

The First Peoples Principles of Learning in Teacher Education: Responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's *Calls to Action*

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In this article we consider the potential of engaging the First Peoples Principles of Learning document in Teacher Education in support of the TRC's Calls to Action. Appreciating the need for Indigenous pedagogies in Indigenizing K-12 curriculum in furtherance of the Calls to Action, we consider the contributions and complexities of engaging this document developed by Indigenous teachers and knowledge holders in British Columbia. Through working with Archibald's Indigenous Storywork and Indigenous scholarship, we highlight the complexity of the colonial context of this work. Ultimately, we find that the complications are generative and we discuss an approach to this document that supports the Calls to Action through ethical and relational priorities.

Keywords: Indigenous pedagogy; decolonization; reconciliation; colonialism; teacher education

Introduction

We begin by extending our deep appreciation to the Indigenous nations where we live for providing us with places to study, teach, and sustain ourselves, and acknowledge that we are guests on their traditional and ancestral territories. We also wish to express our heartfelt reverence for the generations of Indigenous children that were forced to attend Indian Residential Schools in Canada, and the communities and families that have been so significantly impacted by this colonial violence. We are writing this article in response to the formidable spirit of the survivors of Indian Residential Schools who courageously shared their stories, and with a shared sense of responsibility to the significant work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada and the poignant *Calls to Action* that emerged from their work (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada [TRC], 2015a). We also recognize the Indigenous children in Canada who were forced to attend day schools during the residential

school era, children taken from their homes and forced into foster care during the Sixties Scoop, and most recently Indigenous children in care who have been impacted by similar attempts to obliterate their languages, cultures, and Indigenous identities. As scholars and educators in post-secondary education, we are whole-heartedly committed to meaningfully engaging the *Calls to Action* in our own work.

In this article, we focus on our role in initial teacher education and a set of pedagogical principles known as the First Peoples Principles of Learning (FPPL) that has been prominent in education in British Columbia (BC). The FPPL are a set of pedagogical principles developed by Indigenous educators and knowledge holders in BC to guide Indigenous education, and are considered common to the diverse Indigenous traditions in the region. We see the potential of the FPPL to respond to the necessary implementation of curricular changes in K-12 education that the *Calls to Action* require, and initial teacher education as a site where new generations of teachers can be engaged in efforts towards reconciliation through education, in the interests of systemic transformation. We also see particular features of the context in which the FPPL are engaged that limit their potential contribution. In this article, we engage respectfully with the FPPL document in the interests of broader understanding and engagement with pedagogical complexity and diversity, when engaging Indigenous knowledges in the context of Indigenous-settler relations in Canada.

As post-secondary educators, we are interested in the ways we can engage teacher candidates in this complicated curricular conversation with Indigeneity in K-12 education, in this spirit of reconciliation¹. Our work together reflects the significance of Indigenous and settler collaborations in this regard. We begin this article by introducing ourselves and the nature of our work, and then provide greater detail and context to the FPPL document. We engage this document with *Indigenous Storywork* methodology (Archibald, 2008) as well as philosophical and theoretical lenses of Indigenous scholars Jo-ann Archibald, Dwayne Donald, and Martin Nakata (Donald, 2011, 2012; Nakata, 2007; Nakata, Nakata, Keech, & Reuben, 2012). We conclude with our priorities for the ways the FPPL might be engaged in furtherance of the *Calls to Action*.

Who We Are

My name is Amy Parent and I begin by raising my hands high to show my deep appreciation to the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations for providing me with a place to live, study, and teach, and acknowledge that I am a guest on their traditional, ancestral, unceded, and overlapping territories. My mother's side of the family is Nisga'a from the

House of Ni'isjoohl and we belong to the Ganada (Frog) Clan. On my father's side, I am French and German. My Nisga'a name is Nox Ayaa Wilt and I am a mother, researcher, and an educator. I am an assistant professor of education at Simon Fraser University.

My name is Jeannie Kerr and I am a settler²-scholar-teacher grateful to be thinking, writing, and teaching on the ancestral territories of the Anishnabeg, Cree, Dakota, Oji-Cree, and Dene peoples and home of the Métis nation. I greatly appreciate the welcoming I have received in Treaty 1 territory. My parents immigrated to what is now known as Canada with my older sister. I am of the Kerr Clan from the Scottish borderlands and more recently Glasgow on my father's side, and the Couch family of Cork County, Ireland on my mother's side. I am the first of my family to be born in Canada. We also feel that an important component of our relationship is our differing cultural genealogies. We hope to demonstrate within our practice as educators and researchers the ways that Indigenous and settler peoples can work together in a complicated space, in respectful and thoughtful ways. We feel that embodying these kinds of respectful relations is key to the TRC's 94 *Calls to Action*.

*The TRC Calls to Action In Education for Reconciliation
and the First Peoples Principles of Learning*

The TRC formulated 94 *Calls to Action* that focus on the legacy of Indian Residential Schools, and also propose specific recommendations in education. The *Calls to Action* more specifically address the ongoing inequity of funding for on- and off-reserve education and the support of equitable Indigenous participation in educational governance. The *Calls to Action* (per Calls 62 and 63) are directed at developing curricula for K-12 "in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators" and to address "Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools", while also sharing "best practices" in engaging this curricula and attending to "teacher-training needs" (TRC, 2015a, p. 7). In our view, the *Calls to Action* in education are asking us as teacher educators to support teacher candidates in engaging with contemporary Indigenous perspectives on the shared history of the relationship between Indigenous and settler peoples in Canada, including the traumatic events of Indian Residential Schools, and to help them consider how they will engage Indigeneity in the K-12 education system. We view the FPPL as relevant to this work through both the consultative engagement with Indigenous knowledge holders in their development and the focus in the FPPL on engaging Indigenous knowledges through pedagogies that are aligned with Indigenous worldviews.

The FPPL are comprised of nine foundational Indigenous learning principles as follows:

1. Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.
2. Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).
3. Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.
4. Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.
5. Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge.
6. Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.
7. Learning involves patience and time.
8. Learning requires exploration of one's identity.
9. Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations.

(First Nations Education Steering Committee [FNESC], 2015)

The FPPL were developed during 2006 and 2007, through a partnership between the British Columbia Ministry of Education and the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC), during the creation of the *English 12 First Peoples* course. The course was created in response to the superficial and often incorrect classroom resources available, as well as a perceived need to develop resources that address "how Aboriginal perspectives and understandings help us learn about the world and how they have contributed to a stronger society" (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2015, p. 1). The development of this curriculum was guided by a priority to engage Indigenous voice in curriculum development in meaningful and authentic ways, and thus included significant input from Indigenous Elders, knowledge holders, and educators in BC. The creation of this course was unique in that the process began with the creation of an Advisory Committee (Chrona, 2014). The Indigenous Elders, educators, scholars, and knowledge holders on the Advisory Committee not only helped to ensure that the course itself was informed by Indigenous perspectives and knowledges, but that the course was able to "authentically embody aspects of First Peoples' values around teaching and learning" in BC (Chrona, 2014). Through this experience, the FPPL was developed in conjunction with the course.

Due to the meaningful and collaborative engagement with Indigenous knowledge holders in development of the *English 12 First Peoples* course, the FPPL emerged as a key aspect of engaging Indigenous knowledges in ways that are aligned with Indigenous worldviews. Since that time, the

official K-12 curriculum in BC has been completely revised and the FPPL were positioned as a lens to curricular reform (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2015). In the last couple of years, within the mainstream BC teacher education programs we have taught, the FPPL have been engaged as a formal part of the course outline used for the mandatory Indigenous education course for all teacher candidates. From our perspective, through honouring Indigenous pedagogies in ways articulated through the FPPL, we feel there is greater opportunity and support to engage Indigenous knowledges and perspectives more ethically, respectfully, and fully. This attentiveness is intended to enrich the educational experience of all students, and supports the *Calls to Action* geared to teaching future generations to “live together in dignity, peace, and prosperity on these lands we now share” (TRC, 2015b, p. 8). We see the FPPL as being well aligned with the TRC *Calls to Action* in education for reconciliation.

Methodological-Theoretical Complications of Engaging the FPPL

Due to the significance of the TRC *Calls to Action* and how the FPPL can support these calls, we believe it is important to consider and address the complications of the context in which the *Calls to Action* are being made. More specifically, educational systems in settler nation-states such as Canada are marked by violence directed at Indigenous students, families, and communities (TRC, 2015b; Marker, 2006; Kerr, 2014). Such systems are immersed in Eurocentric worldviews that deny the possibilities of Indigenous knowledge as knowledge and deny relationality between Indigenous and settler peoples (Little Bear, 2000; Grosfoguel, 2007; Battiste & Henderson, 2009; Donald, 2012; Kerr, 2014; Kerr & Parent, 2015). Further, the ongoing nature of settler colonialism as a structure and occupation of Indigenous territories marks the broader and power-laden context in which educational reform is imagined (Wolfe, 2006; Tuck & Yang, 2012). As we consider how we engage the *Calls to Action* and the role of the FPPL, we need to ponder the possibilities of ethics, positionality, knowledges, worldviews, and power. With these considerations in mind, we rely on the methodological-theoretical frameworks of respected Indigenous scholars Jo-ann Archibald (Stó:lō and Xaxli’p), Martin Nakata (Torres Strait Islander), and Dwayne Donald (Papachase Cree). We find that these scholars help us to engage the complexity of the topic in critical and ethical ways by centering the notion of *relationality*, which we have been taught is fundamental to Indigeneity and central to all efforts in reconciliation.

At the forefront of our analysis is Nakata’s concept of the *cultural interface*. We are often troubled and challenged by the ways in which Indigenous and Western³ knowledges are positioned as being opposite to

one another. In our reading of Nakata, the concept of the *cultural interface* acknowledges the complexity of the relationship between Indigenous and Western knowledge systems, and directs us to appreciate the differences and attend to how those differences emerge from different worldviews. In so doing, Nakata is mindful of the politics of power and history of this context. We also appreciate from his work the distinctiveness of Indigenous knowledges, yet the familiar forms that such knowledges might take across diverse Indigenous traditions of thought and practice. We see in Nakata's writing the ability to hold a reverence for *place* as informing the distinctiveness of Indigenous ways of being, knowing, and doing, while balancing the shared priorities that draw Indigenous knowledges together.

We also engage Donald's concepts of *ethical relationality* with the notion of *colonial frontier logics* in our minds. As Donald (2012) states, "ethical relationality is an ecological understanding of human relationality that does not deny difference, but rather seeks to understand more deeply how our different histories and experiences position us in relation to each other (p. 103)." In his discussion, Donald emphasizes the ethical imperative of relationality. He argues that we cannot be ethical unless we appreciate that we are related, and that our future as peoples with all living beings on Mother Earth are already tied together (p. 104). We are attuned to the *Calls to Action* in support of reconciliation, and thus we are considering the possibilities of the FPPL in furtherance of reconciliation in terms of *ethical relationality*. The context of violence and separation, that has characterized the ways that settler governments have engaged in relations with Indigenous peoples in Canada, suggests to us the need to forefront ethics and relationships as we consider education that supports reconciliation in Canadian society. We need to deeply consider our ways of being as we engage reconciliation. Donald references the colonial narratives common in Canada, such as Canada as previously empty land in need of civilization, and the logics on which they are based; he encourages an ethic of relationality based in Blackfoot teachings to inform the work of repairing and renewing relations in Canadian educational contexts. Similar to Nakata, Donald considers the differences in worldviews as generative or, in his words, "organic tension in motion" that "support the emergence of new knowledges and insights" (Donald, 2012, p. 105). Donald also locates teachings as emerging from place and territory, and enacts this priority of place and Nation in his work by drawing on Blackfoot teachings.

Our teachings from Indigenous scholars and knowledge holders suggest that relationality is a key understanding in Indigenous worldviews and can support reconciliation. We take guidance from Donald and view *ethical relationality* as a positive way to participate in renewed relations. The

complexity inherent in the *cultural interface* in educational settings requires us to hold the tension without the need to resolve it (Donald, 2012, p. 104), while also ensuring that one system's claims to truth are not legitimized and measured according to the other's standards and justifications (Nakata, 2007, p. 9). A major challenge we see in our work is holding this space without falling into an either/or position in response. We have experienced that, at times instead of allowing the complexity of this space to exist, the *cultural interface* is sutured over within a particular Western order of things (Nakata, pp. 10-11).

Indigenous Storywork Methodology with the FPPL

Our hands are held high in reverence to our mentor, Jo-ann Archibald, who generously shared oral teachings with us throughout our time with her on Musqueam territory at the University of British Columbia. Her oral teachings and texts have allowed us to engage these ideas through her *Indigenous Storywork* (2008) methodology. We aim to follow the way that Archibald has carefully taught us to think and feel *with* stories, in contrast to thinking *about* stories, so they can become the teacher. Fundamental to *Indigenous Storywork* are ethics and relationality, which Archibald discusses in her work through cultural values of respect, responsibility, reciprocity, and reverence learned through her Stó:lō Elders.

Our Storywork in this article considers a personal experience that occurred when Amy was engaged in a discussion about the FPPL in the context of K-12 public education. This story emerged as significant to our work as we began to discuss the complications of engaging the FPPL in initial teacher education and we returned to it repeatedly. We began to appreciate that this story could be a significant teacher for us. We offer this story to share in our continual learning and to invite others to think with us about the complexities that the story draws out. We are not making any sort of claim of being personally beyond the complicities and complexities that emerge in the story—we see ourselves as similarly entangled within colonial educational systems and societies (Ceci, 2000; Dei, 2011). We attempt to share what we have been taught from this story through engaging *Indigenous Storywork* principles. As we worked with this story we discussed with each other the ways we are holding up these principles and the influences that help us discern the inter-relatedness, synergy, and holistic connections that became apparent through *Indigenous Storywork*.

Through our Storywork process we grew to understand that the complex questions that emerged for us were coming through one particular trickster character that we needed to understand in more detail. As we use the word trickster, we are reminded by Archibald (2008) that the “English

word 'trickster' is a poor one because it cannot portray the diverse range of ideas that First Nations associate with the Trickster" (p. 5). The trickster character in First Nations stories has multiple meanings and multiple forms, such as Raven, Naapi, Coyote, and more. Trickster has the ability to shape shift (metamorphose) and transform into other beings. In many of the stories, the Trickster also teaches us how to create balance and harmony in our lives. Tricksters frequently play a key role in Indigenous stories on the northwest coast. In Amy's culture, Txeemsim is a trickster character or miracle worker. According to Nisga'a Elder Bert McKay, Txeemsim displays the best of what humankind should strive for. Still, he is an approachable demi-god, full of human failings, even as he demonstrates how these failings can be conquered (as cited in Rose, 1993, p. 15). We understand Txeemsim to play with different levels of metaphors, reflexivity, and analysis.

Txeemsim has become a familiar friend who often arrives in unexpected moments to teach us critical insights and understandings in the *cultural interface* (Kerr & Parent, 2015; Parent, 2014). Jeannie has been listening and learning from Amy and other Indigenous knowledge holders about tricksters for a few years now, and has also been learning to see the trickster embodiment as a teacher. To understand Txeemsim teachings, we returned to the work of Donald (2012) and Nakata (2007) where we each spent time reading, reflecting, discussing, and then returning to their work in an iterative and cyclical process to unfold the multiple layers of knowledge and vast emotional wisdom embedded in their theories and stories. We also carefully listened to our intuition, dreams, and knowledge learned from our interactions with the land to carefully guide our questions and discussions. Through our process, we learned that there was direct continuity with this story and the traditional stories and characters (such as Txeemsim) that have been passed down for millennia in Indigenous communities. As we share Amy's story and our Storywork, we leave it to you to find and create your own meaning.

A Story of Discussing the Principles with Principals—Amy

It had been a short while since my last encounter with my dear old friend, Txeemsim and I wondered when she/he might appear after I last saw her in a university classroom. Without any notice, Txeemsim swooped into my life again while I was looking for a new school for my daughter after a recent move. As a consequence, I had chosen to meet with two principals in our new neighborhood to interview them about the schools in order to determine which one would be a good fit for her. It is here in the story that Txeemsim first transforms her/himself into a different character. Txeemsim tricks me and becomes Gaakhl (Shrew)⁴, the first Principal that I meet.

After going through a number of questions to learn more about the school culture and Gaakhl's vision for the school, I decided to ask my final question, "Where are you in terms of the Indigenization process at the school?" Gaakhl responds, "We are working with the First Peoples Principles of Learning" and did not provide any further explanation. She/he quickly moves onto other topics and I try to bring the conversation back around to ask how the school is engaging the FPPL but Gaakhl does not respond meaningfully.

A short while later, I find myself in another school, talking to a different Principal. This time, Txeemsim reveals herself immediately when I ask my Indigenization question. Txeemsim stops for a moment and takes another look at me and hones in on my carved Northwest Coast bracelet. She then thinks about my question and slowly explains:

We are working with the First Peoples Principles of Learning and like anything new it takes time for some of our teaching staff to come on board. We did a professional development workshop last fall and I explained to our teachers that the First Peoples Principles of Learning are just good teaching practice. They are what we have already been doing. But, as I said there were one or two in the group that I really had to encourage to get them to feel comfortable using the First Peoples Principles of Learning. I wish change would happen quicker. We will also be bringing in an Indigenous artist later in the year to do a project with students in the school. I would like to do more but there is always a limit on our time and available resources.

Txeemsim Brings the Complications of the FPPL to Light

In being taught by this story, and being guided by Archibald (2008), Nakata (2007), and Donald (2012), we find significant complications with engaging the FPPL. The first complication emerges from the nature of the *cultural interface*, where different worldviews and inequitable power relations are at work. Txeemsim notes the pushback that the FPPL is receiving at her school, where we can infer that some teachers are resisting the FPPL. We would acknowledge that really engaging with the FPPL is actually making a large claim on the school community and that the resistance of the teachers to this sort of change is something that is common. We have been engaging this notion of resistance as a generative source of change in our work (Kerr & Parent, 2015).

Txeemsim's reported response to the teachers that "we are already doing this" engages the resistance by attempting to minimize the power of Indigeneity in the document. Her response serves to erase the distinctiveness of Indigeneity in the FPPL through a lens of what we would term *cultural difference*. When the differences are seen as cultural—simply different versions of the same thing expressed in different cultural ways—there is an erasure of the unique contributions that are being made through an Indigenous worldview. Through engaging the FPPL through cultural dif-

ference and asserting the practices are essentially the same thing as common Western practices, the FPPL is reformulated and assimilated into what Nakata refers to as a "Western order of things" (Nakata, 2007, p. 10). Txeemsim⁵ thus keeps the darkness intact by keeping the FPPL enclosed in a Western box (Parent, 2014). In this case, not only is the Indigeneity informing the FPPL document being obscured, but also the larger issues of colonialism, racism, and power that are part of the context (Quijano, 2007). In particular, the power of Txeemsim to transform the document is obscured through her/his trickster behaviour.

In as much as we have argued that it is an error to homogenize Indigenous knowledges, it is also a mistake to homogenize Western knowledges as singular and opposite to Indigenous knowledges (Nakata et al., 2012). We recognize the history and suppression of diverse Western knowledges that occurred through 15th century Western European colonialism and the 17th century Enlightenment (Bernstein, 1983; Toulmin, 1990; Mignolo, 2011). We also appreciate critical Western, feminist scholars that reimagine *knowing* in this postmodern time (Orner, Miller, & Ellsworth, 1996; Ellsworth, 2005; Barad, 2007), as well as many other Western postmodern critical theorists, such as Michael Apple and Henry Giroux. However, we also recognize that there is a dominant Western order of things in play in public education, reflecting a dominant ideology of Western scientific materialism that is positioned as neutral and culture-free (Vokey, 2001; Marker, 2006; Kerr, 2014). For example, there is an assumption that the principles of Western sciences are the most valid forms of knowledge to guide education and are not a cultural product of a Western worldview. When working in the *cultural interface* we believe that knowledge systems should be identified and appreciated for their distinctions so as to avoid defaulting to this specific Western order of things. We believe it is important to maintain the generative tension of the distinctions amongst Indigenous and Western worldviews, and view this as an opportunity to enrich the educational space through ethical relationality.

Another complication emerges from the lack of specificity of the FPPL itself in terms of sourcing the knowledge of the document to specific places, Nations, philosophies, and Indigenous knowledge systems. While the FPPL did emerge in the context of contemporary engagement with knowledges by Indigenous peoples in BC, this context is not present or noted in the document itself. As a result, Gaakhl and Txeemsim cannot relate to the diversity and nature of Indigenous knowledges being called upon. In this way, the FPPL emerges as a cultural product as it is cut off from the specific Indigenous philosophies that inform the teachings contained in the FPPL. Donald (2011) has argued in a poignant blog entry that

when a teaching is *reified* and *thingified* as an isolated example of culture, then “the teaching is effectively divorced from the processes and commitments that give it depth, meaning, and life.” We find that the lack of specificity to place and Indigenous philosophy in the FPPL encourages a homogenized cultural view of the FPPL teachings and can be ultimately confusing for educators unfamiliar with Indigeneity.

Thus, we see the FPPL as a challenging gift. It is a gift in that it draws together learning priorities that are familiar across Indigenous traditions and can act as a guide in engaging Indigeneity in places of learning. While Indigenous knowledges are diverse, they also share some common characteristics in that they are generally ecological, relational, holistic, pluralistic, experiential, timeless, communal, and transmitted from Elders to youth through oral traditions. Indigenous knowledges are context-specific and interwoven within a given community’s lived experience, and are dynamic and ever-changing to reflect ecological, cultural, and spiritual adaptations. Indigenous knowledges are not a singular body of knowledge frozen in time but are multidimensional, pluralistic, and dynamic (Nakata, 2007). This description captures Indigenous knowledge systems and accentuates the profound relationship between Indigenous people, the land, and the spiritual world.

The FPPL can become a challenge due to the lack of specificity to the Indigenous Nations, knowledge systems, places, and territories from which the FPPL emerged, and the lack of related guidance through protocols on ways to engage place, Nation, and territory in the teachings. This context is alluded to in the resources guides accompanying BC curriculum documents for the *First Peoples 10/11* course (First Nations Education Steering Committee [FNESC], 2010). As they state, “[b]ecause the curriculum documents represent an attempt to identify common elements in the varied teaching and learning approaches that prevail within First Peoples societies, it must be recognized that they do not capture the full reality of the approach used in any single First Peoples society” (p. 9). In our story, it is clear that the FPPL are not being enlivened through the places and relationships with the First Peoples from these territories that would give them greater meaning. Without this connection, we can see how educators unfamiliar with Indigeneity can engage in the conflation with Western pedagogies in Amy’s story. This is evident with Txeemsim’s statement that “they are just good teaching practice”. This also sheds light on the brevity and limited vision of Gaakhl’s response, where there is no discussion or detail through the FPPL—it is being called upon as a thing done.

Another complication came to light for us in recognizing the emergence of neoliberal economic reasoning as the FPPL is encountered in

educational settings. We recognize through our work that economic justifications exert pressure in public education, resulting in educators working in an increasingly underfunded system that prioritizes economics over ethical relations. As Tuck (2013) clarifies, neoliberalism “(the insertion of market values into non-market sectors of human activity), has worked to defund the public sphere” (p. 325). In the Canadian educational context, the values of neoliberalism, and the language of accountability and marketability on which they rely, are normalized and almost invisible in their dominant positioning (Ungerleider, 2006). Public education in Canada has been seriously and continually underfunded over the past 30 years in this context, which is exacerbating student-teacher ratios and support for public education (Ross & Gibson, 2006, pp. 5-6). This underfunding is particularly problematic in our complex educational time in Canada. The TRC has drawn great attention to the need for curricular reform and educators are taking up the priorities of the *Calls to Action* in education, but without the necessary financial supports and time commitment to engage the level of complexity we have been arguing is required. In our view, these factors combine to create a context in which educators are engaging complex educational Indigenous curriculum and pedagogy constrained by economic justifications of education.

As we think about the story, Txeemsim is responsive and immersed in a neoliberal system. She notes the limitations in what has been done with Indigenizing the curriculum due to systemic constraints but naturalizes and excuses the lack of success the school is experiencing in this regard. Tuck (2013) argues that the logics of neoliberalism are not new but actually the current iteration of colonial systems. We find that when neoliberal policies structure educational priorities, it becomes imperative to account for the following questions: What qualities, values, and social relations are deemed economically efficient or desirable? Whose interest does the information and knowledge disseminated in the curricula serve, and who controls that information and knowledge? What forms of knowledge and skills are most important within a neoliberal framework? How do the knowledge and skills students learn within a neoliberal framework unproblematically incorporate the FFPL by impeding Indigenous knowledge(s) and the *Calls to Action*?

As we engage with these questions, we find that a neoliberal framework in education is positioned to uphold the inequitable power relations that have undermined Indigenous learners, scholars, communities, as well as settler allies working in reconciliation. Txeemsim's actions in closing the box to the complications at the *cultural interface* place the FFPL within a Western order of things that emerges from unequal power relations. This

enclosure is upheld through a neoliberal context that prioritizes economics over ethical relationality; there is not enough time to think more deeply and engage in the needed dialogue and embodied ethical relations. Ultimately, we see that reliance on neoliberal ideology in educational settings makes ethical relationality in the context of the *Calls to Action* very difficult. As Txeemsim uses this discourse, she is unable to support the dynamic and organic continuance of Indigenous worldviews from which the FPPL emerge. Educators work with the complications of neoliberalism in different ways as they work with the FPPL, and are informed/influenced by their own histories and related identities. We, too, struggle with the complexity and contradictions of Indigenizing the curriculum, within a system that demands evidence and products in a framework of cost efficiency. This context constrains our choices in our work and makes us complicit in colonial dynamics. In this context, we choose to become more vocal in our critique of the current system, where we resist naturalizing the system that supports colonial dynamics while still recognizing our privilege of being able to do this, and having venues where we can voice our concerns. As educators, we all need to have greater understanding as we engage our work in the current neoliberal system and appreciate that there is no easy, sure, or innocent place within which to exist.

Responding to the Complexity in Teacher Education

We have learned a great deal through being taught by Amy's story and our good friend Txeemsim. We realized through talking and learning together that we have not been actually working with the FPPL in an explicit way over the last year due to the misunderstandings that have emerged for us with teacher candidates. We know that the FPPL are a challenging gift and that teacher candidates are often working in a vulnerable position of trying to establish a professional identity while in the process of learning in a public way. In this context, there is often a desire to get to the facts and find a sure way to get things done. There is a desire for certainty that is exacerbated by a desire to avoid reimposing the traumas that have framed the relationship between Indigenous and settler peoples in Canada. As such, we have found it difficult to engage the FPPL with teacher candidates without falling into the misconceptions and erasures that occurred in Amy's story.

Engaging with *Indigenous Storywork* in this article has thus helped us to reimagine how we can engage the FPPL with teacher candidates. As we have noted, we see great educational possibilities with the FPPL. The FPPL not only provide guidance on learning through Indigenous worldviews and protocols; they also allow us to engage Indigenous curriculum mate-

rials in K-12 with teacher candidates using pedagogical guidance. Through our process, we have relearned that holding complex space at the *cultural interface* is necessary and that the FPPL can be an opportunity to do this work. We have learned that the challenges we have identified are actually the pathway to maintaining generative tension through dialogue. Through considering the distinctiveness and locatedness of Indigenous and Western worldviews with teacher candidates in a way that encourages self-awareness and self-reflexivity, we can consider the complexity of the interface together without the need to resolve it. We can consider the claims and ways of seeing the world that inform the FPPL in the particular places where we live. As Chrona (2014) explains in her informative blog on the FPPL, "Creating teaching and learning environments that reflect the FPPL has as much to do with an educator's philosophy about education, and disposition, as it has to do with curricular content." We extend this thought to include the concept of ethical relationality which also requires educators to explicitly acknowledge and be aware of the historical, cultural, linguistic, and social contexts from which they come and shapes how they understand, interpret, and relate ethically to the world. A deep level of self-reflexivity is required by educators in order to work with the FPPL in ways that uphold ethical relationality.

We also know that this type of work takes time and a commitment to ethical relationality in our own educational spaces and the Indigenous territories where we live and sustain ourselves. We need to build and honour our relationships with teacher candidates and engage them in meaningful dialogue that brings them into relation with this complexity and Indigenous territories. At the same time, we need to continue fostering relationships with people from the local territories so that we may learn more about the FPPL in context and model this practice to our students. We appreciate Donald's words that were learned from his Kanai Elders who have repeatedly reminded him that "teaching is a responsibility and an act of kindness viewed as a movement towards connectivity and relationality. Through the reciprocal process of teaching and learning, we move closer together" (Donald, 2012, p. 102). We have also been working with Richard Atleo's principles to guide us (Atleo, 2004, 2011; Kerr & Parent, 2015). Through his principles, we work toward balance as we engage the resistances and difficulties in our students and ourselves, and will continue to do this with the FPPL. In this way, the FPPL become a venue that we can engage, to hold the generative tension they bring.

We also appreciate two distinct practices with the FPPL to guide our work with teacher candidates: to share the genealogy of the FPPL and to locate/connect the FPPL in place, history, and tradition. In following the

history of the development of the FPPL, we believe we are able to move away from looking at the document as a “cultural thing”, a frozen cultural product, rather than the fluid guide to meaningful teaching practice with Indigeneity that it was designed to be. The requirement to explicitly connect the FPPL to the Indigenous knowledges and teachings in the places we teach as we engage them with teacher candidates is significant to enlivening the document. Encouraging teacher candidates to think about what local knowledge and cultural stories might be shared, using appropriate community protocols that focus on natural and supernatural, animate or inanimate beings, can support deeper understandings of language, relationships, values, and practices (Battiste & Henderson, 2009; Little Bear, 2000). These connections to local context teach us that we must be accountable and responsible in this multiplicity of relationships in the places we teach.

Conclusion

In this article, we have considered the potential of engaging the FPPL in teacher education in support of the TRC *Calls to Action* in education. We see great possibilities in the FPPL to respond to the necessary implementation of curricular changes in K-12 education through Initial Teacher Education; however, we also discussed at length the limitations of engaging this document in relation to the complexities of ongoing colonialism. Through engaging with *Indigenous Storywork* in our own learning, as well as the scholarship of noted Indigenous scholars Jo-ann Archibald, Martin Nakata, and Dwayne Donald, we considered significant complications that emerge from the colonial context of education in the Canadian settler nation-state. The first complication related to the nature of the *cultural interface* and the propensity within that space to conflate Indigenous knowledges and reformulate them in a Western order of things. Another complication emerged from the lack of explicit connection to Indigenous Nation, knowledge system, and territory of the document itself. Without guidance from particular Indigenous traditions of thought and practice through relationships with local Peoples, the document has the propensity to become a cultural product and readily misunderstood by those lacking experience with Indigenous knowledge systems. We also found an important complication related to neoliberal pressures in education and the readiness to succumb to the limitations of time/support that is required to enliven and understand the FPPL.

We found through our learning together from Txeemsim that the complications of the FPPL are not something we should avoid but are the pathway to working generatively in initial teacher education. We can

engage the FPPL by bringing the document into relation with the Indigenous traditions of thought and practice from where it emerged, and then engage the principles with the Indigenous traditions of thought and practice where we teach. In particular, we highlight the need to discuss the Indigenous worldviews that frame the FPPL in place and then provide opportunity for ourselves and teacher candidates to engage with self-awareness and self-reflexivity of our ways of making meaning. We find the FPPL and the complexities it raises can provide generative opportunity to maintain the complexity of the *cultural interface* without the need for resolution. We note our own continuing struggles and complicities within a colonial neoliberal context wherein public education is immersed as we do this work. The TRC *Calls to Action* and the FPPL require deliberate, thoughtful, sustained action and commitment if they are to leave our educational spaces in this country in a better condition than the way we have found them (Archibald, 2008). With respect to the children that were forced into Indian Residential Schools and the generations that have been so powerfully affected, we hold our hands high to you and your courage, and reimagine our commitment to working with teacher candidates in response to the experiences you have shared and the TRC *Calls to Action*.

Notes

¹ We are using the term reconciliation to frame our article in line with the TRC's *Calls to Action*. We would note that there are multiple views on the use of the word "reconciliation" to frame the difficult work that emerges in Canadian society, in response to colonial violence and trauma. In our own work, we tend to draw on Donald's conceptualizing of this work as repairing and renewing relations.

² Claiming an identity as a settler warrants a discussion that exceeds this format. I (Jeannie) would only briefly acknowledge that I claim this identity not as staking a claim to land, but to acknowledge my and my ancestors' participation in problematic and ongoing colonial relations, following the work of Paulette Regan (2010).

³ As noted in Kerr (2014), the term Western in relation to knowledge exceeds the geographic use of the term, and is meant to refer to knowledge practices that emerged from peoples and historical events in Western Europe and through colonial practices that have become instituted not just in the geographic West but also in places across the globe, influenced by multiple forms of colonialism.

⁴ Gaakhl (Shrew) is known for its limited vision and is an animal that builds shelter in caves or in protected areas under logs or tall grasses. In this sense, we chose Gaakhl to represent the first Principal in the story because we saw congruence with this Principal's behaviour in that she/he chose to stay on the protected and familiar territory of Western knowledges. She also had limited vision in her response to Amy's attempts to bring Indigenous knowledge into relationship with the FPPL. However, we also recognize that Gaakhl has extraordinary abilities to "walk on water" and hope that, when the time is right, she/he will endeavour to use her/his gifts to bring FPPL into local context with Indigenous knowledges. We believe in the power of miracles!

⁵ *Raven Steals the Light* is a story that is a part of the Nisga'a Adaawak (oral history) and is shared with some contextual differences among other Northwest Coast Nations, such as the Haida. For a print version of the story, please see: Bringham, R., & Reid, B. (1996). *Raven steals the light*. Madeira Park, BC: Douglas & McIntyre.

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