

# From Reconciliation towards Indigenous Cultural Resurgence: A Métissage on the Co-Imagining of Staʔəlnamət and Stel nūmut

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*On August 21, 2017 at a Traditional Naming Ceremony, the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and Səlilwətaʔ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, along with the North Vancouver School District and Simon Fraser University, stood together as family to name a new graduate program in Indigenous Education: Education for Reconciliation. At the ceremony, two members of the Tsleil-Waututh and Squamish Nations stood to take on, as part of their identity, the name of the program: Staʔəlnamət (Tsleil-Waututh) and Stel nūmut (Squamish), which means deep inner learning. This two-year program is a result of the co-imagining and co-creation of a learning pathway for teachers and community members. Through our collective attention to reconciliation, what is emerging is a powerful resurgence of Indigenous ways of being and pedagogies through the sharing of Indigenous knowledges, cultural practices, and language revitalization. Indigenous Métissage was originally performed following the protocols of oral tradition at the Awakening the Spirit: Indigenous Culture and Language Revitalization Through Land, Water and Sky Conference held on the traditional, unceded territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam). In this article, we speak of our experiences with Indigenous participatory pedagogies, interdisciplinary and intergenerational learning, and also discuss our co-creating of a community of Indigenous Inquiry.*



*Figure 1. The Skwxwú7mesh Longhouse.  
Photo credit: Brian Lee, SFU, August 2017.*

*Revitalizing Cultural Practices Through Indigenous  
Community and University Partnerships*

*prayer of guidance*

Guide me, Ancestors, guide me to the Red Road so the dust around my ankles helps my feet  
to sprout roots to the centre of the Earth,  
of the work,  
of myself.

Teach me the way to teach the children.

Teach me how to protect the sacred from corruption  
so that the blind can't steal it.

Teach me what to protect and what to share.

Lead me to the open ones.

Lead me to the great teachers and Elders who will give me my name.

Lead me to my people so I have a home.

Thank you, Elders.

Thank you for your love and guidance.

Thank you for the vision.

I will bring an open heart and a willingness to learn if I am chosen —  
and even if I am not.

Blessed be our work.

All my Relations.

*R. L. Elke*

*Aaniin*, my name is Vicki Kelly. I'm Anishinaabe and Métis from Northwestern Ontario. Thus, I come from away and am a visitor on the ancestral and unceded territories of the Coast Salish People, the *Səlilwətał* (Tsleil-Waututh), *Skwxwú7mesh* (Squamish), and *xʷməθkʷəy̓əm* (Musqueam) Nations. I am an associate professor in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University (SFU) and have the honour of standing with my colleagues: Gabriel George, Manager of Culture and Language and Angela George, Director of Community Development, both from the Tsleil-Waututh Nation; Paula Rosehart, SFU Program Coordinator / scholar; as well as two teacher-learners, Lori Villeneuve and Ramona Elke, who are within our program. We are standing together as a family; standing with us in our circle is the larger family of Indigenous community members, practicing teachers and educational community, as well as the students in schools today; around us all is the standing circle of the ancestors and the children of the next generations. In the following Indigenous Métissage text, we weave together narrative threads of the emerging story of the collaboration with the Nations and the voices of the teacher-learners that have participated in the co-creation of the Graduate Diploma in Advanced Professional Studies in Education (GDE) in Indigenous Education: Education for Reconciliation. This Indigenous Métissage was first performed following the protocols of oral tradition and was digitally recorded at the *Awakening the Spirit: Indigenous Culture and Language Revitalization Through Land, Water and Sky Conference* (Oct 18-20, 2017), which was held on the traditional, unceded territory of the *xʷməθkʷəy̓əm* (Musqueam) Nation. In addition to each author's personal reflections, this Métissage braids together reflections written by two teacher-learners in the cohort: giving voice to their learning and expressing how the cultural teachings are being embodied as part of their being and educational practice. The word *Métissage* comes from the Latin *misticus*, meaning "the weaving of cloth from various fibres" (Mish, 1990, p. 761). It depicts an artful craft, pedagogical practice, and a research strategy that involves the tracing of mixed and multiple identities as well as histories, and follows the often blurred and messy threads of relatedness and belonging by honouring difference as we develop kinship (Hasebe-Ludt, Chambers, & Leggo, 2009). In our work, it is in the honouring of difference that we develop kinship. We will share the story of how this program came into being, what we have been working towards, where we are at the moment, as well as the emerging intentional spaces and places we are leaning into. The photos (Figures 1 to 6) and poetry are braided into each section of the Métissage to add another aesthetic dimension to the story. The photos show aspects of the longhouse and land. The poetry was written by one of the authors, Ramona Elke. It

is our hope that through this story we will share the teachings of our collective journey.

This project is a partnership between the Səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) and Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) Nations, the North Vancouver School District, and Simon Fraser University. Today, we are in the midst of co-imagining and creating this two-year graduate diploma. The North Vancouver School District and SFU are responsible for responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, specifically the sections that address the calls for education and respectful collaborations with Indigenous communities, and advancing reconciliation through Indigenous education. We also have an ongoing invitation from the Indigenous communities we work with to learn what it means to live on this land and to walk with Indigenous people as they journey forward with Indigenous resurgence. This graduate diploma program is really venturing into uncharted territory, one that we have been longing for, for a very long time. Vicki Kelly begins our Métissage story.

#### *An Emergent Vision*

I would like to reach back and tell you about some of the key moments that led to our arriving at this place together. It began in 2016, when SFU hosted the President's Dream Colloquium on Returning to the Teachings: Justice, Identity and Belonging, with the intention of addressing reconciliation and the 94 Calls to Action (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). This process was powerful because we began to have conversations with members of the Səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh), x<sup>w</sup>məθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), k<sup>w</sup>ik<sup>w</sup>əłəm (Kwkwetlem), ǰícəy (Katzie), q<sup>w</sup>a:nłən (Kwantlen), and Métis Nations. This process began with a gathering of the Knowledge Holders and Elders from these communities and the invitation to co-host the Dream Colloquium. Collectively, we asked the question: "What would it look like if Indigenous Knowledges and Knowledge Holders were put in a place of honour and they hosted a series of speakers?", including Knowledge Holders such as: Robert Joseph, Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas, Wab Kinew, Manulani Aluli-Meyer, Stephen Reicher, Rupert Ross, Jennifer Llewellyn, John Borrows, and Wade Davis. These conversations led to the creation of an All Nations Circle of Elders, who guided the overall process as well as the decision that each nation would host two of the ceremony/lecture events following their own protocols, and involving their respected Knowledge Holders and community members. Simultaneously, we had 30 graduate students who wanted to participate in the accompanying graduate course. People were invited into two-hour sessions where the work was facilitated through ceremony, the

sharing of knowledges through the enactment of knowledge practices, as well as key scholars being celebrated for sharing their visions for the generations to come. This twelve-week journey became a pathway for us to come together and to work together in ways that had a profound effect on all of us. It lifted us all up, whether we were participating in the ceremony or witnessing it, and whether we were members of the Indigenous community, the graduate student community, or the community at large. We were all deeply moved by participating in the process and I heard many testimonials that spoke to experiences of profound personal transformation. Ultimately, it also changed SFU, as it has had a lasting effect on our community both individually and collectively. Specific examples involve the inclusion of ceremony and the pedagogy of ceremony, both within the larger university context and the enactment of particular programs. An example of the larger SFU context is the creation of a ceremony and feast for reconciliation with the Səlilwətał and Skwxwú7mesh Nations when the Aboriginal Reconciliation Council gifted the SFU President its final report and Calls to Action in 2017. This event was witnessed by the local Indigenous community and the SFU community. Another example is the use of ceremony to begin Faculty of Education programs held on various Coast Salish territories: Stó:lō (Sto:lo) and ɥitəy̓ (Katzie) Nations. A final example is the inclusion of ceremony in our university gatherings, such as the Return of the Salmon People event held within the Faculty of Education.

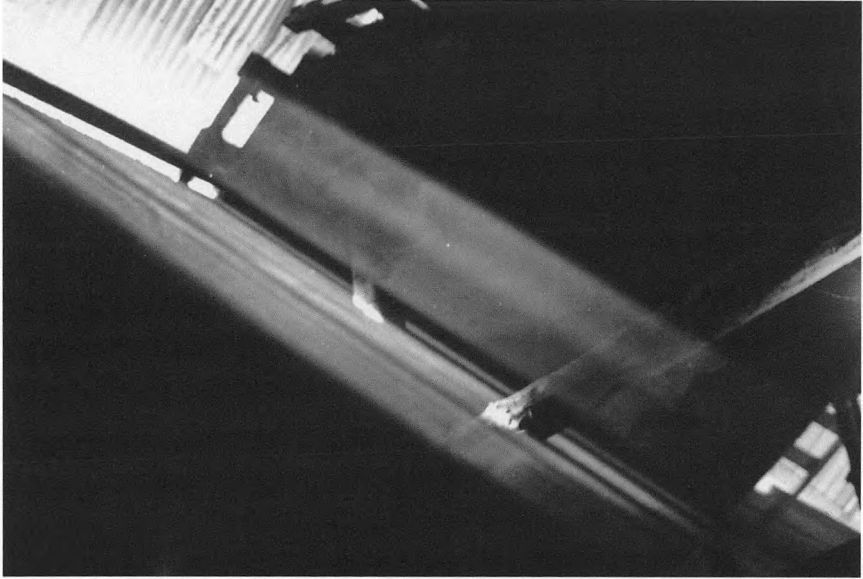
Though we had begun to imagine this Graduate Diploma in Advanced Professional Studies in Education (GDE) in Indigenous Education: Education for Reconciliation prior to the Dream Colloquium, we now had the courage to start where we ended: with the Dream Colloquium and the work of the All Nations Circle of Elders. We held meetings with the North Vancouver School District around their involvement with the new program, and we began to speak to the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and Səlilwətał (Tseil-Waututh) Nations. We created a Curriculum Council and began to sit in circle to talk about how we might support teachers in the program. We asked ourselves: “What would it look like?” “How should it evolve?” “What should be key aspects of the program and the process?” Thus, we began to lean into a co-visioning—from the ground up. How would this all emerge? What were the Nations hoping for as far as their vision of the program and community involvement?

Our first orientation week in August 2017 was co-designed by the Səlilwətał (Tseil-Waututh) and Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) Nations. They hosted the week in their communities, facilitated the activities, and were the Knowledge Holders and facilitators of the pedagogical pathway. Through this process, it became very obvious that we were walking this

pathway as a family: members of the local Indigenous communities, the 24 teacher-learners, the North Vancouver School District, and the Faculty of Education at SFU.

We began orientation week together with a ceremony and the process of the ceremony was the beginning of our walking together: a sort of portal or doorway into the longhouse. And it is through that opening that all our work unfolded. Angela George brought the idea that we should begin the program with a ceremony, a Naming Ceremony. Therefore, Gabriel and Angela began a lengthy process of trying to find a name—a name that could be held by nameholders in the Səlilwətał and Skwxwú7mesh Nations, in their respective languages. We also began the process of co-imagining what this ceremony involved and how we should enact it. The teaching offered by Angela and Gabriel was that in naming the program we were not naming a thing, but rather came to the understanding that community members would carry the name and that this name would have a long life, a lived legacy carried by two individuals within each of the two Nations. What we are trying to initiate within our collective family is that we are all responsible to this living legacy that will gift us with its real fruit in the future. As a result, the names *Staʔəlnamət* and *Stel númut* (deep inner learning) were bestowed on two members of the Səlilwətał Nation: an Elder and a young boy; and two members of the Skwxwú7mesh Nation: two educators. Thus, this program is enacting a living legacy that will continue within our communities.

The teacher-learners arrived on that first morning, gathered in a circle around the fire in the Seymour Longhouse, and introduced themselves. Over lunch, they acted as co-hosts to the feast and by the afternoon they were actively part of a family enacting a ceremony and witnessing work that was deeply serious for the communities attending. The Elders and residential school survivors, as witnesses to the naming, stood up and spoke at great length about what it meant for the communities to be hosting and co-imagining this program. Every one of us felt a sense of reciprocal responsibility as we began this process and as we continue to walk this pathway together. This journey and process is proving itself to be incredibly powerful. That intensive first week within the communities invited the students to radically open themselves to a process of deeply participating in a profound pedagogy. On that first day, the day of the solar eclipse, we jumped into the middle of a very transformative journey and it has been an honour to paddle in the same canoe with the students, the Skwxwú7mesh and Səlilwətał Nations, and the North Vancouver School District.



*Figure 2. The Solar Eclipse through the Skwxwú7mesh Longhouse.  
Photo credit: Brian Lee, August 2017.*

*Addressing Canadian Histories Through Cultural Resurgence  
and Practices that Honour Land, Water, and Sky*

*truth and consequences*

These dusty days of silence are ending—  
the Truth will out in the face of the brave  
or the cowardly—  
it makes no difference to the Truth where she appears;  
she will reveal herself,  
one piece at a time,  
exposing ugliness  
after ugliness  
until it becomes beautiful  
because She has no other choice:  
the cost of silence is too dear now  
the cost of silence has always been too dear—  
paid in blood and tears and pain so deep as to melt our marrow—  
silence is too dear.

These are the days and ways of Truth:  
the ways few seem to want to walk on purpose  
for fear of tripping over themselves on themselves in the light  
when they used to be so brave in the darkness.  
But the Truth will out—  
She will reveal Herself,

one piece at a time,  
exposing ugliness after ugliness,  
until it becomes beautiful.

R. L. Elke

My name is Gabriel George and I am a member of the Səlilwətał Nation. When I look at this program, I am reminded that despite the fact that the Canadian Indigenous people are one of the most studied peoples on the planet, the average person does not understand much about where we are at and does not understand how displaced our people are or what we have gone through. That is a big part of this program with educators; I think it is about trying to help them to understand our reality in all its complexity.

Let me begin by sharing a brief rendering of our Səlilwətał oral history. Going back to pre-European contact, our Indigenous peoples in North America thrived and we had complex cultural systems. Today, often the language used to describe us can make us look primitive and put us in these small boxes. We are often described as subsistent hunters; that we were hunters and gatherers who were also nomadic. This is a way to make us seem less important when, in fact, if one took the time to really understand our peoples and our histories, one would see that we had a monetary system (George, A., 2017). It was a monetary system that the Spanish, English, French, and whomever else arrived on our shores to trade or settle did not recognize. We had systems of economy, of philosophy, psychology, and science. An example of the extensive biological knowledge of our people comes from my cousin, Victor Guerin, from the x<sup>w</sup>məθkwəyəm Nation. He told me about how his grandfather would catch a fish at the mouth of the river and that he could tell by looking at the scales which slough up river it was going to. Despite evidence of the vast knowledge of our peoples, the Eurocentric view often frames our people in a very primitive way or in a very primitive light. This empowers the dispossession of our lands (George, G., 2017).

There are 54 Indigenous languages across Canada and 32 of them are in British Columbia (George, G., 2017). There is a tremendous wealth and diversity here in the local languages and, as a member of the Səlilwətał Nation, I am actively a part of the revitalization of our language because it had become silent. Each one of our languages has its own separate way of seeing the world, its own expression of economy, its own family system, its own relational governance and government, and its own form of medicine. An incredible diversity and wealth exists not just in British Columbia but also across North America. The land provided all of this. So, in our families, in our Indigenous families, we are fortunate; it is a double-edged



sword, as I like to call it. Because on one hand, looking back, we have thousands of years of knowledge that has been passed down from generation to generation. That has helped us to thrive, to be healthy and strong, and it has helped us to endure. We have survived many things: ice ages, floods, famine, and war. We have had our own problems but we always had a system of understanding and navigating this difficult world, which has been unbroken for thousands of years. It developed freely and unbroken. We have that strength to draw on. However, on the other side is the colonial experience and where we are now. This GDE program is really about the well-being and future of our children, because we are at the bottom of every socio/economic statistic in Canada. Yet, we come from great diversity and great strength.

Within our Indigenous families, we still experience the living legacy of colonization and its persistent consequences for our families. We are fortunate in two ways: first, we are fortunate that it took colonialism so long to reach us. The 1780s is not that long ago, and that is when the first ships came to Vancouver, which is much longer in time, compared to 1492 when colonialism reached the East Coast. We are fortunate that our culture and land was undisturbed for that long. However, we are not fortunate because colonization was perfected by the time it reached the province of British Columbia. Twenty years before the first ship came into Vancouver, our Indigenous population was decimated. The West Coast was decimated by smallpox. My own family, the *Səlilwətaʔl*, with a population of about 12,000-15,000 people, were decimated down to a couple dozen (George, G., 2017). Second, we are fortunate that our relatives here in Musqueam came to help us in return. We were dispossessed by disease that we feel was introduced on purpose. It is hard to fathom what that dispossession looked or felt like, and the subsequent trauma resulting from it. Part of this program is to help people to understand what we have been through and to acknowledge the struggles. For me, this program is about trying to reset the bar; it is an act of reconciliation.

In the residential schools, my grandfather, Chief Dan George, was beaten the first day for speaking his language; that was his introduction to English. My dad, Leonard George, was beaten, too. You can look him up in the Truth and Reconciliation findings. I agree with most of the Truth and Reconciliation findings. I do not agree with the phrase *cultural genocide* in the report because, for me, it was truly just genocide. That phrase really does not sit well with me, cultural genocide, because our children were murdered and the Canadian authorities are still investigating these cases today. The First Nations Health Authority has looked into the residential school files and has shown that children were murdered while attending

residential school. Our Indigenous people are a product of genocide, racist and paternalistic policies, and there is a lot of information about this reality in the Truth and Reconciliation findings. In my own family, we witnessed this abuse—physical, spiritual, mental, emotional, and sexual abuse. Our culture was outlawed. We would go to jail for gathering and were banned from holding a potlatch because of the laws that prevented us from gathering in large groups. I grew up in a lot of poverty. Even today we are still living in our communities with all these social problems: suicide, addictions, poverty, and illness.

This program is a chance to help teacher-learners have a deeper understanding of the lived and complex contexts from which the Indigenous children come to school each day. It is not a blanket program where the focus is only on learning the history and the timeline of people in Native Canada. They are learning about Səlilwətaʔ and Skwxwú7mesh cultures, two distinct cultures with a lot of similarities and very strong family ties. The program is arming teachers, showing them how to utilize their voice in advocating and working with our children. The cultural knowledge and historical understandings learned through the program can save lives and can start to undo some of these discrepancies that we face in education. In my experience with the education system, often our children are placed in special education classrooms. Basically, it is playtime; there is no expectation for them to learn. They are looked down upon. I notice that children from our Nation do not respond well to being told; they respond well to experiential learning. Indigenous children do not learn by telling—we can tell them all day, “You better smarten up now and read your work,” but it does not really work if the reactions of educators are, “We are going to put you in this room, in the corner.” Or if educators say, “We are going to ask you to leave the school, after we get the funding, after we get the money that comes with your name.”

The importance of this program is the wellness aspect of it. One of my older first cousins is Lee Maracle. She is my late uncle Robert George’s daughter. She said that her grandma told her that when we are hurting inside we can write about it, we can talk about it, we can try to express it. But until we sing about it and we dance it, and it comes out through every part of our body, we cannot experience all those emotions and heal. If we can bring teachers in and show them some of that, give them a snapshot of what this healing is about, they in turn are going to pass it on to our children because they are working in our school districts. This connection to mind, body, and spirit can help in the healing that is so necessary today.



*Figure 3. The Igniting Fire Within. Photo credit: Brian Lee, August 2017.*

### *Taking Care of the Next Generation in the Classroom*

*their schools*

This system doesn't grow children,  
it crushes them.  
The true way won't be accessed because the walls are prisons.

"School's made to crush your spirit,"  
I told my youngest son—  
approaching the years he would need that information to shield his;  
like Daniel used the word of God to protect him in the lion's den.  
Cuz that's what this system is for kids like him—  
for our children:  
children who were born on the land—  
somewhere in their heart they remember the land—  
and wondered why those four walls weighed on them  
so as to push the breath out of them.

Somewhere they hear the forests whisper a welcome  
and call them to the places only deer have been.  
We feel it in our cells from the double helix ladder connecting us to every mountain,  
every stream,  
every blade of grass,  
and we can't hear the whispers through the concrete blocks built around us,  
them,  
with hands and words.

It's time to open the windows  
or throw down the walls with cries from our Ancestors.

It's time to get out.

*R. L. Elke*

My name is Angela George and I am a member of the Səlilwətał Nation. We have been planting seeds for this program for many, many years. Vicki and I came into contact several years back, through Brenda Morrison, director of the Centre for Restorative Justice and an assistant professor in the School of Criminology at SFU. I was connected with Brenda through my work with healing and restorative justice at the Kwikwəxwelhp Healing Village, in the community of Harrison Mills. In our work together, we brought forward wellness practices passed down from our ancestors, practices that worked our people into the healing village.

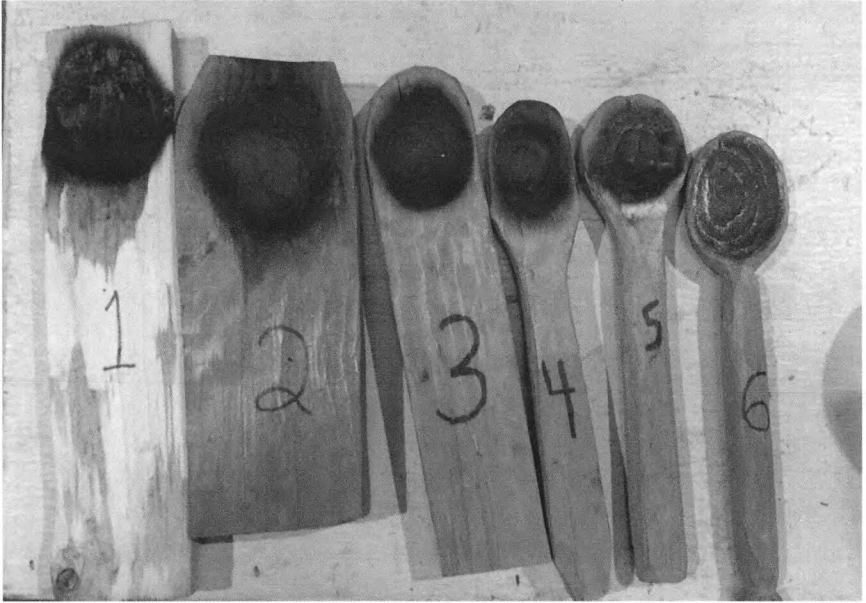
In this program, we wish to weave these purposeful ways of working with children into the public education system, to nurture each individual's character, and to gift and support them in their struggle (George, A., 2017). We seek to acknowledge and honour the teaching of our Elders, who taught us how they would identify the strength and the gifts in a young child and how they, in turn, would nurture that in a child. They teach us that they would put all their efforts into training a child to become the speaker they are meant to be, or the cook, or the weaver, or the hunter—by nurturing their strengths and gifts. Those purposeful ways of being have been lost through colonization. This program is really wonderful because it consists of 24 participants who will become ambassadors to go back out into the community and be instrumental in the schools; they can make an impact. It is like echoing our words and our Elders' words through us, to help the children.

One of the things I oversee is education, among all the other services delivered for the Səlilwətał Nation, and I'm very passionate about our young learners and children in the community. We have a daycare centre on the reserve where we have our own systems, social structures, and mechanisms to nourish the strengths and gifts within each child, through all stages of life. We celebrate and honour the child through ceremony, through teaching, through the ways that we learned and the ways we were taught. Transitioning into the public system, into kindergarten, is a very scary time. We support the transition by physically going to the school because we do not want the children to get lost. We want them to still be able to maintain and continue to develop a strong sense of identity, a strong sense of purpose, and a strong sense of self-esteem. However, despite all our efforts last year—this happens every year—things came to

a head at our local elementary school. It is not in our community; it is off the reserve—the kids catch the bus and they go there from pre-school to kindergarten. It is quite a transition because in our preschool there are familiar faces; it is like a bunch of Aunties who are taking care of them at the daycare. We have our language team and older kids in the community who work with the children, and they are safe, engaged, nurtured, and nourished in a way that makes sense to them. They feel like they belong because we speak their language. However, we have a number of students who, by the end of last year, had gotten lost. The teacher was frustrated and overwhelmed because she was completely under-resourced—one teacher with too many students and very little support. The children in her class were getting disoriented and lost in the system, and by the end of the year, four of them were pretty close to failing. It was reported to me, as the director overseeing education, that we had Grade 2 students who were failing and that they should repeat Grade 2. We also had a Grade 4 student who desperately needed an assessment and it was only recently that we were able to draw on our own resources to assess him. He is now in Grade 6 and has been diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and fetal alcohol syndrome, along with some other learning challenges. The teachers did not have the capacity to address all his challenges. In addition to the student's learning challenges, there was also a sense of not belonging: a feeling like "I come from another world" and "I don't know how to connect here." These are all the things that we collectively put on the table when we discussed how we were going to develop this program. We focused on fostering an understanding of our histories, cultural practices, wellness, and nurturing of the child; this was our collective vision.

A lot of the work that I did within Correctional Service of Canada was the same in this GDE partnership, in terms of looking at reconciliation and rehabilitation. The guiding question for me in that role was, "If we are going to look at "rehabilitation" of federal offenders, what does that look like?" They have the programming, various studies, and the commissioner's directive manuals, but rehabilitation is really about sharing our oral history, our traditions, and what works in our community, in terms of genuine rehabilitation, healing and wellness, and re-integrating safely into a community. The beauty of what we are doing is how we are doing it.

Connecting to our oral history and traditions is the way we started the GDE program. During the first week on the land, we immersed the teachers in culture, ceremony, and community. We had the teachers in the longhouse setting and we did a naming ceremony for the program. We chose four community members who became like pillars for the program; they became the ones who would hold and carry the name, Staʔəlnamət



*Figure 4. Teacher Learners' Carved Spoons.*  
*Photo credit: Brian Lee, August 2017.*

and *Stel númut*. What we intended in creating this program was that it would grow roots and spread out in a way that it was able to grow. It was vitally important for us to begin the program on the land, to provide opportunities for the teachers to experience (not just be told) how our children learn, to discover what works best for our children, and to witness how our Elders teach. Instead of telling them and demonstrating, we were able to immerse the teachers in the teachings on the traditional lands.

*Interdisciplinary Inquiry: Inquiring into Community  
and Cultural Resurgence in Education*

*inside*

Something shaken in me,  
like a jar full of bees,  
has me humming for something deeper,  
something sweeter,  
something harder to reach than the sun.

Tugs and whispers,  
from invisible fingers,  
have me dancing in other directions—  
deasil,

counter-clockwise,  
to re-wind  
and re-member my face—  
their faces—  
so as to learn to read their lips  
and play their music,  
sing their songs,  
dance the steps of their dances  
with humble, light feet,  
touching stars while my feet flit across the dust  
like grasshopper legs.

It's here:  
this place and time longed for so deeply as to make prayers feel like secrets  
or lies—  
longed for so deeply as to reach,  
with my roots,  
to the molten centre of the Earth,  
and be ignited where I stand.

*R. L. Elke*

My name is Paula Rosehart and I am of mixed European heritage. I am the program coordinator for graduate diploma programs at SFU. In graduate diploma programs at SFU we have a long-standing history of providing in-service teachers with opportunities for self-directed, sustained, inquiry-based professional learning. This program is about holistic ways of being in the world and involves inquiring into the weaving of Indigenous worldviews, perspectives, principles, and practices into education. We are all engaging in a co-learning journey guided by “two-eyed seeing”, *Etuaptmunk* (Bartlett, Marshall, & Marshall, 2012). Mi'kmaw Elder Albert Marshall and integrative scientist Cheryl Bartlett shared this term as a way to express how learning can be deepened when one honours and acknowledges that there are multiple, valuable ways of knowing. Elder Marshall describes two-eyed seeing as:

the gift of multiple perspective treasured by many [A]boriginal peoples. It refers to learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western knowledges and ways of knowing, and to use both these eyes together, for the benefit of all with the intention of learning to use both eyes. (Bartlett et al., 2012, p. 335)

In this program, we are braiding together the knowledges and perspectives of the Indigenous world with the knowledges and perspectives of the Western world, thus weaving in diverse perspectives, which can ultimately lead to many-eyed seeing. Vicki Kelly (2013) acknowledges the importance of this approach in her description that seeing with many eyes acknowledges the ways of knowing, the multiple perspectives and the strengths of

Indigenous, Western, Asian and other cultures. It also acknowledges the need for integrative, transcultural, transdisciplinary, and collaborative work within educational praxis (Kelly, 2013, p. 23).

The Indigenous Education: Education for Reconciliation GDE was co-imagined as a program that would be integrative (cross-curricular), transcultural (multi-eyed), and transdisciplinary (Métissage); and focusing on the emotional, spiritual, physical, and intellectual ways in which we engage in learning and teaching. Through Métissage as a curricular practice and a site of inquiry, we track our stories, orienting ourselves to our worldviews and situating ourselves within the process of reconciliation. We engage in inquiry and “life writing” (Hasebe-Ludt, Chambers, & Leggo, 2009) and “take métissage as a counternarrative to the grand narrative of our times” (p. 9). The pedagogy is respectful, relational, and responsive, and is focused on providing experiential practice-based learning, which is underpinned by research and educational scholarship. We connect as a family and support one another in the creation of a “brave space” (Arao & Clemens, 2013), a space where teachers can be vulnerable, take risks, share their fears and questions, and challenge the systems in which they work. Influenced by the work of Paulo Freire (1986), we view education as emancipatory, transformative, and situated within the lived experiences of the participants (Hill & Rosehart, 2017).

It has really been a powerful journey for me, doing this important work and walking this path of reconciliation with the teachers in the program. I am a learner on this journey because I am a visitor on this land. We are all on a journey of storying and re-storying our pasts, Canada’s past, and are learning about how we can be a part of creating a more equitable future for Indigenous children and youth.

The name of our program, *Staðlnamæt* and *Stef númut*, means finding self, finding one’s identity, which really fits perfectly with the philosophy of SFU’s graduate diploma programs, because our programs are focused on teacher identity. The teachers in the program come from different school districts and have varied levels of experience working with children and being in the classroom. They work as a family, mentoring one another, collaborating, and supporting one another in this journey of finding self. We talk about this path as an exploration, which leads us to “finding face” (identity), finding heart (passion), and finding foundation (vocation) (Cajete, 1994). We start by reflecting on our worldviews and asking ourselves questions such as: “Who am I? What’s my story? What were the landscapes that I grew up on? How do the places I have inhabited shape my worldview?” We track ourselves so that we can situate ourselves within our own worldview, so that we are poised to explore an Indigenous



worldview and contemplate how we might see with “new eyes”. As Marcel Proust (1923) reveals that “the only real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes; in seeing the universe through the eyes of another, one hundred others—in seeing the hundred universes that each of them sees.”

We acknowledge our relationship to history and place and how these have formed us as individuals and groups; land, history, and culture meet in a multicentered society that values place but cannot be limited to one view (Lippard, 1997). It is really about trying to know one another in order to arrive at what Saarinen and Taylor (1994) refer to as an “interstanding; a co-emergence of cognition or recognition that arises in the interconnections, interrelationships, and interactions possible: Interstanding has become unavoidable because everything stands between” (p. 2). We work in liminal spaces, places where education does not only consist of critical cognitive reflection on gained knowledge, but also of other forms of learning and appreciating (Conroy & de Ruyter, 2008). I also refer to it as an in-between space, an interactive space of coming to know (Rosehart, 2013).

As Lippard (1997) expresses, “When we know *where* we are, we’re in a far better position to understand what other cultural groups are experiencing within a time and place we all share” (p. 10). As we work alongside one another, and learn from the Nations and on the land, we begin to see one another with new eyes, with eyes of compassion. When we learn about Indigenous cultures, histories, languages, and ways of being, and about what has been lost, we can we begin to understand the trauma that colonization has caused Indigenous peoples. We can discover how intergenerational trauma has impacted Indigenous children and how our colonized education system has impacted, and continues to impact, all children, all people. It is profoundly a healing journey that we are on in this program.

### *Indigenous Revitalization, Reconciliation, and Teacher Identity Formation*

#### *I am from all of it*

I am from skies so big as to crush you beneath the weight of its storm clouds  
and sunrises  
and velvet painting sunsets so vivid the Gods themselves hold their breaths at the marvel of  
their creation.

I am from black Earth  
and red dirt  
and grain dust so fine as to turn your lungs to papier-mâché paste—  
making you a work of art when you thought you were something else

I am from drums and dancers and diamond-studded,  
dew-covered grasses so tall as to swallow you whole before you can spell your name.

Before you can spell your name it claims you,  
those endless skies and black flies,  
it claims you like frostbite and loneliness on winter nights,  
it claims you.

And maybe it's the sky,  
so big as to crush you beneath the weight of its endlessness,  
so big as to remind you of just how small we are.  
Maybe it's the people,

for whom humility and generosity is as much a part of them as the grain dust in their  
lungs.

Maybe it's the summer heat  
or winter wind—  
the weather so real as to be human...  
all force themselves in me,  
and on me,  
become me as I become them.

I am from Earth,  
I am from wind,  
and water—frozen or falling.  
I am from Fire in the Sky,  
where Grandfather name me Starchild.  
I am everything  
and nothing in the center of Her.

I am from places of no return  
and places lived in the centre of who I have become  
from the wild girl in the loose dirt.

I am from all of it—

*R. L. Elke*

My name is Lori Villeneuve; I am a teacher-learner in the GDE program. My journey towards reconciliation required me to reflect on and develop an understanding of my own worldview and perspectives. I was hired as the Aboriginal worldview and perspectives team leader for my school. I am passionate about Aboriginal content, had a confident grip on the revised curriculum, and had assumed previous leadership positions in my school and district. I believed, too, that I was the person for this job. Through the education provided by the district for this position, my own readings and discussions with other team leaders and people of the q<sup>w</sup>a:n̓λən (Kwantlen) Nation, I recognized that to support others in incorporating Aboriginal worldviews within their practice, I should first investigate what a worldview is and what mine was. This inquiry led me down an ever-expanding spiral of self-discovery and disillusion. I began to peel back layer upon layer of a belief system I had held onto yet was unaware of for most of my life.



*Figure 5. Paddling Together on the Journey.  
Photo credit: Vicki Kelly, August 2018.*

The one assumption I questioned through this inquiry was my belief about the education system. I considered myself a fairly progressive and innovative teacher, incorporating the newest methods and strategies of instruction and assessment. I belonged to many school and district committees and presented at many conferences. I was that teacher. Yes, the teacher that Brookfield (1995) refers to as the one with “diligent devotion” (p. 16). I had consumed a cup of hegemony. The view of myself as teacher came under further investigation after a conversation with my friend, respected Indigenous scholar, Edosdi. Quite self-righteously, I shared how I was infusing more Aboriginal content in my classroom and how I had a deeper understanding the negative effects of a colonized education system. I was struck by hurling disillusionment when Edosdi reflected back to me that our school system requires little five-year-olds to spend most of their waking hours in a classroom away from their parents. Colonization is still alive and well in our education system. I began to question the very purpose of education. Is it to create “successful” people, more minions to serve the economy? This ignited further reflection on an education system I have loved and had been ever so devoted to. This resulted in a realization that I, as a public educator, had been, as Battiste notes, “an agent of colonization”

and have worked to perpetuate the “processes of colonization” (2013). As Palmer (1998) states, “teaching holds a mirror to the soul” (p. 2) and, at this time, I was hating what I was seeing. I have been on a journey to become my true authentic self, to trust in my gifts and recognize challenges as learning experiences. Throughout this personal journey, I have studied teachings by Byron Katie (2002), Brené Brown (2017), Matt Kahn (2016), and Eckhart Tolle (2005), and have used natural spaces for spiritual connection. I now realized that how, where, and what I was teaching was not allowing my students to discover their own authentic self. This realization spun me into what many would refer to as an identity crisis. Me, as teacher, had betrayed me, as person. I was in inner conflict. The commitment I have made to work towards reconciliation fuelled my determination to find a means in which to reconcile the *me as teacher* with the *me as person*.

I searched for a process, short of leaving the education system all together, that would allow me to work within the system while honouring my paradigm shift. Through learning experiences with the Tatł’ah (Tahltan), q<sup>w</sup>a:nłən (Kwantlen), Stó:lō (Stolo), and x<sup>w</sup>məθkwəyəm (Musqueam) Nations and Indigenous readings, I continued to learn more about Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, and being. I had come to understand that it would be through Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, and being that me as teacher would begin to merge with me as person. I knew that the me as teacher would need to teach differently. I would no longer be at the front of a classroom being guided by outcomes and curricula. I would not require the youth in my presence to sit in desks or be assessed by what they produce on paper, and be reduced to a highlighted square on a rubric. My classes would start in a circle, and include story, ceremony, and knowledge of the land and the peoples whose land we were situated. Assessment would be in the form of observations, self-reflections, and dialogues. Students would be encouraged to discover themselves as individuals with their unique purpose, and be given opportunities to create connections with others and the natural world around them. I would strive to increase their “capacity for connectedness” (Brown, 2012). They would not be judged on their ability to regurgitate facts, but would instead be recognized as unique beings from various worldviews, with a gift to share with the world. I would work towards Indigenous my practice.

I shared my disillusionment of the education system, and my belief that Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing could transform our system to better support children with a trusted district administrator. He agreed that the current form of education was not effectively supporting children in a holistic way, and the attempts to infuse and incorporate Aboriginal content was doing little to decolonize our schools. As educators, we

knew that we needed a program to help students to better connect with themselves, others, and their natural world, and honour the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of each child. In this context, the O-ACES (Outdoor Aboriginal, Community and Environmental Studies) program was imagined.

I have left the regular classroom setting to create a more Indigenized way of teaching and learning through the O-ACES program. I continue to challenge the Eurocentric ways of knowing and recognize my own assumptions about teaching, learning, and education. Through the SFU Indigenous Education: Education for Reconciliation program, the University of British Columbia's Reconciliation through Indigenous Education Massive Open Online Course, and deepening relationships with peoples of the Tat'l'ah (Tahltan), qʷa:nʷən (Kwantlen), Stó:lō (Stolo), and xʷməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) Nations, I continue to expand my knowledge of Indigenous way of knowing, being, and doing. I strive to use this knowledge to further decolonize me as teacher and person. As my journey continues, and my Indigenous lens from which to view education is refined, I have come to the realization that if I am to support decolonization within the system, I need to approach it with a "two-eyed seeing" mindset (Bartlett, Marshall, & Marshall, 2012). Thus, my journey continues.



*Figure 6. Gathering Around the Fire in the Skwxwú7mesh Longhouse.  
Photo credit: Brian Lee, August 2017.*

*Towards Cultural Resurgence: A Return to Ceremony and Ancestral Teachings**bless us*

This return to ceremony has made me drunk with spirit.  
Whispers from everywhere fill my head with drums  
and song so deep in me my cells are dancing!

Finally!

Finally!

Finally, the sage and sweet grass fill my lungs and heart,  
clear my soul for vision and hope  
that maybe I'll wander closer to the land of the living  
to whisper teachings from them to us.

My eyes are open and clear—  
washing them with dew or smoke—  
to see what cannot be seen,  
faces of those long dead and free;  
beloved and wise.

Bless us.

R. L. Elke

*Homecoming: The Prodigal Daughter Returns to Ceremony*

My name is Ramona Elke; I am a Métis teacher in the GDE program. As a little girl, I would sit in the summer sun and listen to the grasshopper's legs sing to me in the rustle of the tall grasses surrounding me. I could hear the Creator there and smell her in the dirt. I could hear her in the thunder and the whistling winter wind. I would speak to the Star People and pretend they spoke to me, too. I would wish upon the first star and pray on incense smoke before I knew I was praying.

As a young mother, I dreamed of lakes with islands the shape of turtles, of people with faces the colour of the red earth I loved, and hair the colour of raven's wings—and I knew they were me, too. The first time someone smudged me, I knew where my soul lived. I found ceremony then in a Wiccan circle with songs, drums, and stories of Spirit of places and people. I could feel in my skin when they were present with us in ritual. I hungered, yearned with my whole self, to connect with Spirit that had been hovering over me, in me, and through me from the time I knew what to call it.

As I approached middle age, I dreamed of a fire in a longhouse where the smoke would hang in my hair and fill my soul with the fragrance of ceremony again ... the other "river" of my "two rivered" ancestry. Then, nearly ten years after that dream, I entered the longhouse from my dream. Drum and rattle filled me completely. The ancient language of my cousins filled me utterly. The dust of good Mother Earth coated my feet from walk-

ing in ceremony and filled me with gratitude to be home once more. I was so profoundly moved by the smoke in my hair...I could not find words to fill the completeness I felt ... how full I felt ... how recognized by my Ancestors—the Ancestors I had so completely yearned for, that I really believed my heart had broken in being forgotten and left behind. I had longed for Spirit so deeply, so profoundly, that I felt I would wander forever in a grey world, bereft of magic, if I could not find my way back to it. I believe I was dying, spiritually.

Then came these people, this place, this smoke in my hair and I was reborn, remembered to Spirit, collected by the Ancestors. All I could do was collapse into them and sob. I was so grateful, so relieved to be back to where I belonged, I thought I would burst.

The sound of the drum, as it reverberates through me each week, the smoke of the longhouse fire, or the scent of sage and sweet grass, has sewn me back together; it has bathed me in light, has shown me my own face. Now, I can never forget who I was born to be. I never have to hide who I was born to be again. The smoke won't let me. Ceremony will save us. The smoke, the rattle, the stories will save us.

I am so happy to be home.

#### *Final Reflections on Walking the Path and Living the Teachings*

In conclusion, we stand before you, Vicki and Paula, instructors in the program, to share our final reflections. Collectively, in our shared journey as a family walking this path of cultural resurgence, what is unfolding is a powerful process of reconciliation with land, water, and sky, and an awakening of our learning spirits (Battiste, 2013). We would like to acknowledge that through this journey of being in the canoe together with the Səlilwətał and Skwxwú7mesh Nations, the North Vancouver School District, and Simon Fraser University, what has become most obvious is the way in which our reciprocal relationality broadens and deepens in profound and meaningful ways: whether it be through being invited to community events within the Nations, working on the traditional territories, developing programming on land-based pedagogical processes, or ongoing ceremonial events where the community witnesses the development of curriculum and learning within the teachers' practice in the community and in the school districts in British Columbia. Specifically moving is the presence of the name holders from the Səlilwətał and Skwxwú7mesh Nations and their heartfelt support of the teacher-learners' personal and professional transformations.

On August 20-24, 2018, we held our second Institute week and, as part of this unfolding pedagogical process, we travelled up to the Alice Lake

Longhouse in the heart of Skwxwú7mesh Territory. Three generations of women from the Williams family stood before us and facilitated a two-day retreat on the land: an Elder/Survivor/Knowledge Holder; her daughter, the main cultural facilitator; and her young daughter. We shared food, slept in the longhouse, gathered and made medicine, did cedar weaving, heard stories, drummed, and sang songs. Echoes of this powerful experience still linger and braid with the earlier teachings from the program. Afterwards, we spent two days on the unceded land of the Səlilwətał Nation, paddling ocean-going canoes up Burrard Inlet to visit key village and cultural sites where we listened to traditional stories and songs. On our last day, we walked through the towering cedars and along the bolder-strewn coastline of ƧwáyƧway (Stanley Park) with a Skwxwú7mesh Knowledge Holder and language speaker to learn the place names and their stories. We also visited key village sites and heard the powerful stories of how the Skwxwú7mesh people were forcefully removed from the land. As we stood gathered at an ancient village site, we witnessed the singing of a sacred song. It was a powerful tribute to the ancestors of that place and to the circle of life that once thrived there. The teachers spoke of how their understandings and perspectives have been profoundly transformed by the program, and repeatedly voiced their commitment for cultural and educational change. They are currently creating their visions, the future enactments of Indigenous education and Indigenous inquiry as sites of reconciliation and cultural resurgence. The teachers are taking up the responsibility of becoming Indigenous and Indigenist educators with land and community as sites of reconciliation and resurgence.

Most recently, the teachers stood outside in the September sunshine with their drums, honouring the traditional territory of the Səlilwətał Nation and the seven sacred directions. We ended the evening singing a victory song taught to us by two of the Indigenous teachers. The emerging practices of this program are our collective offerings for the healing of the community of life and all our relations. It is our active embodiment of Staʔəlnamət and Stəl númut.

All Our Relations.

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