada. We randomly selected 15 participants (out of 25 volunteers) and offered the opportunity for an interview. In the end, four individuals accepted the offer to participate in a semi-structured follow-up interview (see appendix B) concerning their reconciliatory classroom practices. Following a phenomenological approach, open-ended questions were used to provide participants with the opportunity to construct their understandings as the interview progressed. On occasion, follow-up questions were asked if the researcher required more clarity.

Methodological Limitations

An extensive survey was not possible due to a lack of responses. We understand that schools are very complex, busy and fast-paced working environments and our request may have reached administrators at times which were not conducive to research with teachers. Some administrators responded they did not feel that this research was relevant to their teachers or school. Some stated this was because they did not have a high number of Indigenous students thus the work was irrelevant in their opinion, while others felt that reconciliatory practices were not a priority area in their current work. The fact that this research was dependent on access to schools through administrative facilitation (we reached out to 15 schools and were accepted by 7) means that the teachers who participated in our study may work with administrators who believe reconciliation is important work. Our results have been impacted by this reality which points to the importance and necessity of administrator support in the uptake of reconciliatory work.

The opportunity to participate in the survey was presented to approximately 160 teachers and 90 completed it. It is likely that those teachers who chose to participate may be those that already value reconciliatory practices. Supportive conditions for the uptake of reconciliatory practices were identified but due to the relatively small and possibly biased sample size, we cannot conclusively claim these conditions.

Study participants also came from a public school board that has made visible their goals for improving the experiences of Indigenous students and the desire to weave reconciliatory practices and Indigenous pedagogy into the instructional practices of its teachers to benefit all learners. Due to these limitations, the data may not be generalizable to other jurisdictions that are further ahead or behind in this work.

Data Analysis

In an attempt to understand and not be led by our biases, we identified and discussed them while approaching our study as objectively as possible. The initial survey data was analyzed for common responses and correlations between responses using cross tabulation tests. For the purposes of cross tabulation analysis, the responses 'not at all' and 'to a small extent' were paired and the responses 'to a moderate extent' and 'to a great extent' were paired. This analysis surfaced trends among total respondents, pointed to current practices, and surfaced correlations between specific actions and reconciliatory practices (see Tables 2 and 3). Through multiple analyses of interview transcriptions, common themes emerged. Subsequently, interview and survey data were compared. The common themes obtained from the qualitative data help to explain the quantitative data, and vice versa. Findings are discussed below.

Findings

Ninety teachers, out of an estimated 160 teachers, completed the survey and survey participants represented a range of teaching experience (see Figure 1), subject areas, and grades. The teachers with the least amount of teaching experience had the highest percentage of pre-service teacher training in regard to reconciliation and Indigenous cultures. The vast majority (66%) of teachers were either aware or greatly aware of the work of the TRC and 93% had participated in professional development that was focused on reconciliation in the previous year. Furthermore, when asked if they would like to see Indigenous education and reconciliatory pedagogy become a bigger priority in their school board, 84% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed. Some teachers responded that they incorporated reconciliatory classroom practices;

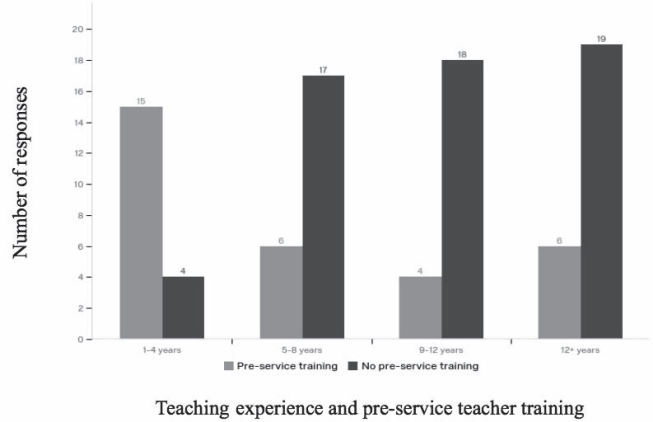

Figure 1. Teachers' completion of pre-service teacher training in Indigenous education and reconciliation as compared to teaching experience

however, the vast majority do not incorporate these practices at all or, if they do, to a small extent (see Table 1). In both the survey and interview data, themes of commitment, self-reflection and collaboration were found to be important supportive conditions for reconciliation through education and are discussed in the following sections.

Table 1. Reconciliatory Practices (in percent) with Challenging Factors and Supportive Conditions

Practice	Not at all	Small extent	Moderate extent	Great extent
Literature	26	40	25	9
Arts	33	44	19	4
Cultural Practices	36	33	23	8
Land-based	30	48	21	1
Elder	60	29	8	3
PD	14.5	33	44.5	8
	Challenging Factors		Supportive Conditions	
	Resistance from parents, colleagues, administrators, & students		Personal Commitment Self-reflection Support & Collaboration	
	Time to learn and reflect		Mandates	
	Emotional labour		Resiliency	

Commitment

Findings from this study indicate that having a personal sense of responsibility has a strong impact on one's engagement with reconciliatory practices. For instance, teachers that identified themselves as being committed to reconciliation also tended to answer 'to a moderate extent' or 'to a great extent' on multiple survey questions concerning their integration of reconciliatory practices into classrooms. These results indicate that teachers who are engaging in this work are doing so with a level of commitment that is demonstrated through intentional action. This commitment was also shared as a supportive condition by interview participants (see Table 1) who sought different ways to increase their own personal knowledge of Indigenous topics and perspectives and how to infuse them within their own classrooms. Maria, an interview participant, attends many community events, professional development sessions on her own time, and seeks out resources "to build [her] own personal understanding of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures". Jacki has committed to taking a critical look at the point of view espoused by "the voices in the [Canadian] narrative" and prompted her class with questions such as, "What is the difference between explorer and exploiter?" She also seeks to celebrate Indigenous contributions to historical and contemporary Canadian culture. Chris shared that he has a commitment "to learn more about Indigenous Culture, languages, make connections with Indigenous community members in order to expand [his] understanding of what the possibilities could be in the world when we all connect". Like Jacki, Chris also created classroom dialogue about various historical and current issues that affect Indigenous communities. James shared that although he is not always comfortable leading reconciliatory work (he tends to rely on his teaching partner), he felt that it was his duty to continue to learn. Conversely, although many survey participants indicated they had received pre-service teacher training and recent professional development in the area of reconciliation and Indigenous cultures, these actions were not related to their integration of reconciliatory practices in the classroom. This is evidence that training and professional development alone do not equate to moving reconciliation through education forward (Siemens, 2018). In sharing their perspectives and practices, interview participants routinely pointed toward their personal commitment as being foundational to integrating reconciliatory practices within their Classrooms.

Self-reflection

The extent to which teachers engage in self-reflection concerning their developing competency to support reconciliation was highly correlated to the extent to which they engaged in

Table 2

Self-Reflection by Reconciliatory Practices

		Self- Reflection		
Reconciliatory Practices		ab (N = 90) (%)	cd (N = 90) (%)	X^2 tests
Collaboration	ab	45 (86.5)	17 (44.7)	X^2 (1) = 17.90
	cd	7 (13.5)	21 (55.3)	P = < 0.001
Aware of TRC	ab	27 (51.9)	3 (7.9)	X^2 (1) = 19.15
	cd	25 (48.1)	35 (92.1)	P = < 0.001
Professional Development	ab	34 (65.4)	9 (23.7)	X^2 (1) = 15.30
	cd	18 (34.6)	29 (76.3)	P = < 0.001
Indigenous Literature	ab	43 (82.7)	16 (42.1)	X^2 (1) = 16.01
	cd	9 (17.3)	22 (57.9)	P = < 0.001
Indigenous Arts	ab	47 (90.4)	21 (55.3)	X^2 (1) = 14.664
	cd	5 (9.6)	17 (44.7)	P = < 0.001
Indigenous cultural practices	ab	44 (86.3)	17 (44.7)	X^2 (1) = 17.42
	cd	7 (13.7)	21 (55.3)	P = < 0.001
Land or place-based learning	ab	43 (82.7)	27 (71.1)	X^2 (1) = 1.72
	cd	9 (17.3)	11 (28.9)	P = 0.209
Elders or Knowledge Keepers	ab	51 (98.1)	29 (76.3)	X^2 (1) = 10. 527
	cd	1 (1.9)	9 (23.7)	**P = 0.002**
Reconciliatory pedagogy needs priority	ab	12 (24)	2 (5.3)	X^2 (1) = 5.66
	cd	38 (76)	36 (94.7)	**P =0.020**

ab= None + Small Extent
cd= Moderate + Great Extent

reconciliatory classroom practices (see Table 2). Teachers who engage in self-reflection are significantly more likely to engage in a wide variety of reconciliatory practices, such as attending professional development sessions on Indigenous topics, as compared to their colleagues who are less self-reflective about their developing competency in supporting reconciliation through education. This was also reflected by interview participants who attributed their successes to action and reflection. Maria describes her reflexivity as moving between feeling “too comfortable” infusing Indigenous content into her classroom and “a little uncomfortable” sharing teachings that were not “[her] stories to share”. It is through her consistent self-reflection that she recognizes growth in her understanding of foundational knowledges and patience for herself on her learning journey.

Collaborative Relationships

This study found a positive connection between relationships and reconciliatory practices. Collaboration with colleagues was highly correlated (see Table 3) to engaging in a wide variety of reconciliatory practices, such as incorporating Indigenous arts and literature into classrooms. This means that teachers who feel supported by their colleagues and who are able to engage in healthy collaboration with them are more likely to engage in reconciliatory pedagogy. The extent to which teachers reached out to knowledge keepers and/or Elders was also highly related to the extent to which teachers engaged in all the reconciliatory practices that we researched (see Table 3). In fact, reaching out to an Elder was the only reconciliatory act that was related to land or place-based education. This means that those who sought out relationships with Elders also sought out opportunities to learn with their students on the land (perhaps through Elder guidance). In support of Hanson's (2019) contention that Indigenous literatures are catalysts for understanding and relationship-building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians, this study found that the integration of Indigenous literature into the grade 4-9 classrooms is the most consistent reconciliatory act by teachers. Furthermore, all interview participants shared that they had faced resistance to this work from either students, parents, or other teachers (see Table 1). This resistance was demonstrated by negative comments during staff meetings, questions from parents about the location of reconciliation in the curriculum, and parents who circumvented the teacher and complained about reconciliatory work to principals. Because of this, all interview participants deemed supportive administration, peers, and parents as crucial to their efforts in incorporating reconciliatory practices into their teaching.

Table 3

Collaboration by Reconciliatory Practices

Reconciliatory Practices		Collaboration with Colleagues ab N = 90 (%)	cd N = 90 (%)	X^2 tests
Self-Reflection	ab	45 (72.6)	7 (25)	X^2 (1) = 17.90
	cd	17 (27.4)	21 (75)	P= < 0.001
Aware of TRC	ab	27 (43.5)	3 (10.7)	X^2 (1) = 9.35
	cd	35 (56.5)	25 (89.3)	P= 0.003
Professional Development	ab	37 (59.7)	6 (21.4)	X^2 (1) = 11.31
	cd	25 (40.3)	22 (78.6)	P= 0.001
Indigenous Literature	ab	50 (80.6)	9 (32.1)	X^2 (1) = 20.09
	cd	12 (19.4)	19 (67.9)	P = < 0.001
Indigenous Arts	ab	51 (82.3)	17 (60.7)	X^2 (1) = 4.84
	cd	11 (17.7)	11 (39.3)	P = 0.036
Indigenous cultural practices	ab	46 (75.4)	15 (53.6)	X^2 (1) = 4.24
	cd	15 (24.6)	13 (46.4)	P = 0.051
Land or place-based learning	ab	49 (79)	21 (75)	X^2 (1) = 0.18
	cd	13 (21)	7 (25)	P = 0.785
Elders or Knowledge Keepers	ab	60 (96.8)	20 (71.4)	X^2 (1) = 12.54
	cd	2 (3.2)	8 (28.6)	P = 0.001
Reconciliatory pedagogy needs +priority	ab	13 (21.7)	1 (3.6)	X^2 (1) = 4.67
	cd	47 (78.3)	27 (96.4)	P = 0.032
		Collaborating with Elders		
Self-Reflection	ab	51 (63.8)	1 (10)	X^2 (1) = 10.52
	cd	29 (36.3)	9 (90)	P = 0.002
Collaboration	ab	60 (75)	2 (20)	X^2 (1) = 12.54
	cd	20 (25)	8 (80	P = 0.001
Aware of TRC	ab	30 (37.5)	0 (0)	X^2 (1) = 6.43
	cd	50 (62.5)	10 (100)	P = 0.016
Professional Development	ab	42 (52.5)	1 (10)	X^2 (1) = 6.43
	cd	38 (47.5)	9 (90)	P = 0.016
Indigenous Literature	ab	56 (70)	3 (30)	X^2 (1) = 6.29
	cd	24 (30)	7 (70)	P = 0.029
Indigenous Arts	ab	64 (80)	4 (40)	X^2 (1) = 7.70
	cd	16 (20)	6 (60)	P = 0.012
Indigenous cultural practices	ab	57 (72.2)	4 (40)	X^2 (1) = 4.25
	cd	22 (27.8)	6 (60)	P = 0.066
Land or place-based learning	ab	65 (81.3)	5 (50)	X^2 (1) = 5.02
	cd	15 (18.8)	5 (50)	P = 0.040
Reconciliatory pedagogy needs +priority	ab	14 (17.9)	0 (0)	X^2 (1) = 2.13
	cd	64 (82.1)	10 (100)	P = 0.353

ab= None + Small Extent
cd= Moderate + Great Extent

Discussion

This study found that the degree that teachers engage in reconciliatory practices is correlated to specific conditions: commitment to reconciliation, self-reflection, and collaboration with colleagues and Indigenous Elders/knowledge keepers (see Figure 2). The findings of this study also indicate that although many teachers are engaging in professional development on the topic of reconciliation, have pre-service teacher training in this area, and believe that Indigenous education and reconciliation should be a bigger priority in their school board, they are generally not implementing reconciliatory practices in their classroom. This is not to suggest that pre-service teacher training and professional development initiatives aimed at integrating Indigenous knowledges and reconciliatory actions in the classroom are not important, but rather that they need to be coupled with a concerted effort to build collaborative relationships at the school level that teachers may draw upon as they engage in this highly complex

work. For example, as reported by Maria, teachers who are not supported and who do not work in a collaborative community are more fearful of making mistakes. As suggested by several authors, fear of making mistakes and of cultural appropriation is a factor impeding educators from engaging in reconciliatory work (Kairos, 2018; Poitras Pratt & Danyluk, 2019; Regan, 2010). However, as Chris shared: “It's better to try and do something and then admit you made a mistake and then try again, than to not do anything.” This point is echoed by Barker, "ultimately, to do nothing is itself failure” (Barker, 2010, p. 329). However, to even begin to try these actions, educators need to see themselves as part of a supportive community.

Figure 2: Key findings

Building relationships and collaboration were noted as key factors in the uptake of reconciliatory work (Davis & Shpuniarsky, 2010; Little Bear, 2009; Poitras Pratt & Danyluk, 2019) and were reinforced through our study. Our data suggests that supportive relationships with Indigenous people, namely Elders, as well as colleagues, administration, students, and parents were vital for educators to feel that they could engage in the work of reconciliation and infuse Indigenous literature and arts, engage in self-reflection, and reach out to various system supports. Therefore, building collaboration among teachers needs to be at the forefront of administrator mindsets when attempting to foster healthy communities. Cosner (2009) suggests that “it is time for principals to become knowledgeable about cultivating collegial trust as an

important capacity-building strategy" (p. 285). Once this trust has been established, educators may begin to infuse entry-level reconciliatory actions into their own classrooms, such as incorporating Indigenous authors, leading discussions through circle protocols, or inviting in Elders and knowledge keepers. These actions create space for Indigenous voices and experiences to be woven into learning experiences in the classroom. These types of actions can then be followed by more transformative reconciliatory practices, such as service learning. While engaging in these actions, it is crucial that teachers reflect on their growing and developing competencies, as self-reflection has been noted as being instrumental in determining one's level of engagement in reconciliation (Regan, 2010; Gehl, n.d.). This study found that teachers who engage in self-reflection also report that they incorporate aspects of reconciliatory practices into their classrooms to a greater extent than non-reflective teachers. Therefore, providing teachers with opportunities to share self-reflective practices may lead them to move into a more reconciliatory-based practice.

The finding that connections to Elders and knowledge keepers is highly correlated to increased implementation of reconciliatory practices has implications for Elders and school jurisdictions. Reaching out to an Elder was the least common practice of teachers surveyed. It is therefore important for educators to understand that because "Relationship-building is an on-going process where respect and trust are built over time (Davis & Shpuniarsky, 2010, p. 337), they need to be committed to reconciliation and relationship building when reaching out to an Elder. Those educators who already have established relationships with Elders need to be mindful of how they can appropriately share their teachings. School leaders may want to consider cross-school engagement projects to foster collaboration with Elders and to bring more teachers and schools along the path of reconciliation through education. Furthermore, if a large component of reconciliation is understood as relationship-building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, then recruitment of Indigenous educators should also be a priority.

Provincial and jurisdictional mandates concerning reconciliation were also found to be conditions that support successful reconciliatory classroom practices and now that these mandates are in place, the work of reconciliation is in the hands of administrators and front-line classroom teachers and will require

supportive, collaborative relationships. For reconciliation through education to be successful, all educators and administrators need to see themselves as part of this work. The findings of this study suggest that with supportive administration, collaborative environments, and committed, self-reflective educators, reconciliatory work in schools may flourish.

Future Research

With recent curriculum development in a number of provinces (which incorporate Indigenous ways of knowing and Indigenous perspectives), there will be more educators beginning this work. The development of more "consistent training, standards and support for the delivery of Indigenous content" (Kairos, 2018, p. 4) would be beneficial. Furthermore, frequent program evaluations of pre-service teacher education programs and professional development initiatives would help to determine their effectiveness in moving teachers forward in reconciliation. It would also be beneficial to understand how teachers are integrating Indigenous knowledges in their design of learning or whether they are 'checking off a box' with ineffective practices—or worse, with practices that continue to affirm colonial attitudes. There may be further supportive conditions for reconciliation through education to those that were found in this study. To that end, surveying and interviewing a greater number of educators, in a variety of contexts, would help to generalize this study's findings as well as point to further supports. Investigations into the reconciliatory experiences of students and Elders are also in order.

Conclusion

This study was a small piece of a much larger puzzle; within Canada, there are active researchers, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, seeking to clarify how best to move this important work forward. The findings indicate that those educators who are committed to reconciliation, who are self-reflective, and collaborative are more likely to incorporate aspects of reconciliatory pedagogy into their own classrooms. Findings from this study have implications for teacher practice, pre-service teacher training, professional development, and ultimately can help to move reconciliation forward within Canadian education. As educators, we know it is not only government commissions calling us to action; our

students are as well. The Calls to Action now live at the school level; we call on everyone working within an educational context to reflect on their roles within reconciliation, and to ask themselves critical questions. We call on administrators to foster collaborative environments within their schools, school jurisdictions to incorporate self-reflection into the development of teacher professional development, and teachers themselves to commit and move forward with reconciliation through education.

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Appendix A

Demographic Questions

1. Did you receive pre-service teacher training surrounding Indigenous cultures and reconciliation?
2. How many years have you been teaching?
3. What grade do you teach?
4. What discipline do you teach?

Survey Questions

1. In the last year, how many times did you participate in professional development activities that were aimed at understanding reconciliation/Indigenous issues?
2. I would like to see Indigenous education and reconciliatory pedagogy become a bigger priority within our school board.
3. To what extent are you aware of the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission?
4. In the last year, to what extent have you engaged in reconciliatory work with your colleagues?
5. In the last year, to what extent did you incorporate Indigenous literature into your classroom?
6. In the last year, to what extent did you incorporate Indigenous arts (music, dance, visual arts, film) into your classroom?
7. In the last year, to what extent did you incorporate Indigenous cultural practices into your classroom? For example, the use of sharing circle or oral language practices.
8. In the last year, to what extent did you utilize the land or place-based education within your design of learning? For example, exploration of natural areas around your school site or a formal trip to a protected area.
9. In the last year, to what extent did you reach out to Indigenous Knowledge Keepers/ Elders to support the work you do in your school?
10. In the last year, to what extent did you engage in self-reflection about your developing competency in supporting reco
11. nciliation/Indigenous education?

Appendix B

Interview Questions

1. Describe your personal commitment to Reconciliation.
2. What does "Reconciliatory Practices" mean to you?
3. Describe your experiences with Reconciliatory Practices in your school or classroom.
4. Describe the challenges that you encounter in your efforts to move reconciliation forward in your classroom.
5. Describe to what extent you feel comfortable infusing Indigenous cultural practices, philosophies or approaches into your classroom or learning environment?
6. If you have accessed system-based supports, please describe your experience. For example, an Indigenous Education team.
7. Describe any other system-based conditions that support you in continuing or building upon your work with Reconciliation. These would be school board supports (for example, resources) that you utilize.
8. Describe the school-based conditions that support you in continuing or building upon your work with Reconciliation. These would be tangible and intangible supports that you drawn upon in your work
9. Describe the community-based conditions that support you in continuing or building upon your work with Reconciliation. These would be community or city-based resources or supports that you draw upon in your work.
10. Do you have established relationships with Indigenous family members, close friends, Elders, or others that you go to as support and resources when engaging in this work? If so, can you describe how these relationships support you?
11. Describe the personal strengths that you feel support a teacher's work within Reconciliation.

Address for Correspondence
Clancy Evans
Email: clancy.williams@ucalgary.ca

Sarah Charlebois
Email: sarah.charlebois@ucalgary.ca