

Re-storying Indigenous Education: Weaving Indigenous Teacher Educators' Pedagogical
Pathways in Teacher Education Programs

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Abstract

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In Washington State, teacher educators are tasked with the integration of Indigenous ways of knowing and being into a required course in teacher education programs (TEPs) (Madden, 2015; Rhea & Russell, 2012). The 2018 Senate Bill 5028 in Washington State, *requires* teacher education programs to integrate a mandatory college course on preparing teacher candidates to teach tribal history, culture, and government. This calls for Indigenous teacher educators to negotiate and forge pedagogical pathways for centering Indigenous education, which do not align with traditional, colonial models of TEPs. In this qualitative study, I draw from the Indigenous research methodology (IRM), Diné Story Rug (Tachine, 2015), to *re-story* the stories of how nine Indigenous teacher educators' identities and educational journeys inform their pedagogical pathways for teaching a state-mandated Indigenous education course in four university-based,

teacher education programs across the state of Washington. To do so, I engaged in IRM to weave a metaphorical and physical story rug. The metaphorical story rug reflected the qualitative research process in tandem with the process of weaving a Diné rug (Tachine, 2015), and the physical story rugs represented the nine Indigenous teacher educators/relatives' stories. The symbolisms found within the story rugs captured core stories from relatives' identities, educational journeys, pedagogical pathways, and visions for re-storying Indigenous education. The findings revealed that the nine Indigenous teacher educators asserted pedagogical approaches in line with their identities and educational journeys. These pedagogical pathways included engaging senses/ancestral teachings, place-, land- and water-based approaches, and federal Indian law through belonging, storytelling, and co-planning/-teaching approaches.

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Dedication

To shináí Louise Chatto,

Thank you for teaching me to weave Diné rugs so I could weave my dissertation and relatives' story rugs.

To my siblings, cousins, and former students,

You were a guiding light in my doctoral journey, I hope this dissertation finds you in the near future and provides guidance in higher education.

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Preface: Grounding

This dissertation begins with a grounding/introduction through the Diné formalities of greeting and identifying oneself in relation to others. *K'é* is a relational teaching and kinship system that the Diné people use when meeting someone new for the first time or greeting a larger audience. This formality starts with a greeting, usually *Yá'át'ééh* ("it is good") followed by a firm handshake. Then the introduction includes, stating the four matrilineal clans and naming where you originated from. It is through this introduction that Diné peoples build a connection by identifying kin through clan relations. In my grounding, I introduce myself in the Navajo language, then provide a brief history of my peoples, and end with a story of how I have come to learn from/with Coast Salish peoples, lands, and waters.

Introduction through Clan Relations

Yá'át'ééh, shi éi Shayla Chatto yinishyé. K'aalógii Nishlí, Dibéłzhini bashishchiin, Tótsohnii dashicheii, dóó Tábaqhi dashinalí. Jééhkał, New Mexico dóó Dishchii' Bikoh, Arizona deę' éi naashá. Translated into English, Hello! My name is Shayla Chatto, I am Butterfly Clan, born for the Blacksheep People, my maternal grandfather is the Big Water Clan, and my paternal grandfather is Edgewater People Clan. I am from Jones Ranch, New Mexico and Cibecue, Arizona. The literal place name translation of *Jééhkał* in the Navajo language is "hard of hearing," which derived from a farmer whose name was Jones and was hard of hearing. In the Western Apache language, *Dishchii' Bikoh* means "red-banded canyon." I come from a line of matrilineal clans and two distinct Native nations. My tribal communities called ourselves Diné (The People) and *N'dee* (The People). We are also known by the federal government as the Navajo Nation and White Mountain Apache Tribe, and both tribes have a government-to-government relationship through our treaties. The Navajo Nation were the

dignitary signers of the *Navajo Treaty of 1868* held at Bosque Redondo in Fort Sumner, and the White Mountain Apache Tribe are the dignitary signers of *Treaty with the Apache of 1852* on the Fort Apache Reservation. Today, my community's lands and rivers are bounded in a reservation, but our creation stories tell us otherwise.

For the Diné people, our story is told from *Diné Bahane'* (Navajo creation story). It tells our emergence story and arrives at this current world, which we call the glittering world. Our emergence story maps out our traditional homelands, which are bounded by four sacred mountains in all the cardinal directions. To the east sits *Sisnaajini* (White Shell Mountain), to the south *Tsoodzil* (Turquoise Mountain), to the western direction is *Dook'o 'ooshiid* (Abalone Shell Mountain), and to the north *Dibé Nitsaa* (Big Sheep Mountain). Today, these mountains are known as Blanca Peak in Alamosa, Colorado; Mount Taylor in Grants, New Mexico; San Francisco Peaks in Flagstaff, Arizona; and Hesperus Mountain near Durango, Colorado. Our four sacred mountains create a *hogan* (traditional Navajo home), and we carry these mountains with us, in what we call our medicine bundles. Inside the medicine bundles we carry the physical dirt from each of the four sacred mountains signifying the holding together of our families and our relationship to/with the land. As my *nali* (paternal grandmother), shares through translation, “The land gives us everything we need to live. It gives us food and medicine so that we can stay strong. It also gives the animals and plants life so they will live too. It is through our ancestral lands that we are here today” (L. Chatto, personal communication, November 25, 2021).

Moreover, I bring into my writing my first childhood home on the White Mountain Apache reservation where I grew up alongside creeks and rivers. Most of my memories related to my *N'dee* roots were short lived, as I moved to the Navajo Nation reservation at the age of eight. I recall learning the *N'dee* creation story through an after school cultural program. As told by our

culture teacher, the *N'dee* people came to this world through the co-creation of four spiders who spun their webs together to form the first *gowā* (traditional Apache dwelling). The *gowā* resembled the intertwining of webs through overlapping oak branches and sticks. Hearing this as a child, I could visualize the web laces coming together, like the Diné string game. I still reflect on these teachings because I did not learn them directly from my maternal side of the family, due to the disruption of ancestral knowledge that resulted from colonial impacts, such as the influence of church ideology and substance abuse. From time to time, I continue to visit my ancestral homelands to maintain a relationship with land by gathering traditional foods and visiting relatives.

Building Relations with Coast Salish, Lands, and Waters

For the past five years, I resided, studied, and worked on Coast Salish lands. During this time, I prioritized building a relationship with the land, the waters, and the People and more-than-human relatives that call this place home. I've been welcomed into many intertribal spaces with Native-led community gardens, tribal canoe families, cultural events, and through Native run clubs and campus organizations. In these spaces, I cultivated the land through the annual intertribal camas digs, prepared the ground to plant orca beans and tobacco, pulled on the water in a cedar canoe, wove cedar roses, harvested stinging nettle, and engaged in countless land-based, cultural activities. Some of the plant relatives I've grown accustomed to are yellow cedar, camas, and the thimble berries. Yellow cedar has been central to much of my inner healing, and also builds physical and mental strength, as I hand carved a cedar paddle for tribal canoe journey.

Tribal canoe journey has been instrumental in immersing me into the teachings and learnings of the Coast Salish peoples. I joined the *č'away'altx^w ʔiišəd*, Shell House Canoe Family

at University of Washington in the fourth year of my doctoral program. I started in fall quarter by attending the weekly meetings, making endless beaded necklaces for gifts, as I eagerly awaited the spring season for pulling practices on the water. During the fall and winter time, the canoe was put to sleep and reawakened in spring time. As spring approached, we learned that the canoe needed repairs, which left us scrambling to get out on the water, so we had to reach out to other canoe families to practice on their canoes. This was an incredible predicament because the journey became a journey in and of itself to practice pulling and preparing for the annual canoe journey. In the process of attending these practices, I immediately noticed each canoe family had its own system of preparing for canoe journey, such as, engaging in gift-making before pulling practices; singing with the rhythm of each pull; counting to an indeterminate number for “power” pulls; and even the systems of switching on the canoe and resting were strikingly different. I like to say that I was completely thrown into it because I had to quickly learn and follow the skipper’s instructions while on the canoe. In any case, I developed connections with multiple canoe families, learned the teachings of the canoe, and pulled varying lengths of paddles in the water. These are experiences and teachings that only could be felt by being fully immersed in the canoe journey protocols, so I was thankful for the opportunities to pull and be in community with them. Eventually, all the practices amounted to partaking in the 2024 Power Paddle to Puyallup Youth Canoe Journey. Our canoe family was gifted another canoe a few weeks before the start of journey, so we were able to pull on a canoe named 23. Given the canoe journey theme, I asked the canoe family if my younger brothers could join us. They agreed and my brothers pulled the first leg of our journey, which started near the University of Washington Waterfront Activities Center. On the first day of canoe journey, the waterways were calm and still with an overcast sky. The following day, we were met with choppy water, cloudy skies, and wind. The weather soon

worsened to the point that the support boat had to tow the canoe. We were still hours away from our next destination, so I sat at the back of the support boat watching the canoe being towed. I noticed that the canoe was moving in a way that felt like there were spirits pulling it and there was a beating sound that sounded similar to a beating drum that could be heard in a Coastal Jam. I couldn't help but imagine that the spirits were with us on journey and that they were using the honor paddles to pull on the water. I learned about the honor paddles when I had asked a canoe family member why we brought the paddles onto the canoe and what was the significance of it? He mentioned that the honor paddles were paddles that honored people who passed, so we brought them with us on the canoe—in spirit. One of those paddles was for Emmett Oliver, who started the first tribal canoe journey in 1989, and it is known as the Paddle to Seattle.

By providing a grounding, I offer the reader a lens into my worldview through the people and the places I come from, and my experiences living/learning/working on Coast Salish lands and waters. My lived experiences inform this dissertation through the stories I share and connect with. It is my hope that the reader reads this dissertation through my own experiences and from a Diné knowledge system.

Chapter One: Introduction - Setting up the Loom

This dissertation study resembles the process of weaving a Diné rug. Diné scholar Amanda Tachine (2015) developed an Indigenous Research framework and methodology for weaving a metaphorical rug through six processes that align with conducting a research study. First, a weaving loom is built by four foundational beams that represent *Nahasdzáán* (Mother Earth), *Yádilhil* (Father Sky), *asdzání* (woman), and *hastiin* (man). In parallel to a research paper, the introductory chapter sets the foundation for the significance of the study and curates the research questions. Therefore, I set up the loom in this chapter. At the end of it, I describe the remaining five weaving processes and how it is a metaphor for conducting a research study and writing a dissertation.

I approach this dissertation as a Diné scholar and rug weaver, to forge both identities in hearing and gathering stories from nine Indigenous teacher educators. I bring with me traditional rug weaving, passed down by *shinálí* (my paternal grandmother), Louise, and the original teacher, *Na'ashjé'í Asdzáá* (Spider Woman). Weaving has taught me intergenerational knowledge of Diné ways of being and has aided in visualizing stories through visceral, spatial, and meaning making. The intricate Diné rug symbols, patterns, and designs tell a story that is contextualized through space and time. Therefore, I leveraged these teachings to *re-story* the stories of nine Indigenous teacher educators' identities, educational journeys, pedagogical pathways, and visions for the state-mandated course on Indigenous education.

Purpose

Currently, there are provincial and state-mandates that call on teacher educators to prepare teacher candidates to teach Aboriginal education in Canada and Native education in Washington state, across varying teacher education programs (TEPs) (Madden, 2015; Rhea &

Russell, 2012). For Indigenous teacher educators, this calls for them to negotiate and forge pedagogical pathways for centering Indigenous education which do not align with traditional, colonial models of teacher education programs (Madden, 2015). Indigenous scholars in education argue that even the most well-intentioned non-Indigenous and Indigenous educator can be complicit in a settler consciousness, which reproduces colonial logics, deficit-based ideologies, perpetuates harmful stereotypes about Indigenous peoples, and upholds patriarchal values (Pewewardy et al., 2022). In the United States context, these colonial models of teacher education derive from a long history of missionary and government attempts to “civilize,” “assimilate,” and “Christianize” Indigenous children through an array of federal policy eras (Reyhner & Eder, 2017). The onset of colonial models of schooling was designed from the legacy of Indian boarding schools, which drew from colonial, assimilative, standardization, and Eurocentric theories of teaching and learning (Brayboy & Lomawaima, 2018; Hopkins, 2020; San Pedro, 2021). Therefore, “we must first acknowledge that Indigenous education has existed since time immemorial, long before European contact and the settler-designed schools that were and are detrimental to the well-being of Indigenous children and communities.” (Pewewardy et al., 2022, p.1). Since time immemorial to present day, Indigenous peoples have used Indigenous education according to their knowledge paradigms, strength, gender, leadership, clan, intergenerational knowledge transfer, and Indigenous giftedness (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Simpson, 2017). Indigenous education comes through the land and embodiment, although the terms, “Indigenous” and “education” do not work in isolation, rather it operates from grounded normativity—from both a localized Indigenous context/embodiment and Indigenous intellect (Simpson, 2017). It is important to note that Indigenous education is unique to the specific Native nations’ languages, cultures, and ways of being (Brayboy, 2005). These historical

underpinnings bring to surface the ways in which teacher preparation programs still operate in a settler consciousness.

Significance of Study

In the 2019 National Congressional of American Indians (NCAI) report on “Becoming Visible: A Landscape Analysis of State Efforts to Provide Native American Education for All”, NCAI found eleven states required Native Education content in K-12 state standards and curriculum. The eleven states were: Arizona, Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Maine, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin (NCAI, 2019). Of these states, Montana is the first and only one to have a constitutional mandate on Native Education. Following the path of Montana, Washington State Senator John McCoy (Tulalip) and other advocates were instrumental in the landmark state-mandates on Native Education for all students. Like Montana, the state of Washington has a government-to-government relationship with twenty-eight federally recognized tribes (excluding the Confederated Tribes of the Yakama Nation) through the 1989 Centennial Accord, which set the stage for Native Education state-mandates. Starting in 2005, House Bill (HB) 1495 encouraged educators to teach “Washington’s tribal history [...] in the common schools”, then, in 2015, Senate Bill (SB) 5433 required educators to teach “Washington’s tribal history, culture, and government to [...] the common schools” (Washington State Legislature, n.d.a; Washington State Legislature, n.d.b).

SB 5433 eventually led to the first state-mandated (2018 SB 5028) college course on preparing preservice teachers to implement tribally developed curricula, specifically John McCoy’s (*lulilaš*) ¹*Since Time Immemorial (STI): Tribal Sovereignty Curriculum in Washington State* (Washington State Legislature, n.d.c). This bill aligns with the Washington State

¹ *lulilaš is a Northern Lushootseed word and this language does not use capital letters, thus lulilaš is not written in capitalized letters.*

Professional Educational Standards Board (WA State PESB), which states, “Teacher preparation programs must integrate the *Since Time Immemorial* curriculum into their programs and courses and ensure that teacher candidates engage and familiarize themselves with the content.” (WA state PESB, 2024) and that these programs can modify the curriculum to meet the regional and place-specific needs/focus. Since the passage of SB 5028, there have been seven cohorts of teacher candidates and practicing educators who have taken the state-mandated course. Of the seven cohorts, I have witnessed five of them in one university-based teacher preparation program complete the course. It is through my experiences of being a teaching assistant and graduate instructor that I seek to understand how Indigenous teacher educators are building pedagogical pathways for Indigenous education in teacher education programs.

Research Questions

Therefore, this dissertation seeks to listen and ‘hear’ the stories of Indigenous teacher educators’ identities, educational journeys, pedagogical pathways, and envisionments for Indigenous education in TEP with the following two questions in mind:

- How do Indigenous teacher educators’ identities and educational journeys inform their pedagogical pathways to prepare teacher candidates to implement state-mandated tribally developed curricula in Washington State?
- In what ways do Indigenous teacher educators re-story and envision the state-mandated course on Indigenous education as a site for transformation?

Overview

In chapter two, I organize the literature review by central and underlying topics related to Indigenous teacher educators’ positionalities, educational journeys, colonial models of teacher education, pedagogical pathways, and teacher candidates’ engagements, particularly the

epistemic self-awareness when taught through an Indigenous perspective and worldview. The key literature derives from Madden's (2015) from 2000 - 2012 systematic review of teacher educators' perspectives on Indigenous education that examined twenty-three studies to identify prevailing pedagogical pathways for Indigenous education within educational institutions situated in the United States of America, Australia, and New Zealand. The author identified four emerging pedagogical pathways that include: learning from Indigenous traditional models of teaching; pedagogy for decolonizing; Indigenous and anti-racist education; and Indigenous and place-based education (Madden, 2015, p.3). Moreover, this literature review examines published articles from 2012 to 2024. The years of the journal articles are to reflect existing provincial and state-mandates on Aboriginal and Native education in TEP. The literature review informed the formation of the research questions.

In chapter three, I present the theoretical frameworks that guided this study, which include Indigenous Storywork (ISW) (Archibald, 2008) and "Tracking A Story" (Cajete, 1994). I engaged in ISW's seven guiding principles for approaching storytelling through the sharing and hearing of stories told from relatives. I sought to embody the ISW guiding principles during the preparation of sharing story sessions. Part of this preparation was asking the nine Indigenous teacher educators if they had a traditional protocol for telling story, this was to account for relatives' storytelling protocols based on their Indigenous teachings (Archibald, 2008). As described by Tanana Athabaskan scholar Dian Million (2014), "Story is Indigenous theory" (p.35). Each of the relatives' stories included tracking their identities, educational journeys, and pedagogical pathways. Thus, metaphorically "Tracking A Story" by following the tracks left behind and forging ahead with overlapping visions for an Indigenous education (Cajete, 1994). I draw from these theoretical frameworks to analyze relatives' individual and collective stories

through the thematic analysis strategy for Indigenous methodology (Kovach, 2021). Taken together, I used the guiding principles of ISW and Tracking A Story, as both theoretical frameworks and as a methodology to gather and hear relatives' stories.

Indigenous Storywork (ISW)

Stó:lo and Coast Salish scholar Q'um Q'um Xiiem, or Jo-ann Archibald's *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit* (2008) conceptualizes ISW as a framework that serves as a teaching tool to bring storytelling into educational contexts. Archibald posits seven principles: respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy. She builds from Kirkness and Barnhardt's (1991) "Four Rs" of respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility, which they call for Western-oriented institutional spaces to attend to, to better serve and engage with First Nation students. I draw from these principles to orient myself as both a listener and a storyteller, and I invite the nine Indigenous teacher educators to draw on their own ISW principles. Lastly, I will consider the ways the Four R's, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy shed light on their stories about their educational journeys and preparing teacher candidates.

Tracking A Story

Tewa scholar Gregory Cajete (1994) postulates "Tracking A Story" as an educational process model for envisioning Indigenous education through an Indigenous Pathway. Cajete defines pathway as such, "Path denotes a structure; Way implies a process" (Cajete, 1994, p.54). The meaning of pathway takes on multiple meanings across Native nations, Cajete (1994) best describes it as a combined structure and process of journeying across time and landscapes to activate learning with/from spirits. He argues that through the lens of Indigenous peoples, nature and spirit are synonymous because Indigenous peoples consider the more-than-human relatives

as teachers. This repositioning from humans as teachers to then considering plants and animals as teachers implies that nature and supernatural beings coincide with one another. Thus, tracking a story metaphorically is said to be that “everything leaves a track, and in the track is the story” (Cajete, 1994, pp.55-56). When relatives are telling their stories, it leaves tracks and clues of a story that eventually leads to an Indigenous Pathway for Indigenous education. I intend to use “Tracking A Story” to better understand relatives’ educational journeys and pedagogical pathways when it comes to preparing teacher candidates to implement state-mandated Native education curricula.

In chapter three, I foreground Indigenous Research Methodologies (IRM) specifically from Diné Story Rug in tandem with ISW and “Tracking A Story” to gather and track the nine Indigenous teacher educators’ stories. I move away from the label of “participants” to instead referring to the nine Indigenous teacher educators as “relatives,” so moving forward they are addressed as relatives. The nine relatives are assigned pseudonym names (Reed, Marigold, Bitterroot, Sage, Cedar, Camas, Rose, Willow, and Alder) for the sake of anonymity, but I maintain their distinct Native nation(s), as this is integral for contextualizing their individual stories and educational journeys that inform their pedagogical pathways for preparing educators to teach state-mandated Native education curricula. I selected relatives in the study because they currently (at the time of the study) or previously taught the required course on preparing preservice and practicing educators to teach Washington State’s tribal history, culture, and government. Moreover, I knew seven of the nine relatives prior to the study and I am still actively working to maintain those relationships.

The methods that I used to gather relatives’ stories were through individual sharing story sessions with each relative (two relatives did the individual sharing story session together) and

two sharing circles with seven and two relatives, respectively. Prior to sharing stories, I consulted with relatives and offered them an opportunity to employ their storytelling protocols. Two relatives took up this opportunity, so we ate before the sharing story session. The other relatives asked to smoke tobacco and engage in our respective prayers. In addition, I provided relatives with a sharing story and sharing circle protocol sheet before and during the session so that they could refer to guiding discussion questions. One of the guiding questions asked relatives to share an item that best represented their identities in relation to their educational journey and pedagogical pathways for integrating Indigenous education into a TEP. The guiding questions and cultural item evoked and garnered stories that traced and forwarded an Indigenous pathway for Indigenous education in a TEP. In the weaving storied meaning (data analysis²), I used aspects of Kovach's (2021) Thematic Analysis Strategy for Indigenous Methodology. These steps will be outlined in Chapter three. Additionally, I used intuitive logic (Wilson, 2008) to weave their stories into story rugs. By engaging in intuitive logic, I was able to look at their stories as "an entire system," rather than breaking their stories into pieces or themes. Wilson (2008) states, "To break any piece of the topic away from the rest will destroy the relationships that the piece holds with the rest of the topic" (p.120). The story rugs held relatives' stories intact, as well as the relational aspect. After I completed the story rugs, I invited relatives to come together in a sharing circle held on Zoom. The decision for holding space virtually was to make it accessible for relatives to join from anywhere, especially since we all lived across Washington state and had weekday or weekend time constraints. In the sharing circle, I held space for introductions and a check-in. I go into further detail in chapter three on the ways I gathered and listened to relatives' stories.

² The data analysis is referred to as the weaving storied meaning. I move away from the term "data analysis," to align with ISW and Story Rug, to show that the analysis derives from the stories that become the symbols within the weavings.

In chapter four and five, I share the understandings/findings ³from the sharing stories sessions and the sharing circle. I present nine story rugs that I wove that re-storied relatives' stories. In each of the story rugs, I wove symbols and patterns to capture aspects of their identities, educational journeys, pedagogical pathways, and visions for the state-mandated course as a site for transformation. The symbolism found within the rugs was done through intuitive logic (Wilson, 2008). Additionally, I engaged in "tracking" their stories by using concentric rings (Cajete, 1994) to identify overlaps in the ways relatives were responding to the story rugs. The overlaps included tracks of affirmation, relationality, worldviews, and inter/connectedness.

In the sixth and final chapter, I provide an overview of the study, a discussion on the outlier findings, pedagogical pathways, and asserting IRM to honor the nine Indigenous teacher educators' stories. Additionally, I conclude with future implications on policy, practice, and research. In the outlier findings, I argue the importance of valuing all stories, so I highlight the Indigenous teacher educators' stories related to their "heart work" before and outside of the state-mandatory course, as well as share their stories of how teacher candidates respond to the state-mandatory course. In the discussion section, I highlight relatives' pedagogical pathways found within their courses and bring it into conversation with existing literature. I offer a discussion on asserting IRM, specifically Diné Story Rug, and how engaging in Story Rug not only sought to tell their stories through the physical story rugs, but by weaving their stories as a whole, I maintain the fullness of our relationships, or hold a relational accountability (Wilson, 2008). The implications of the study are to address the study's findings in relation to policy, practice, and research. Lastly, I conclude with the title of this dissertation, "Re-storying

³ Throughout this paper, "understandings" is also referred to as the findings. The term "understandings" is to denote the relational meaning-making and knowledge that was shared from the nine Indigenous teacher educators.

Indigenous Education,” which shares a story of one way an Indigenous teacher educator is re-storying Indigenous education in the state-mandated course.

Organization of the Diné Story Rug

The dissertation chapters are organized by the weaving process in relation to the process of conducting research (Tachine, 2015). The next chapter is the “Literature Review - Warping the Loom.” In the weaving process, the weaver warps the loom with yarn to create a base or canvas for the story rug, similarly to how a literature review creates the bases for formulating research questions that will inform the research findings. In chapter three, it is the “Theoretical Frameworks and Methodologies - Gathering of Tools.” This process is two-fold, a weaver gathers the necessary instruments (e.g., different colored hand-spun wool yarn, weaving comb, and battens). First, gathering compatible colored wool yarn for weaving is a metaphor for the selection of theories to form a theoretical framework. Second, gathering weaving tools is a metaphor for the methodologies section; it describes the approaches and tools needed for applying the research methods. Chapters four and five are the understandings/findings sections, written as “Part I: Weaving the Story Rug” and “Part II: Story Rugs.” Tachine (2015; 2018) describes the findings chapter as locating the participants’ contemporary “monsters” (challenges) and using “weapons” (sources of strength) to combat it, which derives from a Diné origin story of Changing Woman and her sons, the Twin Warriors (p.73). While this traditional story offers valuable insight and meaning-making, I continue to follow the traditional storytelling protocol of telling origin stories during the winter time. This dissertation was completed during the summer season, thus I chose not to forgo engaging in the “Twin Warrior Journey to their Father” story. Instead, I changed this to encompass relatives’ unique Indigenous identities and protocols for storytelling, thus renaming it “Weaving the Story Rug.” In the weaving process, a spool of wool

yarn is inserted from the right-hand side, pulled, and interlaced across the warps to the left-hand side, this creates a weft. This process repeats and alternates with assorted colors to create a pattern or design. This is a metaphor for how I can begin to analyze individual and collective stories to form emerging symbolisms and overlaps. Finally, Chapter Six is the “Discussion & Conclusion - Future Care of the Story Rugs” (Tachine, 2015). Before completing the process of weaving, the weaver leaves a weavers’ path to ensure their thoughts are not spiritually trapped in the weaving, and that more rugs will be woven in the future. The weavers’ path is a metaphor for the “future care of the story rug” (Tachine, 2015, p.30). In research studies, this is the contribution and future implication section. This concludes the end of the weaving and research process.

Chapter Two: Literature Review - Warping the Loom

Nazh'nishah, or a warped loom, is a blank canvas for weaving a rug. In Diné teachings, a warped loom is a symbolic representation of the pathway of the sun and a spiritual connection between Father Sky and Mother Earth. When preparing to warp a loom, I awaken before dawn to gather my materials and position my loom facing the direction of the rising sun. As told by my grandmother, warping a loom must be a continuous stringing of a single-ply cord that follows the sun's pathway, from east to west. Upon completion of *nanoolzhee'*, or the warps, a figure-eight is seen from the side of the loom. This figure-eight resembles the solar analemma which is a diagram that shows the sun's pathway over the course of a year and it, too, creates a figure-eight. It is no coincidence that the Diné teachings of rug weaving come from the observations and teachings from land, sky, and our surroundings. With that in mind, I enter this process with good intention, positive thoughts, and holding an utmost respect for the sacredness of the weaving tools by giving reverence on a rainy day.

During the process of warping, one will encounter multifaceted steps of stringing together the cords into vertical warps, creating equal parts between warps, and using a tension cord to allow the warps to be tightened and then loosened. A weaver decides the number of warps based on the width, the length, and the pattern design of the rug. Personally, I aim to warp the loom with an even number of warps and the longest length possible, so I can have a central point and can add more designs to the rug. In research, I draw from Tachine's (2015) metaphoric comparison of warping the loom, to writing a literature review. Like Tachine (2015), I visualize the warped loom as a base, or groundwork for setting the foundation, in comparison to identifying existing literature to lay the foundation for formulating research question. The literature review accounts for a specific number of reviewed articles, or a range of years, and it

can determine the parameters of viewable published articles. As a result, the warping of the loom acts as a catalyst for curating the foundational dimensions for the story rug, similar to the process of reviewing foundational literature to inform this dissertation work (Tachine, 2015).

In this section, the literature review builds from Indigenous scholar Brooke Madden's (2015) article, "Pedagogical pathways for Indigenous education with/in education," which provides a systematic review of Indigenous education across settler nations including Canada, United States, Australia, and New Zealand. Madden's (2015) review explored twenty-two articles to identify teacher educators' prevailing pedagogical pathways when engaging with/in Indigenous education at several Faculties of Education, or postsecondary institutions. Madden reviewed literature from 2000 to 2012, to reveal that teacher educators engage in four overarching pedagogical pathways, which are shaped by their individual approaches and theories. The pedagogical pathways include (Madden, 2015, p. 3):

1. *Learning from Indigenous traditional models of teaching*
2. *Pedagogy for decolonizing*
3. *Indigenous and anti-racist education*
4. *Indigenous and placed-based education*

This comprehensive review is a springboard to the ongoing work of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous teacher educators implementing Indigenous education through four overarching pedagogies. Madden (2015) asserts that "Teacher educators are encouraged to connect pathways in charting their own route, taking into account their unique place, positioning, talents, students, and priorities" (p.13), and argues for teacher educators to not follow *one* pedagogical pathway. To further add to this literature review, I examined twenty-seven studies published between 2015 to 2024 that focus on the intersection of teacher educators teaching Indigenous education in

teacher preparation courses and teacher candidates' experiences in the course. I narrowed this down to teacher education programs in Canada and the United States, as both countries have provincial and state policies surrounding mandatory Indigenous education in teacher preparation programs. The following keywords were used to generate relevant literature, "Indigenous", "Aboriginal", "teacher educators", "teacher candidates", "preservice teachers", "teacher education", "Indian Education for All", and "Since Time Immemorial Curriculum". Initial searches on Google Scholar and my university's database located limited studies related to Indigenous teacher educators engaging in Indigenous education with/in the United States, but an advanced search of First Peoples of Canada in Indigenous education revealed a substantial amount of studies targeting Aboriginal⁴ and settler teacher educators implementing Indigenous education in the provinces of Alberta, Ontario, British Columbia, and Saskatchewan. Additionally, a separate search in Indigenous-led journal articles, such as *Canadian Journal of Native Education* and *Journal of American Indian Education* revealed a sufficient number of articles written by Indigenous teacher educators and co-authored by non-Indigenous allied instructors. The selected articles reflect Indigenous and non-Indigenous teacher educators teaching mandatory Indigenous education in post-secondary institutions in the United States and Canada, alongside teacher candidates' reflections on the course. There were five exclusion criteria from the literature review, which included studies conducted on/with practicing teachers, Indigenous teacher education programs, post-secondary Indigenous language programs, degree-required courses on Indigenous education in other fields of studies, outside of a teacher education program, and international teacher education programs beyond Canada and the United States. In the next section, I begin with historicizing and contextualizing both countries' relation

⁴ Throughout this paper, Aboriginal and the First Peoples of Canada will be used to refer to First Nation, Métis, and Inuit people in Canada (Anuik & Gillies, 2012).

to colonial modes of public education, and the shift to mandatory Indigenous education in teacher preparation programs. Following this section, I organized the literature review to capture studies that examined teacher educators' positionalities in relation to Indigenous education, their pedagogical pathways/approaches, and responses to student feedback.

Shared History and Present Day: Indigenous Education in Teacher Education

Comanche/Kiowa scholar Cornel Pewewardy and others (2022) state, “[W]e must first acknowledge that Indigenous education has existed since time immemorial, long before European contact and the settler-designed schools that were and are detrimental to the well-being of Indigenous children and communities.” (p.1). This acknowledgement recognizes that Indigenous education predates colonization and continues to exist in accordance with the distinct Native nations, their knowledge systems, kinship systems, giftedness, gender-based roles, and relation to land (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Simpson, 2017). Moreover, it disrupts the narrative that education only takes place in public schools (Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; San Pedro, 2021). The terms, “Indigenous” and “education” do not work in isolation, rather it operates from grounded normativity—from both a localized Indigenous context/embodiment and Indigenous intellect (Simpson, 2017). In the context of higher education, Indigenous education is a contested space due to the privileging of and collision of Western worldviews over Indigenous worldviews (Smith et al., 2019). These colonial models of education derive from a long history of missionary and government attempts to “civilize,” “assimilate,” and “Christianize” Indigenous children through an array of federal policy eras and in residential/boarding schools (Reyhner & Eder, 2017). Today, these colonial models of education continue to be the root issue of public education that draw from colonial, assimilative, standardization, and Eurocentric theories of teaching and learning (Brayboy & Lomawaima, 2018; Hopkins, 2020; San Pedro, 2021), or as

Mi'kmaw scholar Marie Battiste (2000) calls it, cognitive imperialism. Cognitive imperialism is “the imposition of one worldview on a people who have an alternative worldview, with the implication that the imposed worldview is superior to the alternative worldview.” (Battiste, 2000, p.193). In other words, cognitive imperialism denies the existence of Indigenous peoples, their languages, cultures, and knowledge systems. These historical underpinnings bring to surface the ways in which cognitive imperialism continues to play out in educational systems, spaces, and even in one's consciousness. Indigenous scholars in education argue that even the most well-intentioned non-Indigenous and Indigenous educators can be complicit in a settler consciousness, which reproduces colonial logics, deficit-based ideologies, upholds patriarchal values, and perpetuates harmful stereotypes about Indigenous peoples (Pewewardy et al., 2022). Simply put, teacher educators must actively seek to unmask the colonial logics and settler privilege baked into Eurocentric teaching and learning (MacMath & Hall, 2018). To do so, teacher educators and teacher candidates must engage in contestational dialogue to disentangle colonial relations and modes of learning for the purpose of recognizing multiple worldviews while building/restoring relations (Smith et al., 2019). These contested spaces are being challenged with the aid of policies that require all educators to teach Indigenous education in selective provinces in Canada and states in the United States.

Canada's Reconciliation in Education

In 1972, the National Indian Brotherhood/Assembly of First Nations initiated the call for the Canadian government and post-secondary institutions “to improve teacher preparation on inter-cultural pedagogies and the integration of Indigenous content” (Oskineegish, 2018, p.165). As of today, mandatory Indigenous education courses in teacher education programs are enforced by policies that call for teacher educators to integrate Indigenous perspectives into

required coursework (Hare, 2015; Madden, 2015). In June 2015, the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC)* released a report on the atrocities of the Indian Residential Schools, including 94 Calls to Action for reconciliation among the First Nation peoples and Canadians. Reconciliation in education does not happen in a vacuum and is understood differently, but it foremost “requires coming to terms with schooling as a tool of colonialism that has harmed Indigenous people” (MacMath & Hall, 2018, p.93). In the 62 and 63 Calls to Action for *Education for Reconciliation*, it outlines the demands for adequate funding for post-secondary institutions from the Canadian branches of government and the Council of Ministers of Education. These allocated funds are a commitment “to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms” and to “shar[e] information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history” (TRC, 2015, p.7). In an effort to reconcile through education, British Columbia’s Ministry of Education was the first to take steps toward reconciliation by forming an advisory group to redesign a curriculum that integrated Aboriginal knowledge in social studies and English language arts (MacMath & Hall, 2018). At the post-secondary level, the British Columbia Teachers’ Councils (BCTC) implemented the policy P5.C.03.1, which states, “Beginning September 2012, [included] three credits of the equivalent in studies in First Nations pedagogies and issues related to the historical and current context of First Nations, Inuit and Métis learners.” (as cited in Joyce Schneider, 2015, p.39). This policy required all teacher candidates to complete the course *EDUC 440 Aboriginal Education in Canada* in fulfillment of their program degree and teacher certification (Joyce Schneider, 2015).

State-Mandates Across the United States

To center Indigenous education in the United States, there are eleven states that have passed state-mandates requiring educators to teach Native American history, government, and culture in K-12 public schools (NCAI, 2019). This movement originated in the state of Montana, when the first constitutional mandate, House Bill (HB) 528, was passed in 1999, after a long-awaited pursuit of 34 years (Office of Public Instruction, n.d.). HB 528, also known as Indian Education For All (IEFA), provides “schools and staff with knowledge, skills, and content to ensure Indian Education for All [IEFA] means cultural enrichment, academic engagement, and equitable pedagogy for students” (Office of Public Instruction, n.d.). IEFA is not an add-on, not a curriculum, nor a program, but instead centers *Seven Essential Understandings* for the purpose of interweaving state standards, and encourages integration into existing school curriculum (Starnes, 2006). Two years later, the state of Maine passed the Wabanaki Studies Law (WSL) “requiring Maine K-12 schools to educate Maine’s school children about—and thus increase public understanding of—the Wabanaki Indigenous people of Maine” (Sockbeson, 2019, p.106). Nearly a decade before the passage of both state-mandates, the state of Washington and the twenty-six federally-recognized tribes⁵ convened in 1989 to write the Centennial Accord, which established a government-to-government relationship (Smith, n.d.). One of the commitments in the accord was to educate “citizens” of Washington State, especially the youth, to learn about “tribal history, culture, treaty rights” and have a comprehensive understanding of government-to-government relationships (GOIA, n.d.). This accord was a cornerstone of what eventually led to the passage of landmark state-mandates relating to Native Education by the

⁵ There are 29 federally recognized tribes in Washington State, and the two tribes that declined the Centennial Accord agreement were the Confederated Tribes of the Yakama Nation and the Kalispel Tribe. From 2002 to 2003, three tribes were granted federal recognition status and soon agreed to the Centennial Accord, the tribes include: Snoqualmie, Samish, and Cowlitz (Smith, n.d.).

advocacy efforts of the late Senator John McCoy (Tulalip/ Duwamish) and other Native leaders. The first state mandate began in 2005 when HB 1495 passed. It *encouraged* educators to teach “Washington’s tribal history [...] in the common schools” (Washington State Legislature, n.d.a), then HB 1495 was reintroduced into legislation in 2015, renamed as Senate Bill (SB) 5433, which changed from *encouraging* to *requiring* educators to teach “Washington’s tribal history, culture, and government to [...] the common schools” (Washington State Legislature, n.d.b). To further strengthen SB 5433 from only taking place in K-12 public school settings, a new bill was introduced to prepare future educators in post-secondary institutions. This became SB 5028, which *required* teacher education programs to prepare teacher candidates to implement SB 5433 (Washington State Legislature, n.d.c) and was put into law in 2018. The next state mandate passed in 2021 and became known as SB 5252. This bill held school districts accountable for seeking tribal consultation with local tribes (Washington State Legislature, n.d.d). In addition, there were legislative bills that did not pass into law, such as SB 5161 which sought to change the language in an existing bill from “federally-recognized tribes” to “historic treaty tribes”, as it would have aided in including non-federally recognized tribes and tribes across state- and border-lines into the curriculum (Caudell, 2021; Washington State Legislature, n.d.e). Washington State continues to pave the way for Native Education with the various state mandates and is currently the only state to mandate Indigenous education in teacher education programs and require school districts to seek out tribal consultation from neighboring tribes.

In summary, the provincial and state mandates on Indigenous education initially focused on K-12 educators implementing and teaching Indigenous history in the early 2000s. Soon after, Canadian provinces and Washington State mandated teacher preparation programs to prepare teacher candidates to teach Indigenous history, culture, and government. Since then, a growing

number of research studies have sought to understand the implementation of Indigenous education in K-12 classrooms, as well as how the mandatory course has been implemented in teacher education programs. The next section reviews studies conducted on the mandatory course for Indigenous education, with a focus on examining teacher positionality, teacher educators' pedagogical pathways, and teacher candidates course engagement.

Teacher Positionality

In the field of education, teacher educators bring with them a unique positionality that is informed by their personal identity and teacher identity. Identity is fluid and dynamic because of the consistent shifts over time of being in relation to self, to their professional work, and other external factors (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Identity development plays a significant role in teacher education programs (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009), as teacher candidates are asked to engage in an examination and reflective practices for unpacking personal identity in relation to education. Further, teacher educators aid in the formation of teacher identity through their courses, yet teacher educators bring with them their own positionality. Thus, this section explores literature on the ways Indigenous and non-Indigenous teacher educators' unique identity shape and inform the way they prepare teacher candidates for teaching Indigenous history, culture, and government.

Indigenous Teacher Educators

Personal identities within Indigenous communities are complex and vary significantly across Turtle Island, often referred to as Indigeneity. The contested term Indigeneity captures the amalgamation and entanglements among Indigenous identities, settler colonial impacts (Weaver, 2020), federal policies, and the deep-rootedness of displaced Indigenous communities living in diaspora (Coleman, 2016). Despite this, tribal communities continue to exercise and assert their

tribal identities based on ancestral teachings, for instance, positioning themselves in relation to their clans, family names, lands, and waters. It is through this relational positioning that Indigenous peoples demonstrate relationality. As stated by Opaskwayak Cree scholar Shawn Wilson (2008), a “relational way of being [is] at the heart of what it means to be Indigenous” (p. 80). This sentiment was illustrated in my introductory chapter, where I introduce myself by stating my matrilineal clan relations, my parents’ and grandparents’ names, and the lands I originate from. With this understanding, I recognize that Indigeneity in relation to teacher positionality differs among Indigenous teacher educators within Canada and U.S. institutions.

Reflective and self-studies on Indigenous teacher positionality in the Canadian Faculties of Education suggested that they faced personal and professional complexities of teaching the required Indigenous education course (Davis et al., 2018; Hare, 2015; Poitras Pratt & Hanson, 2022); felt a sense of responsibility to carrying out the 94 Calls to Action from the TRC report (MacMath & Hall, 2018); and worked to be in good relation with tribal communities (Gorecki & Doyle-Jones, 2021; Kerr & Parent, 2015; Scully, 2015).

Meanwhile, in the classroom, Indigenous faculty felt that they had to negotiate their identities (Poitras Pratt & Hanson, 2022) and culture because teacher candidates questioned their “geographic situatedness” and views on being “too cultural” or spiritual (Hare, 2020, p.28). In one study, seven self-identifying Aboriginal women and teacher educators were hired to teach the mandatory course on Indigenous perspectives for teacher candidates and wrote a “common” nine-week syllabus (Poitras Pratt & Hanson, 2022). The study suggested that the Aboriginal instructors experienced emotional and even physical difficulty with teaching the course to teacher candidates because it required instructors to “implicate themselves personally” and from a minoritized position, as their students were predominantly white students (Poitras Pratt &

Hanson, 2022, p.870). One Indigenous teacher educator shared, “I think some of our pre-service teachers are really appreciative of the experience you bring as an Aboriginal person. They know they will learn things they might not learn from, say, a non-Indigenous person teaching the course” (Hare, 2015, p.109). Thus, MacMath and Hall (2018) argue that teachers need to move away from integration and move toward Indigenizing, which requires personal decolonization work. For instance, a Ucwalmicw scholar Joyce Schneider (2015) shares the ways she engaged in Indigeneity, more specifically her Ucwalmicw knowledge, through mobilizing intergenerational wisdom. This is modelled throughout her course, as she puts it, “I share how I begin, proceed, and close these course sections in a *good way*—which, from my Ucwalmicw understandings of and experiences with living this concept, means in a spiritual manner” (p.40). These studies suggest that Indigenous teacher educators’ teacher positionality are threaded throughout their course and can be taken up differently by teacher candidates.

At the colleague level, Indigenous faculty members were asked to advise non-Indigenous faculty on confronting their settler histories and “challenge their own assumptions,” which resulted in emotional labor (Davis et al., 2018, p.22). Scholars further assert that teacher educators must carry a social responsibility that calls out colonialism and reconstructs relationships (MacMath & Hall, 2018), which can take a mental toll on Indigenous teacher educators attempting to help their colleagues. At the department level, Indigenous teacher educators experienced personal complexities of not feeling recognized for the amount of work they put into their curriculum (Davis et al., 2018). Indigenous teacher educators felt a personal responsibility to being change agents in their institutions for reconciliation and Indigenizing their curriculum (Davis et al., 2018). Added to this personal sense of responsibility, one Métis educator shared that their biracial identity was, “further complicated as their identity positions

them both as colonizer and colonized,” which situates them as a “bridge-builder” for reconciliation (Davis et al., 2018, p.21).

Non-Indigenous Teacher Educators

Non-Indigenous instructors’ positionality in relation to the required course were reflected in myriad ways, from feeling a lack of authenticity to working toward reconciliation.

Non-Indigenous teacher educators in the study recognized their lack of knowledge of Indigenous perspectives and positioned themselves as being on a learning journey with their teacher candidates (Gorecki & Doyle-Jones, 2021; Scully, 2015). Settler, non-Indigenous teacher educators and authors Gorecki and Doyle-Jones (2021) were honest and transparent with their “own lack of authentic knowledge of diverse Indigenous lived experiences,” thus stressing the importance of relationality with Indigenous community partners and centering their stories in the curriculum (p.124). Similarly, non-Indigenous instructor Scully (2015) verbally stated her positionality on the first day of class when she posed the question to her students, “Why is the W/whitest woman on the planet teaching Aboriginal education?” (p.83). She proceeded to share the story of how she came to teach the course, then followed up with two positionality statements: “(1) I have no traditional knowledge; and (2) I have no cultural authority.” (Scully, 2015, p.83). In another self-study, one settler teacher educator engaged in “self-in-representation” by acknowledging their positionality and locating/rooting themselves to place when teaching their class (Freeman, 2018). Moreover, non-Indigenous teacher educators said they felt like they held a responsibility for reconciliation through meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities, rather than just simply recognizing them. They alluded to the Two Row Wampum belt as a form of allyship, which recognizes peace and respect between two groups of peoples (Davis et al., 2018).

However, some non-Indigenous teacher educators felt like they had to constantly prove themselves to their students. As one instructor stated, “I have to sort of prove myself. I have to show them [my philosophical stance]. And it takes time. It takes a long time to develop that.” (Hare, 2015, p.108). This was further illustrated when teacher candidates questioned non-Indigenous teacher educators’ qualifications to teach the course on Aboriginal Education (Hare, 2020). Regardless, non-Indigenous educators must constantly reflect on their positionality and practice, as they could run the risk of perpetuating harmful stereotypes and reproducing settler ideologies and privilege (Hare, 2020).

Indigenous and non-Indigenous Teacher Educators as Co-Instructors

Studies also examined Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators’ positionality when co-teaching the mandatory course (Hare, 2015; Kerr & Parent, 2015). Kerr (Settler) and Parent (Nisga’a) (2018) center ethical relationality⁶ in their teachings as a means to support reconciliation. They considered how their students could begin to engage in Indigenous knowledges and articulated that, “We were hoping to shift the gaze inward and consider ourselves (students and instructors) in relation, so as to begin to be collectively taught by Indigeneity.” (Kerr & Parent, 2015, p.66). By shifting their gaze inward, Kerr and Parent (2015) recognize that relationality will occur in tandem with Indigeneity and its teachings. Another non-Indigenous instructor shared an experience she had with bringing in an Indigenous teacher educator to help co-teach her course, she explained: “I felt I had nothing to contribute and I would sit and listen to her [Indigenous teacher educators] stories. And there was this sense I didn’t really have anything to contribute.” (Hare, 2015, p.109). Thus, Indigenous and

⁶ As cited in Kerr and Parent (2018) ethical relationality is “an ecological understanding of human relationality that does not deny difference, rather seeks to understand more deeply how our different histories and experiences position us in relation to each other (p.103).”

non-Indigenous teacher educators bring with them a unique positionality, which calls for building relationality, shifting gazes, and engaging in Indigenous knowledge systems.

Teacher Educators' Pedagogical Pathways

Building from Madden's (2015) systematic review on identifying four prevailing pedagogical pathways (Indigenous traditional teachings, decolonial pedagogy, anti-racist education, and place-based education), the emerging pedagogical pathways revealed in this literature review from 2015 to 2024 include:

- Place-based, Land-based, Virtual Learning
- Locating Self and Critical Reflective Stance
- Arts-based Approach and Storytelling
- Holistic Learning and Building Relationality
- Uniformity and Standardization of Teacher Education Programs

These pedagogical pathways are not meant to be viewed as separate but rather as intertwined. In addition to the emerging pedagogical pathways, a qualitative study suggested that five Indigenous and non-Indigenous teacher educators who taught the mandated course, *Aboriginal Education* at Lakehead University's teacher education program in Canada, engaged in pedagogical approaches and incorporated course assignments based on *story, land, art, and reflection* (Oskineegish, 2018, 2020). Interwoven in these pedagogical practices, teacher educators emphasized the importance of building trusting relationships with teacher candidates (Oskineegish, 2018) in addition to teacher education programs that must also model and build reciprocal relationships (Conrad & Hardison-Stevens, 2024). However, teacher educators were also met with persistent pushback and resistances from teacher candidates (Aitken & Radford, 2018; Restoule & Nardozi, 2019).

Place-based, Land-based, and Virtual Learning. Land has always been central to the ways in which Indigenous peoples attend/ed to their daily lives specific to their original teachings (Bowra et al., 2021). Land-based pedagogies center the interconnectedness of distinct Indigenous knowledges, teachings, relational connections between more-than-human relatives, resurgence efforts of Indigenous language, culture, and the ultimate goal of decolonization through Land Back initiatives (Barajas-López & Bang, 2018; Bowra et al., 2021; Cornthassel & Hardbarger, 2019). In the studies reviewed, place-based was referred to as a setting outside of the traditional classroom. Indigenous and non-Indigenous instructors employed place-based learning by having teacher candidates learn from place via a museum visit, attending TRC events, and engaging in a walking tour (Hare, 2015). Moreover, one non-Indigenous instructor shared that they found value in taking teacher candidates to a museum for preparing and modeling how to engage with museum exhibits, especially when teacher candidates become practicing teachers and take their future students to the museum (Hare, 2015). In another teacher education program, an Indigenous instructor invited an Elder to guide students in a nature walk by telling stories and sharing traditional knowledge of plants around the institution (Oskineegish, 2018). While instructors sought to include place- and land-based pedagogies into the mandatory course on *Aboriginal Education*, the effects of a global pandemic in 2020 shifted in-person classes to virtual settings. Instructors Hanson (Métis) and Danyluk (White Settler) (2022) incorporated talking circles in their online classes, which originated from a faculty request on integrating Indigenous pedagogies in their class. In an effort to engage in talking circles⁷ as an Indigenous pedagogical approach, Hanson and Danyluk (2022) assert “talking up talking circles as pedagogy in our classes requires educators to learn about, connect with, follow, and respect the protocols,

⁷ As cited in Hanson and Danyluk (2022), talking circles “have provided culturally congruent channels for sharing stories, cultures, experiences, histories, perspectives, lessons, mistakes, knowledge and wisdoms” ([Absolon, 2011]p.126) (p.4).

practices, and Peoples of the territory we are in.” (p.3). It is through these taking circles that the authors argue that this pedagogical approach provides a place of equal voice for all teacher candidates and centralizes oral knowledge systems.

Locating Self and Critical Reflective Stance. Freeman (2018) engages students in locating themselves in relation to the local context and through their own family migration/lineage, a practice that the author took up as an act of identifying themselves in relation to place and family. These students are asked to respond to questions such as, “What is your relationship to colonialism? How have you and your family been shaped by it? How did you/your family come to be living here?” (Freeman, 2018, p.117). Self-reflection as an instructional strategy was used by a non-Indigenous instructor who had teacher candidates reflect on the overarching question of, “Where they are, whose land is it?”, and then retell that story in a way that is related to Indigenous peoples, lands, and teachings (Oskineegish, 2020, p. 238). Reflective learning also took form as invitations. A Stó:lō instructor engaged her students through invitations and reflective learning. These invitations were to have teacher candidates ask questions and feel a sense of safety, as it set “the stage” for critical dialogue (Oskineegish, 2020). Further, a Red Rock Indian Band instructor centralized reflection in his course by engaging teacher candidates in “perspective and perspectivism”, so they can “reflect on where their thoughts come from and where their feelings come from about Aboriginal people” (Oskineegish, 2018, p.135). Meanwhile, a reflective learning practice conducted by a non-Indigenous teacher educator engaged teacher candidates to first investigate a “treaty and traditional territory” that they most connected with, as this led them to not only recognize their existing relational connection with lands, but also led them to develop a deeper awareness of the Indigenous peoples and lands they engage with (Oskineegish, 2018).

In terms of criticality, one settler, non-Indigenous teacher educator infused and centered Indigenous perspectives into a required literacy methods course for 31 non-Indigenous teacher candidates in a Canadian university. This teacher educator consulted with Indigenous colleagues and faculty to design a curriculum with Indigenous pedagogies from a critical stance framework⁸. The critical stance framework consists of four qualities, which include consciously engaging, entertaining alternate ways of being, taking responsibility to inquire, and being reflexive (Dharamshi, 2019). It is through this last quality, reflection that teacher candidates can begin to *deconstruct* in order to *reconstruct*. Battiste draws on elements of decolonization to forward deconstruction and reconstruction, which refers to “a critique of colonial strategies that continue to operate within educational institutions,” such as “problematize teaching and learning,” and instead move toward Indigenous knowledges and pedagogies, or reconstruction (as quoted in Davis et al., 2018, p.25). Taken together, when teacher educators engage teacher candidates in locating oneself and engaging in critical reflexivity, it leads toward learning from/with Indigenous knowledges.

Arts-based Approach. Indigenous teacher educators engaged in difficult teaching to balance a dual task of accepting teacher candidates’ prior experiences on Aboriginal education while simultaneously unsettling their understandings which is usually due to a lack of knowledge (Poitras Pratt & Hanson, 2022). To counter these difficult teachings, these Indigenous instructors used various pedagogical approaches to meet teacher candidates at their level of learning. Some of the pedagogical approaches included showing films, engaging in interactive activities, incorporating humor, talking circles, artistic multimodalities, bringing in current events, inviting guest speakers, and many more (Poitras Pratt & Hanson, 2022). On a similar note, an

⁸ The author defines critical stance, “as a “deliberate choice made by educators,” which is a “lifelong and constant pursuit” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009, p.28) (as quoted by Dharamshi, 2019, p.29).

Anishinaabe teacher educator had teacher candidates develop a 15-minute play, drawing from primary resources, such as Indian Affairs reports and records (Oskineegish, 2020). This arts-based pedagogical approach also brought in reflective learning and development of empathy and resulted in shifts in teacher attitudes.

As these arts-based approaches demonstrated, the power of storytelling connects the storyteller and listener, as the storyteller tells stories from a land-based perspective and Indigenous knowledge system and the listener is immersed into that worldview (Oskineegish, 2018). It is through stories that teacher candidates can center an Indigenous worldview and knowledge system. Indeed, a Stó:lō teacher educator found that teacher candidates had the most learning impact when it came with a story (Oskineegish, 2020). The educator used storytelling to share the lived experiences of the First Peoples of Canada—and their differing Indigeneity—because her intent was to prepare teacher candidates to teach Indigenous students who came from both reservations and/or urban areas. Eventually, the listener becomes the storyteller, so the instructor encouraged teacher candidates to tell their personal stories, too (Oskineegish, 2020).

Holistic Learning. Holistic learning accounts for the whole being and a person's senses, such as hearing, seeing, touching, tasting, and even feeling Schneider (2015) engaged in Ucwalmicw holistic learning to prepare secondary teacher candidates to respectfully incorporate Indigenous pedagogies by focusing on values and practical applications. She argues, "Taking up Indigenous pedagogies as a means of teaching about First Peoples' experiences and ways of being, doing, knowing, and valuing IS experiencing Indigenous ways of being, doing, knowing, and valuing." (p.57). In the required course, Scheider had teacher candidates engage in visual representations and metaphor-making, since this has them use their hearts and bodies, rather than solely relying on intellectual thought. Kanien'kehde:ka scholar Arndt and Settler scholars, Nardozi

and Steele (2018) were part of the Deepening Knowledge Project (DKP) at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UT), where they developed an *embodied learning experience*, called “Build a Community.” They define embodied learning experience as “combin[ing] mindfulness and engagement with the whole body” (p.78) that connects with the body, mind, and spirit. Teacher candidates gave positive praises for the “Build a Community” exercise, as it created scaffolding for them through practical application and the use of a provided script. The authors argue that when the exercise is effectively used, it shows promising contributions for teacher candidates’ “journey towards healing relationships and reconciliation” (Arndt et al., 2018, p.84).

Building Relationality. Building Relationality is also illustrated in Madden’s (2015) pedagogical pathway, “Learning from Indigenous traditional models of teaching,” (p.2) by bringing in Indigenous perspectives. Settler teacher educators Gorecki and Doyle-Jones (2021) sought to model relationality with Indigenous knowledge holders to teacher candidates as a means to demonstrate that established relationships must be built prior to asking them to be guest speakers for a class (Freeman, 2018). On the other hand, teacher educators must also reciprocate this relationship of receiving knowledge from knowledge holders through mutually beneficial recognition (Davis et al., 2018) and given honoraria (Freeman, 2018) for their shared knowledge and time. Building relationality is central to many of the pedagogical approaches that include place-based, land-based learning, locating self, storytelling, holistic learning, and arts-based approaches. However, relationality does not translate in the same ways when it comes to colonial modes of education like standardization.

Uniformity and Standardization. Uniformity and Standardization continue to perpetuate teacher education programs, mostly because they follow and comply with educational standards

from the country's designated education department. Some of these standards are written as frameworks, guidelines, and promising practices for teacher candidates. In the context of Alberta, Canada, universities are required to implement *Teacher Quality Standards*, or TQS⁹ for teacher competency, which serves as both a framework and a teacher evaluation metric (Burns et al., 2022). One study sought to understand how ten universities were integrating the TQS and found that there was interconnectedness between teacher candidates' practicum and the required course (Burns et al., 2022). Part of this programmatic synchronicity across universities stems from Alberta's TQS. It was reported by one instructor that having the course syllabus aligned with the TQS standards was helpful in ensuring that teacher candidates were teaching the 'what and how' because mentor teachers felt that teacher candidates held more competency in integrating Indigenous perspectives (Burns et al., 2022). This study led to a collective case study examining those ten teacher education programs in Alberta, Canada. A survey revealed that the ten teacher education programs indicated "an authentic commitment" for deepening "the integration of Indigenous perspectives in their programming" and a desire to collaborate (Danyluk et al., 2023, p.32). It was reported that all teacher education programs were incorporating Indigenous perspectives, specifically content related to Residential School systems, treaty rights, and Indigenous literature. There was an eighty percent success rate for Indigenous perspective integration through *land-based learning*, connecting with *Indigenous knowledge holders/communities*, *experiential learning*, *talking circles*, *storytelling*, and *TRC Day* (Danyluk et al., 2023). The drawbacks were that ninety percent of programs had limited funding to support other coursework activities and challenges with rebuilding community partnerships

⁹ TQS was passed in September 2019 through Alberta Education. It has six key competencies which include (1) fostering effective relationships; (2) engaging in career-long learning; (3) demonstrating a professional body of knowledge; (4) establishing inclusive learning environments; (5) applying foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit; (6) adhering to legal frameworks and policies (Burns et al., 2022, p.104).

due to COVID-19 pandemic impacts (Danyluk et al., 2023). Uniformity and standardization through the TQS framework across teacher education programs in ten Alberta universities indicates that it aids in supporting *all*—teacher educators, teacher candidates, and mentor teachers. Meanwhile, in the state of Montana, Stanton et al. (2019) conducted a case study on twenty years of IEFA efforts from preK-20 settings. They analyzed the state of Montana’s four nationally accredited teacher education programs’ course descriptions and accreditation documents to see if programs were meeting the IEFA requirements, which include, “(a) increase cultural sensitivity and reduce bias against Indigenous peoples, and (b) enrich education for all students by expanding relevance and accuracy.” (Stanton et al., 2019, p.87). They found that programs did not directly reference IEFA, but rather included terms such as, social studies, Native American Studies, diversity, and multicultural education (Stanton et al., 2019). In both cases, standardized teacher education programs had drawbacks, while at the same time holding some type of accountability for both instructors and teacher candidates to teach/learn Aboriginal and Indian Education for all.

Teacher Candidates Course Engagement/Experience

Throughout the literature, teacher candidates contributed to the ways in which teacher educators positioned themselves in the mandatory course and engaged in varying pedagogical pathways. This next section sheds light on teacher candidates’ course engagement and experiences from their firsthand accounts. Studies suggest that teacher candidates continue to position themselves as “settler moves to innocence,” maintain a broaden/broader understanding of Indigenous perspectives, and hold contentious commitments with the mandatory course.

Teacher Candidates’ “settler moves to innocence” (Tuck & Yang, 2012) continues to be prevalent in the mandatory course taught by either Indigenous or non-Indigenous teacher

educators. Studies examined teacher candidates' responses to taking the required course on Aboriginal/Indigenous Education reveal themes of resistance to reconciliation and engaging in "settler moves to innocence" (Aitken & Radford, 2018; Hare, 2020; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Tuck and Yang (2012) posit "settler moves to innocence" as the problematic "attempt to reconcile settler guilt and complicity, and rescue settler futurity" (p.1). Hare (2020) argues that the reconciliation agenda placed in teacher education assumes that teacher candidates will understand Indigenous education and history in a vacuum. While it is one step toward reconciliation, it is important to understand how teacher candidates are conceptualizing "reconciliation." If conceptualized differently, reconciliation runs the risk of enabling settler teacher candidates to continue to situate themselves in settler innocence while maintaining power and privilege (Hare, 2020; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Aitken and Radford (2018) examined non-Indigenous teacher candidates' psycho-social dimensions related to completing the mandatory course, which revealed that teacher candidates reference the metaphor "reconciliation as a journey." One non-Indigenous teacher candidate stated that they felt they were not moving "far along" on this journey due to being seen as a "colonizer" that needs to "shut up," and who "will always be ignorant and guilty in the eyes of Indigenous people" (Aitken & Radford, 2018, p.45). As you can see, teacher educators face challenges of teaching candidates, particularly in challenging and questioning settler colonialism while engaging in Indigenous perspectives.

Broaden/Broader Understandings of Indigenous Perspectives has yielded some teacher candidate interest and impressions from one-credit required courses. Teacher candidates (n=12) expressed interest in learning more about Indigenous perspectives but felt the most challenging approach was to teach land-based teachings and TRC (Gorecki & Doyle-Jones, 2021). Gorecki and Doyle-Jones further found that nineteen teacher candidates expressed key understandings,

particularly that Indigenous teachings must be respected and the importance of land, storytelling, culture, and traditions. In one teacher education program, teacher candidates infused Indigenous perspective into literacy instruction (Dharamshi, 2019). Prior to their required literacy course, their pre-journal entries indicated that they believe literacy was only reading and writing, but after completing a literacy course that centered Indigenous perspectives into the content, their post-journal entries revealed that literacy can take multiple forms, such as the use of Indigenous music. In this class, teacher candidates made the shift from “checking off the box approach” to a broaden “holistic integration of Indigeneity” (Dharamshi, 2019, p.41).

Contentious Commitments with Mandated Course. In Pratt and Hanson’s (2022) article, one case example of a teacher candidate’s commitment to the mandated course was considered after receiving a B+ in the course and then crying about it. It was clear that the teacher candidate did not have a genuine commitment to the work of Aboriginal education and instead was committed to receiving a higher grade in the course. Additionally, a case study conducted with three Indigenous teacher candidates in a social studies preparation program described their peers’ interaction with IEFA as something to “check off the box” and pressured them into feeling tokenized since they had to become the “cultural experts” in their program (Stanton & Morrison, 2018, p.741). Similarly, when non-Indigenous teacher candidates engaged in self-reflection assignments, there were mixed reactions from it being beneficial to their learning, to feeling it was challenging or being disinterested, as the assignment felt “unclear” and they did not feel a sense of connection with course readings (Oskineegish, 2018). Still, some teacher candidates felt the reflection papers were beneficial to their learning and shared that they felt connected to the readings personally, and that it pushed them to read critically and deeply engage with the topic (Oskineegish, 2018).

This literature review aimed to address existing research conducted on Indigenous and non-Indigenous teacher educators teaching the mandatory Aboriginal Education in Canada and the state-mandated courses in Washington. The review reveals that the majority of literature derives from reflective and self-studies from Faculties of Education in various provinces across Canada. However, the literature lacked research conducted in teacher education programs in the United States, specifically in the state of Washington. Thus, studies on Indigenous teacher educators' educational journeys informing their pedagogical pathways in U.S. based teacher education programs for the required Indigenous education course remain underexplored.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework - Gathering the Weaving Tools

In the weaving process, a weaver selects the various *aghaa'* (wool) colors to weave into the rug. *Aghaa'* are the natural fibers and soft wool hair from a sheep, which is carded and hand spun to create the yarn. Traditionally and still done today, the *aghaa'* is dyed from local plants and rocks (turned to powder) found in the southwest region. These natural dyes are prepared by boiling the plants or powder rocks with the yarn, over an open fire outside for hours. During this time, the yarn is being stirred in the boiling water until the desired color is produced. Then, it is removed from the pot, rung, rinsed, and hung to dry. Additionally, wool yarn can be purchased at local trading posts and stores.

In research, I compare the theoretical framework as selecting these desired colors, as these colors are compatible with one another and collectively work toward creating a visually stunning design and tapestry. In this way, I carefully and thoughtfully selected theoretical frameworks that could speak to one another and provide the foundational colors for the story rugs. My selected theoretical frameworks do not work in isolation, rather they are meant to be woven together and “fill in the gaps” that might've not been included in one framework.

The theoretical frameworks that guided this study were Indigenous Storywork (ISW) and “Tracking A Story.” These guiding theories and their principles informed the way in which I approached listening to and sharing stories with the nine relatives. During the sharing stories and circles, I engaged in ISW’s seven guiding principles, to feel the power of story. Much of these principles required that I built a relationship with the storytellers, in this case, building an ongoing relationship with the relatives. I analyzed relatives’ stories through an Indigenous lens/principles to account for the unique experiences of Indigenous teacher educators’ educational journeys and their pedagogical pathways for preparing preservice teachers. The

principles worked with “Tracking A Story” to build synergy for understanding how the relatives were envisioning Indigenous education in the state-mandated course. Taken together, I used the guiding principles of ISW and Tracking A Story to gather and hear relatives’ stories.

Indigenous Storywork (ISW)

Stó:lō and St’at’imc First Nation scholar Q’um Q’um Xiiem, or Jo-ann Archibald’s (2008) ISW is a framework that serves as a teaching tool to bring storytelling into educational contexts. Archibald coined the term “storywork” to signify that stories told by the storyteller and heard from the story listeners must be given serious attention. This is a cultural teaching that the elders in her community denote in community gatherings, they start by stating, “My dear ones, our work is about to begin.” (Archibald, 2008, p.4). ISW situates cultural storytelling protocol through seven principles: *respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy*. Archibald (2008) argues,

These principles are a beginning theory of Stó:lō and Coast Salish storywork [...] I do not want to generalize this storywork theory to all Indigenous peoples. However, these principles may act as a catalyst for examining and developing other storywork theories” (p.140).

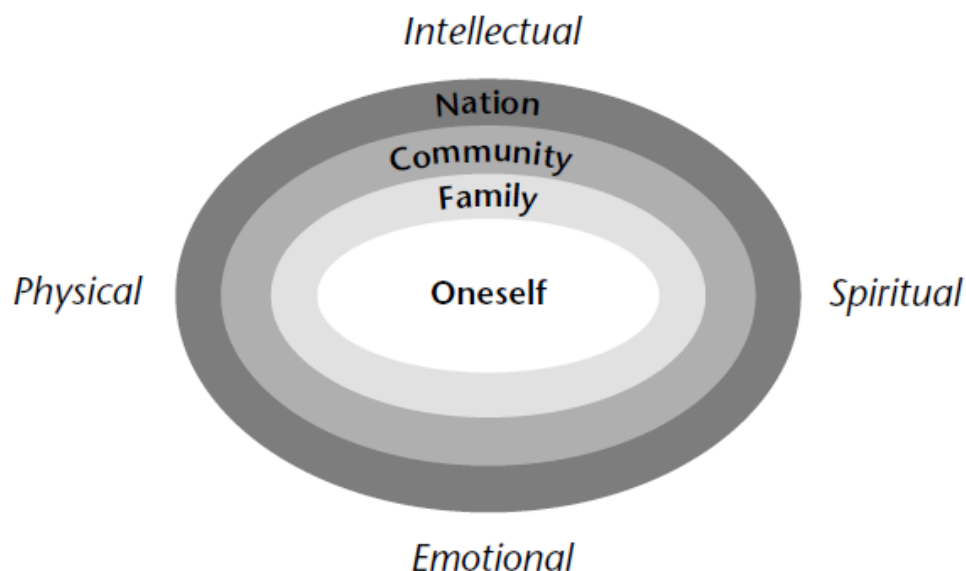
I drew from ISW to reveal the stories (and theories) that the nine Indigenous teacher educators are operating with, to account for their unique Native nations, identities, and ways of knowing.

The ISW principles are also everyday values that Indigenous communities practice to live good, in right relations, and holistically. Archibald (2008) grounds *holism* through a concentric circle framework (*see Figure 1*) for living a holistic life through one’s physical, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional self and self-relation to others. The inner circle is oneself, then works its way to the most outer layer through family, community, and nation. I used these guiding ISW

principles as both a listener and storyteller to feel the power of source from relatives' stories of their educational journeys, pedagogical pathways for preparing preservice teachers, and Indigenous education envisions. Thus, I use ISW as both a theoretical framework and methodology.

Figure 1.

Archibald's (2008) Holism: A context for Indigenous Storywork



Overview: Derived Theory

Archibald builds from Cree scholar Verna Kirkness and Ray Barnhardt's (1991) "Four R's" of *respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility*, which addresses the need for Western-oriented institutional spaces to foster a two-way exchange with First Nation students by attending to the Four Rs. Kirkness and Barnhardt find that Western-oriented institutions favor a modern consciousness, therefore assert *respect* as an implication for incorporating First Nation students' oral literacies of cultural values and traditions as a form of knowledge. Not only are

universities asked to respect First Nations' cultural integrity, but to also implement qualities of *relevance*. Some qualities for universities to implement *relevance* towards First Nation students derive from Chickasaw scholar, Eber Hampton's twelve standards of "Indian theory of education", which Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) listed as such, "spirituality, service, diversity, culture, tradition, respect, history, relentlessness, vitality, conflict, place, and transformation." (p.9). Respect and relevance intersect with these sets of standards for universities to reevaluate their policies and practices when engaging with First Nation students. When it comes to *reciprocity*, the authors argue that universities rely on the expert and passive learner dichotomy, and they call on universities to change this knowledge to a two-way reciprocal relationship. For this to happen, university faculty must learn from Native students and their cultural backgrounds, and students must learn about the university culture, to gain access. When these reciprocal relationships form, faculty and students "are in a position to create a new kind of education, to formulate new paradigms or explanatory frameworks that help us establish a greater equilibrium." (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991, p.11). Lastly, *responsibility* is First Nation students holding power in universities to responsibly participate in everyday decision-making. First Nation students will have to navigate the university setting through "border pedagogy," as both insiders and outsiders of cultural borders, their culture, and the university's culture. The Four Rs offer Native student empowerment, removes student alienation in the university, and benefits both parties.

Storywork Principles

Building from the work of Kirkness and Barnhardt, Archibald's (2008) notion of the ISW principles take many facets and are multidimensional of Indigenous storytelling and story listening as it accounts for the foundational teaching of relation to land, teaching from Elders,

and spiritual beliefs. In the context of research, Archibald (2008) argues for “telling stories as a way of interviewing” (p.42), where her initial research methods were a reflexive interview approach but soon found that it brought ethical concerns. One ethical concern was who “owns” these stories and who has permission to share them. Thus, Archibald developed the ISW principles to honor full control and agency of the storyteller, without decontextualizing their stories and their meaning. Therefore, the Four Rs help in preparing to hear a story and then sharing a story. *Respect* is being open to the storyteller and stories through what is heard and felt from the heart. This is to ensure that the story listeners are hearing and honoring the storytellers’ stories, and that these stories are shaped by the stories’ protocols. Next, *responsibility* calls on the listener to take the initiative to build meaningful relationships with the storytellers and their communities. It furthers the respect of their story protocols, cultural teachings, and histories of colonialism. An example of cultural teaching and histories of colonialism is understanding that Coast Salish communities were banned from gathering in sacred places to tell stories, like the Potlatch ban. Now, the current context is that these stories are being reawakened. Without this knowledge, the listener would not be able to listen with the ear or heart. This relates to *reverence* because it connects to one’s spirituality and kinship systems. These kinship systems derive from a tribal communities’ clans and their relationships with the land and more-than-human relatives. The last of the Four Rs is *reciprocity*, which is being trustworthy to receive the stories and then calls on the listener to reshare this story with respect, responsibility, and reverence. The Four Rs are interdependent and dependent on an Indigenous communities’ story protocols to include the next three ISW principles: *interrelatedness, synergy, and holism*.

Story Protocols

As stated by Archibald (2008), “Each Aboriginal nation has particular traditions, protocols, and rules concerning stories and the way that stories are to be told for teaching and learning purposes.” (p.83). This also applies to tribes and nations in the lower forty-eight states. These story variances take shape through creation stories, cultural stories, sacred stories, personal life stories, and more. Depending on the type of story told, there are distinct cultural protocols for both the storyteller and the listener. Additional storytelling protocols include telling stories during a specific time of the year and telling stories among a certain group of people (Archibald, 2008). Thus, the storywork principles of *interrelatedness* and *synergy* are applied throughout the storytelling protocols. It is said that a storyteller and their stories bring with them energy, as life is breathed into these intergenerational stories. The energy felt from these stories provide a “source of power that feeds and revitalizes mind, heart, body, and spirit in a holistic manner” (Archibald, 2008, p.85). The energy power creates an inter-relational synergy among the storyteller and story listeners because the stories’ power has the capacity to evoke *holism* through emotion, healing, and aspects of spirituality. A Western Apache metaphor for this is when the story reaches you by an arrow. When an arrow pierces through your heart, softly, it does not reach you, it penetrates with full force, thus the story starts to work everywhere—heart, body, mind, and soul.

Tracking A Story

Tewa scholar Gregory Cajete (1994) proposed the metaphor, “Tracking A Story,” to serve as an educational process model for envisioning Indigenous education through an Indigenous Pathway. Metaphorically speaking, stories leave a track; as stated by Cajete (1994), “Everything leaves a track, and in the track is the story: the state of being of each thing in its interaction with everything else” (Cajete, 1994, pp.55-56). I used “Tracking A Story” to better understand

relatives' identities, educational journeys, and pedagogical pathways for preparing teacher candidates to implement state-mandated Native education curricula. In the process of listening and sharing stories, I listened to relatives' stories with my ears and heart (Archibald, 2008), while engaging in intuitive logic (Wilson, 2008) to metaphorically track their stories through the different clues found within them. These tracks will eventually lead to an Indigenous Pathway for Indigenous education.

Origins of Tracking A Story

Cajete (1994) discusses Indigenous education as having four expressions of the spiritual dimensions that includes concepts of “pathway”, “seeking life/becoming complete”, “highest thought”, and “orientation” (p.44). With each concept, he draws from various tribes to define these terms. Cajete defines pathway in two parts, “Path denotes a structure; Way implies a process” (Cajete, 1994, p.54). Thus, it has a combined structure and process of journeying across time and landscapes to activate learning with/from spirits. Indigenous scholars like Archibald have taken up the Diné definition of pathway to illustrate stories as living a good and right way. Adding to this definition, I understand pathway in Diné *Bizaad* (Navajo language) as *ch'ihónít'i* or *'atiin*, meaning, a “way out” or “a road.” *Ch'ihónít'i* is associated with the “way out” when weaving baskets or rugs, and *'atiin* could be interpreted as a road. I metaphorically think about a pathway in relation to the weaver's path. A weaver's path symbolizes a pathway out for exiting the rug through the use of an unmatched color wool yarn. The “way out” is to ensure that a weaver's mind and thoughts are not trapped within the rug. This illustrates Cajete's (1994) argument that through an Indigenous lens, nature and spirit are synonymous and not separated. Further, Cajete (1994) discusses the appropriateness of using a pathway as metaphor, “Pathway

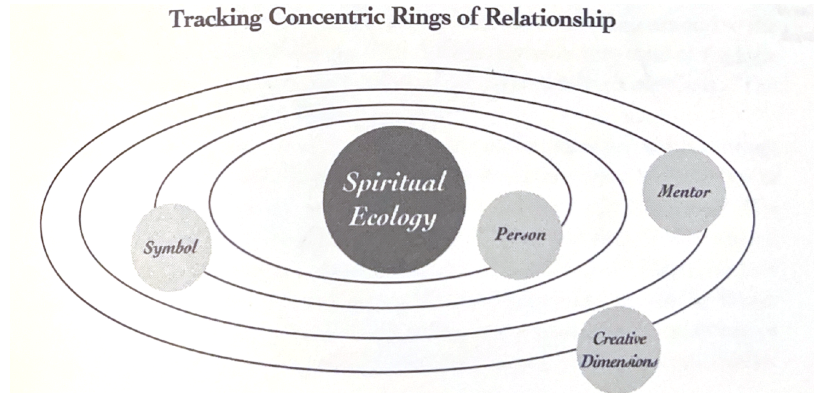
is an appropriate metaphor since, in every learning process, we metaphorically travel an internal, and many times external landscape.” (p.54).

Indigenous tracking through “Tracking A Story”

Cajete (1994) argues that Indigenous tracking presents an understanding of direct experiences with nature in relation to spiritual teachings. I connect this Indigenous tracking to the power of stories, as articulated in Archibald’s understanding of energies embedded in stories. Therefore, metaphorically tracking a story involves, “seeking wisdom, vision, and coming to the source of spirit” (Cajete, 1994, p.56). When engaging with the relatives’ stories, I must account for the spiritual aspects in their educational journeys and pedagogical pathways. An example of a spiritual journey found within the Coast Salish communities is through a movement called Tribal Canoe Journey, started by Elders, including Emmet Oliver, Connie McCloud, Philip H. Red Eagle, and Tom Heidlebaugh. The annual Tribal Canoe Journey is a spiritual and healing journey for the Northwest Coastal and Coast Salish peoples, who travel by canoe on the Salish Sea to come together to share food, dance, songs, stories. Many of the relatives in the study identify as Coast Salish or have participated in Canoe Journeys starting from the late 1980s to today. Additionally, “Tracking A Story” is like Archibald’s *reverence* principle and *holism* framework, which draws on concentric circles of one’s relationship to others, but Cajete involves the relationship of nature and more-than-relatives as well. Thus, “Tracking A Story” accounts for the ways in which relatives in the study connected with spiritual dimensions and more-than-human relatives in their educational journeys and pedagogical pathways.

Figure 2.

Tracking Concentric Rings of Relationship by Dr. Gregory Cajete



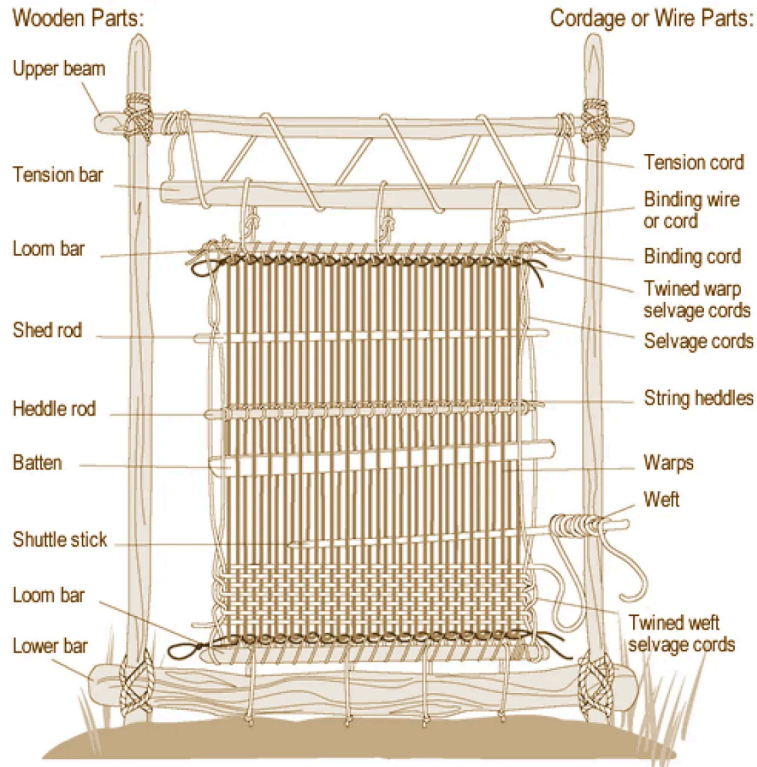
Cajete engages in concentric rings through the example of relationship, which he calls “Tracking Concentric Rings of Relationship” (see *Figure 2*). The diagram illustrates the systems (e.g., symbol, person, mentor) and shows that the heart of these systems is spiritual ecology specific to a Tribal community. Within these systems, there are moments of overlap and intersections. I draw from Cajete’s concentric rings diagram to identify overlapping spiral systems. Cajete (1994) explains it as such, “The symbol of concentric rings images the fact that everything is unique and leaves its own signature track. Yet it also shows that all things share likenesses that are to be found in the overlap of rings” (p.122). It keeps the story rugs intact and maintains each relatives’ story, while working toward identifying those relational overlaps. I return to this diagram in Part II, the understandings section.

Methodologies - Gathering the Weaving Tools

The gathering of weaving tools is the final step before weaving commences (see *Figure 3* for specific weaving tool names). The tools that work in unison to weave a rug include: *bee ník'í'níltlish* (batten), *aki dasitani* (shed rod), *bee ní'dilts'oi* (heddle rod), and *bee adzooí* (weaving comb). In addition, the tools each carry a cultural name and meaning. For instance, the varying sizes of weaving batten names are *nááts'íilid* (rainbow), *shá bitl'óól* (sunbeams), and *shándlín* (sunrays). In Diné teachings, the batten represents the rainbow, the sunbeams, and the sunrays. The batten is the last tool that makes up the last piece of the puzzle, so to speak. The entire loom and the weaving tools represent a rainy landscape: the sky, the clouds, the rain, and the land. The vertical warps represent the rain, so when the weaving batten is inserted into the warps, it resembles the rainbow, sunbeams, or sunrays. The tension cords near the top of the loom are securely fastened in the form of a zigzag, this represents the lightning. Therefore, a weaver follows the weaving protocol of allowing the loom to rest and remain untouched when a rainstorm occurs, this is to show reverence for the rain and sky beings who offered themselves to be our weaving tools to this day. I learned these teachings from *shináli*.

Figure 3.

The Pueblo-Navajo upright loom. Illustration by Kathleen Koopman. (From "Blanket Weaving in the Southwest" by Joe Ben Wheat, edited by Ann Lane Hedlund, 2003, The University of Arizona Press.)



Today, I continue to carry my weaving tools with me. These were gifts that were passed down to me from *shináli* (paternal grandmother). At one point, the weaving tools belonged to my *chóó* (great-grandmother, Mary DuBoise) as her initials, “M.D.” are carved on the edge of the wooden batten. The story of when I received these precious gifts was shortly after I completed my first rug. It was an early summer morning when *shináli* helped me untie the knots from the loom to remove my rug. Just then, a small spider started to web its way down from the left-side of the loom. I pointed it out and *shináli* took notice of it too. She quickly grabbed a portion of the web with the spider still holding on, then she placed the spider on a nearby tree and kept the remaining webs. Then she grabbed both my hands and began to rub the webbing onto my hands. It was her way of connecting me to the spiritual gifts of weaving from our original weaving teacher, *Na'ashjé'íi Asdzáá* (Spider Woman), and by way of transferring her textile weaving to me. At that moment, I felt a sense of approval and validation from *Na'ashjé'íi Asdzáá* and

shináli. After this, we continued to untie the knots and put aside the weaving tools. I held my rug for a brief moment and admired its entirety—three WHOLE months of work held in my hands. I passed it to *shináli* so that she could take a look as well. After examining the rug, she gave her nod of approval and she folded my rug like a towel, gathered the weaving tools together and held it all together firmly in her hands in a tight bundle, then proceeded to massage my body with it. Again, *shináli* was transferring the gift of weaving and ensured that these gifts stayed with me.

The “gathering the weaving tools” in this study is reflected through the methods I used to garner and gather the nine Indigenous teacher educators’ stories through an individual sharing story and sharing circle. The methods employed draw from Indigenous Research Methodologies (IRM), specifically Indigenous Storywork (ISW) principles (Archibald, 2008) and Story Rug (Tachine, 2015). In this chapter, I begin with situating IRM in qualitative inquiry, then outline key principles of ISW and Story Rug, introduce the nine Indigenous teacher educators and the various teacher education programs (TEPs), state my positionality and relational accountability to the nine educators, discuss the gathering of stories/data collection, and conclude with the approaches to analyzing the gathered stories.

Situating Indigenous Research Methodologies in Qualitative Inquiry

Plains Cree/Saulteaux/member of Treaty Four in southern Saskatchewan scholar Margaret Kovach (2009) reminds us that “Indigenous methodologies can be situated within the qualitative landscape” (p.25), as these approaches have specific features and characteristics that are in conversation with one another (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015). Indigenous methodologies coexist with qualitative inquiry, as it values relations and tells stories “through words not numbers” (Kovach, 2021, p.24). Furthermore, these stories are held with respect and carried with responsibility as they are seen as a gift (WindChief & San Pedro, 2019). However, to engage

with IRM, requires an Indigenous paradigm (Kovach et al., 2013). As Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa scholar Duane Champagne states (2015):

The primary focus of Indigenous methodologies and research should center on the issues and concerns of Indigenous nations or Peoples. Indigenous nations, cultures, governments, and issues should be the primary research units and the primary focus of theory, policy, positionality, and analysis. (p.57)

As an Indigenous scholar, I turn to the work of Archibald's (2008) seven Indigenous Storywork (ISW) principles, Wilson's (2008) work on relational accountability, and actively engage in a Diné paradigm, specifically through weaving a story rug as a both a methodology and method that is not separated from qualitative research (Tachine & Nicolazzo, 2022).

Indigenous Storywork (ISW) and Story Rug

Archibald's seven Indigenous Storywork (ISW) principles—respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy—were used to guide the sharing of stories. I drew from the four Rs as a way to engage in both qualitative inquiry and IRM by positioning “stories as a way of interviewing” (Archibald, 2008, p.377). I attended to the principle of holism, as it encompasses four domains across the full body (intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and physical) and groups of kinship relationships (oneself, family, community, and nation). I see holism in parallel to relational accountability (Wilson, 2008), which I discuss in further depth in the *Relational Placing* section. And, as stated earlier, as a step toward placing my relation with others, I chose to move away from the term, “participants” and instead, refer to the nine Indigenous teacher educators as my “relatives.” This is to signal that I have an ongoing relationship with these people and hold myself to be accountable to them in the study.

Archibald (2008) cautions the use of Storywork, as it is specific to the Stó:lo and Coast Salish peoples. Rather, she hopes that the Storywork principles lead to one's Indigenous ways of engaging in story and storytelling while being "meaningfully engaged in educational context" (p.140). This is echoed by Tachine (2018), who states "research needs to be done carefully with people who incorporate theories and methods that align with Native values and epistemologies" (p.74). Therefore, I bring in the Diné story rug fused with principles of ISW, because story rug is an Indigenous research framework that is active, tells a story through holism, and metaphorically parallels the research process (Tachine, 2018). I take a weaver's stance to engage with metaphors, as a way to "evoke imagination and ancient wisdom" (Tachine, 2018, p.66) when listening to relatives' stories.

Relatives and Places (Participants and Setting)

A total of nine Indigenous teacher educators, or relatives, participated in this study. Relatives were chosen based on relational sampling (Hopkins, 2012), as I had established a relationship with them prior to the study. Additionally, relatives were selected on whether they had previously planned and taught the state-mandated John McCoy (*lulilaš*) "Since Time Immemorial" (JLM STI) university course on preparing teacher candidates to teach tribal history, culture, and government in WA State. The next section provides a description of the different universities and programs they taught at and the Native Nation(s) they come from.

Of the nine Indigenous teacher educators, each taught at one of the three universities in different teacher education programs (TEP) associated with a different course credit offering (*see Table 1*). The TEP includes a master's and bachelor's degree program. The following are master's degree level teacher education programs at one university with specific concentrations: TEP A is an elementary teacher education program; TEP B is a secondary education program,

TEP C is a K-12 district-based teacher education program; and TEP D is an accelerated teacher education program. At the time of the study, all four TEPs offered two-credit hours in a course titled, “Understanding Indigenous Perspectives: Implications of Teaching and Learning.” Meanwhile, the other universities offer bachelor's degree-level and teacher certification programs with programs that include TEP E, an early childhood education program; TEP F a music program; TEP G a special education program; TEP H a multicultural education program. Both of these universities offer a one-credit hour but have different names for it: “Pacific Northwest History” and “Understanding WA State Tribal Sovereignty, History, and Culture: Since Time Immemorial Curriculum.” In total, there were eight different TEP represented in this study, which illustrates the different programs specific to preK-12 teacher candidates in WA State.

Table 1.

Three Types of state-mandated JMI STI University Courses

University	Course Name	Course Credit
TEP A/B/C/D	<i>Understanding Indigenous Perspectives: Implications of Teaching and Learning</i>	2
TEP E/F	<i>Pacific Northwest History</i>	1
TEP E/G/H	<i>Understanding WA State Tribal Sovereignty, History, and Culture: Since Time Immemorial Curriculum</i>	1

Prior to the study, I built a direct relationship with seven of the nine relatives. I came to know them over the course of my doctoral program. Many of my interactions with these relatives

were from Native-led campus and community events, such as the annual Canoe Journey and in online spaces like the “Share Our Voices, Hear Our Stories” gathering of Native educators and students. I continued to stay connected with them and eventually reached out via email and text message, asking if they would be interested in partaking in my dissertation study. In the email, I included the purpose of the study and the consent form. Initially, I had reached out to nine Indigenous teacher educators that I directly knew and interacted with before in the summer of 2024. Seven out of the nine relatives responded and consented to participating in the study. Then in early 2025, one relative reached out to be part of the study and invited her co-instructor to also participate in the study. I am currently staying in contact with them and working toward building a relationship. In the next section, I will outline the relatives’ demographics based on pseudonym names chosen in relation to their Native Nation(s)/Indigenous roots, and the TEP that they previously and/or currently were teaching, at the time of the study (see *Table 2.*).

The pseudonym names were selected by plant association and tribal connection to it. I will briefly share how I arrived at these pseudonym names. Reed is Yankton Sioux/Dakotas/Lakotas and if you know in Indian Country, Dakotas/Lakotas are known for their towering height. The plant reed is also a tall grass that grows at the edge of the water. Moreover, Reed’s traditional homelands of the Lakotas/Dakotas are commonly surrounded with wavering grass prairies. In the words of Marigold, a fellow peer, the Yankton Sioux are the little house on the prairies edge because they traditionally lived near the edges of the camp-circles. Marigold has a way of bringing everyone together, even if it is sharing a meal at her home. She reminded me of the plant marigolds because they are often planted around the three sisters: corn, beans, and squash. I feel that she personifies the marigold flowers with her power to bring everyone together and feed us. Like marigolds, they are the protectors of the garden by keeping pests

away. As for Bitterroot, I had asked him to share a plant that he felt most connected to or resembled, and he picked the bitterroot flowering plant. I feel that the bitterroot plant personifies him well, as it has healing properties but holds a bitter taste. I am reminded of his going against the grain persona. As for Sage, I had a classmate tell me that Sage gifted the entire class a bundle of sage. When I see a bundle of sage, I think about the physical gifts and the gift of knowledge that Sage continues to model and teach in her classes. Cedar's name will be evident in the findings section, but to keep it brief, Cedar embodies all aspects of the tree, from the cedar paddle to the cedar canoe. Similarly to Sage, Rose gifted her research participants a package of rose hips blend tea bags. I also associated the importance of gifting through Rose too. For Camas, I connected her with the story of camas that will be further shared in the findings section. Unfortunately, I missed the opportunity to eat baked camas when I visited her at her Tribe's summer cultural camp. I abruptly had to leave before it was finished baking, due to a strained ankle. I associated the willow tree with Willow because I feel she embodies its flexibility. The willow tree also holds immense strength, as it sways its branches back and forth without snapping in two. Lastly, I connected the alder tree to Alder because she presents a feeling of peace and strength. Also, I thought the spelling of alder closely matched with elder, and Alder is a Lummi elder. These pseudonym names will be used in the chapters to follow.

While I used pseudonym names for this study, I still name their respective Indigenous identities by asking them to identify the Tribal communities that they come from. This is to uphold their Tribal communities, Indigenous identities, and distinct Indigenous knowledge systems, as opposed to generalizing their identities to the umbrella term, Indigenous. In the table, I begin with myself. I come from two distinct tribes, the Navajo Nation and the White Mountain Apache Tribe. I was the course instructor for the elementary teacher education program in the

summer of 2022, 2023, and 2024. In addition, I was a reader/grader for Sage's TEP B/C/D courses for winter and spring quarter of 2021 and 2022. The first relative is Sage, the person who brought me into this work. Sage is a descendant of the Steilacoom and Cowlitz Tribes. She was one of the core members to start the first state-mandated course in 2018, where she taught three teacher education programs, including TEP B, C, and D. At the time of this study, she continues to teach the secondary teacher candidates each summer quarter. The second relative is Rose, a descendant of the Confederated Tribes of the Yakama Nation and the Muckleshoot Tribe. Also, at the time of this study, she entered her third year teaching the TEP C and her second year teaching TEP D. Bitterroot identifies as Chicano and Mexicano Indigenous, and he previously taught one quarter in the TEP D. In addition, Bitterroot co-taught with Camas for TEP E/F. Camas is enrolled in the Spokane Indian Tribe and is a descendant of the Colville and Coeur d'Alene Tribes. She taught at two universities in the TEP E/F. Willow is from the Blackfoot Nation and was the previous course instructor before I started teaching the elementary education cohort. More importantly, she pushed for and taught the first "Understanding Washington State Tribal Sovereignty, History, and Culture: Since Time Immemorial Curriculum" course in 2017, right before the legislation passed from "encourage" to "require" teacher candidates to complete the state-mandated course. Since then, she continues to teach the state-mandated course across the undergraduate TEP E/F/G. In the past two years, Willow has co-taught the course with Alder, a Lummi Nation citizen. Willow and Alder aligned their course schedules to co-teach the three courses/programs online. The seventh relative, Cedar, is a citizen of the Suquamish Nation and also taught TEP E online, through the same university as Willow and Alder. Reed is Ihanktonwan Nakota (Yankton Sioux) and helped with co-planning the mandatory course with one non-Indigenous and one Indigenous course instructor, alongside being their guest speakers at

TEP E/F. Marigold is a citizen of the Spokane Indian Tribe and is a descendant of the Pauquachin First Nation. She was the course instructor for TEP E/F and is entering her second year teaching it. In all, these nine relatives come from many distinct Native Nations and Indigenous roots, while accounting for their specific TEP from early childhood to secondary education teacher candidates.

Table 2.

Relatives' Demographics

Name	Native Nation(s) & Indigenous Roots	University TEP
Shayla	Navajo Nation and White Mountain Apache	TEP A
Sage	Steilacoom and Cowlitz	TEP B/C/D
Rose	Yakama and Muckleshoot	TEP C/D
Bitterroot	Chicano and Mexicano Indigenous	TEP D/E/F
Camas	Spokane, Colville, and Coeur d'Alene	TEP E/F
Willow	Blackfeet Nation	TEP A/E/F/G
Alder	Lummi Nation	TEP E/F/G
Cedar	Suquamish	TEP E
Reed	Yankton Sioux	TEP E/F
Marigold	Spokane and Pauquachin	TEP E/F

Figure 4.

Artwork titled, A Prayer Making Its Way by Eliza Naranjo Morse



Relational Placing (Positionality and Relational Accountability)

As an Indigenous person and scholar working/living away from my traditional homelands, I constantly think about how I am working to be in good relation with Coast Salish land, water, peoples, and more-than-human relatives. I often think about this as “coming into the circle,”¹⁰ or how “the circle” is ready to welcome me. I believe this comes from a place of being culturally grounded and rooted in my Diné teachings, where it’s customary to introduce oneself through clan relations, or centering oneself-in-relation to others. Kovach et al. (2013) also names this as “self-location” or “relational placing” by way of an oral address that shows “respect for place and allows for community to locate us,” (p.491) and is imperative to IRM. My relational placing with the relatives in the study has been “establishing and maintaining good relationships with the places and people” (Washington, 2025, p.6) both inside and outside of the academy.

With that said, I think about the many other Indigenous teacher educators who just now come

¹⁰ I view “coming into the circle” as coming to be in a community that is not originally my own community. This originates from the short-film “Into the Circle” that features a Lakota high school senior at Native American Community Academy and his family who navigate living away from their traditional homelands, and came to find community at NACA (Universe Creative, 2023). I parallel this to living away from my homelands, and “coming into the circle” by finding community on Coast Salish lands and waters.

into the circle to teach the mandatory course, or those who walk behind me. I reflect back on how I was in this position of walking toward the circle, following in the footprints of relatives, Sage and Willow, who started teaching years before me. At the same time that I started teaching, I was also walking this path with relatives, Rose and Bitterroot. There will also be teacher educators who will come into the circle in the near future. This metaphoric circle has pushed me to think about not only my journey to arrive at Indigenous education, but also how other Indigenous peoples and scholars are walking toward the circle.

Shortly after I started weaving the stories I heard from the relatives in this study, I was introduced to the work of Santa Clara Pueblo artist, Eliza Naranjo Morse. She was a visiting scholar along with Dr. Tessie Naranjo, who came to share their work. They talked with us graduate students, shared stories, and presented their beautiful community work. During their presentation, Eliza showed some of her past and recent mixed-media art. I was drawn to two particular art pieces, one of a mural and the other a book cover. The mural painting showed a badger walking with their packed belongings. Behind the badger was a cumulonimbus cloud with rain descending from it (see *Figure 4.*). The book cover Eliza showed us was of different animals with their pack belongings all walking toward the center of the universe (see *Figure 5.*). She explained the cultural and spiritual significance of the design, which was along the lines of, you are never alone in this journey and our ancestors are always with us. At that moment, I was reminded that Indigenous peoples carry with them unique identities, teachings, languages, and knowledge systems. As a collective, we walk together, toward Indigenous futurities. In this case, the nine Indigenous teacher educators and I are walking toward Indigenous education across time and spaces. In Eliza's book cover illustration, I imagine myself as one of the animals (a sheep or an insect), making my journey and carrying with me on the shoulders of my back—my cultural

teachings, my educational experiences, and placing myself in relation to others, or “coming into the circle.”

Figure 5.

Artwork titled, Light from Love, Book Cover Illustration by Eliza Naranjo Morse



Eliza’s book cover also is reminiscent of how I visualize relational accountability. Wilson (2008) defines relational accountability in research as, “the methodology needs to be based in a community context (be relational) and has to demonstrate respect, reciprocity and responsibility (be accountable as it is put into action).” (p.99). The animals in the image are the community and each one is demonstrating accountability by being respectful, reciprocal, and responsible. Thus, it was intentional that I use relational sampling for this study, as I am being relational and accountable to the nine relatives. However, relational selection from a hegemonic paradigm would be considered nepotism, but through an Indigenous paradigm, it’s the relational bonds that brings people “into the circle” (Wilson, 2008, p. 81). The ways that I employed relational accountability were through building and maintaining respectful relationships with the relatives,

starting with introducing myself and locating my relations. By way of relational placing, relatives began to ask if I knew so and so, and some even knew where I came from as they had previously taken a trip near my traditional homelands. Before gathering relatives' stories, I told them what I would give before receiving their stories, by way of reciprocity. For the relatives' time, I offered them a \$50 visa gift card and for their shared stories and knowledge, I would gift them back their story by weaving their re-storied story into a textile rug. As I am reminded by bell hooks, re-quoted by San Pedro (2021), "I want to know your story [take your story, only to retell it] back to you in a new way" (p.17). Tachine and Nicolazzo (2022) also describe gifting in relation to being answerable as, "Gifting in the academy speaks to how we maintain answerability to our community while operating in the liminal spaces of the academy." (p.95). Turning back to the metaphor of "coming into the circle," it illustrates a shared responsibility and answerability to the future of Indigenous education. I view my role and responsibility to these nine relatives as upholding Tribal sovereignty by teaching the state-mandated course. Not only is it an obligation to the people and communities I come to work with and alongside, but it is also a treaty obligation to the local tribal communities. Therefore, through my relational placing alongside the nine relatives, I am maintaining my relations to them and being accountable to the shared stories they have so generously offered to share with/in community.

Gathering of Stories (Data Collection)

The relatives in this study live across many traditional homelands, including the ceded lands of the Coast Salish peoples, the Squaxin Island, the Lummi Nation, and the unceded territories of the Spokane Indian Tribe—often referred to as the state of Washington, in the Puget Sound region, in the Olympic Peninsula, the Northwest, and Eastern WA. To account for the dispersed places, I offered relatives the choice to meet at their homes, worksites, or on Zoom for

the individual sharing story—or what qualitative inquiry refers to as, interviews. I chose to use the term “sharing story” to indicate that I was wanting to hear stories on our shared experiences teaching the state-mandated course. In accordance with storytelling, I wanted relatives to choose the place they felt most compelled to tell and share stories.

In the summer of 2024 through the winter of 2025, I gathered individual and collective stories from/with relatives. The individual sharing story sessions occurred either in-person or on Zoom and ranged from forty minutes to two hours. The first sharing circle took place on Zoom for a duration of one hour and thirty minutes. The second sharing circle also took place on Zoom for one hour. Four relatives invited me to their homes to share stories. One of the sharing story sessions at a relative’s home ran past their child’s bed time, so we resumed their sharing circle at their workplace the next day. In addition, one relative chose to share their story in a longhouse on campus, and four relatives chose to share stories on Zoom, in their homes. The four relatives who opted for Zoom were concerned with me travelling too far and encouraged me to Zoom from home too. Meanwhile, the sharing circle was held on Zoom to accommodate everyone’s place of residence, as some folks were as far away four hours of driving distance from each other. Upon completing seven sharing stories and one sharing circle, I was contacted by another relative, who asked to be part of the study. Before agreeing, I met with the relative and, without hesitation, agreed to have her join the study. In addition, she introduced me to her co-instructor and she also consented to be part of the study. I conducted a second sharing circle that included Willow and Alder, and I invited relatives from the first sharing circle to also share stories with them, though none were able to make it. All sharing stories and sharing circles were audio recorded, and transcribed by the transcription service, Otter.AI, and there was another round of proofreading and editing the transcription. Additionally, I followed up with the relatives on

Indigenous languages that were spoken and asked for the literal translation, meaning, and Indigenous language spelling.

Sharing Story

Sharing story with each relative was guided by a sharing story protocol document (see *Appendix A*). The protocol document consists of an open-structured and guided set of questions that stem from the main research questions. The guiding questions were broken down by subtopics, such as relationality and positionality, planning and preparing for their course, and re-storying Indigenous education in TEP. These subtopic questions were informed by the literature review as well as from my personal experience teaching the state-mandated course with the elementary teacher candidates. Additionally, the guiding questions were formulated with the ISW principles in mind, specifically holism and interrelatedness (Archibald, 2008) to account for the multiple experiences relatives brought with them, and the course feedback they received from their teacher candidates, which played a role in their teaching.

Prior to meeting with relatives, I sent the sharing story protocol document to their email addresses. In that same email, I asked them to bring an object that best represented their identities and offered them an opportunity to bring in their traditional and/or cultural protocols for storytelling. I wanted to ensure that I followed their Indigenous communities' protocols for storytelling as well to show my respect for the transmission of oral storytelling. Three of the relatives had specific requests, including sharing a meal first, and smoking mountain tobacco as an indication to start in a good way and mind. Further in the sharing of stories, there were cultural protocols of what to share and what not to share, based on gender and knowledge carriers. I was mindful of these traditional protocols, and, in response, I shared that we held

similar protocols around seasonal storytelling of what not to share in respect to the animals that go in a state of dormancy during the winter time.

At the start of each relative's storytelling, I ask for their consent to be part of this study and to audio record their stories. I reminded relatives that I would be using the sharing story protocol and that they were not restricted to following the sequential order of each question. As with each relative, I began by introducing myself, shared the story of how I came to be an instructor for the state-mandated course, and shared an object that best reflected my identities. Similar to the nine relatives, I could not decide on which object to share, so each time I talked with a different relative, I shared a different object. Through this elicitation, it normally provided a space for them to continue to share stories. In the *Understandings/Findings* and *Discussion* section, relatives' stories of the objects they each brought are illustrated.

During the sharing of stories, I engaged in the ISW principles of respect and reciprocity (Archibald, 2008) by starting with storytelling first and listening to their stories through the "hearing [of] their stories" (Brayboy, 2005) respectfully. This act of hearing stories established a felt understanding that allowed me to connect with their lived experiences. As Brayboy (2005) states, "You tell them, hear them, and feel them—establishing a strong place for empathy and for "getting it."" (p. 440). As mentioned, I built and continue to maintain an ongoing relationship with the relatives. As they were sharing their stories, they were referencing places and experiences that I also witnessed, and so I was able to understand the stories they were telling to an extent. I sat with their stories and found myself refraining from writing down quotes that "stuck out" to me. Rather, I started to visualize these stories into patterns that came together and eventually became the rug designs seen in their gifted rugs. This process reminded me of past

times that I wove rugs. I refrained from drawing out the pattern designs because, at least for me, the rug design never went according to plan.

Sharing Circle

The second part of gathering relatives' stories was through a sharing circle held on Zoom. Kovach (2009) describes sharing circles as centering tribal cultural protocols through an open-structured, conversational, and respectful sharing of stories. Further, the practice of sharing circles among Indigenous communities has been exercised for years, though rarely reflected in scholarly work (Tachine et al., 2016). Taking this into account, I wanted to hold a sharing circle on Zoom, especially to provide accessibility for relatives to come together. The aftermath of COVID-19 continues to be a state of precarity and perplexity, specifically among Native peoples' whose well-being are at greater health risk, so Zoom offered accessibility through mobilizing technological support for gathering relatives from various parts of WA State together in an online space (Daurio & Turrin, 2022). In fact, relatives used Zoom to teach their mandatory course(s) during the pandemic, and some of them continue to use online learning through web applications like Zoom. Similarly to the sharing story session, I created a sharing circle protocol document and shared it with the relatives beforehand. Six of the initial seven relatives participated in the first sharing circle.

During the sharing circle, I started with introductions and had relatives respond to a check-in question. Then, I opened the sharing circle by sharing the story of Eliza's mural and book cover, using the metaphor of walking on pathways to arrive at the center of Indigenous education. Afterward, I re-storied the relative's stories by sharing the process of how I wove their individual rugs and how their stories are reflective of the rug designs and patterns. The first rug I showed was Reed's rug, which I titled, "Indigenous Education as a Third Space - Teepee and

Pipe Teachings.” Reed’s rug and story were centered on how his rug was the first to be woven and that I encountered mishaps of constructing a small-scale loom and using scalable “weaving tools,” such as a yellow pencil, which acted as weaving rods. The next rug I shared was Marigold’s rug, titled “Understanding and Learning Indigenous Perspectives - Crossing and Calling Between Mountains.” I reflected on how Marigold’s rug had new rods, as I purchased scaled-down weaving tools from a craft store. The next rug I shared was Bitterroot’s rug, which I named, “Mobilizing Ancestral Teachings and Connections.” With Bitterroot’s rug, I captured the essence of his identities but also was transparent about falling short on weaving a desirable rug. My transparency was on the fact that I wove Bitterroot’s rug during the night of the U.S. presidential election; I resisted putting down the loom because weaving was easing my mind. However, the rug was not necessarily woven with good thoughts, as the rug warped itself into a soda bottle shape. The next rug I re-storied was Sage, which I called “Building Community - Restoring/Rebalancing Lands and Peoples.” I remembered when Sage was sharing her story, we were sitting outside surrounded by giant trees. The color green kept popping up as a rug design color. However, when it came to weaving Sage’s rug, I did not have any green wool yarn, so I ended up using a different color. I shared with the group that I invested in new wool colors that I wouldn’t regularly use, such as shades of green, purple, and blue, which are symbolically colors of the Pacific Northwest. The next rug I shared was Cedar’s rug, which came to be called “Healing of the Canoe Teachings - Canoe Journey.” Cedar was not able to make it to the sharing circle, but it was surprising to learn that the relatives knew who this rug was for and why. It is indicative of who Cedar is and what he values in his tribal community. Next, I shared Camas’s rug and named it “Intergenerational Knowledge - Grandma Teachings.” I had shared during the rug-weaving process that I used two new weaving techniques, one similar to Coast Salish blanket

weaving and the other more so for aesthetics, using unwoven, single brown wool yarn as camas roots that hung freely from the rug. The last rug I shared was Rose's. Her rug was named "Weaving Our Relations- Coast Salish and Columbia Plateau River Peoples." I shared that by the time I arrived at Rose's rug, I had created a system for setting up and warping the loom. The discussion on the re-storied rugs lasted for about fifteen minutes and then I shifted them into reflecting on what they saw and heard from the different stories illustrated from the rugs. The story rug elicited a generative discussion, as relatives each had a chance to respond orally and in written form via the Zoom chat feature. By the end of the sharing circle, we concluded with responding to one of the guiding questions and also spoke about staying connected.

Weaving Storied Meaning

As mentioned earlier, to analyze the relatives' stories, I drew from the IRMs, Story Rug and Kovach's thematic analysis strategy for Indigenous Methodologies (IM). I used Story Rug and thematic analysis strategy to holistically "hear" (Brayboy, 2005) the stories, as told as is, without decontextualizing them (Kovach, 2021). As described earlier, I refrained from taking notes to listen to the stories being told and instead started to visualize them through a story rug, or to see the stories as a whole. I returned to Wilson (2008) who claims, "the whole thing is an analysis and thus cannot be easily taken apart" (p.99). By re-storying relatives' stories through a story rug, I actively sought to keep the stories intact with the rug's textile patterns. As Wilson (2008) states, "To break any piece of the topic away from the rest will destroy the relationships that the piece holds with the rest of the topic." (p.120). Rather than creating themes, I used intuitive logic to examine the "entire system" through the use of symbols. These symbols also took on metaphors as meaning-making (Wilson, 2008). The story rugs provided a concrete material to analyze the symbols found within them, Wilson (2008) argues that concrete examples

“allows the audience an easier way to form a relationship with something that may be abstract” (p.124). The textile patterns from each relative’s story rug were captured through metaphors. As Tachine (2018) states, “metaphors provided a space to visualize and connect difficult thought processes and assert the Navajo way of life.” (p.66). These story rugs were an integral part of the weaving storied meaning, as it sought to re-story the stories in a holistic way. As for the transcribed analysis, I used thematic analysis strategy for IM to try to ensure that relatives’ stories were not completely decontextualized.

Thematic Analysis Strategy for IM

The thematic analysis strategy for IM has six data analysis processes for analyzing stories. The six processes are as follow (Kovach, 2021, pp. 208-209):

1. *A Prior Framing: Integrating Indigenous Theory Framework in the Analysis*
2. *1st Level Analysis: What are the stories and experiences telling us?*
3. *Relational Analysis: What are the relationships between the experiences arising from the stories?*
4. *Intentional Interpretation: Pause. Is the analysis situated in Indigenous theory?*
5. *Arriving at themes*
6. *Remembering to value “Coyote Codes” (those codes that are outliers)*

Employing Thematic Analysis Strategy for IM

A Prior Framing calls for an Indigenous theoretical perspective to serve as a grounding for data analysis (Kovach, 2021), in this case, the weaving storied meaning. For this study, I drew from ISW principles and Tracking A Story through concentric rings. With these principles and overlapping rings in mind, I brought into focus an Indigenous theoretical perspective and

lens for the weaving storied meaning. In addition, I paired this with the story rugs to draw from my Diné paradigm.

For the *1st Level Analysis*, Kovach (2021) calls on researchers to use an Indigenous perspective for open coding. Rather than using open coding, I used Wilson's (2008) intuitive logic to develop symbols and patterns in the story rug to capture relatives' stories. In level one analysis, I read the transcript with an Indigenous theoretical perspective (ISW principles and Tracking A Story concentric rings) and used intuitive logic (Wilson, 2008) to identify emerging symbols while still maintaining these stories into contextualized vignettes (Kovach, 2021). By using intuitive logic to identify symbols to weave into the story rug, I drew from the research questions, such as personal identities, educational journeys, pedagogical pathways, and views on state-mandated Indigenous education as a site for transformation.

In the *Relational Analysis*, Kovach (2021) calls on researchers to conduct a second data analysis through making meaning from the initial open codes, revisiting the transcripts, examining artifacts, and maintaining an Indigenous theoretical perspective to use axial coding to re-sort and re-categorize new emerging themes. However, I did not forgo axial coding or re-sorting new emerging themes, rather I used the sharing circle to have relatives analyze the story rugs and make meaningful connections. Their analysis and interpretations of the rugs added and contributed to how I was able to "track" their stories by engaging in "Tracking A Story." In this way, I identified overlaps in their stories that revealed four concentric rings, which will be further discussed in Chapter Five. This relational analysis validated and affirmed relatives' stories and served as a form of member checking. Engaging in a story rug, worked to maintain their stories and our relationships. Wilson (2008) reminds us, "These are relationships that we can be held accountable to. Taking this one step further allows research to be collaboratively

analyzed. We are all accountable to and analyze our shared relational reality together” (p.121). The sharing circle allowed for the relational analysis to be alchemized and concur organically.

In the *Intentional Interpretation with Theory (prior)* stage is a moment to pause and step away from the coding process (intuitive logic), which is a great time to return to traditional healing practices (Kovach, 2021). During this state, I returned to carving my canoe paddle, weaving rugs, and went for swims. These traditional healing practices were outlets that grounded and re-centered me. When I worked with cedar wood and wool yarn, I reflected on other parts of myself that I have not fully allowed time to process and think more deeply about. When swimming, I listened to the water and felt its presence, to understand what it tried to teach me because relatives told water stories. In these regards, I was literally working with land (e.g. cedar tree and natural wool dyes from plant medicines) and physically connecting with water. In these spaces, I reflected on relatives’ stories in a non-writing format and recounted the stories that stuck with me the most. Kovach (2021) says this is a moment of pause that allows researchers to think about their emerging themes in non-textual ways, which leads to metaphors or visual outlets. In this study, I physically and metaphorically wove a story rug. This process allowed me to think about relatives’ individual and collective stories in non-textual thought, and opened room to think about metaphors found within their stories.

Arriving at Themes is honing down the four to six themes with the intention of mutually serving the researcher and the communities in the study (Kovach, 2021). Again, engaging in intuitive logic (Wilson, 2008) did not call for identifying themes. Instead, I arrived at weaving symbols that carried symbolic and metaphoric meanings held in relatives’ stories. These symbols aided in revealing overlaps in relatives’ stories, so I used Cajete’s (1994) concentric rings to arrive at the “overlaps.”

Finally, Kovach (2021) introduces “Coyote Codes,” which are the outliers in the findings section. Coyote codes are honored like the other stories that were included and recognized from the “emerging themes” (Kovach, 2021). In the discussion section, I share two “coyote codes” or what I call “excess wool yarn strands.” These outlier findings seek to tell relatives’ full stories by offering additional context that might not directly address the research questions, yet adds to it. The two excess wool yarn strands derive from the context of the research question, that the required course is state-mandated, and “what does it mean for both teacher educators and teacher candidates?” These outlier findings aid in telling relatives’ stories by understanding why certain pedagogical pathways are employed in a mandatory course that prepares teacher candidates to teach from a state-mandated curricula.

Chapter Four: Understandings/Findings (Part I: Weaving the Story Rug)

Weaving begins with inserting a single wool yarn from the right-hand side of the warp, then alternating the wefts between the warps until it reaches the left-hand side of the last warp. This process is repeated from the left-hand side, to the right-hand side, and back and forth. Once there is a comfortable amount of woven wefts and warps from the single wool yarn to form the border of the rug, a weaver can start to insert their selected colors to create a desired textile pattern or design. These textile patterns take years to develop and derive from generational weavers. The patterns can tell a story, or what is called a pictorial rug design. It can have ceremonial patterns, designed for ceremonial and healing purposes that are only woven by those who received the proper ceremonies for weaving those designs. Additionally, there are rugs that have symbolic meanings to represent certain patterns or designs. As a weaver, I weave pictorial rugs, patterns that have symbolic meanings, and from the rug patterns *Shináli* (my paternal grandmother) wove. Furthermore, if I wove a rug that called for a reflective pattern, or a line of symmetry, I would measure the center of the rug and mark it horizontally, so I knew where the center of the rug was—and to remember the weft's counts for each pattern. In addition, a weaver must keep a watchful eye on both ends of the warps to ensure that they do not gravitate to the center, or the rug starts to form a soda bottle silhouette. To avoid this, a weaver leaves loosened wool yarn at the two ends of the warp. As the rug approaches closer to the top of the loom, a single wool yarn (usually the same color as the bottom of the rug) is woven to complete the remainder of the rug. Until the last row, a small section of the small weft has a different colored wool yarn and is known as the weaver's path.

As an experienced weaver, I learned that weaving a *diyogí*, or a Navajo rug, takes patience, flexibility, spatial reasoning, and attuning oneself in relation to the loom. I remember

the first couple of times I wove a rug without the assistance of *Shináli*. I had a composition book with grid ruled paper. In my notebook, I colored the desired textile patterns into each grid to create a rug design. These designs were a combination of *Shináli's* previous rug design patterns and my own. My mother had received many rugs from *Shináli* and most of them were hung on the living room walls. After a close examination of it, I would draw it on the grid paper and then attempt to weave the patterns. The first pattern I decided to replicate was the cube pattern design, or what is often called an eye dazzler design because of the repeated “eye-dazzling” geometric patterns. In my rug design blueprint, I measured the number of warps in comparison to the number of grid boxes that I would need to draw and color in the grid paper. I used the blueprint to guide my weaving. I soon learned that the blueprint did not go according to plan a quarter of the way, as it showed that I was supposed to be halfway finished. At that moment, I had to divert from my original pattern design and incorporate additional patterns. This became a recurrence of “the planning” not going according to plan. I learned that the stacking of the wefts did not represent the “correct” grid paper measurements. After this, I stopped drawing on the grid paper and opted instead to visualize the pattern in my mind. To this day, I continue to weave rugs without a handwritten plan, turning to the loom as the actual physical canvas. When I make mistakes or create an unintended pattern, I undo the wefts and restart a new pattern. In this process, I’ve become attune to the loom; it feels as if my ancestors are weaving with me.

Like Tachine (2018), I envisioned weaving like writing and expanded upon *Story Rug* from viewing the individual stories as “a single strand in the story rug” in one rug, to weaving relatives’ individual stories into their own story rug (p.70). Therefore, I handwove the nine relatives an individual pictorial rug to capture how their educational journeys inform their pedagogical pathways for preparing teacher candidates to implement state-mandated tribally

developed curricula in Washington State. Relatives' story rugs were woven through the use of metaphors, symbolic representations, and Coast Salish storytelling. Tachine (2018) argues that metaphors are integral to research because, "metaphors evoke imagination and ancient wisdom" (p.66). It is through this process of thinking of relatives' use of metaphors that I re-story their stories through a story rug. Kovach (2021) further states, "In using metaphor, one is painting pictures with words to express ideas to a wide range of people" (p.229). The story rugs retell their stories through visual imagery.

The relatives' stories in this study are viewed from an Indigenous paradigm that draws from both cultural and political acts of Indigeneity and teaching. Specifically, I use "Tracking A Story" as a guiding theoretical framework for understanding the metaphoric pathways of each relative's educational journey and how that has informed their pedagogical pathway for teaching the state-mandated course (Cajete, 1994). Their stories are tracked by first locating themselves in relation to their tribal communities and identity.

Sharing Story with Relatives

In the next section, I retell the stories of each relative's sharing story session. The stories are organized by how I came to be in relation with them, then I have them state their tribal and personal identities through an object, and, finally, they share their educational journey, and pedagogical pathways for preparing teacher candidates in the various college courses that they taught. The first set of stories are told by Willow and Alder, as their stories recount the passage of the state-mandates on Native Education and the first college course on tribal history, government, and culture. The next set of stories are told in the order of the individual sharing story to honor the order in which each rug was woven. The next order of stories are as follows: Reed, Marigold, Bitterroot, Cedar, Sage, Camas, and Rose.

Willow's and Alder's Story

Relational Meaning-making with Willow and Alder

Prior to the sharing story, I did not have an established relationship with Willow and Alder. In passing, I had heard Willow's name mentioned because of our connection to the elementary TEP course that we both taught. I had wanted to reach out to her early on and connected with her via a text group chat. Each time Willow's name was brought up, it was always a positive response on being the best course instructor and a wonderful human being. Initially, I sent a cold call email to her in the summer of 2024, but did not hear back from her. It wasn't until January 2025 that Willow responded to my email and asked if she could still meet online and support my dissertation work. I was excited to hear back from her and immediately set a time to meet. Within a week, we informally chatted on Zoom. In a short span of time, I felt like I knew Willow for a very long time. Soon after, we set another date/time to do the sharing story session. By extension, Willow invited Alder to join the sharing story session, too. Willow shared that Alder was a Lummi elder and that they were co-teaching the John McCoy (*lulilaš*) Since Time Immemorial (JMI STI) course. I could not pass up this opportunity to hear from both of them, so we all agreed to meet on Zoom for the sharing story session.

Sharing Story on Lummi and Muckleshoot Lands

On a Monday evening in January, Willow, Alder, and I logged onto Zoom to share stories of our tribal identities, educational journeys, and pedagogical approaches for preparing teacher candidates. By this point, I had memorized the sharing story protocol document and its semi-structured guiding questions. I started with introducing myself in the Diné language. This encouraged Willow to also introduce herself in her Blackfeet language, which she translated into

English for us. In her translation, she mentioned that she greeted us and introduced us to her Blackfeet name, which was *Iikstani akii* or Red Paint Woman. In addition, she introduced her parent's lineage by name and mentioned that she was named after her great-great-grandma, who was Long Hearing Woman or Mary Jane Red Paint. Willow indicated that her great-great-grandma was her "shero." Moreover, Willow described her identities as being Blackfeet, Eastern Band Cherokee, and settler descent. Lastly, she shared that she resides in Bellingham, WA.

The item that Willow decided to share was her daughter's beaded Blackfeet moccasin. She shared the story of the significance of the beaded moccasins:

While these beautiful elders at this encampment, and right on the Two Medicine River were, you know, teaching us how to make moccasins. So, I feel like she was there as a little baby when I started to learn. And beading is like a way of life for me in a lot of ways. And so, my mom had a pair of moccasins that were unfinished that my mom was also learning when we were there, but she just never got into it. And so, I was going to complete her moccasins for her. She has one finished, and I was going to complete the other one, but she got sick and I didn't finish it. But I feel in some ways... and I'm leaving it unfinished, because I feel like, you know, her story is unfinished. Still, maybe I will finish it eventually. But anyway, this is all connecting. I just feel like, you know, it represents our culture and identity and art as, like, we were talking last time about art being functional, like we just wear it, bring it with us. And so, you know, it's a tradition ...for Blackfeet, we put a little thing at the back of our moccasins ... which is just a reminder to walk in a good way. (personal communication, January 27, 2025)

As Willow described the unfinished, beaded vamp, I thought about the unfinished rug that I have yet to complete. I also thought about it in the same way as Willow, where she wanted to finish her mother's unfinished vamp. Similarly, I feel that my unfinished rug will eventually be woven and finished by one of my relatives. I understand the uncompleted moccasins and rug as being out of balance. This was further affirmed when Willow shared that the pair of moccasins have fringes to serve as a reminder of walking in a good way.

Alder was next to respond. It took a minute for her to gather her thoughts. She shared that most of her family were gone and that her old people were also gone. She said that Lummi is where she is from, but that she moved to different places due to relocation. Alder did not share an object that represented her tribal and personal identity. Rather, she spoke about her familial relations and who was still present.

Alder's and Willow's Educational Journey. Alder picked up on the sharing story session by vocalizing the various opportunities she had in working in Native Education in Washington and California State. She shared one of her Native Education job opportunities,

So, yeah, I got a job. I was the manager of the Johnson O'Malley program and that was, I think, I worked there for about five or six years. I revamped the whole thing. We created ... Where do we start, tutoring? Started a tutoring program. I went to Seattle. My boss took me down to this woman who was doing a program similar to what he thought would work at Lummi. So, we did that. And then I [was] hired, I was like, shit! I don't know anybody here, you know? I mean, seriously, right? So, I found... and I knew what I wanted, so I hired somebody to work on the tutoring. And then I decided I'd been to a Head Start program, and they asked me to, they had a parent coordinator. I thought that's what I need. And so, I found a woman who had kids in elementary school, high school

and middle school. And so, she became [the parent coordinator], it was perfect. It all sort of fell into place. So, yeah, it was all just, I did it for about six years, I think, and then was able to pull out, and then, and then I went to the college at Northwest Indian College, and then actually went and got my master's degree at Seattle U. I did that because I wanted those teachers to know in the schools that I was just as good as they were, you know, that I had, you know, that I knew what I was doing. (personal communication, January 27, 2025)

Alder continued to share that her time in California was cut short because she was removed from her position and she returned to Lummi for work. Eventually, she was requested by Willow to work with her on co-teaching the JMI STI course.

Willow's educational journey story began with telling the story of her childhood, being raised in a single parent household, living with immediate family members, having a disability, struggling in school, and then becoming a mom after graduating high school. After going through this, Willow pondered what was next and said:

I decided to go to community college, and I had my daughter right when I turned 19.

When I was at the community college, I met this professor who was Native, and he was the first Native teacher I ever had, first Native anything I ever had. And it was like he changed my life, hands down, changed my life in so many different ways—on like the first day I met him. He was a guest. He was a guest. He was in the anthropology department. He was a guest speaker in a class I was in on physical anthropology. And he comes in and he, like, jumps up on the table. And, dude, he must have been my age, you know, then, you know. And so, I can't jump anywhere anymore, right? So, he jumps up on this table and does the mating call of a gibbon and, you know, he... and he was telling

stories, and, like we were all just riveted. And so, after class, like everybody was, like, swarming around and, like, wanting to know who he was and to talk to him. And I, of course, was rather largely pregnant at the time, and I just was shy and stuff. And so as... as you know, I was listening to this event [at] the Blackfeet Community College, and the woman was like, “Don't be backwards.” It's, like, oh my gosh! How many times have I heard that in my life? So, I was kind of being backwards, and not, you know, talking to him, but I walked by and he stopped. He said, “Hey, you.” and I just was like, Oh... he's like, “What nation are you?” And I just, like, it was the first time in my whole entire ... It was the first time I was seen in education ...he helped me navigate higher ed and then I had my baby ... I would bring her to school with me, and he would watch her on some days that my cousin or my mom, you know, because my mom worked. Everybody worked, anyway. So he would watch her so I could go to classes, and he was just amazing. So many different ways that he was amazing. (personal communication, January 27, 2025)

Willow commended the guidance of the Native professor for getting her through her higher education program. He helped her and her daughter move to Bellingham, WA, where he connected her with faculty in the anthropology department. Willow reflected on this moment and asked him, “Why did you do this for me?” He responded, “I had someone do this for me. I'm doing this for you and now it's your turn to do it for others.” When Willow said this, I thought about her former students that took her course and the way they spoke about Willow. It was the same way she spoke about the Native professor that mentored her. This was a very touching story to hear from her as well as how she has since played a role in Native students' life.

Teaching the JMI STI course before the state-mandate on Native Education.

Willow orchestrated one of the first JMI STI courses, even before the passing of the state-mandated TEP preparing teacher candidates to implement Native Education curriculum. She spoke to her dean about the harm inflicted on Native students by a racist colleague. She voiced her concerns to the dean by saying:

I can't participate any longer in harm. I can't do it... Western teacher education is harming students. This was at the same time, we were now transitioning. We had worked with [three directors of the Offices of Native Education]. So, like all the directors of the Office of Native Ed[ucation] [ONE] as they went through, we were meeting and stuff and it was right at that pivotal moment, right before 2015. I think it was, like, 2013, 2014, and we knew this was coming up in legislation. We knew it was... it didn't pass the first time, but it had that financial, you know, it was in the budget, so we're gonna, like, make it. So I went to our dean, and I said, "I can't do this anymore. I can't be a part of the system." And he's like, "How about we do a special appointment for you for two years, and in that special appointment, you focus on this bill and get us ready for it."

Willow agreed to the appointment terms, as this was something she had previously advocated for in meetings. She met with Sage, another Native educator, as well as a white allied educator, who worked with ONE, to put together a syllabus for the course. The gathering took place at Sage's kitchen table. Eventually, this syllabus was used in multiple TEP programs, and I continue to use the initial syllabus with some revisions that meet the needs of teacher candidates who are teaching in the elementary school settings.

Reed's Story

Relational Meaning-making with Reed

In January 2024, I was asked to be a witness¹¹ in one of the sessions at the Leading Towards Justice symposium. For me, it felt like a big ask to be called upon as a witness because I had never been asked to be a witness before. Previously, I had seen tribal communities practice witnessing in college courses with Indigenous instructors, in virtual storytelling spaces with Indigenous facilitators, and during canoe journey protocols with respected leaders and elders. This invitation felt like a calling, so I agreed to be a witness. I was assigned to be a witness for Reed's and Marigold's presentation, with this being my first time meeting them. There's more to say about how our first encounter went, I was immediately drawn to their work and the Indigenous collective they had co-created. We exchanged contact information after their presentation, and I became an active member with the Indigenous collective. Since then, the Indigenous collective continues to meet virtually to hang out, check in with each other, and talk about future projects for the group. During one of the hang outs, I briefly shared my dissertation project with Reed and Marigold. To my surprise, both had been navigating similar tensions of planning the state-mandated course. I did not know that Marigold was an instructor for the course, and Reed helped in the planning and guest speaking portion of the class. So, I asked if they would be interested in being part of the study. Without hesitation, both were in support of being part of this dissertation.

¹¹ From a Coast Salish paradigm, to witness is a traditional practice that has and continues to be used today. Being a witness is to listen and remember the stories being told. After everyone has spoken, the witness reshapes what they heard.

Sharing Story on *sp'q'ni?* (Spokan) Lands with Reed and Marigold

In August 2024, Reed, Marigold, and I collectively decided that we would meet at Marigold's family home, on her traditional homelands of the Spokane Indian Tribe, to share our stories. Marigold prepared a meal for us, and we gathered around the dinner table. After the meal, we put together mullein tea care packages. While we were still putting the mullein medicine into tea filter bags, Marigold asked to start the sharing story. Reed and Marigold took turns responding to my questions, while we continued to put together the care packages.

I began the sharing story session with a personal grounding by asking Reed and Marigold to share their personal and tribal identities, and relations to their communities. Reed shared his tribal citizenship in his Nakota language and stated that he is *Ihanktonwan Nakota* from one of the tribes within the *Oceti Sakowin Oyate*¹², or the Great Sioux Nation, and also from Swedish descent. He named his people's traditional homelands and current reservations in relation to the forced removal of Dakota and Nakota people from what is now called the state of Minnesota. Reed stated:

Our homelands, well, our current reservation boundaries, over in southeast South Dakota along the Missouri River... Traditional boundaries would have been from about Central Iowa up to southern Minnesota, all the way up around, like [the] Bismarck area in North Dakota. So, that's from my dad's side, and then my mom's side, primarily [of] Swedish descent. So, kind of [an] interesting piece of that heritage is that our treaty was signed in 1858 that created our reservation, and then we were, like, finally moved on our reservation, like 1859. In 1862, they had the Dakota uprising in Minnesota. So we removed outside of, off those lands that we would traditionally occupy in Minnesota in

¹² The *Oceti Sakowin Oyate*, also known as the People of the Seven Council Fires is comprised of the following tribes: *Wahpekute*, *Wahpetunwan*, *Sisistunwan*, *Bdwakantunwan*, *Ihanktonwan*, *Ihanktonwanna*, and *Titunwan*.

1850, 1859. In 1862, there's a Dakota Uprising, which was, like, our relatives, right? Those tribes are related to us. As a result of that, they were kicked out of Minnesota in 1865, which is when my Swedish ancestors came and settled in Minnesota. So directly, you know, beneficiaries of that, that expulsion of Dakota and Nakota people from Minnesota. So that's my mom's side. As far as my relationship to my community, it's been, especially in my adult life, it's been a really intentional investment in establishing a meaningful and deep connection and role within that community. And then I grew up in Spokane, far from our homelands, and it's really having kids that kind of, like, prompted that and wanting to make sure that they grew up with a much, much deeper understanding and connection to place than I had growing up and, so, we've invested a lot of time and energy, making sure that we go home on a regular basis that were mainly... we do that as participating in ceremony. (personal communication, August 27, 2024)

It is through Reed's introduction that I come to understand the people and places he is in relation to, and the ways he engages directly with his community while living away from his traditional homelands. The "expulsion" of his tribal community that he speaks of, is reflected in Brayboy's (2005) Tribal Critical Race theory tenet one, "colonization is endemic to society" (p.429). The forced removal of his people from their traditional homelands is not a thing of the past, but continues to exist through the displacement of Native peoples to this day.

Educational Journey through Native Retention. Reed spoke about his educational journey in relation to working with Native youth, starting with Title VI, serving as a Native liaison that works with Native students in public schools to bring culture and language to them. He then transitioned into the role of higher education, where he worked with a university to support Native high school and college students through summer programming. While at the

university, he was asked to help in the planning of the JMI STI course and was a guest speaker. During this time, he pursued two higher education degrees, obtaining his Master's and Doctoral degrees. Later that year, he was told to teach at his tribal college.

Teaching at a Tribal College. I had asked Reed to share the story of how he came to plan and teach in the university setting. He spoke about his experience teaching at his tribe's tribal college. This was different from when he was asked to co-plan with a non-Native instructor on the JMI STI course. As Reed said:

When it was confirmed that I was going to be teaching that class, I remember thinking, like, one of the first thoughts that I had was, like, "Who else, who can I invite into this and be involved in this?" And, you know, I think, like, obviously, like, [Marigold] one of the first people that I asked to come and visit, and started, just like, making a list in my head. Who would I want to be in this space and help with that? I think part of that has to do with, like, I saw an opportunity to be able to do something in, potentially, like, a different way, and to be able to have more control, some level of control over, like, how something gets done and executed, and seeing an opportunity to be able to do something and structure something in a different way. Who are the people that I want to invite into that, the one that I know we're going to make it better, and who I appreciate and respect and have a relationship with, who I know that can benefit the students. But I think there's also a piece of, like, like, here's the door open a little bit to be able to, like, explore things and do things in a different way that we don't necessarily always get to do when we're in, like, white institutions, from white spaces and so, like, who can I invite to come through this door with me in order to sort of explore doing things in a different way? So, I was just wanting to add that, because I think that, that's a different orientation, and maybe

non-Native or white educators have to do the work. That'd be my first thought. Like, okay, like, “Who else can come along this journey with me?” (personal communication, August 27, 2024)

Reed captured the nuanced difference of teaching in a predominantly white institution versus at a tribal college. This statement resonated with me because I experienced working with my tribe's tribal college as well. During the same summer months, I was teaching in-person for the mandatory course and on different days, I taught online for my tribal college. Despite the course being taught online, I was able to better connect with the Navajo students in my class. It was a feeling that I did not feel when teaching the mandatory course. To me, it felt like a rewarding experience to be able to teach and learn with my people. As Reed mentioned, I also thought about the guest speakers and community organizations that could walk on this journey with me to teach the course. For both Reed and I, we see tribal colleges as a site of transformative learning with/for our people. Whereas, the mandatory course preliminary served a white demographic and was very challenging, as teacher candidates have to engage in a completely different way of thinking that is based on an Indigenous perspective and grounding.

Marigold's Story

Relational Meaning-making with Marigold

As told in Reed's opening story, I met Marigold at an on-campus symposium. The next time that we met in person was at her home in what is now called Spokane. Marigold invited the Indigenous collective to come out to *q'it'q'm'* (strawberry) camp to pick strawberries and huckleberries on her traditional homelands. Strawberry camp is where Marigold and her family have tended the huckleberry bushes for generations. The gathering site is located near a ski

resort, so there are dirt roads that make it accessible to drive on the ridge of the mountain as well as making it accessible for elders and children to park, walk, and pick huckleberries. On our arrival, we were greeted by the low-growing vines of wild strawberries. I had never seen a wild strawberry before, so Marigold shared the plant teachings of strawberry. I closely examined the ground for three leaflets with running vines and then finally spotted a ripe, ruby-colored strawberry. The strawberries are smaller in size, in comparison to the store-bought ones. While we continued to search for strawberries, Marigold looked for the huckleberry bushes. Not far from us, she called out to tell us that the huckleberry bushes had been cut down. Given the ski resort proximity, the disturbed huckleberry bushes were cut and cleared for a ski lane. It was devastating news to hear and see with my own eyes. At that moment, I thought about the many hands that tended the huckleberry and the spiritual connections being completely uprooted, and for what, personal leisure and for busniess? I can't imagine the severing of plant relatives that Marigold must have felt and then having to wait years for the huckleberry bushes to heal and reach full maturity again. We stayed a bit longer to gather wild strawberries and soon after, decided to look for a different huckleberry gathering site. We found huckleberry bushes further down the road, but the bushes were not mature enough to produce berries. We decided to park Reed's truck, rest, and check in with one another. It also gave us time to be in community and plan for future possibilities for the Indigenous collective.

Sharing Story on *sp'q'ni?* (Spokan) Lands

A month after strawberry camp, we reconvened at Marigold's house to share our stories. The first sharing story session was written in Reed's section. The second half of the sharing story session took place the next morning at Marigold's work. Similarly, we sat around a table to pick up where we left off. The time between our initial conversations to the early morning allowed for

us to sit with each other's conversation and to add on. I used the sharing story protocol document to pose the remaining questions that we did not get to the day before, and Reed and Marigold took turns responding to the questions.

Returning to the first sharing story session with Marigold, she identified as a citizen of the Spokane Tribe and Pauquachin descent from Southern Vancouver Island in what is now called Canada. She spoke about growing up in Spokane, while also having a strong connection with her Pauquachin family on the island. Marigold described her educational journey, starting from working at a tribal-compact school, away from her traditional homelands. She credits her success on being away—and also becoming a mother, which further shaped and developed her perspectives on being a Spokane woman. As Marigold shared:

Prior to working at [Tribal middle school] and being away from my own family and my homelands really matured my way of thinking, of being... thinking through more complex situations, and not just seeing black and white. So, through developing relationships on the [Tribal] rez and in the [Tribal] community, I was able to come back home. I wanted to raise my daughter with her family and her grandma and grandpa. So we moved back to Spokane from Puyallup. Since [then] I have spent a lot of time in our community, working with a nonprofit, doing food sovereignty work and learning a lot about our native plants, and I help instruct other people on gardening and plant knowledge, which I'm very fortunate to be able to do. But, I would say that I'm a lot more long term future thinking with my relationship, with my community. (personal communication, August 27, 2024)

Something that came up in this conversation was the COVID-19 impact of not being able to be in community due to mandates of “social distancing.” Marigold mentioned that it was hard to be

in community with her Pauquachin community because the U.S. and Canada borders were closed. I personally connected with her because I had moved to the state of Washington during the formidable months of COVID, when we were restricted to stay home and practice social distancing.

Educational Journey through Tribal Engagement. Marigold's educational journey was not initially geared toward education, but eventually education made its way to her in her temporary job. Marigold recalled her educational journey:

I originally came to education because I was the education person at the crisis residential center on the South Hill, which is a nonprofit that works with runaway and at risk youth. When they need some place to stay and be safe and sleep, we would have a space for them. But part of it was they had to either be enrolled in school, or they would go to the CRC learning education opportunities. So I would most often be the one on day shift, because I was the one that came up with the most exciting activities that would keep the kids interested in doing something for eight hours a day while the other students who were in school were gone, and so that's... I realized I really liked doing that... really kind of goofy story for how I got into education. But I've always wanted to work with my community and Native people, and so the CRC job was always just supposed to be like a temporary job. My original idea after graduating college was to be a grant writer. Bachelor's is in English. But after having that job at the CRC and realizing how much fun it is to be a teacher, I applied and got into a Master's of teaching program, and following that, I went to work at the [Tribal middle school], taught there, came back home, and now I am the Director of Curriculum Development for a Native nonprofit that's focused on building Native entrepreneurs. And so, I work with adults, and I work on trying to write

Indigenous capitalism, Indigenous entrepreneurial curriculum, using Indigenous pedagogy and methodology that has been really challenging in its own right. Because on the one hand, when you're talking to these adults who are really passionate about helping their community by starting a business and offering services, it's really exciting. On the other hand, talking about business is not my most favorite thing. (personal communication, August 27, 2024)

Marigold arrived at the work of JMI STI through her connection to a university, where she worked alongside Reed, supporting Native students.

Planning the JMI STI course with a non-Native Educator and through Federal Indian Law. I asked Reed and Marigold to share what brought them to the work of Native Education, specifically JMI STI. Marigold reflected on what she and Reed went through when planning the course with non-Native educator. As she said:

The class that I teach at [university], [it] is called the Since Time Immemorial, it's housed in the School of Education, and there's two courses for it. There's a grad version and an undergrad version. It was a really intense process to develop that class. It was being taught by a non-Native person who's amazing, self identifies as a settler, is constantly trying to understand what that term means. Really went through a reflective process, but it was super labor intensive to help her develop that course the first year, and she taught it by herself, with me and [Reed], guest lecturing and with me helping review students' homework in their final papers and coming in as a guest speaker, but it would literally be like we would sit for, like, two hours developing like one worksheet. It was probably at least 80 hours that we put into just helping her. And, you know, it was time-intensive. It was emotionally intensive. It was at one point, you know, the Indigenous people at the

table weren't even talking, and she was just processing, like, out loud because she had found out her family directly benefited from the removal of these Indigenous people in California someplace, yeah, and, like, we had to go through all of that, but we weren't getting paid any extra. [Reed] and I, we were really, like, we had to move around our schedules to be able to help her. And it was almost like, oh God, the meeting. But I look back on it now I know why I felt that way, because we were doing all the mental and emotional labor, I feel like, even though she had to go through this discovery process of like, oh man, colonialism is a thing and... look at how education has been used against Indigenous people in the United States. That's all stuff they already knew. We just had to be sitting there witnessing her going through all of this. (personal communication, August 27, 2024)

When Marigold voiced these concerns of feeling the emotional labor and time intensity of committing to helping a non-Native instructor, without proper compensation, I could only compare it to the emotional labor that non-Native students put on me when they are faced with confronting their settler identity. Unfortunately, this is something that I've become numb to, and I sometimes forget that teacher candidates undergo a sudden change of settler ideologies as they become aware of the colonial impacts on Indigenous peoples and lands. It feels like their world has been shaken. Hearing Reed and Marigold feel this emotional labor from a colleague, I can't begin to imagine the intensity of sitting and watching a colleague's worldview be turned upside down and unfold in real time. Further in our conversation, Marigold raised an important question of who is qualified to teach these state-mandated courses. If an instructor is not able to interrogate their own hidden biases in relation to Native peoples, how are they able to detect it in

their students? Marigold further shared that this particular instructor stepped away from teaching the course and passed on the online course to Marigold.

Once Marigold took over the course, she shared her experience as:

It went really well. There were some sketchy parts at the beginning where I was like, “Oh man, you guys are not... you are saying very stereotypical racist stuff.” But we work through it. We did, and I leaned on them a lot to teach themselves and teach each other. I was not going to be the Indian guru on the stage and just entertain questions like, “Do the Natives have shamans and stuff like that?” Yeah. And so, the one way that I really framed it was from Day One: this is not a history course. We are focusing on American Federal Indian Law policy towards Indigenous people because law is what sets up how our education system runs in the United States, and that is the framework that we're going to be studying Indigenous people through, not culture, not tribal history, but through this very specific lens. So don't ask me about the shamans or, like, however, like to, like, better look through that lens. We did spend a little bit of time studying prior to colonization, and I mean, a very little amount of time. Like, there were five units in the class, and one of them was dedicated to prior contact. But through the lens of, “Why didn't you know this?” Was it because of all these assimilation policies to further settler colonialism, which is the erasure of the original people? So, it went really well. The end of the class, I would say a majority of them got the big picture. Some of them were way off, way off, but all of them reflected and felt like they were very prepared to be able to handle talking about in a non-stereotypical way in their future classrooms. (personal communication, August 27, 2024)

Marigold taught the JMI STI course through the framework of Federal Indian Law. Similarly, Reed created an Educator's Handbook for Refusing Settler Logics and positioned federal Indian law as asserting assimilative and colonial logics onto Indigenous peoples, for instance, the boarding school era. Both Reed and Marigold center federal Indian law to unmask the ways in which assimilative policies further settler colonialism in education systems. Their pedagogical approaches take on a critical lens that allows both Native and non-Native educators to examine, detect, and confront these settler logics with learning spaces.

Bitterroot's Story

Relational Meaning-making with Bitterroot

I came to know Bitterroot through our first year in our doctoral programs. We both started our respective programs at the peak of COVID-19, so the majority of our graduate courses were held online. It was through these classes that we established a relationship through the shared work of Indigenous education. Once it became safe to meet in-person, Bitterroot invited me to observe a lesson at a tribal school and attend a culture camp, a community event. I drove out to the tribal school located on the Confederated Tribes of Colville reservation. On this day, Bitterroot, Camas, and an elder led the class to a nearby creek to teach a lesson on the stinging nettle plant. I learned more about Bitterroot's and Camas's outdoor learning curriculum with the K-8 native students, and got to see it in action. This experience was incredibly special because I had a chance to talk to the students and hear about their dormitory experiences. In my middle and high school days, I attended tribal school and resided in the dormitory, so I was able to connect with a few of the students on this shared experience. The following year, I was able to attend the tribal summer camp for Native youth. I started the day early, with my younger

brothers, cousin brother, and nephew as passengers to the Spokane Indian Tribe reservation. We made the four-hour drive to the camp center. The camp was housed in an indoor powwow grounds, so the tables were set up in a circle. Each table or center had a culture teacher with a different cultural activity. My brothers made a hand drum and the bone game tools. This cultural exchange was new to me and my siblings, and we learned so much from the cultural teachers. Bitterroot was there and was working on a wooden bow. I am thankful for Bitterroot, for welcoming me into these spaces as he has cultivated a longstanding relationship with the nearby tribes in the eastern part of Washington State. It is through these in-person interactions that I've come to appreciate and learn Bitterroot's ground-work.

In the third year of our doctoral program, I was invited to a planning meeting with Bitterroot, Rose, and an Indigenous lead faculty member. This meeting was to discuss who would take over the three courses that Sage previously taught, and to discuss the existing syllabus for the state-mandated course. This initial meeting was what prompted me to pursue this dissertation work, particularly as we were indecisive on what to prioritize as core topics to teach and implement with teacher candidates. One of the contributing and impeding factors for this indecisiveness was the fact that the course, at that time, was only one-credit hour with four class sessions. Additional factors included, the teacher candidates were at different stages in their preparation program, in different grade-levels, and content-level(s) specialization. As incoming instructors, our personal identities and values were also an implication of what the shared syllabus would look like. At the conclusion of the first planning meeting, we decided on adapting Sage's syllabus and then to meet a second time, to share what we decided on for the future of the course syllabus. During the second meeting, we discussed the core topics and content that we planned to teach and determined who would teach which courses. While we did not have a

follow-up meeting on how our classes were going, we did get a chance to meet and have an informal conversation about our classes in one of our graduate courses on Indigenous Pedagogy.

Sharing Story on *sp'q'ni?* (Spokan) Lands with Bitterroot

Bitterroot welcomed me into his home to share his story. We decided in the early morning to do the sharing story session. We stepped outside and sat in his backyard to smoke some tobacco, to start in a good way. We were also greeted with a cold morning breeze. The day before Bitterroot showed me the numerous plants that he was growing and at one point, I helped transport a rehomed tree to his home. So, finally, we re-entered Bitterroot's home and shared a story in his living room. I asked him to share an object that reflected his identities. He was indecisive on what to share, pointing out many objects. Eventually, we talked about the *metate*, or the grinding stone. Bitterroot talked about tracing his Indigenous and familial lineage to Tamaulipas and Morelos, Mexico. In his introduction, he named his relatives and relation to the lands. Bitterroot further explained his identity as:

So you know, really more... So, I identify as Mexicano and Chicano that has some understanding of my Indigeneity. I think, you know, I had this conversation with a colleague, friend, a relative, who happens to be White Mountain Apache, and we were talking about the fluidness of identity. And I recognize that through the way I act and the customs that my family still does, that we are still connected to our Indigenous identity, although we don't, you know, although we don't necessarily recognize it to some degree that how we act, our morals and values are still largely there. I think I've known that for a long time, but as far as, you know, what tribe am I from? I couldn't tell you yet, anyways. (personal communication, August 28, 2024)

Bitterroot revealed the complication of Indigeneity, especially around borderlands. There is rhetoric on whether one identifies as Indigenous if their family resides in the country of Mexico. The point that Bitterroot makes is that identity is fluid, and that it is something that can eventually be traced back in time.

Educational Journey through Co-Developing Curriculum. Bitterroot shed light on how he came to work in the field of education. He worked directly with the Spokane Tribe through curriculum development, worked with the head start center, and did the “Grow Your Own” project. Additionally, he worked in the capacity of helping early childhood educators to work toward their degrees and teaching credentials. As he shared:

Before UW, I was working in [City] with the [City] School District that happens to be on the Spokane Indian Reservation. I was hired as a project director for a federal grant at the Department of Education, it is also the Office of Indian Ed so OIE. I was managing a small four year grant. It was called the SAIL grant. So, the Strengthening Authentic Individual Learning, which is kind of weird, right individual, or maybe it was innovative learning, but it had a number of different pieces. It really was geared towards Indian education, so it had lots of different pieces, like the curriculum [...] I worked at, had two focal points, one was high school, and then the other one was early... early learning. So, [at] the Head Start in preschool and [City], I got to be a part of a couple of different teams while I was there. I want to be careful and to not say that I led, even though I was the director, but I got to be a part of quite a few different teams that ended up developing a history curriculum for the Spokane Tribe, some science curriculum for the Spokane Tribe, and then a leadership curriculum for the Spokane Tribe, all of which was developed by community— [a] number of different tribal members, Spokane tribal

members that helped to develop both all of the history, the science and the leadership curriculum, and that really was kind of my start. (personal communication, August 28, 2024)

Through Bitterroot's educational journey, he has and continues to work alongside Tribal communities in ensuring that Native education has a place and space in early learning, in the K-12 school settings, and in higher education. As he mentioned, this included being part of the curriculum team and managing a four-year grant. Additionally, Bitterroot worked with an established Indigenous professor through a National Science Foundation grant. Up to this time, he was attending his doctoral courses and then eventually had the opportunity to teach the JMI STI course at two university settings.

Teaching the JMI STI course through local nearby tribes. The way Bitterroot approached the mandated course was by turning to the local nearby tribes. In the legislation, it is required that teacher educators instruct teacher candidates to teach from the JMI STI curriculum, in particular, teaching tribal history, culture, and government. So, Bitterroot clarified:

The intent is to incorporate Since Time Immemorial curriculum, which is the state's recommended curriculum for school systems at [university one] and at [university two]. You know, we share STI curriculum, but we definitely would make it known that you should be teaching the history of the tribe closest to you or whose ancestral lands you're on, which is... is... even saying that is really hard, you know, because I think if you know tribal histories, you recognize that they're... that they're more than just the 29 federally-recognized tribes in Washington State, that you have to look beyond statehood and the 29 federally-recognized tribes, I guess, what I'm saying there is that the 29 tribes are more complicated than just being 29 tribes, and I don't know that non-Native

educators get that. Actually, I know they don't. (personal communication, August 28, 2024)

In his teaching, Bitterroot recognized that the legislation fails to include non-federally recognized tribes, as being taught in the classroom. The conversation around federally recognized tribes is a very contested and complicated issue that continues to be put into question. An example of this complexity is through the recognition of the Duwamish people, who were signatory signers of the 1855 Treaty of Point Elliott. However, the forced removal to forts and reservations eventually became tribes, renamed as the successors of the Duwamish Tribe, or what is now known as the Muckleshoot Tribe and the Tulalip Tribe. So, educators take their own stance in honoring what is written in the legislation of only teaching federally-recognized tribes in Washington State, and there are teacher educators who are actively speaking for non-federally recognized tribes to be taught and included in the curriculum. Early on, I was advised by local tribal members to take a neutral stance on this matter, as this is not my traditional homelands. This has continued to stay with me, so I am intentionally and mindful when I introduce teacher candidates to federal recognition status. In the mandatory course, I introduce teacher candidates to two treaties: the 1855 Treaty of Point Elliott and the 1854 Treaty of Medicine Creek. Teacher candidates are asked to unpack the various articles and to interpret it, in today's language. From there, we discuss the signatory signers, the articles, and then arrive at one article that mentions tribes and bands have "within one year" to move to said reservations as outlined in the treaty. This is where we begin to discuss federal recognition status and why some tribes are federally- and non-federally recognized in Washington State. At this point, I refer back to the legislation and reference that the bill states that the 29 federally-recognized tribes must be taught. Teacher candidates are taken aback by this and immediately ask, "Why non-federally recognized tribes

are not included?” This is where I advised students to consider building authentic tribal partnerships and to begin to work with tribes on implementing established tribally-developed curriculum that accurately tells their stories—history, culture, and government. Afterward, I present that the JMI STI curriculum is tailored to include three approaches: an inquired based approach with five essential questions, a place-based approach, and an integrated approach. I advised them that a place-based approach can be a way to introduce non-federally recognized tribes, including the Duwamish, the Snohomish, the Chinook, and so forth. As Bitterroot mentioned, it is complicated. I believe this complication puts teacher candidates in a position to include or exclude non-federally recognized tribes, just as Indigenous teacher educators are also having to decide this, too.

Cedar’s Story

Relational meaning-making with Cedar

I was introduced to Cedar at a tribal conference called the Effective Teaching Institute (ETI) in the Summer of 2024. Rose gathered Native educators to attend this conference to engage in her design-based participatory research project around the implementation of JMI STI from building administrators and school leadership, such as principals. Previously, I heard Cedar’s name through passing as he held a lecturer position with the American Indian Studies department and taught the Tribal *Canoe Journey* course. Additionally, I had watched some of their tribe’s early childhood education videos and the Healing of the Canoe curriculum, featuring him and his mother, who is a gifted storyteller. At the ETI conference, I learned that Cedar was teaching the state-mandated course online with a neighboring university. It was serendipitous that it was around the time that I was looking for relatives to participate in my dissertation study

and I just discovered that Cedar was also teaching the JMI STI course. Before I asked him, I wanted to continue building a relationship with him and learn more about the work he did.

In the same week, Cedar held a canoe pulling practice for our Shell House Canoe Family, *čawayaltx^w ʔiišəd*¹³. It was a clear, sunny Saturday morning when a group of our canoe family decided to meet near Lake Washington. On our drive to the meeting location, I spotted a red deer head bow canoe on a trailer, being pulled by a truck—it was Cedar pulling his families' canoe! We set out to pull on water with the members of the canoe family, and Cedar was our canoe skipper for this pulling practice. This practice was different from others, as Cedar shared previous canoe journey stories with us and had an impromptu cold-water training, where folks jumped into the water and had to swim back to the canoe. Part of this training was to prepare us in an event of emergency, if the canoe capsized and we needed to swim to the canoe and get back into the canoe. One at a time, members of the canoe family jumped into the water and Cedar noticed that the “Southwest Indians” had not gone in, so he called out the Southwest Indians to jump into the water. Without hesitation my partner decided to partake in the coldwater training, but I did not and had shared that I did not know how to swim. After this day, I made a commitment to learn how to swim and since then, I have learned to swim so I would be ready for the next time Cedar asked us to participate in cold-water training.

Sharing Story on Suquamish and Muckleshoot Lands with Cedar

Cedar and I met on Zoom to record his sharing story session. He mentioned that we have the convenience of connecting face-to-face through the internet, so traveling to his homelands was not necessary for engaging in storytelling. This worked perfectly with my schedule, as well as his busy schedule and familial commitments. A month after this sharing story session, I was

¹³ *čawayaltx^w ʔiišəd* in Lushootseed translates to “Shell House Family”. The Shell House Family participated in their first Tribal Canoe Journey in 2023. The canoe family is an intertribal group of current university students, faculty, alumni, and the greater community.

able to visit his homelands in the 2024 Power Paddle to Puyallup Youth Canoe Journey. It was another serendipitous moment because I had pulled the final leg of the first day of the canoe journey to Suquamish lands. This was my first journey, and it was the first time that I was granted permission to come ashore from the Suquamish youth and elders. It was incredibly memorable because we were the first canoe to arrive, and the salmon were jumping left to right; it was as if the salmon were greeting us and welcoming us in their waters too. After we landed, a crew of Navy sailors hoisted the canoe onto their shoulders and carried the canoe to the top of the hill, near the cedar plank longhouse, or what is referred to as the House of Awakened Culture, Suquamish Community House.

In the opening of the sharing story session, I spoke about the object that represented my Diné identity and that was my turquoise cluster bracelet/watch that was gifted to me by *achóó* (great-grandmother), Mary. I told the cultural and spiritual significance of the turquoise stones, which is a signifier to the Holy Beings that we are a child of the Diné people and that the stones are our protectors. I explained that I wear my turquoise watch on a daily basis for this very reason and teaching. Cedar responded by saying that he worked with a Diné capacity-building group and also learned about the significance of the turquoise stone to the Diné people. It was reaffirming to hear that Cedar understood what I was talking about. After that discussion, Cedar brought out his object and displayed it on Zoom, he held up a multi-colored, fiberglass cedar paddle with the 2016 Paddle to Nisqually Canoe Journey etched on it. This was a gifted paddle from the Nisqually Canoe Family. Cedar opened his story about his tribal identity from a “Healing of the Canoe” (HOC) teaching:

So, one of the things that we preach in the Healing of the Canoe is, if you ask 100

Suquamish people, “What is Suquamish culture?” You get 100 different answers. And

that's the beauty of it, that's great! That's the perspective, that's the depth and breadth of it. I'm Suquamish, been living here my whole life and involved in canoe journeys and a little bit of song and dance, you know, more so when I was younger, not so much now, but I've never been a hunter, never been a fisher. I suck at Clam digging. You know, there's other aspects of being Suquamish native that I don't know much about and don't get involved in. I don't know if I've ever been berry-picking, to find a good spot, you know, the secret spot, or making, like, a lot of those traditional foods, I don't, I'm not that kind of Indian, not joking. They say, right? (personal communication, September 17, 2024)

Building from his story, he spoke about paddle carvers and the process of carving a cedar paddle. This was a conversation I understood as well because I had been carving a yellow cedar paddle for over a year and had been regularly carving with only hand steel tools from the guidance of a Dakota/Salish master carver. Cedar shared in the same manner about responses to Suquamish culture, you have carvers who carve differently, some who use power tools and others who only use hand tools. In my case, my carving teacher only allowed us to use hand tools. The purpose of this teaching was to become familiar with the wood, feel the grain, build a relationship with the cedar paddle, and it is measured to the person carving the paddle. Cedar mentioned that he is not against this way of carving, but recognized that hand steel tools were not used at one point in time. As he said:

Once upon a time, we made paddles and canoes and long houses before we had steel blades. And we found a way to do all of that, to knock the tree down, do all the things that we were able to do. You know, with stone age tools or whatnot, we did, but once steel deal was around... This is nice. This is faster. This works much better. Let's use it

and continue using it in different ways. And you know, not just one kind of steel knife. There's longer knives and short knives and bent knives and double-bladed knives, sharp on both sides of the blade, or just one side. And then there's adze, and there's axes and all kinds of different tools made out of this steel blade. And I like to think about, I'm not opposed to chainsaws. I'm not opposed to band saws. I'm not opposed to electrical tools to carve and shape and things that make it go faster. When our two canoes were carved from one log, we hired Squamish, not Suquamish. Squamish is a tribe up in North Vancouver, B.C. We hired a guy from up there, and we sent seven of our young men up there to live with him for three months and learn how to carve this canoe. And they... we wanted them to know all about it, not just how to carve a canoe, but as much as they could the spiritual side of it, as well the traditional parts of it. (personal communication, September 17, 2024)

What Cedar had shared about the various steel hand tools is exactly what I have been using to carve my paddle. I understand from his point of view that using power tools does not remove the spiritual side of it because it's the intentionality of entering the work with pure thoughts. He mentioned that the seven carvers had to undergo detoxification of no alcohol, no drugs, and not to engage in sexual intercourse for the duration of the three months. With that said, Cedar justified that the carvers were in their purest form and engaged in traditional practices that allowed them to carve with power tools in a good way—physically, mentally, and spiritually speaking. From my carving experience, this was something that had not been spoken directly, carving with purest thoughts and living in a healthy way. However, it is a teaching I know through weaving, and that is weaving with good thoughts. Moreover, Cedar brought up a valid

point of Native peoples not being frozen in time and that our people have always been resilient and creative in times of change. Cedar recounted when folks ask if he carved by hand:

People give us a hard time about, like, when I talk about canoes and paddles and carving.

“Like, oh, did you do this all by hand?” Like, “No, what? Why do you assume I do?”

Like, why is that a value you think I have? Why do you think the Indians should be frozen in the past and never change? We've always changed. The fact that there's different kinds of canoes for rivers and oceans, and the Puget Sound, and whaling and fishing, duck hunting, and cargo canoes. You know, they all are required for different things, different purposes, and we had to evolve those different things. We always thought of how to make it better and more efficient for the different needs we had, and so that extends to our tools as well. (personal communication, September 17, 2024)

Moreover, Cedar rationalized the way in which the non-traditional carved paddle is a remnant of the current realities of change and the ways our people are engaging in “indigenuity” thinking, meaning, Native peoples are applying ancestral teachings and wisdoms to address modern problems (Wildcat, 2023). Cedar elaborated on the design of the glued red and yellow cedar paddled:

So, that paddle is laminated, different pieces of wood glued together, which saves wood.

If that was one big, long rectangle board, you'd only use, like half of the wood, less than half to make a paddle, so much along the shafts are cut off and not used. But I love that it's laminated, and that smaller rectangles of wood get used to make that, and it's way more efficient, and then it's got some kind of lacquer, some kind of laminate... but also fiberglass, to keep it even stronger, you know. So to me, it really speaks about the, what is that word? Not just resilience, but like that flexibility, that ingenuity of... Innovative!

Yeah, innovative! Innovations of having, you know, new ideas on things. (personal communication, September 17, 2024)

The cedar wood scraps puzzled and bonded together by modern wood supplies is what Cedar is referring to as being innovative—Native peoples taking what they have and using modern tools to make it even better. The tool or the paddle itself still operates in the same fashion as a “traditional” carved paddle would. Similarly, Cedar reflected on how cultural teachings can be transformed to include both original teachings and the use of modern tools. As Cedar said:

I want to find as much as I can about the old ways, and I also want to bring them forward into the future. And how do we, as Natives... we've always walked in both worlds, like the white world and the Indian world, and try to walk the “red road” between them, right? And so how do we honor the traditions, the teachings, our original teachings from the Creator, and keep those alive? In today's world where we gotta go to school and work and money and everything. (personal communication, September 17, 2024)

Without a doubt, Cedar exposes the tension of being Indigenous in the twenty-first century, especially when it comes to passing down cultural teachings to the next generation. Ultimately, he honors the ancestral values from the HOC teachings.

Educational Journey through the HOC. Cedar’s educational journey includes attending universities in Washington, Kansas, and Michigan, earning both a bachelor’s and master’s degree along the way. He served on tribal council for eight years and served six years as the director for his tribe’s early learning center. Another leadership role Cedar carried was the skipper of the Suquamish youth canoe for more than 15 years, where he participated in the annual canoe journey, starting in Bella Bella at the age of 14. Moreover, he partnered with

Native-led health organizations to center the HOC teachings with their youth. Cedar told the story of how it came about:

We ended up working with our community for a long time before I even started working with them to develop a curriculum, a culturally grounded life skills curriculum, to teach to our young people as a prevention measure, as an intervention, sorry. A big part of it was the canoe journey as a metaphor for life. What do we learn on the canoe journey? How do we apply that to life? And a big goal was increase youth connection to community, as well as, like, the byproduct of that would be decreasing youth substance abuse. It's by learning about culture and by learning by increasing the connection to the community that youth substance abuse will go down. We implemented it, we tested it, and, yes, good things went up, bad things went down. And so, for the last 10 years or so, we've been teaching other tribes how to adapt it to their own tribal specific culture and then teach it to their young people. (personal communication, September 17, 2024)

Hearing Cedar share this story made me appreciate the importance of tribally-developed curriculum even more. It was interesting to hear how his educational journey has always been in relation to the canoe and finding healing in the canoe journey teachings. Their youth, meanwhile, are engaging in ancestral teachings by having them reflect on how the canoe journey can be applied to life. I agree, there are many life lessons from the ten rules of the canoe, such as *Rule Three: Be Flexible* (Forlines, 1995). That doesn't even include the actual learning of life lessons when partaking in the physical and spiritual vessel of Tribal Canoe Journey.

As Cedar told me, in his formative years, his educational journey was shaped by his mother, who worked at their tribal museum where she told stories, gave tours, and was featured

in two documentary films, “Come Forth Laughing: Voices of the Suquamish Peoples”¹⁴ and “Waterborne: Gift of the Indian Canoe,”¹⁵ where she interviewed the elders about boarding school experiences and the first canoe journey, Paddle to Seattle. Cedar recounted his mom’s storytelling memories:

Yeah, I definitely inherited that [storytelling]. Everything has a story, thing to it. I can't just, you know, say the answer. I'm like, well, because of this story, and then I get to the answer. When we were kids, she worked in our Suquamish museum. And I'm not saying it was every day for the whole time she worked there or anything, but we spent a lot of time there at her work as kids. Us three kids—my brother, my sister and I—and there was no childcare. There was no preschool ... and it was really awesome to go there and grow up with that, with hearing her do these guided tours, and having strangers come in and learn about our history, our culture, and to watch the two videos. The first one is called “Come Forth Laughing,” and that's a traditional game. It's almost like two lines of kids, like Red Rover, Red Rover or something. But your job is to go over there and get this clamshell off a stick from their side, without smiling, without laughing. And they're doing everything they can to get you to break, to get you to laugh, and then if you get it, you can go back to your team. If you laugh, you're on their team now. And that is about emotion regulation. That is about, if your village is being raided and you hide the kids in the bushes or whatever, they can't scream, they can't cry, they have to be quiet and hopefully live. We who knew that that fun game was all about survival, right? It was emotion regulation. But that's also the name of the documentary. It's weird. I never called

¹⁴ “Come Forth Laughing” is a featured documentary on eight Suquamish elders’ experience of boarding school. The documentary centers on the game, Come Forth Laughing, which teaches Native children to learn how to control their emotions in response to being taken away from their community, specially through the removal to boarding school (Suquamish Museum, 2020a).

¹⁵ “Waterborne: Gift of the Indian Canoe” documents tribal members participating “in the native art of canoe carving” and rekindling “the excitement of the canoe race.” (Suquamish Museum, 2020b)

it that before, a movie that the museum made interviewing Suquamish elders about their boarding school experience, and my mom was the one interviewing them when she was in her early 20s, and we were her kids. And so to see this movie, “Come Forth Laughing,” and to hear those experiences, and listen to those elders voices over and over again, there's so many other, like, stories I could finish, I could almost, like, verbatim say some of these lines, like, as if I was watching Lion King or something. (personal communication, September 17, 2024)

After the sharing story session, I watched the two documentaries that Cedar referenced and gained a better understanding of the firsthand narratives that his elders were recounting from boarding school and through the teachings of the canoe. The photos in the documentaries capture Suquamish history and the narratives aid in retelling this point in history.

Teaching the JMI STI and Tribal Canoe Journey course through HOC and in Conversation. Cedar reflected on the two college courses he taught at two different universities, in comparison to the HOC training that he does with Suquamish youth. He delineated that the HOC is foremost his pedagogical approach for teaching the two courses, but reckons with teaching students who may not have a strong cultural tie to their community or identify as non-Indigenous. When he teaches HOC with Suquamish youth, he is able to connect and share his personal experiences with the canoe journey. Alongside the HOC teachings, he draws wisdom and teaching styles from his previous mentors. Cedar vocalized his teaching as:

So, I have way more pedagogical experience gotten out of my healing of the canoe stuff, than I do my classes at Western or UW. I'm sorry to say, but my UW class was through credits and in-person once a week for 10 weeks, and I didn't know. I got to develop this curriculum. I'm pretty proud of it, but the first year I taught at UW, [there] were a lot of

the UW canoe family people. The people that created the canoe family were the students and a few others sprinkled in ... A lot of my answer is going to be about HOC more so than Western and UW, is what I'm trying to say, and it was probably more informed by Robin Little Wing Sigo and my time at the Evergreen State College's reservation-based, determined-community, determined program. Gary Peterson was my first teacher there and he's a Skokomish tribal member ... I love his teaching style. He did not stand up in front of the room and lecture the class about whatever. He was more about facilitating a group discussion. He was way more drawing us to contribute and add and ask questions and share. And that was a way better experience for me than any other classroom experience I've had as a student, and that is what I've adopted as much as I can in my teaching style that I want us all to contribute and share. I want to have a digital story, really like a training video for healing of the canoe ... we have a destination in mind for our lesson plan or the ideas for the day. I do my best to just let the conversation go and eventually steer it back towards this or how [it] relates... (personal communication, September 17, 2024)

After our conversation on employing our pedagogical approaches to the courses we teach, I followed up with Cedar on where he has implemented the HOC curriculum to the state-mandatory course, or if it was something that he would consider doing in future courses. Cedar mentioned that the first JMI STI course he taught felt “clunky,” since he stayed close to the previous course syllabus and made revisions to assignment due dates. He did say that he found ways to talk about the HOC in conversation, particularly the stories of a successful canoe journey and how that applies to the dynamics of a classroom and being a classroom teacher. As teachers, we are faced with motivating students and identifying what can motivate them. In

relation to this teaching, Cedar told the story of how he motivated a group of young children to pull a canoe for over a thousand pulls without stopping. This is another teaching from the ten rules of the canoe, *Rule One: Every stroke we take is one less we have to make* (Forlines, 1995). The value of teamwork is emphasized in this teaching and could be transferable to the classroom setting.

Sage's Story

Relational Meaning-making with Sage

Sage was the first Indigenous teacher educator that I connected with in the College of Education. Sage was an instrumental mentor in teaching the state-mandated course. I started as a reader/grader for her three courses as well as for the following teacher education programs, accelerated teacher education program, the local district-based teacher education program, and the special education teacher education program. From 2021-2022, I worked directly with Sage supporting her grading load for all three teacher education programs for winter and spring quarter. In my role, I attended the online course sessions and graded students' assignments. Reflecting on this period, I mostly recall the end of the year student presentations. One of the assignments that the teacher candidates had to complete was adapting a JMI STI lesson plan and then showcasing this lesson plan alongside one specific Native nation that they chose to research. The online student presentations were structured as three to five students in a breakout room with one Native leader and/educator. At the beginning of the presentation, there was a keynote speaker who talked to the students and then there was a share of witnessing at the end of the student presentations. I hold this memory dearly because the late Senator John McCoy was there to witness the teacher candidates' final presentations and he also talked to the students before

and after their presentations. He spoke about the importance of implementing tribal history, culture, and government. It was the one and only time that I got to hear Senator John McCoy speak. I continue to treasure his words and am always grateful for his leadership in elevating state-mandated Native Education for all students. There were many learning/teaching moments that I personally and professionally took away from Sage's course. I am indebted to Sage and owe her a tremendous amount of gratitude, as she helped me enter "the circle." During Sage's lecture, I enjoyed hearing stories about plant and land-relations, such as gathering stinging nettle and dandelion flowers for tea. One of the assignments that the teacher candidates had to complete was an assignment called, "Engaging with the Land," where they had to identify an area of land that they could engage with. Some students selected a nearby park, their area surrounding the school, or in their local neighborhoods. The assignment required them to historicize the land, map the land, and reflect on how they engaged all their senses. This was my favorite assignment to read and grade, since I got to see the different places teacher candidates engaged with and on the land. As someone who was actively working to build a good relationship with people and land, Sage's class pushed me to learn the names of the plants and learn about their teachings, which eventually led me to read and learn from the Tend, Gather, and Grow curriculum that emphasizes Plants as Teachers through socioemotional learning. Each year, I looked forward to looking for the seasonal plants and being in good relation through respectful harvesting practices, which included not taking more than I needed and sharing half with a local Indigenous-led organization, or offering it to an Indigenous elder.

Sharing Story on Sahewamish Lands with Sage

Sage was another relative who wanted to share their story in-person on the Sahewamish lands, in what is now called Shelton, Washington. I started the hour and a half drive in the early

morning and arrived at Sage's home just before 10 a.m. I was immediately in awe of the forest of trees and plants that surrounded her home. Sage made me feel right at home and gave me a tour of the “Windows of the Forest”, as she calls it because her home is covered with natural sunlight beaming through a multitude of windows. Then, we sat down, checked-in, and Sage prepared an unforgettable meal—salmon sandwiches! Afterward, we decided to sit outside on the balcony and settled into our chairs to start the sharing story session. For a brief moment, I took in the entire surroundings again. I examined the towering trees reaching the skyline, smelled the fresh air, drank the spring water that she offered me, and felt the warmth of the sun on my skin. This was just what I needed to begin the storytelling. I began by asking Sage to share her personal and tribal identities in relation to an object. Sage immediately looked around and identified the trees as her object. She named the trees as a metaphor to denote the various species of trees, as a tree representing the different tribes or Native nations. The trees surrounding her home were ones that she planted, her children planted, and that her family before her planted. Hearing Sage tell this story about growing “ancestral trees” was very moving, and it spoke volumes to tending to the land and caring for the trees. Seeing the trees is a reminder of how old the tree is in relation to her family members. Sage also spoke about the trees and the lands as our ancestors in a spiritual and physical sense. As she shared:

When we're walking the lands, you know, we shed. You know, we are dust in the house. You know, what is our skin, our hair, you know, makes the dust bunnies and we shed outside as well. We leave our hair sometimes, you know, just as a shedding, or sometimes purposefully, like, just leave a part of yourself someplace. You're talking about hiking, leave a part of yourself, leave a strand of hair, and create that space I share. It's like going to someplace you've never been before but yet you feel you have an ancestor who was

there, and that ancestor is sharing to you that there's a story. There's a story here. What is it? Can you find it? And if you learn to listen, you can find that story. You know. So, when I walk, when we go walk up in the woods, I know my ancestors walked there.

(personal communication, September 24, 2024)

This was a teaching that I heard from one of her previous class lectures and it's something that I continue to think about, particularly the ways in which the Coast Salish tribes traditionally laid to rest their ancestors in trees. In this way, trees hold physical beings that are laid to rest in their branches and it holds their internal spirits. As I am walking the trails and look over to the trees, I know that there is a spiritual presence nearby. As I heard this story told to me a second time, I understood it as my ancestors walked these lands and one day, I too will become an ancestor, and my descendants will have walked the lands with me. Sage also put it into context for me, in terms of my upcoming international travels across the world and that these places are home to Indigenous peoples as well.

Educational Journey Through Interconnectedness. Sage spoke at great length about the educators and scholars who have essentially paved the way for Native presence, education, and re-writing history from an Indigenous perspective. She explained that her educational journey transpired from the prominent works of Native scholars, as this was not reflected in her formative years. Through her educational journey, Sage explained it as:

We have that interconnectedness, and the land does that for all of us. And you know, in the classroom, how do you create that interconnectedness? How do you connect people and knowledges, you know, it's, like, right now, when... when I was learning about culture, there was nothing written, yeah, you think of, I mean, Gregory Cajete¹⁶, you

¹⁶ Dr. Gregory Cajete (Santa Clara Pueblo) is an educator, professor, and scholar in the field of education. Some of his books include, *Look to the Mountain: An Ecology of Indigenous Education* and *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence*.

know, writing, Donald Fixico¹⁷, Hilary Stewart¹⁸. I mean, she wasn't Native, but she was trying to gather Native knowledge, information. Willard Bill Sr¹⁹., you know, with the sacred circle, the medicine wheel. You think of, you know, a lot of these older people, Emmett Oliver²⁰, who finally wrote his book, *Two Paths*, and talked about the story of living in two cultures. But you think of, like Patsy Whitefoot²¹ and Sally Brownfield²², those were the people that impacted me. I aged myself because I started with Indian education in 1987 and I remember Indian education in high school, but I was so bashful, I was so shy. I didn't talk with my outside voice. But I had lots of conversations with my ancestors, lots of conversations, and so it's learning to listen. And how do you teach that? And I think more young people need to know that there's nothing wrong with them. Their ancestors do speak, and it's okay to listen because they're there guiding, they walk with you, you know? So, when we walk the forest, I know that they're walking with me because they've walked it. (personal communication, September 24, 2024)

In the same vein of trees, Sage talked about the cone seedling of a tree and that it works through interconnectedness, that the seeds within the cones are the next generations to continue “the legacies that have been passed along” through the form of stories. As Sage explained, “We are our own story. Our experiences are our stories. We bring our stories with us. Sometimes, you know, it’s understanding too. We also carry the stories of our ancestors ... They walk with us.

¹⁷ Dr. Donald Fixico (Shawnee, Sac and Fox, Muscogee Creek and Seminole) is a distinguished professor, policy historian, and ethnohistorian on topics related to American Indians in the Twentieth Century and in the modern world.

¹⁸ Hilary Stewart is a Canadian writer who wrote books about the Northwest Coast and the First Nation peoples.

¹⁹ Dr. Willard Bill Sr. (Muckleshoot) was an educator and Muckleshoot Tribal historian. He taught for forty years across Washington State in various school districts, community colleges, and universities.

²⁰ Emmett Oliver (Quinault Nation) was an educator in the state of Washington and California. He is revered and highly honored for establishing the “Paddle to Seattle” in the 1989 Washington’s Centennial year. The Paddle to Seattle continues through the annual Canoe Journey.

²¹ Patsy Whitefoot (Yakama) has been a longstanding advocate for Indian Education. In her various roles, she was the Supervisor of Indian Education in Washington State and during the Obama administration, was appointed to the U.S. Department of Education’s National Advisory Council on Indian Education.

²² Sally Brownfield (Squaxin) is an education advocate and educator with over twenty years of teaching experience.

They learn with us.” (personal communication, September 24, 2024). Central to Sage’s educational journey has been the guidance of her ancestors through visions and dreams. She told the story of building a Native pathways program and that she dreamed about ALPINE, which stands for Academic Learning Pathways in Indigenous/Native Education. She called this an “ancestral vision dream” and she was able to make this pathway happen through grant funding and support. This pathway program for Indigenous and Native students focuses on Native knowledge(s) by Native authors. In Sage’s journey, she has carved meaningful space or interconnectedness for Native students and future educators to thrive in university settings. To me, this is heart work because, oftentimes, Native educators in teacher education programs are primarily preparing non-Indigenous teacher candidates. The experience of working with Native students is comparatively different and nuanced when teaching non-Indigenous. In the next section, Sage elaborated on how senses and interconnectedness operate in the state-mandated course on teaching tribal history, culture, and government.

Teaching the JMI STI course through Senses and Interconnectedness. Sage centers “engaging the senses” to connect and learn from land. This was evident as her teaching assistant, where I witnessed Sage teach and place an emphasis on using all senses to engage with land. It became even clearer when I arrived at her home and walked/hiked her backyard. Sage explained that she invited former students and colleagues to come out to her home, to embrace, experience, and engage in all senses because that’s exactly what her home and land offers. The land around her home is encased with plant medicines and foods, just like a grocery store. When Sage and I hiked after the sharing story session, we forged for chanterelle mushrooms. Along the way, she pointed out different plants and also explained where to find them. As I continued to walk the land with Sage leading the way, I reflected on the “Engaging with the Land” assignment from the

required course and thought about how the students would have completed the assignment if they all walked Sage's backyard. I remembered reading many of the student assignments, which mostly walked through their neighborhood that was encased with concrete sidewalks, roads, and buildings. I thought about how different their experience would have been had they trekked through the forest, mapped the land with Sage, and engaged all their senses to cultivate a relationship with it.

Sage acknowledged her pedagogical viewpoint as "broad and big," while we all have "interconnectedness" (personal communication, September 24, 2024) through water and watersheds as holding peoples and lands together. As she described it:

When you look at the watersheds, where water flows... I mean, it's kind of like how we are, you know, it's like your blood flows, like the rivers and... but you see the interconnectedness of the people and where water was part of that life. We come from the womb. We come from the water. When the water breaks, we're born, and water has that connectedness. And so, looking at the watershed map, you see that interconnectedness and this is kind of how I teach. You know, it's engaging the senses. It's understanding that students need to see, smell, touch, hear, taste, or voice, and that innate gut feeling, through the instinctual feeling, is very powerful, and, you know, how they're all interconnected in a balance. But if you take one away, the others become more keen. I had students close their eyes. You know that gut feeling kicks in, the hearing kicks in.

It just becomes more prominent. That's why, you know, with Indigenous cultures, what we call, "special ed," but you're looking at someone who's special, who has a keen sense better than we do. (personal communication, September 24, 2024)

Sage explained the watershed map connecting from North America to South America, and that there are traditional migratory paths near waterways, such as the I-5 freeway being an existing trail since time immemorial. Thus, she understands water as ways in which people are interconnected. As I sat with this, I recalled back to the teacher candidates, specifically the non-Indigenous teacher candidates who contemplated their relationship with land and how they could actively build a relationship with it when it is not their traditional homelands. The teaching that Sage shared illustrates how water acts as a mechanism for bringing us together through the connection of waterways and watersheds. In addition, she brought up engaging senses in relation to students with disabilities. It was reaffirming to hear that Sage conceptualized disabilities as not a deficit, but something that is more keenly heightened in comparison to what is considered “normal.” In another teaching assistant role, I worked with the special education instructors and teacher candidates through the *Introduction to Inclusive Education* course. The cohort was asked to think about disability through an Indigenous lens and to view it as a social construct (Weaver, 2018). In some Indigenous languages, there is no term to describe someone with a disability, but rather they are seen as holding gifts that others do not possess. Sage’s words reminded me about Indigenous perspectives on disability through the example of senses being overly activated when another sense is not fully present. Her pedagogical approach stems from the value of interconnectedness and engaging in senses with/on the land, and it is further reflected in the course assignment, “Engaging with the Land”, where students are asked to walk the land in silence and engage in all senses.

Camas's Story

Relational Meaning-making with Camas

I came to know Camas and her work with the Spokane Tribe through my association with Bitterroot and his doctoral program advisor. Some of the initial encounters with Camas were mostly held in Zoom spaces. I was also advised by Bitterroot's program advisor to reach out to Camas, to learn more about the Spokane Tribal LifeWays curriculum that she helped to co-design and develop. I attended her University of Washington Indigenizing Pedagogies Session and was placed in a breakout room space with her. Similarly, I attended a Native Education forum called, "Share Our Voices, Hear Our Stories," which was for Native educators, parents, and students to connect, share space, tell stories, and, at times, discuss the challenges of Native education in public schools. Camas would usually help to moderate the breakout room sessions. I personally enjoyed these sessions, especially during COVID-19 times. I liked that this virtual space was grounded in storytelling and that there were guiding questions related to the teaching of the story. On Zoom, I would greet Camas and mostly listen in on their conversation and contribute once I heard everyone share. Since then, I've stayed connected with Camas and invited her to be a guest speaker in a course I taught on the *History of American Indian Education*. The first time we met in-person was at the tribal school where Bitterroot co-led a lesson on the stinging nettle plant teachings with Sage and a Colville elder. I'm glad that I was able to witness one of their lessons come to life and to see the students engage in stinging nettle plant teachings that braided Indigenous teachings with science.

Sharing Story on *sp'q'ni?* (Spokan) and Muckleshoot Lands with Camas

Camas shared her story on Zoom with me after I spent the early half of the day at Sage's home. We were both running late, mine was from driving from Sage's home back to my apartment, and Camas was coming back from a family member's event. We both collectively gathered ourselves and hopped on Zoom to start the sharing story session. I gave a brief moment for Camas to look around her home and identify an object that reflected her personal and tribal identities. Camas said that it was unplanned that she would share a hand-painted portrait of her great-grandmother in the garden. Camas showed the portrait to me on Zoom and shared:

She sits behind me all the time while I'm doing work in my closet office. I think in general, it's, you know, the memories and remind me of who, where I came from. I mean, other things are all, I mean, the first thing I thought of was all the cultural stuff I have, like, the stuff that is deeply meaning, to being a Native American and Spokane Indian and living on the reservation and... but that one's like, yeah, because I can't have her here. Remembering where I came from, I think, is what that resembles and what I was taught, and not to stray too far from that, especially when I'm doing my work. So, how she watches over. (personal communication, September 24, 2024)

The portrait of Camas's great-grandmother is a reminder and symbolism of her tribal and cultural upbringings. As she stated, her great-grandmother's presence guides her in staying the course of her community work.

Educational Journey through the Needs of the Community and a Sense of Belonging. Camas grew up on the Spokane Indian reservation, so her cultural teachings were something that were always present. Camas described her schooling experience as not engaging

in Indigenous education, but this was something that she felt was not missing because she had viewed it as separate—cultural teachings at home and not at school. She said,

I had the teachings at home and the people around me and a family around me that filled the gap that the public school system was leaving out and really was two separate spaces, right? When I went to school, I was at school, and it really didn't have anything to do with my heritage or my culture. It was always separate. And when I went home, I, you know, I knew who I was and in going to school, I didn't know what I wanted to do.

(personal communication, September 24, 2024)

Camas further shared that she eventually took an interest in the field of psychology to understand the different kinds of struggles that her community faced living on the reservation, stemming from intergenerational trauma due to the effects of boarding schools. Camas did not start out in Native Education but rather served as an accountant for her tribe's logging business. It was through her daughter's schooling experience and her late husband's involvement with teaching and being part of the universities' cultural programming for teachers to learn about Native culture that pushed her to pursue Native education. In this part of her journey, Camas told the story of running for a school board position,

I decided to run for school board and got on. I started out as just being on the school board and then starting to hear all the stories and realizing just how differently even the Native, Natives that were on the school board were still very assimilated, you know, not sharing culture, not finding it important, not finding it important for teachers that were non-Natives to learn. Even though they were living on the reservation, they were very isolated. They didn't go to events that their students were taking part of the community and stuff like that. So, it just grew from being on the school board and then seeing just

what wasn't happening for our students in the school system. That [it] should have been better, and, you know, that what a difference it made for me and how it could make a difference for them, of having an identity, at least a sense of belonging in the school system. But then the mandate came along shortly after that, with the grant and the Wellpinit school. That's why the Spokane Tribe and the Wellpinit School with [Bitterroot's] grant, it came through even before the mandate did. So, we were already working on it for a year before the mandate happened, so we were ahead of a lot of people in Washington. (personal communication, September 24, 2024)

Furthermore, Camas spoke about building out a curriculum and program for Native students that honored the input and voices of tribal elders, the community, and employees of the tribe. She noted that the project became so big that the local school District was in a sense forced to honor the work and take notice of it. This story illustrated the initial efforts of implementing tribal developed curriculum, and Camas mentioned that other Native peoples were taking interest in starting something similar to the work they established before the state-mandate on requiring all educators to implement tribal history, culture, and government.

Leading up to Camas teaching the JMI STI courses at two universities in Spokane and most recently the required course at the University of Washington in the Native Certification program, she had an opportunity to co-teach a tribal elders course at an Idaho-based university. Camas gave credit to Dr. Phillip Stevens for getting her to teach in teacher education programs for the state-mandated courses.

Teaching the JMI STI course through a Sense of Belonging. Camas has taught the JMI STI course in a span of six different classes. She approaches the course with the understanding that each time she teaches it, there will be different students from various backgrounds coming in

with different levels of understanding. With that said, she prioritized building a sense of belonging for the students. Camas described her pedagogical approach as:

I think the main thing, like, it's always been, How do you give your students a sense of belonging and not that erasure? That's a big thing for me to make sure that we never talk about Natives in past tense, and that they know that, and that they have that understanding of why the families of some of their students, not just Native but any of them, but they don't have an understanding of who their students are and what their families are, and who their communities are. They also have to share who they are. I mean, it's reciprocal. They also have that openness to share for that sense of belonging you'll never get past. If you don't do that, you'll never get past the distrust for any of them, maybe an openness to even start to learn things. It's just the more successful student if, if you get... if they feel comfortable and wanted in that space, then seen and heard. (personal communication, September 24, 2024)

Camas also explained that she does not release her syllabus, until she has a sense of who is in her class. As she pointed out, she does not take the “one size fits all” approach and tries to keep an open mind because she only knows what she knows and does not know what the students know prior to taking the mandatory one-credit course.

A limitation of the mandatory course has been the lack of credit hours offered—one credit hour—that barely meets the minimum requirement for teacher candidates to learn and teach about tribal history, culture, and government. Given this limitation, I asked Camas what she would add or change to her existing course syllabus, if there were more credit hours. She responded by saying:

I think, more hands-on experience. Actually, immersion into what, not just having this hypothetical of this is how it is, or this is... these sites that are historical and why they make a difference, or, and more I would show more personal stories for the... for the people in our communities, and that are ones that are willing to share. Of course, not, yeah, but I think just giving definitely, if I had the time they would be, I'd bring them, even sharing myself more. I would bring them to my home. I would show them what I have, you know, it'd make sense in my family, if I felt, you know, after I've learned who they are first. But I would say more immersion, more hands-on, that's what I would change. (personal communication, September 24, 2024)

This sentiment reminded me of Sage's pedagogical approach of having students engage in all senses through immersion, being immersed with the land. Sensory learning also encompasses and fosters hands-on experience. Like Sage, Camas would bring the students to her home so they could immerse themselves in her traditional homelands. Through this immersion, students could also build their sense of belonging to lands that are not their homelands.

Rose's Story

Relational Meaning-making with Rose

Before meeting Rose, I had closely engaged and examined her JMI STI curriculum work, as she was a co-writer in establishing the state-wide JMI STI curriculum, at the time, it was referred to as STI. Rose also had recorded videos on supporting educators in teaching about Native history in social studies classes. I remembered watching her videos to support my own learning of the STI curriculum. Her videos were also featured in one of Sage's course

discussions. All of this is to say that Rose has been a beam lighting in aiding all educators to implement some of the scripted JMI STI lessons for K-12 learners.

I recalled the first time I met Rose was in a graduate course titled, *Indigenous Pedagogies*, that was offered by Bitterroot's and Rose's doctoral advisor. It was a five-session, condensed course with a full class session on a Saturday. Actually, Bitterroot, Rose, and I all took that course at the same time. This class space provided us a sense of community, and for me, reaffirmed Indigenous pedagogies in the ways I envisioned, like through storytelling and working with the land. Also, it was great to be in conversation with them, as our research focused on Indigenous pedagogies and education. There were two class sessions that I remember the most. One was when we were asked to retell the Yakama story called *Ay-Ay-ish Girl*²³ and the other when we worked with clay. The day we worked with clay, we molded our clay into the objects that we outlined in an initial assignment. I molded my clay into a medium-sized bowl with a corn stalk and sheep design etched on the side of the clay bowl. Similarly, Rose created a bowl like project with a snake coiled in the center of it. The bowl-like structure was a resemblance of the cedar basket that *Ay-Ay-Girl* tried to weave with the assistance of Grandma Cedar tree. Beyond the course, we continue to support each other's work. As mentioned in Cedar's story, Rose gathered us to support her research work at the ETI conference. Most recently, she invited Native educators to come witness the teacher candidates' end of the year lesson plan presentation. It was very moving, as I got to be in community with another Native educator and witness two teacher candidates' lesson plans on the importance of salmon and

²³ *Ay-Ay-ish Girl* is a Sahaptin story from the Confederated Tribes of the Yakama Nation. This story is retold by storyteller, Roger Fernandes, who designed a mural of this story on the third floor of the College of Education at the University of Washington. The story is about a little girl who was called *Ay-Ay-ish* (dumb or stupid) and she tries to weave a tight woven cedar basket. It is through the assistance and encouragement of Grandma Cedar Tree that she prospers and is granted woven designs from the mountains and from the snake (The Creative Advantage, 2020).

preparing students to learn about the Boldt Decision. Moreover, we are part of the *čaway'altx^w* *ʔiišəd*, Shell House Canoe Family, have participated in Tribal Canoe Journey.

Sharing Story on Coast Salish Lands with Rose

Rose and I met on the university campus, specifically at the *wəlabʔaltx^w* (Intellectual House), which is longhouse style building and gathering place for American Indian and Indigenous students, staff/faculty, and the community. I had been in the longhouse for most of the day, as I had hosted an Indigenous Family Luncheon. The event concluded two hours before I was supposed to meet Rose there, so the longhouse was empty and filled with silence. When Rose arrived, we sat on the wooden benches near the outlet, as my computer needed to be charged. We began the sharing story session with sharing an object. Rose visually described her object as the JMI STI logo that was illustrated by storyteller and artist Roger Fernandes. Rose described her tribal identities as:

It's interesting because it's only been since I've lived over here as a teacher that I've really... that I've really connected with... with my Muckleshoot family and, and that's been wonderful, and, you know, and I'm still, of course, you know, with my Yakama family because I was born and raised there. (personal communication, October 17, 2024)

Rose's decision for selecting the JMI STI logo was to show her “duality” of being Muckleshoot and Yakama, since the logo shows two distinct designs side-by-side: one side portrays the Columbia Plateau basket design and the other side represents the Coast Salish eagle design using traditional Coast Salish formline art.

Educational Journey through Embracing Identity. Rose elaborated on what it felt like to be Indigenous in the eighties. She said:

It's really been a journey since, you know, since I was, I guess, in junior high or so that time, you know, being Indian in the '80s was not necessarily a fashionable thing. So, I learned to be white, and that's the part that I embraced. I didn't have any Native friends. I didn't go to any rodeos or anything like that. And it wasn't until I became a teacher that I realized, you know, I was seriously tokenized. I was just telling Kiana that in our class together, when folks found out that I was teaching at Kirkland Junior High, that I was Native, they're like, "Oh, can you get us dancers?" and, like, and at that time, it's like, "Sure, yeah!" So that just started kind of a little bit. (personal communication, October 17, 2024)

Rose told her story of removing herself from Native identity, then embracing it as she was seen for being Native when she became a teacher. Moving forward into her educational journey to embracing her Native roots, she takes a turn to learn from the teachings of her aunt Carol and eventually returns home to the state of Washington. Rose shared the next part of her educational journey:

Then I taught in California, and I thought, "Oh, I'm gonna put together an elective course." And so, I sought out my auntie Carol to get some information. I am not an Indian expert. Nobody's an Indian expert. But if that's how I'm going to be seen, you know who's going to teach them? Who's going to teach them if I don't? And so, my aunt Carol was just very instrumental in that. She just shifted everything that she could about our tribe to me in California and so that really just started the journey. And then when I moved back up here, just to come home and start a family. I wanted to get involved. So, I just drove down to Olympia, met with Denny Hurtado, and I said, "Use me." And so, my journey grew from there, you know, from being at all of the committee meetings that he

didn't want to go to, to actually starting to write some curriculum, and then becoming the primary writer for Since Time Immemorial. And then it just grew bigger and bigger and bigger and bigger. So, it just became part of who I was as a teacher and so I've been on this journey for just a very long time, teaching, training, meeting folks where they are, which is the, really, the most important part, and then just developing the curriculum.

(personal communication, October 17, 2024)

As Rose mentioned, there was a shift in wanting to be part of the narrative change, specifically through curriculum change, by capturing Native perspectives, presence, and rewriting history. As I heard Rose tell her story to the point where she is currently, I would have never thought this was how her initial journey began. I am thankful that Rose started this part of her journey because it was a drastic change in embracing Native identity. I could see why she is a strong advocate and voice for Native Education as she continues to teach, train, and develop curriculum.

Teaching the JMI STI course through Indigenous Pedagogies. Rose brought up in the sharing story her concerns for mentor teachers not being properly trained to support their teacher candidates to implement JMI STI. She described it as “a lot of moving parts that are just not in place yet,” which is a systemic issue that needs addressing and redressing from multiple pinpoints. In this case, Rose identified through the JMI STI course the lack of curriculum implementation, which stems from mentor teachers not training their teacher candidates to implement the curriculum and the building administrators not consistently calling on educators to implement the required curriculum. So, in her JMI STI course, she stated:

At the end of the day, boots on the floor. You know, the boots are on the ground. These teachers have to teach this curriculum. They need to know the mechanics of it. It is really

important that they understand Indigenous pedagogies, and that they learn about place based learning and our history here, that's really important. That's kind of like, for me, that's the launching off point, yeah, because they don't know what they don't know. And then how the course has evolved into what I plan to start teaching next week is, you know, this is the history, and so forth, and then, there's the pedagogy. What does that pedagogy look like in a classroom? What does—and how does—that impact since time immemorial, which doesn't use ontology, epistemology, axiology, but it's all there. It doesn't say Universal Design for Learning [UDL], but it's there. Yeah, it doesn't say, you know, Gholdy Muhammad's historical principles, but they're there. (personal communication, October 17, 2024)

The JMI STI curriculum is inextricably linked to the many facets of Indigenous pedagogy that include UDL and Gholdy Muhammad's Historically Responsive Literacy (HRL) framework that teacher candidates are required to include in their lesson plans. Rose calls this out and further calls on the need for learning about the history of the place through place-based learning. She shared that a student attempted to write their own lesson, as opposed to adapting a lesson from the JMI STI curriculum. However, Rose told the student that the lesson plan was not ready, even after two revisions. She took the student's lesson plan as an example to share with her other students on how much additional preparation is required to write a lesson plan related to tribal history, culture, and government. In her class, she does this by:

Giving them that base of history, and then getting at what they don't know. And then moving into, okay, let's see what this looks like in action. Let's take a look at, like, what I'm doing differently right now is that a student last year wanted to build her own lesson, rather than adapting an STI unit or lesson ... Let's see how we can apply these concepts

to really bring this into an understanding of history and then an understanding of math, and then an understanding of present identity. I said it because it all has to go together.

So, I thought, we'll do that, and then we're going to work on that together.

Rose engaged her teacher candidates to scaffold in adapting a JMI STI lesson plan through Indigenous perspectives and pedagogy. As she explained, it is a multi-layered approach that has the students apply the concepts that they learned in class and to center contemporary Native peoples today, with the understanding of history and other school-related content areas.

Returning back to Rose's end of the quarter showcase, the teacher candidates presented their adapted lesson plan and from the ones that I heard from, they designed their lesson plan to reflect a contextualized history component with contemporary Native presences and tied it with another content area.

Chapter Five: Understandings (Part II: Story Rugs)

Weaving on Coast Salish lands and waters during the wettest season (November to February) of the year is something I never imagined myself experiencing—it was a true testament to my patience. In accordance with Diné teachings, the act of weaving is dependent on the weather and follows the time and order of the rain. Diné protocol of weaving is to pause all weaving during a rainy day, even from a distance when rain clouds are in sight. My first encounter with the rainy season and weaving was during a rainy summer when I first learned to weave. In the southwest, our rainy season is typically a two-week period of thunderstorms, or what is often referred to as the “monsoon season.” I was near completion of my first rug when the monsoon season arrived. Every day that summer, I woke up early, walked to my grandma’s house and sat outside with my loom under the *chaha’oh* (sun/shade shelter). I remembered *Shináli* telling me to stop weaving! In bewilderment, I did what was instructed. I couldn’t ask why because we were both monolingual; she spoke Navajo and I spoke English. I quickly called on one of my aunts to help me translate, so I could ask *Shináli* why I can’t weave. As *Shináli* told my aunt, who then retold it to me, we don’t weave when it rains because we respect the rain; we respect the rain beings, which includes the rainfall, the thunderclouds, the land, the sky, and the in-betweens (e.g., sunrays, rainbows, sunbeams). Then, she told me why, without going into further detail of the creation story (I later connected the creation story to the weaving teaching, as these stories were told to me before, during the winter season). Due to creation story protocol, I did not have permission to tell the origin stories of weaving and the story of *Na’ashjé’íi Asdzáá* (Spider Woman). These stories are only told during the winter season, when the more-than-human relatives, like the spiders, go into a state of dormancy. It is another example of showing reverence and respect by honoring the gifts they passed down to us alongside their

teachings. These are the Diné values (e.g., reverence, respect, and reciprocity) that I continue to follow and practice.

As you might imagine, the process of weaving the nine relatives' stories during the Pacific Northwest's rainy season was not straightforward and followed the time of the rain. The circumstances did not feel ideal at the start of it all, but it eventually alchemized into nine incredible story rugs. Throughout the weaving process, I monitored the forecast on my phone and scrolled down to find a sun icon, which indicated that it was going to be a clear, sunny day. It took me back to that monsoon season. To help subdue the anticipation, I would write, be in community spaces, or go for a swim. I took up swimming over the course of this waiting period because I knew there was something brewing related to the concept of water. When I would swim, I would try to make water connections that were either located in relatives' stories or in my own personal life. I found several water relations in the relatives' stories, such as Cedar's Healing of the Canoe (HOC) teachings, and Alder's stories about living/working on the West Coast and always being near water. In my personal connection, I was reminded that water is in my third and fourth clans, which are Big Water and Edgewater clans. I reflected on how my tribal identities are an embodiment of water, and how I need to continue to build a better relationship with water. This took me back to when I heard Quinault storyteller Harvest Moon tell the story of "How Otter Brought Rain to the People?" at a Native gathering online, and a second time at an in-person event inside the campus longhouse. I won't retell the entire story, but I'll skip to the end of it where Harvest invites us to give thanks to Otter because Otter brought rain back to the people. Her closing remarks were, "Anytime it rains, give thanks to Otter." Her story shifted my perspective from initially dreading rain, to thanking Otter for being the entity of both land and water, thus allowing us to live in flourishing lands that are fed from the rain. The

story of Otter also teaches the value of reverence, reciprocity, respect, and responsibility. These were teachings that I wanted teacher candidates (TCs) to experience, so I invited Harvest to tell this story in the mandatory course. I can't confirm if all the TCs walked away with the same lesson—or that they continue to practice this teaching to this day. Still, as Roger Fernandes so eloquently says at the end of his storytelling, “It’s up to the listener to interpret the story and find meaning.” (personal communication, Winter 2024) In line with Roger’s teaching and in weaving, I reflected on his teaching to find meaning in the nine relatives’ stories.

In part two, I introduce each of the relatives’ story rugs through visuals and vignettes. The story rugs represent symbols, patterns, and metaphors to re-story relatives’ identities, educational journeys, pedagogical pathways, and visions for transforming Indigenous education. I presented the story rugs in two sharing circles held online: the first sharing circle brought together Reed, Marigold, Bitterroot, Sage, Camas, and Rose; the second sharing circle featured Willow and Alder. Cedar was not able to attend either sharing circle. These sharing circles served two purposes: first, to gift the stories back to relatives in the form of a story rug; and secondly, to provide a space for us (Indigenous teacher educators) to envision the state-mandated course as a transformative site for Indigenous education. The collective discussion amongst relatives aimed at addressing the second research question: In what ways do we (Indigenous teacher educators) re-story and envision a pedagogical pathway for Indigenous education in relation to self, to the local tribal communities, and to the teacher preparation programs?

In the next section, I recount the sharing circle sessions by gifting relatives a Diné rug with their re-storied stories that visually captured aspects of their educational journeys, pedagogical pathways, and transforming Indigenous education. This is followed by the second sharing circle, which also followed the same order of events.

Sharing Circle with Relatives

Sharing Circle I

At the first sharing circle, we gathered on a Sunday morning via Zoom. Relatives entered the virtual meeting room one after the other, which provided me a brief moment to re/acquaint myself with relatives. Some relatives had an existing relationship with one another through past gatherings; for others, it was their first time meeting each other. As an Indigenous formality, we proceeded with introductions to signify our relations, re-connections, and coming to know one another. Relatives introduced themselves by name, tribal affiliation(s), institution, and location. After this, I shared my computer screen to project the sharing circle protocol document as an agenda for the meeting. The agenda included a check-in, introduction prompt, the preliminary understandings/findings that were woven into the seven story rugs, and guiding discussion questions (see *Appendix B*). To set the tone of the gathering, I started with a story supported with lots of photos, projecting a slide (see *Appendix C*) that displayed two artworks by Eliza Naranjo Morse (see Methodology chapter, *Figure 1 & 2*). I began by retelling the story of Eliza's art, as it was told during her campus visit presentation. I featured Eliza's artwork to signify that as Indigenous peoples and educators, we each carry with us our own unique experiences, knowledge systems, and most importantly, our family and ancestors. In the "A Prayer Making Its Way" artwork, I spotlighted the spiritual symbolic representation of the cumulonimbus thunder clouds with rain touching the ground, in parallel to our ancestors walking with us and propelling us forward on our journey. I continued to refer to this piece as a way for me to track relatives' stories and have them reflect on their journeys and pathways toward Indigenous education. As Cajete (1994) reminds us:

Indigenous education in process is following tracks in a particular field or level of natural, social, or spiritual reality. This tracking at any given dimension requires opening one's mind to the possibilities within each of the many concentric circles in that dimensions (p.122).

Through Cajete's guidance of returning to story, I began with listening to all the relatives' stories, tracking their stories, and using those tracks in their journeys and pathways to develop symbols. As I visualized the symbols, I decided to weave them into the story rugs. Cajete (1994) explained the importance of engaging in symbols from an Indigenous paradigm, "In this Indigenously modeled approach, a first track begins with a symbol. It is these symbols that are the keys to access the myth [oral story], the relationships of concentric circles, and knowledge and perceptions of natural realities" (p.122). Thus, I shared with the relatives the cultural significance of the Diné teachings of weaving, the act of respecting the loom through relevance and reciprocity, and the process of weaving their individual rugs into the stories.

The symbols and patterns in the rugs were presented as initial, preliminary findings. With some relatives, tracking their stories to reveal symbols was instantaneous; with others, I had to ruminate on it a few days before a symbol presented itself. While I did not hand draw any of these symbols and patterns on paper, I clung to the stories that I remembered the most and continued to visualize it. Eventually, these visual imageries became cohesive designs for their rugs. Moreover, I considered how the story rug best represented the relatives' identities, educational journeys, pedagogical pathways, and visions for transforming the state-mandated course and beyond.

When presenting the story rugs to the relatives, I explained the process of re-storying their stories, which was weaving symbols and designs that represented stories of their identities,

educational journeys, pedagogical pathways, and/or visions for Indigenous education. Alongside this, I felt that it was important to discuss the context of when their rugs were woven, as the rug designs were informed by time, place, and our kinship relationships. In the next section, I re-story the nine story rugs that offer a visual for the featured story rugs and the vignettes that inspired the emergence of each symbol and pattern woven into the rugs.

Re-storied Story Rugs

Vignette #1: Reimagining Indigenous Education with Reed

Figure 6.

Indigenous Education as a Camp-Circle—Tipi



Reed's story was the first to be woven. It was also my first time weaving a rug to that scale, so I utilized "weaving tools" that could fit to a smaller sizable scale and repurposed materials nearby. For instance, I used a wooden pencil as the top and bottom rods of the loom and used a 11-by-7 inch small weaving loom that was stored away in my university's Native makerspace from a previous weaving workshop. In this way, I relied on "indigenuity" to gather

weaving tools and materials to construct a small-scale loom. Once I had set up the loom, I decided to start with the first pattern my grandmother taught me, which she explained resembled “stepping-stones.” This pattern signifies the importance of restarting by clearing one’s mind and working towards a goal. I felt that it was also important to show the work of Indigenous education situated in the community from the ground up. Reed’s story rug coincided with these symbolic representations, as it set the course for the relatives’ story rugs.

When I re-storied Reed’s story during the sharing circle session, I pointed out two symbolic patterns found in the rug: the stepping-stone pattern and the tipi. I explained the meaning of the red stepping-stone patterns on the sides of the rug. Upon further analysis, I connected the stepping-stones to Reed’s experience of being in conversation with students who are attempting to develop a critical consciousness when it comes to understanding Indigenous perspectives. Reed spoke of the importance of remembering and returning to critical conversations, especially when teaching an introductory course on Native peoples. As Reed said:

It's like you're having to repeat the same level one stuff, over and over with people, finding a million ways to say the same thing to try to figure out which one sticks and you're not having, like, the really critical conversations about, like, what do we actually need to be doing as Native people? You know? I mean, like, what's our actual future building? What are the actual, critical conversations that we need to be having with one another that are much more nuanced, much more complicated, much more in depth and much more engaging? And when you're stuck in, like, this mode over here talking to white people... I think what you start to do over time is you start to, like, forget all of these other things. Like, if you're not doing what you're talking about, you do start forgetting, like, what the horizon of possibility actually could be and what the actual

critical conversations are. You'll just be stuck in these boring conversations, and if you don't find ways and spaces and communities to break out of that, I think you slowly start to absorb that sort of thinking and mentality and values. You get really, "lost in the sauce," when it comes to, like, settler colonialism. (personal communication, August 28, 2024)

Reed's words are a reminder to me to balance the introductory, state-mandated course work with engaging in criticality with/for Native communities. Reed's statement resonated with me because I could compare teaching at a tribal college *with* my community and teaching an introductory course *to* predominantly white and international students, who held little to no knowledge about Native peoples, histories, government, and culture. Reflecting on both experiences, I understood the repetitive nature of teaching an introductory course without getting to the critical work, such as moving beyond land acknowledgement, recognition, and representation. What Reed articulated also resonates with the four dimensions of the transformational Indigenous praxis model (TIPM). The "level one stuff" he speaks of is what would be considered dimension one: contributions approach. Educators in dimension one "have not yet developed their consciousness to critically examine school structures and curriculum content" (Pewewardy et al., 2022, p.4). Meanwhile, educators in dimension four (cultural and social justice action), "demonstrate a deep embodiment of critical consciousness" and actively work towards social justice (Pewewardy et al., 2022, p.6). The dimensions help to understand how Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators grapple with settler colonialism and what actions can help to unsettle it through the metaphor of wave-jumping, which is the act of moving forward (through the various dimensions) and receding back (resistances along the way), like water. Like wave-jumping, the stepping-stones act as these dimensions by moving toward an Indigenous critical consciousness,

and in some cases, stepping back and engaging in the other layered dimensions (also non-linearly, but cyclically) in academic spaces.

Building from TIPM, the fourth dimension resonates with the tipi symbol woven in the rug. The symbolism of the tipi, I initially understood it as a “third space,”²⁴ because it applies to the work we (Reed, Marigold, other members, and I) were doing in the Indigenous collective, also connects to the tipi is the Indigenous collective’s logo (see *Figure 7*). The illustration on the logo is of two tipis to denote a camp-circle among relatives and community that embodies the traditional peripatetic movement of the camp-circles since time immemorial (Deloria, 1998). With further reading from the book, *Speaking of Indians*, which Reed sent me, I understand the meaning of tipis in a camp-circle. Yankton Sioux scholar Ella Cara Deloria (1998) defined camp-circle as:

Each family set up its tipi in such a way as to help form the camp-circle, the unifying ring of which they were all a vital part. All tipis faced the council-tipi, which stood in the center of the great open common and was the focus of community life and thought (p.26).

Reed alluded to camp-circles as a form of Indigenous education. The significance of the camp-circle today is to hold space and engage in intellectual dialogue outside of Western academia spaces, like we do in the collective.

Figure 7.

Indigenous Collective Logo, Illustrated by Dr. Jeremy Rouse

²⁴ A “third space” works in tandem with La paperson’s concept of, a “third university” or a “third world university”, meaning a decolonial university while working toward a fourth world university that is outside of the university context (La paperson, 2017).



Moving away from Westernized academic spaces toward a third space, like the tipi symbol that is etched in the Indigenous collective, creates a space for Indigenous educators and allies to dialogue in Dimension Four conversations. Reed posed a reflective question for Indigenous educators working in institutional school settings, “Who are you outside of this, like, Western structure and outside of this education system?” The point Reed was trying to get at was that, as Native educators, our values as educators not only exist within the classroom space but also outside, in the actual communities. Reed explained this as, the work that Native educators do is for the “love of your people” and to work toward being a better Indigenous educator through self-work, “You’d have to really be grounded in your community, which is an ongoing process, and it’s something that always has to be affirmed and reaffirmed over and over again.” Reed mentioned that educators must have a cultural grounding to make cultural connections. Without that proper grounding, they cannot identify who they are, where they come from, and their relationship with more-than-human relatives. Thus, it makes it difficult for non-Indigenous educators to understand cultural connections and relationality, especially if they themselves have not done the work. These were specific stories and quotes that stuck with me from weaving together his stories into a story rug. The rug embodies Reed’s pedagogical pathways for envisioning Indigenous education within Indigenous communities and spaces.

Vignette #2: Understanding and Learning Indigenous Perspectives with Marigold

Figure 8.

Crossing and Calling Between Mountains



Marigold's story rug is titled, "Crossing and Calling Between Mountains" (see *Figure 8*) and it was woven a day after completing Reed's rug. There are three symbolic designs found within Marigold's story rug to reflect her educational journey, experiences teaching the state-mandated course, and visions for Indigenous education. The designs include the symmetrical owl feathers, two grey mountains, and a snowcap mountain that I refer to as Mount Tahoma, or what is now called Mount Rainier. The owl feather was the first design to be woven, since this was a prominent piece of Marigold's story that stood out to me. It's a story that holds spiritual teachings and sacred values, often through the form of messages sent through messengers/gatekeepers (Cajete, 1994), such as an animal, for the Navajo people, our messenger is the coyote. Marigold was sent a message from the messenger, *Shee-na*, or the owl, to remind her to slow down and reconsider her decisions. As Marigold shared:

One time, I was feeling really conflicted after leaving [tribal school] and deciding to return to Spokane and trying to decide if I even wanted to stay in education, working with Native people, and I was getting really close to leaving the field altogether. One morning, I was going for a walk, and I'm in, like, not even suburb Spokane. This is, like, very urban Spokane. And as I was walking, I was having all these thoughts, well, I'm just gonna... I'm just gonna quit. I don't care, this is too much work. This is hopeless. I didn't even see that on the ground as I was walking down the street. But then in that moment, I looked up from walking the dog, and there was an owl feather on the ground. It was definitely a message that *Shee-na* [owl] sent to me, and one that made me think more deeply about my decision to stay in the education field for Native students and Native people. One to not be so hasty and just always be in “yes” or “no,” or “I'm going to do this,” or “I'm fed up, I'm done.” I think that that feather represents me trying to slow down and not be so hasty with decisions, so it's an important reminder. (personal communication, August 27, 2024)

As I heard Marigold tell this story, I thought of it as a pivotal moment that set in motion her continuation in the field of education and working for and with Native peoples. I knew the feather was a symbol that I wanted to weave into Marigold's story rug. I felt it was vital to capture an aspect of her educational journey, prior to teaching the state-mandated course. Thus, the owl feathers were the first symbols woven into the rug to lay the foundation, then it was followed by the two grey mountains. The mountains emerged from the second day of the sharing story session with both Marigold and Reed. I asked them, “Share stories of success and/or challenges that you face (or have faced) throughout your journey to teach this course?” Marigold said that a one-credit, six-course session was not enough time to prepare teacher candidates,

given the importance of the course and the state-mandate. In addition, the nature of “accelerated” teacher education programs are fast paced, which limits the students from deeply engaging with the content. Marigold further contextualized the challenges of teaching non-Indigenous students from an Indigenous worldview by drawing from a quote in the book, *Power and Place: Indian Education in America*. The quote in reference was:

All education, formal academic education and practical educational learning experiences, exists in the gulf between Indians and other peoples and their perspectives on the nature of the world... Whatever Indians are asked to do must be done from within the traditional Indian perspective, from a critical examination of the nature of the task, and with the understanding that professional expertise is but a specific body of knowledge existing within the gulf between the two cultures. (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001, p.110)

Marigold summarized it as “being able to cross a chasm between two worlds” or “two sides of a mountain,” where one side of the mountain is “white culture” and the other side is “Native culture.” She expressed that Native students are able to cross between mountains, that we (Native peoples) know Western knowledge and Indigenous knowledge. But when it comes to non-Indigenous teacher candidates, they are confronted with settler history from an Indigenous perspective, they acknowledge the painful histories through grief, and it’s an awakening that they explained was not previously taught to them in K-12. Marigold called on these students to move past this and be part of the change, she stated:

You’re duped too and so be mad at that. Don’t stay stuck on being mad that you didn’t know there was a massacre of Native peoples in California for the Gold Rush, like you can be there. But move further into the next step of being able to dismantle that system,

or at least critique it. And, so it's very labor intensive to get them there. It's pretty challenging. (personal communication, August 28, 2024)

Marigold acknowledged the challenge of preparing non-Indigenous teacher candidates in moving them past guilt, grief, and essentially Dimension One of TIPM (Pewewardy et al., 2022). In the process of moving teacher candidates away settler innocence (Tuck & Yang, 2012), Marigold said it required emotional labor and intensive work from her. Similar to what Marigold shared about co-planning a course with a non-Indigenous teacher educator, it was labor intensive too (see *Understandings/Findings Part I*). In this case, Marigold recommended that there needs to be a non-Indigenous teacher educator or facilitator to work with non-Indigenous teacher candidates to unpack their experiences, whiteness, and grief, so Indigenous teacher educators did not have to do the work for them. It is a matter of being able to navigate both cultures, the white and Native culture (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001)—or navigating and crossing between the two grey hills as illustrated in the story rug. Further, the snow-capped mountain represents a reimagined space, like the tipi, where both cultures merge, where both knowledge systems can work in unison and educators can cross between (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001).

Vignette #3: Mobilizing Ancestral Connections with Bitterroot

Figure 9.

Mobilizing Ancestral Teachings and Connections



Bitterroot's rug was the next rug woven; it was woven during the 2024 presidential election. It was a tumultuous day of uncertainty and nerve-wrecking anxiety. I was glued to my television screen for the state electoral vote updates. Despite it all, I preoccupied myself with weaving Bitterroot's rug as I found the act of weaving very calming. Unfortunately, Bitterroot's rug paid a price for being woven during the election. The rug was not symmetrical in length—one side was longer than the other. I had woven the top of the rug tightly, causing the rug to pull inward and inward, probably from all the tension of pulling the wool yarn without leaving equal spacing. It was uncanny that the timing aligned with weaving Bitterroot's story, but coming to know him, it also wasn't a surprise as Bitterroot is known to go against the grain and challenge the status quo.

During the sharing circle, I shared the process of weaving Bitterroot's rug and in the context in which it was woven. Then I shared the meaning of the rug. To the naked eye, the rug might resemble a quilt or a lined blanket, but this design represents an abstracted *metata*, or a grounding stone. Bitterroot's rug is titled "Mobilizing Ancestral Teachings and Connections"

(see *Figure 9*). When I had asked Bitterroot to showcase an object that best represented his personal or tribal identities, he pointed out a lot of items in his home. One in particular stood out to me was the *metate*. Bitterroot told the story of how he received the *metate*:

So, what I have... there is a couple of different things, actually, but the *metate*, so that was gifted to me from one of my aunts down in Mexico last time I was there. And it's, you know, it's fairly big, and it's a tool that was used by my grandmother, and just passed down, I guess, to me more recently, but that is, you know, that's a connection to my Indigenous roots from Central America... My aunt, one of my aunts down there, said [to] one of my uncles, they were, like, "Well, now you've got it [*metate*], now you've got to learn to use it and make corn tortillas. And I laughed a little bit. (personal communication, August 28, 2024)

Hearing this story, I was flooded with my own stories of physical and spiritual gifts passed down to me by family members. As I sat with Bitterroot's story, it made sense to weave the very essence of the *metate*, the weathered and discolored surface of the stone that grinded food for generational nourishment. The *metate* not only symbolizes his personal identity but also serves as a reminder of the gifts that we, as Indigenous peoples, receive from our ancestors. It is rooted in place, and it comes from a place of cultural connectivity, thus making it a mobilized gift that could be carried with an individual away from their ancestral homelands. Building on this idea of gifts, Bitterroot discussed the importance of operating from a value set as an educator to connect with Indigenous communities. He stated:

The biggest factor that hangs us up is, or well, is our value set, right? Like our values and how we approach the world tends to be our biggest hang up ... Oftentimes our values dictate our relationship with other people, and so I don't know [if] the educators quite

recognize that. Actually, even more recently, we did a learning engagement or learning experience for a school system up here and we're always seeking ways to incorporate tribal knowledges and the comments. Some of the comments we got back from our co-educators were around stewardship and to some degree they're right... You know, [Indigenous] people lived and operated in these places and spaces forever, and it was done with care. And that's the thing about, like, reciprocity, you know, being reciprocal in nature is recognizing that balance. And within that Western paradigm, when we're operating from that value set, it's like, "No, don't touch that. Or it's like, we've used this space in place so much that we've destroyed it completely." Like there's no middle ground there. And so really kind of thinking pedagogically about, you know, "How do we get people to slow down enough to recognize what value set they're operating from?" Well, also recognizing whose value set is in play or... or operating when it comes to things like stewardship. (personal communication, August 28, 2024)

Bitterroot recognized that educators are contending with their value sets, whether that's from an Indigenous and/or Western paradigm, which results in educators pondering if they are "allowed" or if they don't feel "comfortable" to partake in Indigenous gatherings. For instance, educators might not feel comfortable attending a ceremony, or might (not?) be allowed to. Bitterroot sees this resistance as an individual operating from an Indigenous perspective if they are not allowed to attend for ceremonial purposes and recognize the sacredness of it through respect, whereas an individual who operates from a Western perspective might find it uncomfortable. It is examples like this that "hang up" educators, as they need to operate from both value systems to determine the culturally appropriate decision. Moreover, holding both value sets becomes a crucial point for building relationships with the Indigenous communities. If this is not followed, the relationship

is not mutually beneficial; instead, it becomes extractive. Bitterroot spoke about a time he experienced this extractive knowledge pushed by educators:

I just got, recently, asked to help do some stuff for a mid-sized school district over here for an outdoor learning engagement. And it felt extractive. It felt not just extractive. It felt, I mean, it's just the way Western, it's the way white educators operate, you know? It didn't feel relational. It was, you know, "Hey, what can you do for us?" Yeah, when we shared, "Boom, boom, boom." Then they're like, "Yeah, that sounds good." And so it was, you know, like you're trying to fit what we're doing into a box when, really, what we're saying is, "This is about relationship, and if you can't do it as an educator on your end, then you are recreating the same thing that we're saying can't be recreated. If you can't develop a relationship with me in this context, then how do I know you're going to develop a relationship with a kiddo? How do I know that you're going to develop a relationship with the community member outside of your community?" You're not. You know, because it's extractive, because you want something that you think will contribute towards multiculturalism, or diversity, or STI, but you're still doing it in an extractive way. (personal communication, August 28, 2024)

Bitterroot's previous interactions with educators, as he explained, felt like non-Indigenous educators come from a place of extraction, by extracting knowledge to appease "equitability" and not seeing the knowledge(s) as gifts. He says that educators want this knowledge for free, wanting free and available resources to teach *about* Indigenous knowledge without thinking about the amount of work that it takes or, and the cost that should be built-in for paying Indigenous curriculum developers. Bitterroot named the transactional feeling of curriculum development work and stressed that educators lean into pedagogy of relationality and reciprocity.

Like the *metate*, it is grounded and refines hard substance, or pedagogically speaking, being rooted in oneself in relation to community, and continuing to refine that relationship over time. The *metate* serves as a reminder that not all knowledge(s) can be bought, rather it's a gift that only a specific group of knowledge holders acquire.

Vignette #4: Building Community with Sage

Figure 10.

Restoring/Rebalancing Lands and Peoples



Sage's rug was woven a week after Bitterroot's rug. This short break allowed time for my loom to rest during the holiday season as family visited. It also provided sufficient time for the wool yarns to arrive in the mail. Up to this point, I realized that I did not have any purples, blues, and greens in my collection of wool yarn. I have never woven with purple-dyed wool yarn before, so I was eager to use the different hues of purple. The purple wool yarn was the first to be woven in Sage's rug, titled "Restoring/Rebalancing Lands and Peoples" (see *Figure 10*). The story rug symbols represent five patches of lupines, a plant native to the Pacific Northwest. The

significance of the lupines was explained by Sage during her sharing story session and retold in her previous courses.

During the sharing circle, I shared that my past weaving designs did not include vivid colors like deep purple, bright blue, and lush green, so that it was something that I had to acquire when planning for the rug design colors. The symbols in Sage's rug immediately came to mind. A contributing factor might have been that I had the most interaction with Sage amongst the other relatives. I spent the most time with her when I served as her reader/grader in the state-mandated course, where I was fortunate to listen to the stories she told in her course. The story that called to me the most was about the pods of lupine flowers springing from the ashes days after the eruption of Mount St. Helens. Sage shared a metaphor of this story in relation to building community and interconnectedness in education:

I'll use the analogy of the teaching of when Mount St. Helens blew. Our Governor at the time was Dixy Lee Ray, and she was UW scientist, Dr. Dixy Lee Ray. She preserved the entire area that blew the gray-scape, the moonscape, they called it. We were all covered with ash, even here, but around Mount St. Helens, she kept it for scientists, for science and research. And it was amazing to actually see this moonscape. And the first plant to grow was lupine. Why? Because lupine has nitrogen nodules. When you disturb the soil, nitrogen needs to be replaced. We plunged first. So, alder was along the river banks, and lupine in the higher elevation. Unfortunately, you know, around here and in, you know, fields disturbed soil. Unfortunately, the invasive species, scotch broom, also has nitrogen nodules. That's why it takes over so much. But anyway, Mount St. Helens, the lupine grew so you had these little spiked flowers, just green dots, just individual, okay, looping far apart, like from me to that tree over there, that fir tree, that far apart. And the next

visit, there was lupine in the middle, other green. It was in a perfect circle of other plants growing tight with lupine. And as they grew, these round, perfect green circles spiraled out, got bigger and bigger and bigger, and you had all these round green growing—pretty soon, kind of like the spiral from family, individual, family, classroom, department, school. These plants started getting bigger, this green, perfect round circles, and then they started meeting with other perfectly round circles and creating community, before all joining together in a diverse way. (personal communication, September 24, 2024)

Through Sage's analogy, she compared the green sprouts of the lupine plant as individual spirals stretched across the land where each spiral represents an individual, a family, the classroom, departments, schools, districts, and more. In her story rug, I wanted to capture the essence of these spiral systems working in tandem, spiraling out, and eventually coming together. The symbolism of the spirals within P-20 is that it can work at the micro and macro systems, but ultimately it works at the systemic structures. I believe what is felt from a former elementary educator and current teacher educator's perspectives is that these micro and macro systems often do not find alignment, join forces, nor connect across systems. Through Sage's spiral analogy, she sees the possibility of these individual systems to become a collective system, such as the lupines repairing the land individually, growing outwardly, and then actively working to heal the land together through the nitrogen nodules. As Sage mentioned, there are invasive species, or plants removed from their traditional home-lands that lost their relations with their peoples (Bang et al., 2014), like the scotch broom that is native to Europe, which carries similar restorative properties like the lupine. Through this metaphor, it raises the question, How do Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators cultivate space with a shared understanding without holding power over the other? This question also speaks to the numerous spirals (e.g.,

individuals, families, schools) that are working to come into relation without completely taking over the other.

In the context of higher education, Sage sees the spirals as pathways for Native students and educators to thrive in the university setting. She not only teaches the state-mandated course to teacher candidates, but works with Indigenous doctoral, master, and undergraduate cohorts to create pathways for professional teaching and leadership, such as the programmatic pathway, ALPINE and graduate cohort programs. These cohort programs partnered with the local Native nations and a tribal college to establish tribal partnerships. In this sense, the interconnectedness work Sage speaks of, is being done through context-specific capacity-building (Anthony-Stevens, et al., 2020) and nation building (Brayboy et al., 2014). The metaphor of the lupine spirals breaching to other spirals is a reminder for the multitude of P-20 schooling and educational spaces to build community and interconnectedness at the micro and macro systems and levels.

Vignette #5: Healing of the Canoe Teaching with Cedar

Figure 11.

Coast Salish Canoe Journey



Cedar's rug was woven after Sage's rug and was completed in one day. The rug design organically came to fruition with the core symbol of weaving at the center of the rug, a deer head bow canoe with pullers pulling in sync on the waters of the Salish Sea. In the weaving process, I used different blue hues to capture the water waves. I decided on an early morning sunrise backdrop to highlight the mountains and Mount Tahoma's silhouette. Directly above the mountains are the layers of the morning dawn meeting the constellations of the night sky. The pictorial rug tells the story of the canoe journey and the HOC.

As mentioned earlier, Cedar was not able to attend the sharing circle but I did share the inspiration of weaving a pictorial rug of the canoe journey for one of the relatives. Without revealing who the rug was for, the relatives who knew Cedar had a sense that this specific rug titled, "Coast Salish Canoe Journey" (see *Figure 11*) was for him. Relatives' sentiments of Cedar and his connection with the canoe further validated his widely known presence in canoe journeys as holding a vital role of lead skipper in his canoe family. I can attest to this, too! The moment in which I decided to weave the canoe and the pullers was when Cedar mentioned the following:

Or Since Time Immemorial. It definitely, like, I... just like this interview. I can't not talk about Healing of the Canoe. I do bring it up. I do explain the canoe journey is a metaphor for life, and we can do that with anything. One of the big lessons in the healing of the canoe journey early on: what does it take for a successful canoe journey? And we're not going to worry about what the definition of successful is, whatever you think of a successful canoe journey. What does it take to make that happen? And we'll go to the dry erase board, whiteboard, the chalkboard, to [the] computer screen, whatever, and write down answers and get as many answers as we can. And you... We will, you know, hopefully the first so many are canoes, paddles, water people, pullers, skippers, and then we just kind of keep drilling down, you know, as long as they're willing to keep answering the question. (personal communication, September 17, 2024)

Like the relatives, I associated the HOC with Cedar, as he truly embodies the meaning of it. As he puts it, the HOC is a way of life and can be used as a metaphor for teaching/learning. Coincidentally, I gifted Cedar's rug at the campus longhouse where he was teaching his Tribal Canoe Journey course with a guest speaker that also is weaver. This was the first time that Cedar saw the rug and he was in awe! I re-storied the rug symbolism, sharing the significance of the HOC and the pullers working together. He noticed this specific detail and pointed out that all the pullers on the canoe were pulling as one. This specific symbolism captures the value of working together to propel forward to a desired destination. On the left-hand and right-hand sides, the pullers are balancing one another, sitting side-by-side, and pulling their paddles at the same time, while the skipper stirs them into the "right" direction. The HOC as a metaphor for working together toward a shared goal mirrors Sage's spiral metaphor, the TIPM wave-jumping

metaphor; Marigold's crossing of two worlds metaphor; and Reed's camp-circle to reimagine Indigenous education.

Reflecting on this moment, I am drawn to the deer on the deer head bow. In the HOC curriculum, Cedar tells the story of how the canoe came to be, which was from the efforts of the deer. In the story, the deer succeeded in carrying the people across the water so it became the model vessel for the cedar canoe. Most importantly, the cultural significance of the deer is that it forged the connections between peoples, lands, and waters, and it continues to bring canoe families together during the annual canoe journey. There is more to learn from the teachings of deer. Deer taught the Coast Salish peoples to travel by way of canoe.

Vignette #6: Intergenerational Knowledge and Healing with Camas

Figure 12.

Camas and Grandmother Teachings



I began weaving Camas's rug immediately after taking Cedar's rug off the loom. I honestly was the most excited to weave Camas's rug because of the symbolism that developed with time. Those symbols were not fully conceptualized and visualized immediately after the sharing story session. Four days later, they finally came to me at a Native gathering held at

Daybreak Star Indian Cultural Center, an event that brought together Indigenous communities to celebrate their work. The keynote speaker, Mariana Harvey (Yakama), began with the story of camas. I previously heard the story of *Camas - A Plateau Native Story* from storyteller Roger Fernandes when I was a teaching assistant for his Indigenous storytelling course. The camas story is also retold by Roger in the “Tender, Gather, and Grow” curriculum. The story goes as follows:

A long time ago in a village, there was a time of great hunger. There was no food to be found—no game to hunt, no plants to gather. The People were very hungry. There was a grandmother who heard her grandchildren crying because they were hungry. She was so sad that she had nothing to give them. She left the village and went up a hill nearby. She began to cry. She cried for her grandchildren. As she cried, she began to sink into the ground. After a while, she was gone. She was under the earth. Her grandchildren missed their grandmother. They wondered where she was and began to look for her. They climbed the hill, and as they reached the top, the granddaughter said, “Grandma is under the ground! I can feel her!” The children dug into the ground and found camas bulbs. Grandmother had become camas, and now the children and the People had food to eat. Camas is a main food of the Native people of the Plateau region. And that is all. (Krohn et al., 2020, p.17)

The story of camas teaches the value of reciprocity. In the story, grandma sacrifices her entire being to the land so that she could become camas, or food for her people. This reminded me of Camas’s story of her great grandmother being a key figure in her educational journey. Given all of this, Camas’s rug is titled “Camas and Grandmother Teachings” (see *Figure 12*). The rug depicts the camas prairie, consisting of a single camas flower with six petals, a violet-blue flower with a brown or white bulb covered by roots, and soil. In the story, the camas

bulb is known as grandma's teardrops. Harvested camas prairies is the traditional First Foods, it continues to be cultivated and co-managed by stewards of the land. Due to colonial encroachment and the intentional burning of camas prairies by settlers, there is a drastic decrease in camas prairies today. Thus, more than ever, camas prairies need to be cultivated and cared for.

When Camas told the story of the painting of her great grandmother, serving as a reminder to not stray too far from her path, I thought about the roles our beloved matriarchs bestow upon us, and some of the intergenerational trauma that continues to linger in Native families. As I reflected on Camas's story, I remembered her mentioning that her great-grandmother attended boarding school. As is the case in most Native communities, we know a close relative or a matriarch that was affected by the colonial legacies of the boarding school era. Unfortunately, this is not just a thing of the past (Wolfe, 2006), as settler colonialism continues to permeate the school systems. Camas voiced the remnants of settler colonialism and the effects it has on generations of Native students, specifically schools imposing Western ideologies and resisting bringing Indigenous ways of knowing into the classroom. During Camas's time as an active school board member, parent, and co-curriculum developer, she experienced push back from other school board officials for incorporating Indigenous lifeways. It wasn't until the state mandate went into effect that this resistance turned into "praise" because, suddenly the schools could claim that they were in compliance with the legislation. Camas recounted this story further:

People [school board members and officials] didn't realize what we were doing, I don't think. And pretty soon we got such notoriety from people outside the building, or outside in other communities, because they were asking questions. It began to get bigger, bigger than what the school board could stop us from doing. I mean, it was, it actually was

looked on as something really good for the school outside of the school, as from outsiders looking in ... You know, that wasn't why we were doing it, but if it would help the kids, be, have that sense of belonging, which was the main goal, I think, for me, was to not check their identity at the door when they came to school and have an understanding on a lot of it was the educational system in the past for the tribe, you know, and boarding schools and that history and you know, both that relationship that families had with school systems, you know, and how, how wrongly treated... But also, you know, because my great-grandmother was in boarding school. Both of mine, on my dad's side and my mom's side, were in boarding schools. And I didn't have, they, my grandparents weren't great parents to their kids, but they didn't have that model on what, how to be great parents, you know, taught to them growing up because there were nuns and military were there ... but, why that disconnect with some families in the school system, or why there's so much drug abuse and mental health issues and alcoholism? And that's because ... impacts of genetics and, you know, epigenetics and things like that. (personal communication, September 24, 2024)

In the latter half of the excerpt, Camas acknowledged historical trauma across generations and how this continues to be seen in schools, for instance, policing students' Indigeneity. To counter these colonial legacies, there is an emphasis in ensuring schools teach accurate Native representation, presence, and perspectives. Thus, Camas and a curriculum team created a Native-led and an Indigenous lifeways curriculum for students to see themselves reflected in school and to feel a sense of belonging. As I understand this, it felt like healing work for the future generation. I compare this with the history and teachings of the camas plant. The camas prairies suffered the colonial impacts by the hands of settlers. There was a time when you could

look into the distance and see a blue sea of camas prairies. Today, these blue seas of camas prairies are rarely seen, instead fields of crops can be seen. Thus, the camas prairies are healing and being restored by the hands of Indigenous peoples through traditional harvesting practices and restoration projects. The work that relative Camas does is restoring that severed relationship with culture, land, and Indigenous lifeways.

Vignette #7: Woven Identities and Teachings with Rose

Figure 13.

Weaving Our Relations—Coast Salish and Columbia Plateau



After weaving six rugs, I finally developed a system for warping the small-scaled loom and invested in clamps to hold the tension of the vertical warps. So, Rose's rug was much easier to warp together and to start the weaving process. Her rug design is a replica of the JMI STI logo in woven form. The rug is titled, "Weaving Our Relations—Coast Salish and Columbia Plateau" (see *Figure 13*). The symbols for Rose's rug came instantly as it was explicitly stated in her sharing story session. When I asked Rose to share an object that represented her identities, she

mentioned the JMI STI logo that was drawn by Roger Fernandes. Rose shared the logos meaning in relation to her identity:

The John McCoy (*lulilaš*) Since Time Immemorial [STI] logo, because Roger, really, you know, designed that to be inclusive. And so, we have the plateau basket design, and then the Coast Salish design, so I mean that really, it really, I think, resonates with my duality there.

Rose captured the symbolic meaning of the JMI STI logo from the perspective of the artist, which was to design a logo that represented Native communities in Coast Salish and the Columbia Plateau territories. The Coast Salish peoples are represented through the eagle design, illustrated with the traditional design, formline. Coast Salish formline consists of three patterns, which are trigons, crescents and ovals or circles, and it uses positive and negative space similar to silhouettes. Below the formline art piece is a woven basket design, commonly used by the Columbia Plateau River peoples. The two art forms were something I came to learn when I was a teaching assistant for a course on *American Indian Arts and Aesthetics*.

The two symbols are not only reflected in Rose's identities, but her immense contributions to the heart of JMI STI as well. The logo really entails Rose's educational journey and pedagogical pathways for forwarding the JMI STI into K-20 classrooms. Rose was one of three original writers for the JMI STI, which laid a foundation for Native education and set in motion tribally-developed curricula across Washington State. Another crucial aspect of the JLM STI work that Rose is a core part of is working directly with various levels of school leaders and educators, such as school district leaders, in-service teachers, preservice teachers/teacher candidates, and the Native parent group. When I think about the spirals that Sage referenced, I see Rose hopping to each spiral and watering the lupine patches so they can grow and connect.

Additionally, I could see Rose engaging in waving jump by meeting all these educators at the various dimensions.

Vignette #8: Holistic Teaching with Willow and Alder

Figure 14.

Water and Land Relations - Teaching in Synergy



Willow's and Alder's sharing story session happened the day after the first sharing circle took place, as they joined later in the study. Thus, a second sharing circle took place for them a few weeks later. They got to hear some of the initial reflections from the first sharing circle from me. Also, seeing other relatives' rugs excited them even more about what I would weave for their story rugs. I shared this excitement with them, but, unfortunately, the weather had other plans. I was met with two straight weeks of rain, which delayed the process of weaving their rugs. However, it provided time for me to plan out the weaving process, such as how I would weave the rugs, purchase various hues of brown- and orange-dyed wool yarn, and ponder the emerging symbols. Eventually, I decided on using my larger loom to create side-by-side warped

rugs because Willow and Alder co-taught their courses side-by-side. So, I made a trip to the crafting store to purchase wooden rods that would secure the two warps in place. On a Tuesday morning, I awoke to a clear sunny day. I jumped at this window of opportunity to start warping the loom and start weaving. So, the weaving began; the rugs were woven together, sharing the same weaving batten.

To honor Willow's and Alder's shared stories and teaching methods, I named the two rugs "Water and Land Relations - Teaching in Synergy" (see *Figure 14*). Both rugs share the symbolism of land and water, where half of the rug is covered in water waves and the other half has their individual symbolisms with the same backdrop of being ashore, on land. The symbol I used to honor Willow's story was the object she shared to reflect her personal and tribal identities, which was a Blackfeet vamp, or the upper portion of a moccasin. The words that stuck with me were the vamp plings, which Willow said were "just a reminder to walk in a good way." As described in the previous findings chapter, Willow set in motion the state-mandated teacher education program course on teaching tribal history, culture, and government. Her relentless efforts to develop a course well before the passage of the state-mandated one meant, as she said, that she "hit the ground running," laying a foundation for teacher educators to teach the course through her course syllabus. The vamp/moccasins symbolism was meant to also capture Willow's embodiment of setting a solid foundation at the ground up. Nearly a decade later, Willow continues to add to the required course through collaborative approaches. She described the collaboration among her, Alder, and two additional course instructors:

We all worked together, and we collaborated, and we all met together, and we went to all of us, went to everybody's classes. And then, you know, [Alder] and I decided to, like, we

asked if we could have our classes taught at the very same time, and that we would blend our classes together.

Willow's and Alder's pedagogical teaching and learning approaches helped me to symbolize Alder's rug. To balance the vamp, I thought about the head. I was still trying to figure out the symbolism of this idea of the feet and head making a full body or person. Serendipitously, there was a cedar weaving workshop being held on campus and I decided to go. I was told that it was a series of workshops, starting from weaving something manageable, like a cedar heart, into something challenging, like a cedar woven hat for graduation. Thus, the symbol emerged—a cedar hat! The cedar hat is a traditional head/face covering that is tightly woven with cedar bark, designed to keep rain away. Another symbolic meaning for the cedar hat was the way in which Willow described Alder as the bases for everything that emerges together. Willow shared:

[Alder] was always there. One of the things you need to know about [Alder] is that [Alder] is all the weavings, like, is all the thread and the beads and the leather, like, you know, bringing it all together and always there.

Like the cedar hat, it too is woven tightly together and held firmly with layered strips of cedar bark and sinew. Additionally, the cedar hat represents the highest point of the entire body. Alder is an elder, which further affirms her holding the highest knowledge and wisdom. When I told Willow and Alder that they represented an entire being, I also shared the cultural significance of the feet and head through the Diné teachings of prayer. Our traditional prayers follow the growing of a matured cornstalk, where it starts at the ground, grows into a cornstalk, and the corn tassels reach the highest level, or the head of the hair. As Diné people, we pray from the bottom of our feet to the top of our head. I wanted to acknowledge this teaching because I've come to learn that other Indigenous communities pray with sage from the top of the heads and work their

way down to their feet. In any case, Willow and Alder embody an entire being with the foundations they set through their journeys and continuation of reaching the highest level. To capture this from the perspective of their co-taught course, both Willow and Alder provide a window into their classroom:

Willow: We have a practice of gratitude in every class. And we talk about, like, you know, Robin Kimmerer's work and *Allegiance to Gratitude*, and how important it is. And so, they [teacher candidates] love that too. Like starting each, you know, class with some gratitude, and then at the end, then they come back, we have them in breakout rooms with two, at least to you know, of our esteemed guests. And so, they get intimate feedback from two or three groups. And then we come back out, and this last time, which was so beautiful, [Alder], framed it from a framework of having witnesses.

Alder: I did do that.

Willow: Yeah, and it was as only [Alder] can do, right? Yeah, I'm not Lummi. I can't do that. And, and that was, like, so powerful. And so, our esteemed guests were the witnesses, and they shared out. And so, we tell the students, you stay until it's done, you know, and even if it's beyond your finals, you know time. But they do, you know, because they love it.

Alder: They've never seen anything like it before. So, this is, like, yeah, because it gives them a whole frame to look at.

Willow and Alder were able to draw on each other's cultural assets and teachings, such as witnessing. Witnessing is culturally significant to the Coast Salish peoples. Alder is Lummi and can lead witnessing and call on others (both Coast Salish and non-Coast Salish peoples) to bear witness. Willow said that she can't do that because she's not Coast Salish and if she did, it would

be a form of cultural appropriation. Willow's and Alder's story rugs portray how they teach their classes synergistically, embodying an entire being.

Sharing Circle I with Reed, Marigold, Bitterroot, Camas, Sage, and Rose

At the end of this section, I return to Cajete's (1994) conceptualization of tracking and concentric rings to honor relatives' stories and recognize their unique identities, journeys, and pathways, while also naming the intersecting rings/spirals that derive from the sharing circle conversations. In relation to the diagram, I expand on Cajete's (1994) concentric rings (see *Figure 2* in the Methods Chapter) to encompass Sage's metaphor of spiraling lupines, or spiraling systems. The systems that operate in the concentric rings can be systems that spiral, with the intention of growing together while still holding their uniqueness and not exerting "power" over the other. Similarly, I honor and keep relatives' story in their fullness through the woven symbols in the story rug that represents its own spiral system. Therefore, I offered the sharing circle space for us (Indigenous teacher educators) to identify overlapping spiraling systems.

During the sharing circle, I used a protocol to guide the conversations. I displayed a photo of the seven story rugs and asked relatives to "Jot down notes on what you are hearing, feeling, or seeing from the shared stories illustrated in the story rugs." The photo was used to garner and elicit a discussion on what they were seeing and to expand on what they were hearing from other relatives. Each relative offered a remark to the story rugs and their visions for transforming Indigenous education. I presented their reflections, thoughts, and offerings in its fullest form. Afterward, I engage in "Tracking A Story" to signify the tracks for collectively working towards Indigenous education.

Marigold: Shayla, this is really reminding me of that Vine Deloria [Jr.] quote, I think it's the manifesto book where he talks about how there's this obsession in Western, like, Philosophy and Education to get to, like, the very core root of stuff, and there's only one true way of understanding and knowing things. And I think that this group right here and your work with the rugs illustrates that, that's not correct, and that's exactly what Vine says is, like, that's a weird way of viewing the world, and, like, a true Native philosopher is one that can suspend, like, their idea that there's only one truth, and that we do that because we know that other people have their own stories of creation, their own ways of knowing that are firmly rooted in who they are from the places that they are. And so I'm really thinking of like, I'm not Diné. I don't know all the rules behind, like rug weaving and everything that goes into it. Like, sure, Spokane, we had our own way of weaving, but that's not the same rules as yours. But you are able to bring us all into this space of knowing and understanding your work, not only through your PhD process, but also just explaining the rugs. And I think that's because you were able to ask questions, in a way, and work with all of us, like, completely different people that were all in this same space of like, being able to generate knowledge and talk about, like, these kinds of things that I'm not sure you could create that as easily in other other... places. And so, that's something that's kind of popping to my mind. And [Camas] put interconnectedness. And so, I think it's this ability for you to... to bring all that together in a really, really fantastic way that I think I'm still trying to muddle through it.

Bitterroot: Shayla, this is, this is amazing. It's beautiful and powerful and really kind of all the things. As you were sharing, I began to think about the connections that you were making around my... my identity, mobilizing ancestral teachings and connections, and

thinking about, you know, one I don't always recognize myself as I come into these spaces, and a lot of that is due to colonization, right? Being assimilated, and not recognizing how I connect back to my own ancestors and how I connect back to different Indigenous Knowledges that have been shared with me. And so, that feels really powerful to be grounded in a way where I get to recognize those connections and I get to see myself, because I don't always see myself. I think that's part of what your gift is as an educator, right? You know, educators' roles are to, we're responsible for recognizing young people's strengths and we're responsible for recognizing how young people come into these spaces, but we're also responsible for the educators that teach, you know, Native and Indigenous people more broadly. And so, you know, it really made me think about my own grounding and who I'm responsible to, as I come into these spaces. Like I said, identity is complicated for me, and I can tell you all the ways I'm assimilated and how it's, you know, how that's impacted me. And I think about these things as I critically think about every state, every space I get to, get to walk into, more so out of protection of myself, right? So, when I come into, come to any of these spaces, I recognize that in lots of different ways my identity is, is... is being foreclosed on. And so often I think about, how can I share back to other people? One way in which we recognize how we're... how our spaces are being foreclosed, but also how we situate our own knowledges, whether it be tribal or other knowledges, but how we situate those in these spaces.

Sage: My hands are raised, you know, for all of you, and in the areas and spaces and places that you know, all of you are holding. Being an elder, I just, you know, I think of my journey and... and then the journeys all of you have. Like for me, all of you, our vision. You know, one of my visions and one of my dreams. And, you know, from canoe

journey. As [Bitterroot] said, “You walk your path.” You know, “Who walks beside you, and who do you walk with? Who's your company? Who's your community?” They're there for reason and purpose. So, I think about that. I think about, you know, my struggles, I started Indian education as a paraeducator in 1987. I'm aging myself ... thinking about myself in a school system, you know, being there was only a handful of brown people. And, you know, it was intimidating. It was scary, everyone knew. And you know, then you lift yourself too. Indian education, and working with, you know, three elementary schools and middle school and a high school and trying to lift the Native students and knowing that the majority were going to drop out and not make it through high school. Myself included, I was a high school dropout. And then looking at, going back, having the people in your life that guide you, that push you. Because can you push yourself in many ways? No, you need the other people that walk with you to push you and see things from an outer perspective that you don't see inside of yourself. So, those people are needed, those voices are needed, that community is needed. And, you know, you walk that path and think, wow, you know, as an Indian education person, you know someone pushing you, oh, “[Sage] you should teach!” You know, I think about that with all of you, you're educators, we're all educators.

Reed: Yeah, the rugs are incredible. Like has been said ... kind of an agreement with [Marigold], like, I think there's something very specific that I'm also sort of struggling really, to sort of encapsulate. I mean, it's an incredible, beautiful project and I think that I think there's a lot that comes into this. One of the things I'm thinking about is just like the and I think [Bitterroot] sort of touched on it a little bit, too—of just, like, the reflecting back of people and, like, the way of, sort of, like, what you see in them, or I mean, a lot

of what you put is like, these symbols that are reflecting back, you know, the stories that we shared and that we told, and the way that affirms, I think, not just, like, the individual in terms of, just that, that validation and sense of being seen... I guess, going and looking at the symbolism of the rug that you made me of, like, that third space in the tipi, thinking about, like, within education, Native education, just how crucial it is to build those connections and community, and do it in a way that makes sense to us as Native people and so, like, how important that is to... to be able to, like, share and hold and recognize each other's stories in a way that I think that you've done with the rugs, which I think is really cool because it's, like, one there's, like, the physical, like, I can see the ... this material thing that is holding this story. But then there's obviously, like, the other ... the time and energy and care and everything that you put into that is also, you know, holding that story in a more like immaterial sense. And I think about just that importance within, you know, building these spaces and building community and building connection and relationship within, within this work, I think is really cool. And I like, I mean, I just like the... I also kind of think I... this isn't a fully fleshed out thought, but I was also just thinking of aesthetics. And I was thinking about, like, Paulo Freire writes. It's not something he writes a ton about, but he writes about aesthetics in learning and in education. And I think that in like mainstream education, like a lot of times, our students, like, the aesthetics of a classroom, like, are often not great. The aesthetics of a building are often not great. Like, and, like, how that, being surrounded by, you know, beautiful things that are, like, creative expressions are actually an important part of engaging and learning and, you know, forming how we see the world ... all the depth of their symbolism and what they represent ... and I think that that's obviously a cultural value,

you can look across, sort of, like, tribes and native cultures, like, how much time and energy was creating things that were not only, like, functional, but also, you know, health stories and symbols.

Camas: It's really great. I love the way you've, you know, put these into stories and made me want to learn more and teach in a way that, you know, it's you're learning without even realizing you're learning sometimes, and I think that's what our students really thrive on. So that connectedness, at some point you're gonna... you've connected with all of us in a special way.

Rose: I've actually been thinking and writing and reading and researching about this. This is my next work. First, so grateful to [Sage] and Jenni because their work on Grandmother Cedar is such, it is the growth that I would like to see. And when I take a look at my own educational journey, my own teaching journey, in an urban context, in a city that purports to be liberal, but they're really not. And in an urban situation where we have so many tribal, so many tribes represented on, you know, on the land of the Coast, Salish people. And how does that work together? And I'm just, you know, the complexities are everywhere but, I think that what I would hope to leave behind or carry, you know, with us is the development of JMI STI, you know, as I have been working with with admin, as I've been working with principals and so forth, I realize how much we have been for lack of a better word marketing, JMI STI as a product. And when you... and so then school districts, then have an idea of an adoption process, and they have an idea of... of the product to use and how we use it, and training teachers to use it, and then, boom, move on to the next thing. And I've been thinking about how we impress upon school boards and school leaders that... that JMI STI is not a product, but a process,

that we have a continuum that... that has to be incredibly personal and that has to be incredibly transformative, especially those whose educational journeys only really reflect settler colonial ways and being brainwashed into thinking that that's the way that... that humans are supposed to learn when, when, in fact, it's actually the opposite.

Sharing Circle II with Willow and Alder

Alder: Well, I love being right next to [Willow], like I couldn't do this without her and so, that's really just... To see how close we are, that that... we know that we're close, but then just that other people see that. And so I'm only, I can only hope that our students feel, feel that also. First of all, I love the water and I love the cedar, and it's what I've been doing workshops for a few years now, and it's really about bio regions, stuff. And so, that's what this is for me, so it's really affirming, like ... it's kind of like a gift to me when, when it was, when I found it, I was like, "Oh, maybe I should try this." And so, I've been doing it. And then I sometimes question myself, like, really, do people really want to do this? But I've had such... I've had some really good outcomes from it. And so, for me, it's just like you're on the... you're okay, [Alder], you're doing this on the right, on the right path.

Willow: I'll pick up where [Alder] threw down, where [Alder] left off. I feel all sorts of things. I almost feel like I could probably just sit with how I'm feeling for a while, because there's just layers and layers, and I'm in that weaving with you. I feel like all the... the beautiful time and intention and attention is I feel it even off Zoom, you know, and just with all that love and care that you put into this, it also reflects, like, the love and care that I have for [Alder], too, and so [Alder], you said it so beautifully. I do hope our students know how much we care and love for each other and that we care and love for

this work, that this work isn't, you know, we're not doing it for the big paycheck ... like being on this path, I definitely feel that in here with the moccasins. And it's so interesting because I hadn't really thought about this or articulated this, but, you know, the moccasins represent so much, like being on a good path and moving forward. And because of the way that they're woven, they're also, they also reflect that the moccasin tops, without being completely, you know, turned into a footwear, right? So, they're also like vamps, so they're also unfinished, because we're unfinished, right? We're still moving on that path, with them being in the mountain design and facing the water and or moving towards the water. There's this ... I guess English doesn't really have words to really describe it in the way that I'd like. My heart wants to talk about it ... starting at the feet, you know, and going to the head, you know, [Alder] and I make... and I feel that like we're together, we're such a good... I mean, we could each teach the class separately, and it'd be good, you know? But when we teach it together, it's like, it's holistic. It's complete. It's best! And then the moccasins I was making for my daughter, it's a representation that I bring my family with me. I bring my children. I'm doing this for the generation that's here, and, hopefully, you know, as we talked about like, we're building the conditions for the next generations to come ... we're talking, like, 500 years into the future, you know, so I'm, like, a four or a 400-year strategic plan. Now, that's what we're doing here. So, [Alder] is the 400 years, right? You're the cedar hat, and I'm still working my way to your wisdom, but your mentorship is, that's the first thing I wrote down, is in, sitting in this emotion and love and I think that, for me, those beginning steps are also showing that we're bringing our whole selves to this. And that the walking, the being at the foot, is also walking on the land ... My aunt used to always say, you know, when you get home to Blackfeet

territory, take off your shoes and put your feet on the ground so that the land will recognize you. And so, I feel like that this is a representation of that we're always on sacred land. We're always on the land, is always sacred. It's always Indigenous. And so, even though I'm not walking every day on that sacred land where I'm from, I'm walking with [Alder] on [Alder's] sacred land. And what a gift.

Tracking A Story Through Concentric Rings

The findings revealed that the symbols woven into the story rugs sought to capture relatives' unique identities, educational journeys, pedagogical pathways, and visions for Indigenous education. The story rugs act as a spiral system to keep intact the very essence of their unique stories. When the story rugs were re-storied to relatives, they provided additional interpretation that they observed in the rugs and built connections to relatives' story rugs. In doing so, their stories overlapped to reveal traces of *affirmation*, *relationality*, *worldviews*, and *interconnectedness*.

Tracks of Affirmation

Relatives shared the overlapping concentric ring of affirmation. Affirmation extended to the individual level and to the collective, where relatives saw an equitable balance across the represented story rugs—that one story did not hold more weight over the other. The story rug was the vehicle that allowed relatives to be seen, affirmed, and reaffirmed as the symbolisms reflected their personal identities, journeys, pathways, and visions for Indigenous education. Engaging in symbolism allowed me to narrow down a meaningful and intentional symbol(s) in the story rug and helped to re-story their stories. Bitterroot compared the story rug, to the role educators do to ensure that all students are truly being seen and heard. Both Bitterroot and Marigold see this as a cultural gift, being able to tap into my Indigenous knowledge system

rather than following a Western knowledge system. This was something that I acknowledged to relatives, that I did not intend to share the preliminary findings as stories to be put into themes because I wanted the story to reflect everyone's individual journeys and pathways.

Tracks of Relationality

The second overlapping concentric ring was relationality. Relationality was discussed in terms of all educators needing to build relationships with Native students, families, and communities. Prior to establishing these relationships, the individual must be in right relations with their own families and communities. Reed and Bitterroot discussed the importance of moving beyond the classroom space and re-evaluating what it means to be an educator in relation to the communities that they serve. Not an educator in the sense of just “professional attributes,” but also the interpersonal attributes that most align with Indigenous values. Reed presented an example of his students seeing his interpersonal, relational attributes as being part of the sundance ceremony. Similarly, Bitterroot pushed for non-Indigenous educators to examine the values that they operate from, as some Western values prevent them from being in relations with Tribal communities. Moreover, Rose emphasized that educators build those relationships with students because being an educator is a lifelong process and commitment. However, Rose sees that the structures of education itself, are not designed for peoples to be in relation, rather they are designed to separate relationships. If there is no relationality, there can't be relational accountability. Rose echoes that relationality and accountability are intricately intertwined.

Tracks of Worldviews

Worldviews, such as an Indigenous and Western paradigms/perspectives was another overlapping concentric ring that was addressed across relatives' stories. Marigold's story rug visually depicts and encompasses the divide in worldviews, particularly found in P-20 schools.

Since the P-20 schools are designed to approach teaching and learning primarily from a Western paradigm, it sets the precedents for engaging in this one worldview. While the state-mandated course seeks to tackle and address it, there are not adequate course credits to meet all teacher candidates' varied levels of understanding. To sufficiently address this, it requires teacher candidates and educators engage in a critical shift—a shift in consciousness, in knowing the world, and in building relationships with more-than-human relatives. The journey to create these shifts is best illustrated through the TIPM, by going through each of the dimensions as a cohort rather than journeying it alone. However, Reed cautions Indigenous teacher educators to not fall victim to the dimensions, particularly Dimension One, where it focuses on the surface levels of tribal history, culture, and government. Therefore, engaging in an Indigenous worldview calls for a “third space” that solely operates in a place of Indigenous values, knowledges, and relationships. In K-12 settings, Bitterroot called for educators to develop both value sets, as educators want the curriculum written by Indigenous peoples, but don't actually want to put in the relational work to develop an Indigenous worldview. Rose voiced these concerns as well. When working with school leadership and educators, they view the JMI STI curriculum as a “product” which it's not. Rose had to remind these educators that the intent of the curriculum is for it to be a “process.” Thus, one college course or a few professional development training sessions is still not sufficient enough, until the actual doing of the work is relational. Camas also witnessed school leaders viewing the tribal curriculum as a product that was only accepted because it met the state-mandate requirement. Lastly, Sage, Willow, and Alder offer pockets of opportunities for teacher candidates in an Indigenous worldview, such as, engaging on the land while using your senses and inviting Indigenous educators to offer feedback to teacher candidates' lesson plans. In essence, relatives spoke at great lengths about the way worldviews

do or do not operate in the classroom spaces. At the time of study, Cedar had not yet incorporated the HOC in the required course but also taught it in other college courses. He mentioned that when he does get his footing, he will incorporate the HOC. For my perspective, the HOC authentically embodies an Indigenous worldview while navigating a Western world. The HOC teachings, like the carving of the paddle, directly speak to “walking in both worlds.”

Tracks of Inter/connectedness

The final overlapping concentric ring was connections, connectedness, and interconnectedness. In visualizing this concentric ring, Sage’s story rug encapsulates the ways micro and macro systems operate in spirals and work to spiral as a collective. These systems operate from kindergarten through higher education, all which relate back to the state-mandate on Native education in Washington State. The mandate has been in effect for nearly a decade now, so there are still efforts to merge some of these silo systems. Some of the systems that both Sage and Rose named were students, families, educators (in-service and teacher candidates), school leaders (school board members, principals, and superintendents), teacher education program, school districts, mentorship and cohort programs in higher education settings, Washington State Professional Educator Standards Board, Office of Native Education, and spaces for Native students. Starting with the foundation, Willow, Alder, Sage, Rose, Bitterroot, and Camas were able to establish solid foundations and be leaders in those specific contexts. In Eastern Washington, Bitterroot and Camas were writing Indigenous lifeway curriculum for K-12 students, offering support for implementation, and receiving feedback from educators. The tribally-developed curriculum became a model for others to take the lead in writing a curriculum for their tribes. During this time, Rose was also co-writing the JLM STI curriculum that eventually became a centerpiece for implementing Native education state-wide and is widely

known. Willow initiated the first college course to prepare teacher candidates to teach tribal history, culture, and government. This course was not in existence and eventually would become the mandatory course. Willow was able to develop the course syllabus with Sage, Alder, and other pivotal educators. Currently, Sage and Rose carry multiple hats that allow them to work through the spiral systems. In this given moment, there are nitrogen nodules that are healing and propelling the movement for Native education. Rose and Sage are the lupines that each of the systems so desperately needs, so that they can spiral and interconnect.

Chapter Six: Discussion & Conclusion - “Future Care of the Story Rugs”

There are some final touches to a rug that a Diné weaver does, to ensure that it follows weaving protocol for both the protection of the weaver and the future care of the rug (Tachine, 2015; Tachine et al., 2018). From the start, the weaver enters the weaving process in a spiritual state of mind, pouring good thoughts, intentionality, and positivity into weaving the rugs. To continue carrying those good spiritual intentions through the rug, a weaver needs an exit. To do so, the weaver weaves a line²⁵ toward the edge of the rug. This spiritual exit is called a weaver’s path.

Leaving a Weaver’s Path

Leaving a weaver’s path is a physical and spiritual process that takes place before the rug is completely woven. If you examine a rug closely, you will spot a single woven line near the border of the rug. The single woven line could be misinterpreted as a mistake or an imperfection because it has a different color than the other wool yarn colors surrounding it. But it is said that if a weaver’s path is not woven, the weaver’s state of mind stays trapped in the rug. Therefore, it is imperative that a weaver leaves a weaver’s path, and it’s an indication that there will be more rugs to come. Similarly, I weave a pathway for these relatives’ story rugs to contribute to the field of education and to teacher education programs as well as for educators engaging in Native/Indigenous education. This chapter includes an overview of the study, the outlier findings, a discussion of the findings, and future implications for policy research, and practice.

Overview

Indigenous teacher educators are tasked with preparing teacher candidates to teach state-mandated, tribal history, culture, and government in Washington State (Madden, 2015).

²⁵Depending on the weaver, the width and the length of the line differs. Some weavers prefer a visible line, which has a thicker width and a longer length (e.g., some rugs having a weaver’s path starting in the center of the rug). While other weavers prefer an invisible line, which has a thinner line and shorter length.

Currently, there are teacher education programs across the state that offer this course as a one-, two-, and a five-credit course offering. With this range in credit offerings, I sought to ask nine Indigenous teacher educators (relatives) to share stories of their identities, educational journey, and pedagogical pathways for teaching the course, in addition to their transformative visions for their course. This study revealed that the relatives engaged in varying pedagogical pathways that were informed by their identities and educational journeys. To illustrate these differences while maintaining the depth of their stories, I wove them into story rugs. These story rugs conveyed aspects of their identities, journeys, pathways, and visions for Indigenous education through symbolism and metaphors. In this way, I re-storied relatives' stories by following the tracks that held the stories. Some of these tracks converge, making a pathway toward Indigenous education.

Valuing All Stories - Excess Wool Strand/ “Coyote Codes”

Once the rug is completely woven, the weaver cuts off the excess wool yarn from the back and front of the rug. An excess yarn hanging freely from the rug shows that a new color was added, or the pattern changed. In staying with the weaving metaphor, the excess wool, so to speak, becomes the outlier(s) of the study. Kovach (2021) refers to outlier findings as “coyote codes,” that offer insight to the findings. She calls on researchers to “find a way to include or recognize them” (Kovach, 2021, p.209). Rather than referring to it as coyote codes, I choose to refer to the outlier findings as “excess wool strands” that helped to weave in the stories.

There were two excess wool strands that stood out from relatives' stories: *Heart Work Before/Beyond State-Mandatory Course* and *State-Mandatory Course as Meaningful and a Means to an End*. These excess strands derived from the sharing story protocol, where I asked relatives, “What is the heart and soul of this course?” and “Share stories of how preservice teachers/teacher candidates responded to the course.” These questions were to understand and

fully contextualize the state-mandated course. Relatives approached the first question as sharing the “heart and soul” of the various works that they engage with, and the second question was addressed through concerns for the lack of credit hours. Keeping this in mind provides additional context for why certain pedagogical pathways were employed by relatives.

Heart Work Before/Beyond State-Mandatory Course.

As described in the findings, relatives like Willow, Alder, Bitterroot, and Camas were developing curriculum and course instruction before the state-mandates were passed. These relatives share the stories of already “doing the work” and truly paving the way for the state-mandated course and curricular implementation in K-12 schools. Additionally, relatives responded to the heart and soul question in relation to other courses they were teaching or other Native programs that they were developing. Some relatives felt that the state-mandated course fell short in content and course instruction, due to it only being offered for one- or two-credits. Thus, relatives shared stories of what they would/could do if there were more course credits offered. Furthermore, relatives reiterated that with more course instruction time and credit hours, teacher educators could teach more content and engage in more pedagogical approaches. The limited course offerings in turn limit what can be taught. As was illustrated in my initial co-planning meeting with Rose and Bitterroot, all three of us prioritized differing core topics to teach to a specific group of teacher candidates from different teacher education programs (TEP). Meanwhile, rather than naming the challenges of the course offerings themselves, relatives decided to share the heart and soul of their work, or “heart work,” which included running under/graduate Native pathway programs, teaching at a tribal college with Native students, and mentoring Native students. In some ways, the state-mandated course became “hard work,” due to

the limitations of less instructional time, content delivery, and the willingness (or unwillingness) of teacher candidates to learn.

State-Mandatory Course as Meaningful and a Means to an End.

Relatives shared stories about how the teacher candidates responded to the state-mandated course with mixed feelings, responses, and desires. As told by relatives, the teacher candidates' responses ranged from wanting more time to learn to a desire to “complete” the course to fulfill their degree requirement, meaning, they were most concerned with completing the course to receive their degree. For instance, Marigold shared a story of how teacher candidates were enrolled midway through her class. The candidates received permission from their program to take Marigold’s course, to fulfill their degree, as it was one of the last courses they needed to complete to graduate. I shared a similar experience with Marigold when I was a reader/grader for Sage’s class. We had multiple teacher candidates reach out about completing the course, so they could graduate. Since these courses are only offered once a year, administrators tried to place them with other TEPs that offered the course in a different quarter. Moreover, one relative shared their course evaluation concerns and the recurring theme of teacher candidates advocating for more credits, or complaining about the amount of content and assignments to complete for “just” one-credit. Several teacher candidates expressed distaste for the mandated course because they saw the course credit hour as not equating with the number of hours of class time and completing assignments (e.g., one-credit equates to 3-4 hours of work time per week). It quickly became evident that relatives’ experience with teaching teacher candidates was that some viewed the state-mandated course as an inconvenience, preventing them from receiving their degree. Nonetheless, despite the requirement, it is not prioritized in some TEPs, given the weight of the course credit offerings.

Discussion - Stretching the Rug

The end of the weaving process is near. What remains is the removal of the rug from the loom and the dampening of the rug with water, to stretch it out. Similarly, in research, Tachine (2015) refers to this process as the discussion section, which is the “stretching” of the findings to draw from the theoretical framework and to bring them into conversation with existing literature. Throughout the weaving storied meaning process, I engaged in two theoretical frameworks, which included Indigenous Storywork (ISW) (Archibald, 2008) and Tracking A Story (Cajete, 1994). For the analysis, I followed Kovach’s (2021) Thematic Analysis Strategy for Indigenous Methodology to first integrate Indigenous theory, then asked myself, “What are the stories and experiences telling us?” (p.208), before engaging in relational analysis and intentional interpretation, which were guided by the emerging symbols that were woven into the story rugs. To address Kovach’s (2021) question, the stories and experiences that I heard from relatives during their sharing story sessions were what was revealed in their story rugs. In the sharing circle, I heard responses to and reflections of academic “research,” and how weaving their story rugs was engaging with Indigenous ways of knowing, or employing Indigenous research methodologies (IRM). Thus, there is a discussion on relatives’ stories and engaging in IRM, specifically through Diné story rug. In the next section, I discuss part I and II of the findings in relation to existing pedagogical pathways and with employing IRM to capture relatives’ story rugs.

“Stretching” with Literature: Pedagogical Possibilities - Weaving a Future for Us

I return to the work of Indigenous scholars who engage in critical dialogue with Indigenous theory and practice, or praxis, with a focus on Indigenous pedagogies. Throughout this study, I sought to understand relatives’ identities and educational journeys as they informed

their pedagogical pathways in teaching the state-mandated course. My literature review reflected white and grey literature, and focused on non-Indigenous and Indigenous teacher educators who taught mandatory Aboriginal education in Canada and Native education in the United States. In doing so, I “stretch” the story rugs by bringing relatives’ pedagogical pathways asserted in a state-mandatory course in conversation with existing literature, since those stories adds to and extends from prevailing pedagogical pathways found in existing literature.

As mentioned in the literature review chapter, I build on Madden’s (2015) scoping review that examined articles published from 2000 to 2012, revealing four prevailing pedagogical pathways that teacher educators employ to engage Indigenous education in the faculties of education, which included: (1) *Learning from Indigenous traditional models of teaching*; (2) *Pedagogy for decolonizing*; (3) *Indigenous and anti-racist education*; and (4) *Indigenous and place-based education* (p.3). Building on Madden, I reviewed literature from 2015 to 2024 and found the prevailing pedagogical approaches implemented in mandatory courses in Canada. These pedagogical pathways included: teaching from a place-based, land-based, and virtual learning environment; teaching by location of oneself; and teaching from a critical reflective stance, an arts-based approach, storytelling, holistic learning, and relational building. Given the mandatory course requirement, both non-Indigenous and Indigenous teacher educators drew from pedagogies that created *uniformity* and that relied on *standardizations* derived from the teacher education programs. These varying pedagogical approaches extend to and overlap with the nine Indigenous teacher educators’ pedagogical pathways: (1) healing of the canoe teachings; (2) engaging all senses with the land/ancestral teachings; (3) through a sense of belonging; (4) through Indigenous pedagogies and perspectives that are reflective of storytelling, place-based, and land-based/plant-based teachings; (5) co-teaching in a virtual learning environment; (6) from

a place of federal Indian law; (7) and from the local nearby Tribe(s). In the next section, I share specific examples of overlapping pedagogies, including: land-, place-, and water-based pedagogy, two worldviews as pedagogy, and co-planning/teaching pedagogies.

Land-, Place-, and Water-Based Pedagogy

The pedagogical pathways revealed in the understandings/findings section are brought into conversation with overlapping pedagogies written by scholars and among the relatives. In this study, the relatives, namely Cedar, Sage, Rose, and Bitterroot spoke about engaging with the land and water. These teachings came from a place of everydayness that is embedded in their lived realities. As Simpson (2014) states, “It’s not just pedagogy; it’s how to live life” (p.18). Cedar also spoke about the healing of the canoe as a way of life. The rules of canoe are life teachings and lessons that are grounded in pulling/paddling on a canoe. The healing of the canoe as a pedagogy and as a metaphor derives from a Coast Salish worldview, one that Cedar could articulate and directly speak to. Likewise, Sage also engages in land as pedagogy in the everydayness, where she can identify a plant around her home and forage for medicines and food. She mentioned that her backyard was her grocery store. Sage asserts pedagogies of engaging with all senses and walking the land in silence. Through this, teacher candidates are called on to develop a relationship with the land and to read the land. Simpson (2014) argues that to be engaged with land as pedagogy is “a life practice [that] inevitably means coming face-to-face with settler colonial authority, surveillance and violence” (p.19). Indigenous scholar Sandy Grande (2009) also argues for a pedagogy that “cultivates a sense of collective agency” to “revitalize Indigenous communities” and to dismantle colonial systems (p.237). This is something that Rose is instilling in teacher candidates, “to learn the history of this land,” as school districts are still trying to catch up. Rose referenced existing curriculum for engaging with

the land, such as the Learning in Places - Co-designed Outdoor Learning curriculum (Learning in Place Collaborative, 2021). Finally, Bitterroot engages with place-based pedagogies by teaching the local Tribe's history from their homelands. Bitterroot emphasizes place-based through nearby local tribes because the JMI STI is prioritized as a means for K-12 instruction, as opposed to tribally-developed curricula. Engaging with land and water as pedagogy means living these teachings through a specific knowledge system and it also means engaging on lands and waters that are entangled with settler colonialism. These pedagogies also overlap with Madden's (2015) prevailing pedagogical pathway of Indigenous and place-based education as well as with the literature review where teacher candidates engaged with the land through events, museum visits, and walking tours (Hare, 2015). While, non-Indigenous teacher candidates engaged in aspects of land- and place-based education, it differs from the ways Indigenous peoples engage with land because it is more than a one time event (e.g., walking tours and museums) and is there everyday realities and routinely practices of living. This begs the question, how can non-Indigenous teacher educators and candidates honor and adapt this everyday living?

Two Worldviews as Pedagogy

An overlapping pedagogy that was discussed by relatives was learning and operating from two worldviews and value sets (Indigenous and Western perspectives). Marigold, Reed, and Bitterroot brought up the importance of being able to operate from both perspectives as a way to detect settler narratives and logics. The transformational Indigenous praxis model (TIPM) speaks to the varying levels of working from a settler consciousness toward a critical Indigenous consciousness (Pewewardy et al., 2022). The two worldviews as pedagogy, specifically teaching from an Indigenous perspective, resonate with Madden's (2015) prevailing pedagogy of learning from Indigenous traditional models of teaching. Although settler colonialism has disrupted these

traditional models of teachings, they are now being revived. A sense of belonging as pedagogy, mentioned by Camas becomes a pedagogy or antidote for this disruption because Indigenous peoples are working toward reconnecting with their identities, for which they do not possess traditional models of teaching. This will be a lifelong process for those working to reconnect with their Indigenous identities. A sense of belonging as pedagogy offers reconnecting, Indigenous peoples to feel seen, heard, and understood through an Indigenous presence, perspective, and representation. It affirms their belonging, identity, and relations as an Indigenous being. Without this, Indigenous peoples will fall victim to western ideologies that often portray Indigenous peoples and lifeways as less than, “uncivilized,” and untrue. Therefore, there is an emphasis on two worldview pedagogies and consciousness, to detect and operate from both lenses. In some cases, two worldviews can co-exist, under the right circumstances and conditions, for example, “Native Science,” it does not only include, “traditional ecological practices but also categories such as metaphysics and philosophy; art and architecture; practical sustainable technologies and agriculture” (Cajete et al., 2018, p.16). In terms of education, operating from a place of two worldviews acts as a set of glasses, where teacher educators and teacher candidates can see through both lenses and create a holistic interpretation.

Co-Planning and Co-Teaching Pedagogies

Lastly, I turn to pedagogies that developed when in-person learning shifted to online learning. Willow’s and Alder’s online class employed co-planning and co-teaching to teach from a place of full embodiment, where both could lean on each other’s assets. Alder, a Lummi elder, asserted Coast Salish “witnessing” during students’ final presentations. At the end of their class gathering, Willow and Alder invited Native educators to witness students presenting their final projects. Engaging with an online format afforded the class direct access to Native educators

across the state, who Zoomed in to watch the presentation. On another note, we also heard stories of co-planning with Reed and Marigold, both playing a major role in helping a non-Indigenous teacher educator plan the mandated course. Reed and Marigold brought with them a wealth of knowledge and teachings that became unbalanced, as they became the de facto educators for the non-Indigenous instructor, which brought with it emotional labor. The experiences of emotional labor and its toll were also written in Davis et al. (2018) where Indigenous faculty were advised to mentor non-Indigenous faculty on desettling their settler histories and assumptions.

The nine Indigenous teacher educators' pedagogical pathways contribute to existing pedagogies that are reflective of Indigenous pedagogies. Through this study, the pedagogical approaches were grounded in the teacher educators' identities/Indigenous relations, educational journeys, and tailored to the TEPs. In essence, there was no "one-way approach" for employing pedagogies for the mandatory course. Rather, there were parallels across each relatives' pedagogical pathways, which centered on land-, place-, and water-based pedagogies that were reflective of everydayness, meaning it is embedded in their everyday life. Moreover, the overlapping pedagogies were found in the story rugs, where the symbols of mountains, waterways, plants, and animals were observable in the rugs. Thus, the pedagogies employed by the relatives varied, but all aimed at teaching teacher candidates to teach tribal history, culture, and government.

"Stretching" with IRM - Diné Story Rug

I offer a discussion on employing the IRM, Diné Story Rug (Tachine, 2015; 2018) to tell the stories of nine Indigenous teacher educators through a physical story rug. This discussion stemmed from the sharing circle where relatives responded to seeing and hearing back their stories from the presented story rugs. In the sharing circle, I was pleased to hear relatives share

that the story rugs uplifted and respectfully told everyone's stories equally, without it overpowering or devaluing each other's stories. The symbolisms and patterns in the story rug told a visual story that was understandable for everyone, enabling them to come to know each other's Indigenous knowledge systems. As I soon discovered, the act of weaving their stories became a form of asserting the ISW principles, as well as member checking, to affirm and reaffirm the stories I was hearing from relatives. All agreed that the rugs were reflective of their stories. The ISW principles that I centralized was reciprocity to move away from extractive research. This speaks to one of the challenges of qualitative research that Kovach's (2009) argues, " [The challenge] involves finding (and using) a research approach that is not extractive and is accountable to Indigenous community standards on research so as to honour the tribal worldview" (p.29). The sharing circle offered a space for relatives to also analyze their own story rugs as well as other relatives' story rugs. It created a space for the story rugs to tell their own stories as relatives began to present an array of additional interpretations, ones that were not originally discussed in the story rug symbolisms and meanings. This speaks to Wilson's (2008) points on analysis, "through an Indigenous paradigm, accuracy does not play as big a part in describing the phenomenon but is more important in describing the set of relationships that make up the phenomenon" (p.22). It is through an existing set of relations that we (relatives and I) developed relational meaning-making. So, the story rugs also represent a set of established relationships with relatives that were cohesively put together, therefore maintaining the fullness of the relationship (Wilson, 2008). Further, by engaging in a sharing circle with a visual story rug (elicitation) contributes to a IRM that confirms the validity and reliability of the stories, and also attributes to the collaborative, relational analysis of the understandings/findings. This affirms that western notions of validity and reliability can be challenged, when rooted in IRM. All of this is

to say that, asserting Diné Story Rug throughout this research process held me accountable to relatives' stories, to engage in reciprocal relationships, to acknowledge the relatives' Indigenous ways of knowing, and to re-story their stories through a story rug.

Implications of the Study

State Policy. This study was informed by two decades of Native education policies that were successfully passed into legislation in the state of Washington. The focal legislation that informed this study was the 2018 Senate Bill 5028, which requires all teacher education programs in Washington State to prepare teacher candidates to teach tribal history, culture, and government (Washington State Legislature, n.d.c). As reiterated by the nine Indigenous teachers who taught and co-planned for the state-mandated course, there are not a sufficient amount of college course offerings (e.g., one- to two-credits) to fully prepare teacher candidates, as this course provides a basis and scratches the surface of tribal history, culture, and government. Additionally, there is fluctuation in the amount of course credit offerings in teacher education programs across Washington State, with some programs offering the minimum of one- to two-credits. Currently, there is one institution that offers a five-credit hour course with a non-Indigenous teacher educator, it is worth studying further. This course was not part of this dissertation due to the scope of the study, which was a focus on Indigenous teacher educators' experiences in the required course. An examination of the five-credit course could shed light on whether teacher candidates feel well equipped to teach tribal history, culture, and government because the general message from teacher candidates in the one- to two-credit course is—it's not enough credit hours—to fully prepare them to teach from the curriculum. Therefore, there needs to be a policy amendment, in consultation with local Tribal communities and teacher educators to clarify the "required" amount of course credit offerings—or, the maximum amount of credit

offerings to adequately prepare teacher candidates to teach tribal history, culture, and government.

A sub-focal point of this study was also centered on the 2015 Senate Bill 5433, which requires all K-12 educators to teach tribal history, culture, and government (Washington State Legislature, n.d.b). While these state-mandates are written into law, the JMI STI has not been fully implemented in all school districts and there is lack of financial support, causing Tribal communities to fund curriculum development (Reyna, 2022). Teacher candidates who transition from student teachers to teachers of records are met with this lack of implementation from their colleagues and in some cases are called on to take the lead on planning for and teaching from the JMI STI curriculum (teacher candidate, personal communication, January, 2024). Both teacher candidates and in-service teachers need continuous professional development and support, rather than solely relying on the state-mandated course from their teacher education program to “prepare” them. Stakeholders must continue to advocate and push for senate bills that seek to sustain Native and Indigenous education in P-20 spaces. Policy efforts could begin to consider the ways to hold educators and administrative leaders accountable for curricular implementation efforts through state- and federally-funded streams of support. One example of this is a school district that partnered with a local tribe, to hold educators accountable for JMI STI and tribally-developed curricular, which they did by embedding it into educators’ end-of-the-year evaluation (M. Remel, personal communication, July, 2023). These educators are evaluated on their cultural competence in relation to the state-mandate on Native education. In all, the policy implications for all teacher education programs is to have a consistent and maximum course credit offering (e.g., five credit hours) to prepare teacher candidates beyond an introductory level. Lastly, policy efforts must seek to support all educators to fully implement the curriculum

to teach all students about tribal history, culture, and government, as this is a requirement and written into law. Currently, there are no said enforced penalties for not complying with this state-mandate.

Practice. This study revealed nine Indigenous teacher educators' pedagogical pathways, which were informed by their educational journeys and identities. These personal pedagogical pathways offer an insight into the ways greater Indigenous pedagogies, perspectives, and ways of knowing are being implemented in the state-mandated course. As illustrated in the findings, there was not "one" approach to teaching and preparing teacher candidates, but instead there are many distinct pedagogies being enacted. Teacher educators, educators, and teacher education programs could benefit from these pedagogical efforts, utilizing them as ways to employ Indigenous pedagogies and learn/operate from two value sets—Indigenous and Western (non-Indigenous) perspectives. As echoed from relatives, teaching and learning from a place of Indigenous ways of knowing and being is something that cannot be learned in one class, but is a continuous process of learning and even unlearning. It calls on educators to build a relationship with Tribal communities and with the land, again, which will take time. There is no recipe or step-by-step manual to do so. Instead, it is felt through embodiment, through witnessing, through our senses, and done through relationality. From these relatives' stories, it can be done through a collaborative process of co-planning and co-teaching—in a balanced and mutually beneficial way. In this way, the state-mandated course and state-mandate curricular implementation are not just seen as "requirements" in schools but could be genuinely felt and embodied through teaching and learning in all regards.

Research. The scope of this qualitative study sought to hear the stories of Indigenous teacher educators in various teacher education programs across Washington State to understand

their pedagogical pathways in a state-mandated course. I approached this through IRM and drew from my ancestral teachings of Diné rug weaving to capture the stories of relatives' identities, educational journeys, pedagogical pathways, and visions for Indigenous education. I suggest future implications include examining the state-mandated in Washington state further, and centering Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators' experiences with the mandate.

As revealed in the literature review, there is an existing body of literature on non-Indigenous and Indigenous teacher educators attending to their Canadian provincial-mandate on Aboriginal education at the teacher education program and K-12 level, but there is a lack of literature found in the United States. With that said, further research studies in the U.S. are needed to examine the effects of Native education at the institutional level, at the programmatic level, and in K-12 classrooms across national contexts. There are currently eleven states who have state-mandates on Native education for all students in K-12 schools and several others who are considering similar measures (Hopkins, 2020, NCAI, 2019), but Washington State is currently the only one with a state-mandate at the teacher education program level. Therefore, more self-studies and case-studies are needed to examine teacher educator enactments (including both non-Indigenous and Indigenous teacher educations), responding to emotional labor, teacher candidate preparation, engagement, and perceptions, and in-service teacher curricular implementation of the JMI STI curriculum and other tribally-developed curricula in K-12 classrooms. The research implications are to further understand the programmatic preparation, curricular implementation, and pedagogical enactments in P-20 educational systems to build literature within the context of the United States.

A research study that seeks to employ IRM must draw from Indigenous theories, frameworks, and ways of knowing. I drew from my Diné Story Rug (Tachine, 2015), as it is

specific to my Native nation's knowledge system. Archibald (2008) encourages researchers who are engaging in Indigenous Storywork (ISW) to draw from their specific tribal communities' ways of sharing and listening to stories, not so they generalize the ISW framework but so they recognize there might be similar principles of storytelling and storying. In the ISW principles, I found similarities within Diné teachings, such as the four Rs. For scholars seeking to engage in ISW, I too, encourage researchers to engage with their community's distinct ways of engaging in storying and storytelling.

Conclusion

The "re" denotes that we have always had the capability to see the humanity in others and that others see and reflect our humanity back to us. The "re" pushes forward by enacting that which was inherent. (Grande, 2004, p.280).

By re-storying Indigenous education, I used Diné rug weaving to track relatives' pedagogical pathways for preparing teacher candidates to teach from the JMI STI curriculum and other Tribally-developed curricula. The story rugs served as a catalyst for "enacting" my inherent ancestral knowledge. It is through these story rugs that I present how we, as Indigenous teacher educators, are employing pedagogical pathways that are shaped by our identities, our educational journeys, and our visions for Indigenous education. I conclude with sharing the story of how one Indigenous teacher educator, Sage, is envisioning how we can begin to *re-story* Indigenous education:

It's walking it in silence, and listening to the voices, listening to what the land is saying, because it's speaking to us. Walk it, walk it in silence. What does it teach? Because it's always teaching. I look at what's happening today, you know, politically. And then I have

to embrace and trust, “What is the land going to teach us about that? How are we healing? How can we heal?” And so that's kind of where I'm at right now.

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Appendix

Appendix A. Sharing Story Protocol

Individual Sharing Story (Interview) Questions

- **Checking In:**
 - How are you doing?
- **Grounding - Personal and tribal identities:**
 - Tell me about who you are and the tribal community or communities that you come from.
 - Bring an object(s) you would like to share that speaks to your personal and tribal identities.
- **Educational Journey and Pedagogical Pathways:**
 - What brought you to this work? Share the story of how you came to teach this course, your relationship with this course (e.g., When and how it began? What have you put into it and gotten out of it?)
 - What is the heart and soul of this course? Share stories of how preservice teachers responded (e.g., gratitude, constructive feedback) to the course.
 - Share stories of success and/or challenges that you face (or have faced) throughout your journey to teach this course?
- **Re-storying and Envisioning Indigenous Education**
 - Now that you've taught this course x many times - What wisdom and pedagogical pathways would you provide your younger self or incoming Indigenous teacher educators about critical preparing preservice teachers to teach tribally developed curricula?

- Stories about what you learned from/with your students and tribal communities.
- Indigenous communities value being in good relation, what does it look like and feel like to build trust and relational accountability with local tribes, with students in the teacher preparation program, and also relation to self?
- What are some ways you envision this course being transformative for teaching/learning for preservice teachers? In what ways do you see this course as a site for transforming Indigenous education within and beyond K-12 public school spaces?

Appendix B. Sharing Circle Questions:

Check-in (15 minutes)

- Shayla will greet and get everyone acquainted. Begin with introductions: Tell us where you are zooming in from, name, and tribal affiliations
- Warm-up question: Drop your thoughts in the chat, what is foremost in your heart and mind as you enter this space?

Share Mini-Rugs, Initial Understandings/Findings from Sharing Story Data Collection, and Discussion (1 hour)

- Jot down notes on what you are hearing, feeling, or seeing from the shared stories illustrated in the Navajo rugs?



Re-storying Indigenous Education in a teacher preparation course (15 minutes discussion)

CONTEXT: For this study, I am engaging with an Indigenous Research Methodology called, Diné Story Rug. It is essentially weaving a metaphoric story rug. I see weaving as a way to gather and share stories. I think about how each different colored wool yarn represents your unique stories, journeys, and pathways. I am also engaging in an educational process model called, “Tracking A Story” by Tewa scholar Gregory Cajete. He states, “Everything leaves a track, and in the track is the story” (Cajete, 1994, pp.55-56). During this sharing circle, I hope you are open to sharing stories of how you are “leaving tracks” and “forging new tracks” for a pathway toward Indigenous education.

Guiding Questions:

- In your personal educational journey, what are some stories of teaching and learning (or pedagogical pathways) that you hope to leave behind and/or carry with you in future courses?
 - As a collective, how might the state-mandated course (i.e., Understanding Indigenous Perspectives/Tribal Sovereignty) become a transformative site for preparing future teachers to teach from Native Education curriculum?

(If needed) Guiding Questions:

- Reflect on the successes and/or challenges of preparing for and teaching the state-mandated course (i.e., Understanding Indigenous Perspectives/Tribal Sovereignty) to under/graduate students.
 - As a collective, what are you hearing, feeling, or seeing that you might want to change or add into your existing syllabus, pedagogical approaches, engaging with students, and more?

Appendix C. Story Rug Presentation Slides

Slide 1.

Story Rugs

1/26/2025

Slide 2.



Art by: Eliza Naranjo Morse (Santa Clara Pueblo)

Slide 3.

Indigenous Education as a third space - Teepee & Pipe Teachings

Slide 4.

Understanding and Learning Indigenous Perspectives -
Crossing and Calling Between Mountains

Slide 5.



Mobilizing Ancestral Teachings and Connections

Slide 6.



Building Community - Restoring/Rebalancing lands and peoples

Slide 7.



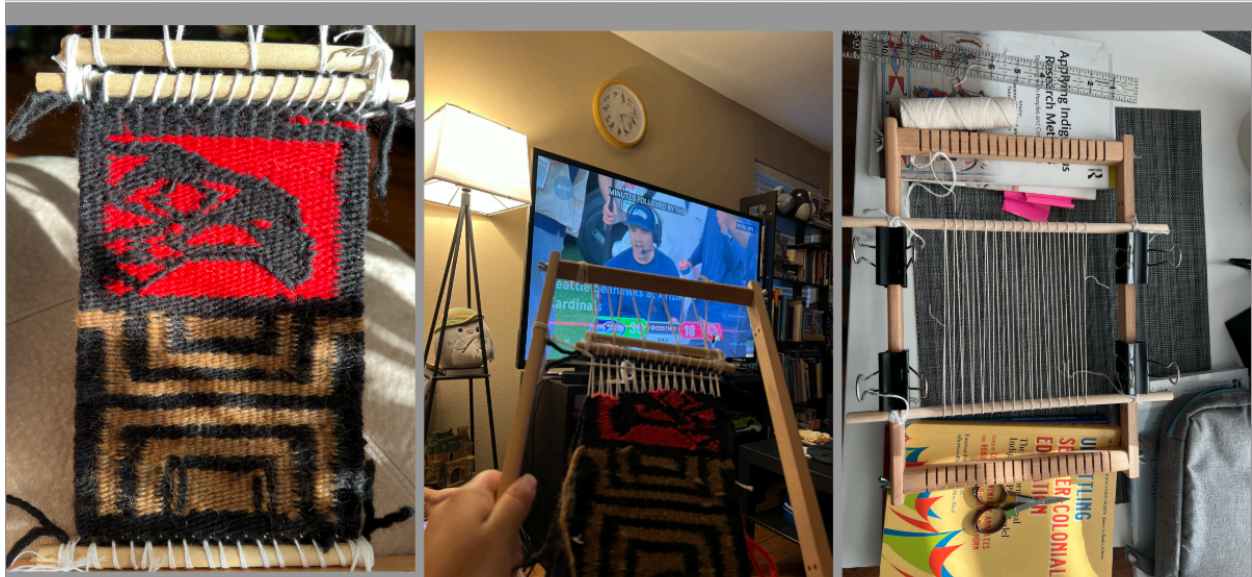
Healing of the Canoe Teachings - Canoe Journey

Slide 8.



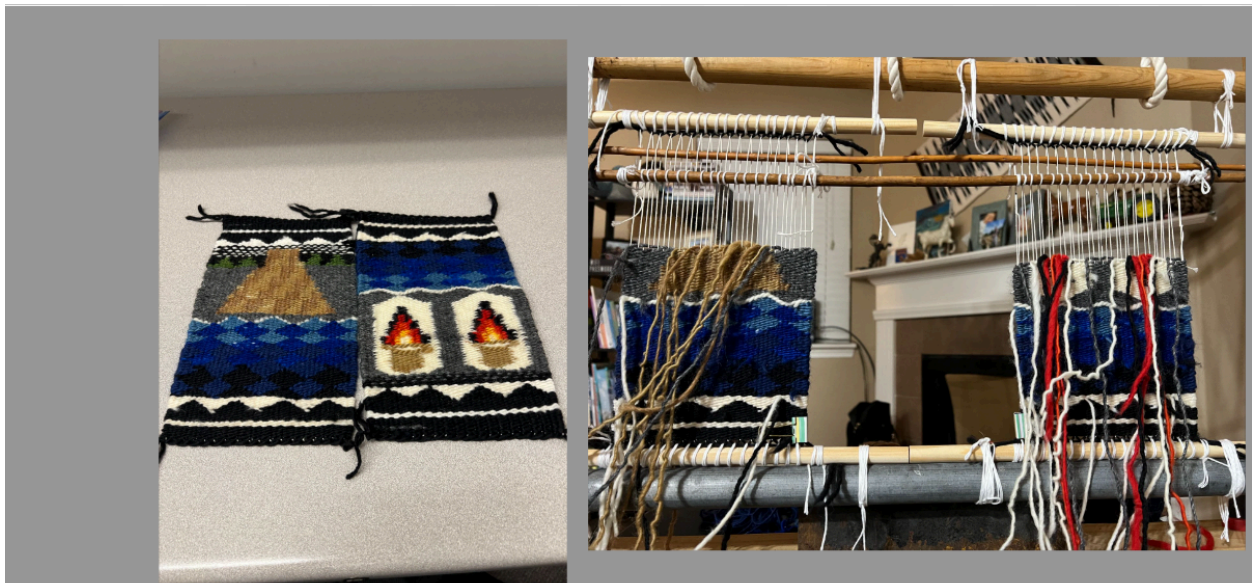
Intergenerational Knowledge - Grandma Teachings

Slide 9.



Weaving Our Relations—Coast Salish and Columbia Plateau

Slide 10.



Water and Land-Relations - Teaching in Synergy