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Our Stories: Inuit Teachers Create Counter Narratives and Disrupt the Status Quo

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Graduate Program in Education

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree in Doctor of Philosophy

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OUR STORIES: INUIT TEACHERS CREATE COUNTER NARRATIVES AND
DISRUPT THE STATUS QUO

(Thesis format: Monograph)

by

Dawn E L Fyn

Graduate Program in Education

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
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Abstract

Canada has a reputation for diversity and acceptance and of late has made significant strides in formalizing apologies for the maltreatment of Aboriginal populations (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, 2010). The purpose of this study was to investigate Inuit educators' perceptions of education in Nunavik. While multiple studies consider concerns regarding Inuit education and low graduation rates (Brady, 1996; Walton, 2012), few studies consider the role that Inuit educators can play in assuring the optimal success of Inuit students. This study, situated in Nunavik, the Inuit homeland located within Northern Quebec, fills that gap. Using qualitative methodology and a decolonizing framework, 36 Inuit educators were interviewed. To ensure balanced data collection both an interview guide and conversational interview approach were utilized. Critical theories, including critical race theory, transformative multiliteracies pedagogies, and a focus on linguisticism, were used to support the data analysis. With the transcripts, and using the above mentioned theories, four significant themes were defined: caring in education, relationships, racism, and language choice. The research suggests that Inuit educators have suffered from a "master narrative" that frames them in a deficit perspective; additionally, a Eurocentric focus on education (bound within a goal of English or French competence in Canada) has eroded the educational, cultural, and linguistic roles that Inuit educators play within the schooling of Inuit students in Nunavik. These factors, coupled with pervasive systemic racism, create a challenging environment for Inuit educators. The results of this study suggest that shifting leadership practices, creating more equity between Inuit and Qallunaat (non-Inuit) educators, and adjusting language policies may support both Inuit educators and students. By

constructing their own counter narratives, the Inuit educators within this study take significant steps towards disrupting the status quo and creating a new story.

Key Words:

Aboriginal, Inuit, counter narrative, meritocracy, multiliteracies, critical race theory, linguicism

Dedication

I spent 14 years living, working, and becoming friends with the Inuit of Nunavik. I spent 10 of those years, the later 10, wondering why racism was so prevalent, and how those in charge could not see it. I promised myself that if I had the opportunity I would support the Inuit in telling their stories.

This work is dedicated to the Inuit educators of Nunavik. Thank you for sharing your thoughts, feelings, pain, and joy with me. I admire you so much. I hope you find a bit of yourself in the stories shared here. may these stories be a step towards interrupting the status quo.

Acknowledgments

Undertaking a PhD is like volunteering to go on a mission to Mars. Regardless of the preparation, you don't know what the journey will be like, and how you will react when you finally get there. Here I am, standing, with the support of others, knowing that I have completed this journey. I have so many people to thank. I could write a thesis of thanks. Instead, I will name those who I can and hope fervently that the others will understand.

I would like to thank the Inuit of Nunavik, particularly those who befriended me in 1994 when I first stepped off the Air Inuit plane and landed in a foreign, but tremendously beautiful landscape called Inukjuak. Many of you supported me, guided me, and showed me the way. Caroline, Eva, Besty and Annie, your support has been so welcomed...even when I needed to be reminded of things, you did it with compassion and that changes everything. My fourteen years living in the Arctic will always be cherished.

To my students and colleagues in the North. Thank you for letting me join you in the greatest adventure of my life. Thank you for sewing my amautik, thank you for teaching me songs in Inuktitut, thank you for helping me start my ski-doo, and thank you for making me believe that in the North I would always have a home. Every time I return to Nunavik I feel that I am where I belong.

To Jim and Avril: you are colleagues and demanders of Indigenous rights. You both have, in your own ways, guided me and supported through tears, frustrations, and aha moments. I never would have done this without the initial push and confidence that you gave me. I really mean it!

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Shelley, you are more than a supervisor, you are a friend. You have guided me, helped me through impossible deadlines, and you are an editor extraordinaire. Thank you for ideas, time, and coffee.

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To my PhD buddies, Jen, Jenny, Katherine, Allyson, and most of all Adrienne – who keeps us glued together, and whose knowledge of APA cannot be surpassed! I heard once that if you are in a room and you are the smartest person there, you should go to a new room- there is never a chance of that with this group.

Finally, my family. I come from a large, noisy, music loving, church going family. Neither of my parents had the opportunity to continue in their education, but they both knew compassion and showed it every day to me, my five siblings, and so many others. We often had long term guests at our house. We were that kind of family! It is that love, and compassion that drove a young girl to push for social justice and equity. That girl has grown

up but she never stopped pursuing fairness. To my dad Hans, who has known great struggles, thank you for caring enough to listen to the rantings of a 15 year old girl, and believing in me when no one else did. To my mother Willow, you are the strength in our family, the woman who started running in her 60s, and the one who consoled me when my greatest tragedy occurred. If you ever get a card from my mother, you need to know that she means it! I am forever grateful mom.

I have 4 amazing siblings. Paul, Deby, Eric and Beki. We are not so unlike. We all care- some of us in different ways- but we all care deeply about people. My hope for all of you is that you dream a little more, and know that these dreams can come true. You deserve it so much. I am lucky and blessed to call you my friends.

To my children, Becket in heaven, and Morgan and Delaney. I never thought I could love as much as I love you. You have taught me to be curious and wonder and not accept. Morgan, you are so unique and passionate. May you lean left enough to change the world, but just right enough to hear what others have to say- sometimes they can help. Delaney, my hope for you is that your beautiful mind, which matches every bit of you, leads you with passion and joy into a world you cannot yet image. You are a flame of joy in this world. Shine brightly my girl.

And finally, Peter, my rock and my love. How is it possible to love so much, for so long, and still feel a zing of passion when you walk in a room. You have been my support from day one. You believed in me when I doubted. You gave me time to write and research amidst a messy house, kids with busy schedules, and a life you were trying to live too. You make me the best version of me possible: I can ask for nothing more. I know that much of this belongs to you too. It is your turn now. I can't wait to see what you do next! I love you. (1/0)

Thank you and Nakurmik!

Dawn

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Chapter 1. Introduction and Context

Inuit must not only participate in our northern system of education, but be able to profoundly influence its policies and priorities... All of our goals and aspirations are in some way tied to education: for ourselves, our children and future generations.

(Simon, 1989, pp. 43-44)

As a young teacher, I entered the world of the unknown when I stepped off a small propeller plane and set foot on tundra for the first time. As a brand new teacher in my 20s, I was scared, but sure that I was knowledgeable. I had graduated near the top of my class; I had worked in many challenging jobs, and I felt confident that I would flourish and ‘help’ the students in the North. I had a back pack full of teacher “tricks” that I could pull out at any point in time. I had support from friends and family, and I had many resources. I had it all. The only thing I did not have was the knowledge that I needed and did not yet know I lacked.

My back pack was indeed full of *tricks*. I knew how to cajole a class into listening, and how to use music and drama to develop a learning theme. I understood the importance of literacy and how to create a lesson that appealed to students, and yet still taught specific skills. I was (and still am) a teacher and I felt confident.

The first few years seemed to go as expected with ups and downs and challenges. I occasionally had a difficult day or two, but I was teaching in adult education at the time, later I switched to grade 7 and 8, so I was not dealing with some of the issues associated with teaching children. I did not have to worry about behaviour issues or lack of motivation. Some of my Qallunaat (non-Inuk) colleagues complained about the children ... a lot. But for me, my teaching was proceeding and I felt that I was doing a reasonably good job and enjoying

new experiences. I felt like I was a professional, with a good job, a nice house (courtesy of the school board), and I was moving forward in my life, taking courses and becoming the educator I wanted to be. I made friends with other Qallunaat teachers, never noticing or questioning why I was not befriending Inuit. I enjoyed the fresh air, loved hiking on the tundra, and could not believe the wildlife I saw. I took advantage of the beautiful view of Hudson's Bay and really looked forward to holidays. I spoke out loud about wanting to go 'home', about missing my 'home', and about how much I needed to get to 'the south'. I never questioned my perspective. I thought everyone wanted to go south. I never thought about how my comments were being perceived by Inuit or the message that these comments were sending to my students; I never thought about how my comments made me seem to Inuit. The fact that I never thought about these messages was the critical key. I did not take the time to think about how my comments affected others. What I thought about was being happy, being a good teacher, going on holidays, and having fun with my new (exclusively White) friends.

I stayed in the North longer than most of my Qallunaat friends. I thought about leaving, often, but something always pulled me back and I felt happy to stay. I would not say that things were perfect, but for a young couple it was a great lifestyle. It was during this time period when I saw "the letter." *The letter* changed everything for me. *The letter* taught me what I did not know that was essential for me to learn, unlearn, and learn again; *the letter* became the catalyst for my personal transformation; *the letter* became the start of my search, of this inquiry. *The letter* caused me to shift my own ideology. It changed me forever, even though I did not know it yet.

The letter was simply posted on the staff room bulletin board at Inuit school where I was teaching. This letter was written by a member of the hospital's board of directors, and was intended to be read by the 'Qallunaat' staff. The letter was bold, stark, and upon first reading, hurtful. The letter was not polite. It was honest. The letter questioned the role of schooling in the North. More poignantly, the letter questioned the value of having teachers come up North to teach for a year or two and then leave. The letter posed the question: *Do the teachers realize the damage they are doing?* As I read those words, I was in shock. Damage? Was I really causing damage? I recall being very upset with the letter; incredulous, really. I did not understand the perspective expressed in the letter; I did not know why the author did not see that I was just trying to help. I was very angry, actually. How dare the author... after all I had done for "those kids"? The letter stayed with me long after I left the room. The viewpoints stated in the letter would not leave me, and those words continued to challenge me and all my actions. That letter still challenges me and reminds me to check on my own perspective and what I take for granted.

1.1. Research Setting

This study was focused geographically in the Nunavik region of Quebec. Nunavik is the Inuit homeland located within the province of Quebec. Inuit have occupied this area for over 2000 years. The 1950s brought about profound changes for Inuit. It was a time when: "The Inuit saw the traditional life changing and new ways of living arriving in the North" (Vick-Westgate, 2002, p. 38). With the advent of coastal communities spurred on by the Hudson's Bay Company and the availability of provisions, Inuit moved in to permanent settlements, creating 14 coastal villages along the Hudson's and Ungava Bay (Vick-Westgate, 2002). This move prompted changes in many traditional activities including the process of educating

young people. Traditionally in the Inuit culture young people were educated when the need arose, or when they showed interest. This education was not “something you studied, it was something you did” (Vick-Westgate, 2002, p. 41). By the mid 1950s transient mission schools were replaced with government schools. Few choices were given to Inuit about schooling and the perception at the time was that this was a positive movement. Traditional education, based along gender roles ensuring that family groups had hunters and sewers, began to fall away in favour of a more Westernized view of education. These schools were often housed in the nursing stations (Vick-Westgate, 2002). With political changes, so too came educational changes.

In 1971, the Quebec government announced a massive hydroelectric development project. The rights of the Inuit and Cree living within the affected area were ignored (Makivik, n.d.). In response to this, Inuit and Cree worked together and forced a settlement. This settlement became the James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement. This 1975 agreement defined aboriginal rights and established regimes for future relations between aboriginal peoples and non aboriginals in the region and among local, regional, provincial and federal governments. Harvesting rights were provided, land categories set out and resource management regimes set up. School boards were created, health services were restructured and regional governments were established. (Makivik, n.d.)

One provision of the agreement was the right to self-education. This right was detailed as the ability to select and choose how the Inuit of Nunavik were educated. This led to the creation of the first Inuit school board in Canada: Kativik School Board (KSB). The new school board gave responsibility to the Inuit of Nunavik, under the banner of Makivik Corporation.

Makivik Corporation was the Inuit organization “established in 1975 to administer the funds from the first comprehensive Inuit land claim in Canada, the *James Bay Northern Quebec Land Claim Agreement*” (Makivik, n.d.). This was a tremendous responsibility as housing, materials, teachers, and curriculum choices were essential.

KSB now has a population of a little over 3000 students and continues to educate in three languages: Inuktitut, English, and French. Students are initially educated in Inuktitut, and then in grade 3 (in most schools) a shift to English or French is made, with Inuktitut becoming a core subject taught as language-as-subject as opposed to being used as a medium of instruction, as discussed later. Staff meetings are usually held in three languages, and all documentation from the school board is produced in the three languages. Teachers are a combination of Inuit, Anglophones, and Francophones. There are approximately 100 Inuit educators, 110 Anglophone educators, and 120 Francophone educators. The majority of the Inuit educators are “local hires” (i.e., they teach and live in their home village). They participate in the KSB/McGill Teacher Education Program, completing either a certificate in Northern education or a Bachelor of Education degree. This program allows Inuit educators to begin teaching while completing their post-secondary education. During this process they are supervised by a local teacher training counselor. Completion of this program takes multiple years and even senior teachers have often not completed their training. As the courses are offered in different villages, and are offered during the summer and twice during the school year, it may take an Inuk ten or more years to complete their certification. Many of the educators I interviewed were frustrated about the length of time it took to finish their certificate. “It needs to be faster” was a continual refrain from almost all of the educators.

Some benefits are extended to Inuit teachers, such as free post-secondary education and cargo benefits (used to bring goods to the North), but housing and furniture are not supplied to local hires. If an Inuk moves to another village to teach or takes on another role with the school board, then benefits such as housing and flights home are allocated to them.

Anglophone and Francophone teachers are generally hired from Quebec, Ontario, the Maritime Provinces, and Newfoundland and Labrador. These teachers are usually either new teachers, having just completed their education degree, or they are retired (or early retired) teachers looking to enhance their experience or a new opportunity. These teachers usually have little experience in cross cultural teaching. They come with many benefits including trips to their home locale, cargo benefits, and furnished housing at greatly reduced costs (10% of the market cost). Since these teachers have completed their education degree, they do not have to participate in ongoing education.

The participants in this study were all Inuit educators; working in schools or educational services with (almost) exclusively Inuit students. The study, grounded in a decolonizing framework, considered through the lens of critical race theory and transformative multiliteracies pedagogy, utilized methodological approaches that considered power and hierarchy, and the effects of colonizing forces upon Inuit educators. Concepts such as decolonization and critical race theory, which will be discussed in the literature review, were the underpinnings of this study.

1.2. Rationale for the Study

Examining education can be a nebulous endeavour. Examining education with a desire to share a voice that is not your own, across a different and unique culture is even more challenging. I felt that I had no choice but to undertake this challenge as my heart led me

down this path, and I will listen to my heart because I have learned in life that happiness follows the direction of my heart, even if the road is rocky and unsure. My connection to this study, my inherent bias that colours every choice I have made as a researcher and shades every question I have asked, and my desire to bring about change via the unconditional viewing of the perspective of Inuit educators, is bound within this study.

My purpose in conducting this study was to create a space for a voice: a voice that is often unheard and frequently disregarded. This study considers the positionality of Inuit educators and the challenges these educators are confronted with on a daily basis. Teaching Inuit learners in their first language, with Inuit educators, is a recent phenomenon in the educational history of Canada (Vick-Westgate, 2002). The forces of colonization that began when early settlers arrived in Canada still continues today (Battiste, 2005) through the use of policies. These policies consider the southern White teachers as the norm, through the normalization of the deficit model which “holds that students who struggle or fail in school do so because of their own internal deficits or deficiencies” (Bomer, Dworin, May, & Semingson, 2009, p. 2523). This model, continues to pervade the education of not only Inuit children, but the vast majority of Aboriginal students, and through the hegemonic discourse of Western privilege that, over time, teaches Aboriginal students and educators that they are less than their White counterparts.

Historically, Inuit People have suffered at the hands of Euro-Colonizers and even now, in the modern age, issues of cognitive imperialism (Battiste, 2005) including the appropriation of culture, thoughts, and knowledge (Haig-Brown, 2010), and issues such as meritocracy (Vanouwe, 2007) which is based on the belief that all privileges are earned and deficit perspective (Anyon, 2005) which focuses on the fault of a person, or group, and not

the system, pervade the academic world leaving both Inuit students and Inuit teachers at a distinct disadvantage. These disadvantages take the form of subtle and not so subtle policies and attitudes that continue to pervade the landscape of Aboriginal education. Many studies suggest a need for a transformative change in Aboriginal education (Battiste, 2000; Battiste & Barman, 1995; Stairs, 1995; Tompkins, 2006; Vanouwe, 2007) but the perspective of the Aboriginal educator has largely been ignored. This study aims to fill this gap by considering the perspective and voice of the Aboriginal educator, more specifically the Inuit educator.

“Funds of knowledge” refer to the knowledge and skills developed by a cultural group, over time, that supports the functioning of the group (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). Inuit students and their “funds of knowledge” (Gonzalez et al., 2005) are often undervalued, or not valued at all (Haig-Brown, 2010) and concepts such as multiliteracies (Cummins, 2009), which considers multiple languages and literacies as assets, have not yet become part of the educative discourse in the majority of Canadian schools, and is perhaps even less common in the North where the discussion is often about how to create better English or French speakers and rarely about how to support the first language- in this case Inuktitut. While the push is for more Westernized schools and educational policy, this is couched in terms of a common discourse. This common discourse, pervasive within education institutions, is a continuation of the master narrative (Denzin, 2005a; Love, 2004).

The master narrative firmly places Inuit teachers as “less than” their southern (Qallunaat¹) counterparts. This narrative is strengthened by the continual onslaught of the media, narratives, and politics. It is the discussion about “those people” that you might hear

¹ “Qallunaat” is the Inuktitut word for a non-Inuk person. Qallunaat (plural) or qallunaak (singular) are the commonly used word for Non-Inuk people. The term Qallunaat will replace the term southern in the rest of this text.

in the staff room, and the images of Aboriginals that you see played over and over again in films and in the news. While this is beginning to change, the narratives are often well secured, even, at times, within the Aboriginal population (S. K. Taylor, 2011). It is the narrative that looks at the deficits and builds a discourse surrounding these deficits and presumes that this discourse is accurate and generalizable to all. It is a master narrative which serves to negate the abilities of Inuit educators and students.

Master narratives are defined by Denzin (2005a) as “the dominant, hegemonic way of seeing or thinking the world is or the world should be, the narrative often guides and undergirds social, cultural, and political mandates” (p. 424). In a similar concept Love (2004) describes “majoritarian stories” as the “description of events as told by members of dominant/majority groups, accompanied by the values and beliefs that justify the actions taken by dominants to insure their dominant position” (pp. 228-229). These stories are *told* and *retold* by the dominant class in order to secure their status and to shift the responsibility for any injustice to those in subordinate positions (Love, 2004). These stories have been told, and are being retold within Inuit communities and schools in the Arctic. Sadly, before I began my own process of unlearning, I too told these stories. I have heard them told by others. I have heard these stories bind policy decisions. I have listened to these stories rationalize choices about course offerings, teacher placement, housing concerns, and language planning. The power of these stories is essentially a fact within the Aboriginal communities and more specifically within the Inuit communities of Nunavik. These stories cause harm to all who hear them: not just the Inuit. These stories deny teachers both Inuit and Qallunaat the opportunity to move beyond the prescribed discourse into a world of

possibilities. These stories serve to compartmentalize Inuit and see them through a lens of incompetence (Wolf, 2012).

Educational institutions often align with the discourse underlying these master narratives (Battiste, 2005; Haig-Brown, 2010; D. Rasmussen, 2002; Simon, 1989; St. Denis, 2007; Vanouwe, 2007), ensuring that power and control in the school ultimately belongs to the dominant group of educators. I have personally experienced this with the almost exclusively Qallunaat principals and the Qallunaat support person put in place whenever an Inuit has a role of responsibility. Within schools in Canada the power belongs to the predominately Qallunaat, Western, staff (D. Rasmussen, 2002; Simon, 1989; St. Denis, 2007; Tompkins, 2006). This significantly disadvantages the Inuit educators and students as they are continually seen in deficit perspective. Seen from a deficit perspective, the blame for any failures fall solely upon the person who is not successful; the institution, policies, and ideology are not considered in a causal manner. This way of viewing schooling removes any responsibility for failure from the dominant cultural group and places it directly upon the shoulders of the Inuit.

This study came about due to my own learning, unlearning, and relearning about race and education, and situating my developing understanding within the area of Inuit education: an area dear to me as I have spent the bulk of my professional and much of my personal life living and working with Inuit. The more time I spent in the Arctic, the more I began to wonder about the experiences of Inuit educators. Grounded in a decolonizing framework, discussed in chapter 2, this study was guided by the notion of the essential need for Inuit educators to have a space for their voices to be heard and for these voices to collectively disrupt and challenge the current status quo.

1.3. History of Inuit in Canada

Canada is home to many Aboriginal Peoples. This study focuses on a specific culture group of Aboriginal People: The Inuit, who:

are one of three distinct Indigenous groups in Canada as defined by the Constitution Act, 1982, with distinct cultural heritage and language. Nunavik (population 9,565 Inuit) lies north of the 55th parallel in Quebec and is one of four regions in Canada that comprise Inuit Nunaat (Inuvialuit, Nunatsiavut, Nunavik, and Nunavut) – Inuit homeland. (Ives et al., 2012, p. 2)

A clear definition for the Arctic is somewhat challenging, as the traditional concept of north is often not enough. Most geographers agree that Arctic Canada is defined as the regions in Canada above the jagged tree line. Like many things, the tree line does not follow a straight path. It curves and shifts due to currents, oceans, mountains, and other immovable objects. Much like the Inuit, the tree line follows its own path and cannot be deterred. See Figure 1.

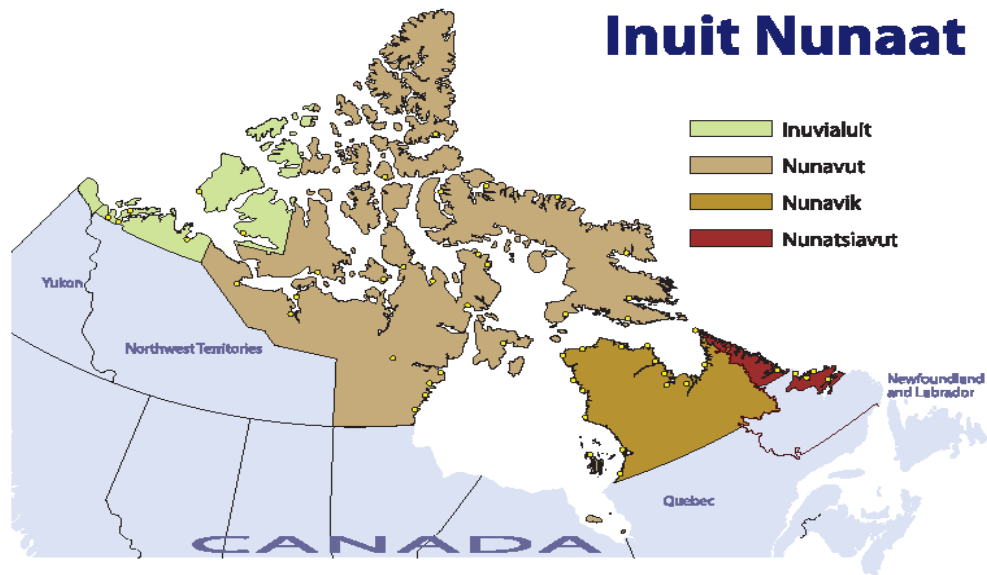


Figure 1 Inuit homelands within Canada. Retrieved from Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami website: <https://www.itk.ca/publication/maps-inuit-nunangat-inuit-regions-canada>

The Inuit first crossed what is now called the Bering Strait Land Bridge sometime between 3000 BCE and 2200 BCE, eventually making their way to what is now Labrador by 1000 BCE (McGrath, 2006). The Inuit were the first people to live permanently in the Arctic region of Canada. They brought with them three items that allowed them to survive in the tundra: the bow and arrow and the kayak (McGrath, 2006). The Inuit had to adapt to the different environment they found in the new land. This new land was vast, often dark, and had different wildlife.

This was a very different environment since during the winter the sea was covered by a thick layer of ice. It was here that a remarkable shift in the way of life took place as our ancestors developed the knowledge, skills and technology needed to utilize the

winter sea ice environment to hunt marine mammals. This adaptation endures as one of the defining characteristics of Inuit culture from Alaska to Greenland. (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, n.d., p. 5)

The Inuit lived untouched by other cultures for thousands of years. They lived by hunting and fishing, using tools such as harpoons, spears, ulus (women's knives), snow knives, soapstone lamps, and pots. These tools allowed them to hunt, cook, and clothe their families. Contact between Inuit and "Europeans began in the late 1500s when the first explorers sailed into the icy waters of Davis Strait, Hudson Strait, and Hudson Bay" (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, n.d., p. 10). Expeditions in the North, beginning in the 1570s "produced more than a dozen accounts of meetings with arctic dwellers, some of them in great detail" (Fossett, 2001, p. ix).

But whaling, the whalers, and the items and demands brought to the North by the whalers, impacted the Inuit greatly. During the 1700s over 30 ships a year were entering the Arctic region.

In those times the whalers would arrive as the ice broke up and leave when the new ice began to form. The only whalers that wintered in the Arctic were those that had their ships trapped or destroyed by pack ice. (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, n.d., p. 11)

By the mid 1850s permanent whaler stations were set up, contributing to an ongoing relationship between Inuit and Qallunaat. These connections brought changes to the culture, the land, and the health of Inuit, who suffered from diseases that their bodies were not used to fighting.

By the late 1800s, the whalers, having over-hunted, began to see the effects of having depleted the stocks of whales. While this affected them and their livelihood, it was devastating to Inuit who relied on these and other marine mammals for a large portion of their food and oil. The lack of whales and other marine mammals did not deter the whalers, as they turned to other sources to make their money. This was the start of the fur trade in the Arctic. “The whalers supplied our ancestors with steel traps and taught them to trap the fox and then trade the fur to get credit to obtain guns, ammunition, and the other goods” (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, n.d., p. 12). This shift led to a monetary system within the Inuit culture. Suddenly lifestyles changed. Inuit, in order to trap, needed to function in smaller groups and spread inland away from the sea. Elders still remember the shift, and how fur traders began to run their lives by controlling economic decisions, and holding debts as a guarantee towards more trapping.

The fur trade led to the Hudson’s Bay Company setting up a post in Churchill, Manitoba. Relationships began to slowly develop during this time and the European perspective about the life of Inuit began to be documented. Beginning in 1884, and continuing for forty years, expeditions were conducted by German and Danish nationals with the purpose of surveying the land and determining more accessible traveling routes. The final expedition is the most storied. Headed by Knud Rasmussen, this expedition focused on more than the geographical area: this study was designed to study the life of the Inuit and their histories (Fossett, 2001 p. x). Rasmussen spent years studying the Inuit and lived amongst the Inuit in family groupings and travelled by dog sled across Inuit lands. His ability to speak Inuktitut and the fact that his mother was part Inuk, eased his entry into life in the Arctic

(Fossett, 2001). However this prolonged exposure and connection to the Inuit made significant changes in the way the Inuit lived. The Inuit were used to living simply.

They had married and given birth and died. They had played drums and cat's cradle, staged sled races and played football using walrus skulls for balls. They had sung their songs of great hunting exploits and passed them down to younger generations. At time they had eaten well, at other times, starved. (McGrath, 2006, p. 40)

According to K. Rasmussen (1930), early exchanges between Inuit and European explorers were at first mutually beneficial, but this did not continue. After a time it became clear that the Inuit knowledge was no longer viewed as essential. The elders participating in the Nunavik Educational Task Force stated,

In Inuit culture our elders are our source of wisdom. They have a long-term view of things and a deep understanding of the cycles and changes of life...So it was natural for us to respect the newcomers who seemed to know how to survive and how to make their organizations work. Their power looked like wisdom...We now know that it [was] a mistake. (Vick-Westgate, 2002, p. 11)

These mistakes were cloaked as appropriate at the time. Inuit, who were noted to be trustworthy, showed respect by believing in these new people. This began the cycle of domination.

1.4 Colonization

By the late 1800s missionaries had found their way North and were attempting to Christianize the Inuit. Many Inuit speak about the positive benefits of the mission staff who worked within the villages. Complaints about the shift in religion are usually only heard from

Qallunaat (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, n.d.). Currently Christianity is the majority religion in the Arctic and is highly valued.

The first Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) came to the Arctic in 1903. Their police posts were placed at strategic places along coastal villages. The RCMP mandated laws and controlled land, seas, and people. The Inuit were viewed by the RCMP as an inconvenience (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, n.d.). Disagreements would occur between Inuit hunters and fur traders and often the RCMP felt it necessary to intercede. The following excerpt illustrates the pain and frustration the Inuit felt about the level of control and domination at this time.

So in those days that was the level of understanding about our culture and its importance from the perspective of government. It simply was up to the trader, missionary and police to look after our lives and always on their terms not ours. (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, n.d., p. 14)

When the Second World War ended in 1945, colonialism decreased, with countries such as Canada and New Zealand gaining full independence from Britain. However, no decrease in colonialism took place in the Arctic. “While the world decolonization process is almost complete, it has not begun for Indigenous people” (Yazzie, 2000, p. 39). The first occupants of these great lands were not given their independence. For the Inuit in Arctic Canada, this time period was particularly challenging and riddled with colonizing practices. It was not until after the Second World War, when other countries began to show interest in the relatively unpopulated Canadian North, that the government of Canada began to develop more interest in this region. This interest, which led to incredible harm and sorrow for

multiple families, changed everything for the Inuit of Nunavik (Tester & Kulchyski, 1994). The following two sections discuss the educational changes and the High Arctic Relocation.

1.5 Change in Education

Prior to colonization, the Inuit educated their own children through traditional family practice and taught their children the skills needed to participate in life. These essential skills were taught through familial practices where mother taught daughter and father taught son.

Learning was accomplished through observation and practice (Simon, 1989). When children were ready, their parents would teach them the necessary skills. Skills were taught mostly by imitation and successful “learning was demonstrated by performance” (Vick-Westgate, 2002, p. 41). The Inuit had been living for thousands of years in some of the harshest climates known and had continued to share their important knowledge with their families, so that they could hunt, sew, cook, and live. When technology entered the North, the knowledge needed to survive quickly shifted. Suddenly understanding how to make a dog team work, and respect you, was not as critical as being able to buy gasoline for your new snowmobile. Things were changing quickly and formal education would be a cornerstone in this transition.

Aboriginal education in the Arctic region began first in the Western part of the Arctic. In the Eastern Arctic, where this study takes place, formal education was not established until well into the 1900s. The Government of Canada, when approached by the Anglican Church for educational funds for Inuit learners in 1909, denied the request; stating that it was not supportive of this endeavour (Van Meenen, 1994). However, mission schools did start in certain locales. “Schooling was sporadic. Prior to the 1950s, most people lived in camps and came into the posts only to trade furs or when the hospital ship visited” (Vick-Westgate, 2002, p. 44). As the government of Canada slowly began to introduce schools, it was done

with a specific purpose. “English was the sole language of instruction, and the avowed purpose was integration of the Inuit into the ways and economy of modern Canada” (Cram, 1985, p. 115). The memories of this era are challenging for most Inuit. Memories of imposed language, negated culture, and uprooted children are commonly discussed amongst the elders. Many parents have stories of their children simply being taken away. They did not know for how long or why (Cram, 1985).

Trading posts that sold goods encouraged Inuit families to increase the number of trips they made into the permanent settlements. This began the process of “settling” the Inuit. “Between the mid-1940s and early 1970s, Inuit lost their autonomy in their Arctic homeland” (McGregor, 2010, p. 54). This loss of autonomy was in direct conflict with the traditional practices of the Inuit and was a catalyst for a significant shift in the practices of Inuit families and familial structure. The Inuit parents suddenly had little control over what their children learned and who taught their children. Western education abruptly “eclipsed Inuit ways of knowing, being, and doing” (Tompkins, 2006, p. 36). The shift to formalized education conducted by mission churches and at times the government was “culturally assimilative and the most significantly disempowering colonial practice imposed on Inuit” (McGregor, 2010, p. 55). These hegemonic Western educational practices have “contributed greatly to cultural change and language loss” (Vick-Westgate, 2002, p. 9) in Aboriginal communities. The Eurocentric view of education tends to favour monolingualism. This view contributes to language loss and Inuktitut is viewed as less important than the dominant, majority language (Soto & Kharem, 2006). In my experiences, there has been little inclusion of Aboriginal practices and voices in educational policy, administration, and preferred teaching practices.

These colonizing forces have been enacted upon all Inuit groups within Canada. It is imperative that Inuit education be looked at in context “of colonial practice designed to eradicate Aboriginal languages and culture and facilitate assimilation into the dominant language and culture” (Kitchen, Cherubini, Trudeau, & Hadson, 2009). These practices were not accidental. Inuit children were taken from their families and forcibly disengaged from their culture and their identity. Part of this assimilative process is the tragedy of residential schools. Many Inuit were forced to leave their families and move thousands of kilometres to attend these schools. High suicide rates, concerns regarding family violence, and drug and alcohol abuse, as well as high rates of school withdrawal are linked to the significant loss of family and culture that occurred in connection to the residential schools (Watt-Cloutier, 2002). The schools were designed specifically to “stifle Indigenous thought ... through severe punishments for speaking native language or practicing what was designated the devil’s work” (Haig-Brown, 2010, p. 932). This discourse is the one in which Inuit students are still taught today; it is still the master narrative (Fletcher, 2008).

The process of working towards decolonizing a group that has endured colonization and the atrocities linked to this process, is enormous. Colonization is a course of action that eradicates

a people’s belief in their names, in their language, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacity and ultimately in themselves. It makes them see their past as one wasteland of non-achievement and it makes them want to distance themselves from that wasteland. (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, 1986, p. 3)

This form of colonization has endangered the culture, language, and lives of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada. The Inuit, mostly due to their geographic distance, has been impacted to a

lesser degree than some of the other Aboriginal Peoples. The Inuit still have a strong, vibrant language. But other aspects of colonization are apparent and continue to rack generations with confusion and pain.

Currently within Canada, 84% of students graduate from high school. Comparatively, the graduation rate for Inuit students is less than 25 percent (Simon, 2008). While graduation rates are only one measure of success, the links to other measures such as employment, status, and security cannot be denied. Yet all education in the North is mired in larger issues.

1.6 The Legacy of the High Arctic Relocation

In 1953, in a bid to populate the far North and curb the potential for other countries to encroach on the barren tundra, the Government of Canada decided that a new village should be created in the High Arctic. The RCMP was charged with finding “volunteers” for this move. Eight Inuit families from the villages of Inukjuak, Quebec, and three Inuit families from the village of Pond Inlet, Nunavut (formerly NWT) were relocated, 2000 km North to the areas in the barren lands of Ellesmere Island and Cornwallis Island (Damas, 2002). This relocation had long term effects on the Inuit of Nunavik.

The lands of the high Arctic are technically Polar deserts, and wildlife and plants were sparse and very different than those families from Inukjuak area were used to. The temperature in the High Arctic is much colder, and that far North, 78 degrees North Latitude, there are four months of total darkness. These conditions are significantly different from those in Inukjuak, where the summers are mild, but pleasant, and even in January there are at least three hours of sunlight.

Why did the families go? While there are varying perspectives on why families agreed to go, there is a great deal of speculation that the families felt that they had no choice. “No Inuit says no to a White man without repercussions” (McGrath, 2006, p. 106) was the common feeling about the situation. Since White men gave cheques and had access to goods, many Inuit did not feel that they could say no. On July 26th, 1953 the C. D. Howe sailed from Inukjuak with eight families aboard. The families were promised that if they did not like it, they could return in two years. This promise is one of many that were broken.

The eight families from Inukjuak and the three families from Pond Inlet arrived in Resolute Bay on September 6, 1953. Immediately after, there were issues with boats, food, and camp locations. Doug Wilkinson, who was a CBC filmmaker aboard the ship, felt that everything was in shambles and very confusing. He was greatly concerned for the Inuit. He stated that there was “no planning at all. There was absolutely nothing. I don’t know how they ever expected those people to live” (McGrath, 2006, p. 145). The desire of the government to populate the North was not well planned or organized.

That first night the Inuit slept in flimsy cloth tents in cold weather with no stove or ulliq (traditional lamp that uses whale fat for fuel) to keep them warm. They had been promised supplies and materials, but the next day, when the crates were opened, they were shocked at how little had been shipped. They did not have what they needed to survive.

By December, the camp was struggling to stay alive. There was not enough meat and for weeks on end they had to live on bannock bread and tea, but the bannock did not fill their stomachs and the tea did not keep them warm. (McGrath, 2006, p. 175)

The Inuit who had lived for thousands of years with no support, were barely finding enough food to exist. They were in a barren land with little food, inadequate supplies, little snow, but lots of cold, and no knowledge of this landscape. “Due to poor planning and implementation of the move, the relocated families spent their first winter in the High Arctic in flimsy tents with inadequate food and supplies” (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, 2010). The RCMP detachment, 60 km away, did little to help.

There are reports from local RCMP detachments stating that all was going well and the families were happy; however, upon delving deeper into it, it has become clear that this was not the case. The Inuit argued that they “were ‘used’ in the early 1950s by the federal government to strengthen Canadian sovereignty over the Arctic Archipelago” (Tester & Kulchyski, 1994, p. 102). At the time the government stated that the reason for the relocation was to support a subsistence lifestyle for the Inuit; however, it is now recognized that the Inuit were sent to the High Arctic to “act as flagpoles. They represented this country’s efforts to occupy the uninhabited High Arctic and counter the feared expansionist activities of other nations” (Nunavik Tourism Association, 2010).

While there are varied reports about the treatment of those relocated, on August 18th, 2010 a formal apology was issued from the government of Canada. This apology given by The Honourable John Duncan, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, in the village of Inukjuak:

We would like to express our deepest sorrow for the extreme hardship and suffering caused by the relocation. The families were separated from their home communities and extended families by more than a thousand kilometers. They were not provided

with adequate shelter and supplies...Moreover, the Government failed to act on its promise to return anyone that did not wish to stay in the High Arctic to their old homes ...The relocation of Inuit families to the High Arctic is a tragic chapter in Canada's history that we should not forget, but that we must acknowledge, learn from and teach our children. (Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, 2010)

The interest in the North, by both government groups hoping to stake claims to uninhabited lands, and companies hoping for economic benefits, impacted the Inuit significantly. Life shifted from a nomadic, subsistence lifestyle, to a colonized, village existence.

Government assistance designed to help the Inuit eventually destroyed the semi-nomadic lifestyle and led the population to settle in villages where their subsistence economy was no longer viable. As a result, most Inuit were forced to depend on the government for their survival. (Kativik Regional Government, 2007 p. 5)

As always, support comes at a cost. Undoubtedly this cost was too high for the Inuit of Nunavik. The shift from traditional Inuit lifestyle has impacted this group significantly. A culture that existed independently for thousands of years, suddenly changed almost overnight. This study is bound within the frame of opening a space for the voice of Inuit educators, so they may share their own feelings and not be dominated or controlled within the area of education.

Colonization of Inuit immensely changed their lifestyle and culture. While for thousands of years they lived on the land, within a short time period changes rapidly occurred. Education, which was part of the culture, lifestyle, and dictated by need, changed

when missionaries entered the North, and began teaching children in a formalized manner. The move from a nomadic, subsistent lifestyle, to a village run community, anchored by supply stores, created a shift in family life. The harm done by the Arctic Relocation significantly impacted, and still impacts Inuit.

1.7 Positioning Myself

As I consider the opportunities life has afforded me and the enriching directions, I never could have imagined, that life would take me on, I have learned, albeit slowly, to stop, consider, think, ponder, and wonder. It is with this perspective that I come to this research. I take up this opportunity with the knowledge that I need to position myself so that I am not seen as all knowing (Smith, 2002). The need to push away from this is palpable, and the desire to simply go with the flow is challenging. In order to resist this instinct of the Westernized me, I am reminded by Fine (1994) to consider the *other* and my role in actively working towards opening spaces instead of closing spaces. I need to ask questions and wait for, without pressure, responses that are genuine and real and not just what people may think I want to hear.

I come to this research as a learner. After years of learning, unlearning, and reflecting, I have learned and unlearned (Wink, 2010) multiple concepts about other people and, perhaps more importantly, about myself. I now see the damage that teachers can do who, well intentioned, still pass on hegemonic views of culture and idealize every situation through the lens of Western norms. I also understand that the decisions I often made as a teacher were done because I saw the world through the eyes of White privilege and meritocracy. Was this intentional? No. Did it hurt the students? Yes. Did it hurt the teachers? Yes. Did it contribute to the master narrative? Yes. Did these contributions build the deficit model and make me

part of the colonizing effects on Aboriginal educators and students? Yes. My recognition of the fact that I answer “yes” to those questions caused a painful, but tremendously important shift within me. My deep reflection on the topic that I subsequently engaged in allowed me to see the perspectives I held, and gave me the desire to make changes.

These revelations lead me on a new journey, to unlearn and uncover my own biased beliefs: beliefs that were firmly planted in normative, hegemonic ideals. I sought to learn about the master narratives and the counter narratives that would eventually support my unlearning. I began to create an internal space where I could ask questions, where answers would not be censored, and where inquiry was welcome. This desire to uncover and unlearn, before relearning, caused me to clearly examine my own beliefs about the role of education and the master narrative that binds these beliefs, neatly, clearly, and erroneously.

It is this journey of change and relearning what I thought I knew that has brought me to this point in my inquiry. Do I have a bias? Yes. I have witnessed teachers being treated like worthless “nothings,” and the *othering* of Inuit staff in order to maintain the status quo. The othering is the “process that underscores the privilege of the dominant group” (MacQuarrie, 2010, p. 636). This process is what happens when the norm of the dominant group is seen as correct and the other is always seen as less than. I have sadly, although unconsciously, been a participant in this domination. Through my experiences, and my opportunity to gain and learn and question what I once thought true, I have begun to unlearn and through this process I have grown in my understanding of the effects of hegemonic education and my role in this process.

This research study represents a great deal of who I am, and a great deal of my Inuit friends. I attempt throughout this project, through the setup, the interviews, the analysis, and

the discussion, to contain my hubris and to share the voices of the Inuit educators who struggle to give their children, all the students are their children, so much. These pages belong to them much more than me. Smith (2002) discusses the need for Aboriginal research to be beneficial to those being researched. As well, the voices of the Inuit must be honoured and shared (Smith, 2002). I only hope that I can do justice to their words. It is time that what they wanted to say is listened to, written down and shared. They deserve that.

1.8 Overview of Theory

The selection of theory is critical to any study. I have selected two main branches of theories to support my inquiry and anchor my understanding. Critical theories beckon the question, what is taken for granted in this situation? (McLaren, 2005). As well, studies founded in the tradition of critical theories are oriented towards transformation (McCarthy, 1991). The two key factors determined my use of critical theories. In this study the critical theories chosen are critical race theory (CRT) and transformative multiliteracies pedagogies (TMP). These theories gave me a lens with which I was able I used to conceive of this study, determine the questions, interpret results, and share my findings. These theories will be discussed in full detail in chapter 2.

1.9 Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to consider the challenges and what can be done to support the professional experiences of Inuit educators and to create a space for their voices to be heard.

The following questions support this inquiry:

- 1) What do Inuit teachers perceive as challenges to their own educational practice?
- 2) What shifts could occur to support Inuit educators?

- 3) What is the message Inuit educators wish to share about their practices in order to interrupt the status quo and create a counter narrative to the damaging master narrative?

These questions, which are guided by the tenets of critical race theory, shift my proposal away from “colonization and assimilation and towards a more real self-determination” (Brayboy, 2006, p. 441). The purpose of this study is to disrupt the status quo and create a safe space where the Inuit can discuss, consider the current narratives, and the new narratives they would like to be heard. A shift in perspective, supportive policies, a new view of racial equity, and language planning need to be put in force prior to education taking on a truly decolonizing effect.

1.10 Outline of the Dissertation

In Chapter 1, I shared my own perspective on this work, and considered why a study of this nature has not been undertaken previously. I shared my thoughts on how I position myself. As well, I contextualized the research and broadly discuss the history of the Inuit people and the region where this study occurs. In Chapter 2 I delve into the theoretical framework used to guide this study. In Chapter 3 I discuss the literature that informs and supports me in this study. I discuss the work of previous researchers and how I connect what they have done with the purpose of this study. In Chapter 4 I reflect upon the methods and methodology: considering both the process I used and the processes I wanted to use. In this chapter, I consider the selections I made and the reasons for these choices. In Chapter 5 I review the findings and the analytical choices that I made. The findings are discussed through four thematic lenses: caring, equality, racism, and language planning. Direct quotations from the

transcriptions are used to strengthen the voices of the Inuit educators with specifics focused on the connection the Inuit educators have to their students, the other teachers, and the communities at large. Chapters 6 describes the process of creating a counter narrative, and why this is imperative. As well, the constructed counter narrative is shared. In Chapter 7 I lead a discussion about what the research means and connect it to the theoretical framework. Finally, in Chapter 8, I share recommendations and next steps.

Chapter 2. Theoretical Framework

The choice of theory is essential to all research as it frames and shapes perspectives, guides action, and ultimately determines what questions will be asked, how the questions are asked, and what response is actually heard (Denzin, 2005a). To frame my research I require a theory that not only supports my inquiry, but supports the Inuit educators and considers the historical context of Inuit in Canada. In section 2.1 I will consider the role of critical theory in this study. Section 2.1.2 focuses in more closely on critical race theory and how this theory can be used to consider schools as a potential site for racism. Section 2.1.3 then further delves into the implication of schooling and racism by shifting the focus to critical race pedagogy.

2.1. Critical Theory

Critical theory was a response to other theories (such as structuralism, modernism etc.) and as such is a part of the “post” discourse (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005). This post discourse considers that truly bias free perspectives do not exist. The actual word

“critical” in critical theory comes from the critique such theories made of previous explanation of how the social world operated and was organized. Critical theory does not involve mere fault-finding: rather it requires unearthing or deconstructing hidden assumptions that govern society-especially those about the legitimacy of power relationships- debunking or deconstructing their claim to authority. (DeMarrais & LeCompte, 1999, p. 27)

Theorists such as Antonio Gramsci, Jurgen Habermas, Michael Foucault, and Paulo Freire played a significant role in the development of critical theory, although the view and use of

the theory was enacted differently by each theorist (DeMarrais & LeCompte, 1999; Jennings & Lynn, 2005). Works by McLaren (2005) and Giroux (1997), along with a focus on critical pedagogy (Apple, 2004; Wink, 2010), informed me as I structured and analyzed this study.

The central driving question behind many critical stances is “Whose interests are served?” (DeMarrais & LeCompte, 1999, p. 250). McCarthy (1991) discusses how critical theory challenges notions of common sense and power, emphasizes practice over theory, and looks at what is taken for granted and therefore works towards transformation with a view to social justice. Gordon (1995) suggests that a clear perspective on the role of critical theory is essential if transformation is to occur.

Critical theory digs deeply and looks under, around, and over. Critical theory seeks to understand the origins and operation of repressive social structures. Critical theory is the critique of domination. It seeks to focus on a world becoming less free, to cast doubt on claims of technological scientific rationality, and then to imply that present configurations do not have to be as they are. (Gordon, 1995, p. 190)

The essence of critical theory then is to seek hidden meaning and disrupt what is thought to be true. This disruption allows for new considerations to occur.

Critical theory has multiple offshoots, which allow the principles of the theory to be applied to specific, situational concerns. This specific application is particularly imperative for this study, where seeking to uncover the hidden stories, in a unique context, is central theme (Fine, Weis, Wessen, & Wong, 2003). Some of these offshoots of critical theory are critical race theory (Bell, 1995; Brayboy, 2006; Delgado, 1995; Gillborn, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1999, 2000; Milner, 2008; Roithmayr, 1999; E. Taylor, 2009; Vanhouwe, 2007; Williams, 2000; Yosso, 2005), tribalcrit (Brayboy, 2006; Haynes Writer, 2008), critical

pedagogy (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1997; Jay, 2003; McLaren, 2005; Wink, 2010), and critical race pedagogy (Jennings & Lynn, 2005; Mueller, 2013; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002b). All of these subtheories are connected to the central stance of critical theory, and yet have specific areas that apply to aspects of critical theory. I will focus this study on critical race theory, while borrowing from other subtheories.

2.1.1. Critical race theory

Critical race theory (CRT) began as a theoretical structure concerned with issues within the legal field. Since its origins, the theory has expanded and now encompasses multiple fields. I am utilizing the strand of CRT that focuses on education. Concerns such as hierarchy within schools, White privilege, and how power is frequently unequal between groups, particularly racial groups (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) is central to the educational focus of CRT and supports my inquiry.

CRT is based on the belief that racism has become so normalized within Western societies that everything else is compared to and aligned with Western, White practices (Milner, 2008). This normalizing of White culture decreases Inuit students' opportunities to utilize their funds of knowledge and be seen as capable and competent in their own right. This can be witnessed when skills and competencies of Inuit students are continually linked to English acquisition, and traditional knowledge is not valued within the educational community. I also believe that this extends to the Inuit educators, where the academic achievement of the White teachers, and the formality and structure of lesson planning and examinations, are seen as imperative and place the unique contributions of the Inuit educators in a deficit perspective (Eriks-Brophy & Crago, 2003). This can be seen when Inuit educators are encouraged to use the IRE format of teaching (i.e., in IRE there is a pattern of teacher

initiate, student respond, and teacher evaluate) instead of longer discussion formats with minimal teacher evaluation, typically used in Inuit classrooms.

While proponents of CRT do not blame individual people, they do state that most people who benefit from White privilege are so used to it that they see it as normal (Delgado Bernal, 2002). This observation caused me to stop and reflect. Was I a beneficiary of White privilege? Did I accept the status quo as unchangeable? Did I have these privileges with me every day of my life? (McIntosh, 1989). These thoughts and ponderings, as well as my research interests drove me towards CRT.

Yosso (2005), based upon the work of Solórzano (1997), considers the five tenets of CRT: 1) intercentricity of race and racism; 2) the challenge of dominant ideology; 3) the commitment to social justice; 4) the centrality of experiential knowledge; and 5) the utilization of interdisciplinary approaches. These tenets anchored me as I considered options and choices throughout this study. When looking at the intercentricity of race and racism, Delgado (1995) states that Whites see what they believe to be the truth, when in reality it is only a perception. This perception, since it is framed as the truth, causes policy makers and teachers, who are often White, to not see the pervasiveness of racism in education. CRT believes that it is about more than just seeing the racism, it is also a case that the “largely White teaching staff whose practices, consciously or not, contribute to the racial achievement...are unable to see what they are doing” (D. Taylor, Usborne, & de la Sablonnière, 2008, p. 9). Through my work in various Inuit schools, I have seen repeated cases of racial bias. This discourse, that the White dominant teachers know best, is still pervasive in the North and acts as a colonizing and assimilating force in schools. In education “race matters because teachers bring to the classroom interpretations of students and their

communities, and their location within a hierarchical society, that are informed heavily by assumptions about race and ethnicity” (Sleeter, 2005, p. 243). Since race matters, it is imperative that educators have a say and work towards reducing bias.

The second tenet of CRT focuses on the need to challenge the dominant ideology. Yosso (2005) discusses how the Whites’ cultural capital is valued, but the cultural capital of ethnic minority students and educators is undervalued. Yosso (2005) suggests that by looking at assets in a different way, researchers can challenge the dominant ideology, and look beyond deficit models (e.g., what the students do not know, what the teachers are not doing) and look at the positives. This could be done by honouring students who can function in more than one language, looking at talents and skills that may not be part of the curriculum, and considering the strengths of the Inuit communities.

Inuit students are often viewed as academically challenged, which may be in part due to their multiliteracies. While speaking, learning, and functioning in more than one language can and should be seen as positive, Inuit students are most often viewed as lacking standardized English or not understanding a highly contextualized math equation. CRT considers and challenges these perceptions.

Challenges to dominant ideologies can occur through the disruption of concepts such as “objectivity, meritocracy...race neutrality, and equal opportunity” (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002b, p. 26). CRT maintains the belief that institutions, such as the schools in this study, are inherently racist. To end these practices, hidden myths such as meritocracy and racial neutrality must come to light. CRT works towards uncovering these myths and creating new dialogues (E. Taylor, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2000; Sleeter & Delgado Bernal, 2004). CRT actively works towards eliminating the effects that racism has on marginalized groups

(Brayboy, 2005; Delgado Bernal & Villapando, 2002; Parker, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002a) by challenging the dominant ideology. This challenge frames this study by considering the role and identity of the Inuit educators and creating a space for their voices to be heard.

The third tenet of CRT, a commitment to social justice, is an intrinsic part of this study. My belief is that for Inuit education to change, the deficit model, so often employed must be abolished (Tompkins, 2006). Inuit educators must be seen as strong, capable individuals. Disrupting these myths, as suggested by Cummins' (2009) transformative multiliteracies pedagogy model, as discussed in section 2.2.5, may be one way of creating social justice for students and teachers.

The fourth tenet, the centrality of experiential knowledge, is extremely important in this work. For far too long, Inuit students have been seen as “without”... without knowledge, without language, without possibilities. It is my belief that this is a very biased view as it considers students who are different as deficient. Inuit funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 2005) which are so deeply linked to the land and cultural experiences must be honoured within the educational system. If the Inuit educators in this study are given the opportunity to share their knowledge in different ways, they may be able to express their strengths, which in turn will support teaching practices.

The final tenet of CRT is the utilization of interdisciplinary approaches. CRT dovetails with this project as it encourages the utilization of diverse methodologies and alternative representation. Various forms of representation (Glesne, 2010) support unique ways of sharing work and allow stories to be told. Tompkins (2006) discusses how “the stories we tell of our experiences matter and that through exploration of our stories we can

come to more fully understand” (p. 5). I believe that Inuit teachers have a story to tell. I believe that this story can only be told through the challenge of the dominant ideology and the uncovering of the connection between racism and educational practices.

Notions such as multiculturalism are questioned through the lens of CRT. Issues such as who benefits from multiculturalism is brought to the forefront in CRT by utilizing the tenet of challenging the dominant ideology. Vanhouwe (2007) states that: “Multiculturalism is problematic in that it sustains racism by supporting the myth of Canada as a tolerant country, perpetuating unequal power relations and White dominance and contributes to the process of ‘othering’” (p. 6), in this case, both Inuit students and teachers. Inuit educators are often viewed as less than their White counter parts (St. Denis, 2007) in part due to the myth of the tolerant Canada where the idealized concept of multiculturalism is embraced at the expense of real issues such as racism. My experiences in the North concur with this perspective. As well, this concept of multiculturalism acts to negate the privilege conferred to Whites and reverses the gains that have been made by Aboriginal groups by “attacking race-based programs” (Zamudio, Russell, Rios, & Bridgeman, 2011, p. 29) that are designed to support the marginalized groups, particularly those programs with an education focus. For example, when you hear about someone’s nephew not getting into the school of their choice because another (fill in the blank with whatever minority you choose) got in, you are hearing first hand this attack on programming. The attack is put in place specifically to negate the support of the marginalized group and re-create, yet again, more privilege for the White youth. Laws and regulations that have been put into place, such as affirmative action regulations, are overturned when colour-blind lenses are used as filters. If we live in a colour-blind society, then we do not need these regulations to support racial minorities. However, as

stated earlier, we do not live in a colour-blind society (Gillborn, 2005; Zamudio et al., 2011). No one complains about nepotism that has occurred for generations, but everyone complains about a youth getting a little extra support if s/he is not middle class and White.

It is clear that racism exists and that acknowledging it is a central step in working towards a change. Zamudio and Rios (2006) share their way of coping with this situation:

One way of demystifying the ...racist society is simply to admit that racism exists and that all White people benefit from it. We believe that coming to an understanding of the various ways in which racism plays out and is understood, legitimated, and contested serves to demystify. (p. 485)

This acknowledgement can be a step towards creating a positive change for those who have been marginalized for far too long. Gillborn (2005) argues that it is not radical groups that are the most challenging when dealing with racial issues. These groups can be quieted and most people accept that their radicalism is misplaced. However, it is “the taken-for-granted routine privileges of White interests that goes unremarked in the political mainstream” (Gillborn, 2005, p. 485). So while radical, White supremacists are quieted by policies and people alike, quieter, (but just as concerning) policies and actions that preference Whites are not considered and are left to flourish. For the Inuit educators, this means that they will continually be regarded as less than, in the binary of Inuk and White: Inuit students will always be considered as linguistically challenged, even though they speak two, and many of the children speak three languages; and policies about hiring, benefits, and protocols will continue to protect the status of the White, southern teacher over the status of the Inuk educator.

Gillborn (2005) suggests that a set of proposed questions be asked of public policies. These questions include, “Who or what is driving education policy?...who wins and who loses as a result of education policy priorities?...what are the effects of policy” (Gillborn, 2005, p. 492)? In considering these questions, in context of my own study, I had to think about what the policies were, who they supported, and what their outcome was. To discover this, I asked pointed, specific questions about policy, benefits, and effects. This theoretical stance supported the type of questions I asked, the manner in which they were asked, and the answers I was looking for. It is one thing to look at the policy itself, which at first glance may seem highly appropriate; however, a more challenging task is to look at the reality of the outcomes and the (subtle) conditions that are put in place to (not) support certain segments of the population.

Bilingual and multilingual education, or the lack thereof, is strongly linked to CRT. The medium of instruction may be linked to underperformance of Aboriginal students (Cummins, 2001; S. K. Taylor & Skutnabb-Kangas, 2009). While many schools around the globe utilize multilingual language education successfully, North America, and in particular Canada, still has a (mostly) unilingual language policy. In Ontario, it is illegal to teach content subjects in any language other than English or French in the public school system (S. K. Taylor, 2010b). Exceptions have been made for certain segments of the population, in regards to Aboriginal students, but since these exceptions are bound within the view that policies of monolingualism is best, the exceptions are never strongly enforced. The later holds true in Kativik School Board where development of protocols and policies, under the direction of researchers and Inuit leaders, working towards increasing the amount of time spent learning in Inuktitut, has been eroded and shifted to extra English (or French) courses,

and many villages have even seen a shift towards an earlier introduction of the second language. When I asked a high level professional why this was, even when research showed this was not beneficial (Cummins, 1979, 1988, 2009; D. Taylor et al., 2008; S. K. Taylor & Skutnabb-Kangas, 2009), his comment was that there really were not enough “good Inuit teachers”.

Often the dominant narrative is that minority language students “are the problem rather than the institutions that fail them. This view feeds the myth of meritocracy, and in turn is fed by it” (Zamudio et al., 2011, p. 60). If these students speak English (or French) fluently, and are still not being successful, then their culture is to blame. There is “[n]o need to examine the structural context” (Zamudio et al., 2011, p. 60) that affects the Inuit students. Ultimately, they and the Inuit educators are fully blamed for any lack of success. The institutions, the policies, and the enactment of these are never considered.

CRT, as defined by E. Taylor (2009):

shares the emancipator’s hopes of these forbearers whose moral compass led their efforts towards the call for human freedom and equality. The forbearers, those who conceived of CRT held this compass to guide them. This compass continues to guide good teachers, educators, and policy makers. (p. 1)

This compass guided me during this process.

2.1.2. Critical race pedagogy

Yosso (2002) states that critical race pedagogy is “an approach to understanding curriculum structures, processes, and discourses informed by Critical Race Theory (CRT)” (p. 98).

Yosso (2002) continues her discussion about race in education by following the five tenets of

CRT, as outlined in this text, and the accompanying tenets of critical race pedagogy would be as follows:

- (1) acknowledge the central and intersecting roles of racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of subordination in maintaining inequality in curricular structures, processes, and discourses;
- (2) challenge dominant social and cultural assumptions regarding culture and intelligence, language and capability, objectivity and meritocracy;
- (3) direct the formal curriculum toward goals of social justice and the hidden curriculum toward Freirean goals of critical consciousness;
- (4) develop counter discourses through storytelling, narratives, chronicles, family histories, scenarios, biographies, and parables that draw on the lived experiences students of color bring to the classroom; and
- (5) utilize interdisciplinary methods of historical and contemporary analysis to articulate the linkages between educational and societal inequality. (p. 98)

These tenets of critical race pedagogy highlight the need to consider all areas of possible tensions within the framework of school. If schooling is designed to support students, it is clear, as Yosso (2002) points out, that this is not always the case. Curriculum is often designed from the Western perspective and negates the specific histories of other cultures. It is important to challenge this ideology and in particular within this study challenge the dominant discourse surrounding language, intelligence, and meritocracy. There are many types of curriculum and how you view these matters a great deal.

Apple (2004) speaks about the role and goal of various curricula. The intended curriculum is what is expected to be taught, while the implemented curriculum is what is

actually taught. These are quite clear and apparent to most educators. The hidden curriculum is what is learned that is not an intended part of the actual curriculum. It could be thought of as the side effects or what is taught on the periphery. This may be the importance of lining up in the hallway, or it might be the need to raise hands when speaking. The hidden curriculum is often problematic for both Inuit educators and students as the hidden curriculum contains a code that is taught throughout life. This code however is written using middle class White values. Finally, the null curriculum is what is not taught. The choice of what to teach is just as important as what not to teach. So, when Inuit educators are asked to teach, but most curriculum is not written from their perspective, the juxtaposition is very challenging. Choices of curriculum, what is taught, the language used to teach, and what is not taught must be considered from the perspective of the Inuk.

Both CRT and critical race pedagogy consider the structures of the school. Zamudio et al. (2011) discusses that the structure of the school and how it is enacted and the process of educating the students is not neutral. It is not neutral as education, policies, and the enactment of these are put in place for specific reasons and purposes. Often these purposes are organized to “legitimate (i.e., justify) the disadvantages of student who are unequally impacted by these inherently biased practices and policies” (Zamudio et al., 2011, p. 95). These policies, which include curriculum, are used to educate and assimilate students. Zamudio et al. (2011) asserts that once inequalities are put in place, ideologies are created in order to support these injustices and build the conception that the inequalities are in fact normal. Often low academic success of marginalized students in this paradigm is viewed through the lens of the deficit model, as well as the meritocracy model, where these students

are blamed for their lack of success, regardless of structure, programs, policies, or curriculum that could be more supportive.

Curriculum choices are often decisions made in order to preference one group over another. In any curriculum document, choices must be made about what to include and what to exclude. These choices are often made with the dominant group in mind. Perez Huber, Johnson, and Kohli (2006) state that:

Curriculum reinforces the hierarchical status-quo of White supremacy and renders the race and cultures of non-Whites as inferior. The constant bombardment of messages embedded in curriculum about the superiority of Whites and inferiority of non-Whites (which can be explicit or implicit) can indoctrinate students about their placement of the racial hierarchy in relation to their races. This can contribute to internalized racism and potentially damage the self-concept of non-White students. (p. 193)

This is the curriculum in which the Inuit educators teach and the Inuit students learn. While there have been great strides in working towards a more culturally relevant curriculum, the overlay of preference given to English (or French) classes, and the focus on Eurocentric educational protocols, creates a great divide. This also holds true in regard to language planning. As will be shown in section 2.2, power and politics intertwine within education.

2.2. Considering Language

The power and politics of language cannot be ignored when considering both Inuit educators and students. This second part of the theoretical section considers how and why language choices have been made and continue to be made. Section 2.2.1 will discuss critical applied linguistics which looks at not just language, but also at issues and concerns surrounding

language choices. Section 2.2.2 considers the linguistic interdependence hypothesis and how this theory can impact choices made for minority language students. Section 2.2.3 discusses the link between ignoring linguistic interdependence hypothesis, the linguistic genocide that is currently occurring in many minority language communities, and its impact on learners and educators. Continuing, section 2.2.4 considers how multilingual education looks in various parts of the world. Finally I finish by introducing Cummins' (2009) concept of transformative multiliteracies pedagogy and how this could make a significant difference in how education could look for Inuit.

2.2.1 Critical applied linguistics

Critical applied linguistics (CALx) is an approach to language that “seeks to connect the local conditions of language to broader social formations” (Pennycook, 2008, p. 169) These local conditions may include gender, class, race, culture and many more. This focus on more than the words of a language support Inuit educators as the effects of hegemonic teaching of English (or French) come into play in the North. CALx “adds an overt focus on questions of power and inequality” (Pennycook, 2010, p.161) across languages. The role of CALx is to provide the context to language situations. These situations may be, as mentioned, cultural, gender based, racial etc., but they are situations that must be regarded in terms of language, and the role language and the “killer” language (English) plays in the education of Inuit learners and the role of Inuit educators with killer languages being those languages that dominate and control the educational playing field (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2003).

CALx problematizes various situations and considers how and why policies have developed. Language ideologies and myths about language learning continue to ground choices and decisions made by policy makers, even though the foundational premise for

these concepts is erroneous. Jim Cummins (1979), in his seminal work on the interdependence hypothesis, considers how and why there are differences in educational success between middle-class majority language children and often disadvantaged minority language children. Much of the research work done on bilingual language learning has been done with French immersion students in Canada (Lambert & Tucker, 1972). While these immersion programs show a high rate of success for students, the opposite is true for students in “submersion programs”, where learning in the second language (L2) means decreasing the amount of instruction offered through the medium of the first language (L1). To consider this, Cummins (1979) developed the linguistic interdependence hypothesis, “which assigns a central role to the *interaction* between socio-cultural, linguistic and school program factors in explaining the academic and cognitive development of bilingual children” (p. 223), as is next discussed.

2.2.2 Linguistic interdependence hypothesis

The interaction between languages is key to Cummins’ (1979) interdependence hypothesis. This hypothesis “proposes that the development of competence in a second language ...is partially a function of the type of competence already developed in L1 at the time when intensive exposure to L2 begins” (Cummins, 1979, p. 222). The better a child’s command of the first language, the better he or she will do in developing his or her second language. “Fundamental similarities exist between first and second language skills” creating an interdependence between the two languages (Jian, 2011, p. 178). An understanding of the importance of L1 is critical when developing language planning options.

Currently, Kativik School Board utilizes a weak form of bilingual education.

Sknutnabb-Kangas and McCarty (2008) describe early exit and late exit bilingual programs

as weak forms of bilingual education as the dominant outcome is usually stronger literacy skills in the L2. Strong forms of bilingual education include programs that focus on L1 maintenance (e.g., dual language or multilingual programs.) In these programs, the focus is on the maintenance and growth of both the L1 and the L2. Currently Kativik School Board, uses an early exit model, following weak bilingual protocols. Only strong forms of bilingual education lead to high level of competence in students' L1 and L2s, and to enhanced opportunities for academic success (Skutnabb-Kangas & McCarty, 2008; Thomas & Collier, 2002).

Many proponents of early exit transitional models, base their understanding on immersion type programs yet there is a vast difference between submersion and immersion programs. In Ontario, French immersion programs are highly successful (Lapkin, Hart, & Turnbull, 2003). The Ontario prototype of French immersion was designed as a true immersion program. That is, majority language students, all of whom speak English very well, enter a program where the teacher speaks both the majority language and the target language. Ideally, the playing field between all students is level: All students are progressing towards learning a new language and the teacher is adept at using L2 strategies to support student learning, however; the latter does not hold true for minority language students (whose home language is not English) who enrol in French immersion (S.K. Taylor, 2010b). In comparison, a submersion program exists when a minority language speaker is submerged into a majority language class. While some supports exist in these classes, such as pull-out ESL, in class additional support, and training for homeroom teachers, it is currently not enough. The Ontario curriculum states that all teachers, regardless of subject specialities, are language teachers (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008). This stance, while supportive of

English language learning, may decrease the perceived need for more support for English language learners (ELL).

Proponents of submersion, also called “sink or swim” programs, often state that it worked well enough for earlier generations of immigrants, so why should it not work well now? Reyes and Vallone (2008) discuss this fallacy. Their question is: Did it really work all that well? What was the cost to the student who often did not do well in school (i.e., years behind peers; loss of L1 in the process?). This is not the standard most people would deem as acceptable. The cost of losing a language and feeling like a failure is exactly what has happened to many Aboriginal students in Canada. The term “linguistic genocide” used for this type of language loss is discussed below.

2.2.3 Linguistic genocide

There is a plethora of research surrounding the revival of “dead” or “moribund” languages (i.e., languages that are no longer used) (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2009); these languages often include the Native language of Aboriginal people. There is comparatively little research done on neglected languages or languages that soon may be endangered. While people study languages that are no longer used, such as Latin, there is a growing support to secure languages that may soon become neglected; languages spoken by minority groups. Linguistic minorities are not simply a percentage of speakers, but rather the speakers of languages seen as less important than the dominant language. Speakers of dominant or majority languages have power and prestige, and are usually conferred linguistic rights (e.g., schooling, access to materials, government documents all in L1). Many people world-wide, speakers of minority languages, often Indigenous groups, are not granted this basic human right.

Educational systems, often present parents with a choice of one or another language option for their children. They are rarely told about fully bilingual programs that support both languages and use each language to strengthen the academic abilities of the students (Cummins, 1979). During my 14 years in the North, when discussion turned to language options, it was almost always about how poor Inuit children's L2 (English or French) was and how to better support their L2 development so they would be able to attend post-secondary school and be successful. There was rarely a discussion about the value of developing their L1, Inuktitut, even though research has showed that the quality of Inuktitut starts to wane after children receive L2 medium instruction (Wright, Taylor & MacArthur, 2000). Rather, discussion was framed in either/or terms, creating a space for linguistic genocide to occur. In fact, the United Nations states that there are:

no more powerful means of “encouraging” individuals to assimilate to a dominant culture than having the economic, social and political returns stacked against their mother tongue. Such assimilation is not freely chosen if the choice is between one's mother tongue and one's future. (Fukudo-Parr, 2004, p. 33)

The Inuit are often challenged by this position. They are presented with a binary: they can care about their children's future or they can care about the strength of Inuktitut, but they cannot care about both. When “manufactured consent” (Herman & Chomsky, 2002) is given to increase L2, without a real discussion or dialogue, then linguistic genocide is occurring.

Linguistic genocide is all too common due the dominant status of the majority languages. Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) defines the latter as “killing a language without killing the speakers ...or....letting the language die” (p. 312). Linguistic genocide leads to fewer groups seeking rights; thereby conferring greater linguistic rights to the dominant group. This

greatly effects the schooling of minority language children. The United Nations (1948) declares genocide as including the serious mental harm to a group of people and the forcible transfer of children from one cultural group to another. When children are not allowed to gain full fluency in their L1, they endure mental harm. When the same children can no longer communicate effectively with elders, they are in the beginning stages of transferring to another cultural group. The Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (1989) states that children must be taught in the L1 and that all measures necessary should be used to ensure fluency in the first language of Indigenous children. Currently this is not happening for many Aboriginal children.

Many minority language children are schooled in a submersion type program, where they may have L1 medium of instruction for a few years, but exit early into an abyss of L2 medium of instruction with a teacher who neither speaks their L1 nor sees its benefits; viewing the benefits of the L2 to the exclusion of the L1. In my personal experiences in the North, I often heard teachers decrying the lack of English in kindergarten or grade one. I can recall several incidents where it was suggested that the students were wasting their time in the L1. These educators, like many world-wide, do not understand the interdependence between the languages and the need to ensure the strength of the L1 (D. M. Taylor & Wright, 1990). However,

research results about both the negative consequences of subtractive education through the medium of a dominant...language and the positive results of mainly mother tongue medium education for Indigenous...children are solid and consistent. The existing ... counterarguments are political/ideological, not scientific. (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2009, p. 3)

Fishman (2006) suggests that school authorities are deeply implicated in the situation whereby children are deprived of their L1, experiencing instead language choices that benefit majority language speakers. In so doing, these authorities use education to create a *language shift*. (Language shift is the process of transferring ones' language dominance – usually from L1 to the L2). Once this shift occurs, the L1 is often lost and cultures are forever changed.

2.2.4 Multilingual education

To counteract the processes involved in linguistic genocide, a new form of educational delivery must occur. This form, as defined by Cummins (2000), Hornberger (2002), and Skuntnabb-Kangas (2000) is multilingual language education (MLE). MLE is a model featuring three (or more) languages used as medium language of instruction, but prioritizing L1 development (S. K. Taylor, 2010a). In this model, three or more languages are gradually used to teach content subjects (i.e., when the child is proficient enough to grasp new concepts in each language of instruction). That is, the introduction of the L2 and L3 occur in a graduated manner, over time. One of the main differences between the MLE model and the late-exit model of bilingual education is that in the MLE model, the various languages are used throughout the course of schooling; the L1 is not relegated to the status of language-as-subject.

This model would need to be adjusted if it were to be used in the North. Currently in most Arctic communities, students study two languages: Inuktitut and English or Inuktitut and French. While content-based instruction through the medium of two languages is typically seen as bilingual education, the concepts behind MLE would serve the Inuit students well. The idea of having two languages that support each other throughout children's entire public school career and are taught alongside each other, would support both

the L1 and the L2 development of Inuit students; this model would also increase the status and power accorded to the role of the Inuit educator as s/he would continue to teach content courses through the medium of Inuktitut after grade 3 – not just until the end of grade 3, as is now the case. This model of MLE could be introduced by adopting transformative multiliteracies pedagogy.

2.2.5 Transformative multiliteracies pedagogy

Transformative theories draw from Freire’s (1970) critical pedagogy paradigm, which works towards emancipation and empowerment. Cummins’ (2009) transformative multiliteracies pedagogy (TMP) is a transformative theory of instruction located within critical theories. Its focus is on the learning environment, and the actions of those in educational institutions.

TMP considers the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students (CLD) “via a set of constructs that include: distinctions among transmission, social constructivist, and transformative orientations to pedagogy; an analysis of how societal power relations affect the schooling of CLD students and the construction of multiliteracies²” (Cummins, 2009, p. 42). Cummins (2009) places issues of identity at the forefront by stating that the negotiation of identity is “a primary determinant of whether or not students will engage cognitively in the learning process” (p. 42). Identity is multifaceted and encompasses language and culture. I suggest, through this study, that this engagement in teaching and learning, and identity negotiation is also essential for Inuit educators. Hall (1990) states that:

Cultural identity is not something that already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere and have histories. But, like everything that is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being

² See section 1.2 for a definition of multiliteracies

eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to continuous “play” of history, culture and power. (p. 225)

This play of identity is critical to both Inuit educators and students. As Hall (1990) suggests, identity is always changing and therefore needs continual reinforcement, especially when one’s cultural and linguistic identities are marginalized.

The need to look at identity is imperative as Inuit have been colonized and oppressed for generations (Tompkins, 2006). Issues of power within the institution of schooling need to be considered fully if student success, engagement, and identity are to be improved.

Cummins (2009) considers this within the TMP framework by stating that “classroom interactions are never neutral” (p. 42). TMP works towards changing the status quo and bringing about an understanding of issues of power, opportunity, pedagogical choices, and teacher agency.

Cummins (2009) outlines five principles that must be prioritized in order to support CLD students, such as the Inuit children:

1. Transformative multiliteracies pedagogy constructs an image of the students as intelligent, imaginative, and linguistically talented; individual differences in these traits do not diminish the potential of each student to shine in specific ways.
2. Transformative multiliteracies pedagogy acknowledges and builds on the cultural and linguistic capital (prior knowledge) of students and communities.
3. Transformative multiliteracies pedagogy aims explicitly to promote cognitive engagement and identity investment on the part of students.

4. Transformative multiliteracies pedagogy enables students to construct knowledge, create literature and art, and act on social realities through dialogue and critical inquiry.
5. Transformative multiliteracies pedagogy employs a variety of technological tools to support students' construction of knowledge, literature, and art and their presentation of this intellectual work to multiple audiences through the creation of identity texts³ (p. 50-51).

These principles, collectively, can be used to support the redesign of schools. St. Denis (2007) discusses how schools can and should look different, depending on the students and the goals of the school (St. Denis, 2007). While success may mean high achievement in a testing laden environment, it is possible that an Inuit village may define success differently (Simon, 2008). If schools shift their perception of Inuit students and Inuit educators from a deficit model to a model of possibilities, change may be possible.

Cummins (2009) suggests that to shift the pedagogy towards student and educator empowerment, discussion based on difficult, but necessary questions must occur. Examples of the questions that must be discussed and which draw on Cummins' (2009) multiliteracies pedagogy follow in Figure 2.

³ Identity texts are cognitively challenging texts that students create. These are chosen by the student and often reflect their identity (e.g., a dual language story).

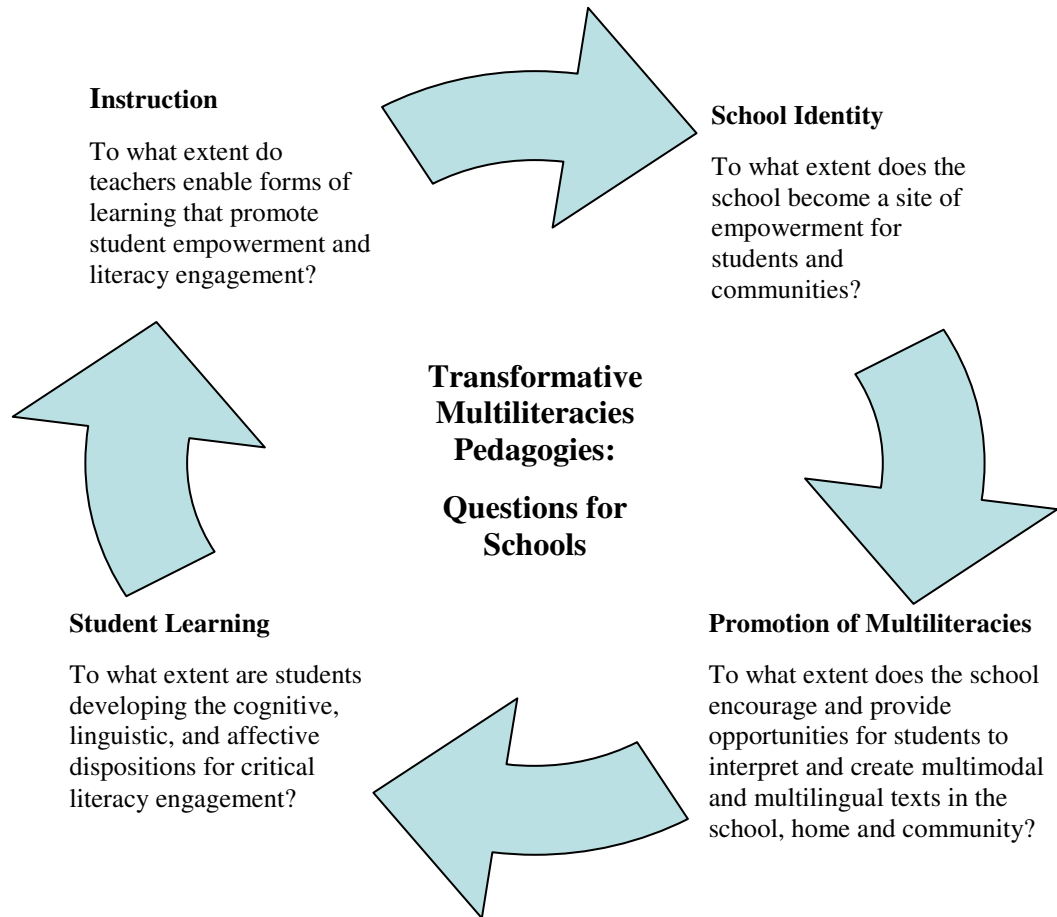


Figure 2. Overarching questions of transformative multiliteracies pedagogies. Adapted from "Transformative Multiliteracies Pedagogy: School-based Strategies for Closing the Achievement Gap," by J. Cummins, 2009, *Multiple Voices for Ethnically Diverse Exceptional Learners*, 11 (2), 53-54.

These questions support inquiry by looking at what is taken for granted, through a critical lens, the underlying reasons for biased choices, and why racial practices that serve to support the dominant group and a deficit view of CLD groups continue. These concepts, along with CRT, anchor this study and support my inquiry.

2.3 Summary

Theory shifts how a researcher looks at a study, what she makes of the results, and how these results are reported. The overarching branch of critical theories, with the subsets of both CRT

and TMP allow me to consider two of the most salient issues surrounding Inuit education: race and language.

Issues of race still complicate and alter the educational landscapes of Aboriginal people worldwide (Battiste, 2000; P. Berger, 2009a; Gray & Beresford, 2008; St. Denis, 2007; S. K. Taylor & Skutnabb-Kangas, 2009). These issues, which are often embedded within meritocracy and the deficit perspective, are commonplace when planning and policy development occurs. CRT, as a theory, allows me to consider the underlying message and what is taken for granted when educational decisions are being made.

Decisions surrounding language programs are highly complicated and often politically and ideologically based. These program often function under the guise of manufactured consent, but the choice between language maintenance and opportunities for a better future are choices no one should have to make. The choice itself is based in a false sense of superiority. Cummins' (2009) TMP considers what choices are available and how these can support Aboriginal schools.

This study, focused on Inuit educator and designed to create a space for their voices, required critical theories. As outlined in chapter two, these theories supported me in my quest to answer my research questions. The critical nature of the theories allowed me to uncover what might have been taken for granted and to consider it through a new lens. Together, the theories I used were selected to support the questions that bind this study. By utilizing both of these theories, they strengthened the research and showed clearly the issues and concerns and, more importantly, other options.

Chapter 3. Literature Review

This literature review is divided into two sections. The first section focuses on Aboriginal education and the research and concepts that informs this study. These concepts include the Eurocentric model of education, the myth of meritocracy, the deficit model, and current practices in teacher education for Inuit educators. The second section considers the development of minority languages, specifically studies that look at the status of Inuktitut. Several studies in this section will explain how the deficit perspective impacts Inuit education. As well, key studies regarding first language development, and the maintenance of Inuktitut will be discussed.

This literature review reveals the need to reconsider how Inuit education is viewed, and the short and long term effects of these views. As well, long term, empirical studies demonstrate the need for fluency in Inuktitut and the importance of first language development and maintenance not only for academic success, but also for the self-esteem of students, and for cultural transmission.

3.1. Aboriginal Education

Aboriginal education and, more specifically, Inuit education, has a long, colonized history. Chapter 1 discusses this history, showing the progression and current status of Inuit education. Significant concerns in Inuit education include low high school graduation rates and the impact that has on perceptions of education, opportunities for Inuit employment, and the negative self-perceptions.

Focus on Aboriginal education, and specifically Inuit education is imperative as the number of young Inuit continues to grow. Reports such as the Royal Commission on

Aboriginal People (1996), the Berger Report on the Implementation of the Nunavut Land Claim (T. R. Berger, 2006), Closing the Aboriginal/Non-Aboriginal Education Gap (Richards, 2008), and The Report on the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami Education Initiative (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2008) demonstrate the critical need to improve Aboriginal education. Based on needs highlighted in these reports, and a community level desire to make a positive change, a National Strategy for Inuit Education was created (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2011). The chairperson of this strategy, Mary Simon, summarizes the purpose of this strategy as the need to enable Inuit children to participate fully in Canada. This is a challenge because:

the reality of Inuit education in Canada is that too many of our children are not attending school, too few are graduating, and even some of our graduates are not equipped with an education that fully meets the Canadian standards. This is the greatest social policy challenge of our time. Some 56% of our population is under the age of 25, so improving educational outcomes is imperative. (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2011, p. 3)

While the mandate to make changes in Inuit education is apparent, these changes must be grounded within Inuit conceptions of education and priorities determined by Inuit and for Inuit. Colonization continues when decisions are made for Inuit, particularly uninformed decisions. Currently changes are being made within Inuit education with “almost no data or evidence supporting any of the major policy shifts” (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2011, p. 90). One example of this is the sudden shift to include some L2 as a subject, in early years, regardless of previous decisions not to do so. These shifts and changes are often made with good intentions.

Current studies that examine Aboriginal education in Canada tend to offer useful critiques of school practices and processes and counter suggestions to meet the needs of Aboriginal learners. However, few of these studies provide records of practices and recommendations that have proven to be successful in supporting Aboriginal student achievement in Canadian schools. (St. Denis, 2007, p. 6)

Research about Aboriginal education, is often full of critiques, but rarely has suggestions that are positive. The role of these negative critiques will be discussed in section 3.2.2.

Walton (2012) discusses a longitudinal case study in which Inuit students performed better than previously, as witnessed by increased graduation rates, and improved attendance when three factors occurred: Inuit leadership was present at the school, an increased level of parental involvement, and curriculum was meaningful and pertinent to Inuit learners. These results are reflected in the National Strategy for Inuit Education (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2011), where the stated goals are supporting students to stay in school, provide a bilingual curriculum that ensures literacy in Inuktitut and one other official language, and increase the number of Inuit leaders and bilingual teachers in the schools. Clearly, there are concerns and ideas about how to best ensure student success. This study considers how to support two of these areas: increasing the number of Inuit leaders and providing a bilingual curriculum.

While the work to be done seems clear, many factors impact this work. These factors include the dominance of the Eurocentric model of education, the deficit model, the myth of meritocracy, and the needs within teacher education.

3.1.1. The Eurocentric model of education

Schooling in the eastern Arctic is still based on “Euro-Canadian values, curricula and pedagogy” (P. Berger, 2009a, p. 55) and continues to privilege English (or French in some

communities) over Inuktitut. This presents a major stumbling block for the Inuit as they attempt to improve education (P. Berger, 2009a). They have not had any real control over the education of their children since they began receiving formalized education (P. Berger, 2009b; Van Meenen, 1994). While at times there has been a community push for more Inuktitut content and language, this call has not been heeded. While Inuit educators teach lower elementary grades, and some specialty subjects such as Inuktitut language, culture, and religion, secondary school is largely taught by Qallunaat teachers hired from Southern Canada (Aylward, 2007). In this way the Qallunaat garnered power and control of the schools.

The voices of Qallunaat teachers are often honoured more than the voices of Inuit teachers (P. Berger, 2009b; Tompkins, 2002). This may be in part due to the sheer number of Qallunaat administrators, but it may also be in part due to historical control and hegemonic, Eurocentric ideals. While policy has been enacted, to reinforce Inuit culture and language, in many regions it is often not enough to make a real change (Aylward, 2006).

Preoccupation with Eurocentric values continue today. In 2010 the Association of the Canadian Deans of Education (ACDE) released their new Accord on Indigenous Education (Archibald, Lundy, Reynolds, & Williams, 2010). This accord makes note that a primary goal is for “Indigenous identity, culture and language, values and ways of knowing and knowledge systems [to]... flourish in all Canadian learning settings” (Archibald et al., 2010, p. 4). The question that must be asked is whether truly unique, cultural knowledge exist through the pipeline of Eurocentric education (D. Rasmussen, 2011). However, this accord may initiate necessary conversations surrounding Indigenous education.

The concept of education as a formalized endeavour dates back to 1792 when a tutor first graded a paper, paving the path for education, writing and literacy to be forever tied (Cayley, 1992). It is this tying together of literacy and writing that pulls the conception of Inuit education apart: an education where reading and writing may not be the core, and truly unique knowledges may not fit into the neat box of the Eurocentric education model. There exists little room within this model for oral histories, or activities that need no written component. Indeed, the ACDE (2010) may have been written with a desire to support Indigenous knowledge, but it is trying to fit into a box something that cannot and should not belong there. Paul Quassa (2001), the elected member of Nunavut legislative assembly stated that:

Almost all the schooling in Nunavut is in English, and it is all oriented towards skills needed for the wage economy, not for the land-based way of life. ...All the skills needed for the land-based economy—navigation, weather observation, understanding wildlife, outdoor safety—are not learned in the formal learning environment. We learn these things in our families and from our elders. (as cited in D. Rasmussen, 2011, p. 30)

Essential skills and knowledge cannot be taught in the overlay of Eurocentric education.

Eurocentric views of education are not only apparent in curriculum and pedagogy, but also in the daily functioning of schools. Value placed on punctuality, for instance, is very much a hegemonic ideal brought forth from this Eurocentric positioning. In the context of a qualitative research study, P. Berger (2009a) discusses the battle over punctuality. During his fieldwork, he had the opportunity to participate in professional development with Qallunaat teachers. These teachers had a strong opinion about punctuality. “I was told that school is

like work- you cannot be late for work- and that the Inuit would, sooner or later, get used to the school schedule” (P. Berger, 2009a, p. 61). P. Berger (2009a) continues with a direct quotation from a Inuit teacher, “If I was like that and I was going to school, I’d be late on purpose just so I would be suspended” (p. 61). Clearly the anticipation that suspension would change the behaviour, was not in agreement with the Inuit staff. Again the discussion about punctuality was essential for learning did not occur, just the Eurocentric vision that it should be honoured.

In another study by P. Berger, Epp, and Moeller (2006), Qallunaat teachers repeatedly brought up issues of attendance and punctuality as their main concerns. As well, Fuzessy’s (2003) interview with Qallunaat teachers reinforces the conception that there are significant attendance issues. The Eurocentric concepts of education are defined within this concept of attendance and punctuality.

3.1.2. The deficit model

How you look at something changes everything. Eber Hampton, an Aboriginal educator shared the lesson he learned when an elder asked him to carry a box.

His question came from behind the box, “How many sides do you see?”

“One,” I said.

He pulled the box towards his chest and turned it so one corner faced me, “Now how many do you see?”

“Now I see three sides.”

He stepped back and extended the box, one corner towards him and one towards me.

“You and I together can see six sides of this box,” he told me. (Hampton, 1995, as cited in Battiste, 2000, p. 42)

This message frames this section of the literature review and refocuses the need to consider the deficit model. Researchers discuss how Aboriginal educators are frequently viewed as inferior and incompetent (Aitken, 2005; Cherubini, 2008; Tompkins, 2006). Aboriginal students and educators, and more specifically Inuit students and educators, are often viewed through a deficit perspective. By applying a deficit model to the Inuit educators, they are seen as lacking. This in turn reinforces years of hegemonic discourse (whereby they are lacking) and does not allow the Inuit students or educators to maximize their potential.

The deficit model, which blames the students (Bomer, Dworin, May, & Semingson, 2009), is currently on the rise, as testing, and the attainment of a high international ranking are viewed as absolutely essential to success (Bomer et al., 2009; Pearl & Pryor, 2005; Valencia, 2010; Yosso, 2006). Researchers argue that certain viewpoints lead to a constant continuation of the deficit model. Historically CLD groups are viewed through a comparative lens. They are compared to images of the dominant culture and always seen as lacking in this comparison. As well, “systemic conditions, such as inequitable access to high-quality schooling, that support the cycle of poverty” are virtually ignored (Gorski, 2008, p. 34) as are their roles in the outcomes associated with perceived deficits in CLD individuals and groups.

The lack of context given to the historical and cultural situation of the Inuit only serves to feed and reinforce the deficit model. The High Arctic relocation discussed in Chapter Two is virtually unknown to Qallunaat educators in the North. They are unaware of the damage done by residential schools, and the hardship many of the Inuit faced. This is one example of how lack of knowledge leads to the deficit model.

Inuit students and educators are often educated and work within the boundaries of a school system that does not see their capabilities and only perceives their deficits. Therefore

the background knowledge and experience of Inuit educators, which could and should be highlighted, are often negated in favour of traditional educational practices of the White educators and Western models (Battiste, 2002; Tompkins, 2006).

The deficit model blames the victim, and contributes to an internalization of the issues and problems and places no responsibility on the multiple institutions that are supposed to support the various groups (Anyon, 2005; Bomer et al., 2008; Valencia, 1997). This deficit model lacks a critical stance and does not take into account other factors such as bias, racial prejudice, historical context, and the desire of the dominant culture to maintain this perception, and the personal belief that privileges gained by those within the dominant group are warranted and merited.

The deficit model continues to prosper as it negates any responsibility of the dominant class, and, as CRT posits, this model allows systemic racism and privileged status to exist while at the same time other, significant, factors are not considered (Ladson-Billings, 1999). Anyon (2005) discusses how people rely on the deficit model so that external factors for school failure do not have to be considered. It is easier to blame the CLD groups rather than look at the real causes, which may reflect back on the dominant group in a negative way.

While the term “respect” is often the topic of discussion at schools, and is almost inevitably on every classroom wall in the “rules” section, it is frequently not adhered to by the White staff in regards to Inuit educators. Ladson-Billings (2000) discusses respect as a fundamental need in order to support learning. The concept of respect is not only essential in classrooms, but within educational models.

A part of the Eurocentric model is the sense that any failure experienced by the Inuit students is due to “deficiencies in their home culture” (P. Berger, 2009a, p. 60). This relates to the concerns brought forth by both CRT (Ladson-Billings, 1999) and TMP (Cummins, 2009) where students are often seen as having deficits. While this has been challenged in the literature (Alyward, 2004; Bishop, 2003; Fuzessy, 2003) the deficit model persists and leads Qallunaat educators to believe that they have little responsibility for educational concerns. Whereas some changes are made to policies, researchers are concerned that changes only reinforce the deficit model (Cherubini, Hodson, Manley-Casimir, & Muir, 2010).

A deficit model utilizes the force of the common, everyday person, to attempt to fit the outlier, in this case the Inuit, into the dominant, White, middle class, English world. Instead of honouring unique qualities, the deficit model seeks not a mosaic, but a melting pot of sameness. While the Inuit educators are looked at through this lens, they will continue to be in challenging positions. Current school practices only serve to reinforce the deficit model of Inuit education.

This study considers the role of the Inuit educator. Tompkins (2006) considers the role of administration in supporting Inuit education and discusses how changes in leadership can lead to changes in school culture. Simon (2008) is an Inuk from Nunavik. As an activist, a leader in the ground breaking National Strategy on Inuit Education, and the former president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, she writes extensively about the need for Inuit focused education. Utilizing these researchers, and others, this study will consider what a model of possibilities, instead of deficits, could look like.

3.1.3. Meritocracy

Meritocracy, as described by Schick and St. Denis (2003), “assumes that power is equally available and distributed, thereby ignoring social, economic, historical, and political conditions” (p. 9). This belief in equality and colour blindness affects how those in the dominant class perceive the role of personal effort and desire in creating a better position within the socioeconomic sphere. D. Garcia (2001) shares the following five key factors in the concept of meritocracy:

- 1) people are responsible for their own successes and failures,
- 2) people can achieve upward mobility,
- 3) everyone has equal opportunity for success,
- 4) individuals are rewarded for their effort and ability, and
- 5) people are rewarded independently of their categorical membership. (p. 18)

Success, at times, comes when we least expect it. When considering meritocracy most people assume that those who surpassed expectations did so based on personal victories. The success of CLD people such as Barak Obama and Oprah Winfrey often feed the concept of meritocracy. These amazing success stories provide society with examples of working hard and being successful, which in turn feeds the belief that this level of success is possible for all. People point to these success stories as a way of saying that our society is past or beyond real discrimination and that everything is possible for CLD individuals and groups that strive hard (Zamudio et al., 2011). As well, by propagating the myth that success is based solely on merit, we in turn blame those who have endured hardship or have been less successful for their own downfall. That is, “the narrative of meritocracy has a dark side. It implies that a

person who does not succeed must lack ambition; conversely, that anyone who is successful must have gotten there solely on her or his own” (Hartlep, 2011, p. 1-2).

This ideology of meritocracy continues to grow over time. In order for this ongoing domination of the concept of meritocracy to occur it must be “constantly created and verified in social life” (Fields, 1990, p. 112). These ideologies become part of the master narrative and dominate the thinking of both the privileged and the marginalized groups. For the dominant group to continue with its privileged status, meritocracy must be a belief that both majority and minority groups consider accurate. (Briskin, 1994; McNamee & Miller, 2009; Schick & St. Denis, 2003; Zamudio et al., 2011).

For the most part, Canadians, as part of their multi-cultural identity, believe that structural policies and practices have been equalized and we are now living in a time where hard work allows shifts within socioeconomic status and opportunities exist for all equally (Schick & St. Denis, 2003). Many educators feel that if racial inequalities exist, they can be overcome if a student is motivated. As well, many educators feel that the discussion about racial inequalities is too challenging to deal with and therefore they would rather pretend it does not exist (Schick & St. Denis, 2003). This message is sent out loud and clear, tainting discussion of support and accommodation, blaming CLD groups and allowing the dominant group to maintain its status and privilege without having to take any personal responsibility for the misfortune of others. Therefore, in education, which is:

considered the great equalizer, the myth of meritocracy has more than just ideological connotations. If natural ability and hard work (i.e., merit) are the keys for success, then those who fail to achieve, it is believed, have only themselves, their families, or at best, a random fateful turn of luck to blame. (Zamudio et al., 2011, p. 12)

This message is key to understanding the position of Inuit students and educators in Nunavik. Since merit is part of the dominant discourse, the Inuit educators are often seen as less capable and other factors such as their own funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 2005) and differences in teaching styles (Eriks-Brophy & Crago, 2003) are not considered. This notion of meritocracy feeds directly into the master narrative that is so prevalent in the educational milieu.

The concept of “why am I to blame for past sins” is still part of the current master narrative. This concept is often referred to as the bootstrap message. Briskin (1994) states that:

[the] bootstrap message does not recognize the deeply embedded structural, economic, and political barriers that circumscribe choices. Individual solutions and successes are indeed available, but primarily to those who have some privilege. The degree to which hard work pays off is limited by the constraints of race, class, gender and sexual orientation. (p. 447)

As global citizens, we frequently point out exceptions: we seek to normalize the unusual and attribute success to these few as options for all. We base success on making the most of opportunities, on working hard, on not giving up, and on positive attitudes. In doing so we disregard our societal role in supporting those who live or are forced to live at the margins and place the blame solely on their lack of will, desire, fortitude, intelligence etc. Since the *Brown v. Board of Education*, in 1954, the last vestige of legal discrimination was overturned, and followed by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, meritocracy took on even more meaning (Bell, 1990). *Brown vs. Board of Education* was a major court case that desegregated schools in the U.S.A. This was unquestionably a positive move; however there

were other effects. “In the 21st century where state-sanctioned discrimination is relegated to the history books...the myth of meritocracy shines all the brighter” (Zamudio et al., 2011, p. 13). Legislation may change what is legally allowed to occur, but many ideologies hold strong. Canada follows along. While most Canadians are repulsed by clear acts of racism, they cling to the concept of merit based success and access to opportunities, beliefs that are still entrenched within most ideologies within our country.

3.1.4. Inuit educators as cultural brokers

Inuit people have been silenced through the enforcement of the Western educational system, which for years had the goal of assimilation (Antone, 2000). It is nested within this colonizing history that Inuit teachers now fight for a place in the educational system: a system which has attempted to override culture, devalue language, and assimilate all Inuit groups (Battiste, 2005). What is left is a new battle: a battle for a place within education. To effectively manoeuvre this arena Inuit teachers have many hurdles to overcome. Sleeter (1999) states that:

there seems to be a belief that monolingual Anglo members of the general public are perfectly capable of deciding what kind of educational programming is best for non-Anglo language minority children...and are better able to make such decisions than are bilingual education teachers or the communities the children come from. (p. xv-xvi)

Research suggests that this belief directly relates to the master narratives about who can and should educate and what the role of education is (Anyon, 2005; Battiste, 2000; Bomer et al., 2009; Denzin, 2005b; Kaomea, 2009; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001, 2002a). This belief that the

Whites can make choices for Inuit students feeds into the deficit model and serves to discredit the role and the validity of the Inuit educators within the school.

The subsequent conflict between expectations, curriculum, culture, and choices is at the forefront for Aboriginal educators. “Aboriginal teachers employed in schools are situated in the borderlands between languages and cultures and have important choices to make as they prepare Aboriginal students to walk between two parallel but very different worlds” (Kitchen et al., 2009). This cultural brokerage (Stairs, 1995) where the Aboriginal educator must balance and select between two worlds, picking and choosing what best supports the students, is an ongoing challenge.

Kitchen et al.’s (2009) study of Aboriginal educators and their practices, shares the division between these two unique worlds and the choices the teachers must make. These choices can only be made by the Aboriginal educator. Bear Nicholas (2001) states that it is the Aboriginal people “themselves who hold the key to their own liberation” (p. 28). This key is critical to the identity and role of the Inuit educator. They are the only ones who can straddle the two worlds and create meaningful learning for Inuit students. This role is challenging and even more challenging, considering the master narrative that continues to see Aboriginal educators as incompetent (Wolf, 2012).

Kitchen et al. (2009) conducted a study with six Aboriginal educators in Ontario. This study, which was grounded in a decolonizing framework, and conducted by a bi-cultural team of researchers, looked into the lives of Aboriginal educators. They had varied opinions on the strength of the pre-service training they received. Several stated it was Eurocentric. Other educators felt that they were not treated as a real educators. One teacher recalled being referred to as “Tomahawk man” by other teacher candidates, and still another teacher felt that

she was patronized all the time (Kitchen et al., 2009, p. 362). These teachers felt the pressure to ensure students, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, had the best education possible, but defining best was often a struggle.

Some of the teachers in Kitchen et al. (2009) study felt that their role was predetermined for them. One participant stated that “I am not an Aboriginal teacher, I am a teacher who is Aboriginal...I am a math teacher” (Kitchen et al., 2009, p. 364). This sense of being viewed within a stereotype is common within the literature (Aitken, 2005; St. Denis, 2007; Tompkins, 2006; Vanouwe, 2007). The way one sees oneself is often a reflection of how others see you. Aboriginal teachers often report “struggling to be accepted”, and that they still “encounter attitudes and behaviors that suggest that they do not belong in the profession” (St. Denis, 2007, p. 63). Aboriginal teachers report their qualifications being questioned, feelings of exclusion, and a sense of being marginalized (St. Denis, 2007).

This sense of hierarchy, about who is capable of teaching what and in what schools is prevalent across Canada (Batistte, 2002, 2008; Haig-Brown & Nock, 2006; Kitchen et al., 2009; Sleeter, 1999; Smith, 2002; St. Denis, 2010; Vanouwe, 2007). While Inuit teachers live in the communities they teach in and have ongoing relationships with students and families there, the power within the school, lies almost exclusively, with the Qallunaat teachers and administrators (P. Berger, 2009b; Tompkins, 2006) As well, Aboriginal educators are often relegated to teaching language and culture, regardless of their skills and education (Kitchen, et al., 2009). One explanation for this case is because “schooling practices are always intricately related to broader issues of social class, ideology, and power” (González et al., 2005, p. 276). Tompkins (1998) discusses how power in Nunavut schools has exclusively belonged to Qallunaat teachers. Explained thus, the power relations within schools do not

support Inuit educators gaining the foothold necessary to increase their cultural capital and display their own funds of knowledge.

Certain concepts, prevalent within White society, may actively work against Inuit teachers taking a leadership stance within the school. For instance: “The myth of meritocracy ...does not favour [Inuit] students. The idea that any student that works hard can experience success negates the fact that the Inuit students have been systematically excluded from opportunities to succeed” (Vanouwe, 2007, p. 34). Concepts like meritocracy in fact only serve to disregard any strengths the Inuit educators have as the concept is built upon equality of opportunity and does not take into account the historical context of colonization.

Power and privilege, which has long been connected to Whiteness (McIntosh, 1989), act to devalue the practices of Inuit educators. While a White teacher who requires support may be viewed as utilizing appropriate resources, an Inuit teacher who seeks support may be perceived as deficient; while a White teacher who moves North and is being groomed to be an administrator after two years sees this as normal and denies any “White privilege status,” the Inuit teacher may view this as a lack of equity within the school and may internalize this deficit position upon themselves and, even more sadly, transmit it to the children they teach. “Racism directed towards Aboriginals... in Canada remains acceptable to Canadians. We have to say that it is not” (St. Denis, 2007, p. 45). One way to say that it is not acceptable is to take control, build capacity, and create a new counter narrative.

3.2. Development and Maintenance of Minority Languages

There is a critical need to develop and maintain minority languages. In particular the need to support Inuktitut is essential. Cree, Ojibway, and Inuktitut are the only three Aboriginal languages in Canada that are deemed strong enough to survive (Norris, 2007). This is due to

a large base of speakers. Inuktitut, with 90% of speakers learning their ancestral language, as their L1 from birth, continues to thrive and has managed to survive due to the lack of proximity to other languages (Norris, 2007). Still, there is great concern in Nunavik, that Inuktitut will lose its status and eventually become a lost language.

3.2.1. Language status and language planning

The status of a language is uniquely linked to the sociopolitical history and value of a given group. Policies to create language choices are usually bound within a political sphere (Ricento, 2000; Tollefson, 1991). These policies dominate discussions about language choice in schools, opportunities for truly bilingual learning programs, and access to further learning in minority languages; they are created to support the domination of the majority group and exclude the minority language speakers (Tollefson, 1991). There is often a gap between policy and the practice due to limited communication between those who create the policy and those who implement it; a gap that leads to frustration and confusion (Kaplan, 2009).

English as the “global lingua franca and the language of globalization” (Mahboob & Tilakaratna, 2012) is a high status language. Those whose speak English fluently, with minimal accent, are granted entry, power, and privilege within society and world of work. Today’s focus on English over other languages serves to increase the economic and social value of English, and decrease the status of other languages. The globalization of English, set against a neo-conservative economy, endangers minority languages (Mahboob & Tilakaratna, 2012).

The mission statement of Kativik School Board (n.d.) states a desire for a mastery of Inuktitut and a fluency in a second language, either English or French. The enactment of this policy, with little attention to practitioners, may not in fact support the goal. Many parents

suggest that the policy, which is written to create an additive bilingual learning experience, does not meet this goal. “Many parents, informally report a progressive decline in their children’s Inuktitut once the children begin to be educated in the L2 in school” (Allen, 2007, p. 525). This decline is seen in multiple research studies where the level of Inuktitut declines as the child progresses through school (Spada & Lightbown, 2002; D. M. Taylor & Wright, 1990). Given the high status of English and the need to speak an official second language to enter post-secondary schooling in Canada, and to gain access to job opportunities, the need to ensure the strength of Inuktitut is a necessity if the language and culture are to continue. Current policy does not ensure this will occur.

3.2.2. Program models

There are multiple program models to consider when determining the best method to support language learning. These models are further complicated by the unique situation of Inuit students, whose first language is marginalized. The models reviewed here include early-exit and late-exit bilingual education, and dual-language programs.

3.2.2.1. Early exit transitional model

Early exit programs, also called transitional programs use students’ knowledge of their L1 to support early literacy and reading development, and then quickly switch to instruction through the medium of the (preferred) L2. In an early exit model of language learning, students are instructed in both the L1 and the L2. The amount of time allotted to L1 instruction is decreased, and very little content is delivered via that language medium. The students are encouraged to quickly adapt to their new L2 and, within two or three years, they move into a full immersion program, or in the case of Kativik School Board, the students are moved into English medium instruction [submersion] with few, if any, supports in their L1

(Cummins & Corson, 1997). This model is often cited as faulty as studies show clearly that it takes English language learners between four and nine years to become fully proficient in English (Collier, 1992). Students in this type of program are just beginning to develop fluency in their L2, strongly supported by skills and strategies developed in their L1, when suddenly their L1 is no longer allowed, or relegated to a small amount of instructional time, and the L2 becomes the focus of all content learning. This type of model is the one most commonly used in the United States (Collier, 1992) while in Ontario, students never have the L1 option (S.K.Taylor, 2010b); they are enrolled in L2 medium of instruction with some ESL supports, usually via pull out programs.

3.2.2.2. Late exit transitional model

In a late exit transitional model, students are provided with instruction in their L1 for several years. Usually this medium of instruction begins to shift after grade 6. In this model students are encouraged to stay in the program, allowing them to develop both their L1 and L2. This program model attempts to honour, build, and maintain the L1 while introducing and developing the L2.

Typically, in late exit transitional model programs, students begin learning English as an L2 in the first grade, but only for 10% of their daily learning (i.e., “as subject”). There is a gradual increase in the percent of English being taught, until the L1 is no longer part of the program. In the US, this typically occurs around grade 8 (Cazden, 1992). This model is preferred by many as long term results show an increase in academic results of students not only in the US, but also internationally (e.g., Eritrea, India, and Nepal) (see Skutnabb-Kangas & Heugh, 2012).

3.2.2.3. Dual-language or two-way immersion models

In a dual language program, students are instructed in both their L1 and L2. Students who enrol in this type of program are native speakers of one of the two languages. This model mixes students from different linguistic backgrounds together and provides them with the opportunity to learn from each other. Texas, California, New Mexico, Illinois, New York, and Washington, D.C. all have strong dual – language programs (de Jong, 2012). Baker (2006) states that all student groups in these programs benefit from meaningful and challenging academic environments. This type of program is relatively new as it requires a shift in thinking from that of a “broken non-English speaker”, to that of a “multilingual achiever” (Thomas & Collier, 2003).

Dual-language or two-way immersion programs are not the same as French immersion programs offered in most parts of Canada. Canadian immersion programs were designed with “language majority, English speaking students from the societally dominant cultural group[s]” in mind (Genesse & Gándara, 1999, p. 665-666). Currently there are no two-way immersion programs in Ontario, Quebec, or the Atlantic provinces, and very few in Western Canada (Dressler, n.d.).

3.2.2.4. Results of research studies on language learning models

As shown, there are multiple models of language learning. Each type of language learning option shows unique results depending on the students, the sociopolitical climate at the time, and the importance accorded to the L1 of the student.

Immersion programs in Canada, are considered additive. This means that the student adds another language to an existing language with no fear of the first language being lost.

Genesse and Lindholm-Leary (2007) consider this model of learning to be highly successful and year of evaluation studies support this view (Swain & Lapkin, 1982).

Students schooled in dual language models also demonstrate high levels of academic achievement in both languages, although there may be a lag within the first few years (Genesse & Lindholm-Leary, 2007). These models of immersion can be very supportive for L1 majority language speakers, or those who are in a true dual language setting.

In Texas, a large scale study has shown significant gains for ELL in dual-language programs compared to similar students in a transitional bilingual program (Thomas & Collier, 2003). Minority language students in a dual language program scored at the 51st percentile on a national test of English, as opposed to their peers in the transitional programs who scored at the 34th percentile (Thomas & Collier, 2003). While subtractive bilingualism, taking away from the first language in order to learn the second, does not show nearly the significant gains that dual language programs show. Programs continue to grow due to political and emotional investments in the English-only camp. “These assumptions [about the need for English only] represent part of a broader monolingual instructional orientation that is promoted ...this monolingual instructional orientation is counter-productive and inconsistent with the reality of interdependence across languages” (Cummins, 2005, p. 2). This interdependence hypothesis as discussed in Chapter 2 explains why two languages can support and not subtract from each other.

Thomas and Collier (2007) studied multiple types of language acquisition programs. Their longitudinal study involved K-12 students, in 15 states, and lasted over 25 years. They considered multiple factors (called the prism model) to determine students’ level of language ability. They determined that the least supportive method was the one year intensive English

immersion program. In this program, which is currently used in many parts of California, students are in an isolated classroom and taught intensive English all day long. The results of studies show that students do not retain what they have learned. The best result came from the one-way or two-way dual language program, where the curriculum is taught through two languages.

Alternating between the two languages takes place not by translation but by subject or thematic unit or instructional time, so that after several years students become academically proficient in both languages of instruction, able to do academic work on grade level in either language. (Thomas & Collier, 2007, p. 346)

In a one-way dual language program speakers of one language are schooled in two languages. In a two way dual-language program speakers of two languages are schooled in both languages. These programs have shown high levels of success. Students who spend 6-12 years in this program routinely close the gap between L1 and L2 (Thomas & Collier, 2007). Clearly certain programs confer more success than others.

Kativik School Board, which discontinues L1 medium instruction at the end of grade 3 and introduces solely L2 medium instruction in grade 4, currently operates a mixture of early and late exit transition program. Wright et al. (2000) considered the effects of Inuktitut when the majority language was taught beginning in kindergarten. The results were clear: while there were no significant differences in the level of Inuktitut at the beginning of the three year study, by the end of the study, there was a clear disruption in the learning of Inuktitut. Therefore, it is constituted subtractive bilingualism.

Kativik School Board has made significant efforts to shift these practices, as noted by the language policies, which ensure Inuktitut medium of instruction only until grade 3, with a goal of increasing the amount of Inuktitut as resources become available. Recent challenges though have shifted these practices and now, starting in grade 1, the new amendment to the language policy allows for “100% teaching in Inuktitut with the introduction of English and French with a maximum of 3 periods of 30 minutes per week” (Kativik School Board, 2011) (i.e., English or French as a subject). Many educators I spoke with are concerned about this encroachment on the time allotted to L1 medium instruction. Many Inuit educators want to know what can or should be done to bring about improvements.

3.3. Summary

The literature review outlined here shows a strong connection between bias and racial practices occurring within Aboriginal schools, and L2 preference. The L2 preference could be seen as another hegemonic ideology at play within the schooling of the Inuit of Nunavik. Choices for language are often bound within the need to make an either/or choice instead of dual language options. The literature shows clearly that the dual language program model would be a viable model for the Inuit of Nunavik, but while Eurocentric ideals continue to inform the practices, these choices are not likely to be offered. The Eurocentric model of education, which has been the spring board for education in the North, continues to value and preference certain knowledge, ways of thinking, and attitudes toward schooling, over ones the Inuit may prefer.

The Inuit of Nunavik must be given choices about the system of education, a choice that is not manufactured, but thoughtfully considered with a focus on the end goal. This consideration of what education should be in Nunavik, may be the place to start.

Chapter 4 will review the methods and methodology used within this study. It will discuss how choices were made and the process. As well, it will outline the ethics used to guide this study.

Chapter 4. Methods and Methodology

4.1. Overview

Central to this study is the rationale behind the methods and methodology selected and employed. I start this chapter by outlining my voice within the research and the bias I bring to this work. In section 4.2 I discuss the researcher's voice. In section 4.3 I discuss the reason why qualitative research was essential for this study and how it shaped my choices and the outcomes of this work. In section 4.4 I consider the methodology used to anchor the study. I share why using decolonizing methodologies was essential and how this perspective guided the research. Continuing with section 4.5, I outline the method used, how the interviews proceeded, and how research designs end up changing sometimes. Section 4.6 reviews the participants and the location of the study to ensure an understanding of the particular situation that is novel to the participants. Sections 4.7 and 4.8 review the data sources and the sampling decisions made during this study, and 4.9 discusses the analysis. The last two sections, 4.10 and 4.11, conclude with results and ethics. It is not by accident that this chapter begins with the voice of the researcher and ends with ethics. It is purposeful and hopeful that the bookends created by these sections contain a study of value to the Inuit educators of Nunavik.

4.2. The Researcher's Voice

This research study is framed as a qualitative study using interviews and field notes to fill a gap in the literature. It is imperative that this gap be filled as there is a loud call for research that enables people and communities to “tell their stories” (Smith, 2005, p. 89). This research study is about telling stories. I am a Qallunaat researcher researching Inuit educators. This is precisely what Smith (2005) meant when she called this “tricky ground” (p. 84). I need to tread incredibly carefully. To consider this tricky ground more carefully I turned to Fine’s (1994) work on *othering*.

Fine (1994) discusses the concept of othering and *working the hypen* in her landmark text, “Working the Hypens: Reinventing the Self and Others in Qualitative Research.” Fine discusses how cross-cultural research is, at best, tricky. The desire and ability to work with another cultural group has had historically damaging outcomes. I did not want to contribute to the damage; I wanted to take my developing understanding and ask questions that would support Inuit educators. I wanted to open discussions about my prior understandings and the ideological change that occurred within me when I began to question the status quo.

Haig-Brown (2010) speaks clearly of the appropriation of Aboriginal Peoples’ culture, and how taking Aboriginal cultural icons (e.g., headdress and Inuksuk), has stolen the identity of Aboriginal groups by diminishing the importance of cultural artefacts. The concept of taking from one culture and assimilating it into another culture is hardly new. Well-meaning researchers who have attempted to share the stories of others often continue the binary of “us” and “them” where the researcher becomes the author of someone else’s story. hooks (1990) speaks unmistakably of this:

No need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can talk about yourself. No need to hear your voice, only tell me your pain. I want to know your story. Then I will tell it back to you in a new way. Tell it back to you in such a way that it has become mine, my own. Rewriting you, I write myself anew. I am still author, authority. I am still colonizer, the speaking subject, and you are now at the centre of my talk. (pp. 151-152)

It is my goal to listen to and hear the voices and to tell stories: These are not my stories and they do not belong to me, so telling them requires participation, collaboration, and a sense of community rather than the all too familiar binary of researchers and participants.

While I have stated that I am someone who listens to and works with Inuit educators, it is critically important that I position myself and who I am as a researcher (Creswell, 2007; Etherington, 2004; Smith, 2002). I am unequivocally not an “insider,” as I do not share language, culture, identity, and experiences with the participants (Breen, 2007). However, I am also not fully an “outsider” as I have shared experiences and knowledge of the participants and a deep understanding of the educational milieu in which this study occurs. I acknowledge that my profound desire to complete this study comes from my experiences living in the North and learning from the Inuit. These experiences shape who I am, the questions I ask within the confines of this study, and the methodological and theoretical choices I utilize.

A catalyst for my use of CRT as my main theory was to define myself as a researcher. I needed to consider if there was a place for a middle class, White woman in CRT. Yosso (2005) clarifies this central, driving issue by sharing her belief that White scholars can extend CRT by seeking ways to expose White privilege, and by doing so, challenge the racism that

is seen as the norm. Using CRT, I come to this study with eyes that are open wide enough to see the layers of racism that I believe exist, and impact not only the learning of the Inuit students, but the teaching practices of both the Inuit and Qallunaat educators.

Fine et al. (2003) states that, “we all write what we write in a world not (necessarily) prepared to hear” (p. 199). To guide and support me, and help me stay focused, I have considered some of the questions posed by Fine et al. and continually reviewed questions such as: What does it mean to uncover? Whose voice do I use when I write? What do I have to contribute? Who am I responsible to?

I continually reviewed these principles as I “connected the ‘voices’ and ‘stories’ of the individuals back to the set of historical...realities [in which] they are situated” (Fine et al., 2003, p. 199) and ensured that the methods I used in this study allowed for a “very different kind of analysis” (p. 199). I took steps to ensure that the research belonged to the participants, and gave opportunities for them to “challenge my interpretations” (Fine et al., 2003, p. 200) and consider carefully how this data will be used. The finished text, being much more than a thesis, challenges the “common discourse” (Fine et al., 2003, p. 201) and works towards a greater purpose for the participants.

In this section I will consider why qualitative research and decolonizing methodologies are imperative to this work. I will share the methods I used to collect and analyze data and why these choices were supportive of my research questions and the Inuit participants.

4.3. Why Qualitative Research?

To build a foundational base in which the research could flourish I needed to consider the methodological choices that would be most supportive of my questions. I was drawn

specifically to qualitative research, knowing that questions I had about counter narratives and the voice of Inuit educators could not be told solely through numbers, but rather through words and stories that draw out themes and ideas. Qualitative research itself can be considered a counter narrative to the traditional master narrative of quantitative research (Stanley, 2007).

Fine et al. (2003) considered the role of the researcher in qualitative research, stating that “it is essential to think through the power, obligations, and responsibilities of social research” (p. 168). Considering the work of Fine (1994), I anchored myself in the complexity of my role as a researcher and recognized that this role would be ever shifting as the needs of those I interviewed shifted and swayed.

Smith (2002) discusses the complexities of research and reminds me that research has often not been beneficial to those being researched and misappropriation of knowledge has often been the result of what was couched as helpful research (Haig-Brown, 2010). Smith (2002) states that research is “probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary” (p. 1). This sense that Western research has attempted to take knowledge and leave little in return is a focus for much research within Aboriginal communities (Battiste, 2002; Brayboy, 2006; Haig-Brown, 2010; Kovach, 2009; Smith, 2002). It is with these considerations that I grounded my choices and attempted to ensure the role of my research in supporting the voice of Inuit educators.

“People’s lived experiences are not always quantifiable” (Stanley, 2007, p.18). Quantitative methodologies can take data and create faceless images of real life situations and people (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Therefore, this was not a good choice for my study. Since qualitative “researchers are the instrument of their study, and we know that there is

interaction between participants and researchers” (Stanley, 2007, p. 19), I felt that this type of methodology would best support my complex project.

4.4. A Decolonizing Methodology

The choice of methodology used within this study is important because it “frames the questions being asked, determines the set of instruments and methods to be employed and shapes the analyses” (Smith, 2002, p. 143). Decolonizing methodologies (Smith, 2002) are those that allow Aboriginal Peoples, and those working with Aboriginal Peoples, to understand and use theory and research to support the goals important to the Aboriginal community. This study is framed by the tenets of decolonizing methodologies. I have worked to ensure that I “support a methodological approach that foregrounds the voices of... [I]ndigenous peoples...I need to reach out in democratic and libratory ways that effect research collaboration helping to foster social justice and locally desired change” (Lincoln & González, 2008, p. 784). The focus on decolonizing methodologies, serves to anchor, support, and guide me, but using this framework was challenging and caused a great deal of reflection. I needed to ensure that I was not simply using this framework as a way to assuage my own guilty, settler feelings (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Decolonizing methodologies align with both CRT and TMP, where the focal points are entrenched within seeking to uncover and a movement towards a positive change.

There is a comfort in admitting responsibility. It often gives you an opportunity to move beyond any culpability and therefore deny any further wrong doing. Far too often, privileged researchers have tagged the word “decolonizing” onto their work, and feel that they are now doing the right thing. While there is nothing wrong with wanting to do the right thing, the reasons for the actions are paramount to any success that could occur. I can only

enter this research with an understanding of my privilege: a privilege that extends beyond my colour, and social standing, but also bound within a first world perspective (Sleeter & Delgado Bernal, 2004). I cannot imagine being Aboriginal, as it is not within me, nor can I imagine existing in the fourth world: that belongs to those whose homelands have been stolen from them (Manuel & Posluns, 1974). I am not attempting to negate my role as a colonizer, but I am attempting to create a space, where I have been to, and share the voices I care about. These concepts lend to a decolonizing framework.

Decolonizing research is not “simply about challenging or making refinements to qualitative research” (Smith, 2005, p. 88). Both Rigney (1999) and Churchill (1993) discuss the need for an Aboriginal approach to research. Building on their work, Smith (2005) states that there must be an Aboriginal approach to research that is “formed around the three principles of resistance, political integrity, and privileging indigenous voices” (p.89). I took each of these principles and inscribed them on my heart and in my head and on my hands. I resisted the urge to do easy research when the original plans did not work out. I make a conscious decision to surround myself with Inuit who also wanted this study done. I needed to ensure that politically I had integrity and that I was not simply serving me. Finally, I needed to privilege the voices of the Inuit educators. This was a challenge at times, as the counter narrative I honestly felt needed to be shared was often a contentious issue with the establishment.

I was fortunate to have those who believed, as I did, in these principles. As well, giving voice to the participants was essential in this study as, through the use of voice, the study followed decolonizing methodologies (Chilisa, 2012; Smith, 2002). This meant that the participants were encouraged to share what they wanted and not share what they were not

comfortable sharing. At times participants chose to not respond to certain questions and at times they chose to open other concepts and add more details. Encouraging the voices of the participants meant that the agenda was fluid and ever changing. These three principles have become the crux of my work: they guided me and answered my queries when I was lost.

In decolonizing methodologies the focus is always on moving away from the colonizing, Western ways of doing, being, seeing, and thinking. Rather, decolonizing methodologies celebrates the stories that are told and the stories yet to be told. This study is about telling stories.

4.5. Methods

4.5.1. Interviews

The purpose of interviewing...is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective. Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit. We interview to find out what is in someone else's mind, to gather their stories. (Patton, 2002, p. 341)

While I had many choices about the method I would use to gather my data, it became clear to me, after reviewing various methods, that using interviews would best align with the goals of this inquiry. I wanted to use interviews because I felt this method would allow me to gather important details within the data, and that each participant would be able to share his or her own story in a unique way and determine his or her own focus. Since an interview is a way to explore how "subjects experience and understand their world" (Kvale, 2007, p. 9), it aligns well with decolonizing methodologies that focus on the understanding of the participants rather than solely the questions of the researcher.

There are many types of interview methods. I was drawn to both the general interview guide approach and the conversational interview method. While each method has its own qualities, I felt that this combination of methods would be the most useful.

The general interview guide approach is outlined by Patton (2002). This interview type:

provides topics or subject areas within which the interviewer remains free to build a conversation within a particular subject area, to word questions spontaneously, and to establish a conversational style but with a focus on a particular subject that has been predetermined. (Patton, 2002, p. 343)

I was drawn to this approach as it would ensure that critical, key points were focused upon, but would not put in a structure that was so rigid that a flow of discussion would be disabled. The guide allowed me to begin the interviews in a generous, caring, easing going manner, as I knew that I would get to the key points since the interview guide “list[s] the questions or issues that are to be explored in the course of the interview” (Patton, 2002, p. 343).

To combine with the interview guide, I used a conversational interview method, which offered “maximum flexibility to pursue information in whatever direction appears to be appropriate...from talking with one or more individuals in that setting” (Patton, 2002, p. 342). It is this flexibility that drew me to this interview method. I felt it was imperative to offer the Inuit educators the opportunity to share what I might not have considered, allowing the data to go beyond what I anticipated and encapsulate the real stories that needed to be told.

One of the major concerns with conversational interviews is the analysis of the data. Since there is not a set of questions to follow, conversation can go in multiple directions and

being able to analyze the data, as well as to look for themes and develop understandings, can be very challenging. It is this challenge that led me to combine conversational and interview guide approaches.

By using a combined approach I was able to have “flexibility in probing and in determining when it is appropriate to explore certain subjects in greater depth, or even to question about new area of inquiry that were not originally anticipated” (Patton, 2002, p. 347) by the interviewer. The best qualities of both conversational interviews and interview guides allowed me to preselect topics and questions, but at the same time to encourage the participants to lead the interview by sharing what was important to them. To follow the tenets of a decolonizing methodology, it was imperative that the interviews build on each participant’s thoughts, while the interview guide allowed me to foresee gaps in the data collection, and ensure that these were covered.

While deciding on the type of structure my interviews would use was rather easy, creating the guiding questions to support the interview process was much more challenging. There are many types of questions that can be used during interviews: experience and behaviour, opinion and values, feeling, knowledge, sensory, and background/demographic questions (Patton, 2002). Selecting questions and question types is a precarious undertaking. When thinking about types of questions and their purpose, it was important to consider my personal bias and what I really wanted to gain through the interview process: an understanding of the life of the Inuit teacher. In order to create meaningful questions, I used my research questions and from there, extrapolated specific, in-depth questions that would link directly to answering the research questions. I attempted to use many of these

questioning types in order to gain a thick, rich description. The interview guide with questions can be found in Appendix 1 and 2.

“The research interview is an interpersonal situation, a conversation between two partners about a theme of mutual interest. It is a specific form of human interaction in which knowledge evolves through a dialogue” (Kvale, 1996, p. 125). It is imperative to create a space for a dialogue, and a sense of security, in a very short time in an interview. As well, I had to continually remind myself of Lather’s (1986) warning not to “impose meanings on situations rather than constructing meanings through negotiations with research participants” (p. 265). This negotiation is the core of the interviews I completed. Where the open structure with the interview guide allowed me to build the connection needed and supported the construction of meaning. I supported the validity of my understanding during the interview process by using an ongoing feedback loop. At times I would interpret by asking if the participant meant this or that. Often I was told, “No!” and then the participant would reinterpret for me. Using this type of question is imperative to the work I have done. During this process the participants would often correct my understanding and support me in gaining a clearer portrait.

As suggested by Lincoln and González (2008), working within a decolonizing framework mandates a focus on the voices of the Inuit and a collaborative effort. This guided me and prohibited me from shifting the focus within the interview as suggested by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009). Instead, I allowed each participant to go as long as he/she wanted. I felt that due to this, my results were richer and ensured a full response. At times this was challenging. Silence during an interview can be difficult, especially for a person brought up in a Western tradition. I worked very hard to allow silences to be present during the

interview. As a woman growing up in a Western culture, I am nervous about silence. This was and continues to be a challenge for me.

4.5.2. Change in plans

My actual research design was altered during the research process. Maxwell (2012) shares that a plan for any study can be completed in great detail, but flexibility must be allowed in order to get the greatest results from your research. This was true for me.

My original intention was to use focus groups, with six to eight Inuit educators, and to discuss and share feelings and concepts surrounding notions of race, equity, and education in the North. I wanted people to have an opportunity to diverge from one idea to another, to build their own ideas based on the brave words of other educators, and to feel safe within a group structure. I wanted to delve deeply into ideas, to give opportunities to talk, draw, create, and grow. I was hoping to continue working with this group and to use the research to begin something that could support the Inuit educators. I wanted to take the research and create a dramatization of the counter narrative that would be shown and shared amongst the Inuit and the school board.

I was not able to do all I wanted to do, but I was able to do something that I feel is important—not just to complete the requirements of a PhD, but to shed light on Inuit educators and to take time to consider their perspective. My desire to work with a group of educators for one entire week was not possible given schedules, new meetings, previous engagements, and school board policies. However, I was able to interview 36 educators, who willingly gave of their time and shared their own ideas and perspectives. They shared in depth details about being a teacher, they considered the role of the Qallunaat teacher and administration and the tensions and joys that comes from working across cultures. They

answered my questions and asked more. We cried, laughed, chatted, and cried again: and I learned a great deal through the process. I was so glad to be able to ask these questions, to make a space, however small, for voices of Inuit educators to be heard. I felt that the study reached its goal of empowering the researched (Lather, 1986).

If I did not have the status of a partial insider, I am not sure that I would have been able to complete this research. In order to connect to the tenets of decolonizing methodologies, my connection to the North and sense of belonging was critical. It allowed me to interview a wide variety of educators and gain access to groups I may not have had access to otherwise.

4.6. Participants and Location

Since I am not an insider, I needed to ensure that the Inuit educators I was speaking with felt comfortable and free to express their opinions. However, the fact that my status is not quite that of an outsider either, made this much easier. I knew many of the Inuit I was speaking with, and those whom I did not know often had connections with people whom I did know. These connections made everything much easier. The tensions in the room fell away, at least in my opinion, as soon as we found common ground. It is my belief that this common ground and shared experience is what allowed me to gather rich data that tells a real, authentic story.

Inuit are the original people of Canada (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, n.d.). The Inuit have made their home land in Arctic areas of the North, including Canada, for over 5000 years (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, n.d.). The Arctic is a place of beauty defined by its land and climate more than its location. Nunavik, located within Canada, is part of the circumpolar North. Nunavik is a region of Northern Quebec, comprising over one-third of the land in the province. The total population of Nunavik, as recorded in 2006 is 10784, with over 90% of

this population being Inuit (ArcticStat, 2007). Each of the 14 villages in Nunavik has a unique flavour, its' own specific history, and a connection to education that varies between villages (Makivik, n.d.) Some of the villages have strong connections to the south while others do not. Some are tiny, with only a few hundred residents though a few are significantly larger, with over a thousand residents. Some have strong first language protocols and others do not. The colonization history of each village is unique and significant. In light of these considerations it became crucial for me to interview Inuit from a number of the villages.

The logistics of attempting to interview Inuit educators from 14 villages was daunting. I was fortunate that the opportunity arose for me to meet with educators from all of the villages, while they were attending large meetings in two locations. I flew to two separate villages on those occasions in the fall of 2012. These meetings are a biannual event and are usually located in a selected village on each coast within the region. These meetings, termed pedagogical days, involve all teachers and educators within the school board. The school board pays to fly teachers to these villages and offers professional development. During these pedagogical days, I had the opportunity to interview Inuit educators. I did not interview them during the workshops, but rather before them, at the extended break times, afterwards, and, in some cases, during the evenings. Overall I had the opportunity to conduct interviews that lasted from 20 minutes to two hours in length. These 36 interviews of Inuit educators from 13 different villages, were conducted in only two villages.

While I was hoping originally to have the interviewees become co-participants in the study (Hatch, 2002), the shifts in the study and time pressures did not allow for this to fully happen. What did happen was that all participants were made aware of their rights within the

study and were able to co-create the data by sharing and adding as they desired. They could add to my questions, not answer a question, have someone else with them when they answered, come back to me the next day or the day after that with more to share, and ask for things to be deleted if they decided to do so. The interview could be stopped at any point during the process and some did stop the interview. While I was not able to conduct my study with co-participants, I was able to ensure that the participants had a voice, and were able to shift and modify questions and protocols as needed. This was essential to the integrity of my study as it follows the tenets of decolonizing methodologies by creating space for voices and working in an open, collaborative manner. This was challenging given the limits of time, but I feel that the sense of this was achieved.

Having lived and worked in the Nunavik region for 14 years, I know many of the participants. All participants in the study were between the ages of 20-65. All but one participant was female. This was not surprising as currently there are few male teachers within Kativik School Board, and all of these are subject specialists. My goal in interviewing was to capture a broad array of Inuit educators.

Table 1 *Summary of Participant Demographics*

Characteristic	Number of participants (N=36)
Age of participant ranged from	21 to 62
Number of villages represented	13 out of 14
Number of people who had lived outside of the North	5
Teaching Kindergarten to Grade 3 in Inuktitut language	20
Teaching Inuktitut language (as a subject)	4

Teaching special education	3
Teaching gym	2
Teaching culture	1
Teacher training counselors	6
Average years of teaching experience	10.4 years

4.7. Sampling Decisions

The selection of participants should be purposeful. When selecting the participants for this study, I decided to focus on the tenets of decolonizing methodologies and give voice to people who wanted it. In so doing I created criteria for those to be interviewed. These criterion included: a) being an Inuk teacher, b) living in Nunavik, and c) having at least one year of teaching experience. Everyone who met this criteria and wanted to be interviewed was encouraged to meet with me.

As a fledgling researcher, I struggled with sample size. I wondered how many Inuit educators I needed to interview. Was it possible to have too many? Again, I considered what Patton (2002) suggests when he states that: “sample size depends on what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what’s at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with available time and resources” (Patton, 2002, p. 244). I knew that sample size was not the only key, as Patton (2002) suggests that the importance lies in gaining credibility. I was not interested in specific numbers or statistics, but rather I was on a journey of discovery. I wanted to interview enough people to gain a depth of understanding, while at the same time I did not want to rush the interviews just to gain more participants. There are approximately 100 Inuit teachers with the Kativik School Board. Rather than

seeking a specific number of participants I was hoping for variations in the respondents (e.g., from different villages, ages, teaching experiences). As this was a qualitative study using decolonizing methodologies, triangulation did not come through traditional means. Instead I looked toward the concept of crystallization.

Crystallization can be defined as the combination of:

multiple forms of analysis and multiple genres of representation into a coherent text or series of related texts, building a rich and openly partial account of a phenomenon that problematizes its own construction, highlights researchers' vulnerabilities and positionality, makes claims about socially constructed meanings, and reveals the indeterminacy of knowledge claims even as it makes them. (Ellingson, 2009, p. 4)

This form of rigour means that I acknowledge that my work is biased, as all research is. I am aware that I may not be telling the whole story, and yet at the same time I know that the work I am doing lies within a socially constructed foundation and I am part of that foundation.

How I heard the participants shifted the meaning. My understanding, through my 14 years in Nunavik, allowed me to have some knowledge of the issues connected to the North and some of the horrors, in some cases, of residential schools and forced colonization. Their testaments are raw and real and connect directly to the interviewees and their stories.

As a researcher I have “abandoned claims of objectivity in favor of focusing on the situated researcher and the social construction of meaning” (Ellingson, 2009, p. 2). In doing so, I have become free to use both analytic practices such as content analysis, and narrative forms to tell a story that is based on research, has been thoroughly considered, and needs to be told. Counter narrative is the medium I selected to tell these stories.

It was important for the crystallization to ensure that I was interviewing a broad cross section of Inuit educators. With this in mind, I interviewed 36 educators, from 13 of the 14 villages. The only village not represented was a small village from which only a few teachers attended the meetings and none of them were, at the time, able to or interested in being interviewed.

4.8. The Interviews

Most of the interviews took place at the schools in the two villages I visited, but a few of the interviews occurred in the participants' home. The interviews lasted from 20 minutes to two hours, during which time I asked the questions in my interview guide, but also encouraged the participants to share their own ideas and opinions. I used a small, digital recorder during all of the interviews, but I also took notes, to remind me of key points or occurrences during the interview process. These notes were critical as they became a data source containing nuances of the interviews, such as knowing looks, general comments, and notations about the length of interview and the interest level of the participants. The interviews did not feel forced or rigid, but rather the process felt more like uncovering ideas, sharing concepts, and asking opinions. At times, during the interviews, some participants would sit quietly, seem hesitant, but then carry on. This appeared to happen when I introduced the concept of Qallunaat teachers. I wondered why this was happening, but by my third interview I began to understand this phenomena. In my third interview, with a seasoned educator that I knew very well, I asked why she was being so hesitant to share her opinions about Qallunaat teachers. She took her time, was silent for a while, (which was hard for me), and then said, "I don't know what to say Dawn, but if I say bad things about Qallunaat, I'm afraid I will make you feel bad." Then I understood. Yosso (2002) discusses how individual people of marginalized

racism are often held up as representatives of their whole race. This concept was being applied here as my third participant, who would be used to being representative of her race, was concerned about my feelings, and how I might interpret her thoughts on Qallunaat. She did not want to hurt my feelings. I thanked her for her honesty, we cried together, and then, after the interview, I made changes to the interview guide. I needed to be clear that I would not be offended by their honest answers. I added in my own feelings that at times Qallunaat are unfair and by doing so, was hopeful that this would give permission to the participants to share their feelings without hesitation. I also included my feelings that I had when I first arrived up North and how much my ideology had changed. This opening up of myself allowed the participants to feel more comfortable, as is apparent in the field notes.

It helped me a great deal that the 36 interviews were done in two separate chunks. My first trip was in mid-September, and my second trip was not until late October. This break between the two main interview segments gave me time to collect myself and manage the stress inherent in interviewing. I was also fortunate that while I was travelling to complete these interviews, I was able to stay with friends of mine from the North. After a long day of interviewing people, it was wonderful to see a friendly face and relax in a home rather than a hotel.

After the interviews were completed, I transcribed all the recordings myself as I felt the nuances of the discussions would be lost if I were to hire a transcriptionist. In the end, there were over 250 pages of transcriptions from the 36 interviews. As well, I had dozens and dozens of pages of field notes. Following content analysis protocols, discussed in detail in chapter 5, I then hand coded the transcriptions looking for specific themes, details, concepts, and reoccurring ideas

4.9. Data Sources

The decision about what data sources to use, how to use them, and why they are imperative can be very tricky. There were two data sources used within this project: interviews, and field notes.

My first data source was the recordings, and transcriptions gathered from the interviews. This was my most useful data source as it contained rich information, directly shared from the participants. Listening to the recordings over and over again allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the message shared by the participants. By listening not only to the answers, but also to the pauses, the reiterations, and the questions the participants brought forth, my data were greatly enriched.

My second data source was my field notes. I began the writing of field notes from the day I landed in my first interview location, and completed the field notes when I left my last interview site. These notes contained both observations and personal reflections on what I saw, heard, perceived, and wondered throughout the interview process (Given, 2008, p. 341). My field notes were written to support my understanding of situations, to ensure I did not forget who asked for a break when being interviewed, who cried and who shared a long stare. My notes were written to “form the context and quality control that shape multiple qualitative data points into articulated, meaningful, and integrated research finding” (Given, 2008, p. 341). When interpreting the data qualitative researchers create a “field text consisting of field notes and documents from the field” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005b, p. 26). It is from these texts that themes emerged.

4.10. Analysis Process

It took time to find the themes, allow my understanding to coalesce, and to determine what was salient, reoccurring, significant, unique, and important within the interviews. This process took place over several months. Every day I reviewed the transcriptions, with multiple coloured pens, highlighting features such as differences and similarities, seeking the answers that I knew must be there. From this process, of reading, rereading, thinking, mapping, and reviewing, I finally saw, hazily at first, and then more clearly, three salient themes emerge. Once the themes were determined, the quotations from the transcriptions were organized in such a manner as to support each theme. The quotations support a thick, rich description, which is essential in qualitative research (Denzin, 2001; Geertz, 1973; Patton, 2002); they support this thick description by not only sharing the direct thoughts of the participants, but also the context needed in order to make sense of the themes.

Member checks were used at two points during this process (Merriam, 1998). During the actual interview, I would purposefully rephrase participant responses to ensure that I correctly understood the message being shared with me. Second, as I completed the analysis, I asked several members to read portions of the final analysis to ensure authenticity. These members were selected on the basis of wanting to take this further step within the process.

The analysis of the over 250 pages of transcripts led me to identify four main themes that emerged from the interviews: a) teaching is caring, b) relationships and equality; c) Inuit racism...still, and d) language and power. While these themes overlap and share strong connections, they also stand on their own. It should be noted that while the themes are organized in such a way as to determine the sense of concern shared by Inuit educators, there

were certainly some educators who did not have the same concerns. In order to make sense of the transcripts and my field notes, I used content analysis.

Content analysis is the process of examining “artifacts of social communication” (Berg, 2007, p. 240). While I was drawn to content analysis, I was concerned as some definitions apply the word *quantitative* as a descriptor for content analysis. Berelson (1971) and others regard content analysis as a purview for only quantitative methodologies. While this may have been the norm for some time, content analysis is now used in various research methods (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). With caution, I proceeded with content analysis and used this approach as I combed through my transcriptions.

For the purpose of this study, I define content analysis “as a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). This allowed me “to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study” (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992, p. 314). The goals of my study (to honour the Inuit voices, collaborate with the Inuit educators and share their stories) could only be met through the time-consuming method of content analysis. I selected content analysis as it allowed me to review all of the texts and my field notes, and look for the themes and commonalities amongst the interviews. Content analysis, done through a qualitative lens, supported my understanding of the underlying meaning within the texts.

When using content analysis, interview data is usually obtained via open ended questions, where the participant has the ability to add more details as needed. After careful transcription, the data is read over and over again, in its entirety, to gain a clear vision of the text and the messages within the text (Tesch, 1990). Then, after careful reading and

rereading, the data is looked at again to seek key words or concepts (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Morgan, 1993; Morse & Field, 1995). In this study, I read the transcripts completely, 12 times, ensuring that I was capturing all nuances. As well, field notes were reviewed seven times.

While reading and rereading the transcriptions, key concepts emerged. I read with a highlighter, seeking these key concepts, looking for connections, and finding intricacies with the text. I completed this process multiple times, and soon my text looked like a rainbow of colours. Through this process the themes, and salient ideas became clear (Patton, 2002). This type of qualitative content analysis allowed me to gain essential perspectives from the participants. I did not begin the transcriptions with preset categories, but let them develop organically as the text coalesced.

I found this process tedious, difficult, and at times frustrating. Many times I thought I had it, that I understood the themes that were emerging, and then my elusive understanding would fall away as a new piece would enter the fray. I challenged myself to go beyond the basics of content analysis as outlined above. I read my transcriptions 12 times in total, although certain portions were read more than 20 times. I needed to do this, as I needed to assure myself that I was honouring the voices that I was committed to honouring. I could not do this if I was not clear about the messages shared in the interviews. I could not have doubts about the themes that emerged.

The aim of research is to generate knowledge, something that was not known before, and to demonstrate the validity, or believability, of this knowledge. This means offering descriptions, explanations, and analysis for what is done and how it is done (McNiff & Whitehead, 2009). As Gibbs (2007) notes, “The idea of analysis implies some kind of

transformation. You start with some (often voluminous) collection of qualitative data and then you process it, through analytic procedures, into a clear, understandable, insightful, trustworthy and even original analysis” (p. 2). In this study my voluminous data was the transcription of the 36 interviews: the aforementioned over 250 pages of text. As I read and reread the transcriptions, I was fully aware that I was also in the process of transforming the “data into findings” (Patton, 2002, p. 432). As a researcher reflecting on this study I can say that my greatest challenge was to make sense of so much raw data.

Looking for themes, while involved in qualitative analysis is always challenging (Bailey, 2007; King & Horrocks, 2010; Lichtman, 2010; Patton, 2002; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). It can be difficult to actually define what is meant by the word theme, but there are guidelines that supported my understanding. King and Horricks (2010) discuss the matter of choice researchers have when deciding what to include and what to exclude when looking for themes. This concept guided me well as I knew that I had to make choices, but each choice was consciously difficult. A choice meant that something would be or would not be included in the analysis. It was painstaking and time consuming to make these choices, but essential.

Coding is the process of “breaking a text down into manageable segments and attaching one or more keywords to a text segment in order to permit later retrieval of the segment” (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p 322). This process allowed me to take the seemingly unmanageable transcripts and section them into codes that made sense to me. To use coding more effectively, I opted for descriptive coding. Descriptive coding is the process of summarizing “in a word or a short phrase—most often as a noun—the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 262). Descriptive coding was appropriate for this study as its primary goal is to share with the reader my understanding of what I saw and heard

(Saldaña, 2013). Hand coding is using yourself, and your coloured pens as the tools. In this process I sat with the text and my pens and painstakingly went line by line through the text looking for *common* words and ideas. I originally had dozens and dozens of words. Some of these words included the following: workload, benefits, tension, care, help, need, teacher training program, support, students, language, treat students, proud, racist, unsure, race, language, culture, bond, fear, amazing feeling, respect, relationships, compare, unfair, equality, professional development, housing, materials, worry, love teaching, family, priority, kind, complain, judge, Inuktitut, gossip, listen, two sides, envy, angry, training, tolerance/intolerant, Us vs. Them, nervous, caring, and Qallanuut. Upon reading, and reading, as suggested by King and Horrocks (2010) and Patton (2002), the eleven categories began to solidify into four themes. See Table 2.

It was daunting to determine the themes. The initial descriptive coding, and the words or phrases that connected this process, did not fit into subthemes easily at first. The process took time to crystallize within my mind, but it did eventually crystallize. The concept of themes generates the notion of repetition, and therefore excludes statements only made once, even if they are powerful. I found this particularly challenging, and at times I broke from my desire to use reoccurring themes. Also, at times, an interview led the participants and myself down a new, undefined path. It was then that I had to hold to my main tenets. Statements that were raw, open, and honest needed to be included, even if they were only mentioned once. A shocking story about being called “lazy” by a new Qallunaat teacher needed to be part of the story, because it relayed important information about the journey of the Inuit educator. I would not be adhering to the tenets of decolonizing methodologies within the framework of qualitative, critical research, if I dismissed these messages due to their singular nature.

Finally, themes must be distinct. It is normal for there to be some overlap between themes, but too much overlap impedes the interpretation process (King & Horricks, 2010). I concur with Patton's (2002) view that there is no recipe for qualitative data analysis. I could not follow a recipe. Instead I spent a great deal of time with coloured highlighters looking for the nuances in the data so I could create the portrait that best shared the voice of the educators and represented my observations and interactions authentically.

Table 2: *Coding Matrix*

Initial Descriptive Coding Words	Categories	Final Themes
Professional development, training, support, teacher training program	Professional Support	Equality
Workload, unfair, equality, racist, envy, angry	Workload Benefits	
Materials, resources, housing, unfair, equality, envy, angry		
Love teaching, care, proud, amazing feeling	Proud	Teaching and caring
Care, students, support, proud, help, need, bond, respect, family, priority, listen	Teaching from Inuk perspective caring	
Respect, treat students, care, kind, bond	Helping/ caring	
Worry, judge, fear, nervous, unsure	Fear	Racism
Tensions, racist, respect, fear, relationships, compare, unfair, equality, complain, judge, Qallunaat, complain, Inuktitut, gossip, angry, listen, tolerance/ intolerant	Tensions Taking sides Racism	
Gossip, judgment, fear, respect, two sides, us vs. them		
Racist, respect, fear, unfair, equality, judgment, tolerance/ intolerant		
Language, culture, proud, fear, Inuktitut, family, angry, French, English, K-3 Inuktitut only	Language/culture	
Language loss, weak Inuktitut skills		Language and power
Never told what changes are happening, little help to teach Inuktitut, pushing English or French, commissioners make decisions		

4.11. Ethics

Aboriginal scholars (Battiste, 2002; Brayboy, 2006; Smith, 2002; D. Rasmussen, 2002) strongly caution academics to take care and proceed with research only if it benefits the people with whom they are working. This caution was always in my forethought as I proceeded through the research process. I was determined not to take on the role of othering Inuit teachers by simply becoming another colonizer. My commitment to the Inuit teachers was challenging, but I am happy to have done what my Inuit friends and I believe in: research with a purpose, for a purpose, that is purposeful.

The term ethics means many things to many people. As a PhD candidate I was bound to apply to the Ethical Review Board at the University, but for me that was only the beginning. I was also committed to work with the Inuit community and followed the school boards' research protocols. Although I could have circumvented some of these protocols, I choose to be transparent and work through the process. "In Indigenous communities, research ethics involves both establishing and nurturing reciprocal and respectful relationships. This ethical framework is very much at odds with the Western ethical review process of informed consent forms" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005b, p. 35). Since I am not Inuk, but my research was with Inuit, it was essential that I had Inuit supporting the process in order to ensure my ethical underpinning went beyond that of the ethical review board process.

Codes of ethics taken from the Tri-Council Policy Statement focus on several areas: respect for persons, concern for welfare, and justice. These three principles that "express the value of human dignity provide the compass for this journey" (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada [CIHR-NSERC-SSHRC], 2010 , p. 11). While

these areas are imperative for quality research that respects and takes into account human participants, there were other codes of conduct, such as those outlined by Smith (2002), of which I was not only aware, but connected to, and worked within.

Codes of conduct for Aboriginal research have been discussed by Aboriginal scholars and communities (Battiste, 2008). These codes of conduct were very different from those of ethical review boards. For the purposes of this study I utilized the following code of conduct for researchers by Smith (2002), which include:

1. A respect for people,
2. Present yourself face to face,
3. Look, listen and then speak,
4. Share, and host, be generous,
5. Be cautious,
6. Do not trample over people,
7. Do not flaunt your knowledge. (p. 120)

These guidelines supported and anchored me as a researcher. Ethics, which can seem quite bland, suddenly transformed into something incredibly useful. These guidelines were not just paper work and stringent rules, but rather structures that supported my research: ideals I clung to when everything seemed unlikely. This frame supported me, a southern, White researcher in ensuring that I was using decolonizing methodologies to conduct my research. Some of these guidelines are not part of what would be called research protocols (Denzin, 2005a) but they were essential in the cross-cultural research I was undertaking. The salient point in these guidelines is that my focus shifted away from gathering my data to the well-being of the participants, rather than the needs of the researcher. My research was about

emancipation and support and not about doing research *to* people but rather *with* people. I feel that by clinging to these guidelines I was able to conduct my research in a positive, meaningful manner.

During the process of completing this research study, my goal of honouring the ethical standard, as outlined by Smith (2002), was challenging. While it was easy for me to respect the participants, as I knew many of them and had worked and lived in the region, and I was there for every interview face-to-face, I found it more difficult to look and listen before I spoke. It may be part of my cultural norm that we speak first, or it may be me as a person, but I did find this a challenge. I had to constantly remind myself during the process to be quiet, to wait, and to allow the silence to occur. On the recordings of the interviews there are many instances where I start to talk, and then stop myself. These incidents clearly show that as a researcher I need to work on silence.

As well, I feel that I honoured the concept of being generous as I accommodated schedules, shared ideas, and encouraged people to share as they wanted. However, it was often a challenge not to jump too quickly and therefore trample over ideas. This experience showed me that while it is easy to say I am going to adhere to codes of conducts, it is in reality more difficult to change behaviour that has been my norm for years. It is a personal goal to work towards this in future research projects.

4.12. **Summary**

My choice of methodology and methods were imperative to this research study. The combination of working across cultures and using a decolonizing method required extra steps be put in place to ensure that othering did not occur. I have done this by following carefully the ethical guidelines suggested by Smith (2002). Using interviews and field notes for data

sources allowed me to gather highly pertinent information. The results of this data will be shared in the next chapter.

Chapter 5. Analysis & Findings

In this chapter I discuss the analysis and the findings and consider the themes that emerged from the interviews and the field notes. In section 5.1 I review the research questions and the process of determining the themes. In section 5.2 I consider the connection between the themes and then further discuss each theme. After these four themes are discussed I consider, via question two, the steps towards improvement in section 5.3. Section 5.4 will summarize this chapter.

5.1. Themes

Research questions are inherently difficult to answer; if this were not so, they would not be asked. In today's google era, any question can be answered quickly, and while many of these are important, such as how to fix a broken lock, other questions cannot easily be answered. My major research questions posed many challenges. These questions, while not easy to answer, were essential in this process:

- 1) What do Inuit educators perceive as challenges to their own educational practice?
- 2) What shifts could occur to support Inuit educators?
- 3) What is the message Inuit educators wish to share about their practices in order to interrupt the status quo and create a counter narrative to the damaging master narrative?

This chapter analyzes the data obtained through the interviews and field notes, using the lens of critical race theory and transformative multiliteracies pedagogy to answer the above mentioned questions.

While the themes share with clarity the challenges Inuit educators face, these themes also point towards essential shifts that must happen in order to better support Inuit educators.

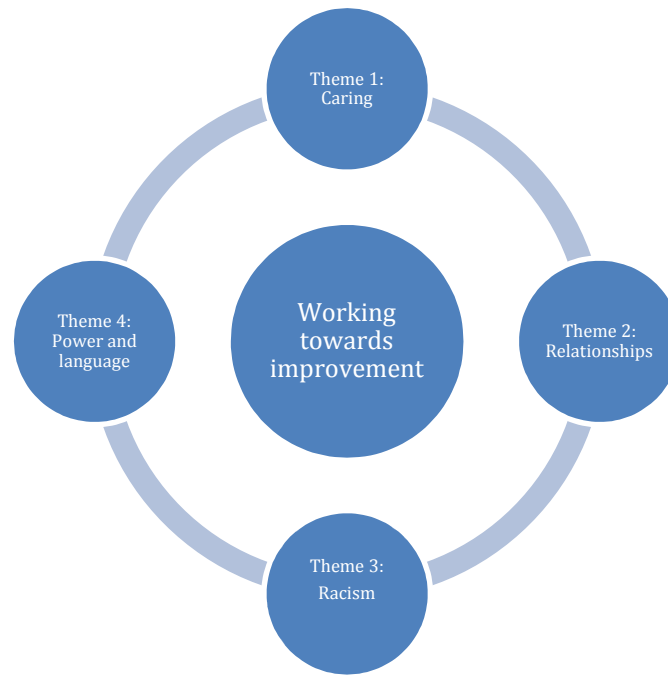


Figure 2: Connections between the themes

5.1.1. Theme 1: Teaching is caring

The first theme I garnered from the over 250 pages of transcripts was the theme of teaching as caring. Anna⁴, a woman in her late 30s, began teaching when she was 20. She has over 15 years of teaching experience, and is well known and respected in her home village. She discussed her feelings:

It made me feel so great when we were fishing with all the students. Some kids really do want to go out and go fishing and it feels so good that I took all of my students out for fishing and every fish we caught we saved it put it in a bag and a week after

⁴ All names are pseudonyms.

we started working on the fish. I made them open the fish, check out their guts, you know science, and the kids were so into it. And some kids started saying, so when I grow up I am going to be like Anna. I am going to go hunting and fishing I am going to finish school. I am going to get a ski-doo, I am going to get what Anna has: ice drill, fishing hooks, I wanna be like her. They were telling their parents about the course we had going fishing and checking the fish guts, this is the liver... it touched the kids hearts and also the parents hearts. There is a lot more than that, but it makes me feel so good. (Anna)

Anna's smile, as she shares her thoughts is unmistakable. She is passionate about her work and loves the children, and sharing her knowledge with the children. Twice in this passage she discusses how she feels when she works with the children and how they feel when they are engaged about learning. This learning they are doing, on the land, with the fish, this exemplifies funds of knowledge and Indigenous knowledges that are not written into the curriculum. This knowledge is not knowledge that I would share with students or that most teachers would share. This is traditional knowledge that is grounded in the Inuit culture. Anna's funds of knowledge are unique and do not easily fit in to a Eurocentric curriculum. She does not feel that these knowledges are valued. Anna also reflects on the impact school had on her as a young child:

When I was a child most of the Qallunaat teachers didn't listen to me or see what I need, and what was missing out in my life (Anna begins crying- we take a short break, but she wants to continue) so looking into children's eyes they don't need to speak or tell you anything about their life. You just need to look into their hearts and give them what they need what I wanted when I was a child (she is crying and taking

time to think). Back then the teachers were like being picky with the kids, they wanted the perfect life so they would put you down. They didn't give them self-time to listen to you to make you talk and they would just shut me up and I said when I grow up to be a teacher I am not going to shut them up I am going to listen to them. And I said to myself I am going to defeat them and that is my goal. To listen and to help their needs. I wish every teacher felt that way, but not all do...not all feel that way...It is the same as teaching it is not about who is better but we are a family group and we help and that is what we do in school too.

Anna is clearly distraught by memories of her educational experience. She realizes the impact of the Qallunaat way of teaching and the impact this has made upon her. She wants and desires to be part of this change. A change where Inuit students feel valued. This direct, from the heart, quotation, is completely contrary to the master narrative of Inuit educators so often shared in society, and the one I heard repeatedly when I was teaching in Nunavik. Anna speaks of her desire to *listen to them* and *help their needs*. She rallies against the master narrative.

Master narratives are stories designed to:

justify the domination ... [they are] stories of grand scale that provide the meaning and value within which people position their social and national identities. Master narratives are produced when public memory supplies historical accounts that make it seem normal, natural, and common sense that certain events or traits, and not others, have come to represent national identity. (Wolf, 2012, p. 39)

It is clear that Anna is passionate about her work, and yet, feels that she is often not understood. The infectious smile upon her face, when she spoke about fishing with the

students is indicative of her spirit and commitment. While it is not unusual for Qallunaat teachers to be somewhat detached, and compartmentalize their lives between work and family etc., it is clear that this is not the norm for Inuit educators. Anna's comments displayed an attached, caring educator. This desire to share a part of the self with the students in a novel way is apparent in Anna's self-disclosure. This self-disclosure combats a common master narrative within Canada. That views Aboriginal peoples as "incompetent" (Wolf, 2012, p. 39). This view of incompetence is used to frame education and ensure domination by Qallunaat educators and administrators and to justify their sense of superiority.

Many of the educators interviewed commented that the students feel much more comfortable with Inuit teachers. The impact of this master narrative, one that sees Inuit as incompetent, is addressed by Siasie: "The kids are so scared of the Qallunaat teachers. The Qallunaat teachers are more strict. I see that because I teach grade 3 and the kids are so petrified. The kids are comfortable here with me." Many educators were concerned with the comfort level of the students. Many suggested that they cared about the children more and that the children responded well to the caring. Many Inuit children who blossom in the early grades with Inuit educators, begin to decline academically as soon as they move into second language instruction (Wright et al., 2000). The master narrative which sees Inuit as incompetent is used to control which grades they teach, what grades they teach, and how they 'should teach'. This narrative relegates the goal of care, which the Inuit state is critical, to the background in favour of pedagogy and planning (Muller, 2001).

All of the Inuit educators interviewed reported feeling a sense of joy in working with the children. This is apparent in the following excerpts.

I love working with the children. The creativity, the joy, and the learning that takes place when you are teaching, I just love it! And being around the kids there is always hope and the learning, there is constant learning. (Eva)

Being a teacher is guiding students, being a leader, giving them hope, encouraging, motivating and to keep learning as well because we don't know it all. Looking for those students who really need that extra hand. Encouragement as well, verbal encouragement. I know from going to school I have had really poor examples of teachers and that is one of the things that I... that motivated me to be a better teacher.

(Betsy)

“I have a joy pure, pure joy in my heart and tears start to fall in my eyes when students really get it” (Annie). These teachers clearly display their desire to teach and the joy they feel when connecting to the students. Many Aboriginal scholars and those working closely with Aboriginal groups discuss the need to educate the whole student (Battiste, 2000; Simon, 2008; Smith, 2002; Tompkins, 2006). Inuit teachers state that Qallunaat struggle with the notion of teaching the whole child, and I too have witnessed this confusion amongst Qallunaat teachers. Inuit educators embrace the wholeness of the student. Many educators shared this concept during the interviews. “I am proud to be a teacher and I like it. I think that you know we have to be good role models for the younger you know kids and I, I like to think that I am giving them what I can as a teacher. It is more than a job” (Maina). “When I teach there are no boundaries” (Betsy). “I always have a joy pure, a pure joy in my heart and tears start to fall in my eyes (when a student understands). I sometimes feel I am more than a teacher” (Dora). This concept of few boundaries appears to be more normalized within the Aboriginal culture (Smith, 2002). While many Qallunaat focus primarily on teaching the

curriculum: Inuit discuss teaching the whole student and do not put boundaries around school hours, location of teaching, teaching materials or who does the teaching.

The Inuit educators shared their beliefs that teaching is not just the science behind the lesson plans and content, but more so, about the depth of connection they felt to their students and to the community and how this connection was relayed through the act of teaching. Sarasi shared specifically what being a teacher means to her.

Being a teacher is guiding students, being a leader, giving them hope, encouraging, motivating and to keep learning as well because we don't know it all. Looking for those students who really need that extra hand. Encouragement as well, verbal encouragement. I know from going to school I have had really poor examples of teachers and that is one of the things that I... that motivated me to be a better teacher.

This poignant quotation clearly shares a unique perspective of Aboriginal education. The teacher opines that Inuit need examples of successful learning, and encouragement that breaks the master narrative of the incompetent Aboriginal and instead produces a narrative of caring and competence. These are not exclusively mutual.

The above quotations show the emotions connected to teaching for the Inuit teachers. When asked "Why did you become a teacher? And what does it mean to you?" The responses were meaningful, complex, and surprising. While a few people stated that they became a teacher because they "needed a job," (Eva) most had bigger reasons. Thirty-three out of the 36 interviewed stated that they became a teacher because they "knew they could help," (Nancy) or "they wanted to be with kids" (Akinisie). Those interviewed talked in detail about what being a teacher means to them, the role it plays in their lives, and why they have made the choices they have made. The responses of the educators, while varied, had

some strong commonalities. Some educators responded by stating that “we help others,” (Dora) and that “I find it rewarding, like an invisible reward” (Emily). Both Joanna and Emily stated “I am very proud,” and Joanna expanded on this by saying that she “love[s] being a teacher because it makes me feel good, proud, excellent, but I want more training.” These are not simply words that convey the emotions and feelings of the Inuit educators, but also it shows the direct contrast to the ways that the Inuit are often perceived by the Qallunaat (St. Denis, 2007). Even when asked, only four educators spoke of the financial gains of teaching, the summer holidays, or the prestige this position may hold in their own community. Instead, the Inuit educators framed teaching as a responsibility, as a role they played in their community, and most importantly, and mentioned by 33 educators, a way to care for the children. They defined their role as educators as that of a connection. This connection is with both the students and the communities. They felt that they were individuals, but with a sense of duty that accompanied a personal level of internal satisfaction and commitment. They felt a great deal of responsibility to share academic knowledge yes, but also cultural knowledge, to support the students in developing and strengthening Inuktitut, and to counterbalance some of the Qallunaat influences. These responses show a direct contrast to the deficit perspective (Eriks-Brophy & Crago, 2003) often considered and referred to by Qallunaat educators and the general public alike. While Inuit educators view themselves as “hard working,” “caring,” “helpful,” and “loving,” the master narrative considers them incompetent.

When the Inuit were given the opportunity to share their feelings on what being an educator means to them, their responses focused solely on caring for the students and their desire to help the children in their own community. Their feelings, shared throughout this

process, could be consolidated into the following words: helping, proud, rewarding, and caring. Malayia stated that my job “is important. I am always in a good mood. I could never be in a bad mood. I am always happy.” Another educator shared how she felt about being an Inuk educator and how she helps the students. “With my experience I know that being an Inuk I have a way of helping the students” (Martha). These responses are in direct contrast to the current grand narrative that suggests that Inuit do not know how to teach and are incompetent (St. Denis, 2007). The response of the Inuit educators, collectively, act as a counter narrative to strengthen and reframe the role of Inuit educators.

The Inuit educators stated over and over again how important the children were to them, their need and desire to support the children, and how lucky they felt in their current job. Ongoing conversations with many of the participants showed a strong desire to support the concept of Inuit as caring for the students and feeling the intrinsic reward accompanied by a job well done: this is the message they want people to hear.

5.1.2. Theme 2: Relationships and equality

Availability of resources within a school and easy access to these resources is essential for quality teaching and learning (Feiman-Nemser, 2003). Every Inuk I spoke with discussed the lack of resources that they had, or that that they knew how to access. It was stated by one long time educator that, “we have limited Inuktitut resources” (Mary). The indication by this profoundly passionate educator is that Inuktitut as a language is under serviced. She wondered if that was a plan...to subtly nudge out the language. This lack of resources means that the Inuit educators spend hours making their own materials.⁵ The classrooms of my Inuk

⁵ Many educators who teach in non-dominant and/or lesser used minority languages face this same predicament. This is also true for French immersion teachers (Karsenti, Collin, Villeneuve, Domouchel, & Roy, 2008)

colleagues were filled with calendars, syllabics⁶, and schedules. These were all handmade by Inuit. The Inuit educators discussed how much time this takes them. “We have to make all of our own materials” (Annie). There was clear frustration about having to spend time building and creating the smallest of learning tools. They discussed how their Qallunaat colleagues could just order materials from Scholar’s Choice etc., but that they could not.

I think one problem for sure is that there is not enough material for the Inuit teachers. We need a person that can prepare for us because we don’t have time to make everything, all our teachers’ supplies we make. We need a person at least in every community that can help us prepare materials so we can teach. So we can teach the local history in every town and not just the Qallunaat history, our local history too. I want the kids to know what happened, what they did, how they survived the old teachings. I wonder why money is not spent on that. (Betsy)

Betsy shared what many others mentioned during their interviews. That is, that a lack of resources and materials impact teaching on daily basis. As well she suggests that instead of funds being spent on supporting the Inuit culture, that money is spent on less important items. She does not directly state what those are, but field notes explain the look on her face, the questioning motion when she wonders about where the money is spent. Her expression leads me to believe that the money is spent on second language teachers and second language resources. As a group, the Inuit educators felt that their needs were not being met. They did not feel that they had reasonable access to adequate resources. This ongoing struggle will be addressed more fully in section 5.3.1.

⁶ Syllabics are the orthography of the Inuktitut language.

Professional development is essential for lifelong learning, which is written into the mission statement of Kativik School Board (n.d.) as a guiding principle. Multiple teachers suggested that training and professional development was a big issue. Joanna and Emily both wanted “more training!” and Ida shared that she needs both “materials and training.” Many of the Inuit suggested that their opportunity for training was limited to the joint Kativik School Board and McGill teacher training program. While many suggested that this program had advantages, they also had issues with the length of time it took them to get their certification or their bachelor degrees. As well, most teachers had to leave their home communities to take part in this training. Since many of the teachers have young families, were grandmothers, or were otherwise engaged in community responsibilities, they did not want to leave their communities to gain professional development. This was an ongoing issue and concern for most of the Inuit educators.

As well as issues with ongoing professional development, there were concerns about equity in terms of how support was given. Emily stated that:

When the English secondary consultant comes here, all the ESL teachers take a day or two off teaching and work with the consultant. There is never anything like that for Inuit... never workshops, never days off...It made me feel like we are just here babysitting.

While there are Inuktitut language consultants, the role appears to be different from that of the second language consultants. Many of the Inuit commented that they did not get that one on one support they needed. The frustration is clear. The time and care given to Qallunaat teachers is not felt by Inuit teachers. The master narrative continues.

One of the main threads that winds throughout the interviews is the feeling of inadequacy that the Inuit educators have and their opinions about how the Qallunaat feel about them as professionals. One educator discussed how she felt.

It felt like I was lesser, that is how it felt to me. I felt like leaving the school board that time, but inside I knew, I think my faith helped me at that time to stay in a position that even if I don't feel like I am getting equal treatment I have expectations that it will happen one day. In one form or the other. (Rynee)

This Inuk⁷ educator stated what many others alluded towards. She discussed that the treatment she was given was unfair, but that she was still trying because she believed that one day it would change. When I tried to pursue this line of questioning it became clear that most Inuit educators I interviewed were not sure how or when change would come. In fact one educator stated that, "I don't have a clue why they get things and we don't... We Inuit are full of patience" (Annie). The Inuit described themselves as patient, passive, unquestioning, calm, and thoughtful, while they often considered the Qallunaat teachers and administration as being pushy, asking too many questions, and wanting too much, too quickly. They felt that it was simply "not fair."

This concept of not fair extended beyond the simple pedagogical practices and what was available in the school, it also connected to benefits that were extended mainly to Qallunaat staff (Kativik, 2007). Shelia is frustrated by these practices. She states that "when they come they have everything." Mayalai, Sarasie, Shelia, and Leena all felt that "it's not fair." As well, Maina commented that "when they (Qallunaat) arrive they have everything

⁷ Inuk is the singular form of the term Inuit

and the Inuit don't and we are treated like we are nothing." Cathy suggested that this made her feel "unimportant here in my life and my career...It is just not fair."

Within the school board, there are certain benefits and privileges given to teachers who meet certain criteria. A rental house is provided at a steep discount (less than 10% of the market value), the houses are completely furnished, including washer and dryer, baby furniture, desks, brooms, light bulbs etc., and maintenance is organized and conducted by school board employees. Housing is provided for any staff member that is hired from a location more than 50 km from their location of hiring (Kativik School Board, 2007). As well, three flights to the location of hiring are provided to any employee who is relocated more than 50 km. While there are historical reasons for these benefits (Makivik, n.d.) many Inuit teachers describe how they view this discrepancy.

We don't get housing from KSB, they are so lucky they do. Fully furnished and big three bedroom, wow...they are in heaven and their rent is so low so we just dream. I have no clue why they get it and we don't. We have been trying to fight for it.

(Rynee)

Utilizing a frame consistent with CRT, it becomes apparent that these differences in benefits may in fact be put in place, or the least continue to exist, in order to secure the privilege, seen as the norm, for the White, Qallunaat staff. While the policy is written so as not to exclude Inuit, the overwhelming majority of those who benefit from these privileges are non-Inuk. This leads to what many Inuit view as a double standard. When asked about these issues, Inuit educators shared exhaustively their thoughts and connected feelings towards these benefits. Their overwhelming responses concluded that they feel like less than, because of how the benefits are or are not applied to them. While some Inuit attempted to understand the

rationale behind the distinct difference in benefits, many more were confounded in regards to the differentiation between locally hired and non-locally hired educators.

When given the opportunity to voice their opinions about these issues, many of the Inuit sighed, rolled their eyes, got visibly irritated, and showed other negative emotions.

For us Inuit we don't get free housing, the English teachers get free housing, brand new furniture in the house, we have to pay for ours... We are living in the community but we have to pay... We can't get housing like the White... I have no idea why it is. It makes me feel weird. (Annie)

This was a challenging topic and most of the educators felt that they were being treated unfairly.

Emily stated that,

It's not fair. I don't know why. It should be equal to everyone. We all work at the same place so it should be equal. It's hard for us to... if we had more cargo, the shipping is like basically free for them. I wish we had that plus their houses are cheaper.

The frustration felt by that teacher is palpable. She feels like things are unfair, that she doesn't matter and "they" get everything. This is a common theme that ran through the interviews. "They are hired from somewhere else... I don't know. When they come they have everything" (Nancy). It is very challenging for teachers to work together in this scenario. The students are very aware of who lives in school board housing. In small villages everyone knows which houses are owned by the school board as these houses have school board insignia on them. This message, sent to the Inuit educators of being less than, pervades

the educational milieu. Concepts such as value and worth are intertwined into this as Inuit struggle to take control of their own educational future.

Sarah, a teacher with over 10 years of teaching experience, who lives and works in the same medium size village that she grew up in, shares her thoughts about the benefit packages.

The Inuit teachers are aware of that. They are aware of this inequality. I was wanting to stop teaching when I thought about that. One year when I was lucky enough to stay in a staff house because I didn't have a place to stay the principal allowed me to stay in a Kativik apartment for a while. For a while and then I got a letter saying I was not eligible to a staff house so you have to leave in a week. That made me really think this is unfair treatment. I feel like we are back in the 1970s...Why are we educating our Inuit kids when they are basically being told that you can't have these houses. It felt like you are lesser, that is how it felt to me. (Sarah)

Sarah takes a deep breath and continues:

When the school board was established with the James Bay Northern Quebec Agreement it clearly stated that you had to have your Bachelors [degree] and if you are hired outside the territory you are allowed those benefits. That is from '77, it is an old thing that the school board is still obliged to follow. When we have a housing crisis in Kativik that I find should be reviewed badly because it also could be an incentive for the younger generation to take on the teaching profession. ...Why does the school board hold on to these old polices...We have talked about it. As a teacher I have gone to the union and said this is how it is and we are really stuck between a

rock and a hard place. As a school board we are saying this is what we want but we are getting deaf ears they are saying the pressure is coming from the ministry.

Sarah shares her opinion without fear. She is used to standing up for her opinions. Her response connects to the second research question. She shares what she thinks could change to support formalized education. She wants the school board to review the policy and to make the practices equal for Inuit teachers. She is clear about the inequitable treatment that occurs in many ways, particularly in regards to the benefits packages. Although she understands the basis for these practices she also believes that they should be changed. We discussed her sense of frustration and she firmly believes that things will not change while the current policies are still seen as appropriate

Sarah questions why Inuit would become teachers when there are so many better options in terms of housing and benefits. These options include working for other organizations that give housing allowances, or provide housing. I wonder the same thing. She believes, as is suggested by this research, that it is the care and concern the Inuit have for the students that encourages them to take on the teaching role within the community.

Sarah is not the only person concerned about the link between housing and education. In an interview with the *Globe and Mail* newspaper, Mary Simon, former president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami discusses some of her concerns (Keevil, 2014). She shares that there is an unequal playing field between Inuit and Qallunaat teachers. “Teachers moving north for work are offered housing and a northern living allowance on top of their salary, she says – perks that aren’t provided to Inuit teachers who already live in the North” (Keevil, 2014). This is the same sentiment shared by most of the educators I interviewed.

When discussing equity concerns, many of the Inuit educators talked about their own concerns about fairness. While many spoke about the benefits, with a focus on the housing, which is almost always in short supply (Keevil, 2014; Nunatsiaq News, 2013), another significant issue was mentioned repeatedly. Throughout the interviews 32 of the participants stated that they felt their workload was unfair, particularly in contrast to the negative perceptions that the Inuit believed was circulating continually about them and their teaching practices. When asked about their workload, many teachers discussed the need to translate everything. “We have to translate them all. We have to figure out a word. Some of the Inuit work even harder. I do. I see that. We have to translate everything” (Emily). This issue of having to translate all of their work- having to translate the names of colours, buy books, and write out the text in Inuktitut and glue it on, of creating their own calendars in their mother tongue, was continually mentioned. This is not uncommon amongst educators who work in minority/non-dominant languages. One teacher extended this concept by stating that “we have to create everything. We photocopy fun little additions, erase the English or French, and translate it to make our own materials. In the English/French it is easier- Moyers, Scholastic⁸ ... it is just easier” (Emily). While it may be challenging for anyone teaching in Canada, in any language other than first language English or French, these challenges are truly unique when considering the lack of Inuktitut resources and the need to keep the language vibrant. This was also brought up as a concern about the difference between Qallunaat teachers and Inuk teachers. “They don’t work extra hours like us, we take our materials home and we work on it. It’s not being done in the south, we are doing all the colours in Inuktitut, cutting it out” (Dora). Other teachers seemed to think that they will never get these resources. “It would be surprising if I had things made for me... I would plan more and cut less” (Sarasia).

⁸⁸ Scholastic and Moyers are companies that sell educational materials

This comment is of interest as a complaint often made by the Qallunaat educators is that the Inuit educators do not plan. While many teachers around the world struggle to develop materials in lesser taught languages, or immersion subjects, the Inuit teachers I interviewed felt that the Qallunaat teachers had many more resources available to them.

While I wonder about the knowledge base for the Qallunaat comment, I also wonder if time, which is static, could be better used if the Inuit teachers had less cutting and translating to do and were free to do more pedagogy. This seems like it should be an easy thing to fix. Easy availability in the first language of the school board, the language that the mission statements decrees as a priority, should be forth coming. According to the teachers I spoke to this was not the case.

The impact of the benefits is not simply one of equality and equity: it is also an issue of priority and the feeling that Inuit educators, and what they teach, is not valued. A young educator discussed this issue,

I know it is not equal. I can see that the Qallunaat think that what they are teaching is more important than the Inuit programs. It has always been like that, they think they have more rights, more rights and privileges more...it has always been like that. But it doesn't make it right, but we are just used to it. (Maina)

Clearly Maina feels that equality does not exist within the school board, however, she is also used to it. This concept of being used to unequal treatment, was a theme that continued throughout the interviews. Jamieson (2013) suggests that many Aboriginal people still see themselves as inferior and that this learned position must change. Many Inuit suggested that they felt things were unfair, but that it wasn't going to change so there was not much point in worrying about it. Some Inuit feel angry and resentful.

They are lucky, lucky, lucky. Like they are a teacher we are supposed to be like equal but like I want to get a house too, but in North they didn't have much houses every year... So I keep thinking how come they get a house and I tried to apply but I never get it [a house]. (Lucy)

This concept of inequality connects directly to CRT and meritocracy. The Qallunaat have houses because they come to the North and need homes. The question of fairness never enters the conversation. The Inuit shared how they are frustrated and do not know how to cope with this frustration. They mention that they have tried, but that it has not made much of difference. They feel that there is not much that can be done. Part of the reason for this feeling is that there is a sense that their funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 2005) and their ability to be effective and make an educational impact in the school is limited (St. Denis, 2007; Vanouwe, 2007). Wolf (2012) discusses how Aboriginal people are seen as incompetent and that this master narrative continues to reinforce the belief that there is little that the Inuit have to offer. With this current perspective there seems little that can be done to effect a powerful, positive change.

The Inuit educators shared their beliefs that teaching is not just a series of lesson plans, but rather about the depth of connection they felt to their students and to the community and how this connection was relayed through the act of teaching. One teacher shared specifically what being a teacher means to her.

Being a teacher is guiding students, being a leader, giving them hope, encouraging, motivating and to keep learning as well because we don't know it all. Looking for those students who really need that extra hand. (Sarah)

This poignant quotation clearly shares a perspective that breaks the master narrative of Aboriginal educators. This educator is not incompetent. She cares very much and wants to encourage and support her students. This educator wants a strong educational system for her community. She is working towards making this happen.

5.1.3. Theme 3: Racism... still

While race and issues connected to race are still areas of concern within many schools (Anyon, 2005; Apple, 2004; Zamudio et al., 2011) these issues are a daily, ongoing struggle for Inuit educators in the North. Thirty-two out of the 36 Inuit educators I interviewed saw racism as a part of their daily lives as educators. Issues surrounding judgemental behaviours and racial attitudes, preference and priority given to Qallunaat teachers, and unfair treatment was a thread that ran throughout almost all of the conversations.

There were four educators who believed that racism was not part of their everyday teaching life. When I reviewed the transcripts, looking at these outliers, I saw a specific trend. All four of these educators were young – all less than 30 years old, and all of them were teaching at a K-3 school, where there is an Inuk principal. These findings suggest that working at what is essentially an all Inuk school, and being younger, may mean that you either do not see the racial inequality or it may not exist within the parameters of the school environment. However, other educators, the vast majority, did not feel that way. When asked about racially biased practices within the schools, the Inuit educators shared their opinions readily.

Of all the areas we discussed, of all the issues brought up by me, and by the Inuit, the most prevalent issue was that of racism. This was the core, the center, the area that brought teachers to tears; that caused Inuit to choke back their emotions; that allowed the memories

of the past to enter the interview, and caused old, haunting feelings to surface once again. While several educators alluded to generalizations, one actually discussed them.

If I make a mistake it is my fault, but it is generalized to all Inuit – the non-Inuk parents are mean to me – because they are just waiting for me to make a mistake...One of the parents is really mean like that...he is racist to everybody–every Inuk. (Emily)

The openness with which Emily shared her feelings was astounding. These thoughts on racism fell within four major areas: prejudicial ideas and judgmental, lack of support and tools, unfair treatment, and a need to push back and have a voice.

Research supports concerns and issues regarding treatment of marginalized groups (Anyon, 2005; Brayboy, 2006; E. Taylor, 2009; Vanhouwe, 2007; Yosso, 2005). It is my belief that this too extends to the Inuit educators within the schools where this research has taken place. One educator said that Qallunaat think she just colours with the students. CRT concurs that experiences of educators indicate privilege extends and preferences the master narrative and those who fall within the realm of the master narrative (Bell, 1994, 1995; Delgado, 1995; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Stanley, 2007). The master narrative defines successful teaching as ordered, rigorous, and testable, etc., but factors such as caring about the students, using the first language, enlivening the culture, and many more are not considered part of the success for Inuit educators. These markers of successful teaching are guided by and shift only in favour of the master narrative and therefore in favour of the Qallunaat teacher. The cultural capital of the Inuit educator is clearly not valued.

According to many researchers, and my interviews, racism still exist in its most obvious form. One educator mentioned racism that occurred within the community. “There

was a guy here who worked for the restaurant as a cook and he had a sign that said, ‘No Eskimoes’ in the kitchen. He was sent south” (Minnie). The thought that in 2013, in Canada, that someone would think that sign was okay is simply astounding. Minnie also commented that most people thought it was just a funny joke and did not understand why people got upset about it. This notion of people taking things too seriously and worrying too much, the political correctness that is often cited, is a strong indicator that ongoing racism is still present. The fact that a sign like this is even posted displays the normalization of the racism within the communities.

Many people made comments, similar to Minnie, who stated, “Yeah I have the feeling that people think White people know better.” This concept was clearly linked with an ideological perspective that places the Eurocentric mindset as superior to the Inuit mindset. The funds of knowledge of the Inuit are rarely valued (Yosso, 2005).

Thirty-one out of the 36 Inuit educators interviewed commented on how they feel judged and undervalued. Comments such as, “Some Qallunaat are very judgmental” (Caroline) and “they don’t even look at us” (Siasie) were part of every conversation. Thirty-six educators, independently of each other (in all but two cases where they were interviewed in small groups) felt that Qallunaat were very judgmental towards Inuit educators. They all suggested that the Qallunaat did not respect them, or believe what they were doing was important. One Inuit educator stated that the Qallunaat teachers “don’t have much respect for the Inuit” (Mary). Many Inuit shared how they could not work with the Qallunaat as the Qallunaat would not listen and always took control. However, at times exceptions were noted. Several Inuit commented that there was one or two teachers who were not like that,

who cared, who shared, and who made a positive impact on the students and the schools. Sadly this was the minority.

Other Inuit educators mentioned that they heard racial slurs on a regular basis and that she feels that the Qallunaat are “high and we [Inuit] are very low” (Rynee). Another Inuk shared how her desire to further her own education was thwarted by a Qallunaat principal who “didn’t expect me to finish university...Like I was going to fail even before I started. It was so belittling” (Sarah). Beyond failing, the sense of isolation in the school was real for the Inuit educators. “They [Qallunaat] don’t even look at us” (Siasie). “They don’t have respect... Little things, not big, but daily it becomes bigger” (Mary). “I have been taught that the White way is the way- even here in this school” (Eva). While a few people making these comments might make you think they were isolated incidents, the fact that these comments were made by Inuit from at least eight different villages, from teachers ranging in years of experience, and from Inuit ranging in age from 22 to 63, leads me to believe that this is a recurrent problem. “Faces speak louder than words. Yep, their actions, faces, expressions and the way they look at you says a lot and we stay away, I stay away” (Eva). These direct words of hurt, and subtle looks, continue to plague education in Nunavik.

One of the major concerns with this racial bias is the fear that at some point in time, one might begin to believe it too. Sarah shared her connection to this concept.

I have experienced it. My mother was a teacher and she felt it too. We feel like ... and I started to believe it too... that we are less then...I have been really aware of not just that but that Inuit feel like we are less. I have felt it too. I have felt like I am less than a Qallunaat. Not worthy...not as smart, not as pretty, not better.

Part of the reason for this negative self-talk stems from the distinction between the Inuit and the Qallunaat teachers. Many of the Inuit educators mentioned that they were separate from the Qallunaat. Shelia stated that, “[w]e are separate. I don’t want to be separate, but they want to be separate.” This function of two sides, us and them, is apparent in all the interviews where the educators being interviewed teaches at a K-secondary 5 school. (Secondary 5 is the end of high school in Quebec. In Nunavik the children go to school from kindergarten to grade 7 and then do five years of high school). Noticeable is the lack of this in the K-3 schools. However, the majority of schools in Nunavik are K-5 schools so this feeling of two sides is important. This separation is linked to the “negative thoughts *they* think about us” (Mary). “There is whispering, and it causes a divide between us” (Caroline). When I asked what negative feelings, and what divide, the teacher I was speaking to laughed in a knowing manner and stated, “You know, Dawn” (Eva). Yes I know, but I want to hear it from them. I want to hear her story.

When asked if there was equality in the school, Maggie, who is quiet, and soft spoken, passionately shared her feelings.

Mostly Qallunaat, new Qallunaat, those first time in Nunavik they don’t have respect but people, the Qallunaat people who stay longer have more respect. It is harder to deal with it... older Qallunaat, those who stay longer they respect me. They smile, most of the new ones don’t smile. I understand French and English so I can hear new Qallunaat always putting Inuit down ... like these families are so angry, like this or that, they don’t listen at school they are just running around...I think all they want to do is put down instead of trying to help... I hear them complaining about that students ...I find they don’t have much respect for the Inuit and I have to say, sometimes, not

all the time... That really hurts me because I am an Inuk teacher and the White teacher came here to help and make money for Inuit people and if I hear them complaining all the time. I just can't stand them.

When the Inuit mention being judged they may blame the Qallunaat but they are often not sure if that is actually racism. When I used the word racism in my questioning, many Inuit seemed ill at ease, as if I was creating a problem of sorts. However when I asked if they felt that the Inuit were judged on the basis of their race rather than the quality of their work, most Inuk concurred. "The Qallunaat think they know everything... they are treated higher and they feel it and when it happens they become snobby and say negative things. Not once do they say positive things" (Eva). One Inuk spoke about a time when a Qallunaat didn't believe her.

She asked me, "How come you gave this student a mark, she never comes [to class]?" She comes! "No, no, you are a really fake teacher- how come I never see her?" She comes to Inuktitut time and then sneaks out ... "You are lying, you are a liar..." I got so furious- that is how bad it is sometimes, we are treated like that. There is tension all the time. (Susie)

This suggestion of tension was common in almost all of the interviews. Some of the exceptions, as mentioned previously, were teachers who taught in the K-3 schools. This will be explored further in the chapter 6.

When I asked if they felt that Qallunaat believed they were superior, all of the people I spoke to concurred. Susie shared that "I heard that our principal say Inuit are dumb, they don't know how to work, they are no good. Yeah Inuit people are always being put down. I don't understand why." When I asked if Qallunaat had the power to carry out racist actions,

everyone agreed. When I asked if Qallunaat benefited from this superiority and Inuit were negatively affected by it, everyone agreed. “She [the principal] ...ignores me, so I don’t go to ask her any more. She is always mean to me” (Lucy). While the words “racism’ may not be used, it is evident that racism does exist today in the Arctic region of Quebec.

When I review the comments made by the Inuit educators it becomes clear that there is ongoing, hurtful racism occurring within the schools. Comments such as “I really find them selfish and they think they are better and bigger than me” (Mary). “We are really down and they are really up, almost all the time it is like that in this school and the school board” (Sarasia). “We are not being treated equally at all” (Susie). “People are not treated the same here” (Lucy). “They say – all the time, that Inuit are dumb” (Susie). “The Qallunaat teacher are negative about our kids” (Betsy). “I don’t want to say bad things about the Qallunaat teachers, they come in and they are all that and they know everything already” (Eva). “It’s not fair at all” (Leena). “They jump to conclusions” (Betsy). “The way they look at us says a lot and so we stay away” (Eva). The Inuit clearly do not feel that they are treated fairly or equally by the Qallunaat teachers. I wondered if this was new. Would a seasoned educator feel the same way? I had my answer when Susie spoke.

Some Qallunaat teachers...actually I have been involved in school council and over the years sometimes I feel it is not nice, but it is true. As an Inuk I feel dirty, silly, that is how some Qallunaat teacher make me feel, dirty and silly, that Inuit can’t do their jobs well, Inuit can’t be teachers, Inuit can’t be administrators. That usually comes once in a while in our meetings Inuit are stupid, students are stupid. That is how bad some Qallunaat teachers make us feel...One time I was told by a Qallunaat teacher who is still teaching here that we would never have a problem if all the Inuit teachers were like Qallunaat

teachers... high educated, well educated, there would be zero problem if all the Inuit teachers were like Qallunaat teachers... then she invited elders because a lot of things happened in the community the relocation in the high arctic ... and then after I saw her and asked her how did it go... and she said even the elders aren't worth it, they don't even know what to say, even how to say a story about it. They are dumb, they are being paid for nothing. It goes on and on and on and the Inuit teachers and the Qallunaat teachers are separate... Why are some of the Qallunaat teachers pointing at Inuit teachers when they're not doing what they are supposed to be doing? It doesn't make any sense at all.

Susie is frustrated and angry. She states that Qallunaat make her feel dirty and blame the Inuit for all the problems. She also points to the division between the two teaching groups. She does not understand why the Qallunaat judge the Inuit so much, but she is sure that they do, and they have in fact told her that when they blamed the Inuit for all the problems and stated the elders were not worth it. What Susie is talking about is the not so hidden master narrative of the incompetent Inuit educator. For her, it not only exists, but it lives in her daily teaching, in every move she makes. The need for a real change is essential.

This quotation shares not only a sense of inequality, but also a strong feeling of frustration and anger. Susie states that as an Inuk she at times feels "dirty." This sense of feeling inferior is theorized by CRT where the dominant groups ensures their privilege by keeping the other group down. This occurs at the individual, institutional, societal, and epistemological level where dominance by White, Western people has been occurring for so long that it is now seen as the norm (Gillborn, 2008).

One Inuit educator shared what she had heard. Susie said, “It’s only gossip, but I hear that our principal said that Inuit are dumb, that they don’t know how to work, they are no good. Why are Inuit people always being put down? Why?” As I sat listening to this, unable to answer, I wondered many things. I asked this teacher if she thought the gossip could be true. She hesitated, and then suggested that she knew it was not gossip, that she knew it was true, but just did not want to come right out and say it, for fear of offending me. I realized at that moment that regardless of knowledge and experiences, that I was still a southerner, White and a Qallunaat. However, I was also a CRT scholar and one of the goals of CRT is that “scholarly resistance will lay the ground work for wide scale resistance” (Bell, 1995, p. 900). I could not answer all the questions, but I could use CRT as a way to analyze and resist the status quo. As well, it could be a starting point towards capacity building.

When I asked Susie what she thought could be done to rectify this situation, she shrugged. The feeling of inevitability that nothing will change seemed pervasive with most of the educators to whom I spoke. “We Inuit are full of patience... but it gets to you it gets to the point where I can’t sleep... where I think, what can I do, what can I do better? ... I see most of the time that people are frustrated” (Dora). This educator showed clearly how she feels hopeless about the current situation and her role in improving things.

5.1.4. Theme 4: Language and power

As outlined in chapter 1, language and language planning are critical for minoritized languages (Cummins, 2001; S. K. Taylor & Skutnabb-Kangas, 2009). While Inuktitut is currently a strong language, research indicates that it is beginning to decline. In most of the interviews, Inuit shared that they felt that L2 were clearly preferred over L1. Concerns regarding language loss were prevalent in many of the interviews. One educator stated that

“For five or six year now we have been losing our language, really, really fast ...when they are in their secondary level their Inuktitut skill is more like grade 2 or grade 3 level” (Susie). This insight brings into focus a major concern with language loss. Decline of the younger speakers is considered the greatest risk for language loss (Norris, 2007). Many of the educators I interviewed suggested that their main role was to support Inuktitut and transmit their language to younger generations. “This is a minority language ...we are really, really trying to find ways to preserve it and also be proud of the language and who we are....I have a way of helping the students” (Sarah). A young educator discussed how at first she did not see the big issue with language, but after teaching for two years she realized the impact. Malayia stated that “they are losing their language.” Her concern was based on her own experiences teaching grade 1. Malayia has changed her mind, “I would say that kids should be learning their language...all the way through grade 6...then they would keep their language forever.” When I asked why the change of opinion, Malayia looked at me and said, “I want them to learn everything about English and French, but mostly Inuktitut.” She understood well the need for this and the risk of losing her language.

The call for mastery of Inuktitut was strong by almost all of those interviewed, but there were some who suggested that not everyone felt the same way. Some of the educators, with whom I spoke felt that the parents were at fault for preferencing the L2 over the L1. This colonized consciousness (Fanon, 2008), occurs when the minority group has been colonized and no longer sees the benefit of his or her own distinct culture.

As an example of this, Maina stated that:

When it is report cards parent will go to the English teacher and not come to me because they think they are learning more in English than in the Inuktitut classroom. It's, I don't

know, even some Inuit, not all, think that learning English or French is so, so much better than learning their own language. They think that but at the same time they don't want to lose their own language.

Maina shared a growing concern. If a master narrative is told for long enough, do the dominated group end up believing it? Roberta Jamieson (2013), a lawyer and Aboriginal Rights activist, speaking at a summit on post-secondary education states that “we seem to still be combating myths and stereotypes which lead too many to believe they are inferior, incapable, unworthy” (p.1). It is this self-doubt that concerns many of the Inuit educators, and many researchers. These narratives are strong. At times, parents see the choices between learning the L1 and being successful as their only choice. This choice is unfair and other, better options such as bilingual or multilingual education exist (Fukudo-Parr, 2004). Another educator suggested that it is not all parents who want the L2 stronger, a “few parents want them to learn English quicker...but I don't really like that. I want them to learn Inuktitut first, the mother tongue” (Leena). This was the prevalent attitude of those I interviewed.

Most of the Inuit I interviewed, who are also parents and grandparents of school aged children, want children to master Inuktitut. This raised the questions about the language planning process. When I asked this, many of those interviewed had a great deal to share.

They started without asking the community people. We really want Inuktitut until grade 4 or 5, but they are starting even younger...There is no communication, No one questions... It's being erased little, by little, our language and they are adding more second language. (Malayia)

There is clearly a lack of communication. These educators do not feel that they are considered when major issues, such as language, are discussed.

Ah those commissioners always decide what they want before they talked to teachers...they are not communicating...so commissioners, want English starting in grade 1...they have to ask the teachers what is best for the students because the teacher knows, they are with the children all the time... they just decide what they want and we have to follow what they decided...I have to have at least a half an hour in English or French now. (Leena)

Leena was very concerned about the early integration of English. As she was speaking she was getting more and more agitated. She clearly did not feel that the commissioners, those who make decisions about education in Nunavik, cared about what the teachers felt was best. She was worried about the shift in language policy.

When I asked a person with a highly responsible position at KSB why the change in language policy was instituted, he was unable to articulate the reasons and the expectations from the change. It is possible that the deficit model discussed earlier in this paper has been applied to both the students and the teachers. Inuit, in positions of authority, may feel that they are not capable and therefore quickly move to “fix” the language situation. Eva agreed. She said that,

They were talking about...the research, and told us and gave us dreams that Inuktitut is going to go longer, past grade 3. Many times they come and tell us and they spend all that money and ...it just never happens.

I asked her why, and after quite a long pause, and a look of frustration, she shared that she believes that they (the commissioners, the principals, and the administration) think that the Inuit can't teach well.

The impact of moving language targets and planning for language that is encumbered by a lack of belief in the role of the Inuit educator has a devastating effect on the learning of the Inuit students, and the role of the Inuit educator. Still, a few educators believe that equality of language can exist within the school board. Maggie, who has taught all primary grades, shared that she “like[s] both. It is good to have both”. Many models of language planning agree with her. Since bilingual education shows strong tendencies to support both languages, especially when both languages are used for content teaching, then a shift from the current subtractive language model would best support the students and increase the sense of identity desired by the Inuit educators (Cummins, 2000; Hornberger, 2002; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; S. K. Taylor & Sknutnabb-Kangas, 2009).

5.2. Working Towards Improvement

My second research question, and perhaps the most important question, asked: What shifts could occur to support Inuit educators? This is a complex and challenging question that is steeped within the ideology that something must change in order to make vast improvements in the sense of importance, and role of each Inuk educator. It is not surprising that the supports desired by the Inuit connect directly to the barriers they established during the interviews.

Within this next part I will consider the suggestions made by Inuit educators. Section 5.3.1 considers a reframing of education and what it means. Section 5.3.2 looks at policies that could support the Inuit. Section 5.3.3 shares thoughts on better working relationships and section 5.3.4 considers how resources and professional development can support Inuit educators and section 5.3.5 will discuss how a shift in language focus could change everything.

5.2.1. Reframing education

I remember sitting in a curriculum meeting, one of only three Qallunaat, trying to come up with a curriculum framework: a framework to support Inuit students in education. The meeting was held in Inuktitut and I had a translator sitting beside me, translating for me during the meeting. As the meeting progressed I shared some of my thoughts on the curriculum framework and my ideas about having self-actualization at the centre of the framework. To me this was simple: each student should strive to be the very best he or she could be and that meant working towards self-actualization. What I did not know then, and only really understand through the process of interviewing 36 Inuit educators, is that my vision was not culturally responsive to the needs of Inuit students or Inuit educators. My thoughts and ideas for education were linked to the individualist concepts, such as self-actualization, that is held within most Eurocentric societies. This is not the same in the North...and it took me years of personal development and significant amount of unlearning and relearning to comprehend this.

In almost all of the interviews the Inuit educators reframed how education is viewed. Their perspectives were clearly those of caring professionals who wanted to help children, guide them towards being good people, support them in their understanding of Inuktitut, and help transmit their culture to future generations. Very far down the list was any discussion about actual curriculum content.

While some researchers (Crago, 1992; Stairs, 1994) indicate that it may not be the goal of all Inuit to bring Inuit culture into the school systems, this has not been the case with any of the Inuit educators I interviewed. All of them, without exception, indicated the strong need for the language and a sense of culture to be reinforced throughout the schools. While

all Inuit educators agreed that the curriculum was important, they also clearly expressed that the whole student was more important than any one subject.

5.2.2. Policies to support

There are written policies, agreements, and understandings. Many of these appear to directly benefit those who relocate to the Arctic from other areas. Thirty-three out of the 36 Inuit interviewed mentioned issues regarding housing and flights. The general feeling is that these policies are enacted to support Qallunaat teachers. When I asked why they felt these policies still existed, most Inuit believed that it was due to a racial preference for Qallunaat; a sense that they were more deserving. This concept of meritocracy (Vanouwe, 2007) continues to pervade education in Nunavik.

While policies are written from a specific perspective, there were many comments made by the Inuit regarding the unwritten policies.

Even though it is not very obvious, there is always covert forms of belittling Inuit teachers and I have experienced this many times throughout my teaching years. It kind of changed when we got this school. This school is 99% Inuit teachers. Before we were immersed with non-Inuit more at [another school]. I have experienced it.

(Sarah)

The “it” in question was unwritten policy on how teachers were selected, how workload was assigned and how meetings were organized. While many Inuit commented on official policies, all but one Inuk spoke about the feeling that they are treated as “less than”. Rynee spoke about how frustrating being an Inuk educator could be. We don’t “have anything... there is nothing, reading and writing nothing. There is a feeling it is more for second languages.” This feeling is part of the unwritten policy.

5.2.3. Development of better working relationships

The single biggest frustration the Inuit educators discussed and therefore the single biggest shift that needs to occur is that of improved working relationships between Qallunaat and Inuit staff. Comments like “the staff needs to integrate with us. They need to see what we do, and be able to talk together and build a better bond between all of us” (Emily). Another educator stated that what is really needed is “team work.... I believe that we can have better team work than talking behind our back” (Mary).

Inuit teachers and Qallunaat need to get together sometimes to see what they can do to improve the classrooms. This is not happening in the schools. There is a divide between Inuit and Qallunaat, but not for me, we talk about the kids. (Caroline)

This quotation is unique in that it comes from an educator who has worked in both a K-secondary 5 school and the aforementioned K-3 school primary school. The uniqueness of these primary schools shifts everything.

In three villages there are early primary schools. These schools begin at Kindergarten and end at the completion of grade three, where the students then enter fourth grade at another school. At the same time these students entering fourth grade select a second language stream – either French or English. At these early primary schools, the Inuit educators were significantly less likely to be concerned about working relationships with Qallunaat staff. There may be several reasons for this.

First, in all of these school there is an Inuk leader of the school. This leader works with her staff and makes decisions that are best for the Inuit. One teacher, when discussing the administration of the school where she works, commented that things are different at the Inuk run school. Emily shared that “All my bosses are Inuk here. Yeah, it is comfortable

because I know them.” Second, in these schools the number of Inuit staff is significantly higher than Qallunaat staff, often there is only one or two Qallunaat staff, compared to many Inuit staff. Just the sheer numbers help shift the racial bias that seems to occur at the other, predominately Qallunaat dominated schools. Third, the focus at these schools is on first language Inuktitut. The overwhelming amount of time spent in L1 shifts the entire experience for the staff and the students alike. One Inuk stated that “in our area, the K-3 school that is only Inuit it looks like to me we have the power, but if I go upstairs to French or English classes I feel weaker” (Elisapee). This sense of feeling weaker must be addressed.

Almost all of the Inuit educators interviewed spoke of a desire to have Inuit children prioritized. This cannot happen while the Inuit and the Qallunaat staff are not working together, cohesively, as a team. This could be done through mentoring, team building, and developing an understanding of strengths that each person has. Many of the Inuit had a hard time envisioning this, and I understand why. Specific steps must be put in place to combat this issue and support the understanding of Qallunaat.

5.2.4. Resources and professional learning opportunities

Throughout all of the interviews a common theme was the need for more resources and professional development. Inuit teachers stated continually that they wanted to do the best they could, but that lack of resources often precluded their ability to focus on all aspects of teaching and pedagogy. While this has been mentioned, the Inuit I spoke to thought it was essential to include this concept as a need if improvement is to occur.

When asked how things could be improved, Sarah spoke about the lack of resources. “I think one of the challenges I face as a school teacher is limited Inuktitut resources. Is it constantly developing [the resources].”

It would be better if we had more materials that were made in Inuktitut. For example simple boarders, posters, anything. I don't know if there is a , we always have to make our own... There is not enough. (Maina)

Maina believes that if there were more appropriate resources, then teaching would become less frustrating and teachers would not leave the profession as often. As well, several educators called for elders to be in the school. This would support the entire concept of an Inuk school. "I want the elder to be here. I want the elder to be here all the time" (Lizzie).

The call for more resources continued through each interview:

Honestly I need science materials big time, I need math materials. The one they introduced is not even well made and they asked me to follow it...There is no communication between material developers and administration. I think the administration should know about everything. I think it is mandatory. (Eva)

The frustration surrounding this issue is clear. Sarasia states it succinctly, "if I had things made for me I would plan more and cut less" This should be an easy fix and yet it has not yet happened.

CRT would posit that this is due to the marginalization of certain groups. Education would look entirely different if Inuit were in charge. If that happened there would be less of a role for Qallunaat administrators. [It is possible that this is an underlying reason for the lack of Inuit administrators]. Few people would write policy that decrease their own job security.

One educator calls for "teachers and administration working closely together.... There are so many gaps between the admin [administration] and the teachers" (Susie). When I asked her if these gaps exist between Qallunaat teachers and the admin (which is mostly

Qallunaat) she said no. But, between the Inuk and the Qallunaat administration, Susie notes that there is “tension all the time.”

Teachers called loudly for this training. Section 5.2.1 discusses their strong feelings about the need for more training, improved access to resources, and better teaching materials. Many educators discussed the need for more subject specific pedagogical support. They have math ped counsellors⁹ but they need that too in gym. Inuit are gym teachers too, they do art too and they need ideas, and help to do more science too, there is nothing, reading and writing nothing. There is a feeling it is more for the second language [teachers]. (Emily)

All Inuit interviewed stated that they needed more support, and almost all of them felt that there was better support for Qallunaat teachers. There is constant debate about funding. One educator commented that the school board is “not prioritizing. I know a lot of money is spent on unnecessary stuff... and they are always cutting Inuit positions, but they are adding more Qallunaat positions” (Eva).

Question two asked about the shifts needed to support Inuit educators. Clearly, there are many areas in need of support. The Inuit I interviewed shared their desire to see these improvements: improvements that would lead to better teaching practices and ultimately better educators for Inuit children today and in the future.

5.2.5. Language Planning

A major concern for the majority of Inuit educators, was the strength of Inuktitut and the role and the value it plays within the school. As outlined by Cummins (2001), Taylor & Skutnabb-Kangas (2009), it is critical to have language planning in order to ensure the

⁹ Ped counsellor is the common used short form for pedagogical counsellor- this would be referred to as an instructional coach within the Ontario school system.

strengthening of minoritized languages. Inuktitut is currently a strong, vibrant language, and spoken as an L1 for almost all Inuit in Nunavik. Many of the educators interviewed discussed their concerns for their language and culture. Comments about decreasing in fluency, and losing language were common amongst those I interviewed. A firm plan needs to be put in place in order to ensure the viability of Inuktitut.

Currently Kativik School Board utilizes an early exit model. This model usually produces students who are weak in two languages. A change must happen. This change is called for by the Inuit educators I interviewed. Sknutnabb-Kangas & McCarty, (2008) and Thomas & Collier (2002) suggest competence in both L1 and L2 come from strong forms of bilingual education. As discussed in sections 2.2.2 and 3.3.5 strong forms of bilingual education occur when mastery of the L1 via language maintenance and teaching content subjects in the L1, while introducing the L2 are the focal point. These may include dual language programs or MLE programs.

For change to happen, there needs to be a shift in the current language policy and language planning implemented by Kativik School Board. Many of the Inuit I interviewed wanted to see a language program that included L1 only until the end of grade 4 and then a dual language program being implemented. Using this format, there would be fewer Qallunaat educators required, which may alleviate some of the struggles between the two groups. As well, teaching L1 medium of instruction in content subjects increases the value not only of the language but of the Inuit Educator. This change in language planning could be very supportive for both the Inuit students and Inuit educators alike.

5.3. Summary

Through the 36 interviews and the pages and pages of field notes, a clear portrait of the concerns and desires of Inuit educators becomes clear. By utilizing content analysis, through a qualitative lens, I was able to deduce four salient themes, and with support of direct quotations, share what I believe are the issues the Inuit educators would like to bring to the foreground. Continuing in this vein, ideas about how to support education in the North were garnered and shared.

While question three is not discussed in this chapter, I decided to honour the counter narrative by dedicating a chapter to that question alone. The following chapter will share the counter narrative created to disrupt the status quo.

Chapter 6. Building a Counter Narrative

In this chapter, I focus on the creation of a counter narrative to answer my third research question: What is the message Inuit educators wish to share about their practices in order to interrupt the status quo and create a counter narrative to the damaging master narrative?

Story telling has a long history in many cultures (Solórzano & Yosso, 2000b) and this is particularly true of Indigenous cultures (Archibald, 2008). The strong connection to storytelling makes the creation of a counter narrative an excellent way of sharing a counter story. By taking the comments and quotations of all the participants, and listening over and over again to their stories, I created a counter narrative to stand against the master narrative so often heard about Inuit educators. These vignettes were created by using words and sentences from the transcriptions, along with comments taken from my field notes. The following vignettes are their story- told by me- for them.

6.1. Vignette #1

“The daycare is closed...everyone is out fishing.” “Aii,” says Nellie. After a few minutes of chatter, they begin to look at the work they have been assigned to complete. As a teacher training counselor, Nellie works with Geela and other new teachers. Today they have time to talk about concerns and questions. It is rare to have the time.

“So, how are things going? Are you finding the students are happy? Are they talking to you? Do they like the class?”

“I am glad you are asking these questions... I feel like no one at the admin cares about the students... they just care about grades, behaviour, and keeping the kids in

straight lines... I mean we are all going to same place, why does it have to be a straight line?" "It's the Qallunaat¹⁰ way I suppose. They like things to be in order."

"But isn't this supposed to be our school?" Geela pushes.

"Yeah well, like that's true. We should complain about those things more...but you know us Inuit are passive. It's hard for us to complain about things."

6.2. Vignette #2

The vignette continues with Nellie in her role as teacher training counsellor, supporting Geela.

Nellie starts the conversation, "So we need to discuss how you feel as a teacher Geela. Do you feel that you are doing a good job? Is teaching important to you? Are you happy?"

Geela takes a deep breath. She is shy to answer. "I like teaching. I really like it. I mean we help others and when the kids get it, when that smile comes on their face...there is nothing like that. You know what I mean?"

"Yes," Nellie says, smiling to herself at her own memories. "I remember when I took my class fishing. Some kids really do want to go out and go fishing. So I took all of my students out for fishing and every fish we caught we saved it, put it in a bag and a week after we started working on the fish. I made them open the fish, check out their guts, you know science, and the kids were so into it. And some kids started saying things like... when I grow up I am going to be like Nellie. I am going to go hunting and fishing I am going to finish school. I am going to get a ski-doo, I am going to get

*what Nellie has: ice drill, fishing hooks, I wanna be like her! They were telling their parents about going fishing and checking the fish guts, this is the liver... it touched the kids hearts and also the parents hearts. That is the first time I remember feeling like the kids really got it and learned something important to them, not just about what **they** want them to learn you know."*

"They?" Geela asks.

"Yeah, you know. The principals, the Qallunaat, the government... everybody but us! We know that the learning about numbers, and syllabics and worksheets, and manipulatives is fine, but our kids need to experience the learning. It is who they are. It is who they have been for generations. If you take that away, you kill them...or at least make them different to the point where they don't know who they are anymore."

"Sometimes I worry that if I take them out on the land too much then the principal won't think I am a good teacher. Do you know what I mean?" Geela asks.

"Yes I know Geela. It is really hard for us someday eh? Some days I want to scream at them... they just don't get it - at least not most of them. One time I was told by a Qallunaak teacher who is still teaching here, we were discussing about her students who I was teaching in Inuktitut at that time and she had a hard time with her students, some of her students and she started telling me... We would never have a problem if all the Inuit teachers were like Qallunaat teachers... high educated, well educated. If this was the case there would be zero problems. If all the Inuit teachers were like Qallunaat teachers it would fix everything. And then she invited the elders into her class because a lot of things happened in the community. The community had just

had an official policy meeting about the high Arctic relocation so she invited two elders who were family members of the ones moved up North to come and talk to her class. I was excited because I thought that was such a good thing. Then after I saw her and asked her how it went and she said even the elders aren't worth it. They don't even know what to say. They can't even tell a proper story. She said that they are dumb, they are being paid for nothing." Nellie gestures frustration and then continues. "Everyone thinks they know what is better for our students, but they don't. I mean maybe they are better at teaching math or something, but I am better at teaching life, culture, language, respect, spirituality, and how to be an Aboriginal." Nellie takes a deep breath. "At first I was scared to be like that, to be pushy, but I have to now. I have to stand up for my kids. They are all my kids. I live in this community. I know all the families. My job doesn't stop at 3:30p.m. It is a job of a lifetime."

"I think so too," Geela chimes in. "That is why I want to teach. I want to help the kids be more themselves. I love working with the children. The creativity, the joy the learning that takes place when you are teaching. I love it. And being around the kids there is always hope. They are always learning and not just during class time. I LOVE THAT!"

"Aii! I think it is important that are kids feel that hope and joy. When I was younger," Nellie continues, "when I was a child most of the Qallunaat teachers didn't listen to me or see what I needed. So when I look into children's eyes they don't need to speak or tell me anything about their life. I just need to look into their hearts and give them what they need; what I wanted when I was a child. Back then the teachers were like

being picky with the kids, so they would put you down. They didn't give them time to listen to you to make you talk and they would just shut me up and I said when I grow up I want to be a teacher. I am not going to shut them up I am going to listen to them. And I said to myself I am going to defeat them, the Qallunaaq and that is my goal. My goal is still to listen and to help the kids. I wish every teacher felt that way, but not all do ... not all feel that way."

"I know. We have many good, good teachers, but there are some really bad ones. Even the Inuit teachers can be bad sometimes. We are not all perfect, but it feels like if I make one little mistake, the Qallunaaq are all over it. It feels like it is always our fault. They need to recognize that Inuit teachers are as good as anyone." Geela says.

"You are right Geela, but we have to still try to make it work. This is what we have right now. It makes me sad too. I worry for my grandchildren. I worry that they will grow up feeling dirty."

"Dirty?" Geela asks.

"Yes" says Nellie, "dirty because we are not WHITE like the snow. You know when I first saw Qallunaaq I was so surprised. How could anybody be so White? When the first Qallunaaq came up North I was a child. That was when school had just started. At home we would eat seal meat all bloody and everything or raw fish and the Qallunaaq, if they were walking this way and it looked like they were going to come in to our house, we would hide our food under the bed and wash our hands very quickly because we were so shy of what we are eating and what we were doing and we were ashamed of our culture because the Qallunaaq are so clean. They are White. It looks like they never touch seal blood. It is different now for me today they can watch me

eating; they can eat with me. I can invite them any time because I am not ashamed any more. At first our ancestors were ashamed of their culture. I think maybe it is getting better, but some people are still very shy to invite a Qallunaat to their homes and some Qallunaat are way too judgmental.”

“I find them judgmental at school. They don’t trust me and this hurts me,” Geela says quietly.

“What do you mean? I think I could guess, but if you tell me, maybe I can help a bit.”

“Well...”

Geela starts and the emotions come quickly to her face. She begins to cry. She cries from the humiliation of feeling less than, she cries for her own children in the school, and she cries because she doesn’t see the possibility for change.

“Last week, just around report card time, I had this big problem. I have this student in high school that is very good in her language. For five or six years now we have been losing our language really, really fast. The students at younger grades are okay with their Inuktitut skills, but when they are in their secondary level their Inuktitut seems to get weaker and weaker. It is more like a grade 2 or 3 level. Because of this it is hard to follow Inuktitut programs because some of the kids do not know and really, really need help with syllabics and diacritics. That year I was mostly doing just the reading part because they were really, really slow in reading and they just couldn’t read, except by sounding out the word, which is really slow. So I have this student, Adamie, who really doesn’t like his Qallunaak teacher. I don’t know why, but he really doesn’t like her. This student would come and sneak into my Inuktitut class and

when it was time, almost time for him to go to the homeroom teacher he would sneak out and go home. So, when it came time for report cards I gave him a good report card mark because he was really good in Inuktitut. So he got a very good mark in Inuktitut. Anyhow, there was no problem made with this at all. But, a few days after report cards I was in the office making photocopies and this homeroom teacher came to me in front of everyone in the office and said,

“How come you gave this student a mark, he never comes?”

“He comes!”

“No, no you are a really fake teacher- how come I never see him?”

“He comes when it is time for Inuktitut time and then he sneaks out again.”

“I am right across from your classroom and I never see him... you are lying, you are a liar.”

“This is what she said to me. This is what this Qallunaat teacher, who has only been in the North for four months, says to me in front of everyone. She is the first one to demand respect and she treats me like this. I thought about that, and about the poor kids in her class and then I got really furious and I ran upstairs and went to get my binder of all the work the students have been working on and I went to the office and slammed the binder in front of her. I told her to look at it, see the work Adamie has done, and see all the days he has been in my class! I was so mad. I wondered how anyone could treat another person like that. How could a teacher be so mean? But then, when I think about it this is just how some of the Qallunaat treat the Inuit teachers and the kids. It’s no wonder the kids don’t want to be in school. I mean I am

not a perfect teacher, but I try hard, and I care about the kids. Doesn't that count for something?" Geela is visibly shaking now. Nellie knows that words are not enough.

She gently reaches over and holds Geela.

There are no words spoken; they are unnecessary. All of it has been said before and will be said again. But not today: today they will stop. If you could see Geela later, with her three children, at home, you would see her making bannock. She is happy and laughing. The worry of the day has left her. Nellie is in her home with her 11 grandchildren, at a birthday party. Both educators are content, and yet both hold within themselves the anger, frustration and pain of the day and of many days still to come.

6.3. Vignette #3

It has been over a month since their last discussion in the school. Nellie knows that she needs to support Geela. She is also aware that the discussion today will be difficult: it is easy to say what is wrong. It is harder to think about moving past that. The goal for today is to consider what Nellie can do to support Geela. What Geela needs in order to be the best teacher possible.

"Hi Geela, how are you?" Nellie asks. She knows things have been difficult for Geela. Geela's father died. Nellie, with the entire community went to the funeral two weeks ago.

"I am okay, but my mother is having a hard time."

"Ai! I know how it can be" Nellie gives Geela a hug. *"Are you okay to meet today and talk about moving forward?"*

“Yes! I am happy to have time to think about teaching. It was good to get back to teaching last week. Siasie helped me out a lot, getting me caught up on things that happened when I was away. It was really good to see the kids again too! I, I like to think that I am giving them what I can as a teacher. It is more than a job.” Geela takes a deep sighs, laughs a bit and then relaxes.

“I agree... we teach the whole students. We want to know everything about their lives and it doesn't stop at 3:30.”

“Nope! I see the kids all the time and they know I am always their teacher. I just love them.” Geela beams.

“So, what do you need? I mean we can all improve. We can all be happier in our job and feel better. I think when we feel better, we do a good job.” Nellie encourages Geela. Geela is slow to start, hesitant to complain or ask for anything. She takes a bite of Bannock before she starts.

“I asked the principal about taking other courses, ones not in the teacher training program. I had the feeling that he felt like I would fail, like I would fail before I even started. It was so belittling... I was so sad. It feels to me that when I want something, I can never get it, but if a Qallunaat wants it, then it is no problem. I am not saying everyone is like that, but it feels like it sometimes.” Geela looks shy, uncomfortable. She is unsure of sharing these thoughts, but wants to continue. *“I am not trying to complain I just...”*

“You are not complaining Geela” Nellie states clearly, “We need to stop being so passive. I know it is hard for us. We are not complainers. We can’t be! But we have to start standing up more.”

“I know... but it is hard! Some Qallunaat are very judgmental. They don’t even look at us. It really hurts me because almost every day I hear nasty comments. I hate it. We have the same jobs and I am very low and she is like...high.”

“I see that all time Geela” Nellie starts. “I hear it all the time too. It seems like it is just fine to put us all in one box and say nasty things to us.”

Geela looks upset, “Yeah! Last week I was late for work. I know I was late, but the daycare closed and it took time to find a babysitter. I heard some Qallunaat making nasty comments about that. About how Inuk are always late for school. But it is easy for them. They come here and it is just them. They do not have parents here, elderly grandparents, a house to take care of, and many kids. I know I should not be late for work, but I hate it when they judge me about that kind of stuff.”

“I know,” Nellie sighs. “I see it and hear it every day. It can be really hard sometimes. I know us Inuk are really sociable people, but the Qallunaat...at least the ones who are new here, are not.”

“You’re right. Deanne, who has been here for 13 years, she is great. She visits us, talks with us...it is just like friends you know, but that always seems to take time.”

“You are right. In the mean time we feel badly. I remember being so jealous of the Qallunaat!”

“When they come here they have everything. They get a house from the school board to live in and it has furniture, nice furniture you know. They get a washing machine, and a dryer. The school board gives them three flights home, and they take care of them. Us, we get nothing. But we have so little and we get nothing from the school board at all. I understand a bit about some things, but other things really frustrate me. Like school things.”

“Okay” Nellie interjects, “Tell me what you mean. These are things I can help with.”

“Well, there is a lot to be done. We are trying to make everything. The Qallunaat can order anything. For us it is not that easy. We have to spend hours making calendars in our language, rewriting stories, making our syllabics. It takes so much time to cut all these things out. The new Qallunaat teachers, they just work their hours and then they go. I need more resources to help me. They want me to plan better, but I need resources and help too. The teacher training program takes forever. I do not have what I need to be a good teacher... and really, no one seems to care much about that.” Geela is clearly frustrated and unsure what to do.

“I know Geela,” Nellie states gently. “You need more tools, more resources, more support, more training, more help, more respect, more say... does that about sum it up?”

“Yes! But I will not forget that I need all of that so I can teach the future better. That is what I want it for. The kids deserve it. That is my goal.”

The principal comes on the PA and announces it is time for the staff meeting. *“I guess that is all the time we have today. Geela, I really want to thank you for sharing. I will try to get you what you need. Nakurmik.”*

“Nakurmik Nellie... I can't wait for fishing this weekend and...” They walk away, happy, together.

These vignettes are “could be real” situations. They are fictionalized, but based on field notes and transcriptions. These vignettes are purposeful. They serve the role of disrupting the status quo, and tearing down the master narrative through the creation of a new, possible, counter narrative. Sleeter and Delgado Bernal (2004) discuss how counter narratives are a tool that can be used to question the norm and challenge the status quo of the master narrative. These vignettes have been created for this purpose.

The vignettes show a unique situation in the North. The vignettes point towards a need for change, particularly in administration and power. These changes will be considered in the discussion.

6.4. Summary

The interviews conducted in the Nunavik region of Quebec, combined with copious field notes, blend together to give evidence of remarkable need and distress of Inuit educators. The findings in chapter five and the counter narrative in chapter 6 begin to answer the three research questions.

- 1) What do Inuit teachers perceive as challenges to their own educational practice?

The challenges for Inuit educators were clearly stated. The main issues are that of racism, lack of resources and professional development, language planning, and the sense of

education and the values of the education still being a Western ideal. These concepts were stated over and over again, in different ways, but with the same feeling, by almost every educator interviewed.

2) What shifts could occur to support Inuit educators?

These need for change was validated via the response to question one. Many suggestions were made regarding what could better support Inuit educators. These included reframing education so that Inuit values, language, and culture are the centre of the learning; finding ways for Inuit and Qallunaat to work together and therefore aiming to reduce bias and racism; and developing more resources and professional learning for Inuit educators. While these suggestions were the focus of most of the Inuit I interviewed, there was another underlying current. Many of the Inuit did not think these changes were likely to happen.

3) What is the message Inuit educators wish to share about their practices in order to interrupt the status quo and create a counter narrative to the damaging master narrative?

In reading the counter narrative, the message that begs sending is that Inuit are capable, caring, resourceful, and responsible educators; that being an Inuk means teaching the whole student all the time and not complaining about it. The counter narrative seeks to disrupt the status quo by showing the many qualities of Inuit educators.

Chapter 7. Discussion

7.1. Overview

In this chapter I will discuss the major findings that this research brought to light in terms of my three questions: 1) What do Inuit educators perceive as challenges to their own educational practice? 2) What shifts could occur to support Inuit educators? and 3) What is the message Inuit educators wish to share about their practices in order to interrupt the status quo and create a counter narrative to the damaging master narrative?

This study showed that Inuit have major concerns regarding their role as educators in Nunavik. These micro-level concerns were seen in almost all of the Inuit educators interviewed, leading this researcher to believe that these are significant concerns that need to be reviewed more closely. As well, there were macro level concerns brought forth during this study. The three major themes within this area are the need for leadership change, language planning as a global concern, and the Canada wide need for diversity in educators.

7.2. Micro level concerns

At the micro level are the concerns of the particular group studied within the confines of a specific geographical and social area. Within this study, many micro level concerns were discussed, including: perspectives on education, racial inequity and bias educational practices, a lack of resources and support, and language planning. CRT and TMP were used as lenses to consider how these areas impact education and the role of the educator. As well, the use of counter narrative to share the voices of those interviewed is discussed.

7.2.1. Perspectives on education

What does it mean for the Inuit educators to teach in Nunavik? Sarah, a seasoned educator, stated that “being a teacher is about guiding students, being a leader, giving them hope, encouraging, motivating and to keep learning as well because we don’t know it all.” This recursive concept of caring comes full circle in almost all of the interviews. The findings of this study are clear: Inuit educators want and need to view education from a caring perspective. Wright et al. (2000) and D. Taylor et al. (2008) discuss the need to find a way to support Inuit students. Their research shows how Inuit students thrive in the first three years of schooling, and then something drastic changes. Students who are bright, capable, and engaged, are no longer achieving. Students who showed signs of brilliance, begin to dull. Wright et al. (2000) and D. Taylor et al. (2008) suggest this is due to the shift in teaching practices and teaching culture. The Inuit students shift to second language classrooms in year four of schooling.

This research supports previous findings, but from a novel perspective. This study confirms that Inuit students need Inuit educators, but it also expands on the thought that Inuit educators need to teach students in a unique, caring, whole student manner. This not only supports the student, but as has been shown, allows the Inuit educators to grow as well.

While education is often viewed, and taught as a science, with courses such as curriculum and pedagogy, social foundations, educational psychology, and “supporting literacy”, to name just a few, it can and must be seen differently in the North. The Inuit educators interviewed for this study were firm in their belief that the role of education was three-fold: to care for the children, to support the development of Inuktitut and Inuit culture, and to create a welcoming friendly space where the children could explore and grow.

Throughout the interviews, and in reviewing the transcriptions, the continual message of education as a caring medium was reinforced. The need for this caring is discussed by multiple Aboriginal researchers (Battiste, 2013; Simons, 2008; Smith 2002). Many of the Inuit I interviewed had clear ideas about what this should or could look like in schools, and what it looks like in their classrooms.

Inuit teachers are caring, they care for the students, they work for the kids, they know, since they are in the same community, since they know the parents, they know what is going on ...they care for the students that they have. Inuit teachers are good in spite of all the obstacles...We are not just colouring. (Maina)

Maina shares how much she cares about the students, and her frustrations. She also focuses on the importance of knowing the students and how she works through all the difficulties. Like many others, she is frustrated.

The educators interviewed overwhelmingly felt that the school and curriculum were organized within a Eurocentric framework, with a preference for the Qallunaat way of teaching. This was seen when outdoor learning was minimized; when IRE styles of teaching were preferred; when taking the students out on the land was viewed as “special” rather than the norm; and when curriculum became the major concern rather than caring for children.

The Inuit interviewed talked about how their classrooms were organized to support student learning but, more specifically, to support Inuit student learning. The organization of the classroom should be dictated by the needs of the students and not some norm elsewhere. The Inuit interviewed in this study concurred with Aboriginal scholars: they want to teach the

whole child and start by caring for that child (Battiste, 2000; Simon, 2008; Smith, 2002; Tompkins, 2006).

During the interviews, the words care and caring were used 25 times and the word love was used 41 times. It is evident that these strong emotions are foundational for Inuit educators. While the Inuit educators in this study spoke strongly about their passion for the children, they did not see this in their Qallunaat teaching peers. The Inuit interviewed felt that these emotional connections towards the students were viewed by the Qallunaat as less important than the curriculum and pedagogy. These varying perceptions may account for some of the discrepancy in how education is delivered and what is valued. The Inuit interviewed shared their desire to see the connections as the most important key to education.

Competence can be viewed in many ways. When a competent teacher is deemed as a teacher who has perfectly written lesson plans and has strict classroom management, then the Qallunaat teachers are generally viewed as more competent than their Inuit counterparts. When funds of knowledge are the reference, then everything shifts. Consider what one educator said when I asked her why she was a teacher: “I realized that I loved working with children. The creativity the joy the learning that takes place when you are teaching. I loved it. And being around the kids there is always hope and the learning... the constant learning” (Sarah). This educator shares how she not only loves teaching, but she also sees it as a beacon of hope and way to keep learning herself. This way of framing education is not the norm for Qallunaat teachers. A shift must occur to better support Inuit educators and students.

The rich discussions I had during the interviews focused a great deal on how education needs to be envisioned with a focus on caring about the children as people first and

students second. One educator, Elisapee, shared her frustration: “Some of the teachers I see are so strict.” It is like ... “if you don’t read you are going to write 100 lines. Do you think that is going to help the kids? It is going to make them angry. It is going to make them stop reading.” This teacher shared the direct difference between some of the Qallunaat classrooms and the Inuit classrooms. While Qallunaat may see the Inuit as too laissez-faire (Cherubini, 2008; Vanouwe, 2007), many of the Inuit, as evidenced by this research study, see the Qallunaat as too demanding and ultimately uncaring.

Another educator showed her dismay at a routine school practice. Betsy said, “Not all teachers love teaching, and it shows. Yeah they yell line up, line up!” If you are all going to the same place why must you line up? What difference does it make if you “eventually get there?” I pondered this question and in my mind’s eye I could see my own class with its straight line, and again I was forced to wonder why I reproduced certain Eurocentric values and how these actions contributed to colonization of the Inuit students. It is imperative that these colonizing factors are reversed. To make this shift, a “paradigm shift regarding the role and place of...language and culture in schooling” must occur (Lipka & Mohatt, 1998, p. 54).

P. Berger (2009a) discusses how this shift is imperative if change is going to occur in Northern schools. He states that “Eurocentrism may act as a roadblock to educational change...change that would help schools reflect Inuit wishes rather than Euro-Canadian priorities” (P. Berger, 2009a, p. 57). While many Qallunaat, myself previously included, wonder why the Inuit do not get it and do not understand the division between life and school, the Inuit educators I spoke with got it. They shared copiously the need for school to care for and nurture the whole child. There is clearly a need for a reframing of school with care and nurturing as the focal point. Before this can happen “Eurocentric thinking must be

acknowledged and resisted if Inuit visions for schooling ... are to be fulfilled” (P. Berger, 2009a, p. 57). This change of priorities is critical for a shift in the educational milieu to happen.

7.2.2. **Racism**

A concern mentioned by almost all of the Inuit educators I surveyed, was that of racism. It can be hard to believe that today, in multi-cultural Canada, that racism not only exists, but abounds. In fact, this is so apparent, that many of the Inuit I spoke with were hesitant to use the word racism. Only after the interview was well under way, and idea and thoughts began to flow, did they share that, yes, there was racism in the North. One educator discussed how a new Qallunaat teacher told her that everything she was doing was wrong. Another educator shared how a Qallunaat teacher questioned every mark she gave. The assumption behind these behaviours is that Qallunaat know better, and therefore are better than Inuit educators.

The ongoing dialogue, the thread between all of the interviews, was the racial prejudice that Inuit educators experienced on a daily basis. Corson (2001) concurs that busy administrators often make and rationalize minor unfair acts as appropriate to save time, get things accomplished or simply because it is what has always been done. While this racial prejudice was felt the most strongly from Qallunaat educators and administrators, many Inuit were hesitant to name this as racism. In fact, racism towards Aboriginal People has become so normalized within society (St. Denis, Silver, Ireland, George, & Bouvier, 2008) that many people are unaware of the level of racism that exists and how prevalent it truly is. The Canadian Council on Learning (St. Denis et al., 2008), in their seminal report of education, states that “too many Aboriginal youth and adults have had to learn how to live in and with

racism” (p. 14). This constant racism decreases the awareness of it as it has become so normalized.

This normalization of racism was clearly apparent in most of the interviews I conducted. Many Inuit were hesitant to call an action racist, until I confirmed that I believed it to be racist. This shows a sense of colonization where the Inuit have been led to believe for so long that they are not capable that they see the slurs as the norm. St. Denis (2007) states that: “Aboriginal teachers’ lives are a testament to the ongoing legacy of racialization in Canada” (p. 1081). This research was conceived of, in part, to battle against the normative aspect of racism and create a narrative that showcases the strengths of the Inuit educators.

All of the Inuit interviewed discussed at length issues of racism and privilege within the school board and the schools. Many of them had significant examples of racial practices that occurred on an ongoing basis. Several Inuit discussed practices such as lack of support for training, less mobility within the school board, less curriculum support, lack of respect at meetings, meetings not conducted in Inuktitut, slurs about Inuit children, etc. It is evident that a change must happen.

When I asked one educator what she thinks can be done to rectify this situation, she shrugged. The feeling of inevitability that nothing will change was pervasive around most of the educators. Delgado (1995) discusses how those in dominant positions see their privilege as the norm for so long, that eventually it does become the norm. By considering the reality of the teaching worlds of both Inuit and Qallunaat educators, rather than simply reviewing the status quo, it is possible to move towards more equitable working situations. In order for real, long term change to happen, divisions between the Inuit and the Qallunaat must stop. Currently the tension between the two groups is high: “they don’t respect us ... all they want

to do is put us down,” (Mary) “we would never have a problem if all the Inuit teachers were like Qallunaat teachers.” (Susie) These tensions serve to segregate both groups and leave the Inuit feeling “less than.”

During the interviews I asked what would happen if Qallunaat teachers were not given extra benefits. The overwhelming comments were along the lines of ... they would leave, the kids would not have those teachers, the teachers would be unhappy and not stay very long etc. However, this notion is never turned around to question. If Inuit received similar benefits perhaps consistency in Inuit educators would increase. Inuit leader Mary Simon concurs with this perspective (Keevil, 2014).

I remember sitting in a staff meeting, in a small library, in a school up North. The Associate Director of the school board - there is always an associate director, who is NOT an Inuk - was discussing changing the language policy. A new teacher, young, fresh faced, 23 years old, stood up and basically said that giving the students another year of Inuktitut would ruin their education. She was not qualified to make this statement, and I feel certain that she would not have said anything of this nature if she was dealing with a Qallunaat administrator. I think this is evidence of how racism is so blatant and pervasive in the North, that a young inexperienced teacher can stand up in front of an entire staff, Inuk and Qallunaat, and say that the Inuit don't know how to teach and that Inuktitut is unimportant.

The message is clear to me. I believe it was clear to my Inuit colleagues on that day too: Qallanuut think they know better, and think they are better. I remember being so angry that day. I remember hoping to make changes.

Racism in the North is not only bound in comments by upstart youth. As mentioned in chapter 5, one Inuit educator stated that “I have the feeling that people think White people know better” (Minnie). This concept of knowing “better than” connects to the Qallunaat deserving more, or the concept of meritocracy, which has been visited and revisited throughout this thesis. Benefits and privileges which are part of the package for teachers, often apply only to certain teachers. As suggested earlier, the teachers who gain from these benefits are almost always Qallunaat teachers. While it is easy to say that it has always been that way, the lack of benefits, support, resources and value placed on Inuit educators is not fair to the Inuit teachers and change must occur.

Racism is the norm in the North. While the Inuit come with a wealth of knowledge, this knowledge is continually seen as less important than traditional academic knowledge. This devaluation of funds of knowledge is linked to racism as it devalues the whole person and therefore the educator as well. When culture days must be fit into the schedule, Inuktitut is taught less and less, and administrators continue to be Qallunaat, it is not hard to see that the funds of knowledge of the Inuit are not seen as important.

Perhaps the devaluation of Inuit is one reason why relationships between Qallunaat educators and Inuit educators are so tense. Many of the Inuit said they felt that they were not welcome to work with the Qallunaat. They felt that the Qallunaat did not want to listen to them, learn from them, or spend time with them. This is a critical finding as it is so important that teachers work together to support the students.

It sickens me to think that my Inuit colleagues are teaching in a school where they feel “dirty,” “judged,” and “hurt.” This is a major challenge for educators and the entire

education system up North. I could not teach in a school where I felt so disrespected. This presents a huge challenge to Inuit educators.

7.2.3. Lack of resources and support

The third challenge the Inuit discussed in terms of teaching, was that of resources and professional development. It a challenge for every teacher who teaches in any non-dominant language, to locate appropriate resources (Karsenti, Collin, Villeneuve, Domouchel, & Roy, 2008). Companies simply do not earn enough from small print runs and therefore rarely make resources for smaller populations. This issue is even more exacerbated by the unique situation of the Inuit. Inuit live in remote, isolated areas, where access to goods are limited. As well, one major resources for many people is the internet, but there are limited websites in Inuktitut and even fewer that host educational type materials. The Centre for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (2014) states that “finding instructional materials for the LCTLs (less commonly taught languages) is frequently a challenge.” This challenge affects all Inuit educators and students.

The Inuit interviewed cited numerous examples of feeling like they were not supported or that their needs and development as educators was not prioritized by either the administration or the school board. As well, information about policies, educational practices, and opportunities for professional development seemed to be lacking. One teacher, Mary, mentioned that “we are usually the last to know what is going on.” While this is problematic, it is also bound into a hierarchical and racially and linguistically biased practice. “The principal has the power in the school. Mostly he listens to and talks to the second language teachers” (Louisa). Louisa feels that the administration prefer the Qallunaat educators. Many people felt that the principal spent more time with the English or French

teachers rather than the Inuit teachers. Many Inuit spoke about not feeling like they had the power to combat these types of issues. If change is to happen, then professional development for the teachers that is on par with that of Qallunaat teachers must be readily available.

Many of the Inuit I spoke with suggested that the school board could be doing more to help them. They want and need resource materials. When I asked why the resources were not available, a colleague who works in curriculum development, stated that the materials exist, however, when I continued my interviews and suggested these materials exist, I was told another story. I was told that the materials may exist, but they are old, and outdated, and poorly created. I was told that they ask for these materials anyway and that they never arrive. It does not matter if the materials exist- what matters is the access to these materials.

As mentioned in chapter 1, Kativik School Board has a unique training program with McGill University. This program allows teachers to be hired and finish their certificate and/or degree while they are still teaching. While this is excellent in principle, there are some major flaws that have been discussed by the Inuit educators interviewed for this study. The flaws include needing to leave their home village, the length of time the program takes, and availability of qualified instructors.

The main concern with this program is that it takes a great deal of time. Many educators are enrolled in the certificate program for ten or more years. The Inuit interviewed felt that the training they were given was too slow. One Inuk interviewed who began taking courses towards her Bachelor of Education in 1993 finally graduated in 2014. Some of this is understandable: distance, the need to create culturally appropriate materials, and translate materials into Inuktitut, ensure obvious time delays, but 21 years seems extreme. This is an issue for every educator I spoke with. Solutions may be complicated, as time, location,

remoteness of village, family life, and qualified instructors often impact when, where, and how courses are offered. However, I do believe that if it were a priority, that these issues could be surpassed.

7.2.4. Language concerns

A significant issue, mentioned by almost all of the Inuit educators, was that of language. Currently KSB utilizes an early exit language program, where the students learn in their L1 for 3 or 4 years, and then switch over to the L2 completely, with the exception of Inuktitut language and culture classes still in the L1¹¹. As discussed in chapter 2 and 3, this represents a weak model of language learning that usually leads to subtractive bilingualism, where the student pays for the increase in L2 by the decrease or the stagnation of the L1. Studies have shown that this choice of language planning is linked to low L1 acquisition (Cummins, 2001; D. Taylor et al., 2008; S. K. Taylor & Skutnabb-Kangas, 2009; Wright et al., 2000).

Given the overwhelming evidence to support a stronger bilingual education program, it is curious that currently, with the introduction of a limited amount of L2 earlier, that the school board is moving in that direction. The Inuit I interviewed were concerned about language loss and the students not being able to read and write well enough. One educator mentioned that the school board promises more time in L1, but does not deliver. I wonder about this too. A fully bilingual program or an MLE program, that would honour the L1 and then introduce other languages, that would continue all the way through to the end of high school, with content subject split between the two or perhaps three languages (i.e., teaching math and the arts and language in L2 and social studies and science and physical education

¹¹ Subjects taught in L2 may vary slightly by schools. Some schools have physical education and religion in the L1.

and language in the L1) would increase the status of the Inuit educators, the number of Inuit educators and, most importantly, the success rate of the students.

7.2.5. The narrative behind the counter narrative

The creation of the vignettes, found in chapter 6 was critical for this study, as it shared the internal thoughts and details: the message the Inuit wished to convey. In these vignettes Geela and Nellie are sharing, over tea, emotions and issues that are always there. They consider the binary of the two cultures, and how one is dominant over the other. They wonder aloud about rules, and how and why they are implemented. Rules that Qallunaat take for granted within the school system, they see as unnecessary. Mostly they consider their lack of voice: the voice they once had, that was stolen away from them (Battiste, 2000) and how, if possible, they could work towards getting it back.

The research shows a clear portrayal of how Aboriginal educators view their own teaching and educational practices (Annahatak, 1994; Battiste, 2002; Battiste & Barman, 1995; P. Berger, Epp, & Moeller, 2006; Kaomea, 2009; McGregor, 2010; Simon, 1989; 2008; St. Denis et. al., 2008; Tompkins, 2006; Vick-Westgate, 2002). This is in stark view to the deficit model continually portrayed in the media, within the educational milieu and amongst the general public (Eriks-Brophy & Crago, 2003). In my own experiences working with Aboriginal teachers for 14 years, I often heard this binary expressed in differing ways. The Qallunaat teachers were good, smart, and tried hard; while the Aboriginal teachers were lazy, late, and did not know how to teach. While I ventured into many schools, with several different Aboriginal groups, this pervasive discourse seemed to be the norm amongst the Southern teachers, particularly amongst those southern teachers who were new to the North. This narrative about the inadequacies of Aboriginal education, and in turn Aboriginal

educators, is prevalent (Cherubini, 2008). However, in close discussion with Aboriginal educators, I was able to gain a clearer portrait of what it is really like for these teachers, and why frustration and segregation drawn upon racial lines are still the norm in these Northern villages.

7.3. Macro Concerns

Beyond these micro level issues and concerns, there are three macro level issues which this study considers. First, how does leadership effect the educators and the schooling of CLD students, second, what are the implications of being a CLD teacher in Canada, and third, what type of language planning is ongoing in other locations that could be used as a model.

7.3.1. Leadership matters

The Nunavut Board of Education (1994) states that “the only way to change things is to put Inuit into leadership positions” (p. 14). This concept concurs with the analysis of the interviews I conducted.

Inuit educators who worked at the early primary schools (kindergarten to grade 3), who were surrounding by other Inuit educators, and where there was an Inuk principal, reported feeling distinctly less racial bias, than colleagues working in other schools. These educators felt more power, were able to use Inuktitut more often, felt a sense of self-worth in their job and felt that they were well supported. This was in direct contrast to colleagues at the other schools, who reported feeling powerless. Teachers in the early primary schools changed jobs less, reported feeling happier, and worked in a community manner with all educators in the school, regardless of race.

In contrast, most of the teachers I interviewed taught at typical Northern schools where all the grades were taught in one school. This meant that there was usually a Qallunaat

principal, and many more Qallunaat teachers than Inuk teachers, as the students receive L2 medium instruction beginning in grade four. The Inuit at these schools felt similar to the scenario shared by Susie:

I was told by a Qallunaat teacher who is still teaching here... we were discussing about her students which I teach in Inuktitut and she had a hard time with her students some of her students and she started telling me... We would never have a problem if all the Inuit teachers were like Qallunaat teachers... high educated, well educated, there would be zero problem if all the Inuit teachers were like Qallunaat teachers.

The master narrative is pervasive in the schools. The educators I interviewed all felt the pressure of this narrative. This sense of less than makes education very challenging.

Tompkins (2006) discusses her “many conversations with new Qallunaat principals arriving on planes from Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, or Ontario and about ‘my school.’ I have heard them question the value of teaching Inuktitut, or if Inuit teachers are really qualified” (p. 251-252). This quotation supports the notion that Inuit educators work in schools where racism starts in the administration and continues from there downwards; where racism and prejudice are pervasive. These perceptions appear to be heightened when a Qallunaat is in charge of the school. When a principal challenges the qualifications of the staff, does not value L1, and pays little attention to culture, is likely that the Qallunaat will follow his or her lead. The Inuit educators, working in schooled mired by racism have a nearly impossible task: to empower Inuit children. The role of the Inuit educator becomes very complex when it is viewed through this lens.

7.3.2. Diversity

The cultural/linguistic capital of CLD groups has been discussed in this study (Gonzalez et al., 2005; Yosso, 2005). Often the strengths and knowledge of Inuit educators is seen as less than, while the strengths of the Qallunaat teacher is deemed a priority. I was teaching as an occasional teacher at a large elementary school in the South, when the concept of cultural/linguistic capital struck me. I worked with two occasional teachers. Jeannie was European descent and was not a visible minority. Farrah, was from India, schooled in English all her life, spoke Hindi as her L2, and had gone to university in Canada. Jeannie was lamenting to me that Farrah seemed to be getting much more work. I wondered why this bothered Jeannie—there were lots of teachers who got more work than either Jeannie or myself. Jeannie responded by saying, “Yeah, I know you get a lot of work and other people too, but Farrah doesn’t know anything and she can barely speak English, and the students can’t even understand her.” I was shocked. I shared what I knew about Farrah’s background, but none of that made any difference to Jeannie. She shared that she felt that she deserved her job more. I was not brave enough to ask more critical questions. But now, after working on this study and seeing the challenges of CLD teachers, I understand more. I understand that Jeannie felt entitled to more than Farrah simply based on the colour of her skin and her L1. I also understand that this is similar to how many of the Qallunaat teachers feel.

Teachers from diverse backgrounds struggle to be seen as capable in many schools in Canada and around the world (Sleeter, 1993). Cummins’ (2009) work on TMP is foundational in regards to shifting perspectives based on differences. Using questions as a springboard, as suggested in section 2.2.5, Cummins discusses the need to review the school and the processes that occur within the school in order to better support all learners. While

this theory focuses on the students, with slight modifications it could be used to consider ways schools and school systems might be able to support CLD educators. These concepts are outlined more fully in chapter 8.

Cummins (2009) states that “classroom interactions are never neutral” (p. 42). This begs the question of whether, since classroom interactions are never neutral, policies, interactions, and practices of schools and school boards are neutral. Surely the answer to this must be no. If this is true, then the larger question that needs to be answered is: What steps should schools and school boards take to ensure support for diverse teachers?

7.3.3. Language planning

The need for language planning is not only essential in Nunavik, but is critical world-wide to reduce language loss and increase the value associated with minority languages and those who teach these languages. Recently a worldwide movement has begun to develop mother tongue language programs. This movement is formed in part by researchers such as Cummins (2000, 2005, 2009), Skutnabb-Kangas (2000, 2009), Skutnabb-Kangas & Heugh (2012), and S.K. Taylor (2000) and policies developed in conjunction with UNESCO (2003). These policies deem the learning in a bilingual or multilingual situation, with the mother tongue being used for content subjects, in no way diminished a students’ ability to learn the national language (UNESCO, 2003).

New programs, such as those in Nepal (Nurmela, Awasthi & Skutnabb-Kangas, 2010; S.K. Taylor, 2010a, 2012, 2013), are leading the trend in MLE programs, where more than three languages are used as language of instruction. Other programs such as the Māori bilingual programs (May & Hill, 2005) and dual language or bilingual programs in the United States have also shown high levels of success for both L1 and L2 speakers (de Jong,

2012; Nora, 2013; Thomas & Collier, 2007). This success clearly shows the need to shift the focus from L2 acquisition to dual language learning: a move supported by Cummins' (2005) interdependence hypothesis.

7.4. Summary

In this chapter I reviewed the finding of this study in connection to the literature review. In the first section I considered the major findings as they related to the questions that started this entire process. I considered the challenges the Inuit educators face. These micro areas included different perspectives on education, racism, lack of resources and support, professional development, and language planning. CRT theory and TMP were applied and used to evaluate these concepts.

In section two, macro level concerns were discussed. I reviewed the need for leadership change, what diversity really looks like for educators, and language planning across the world. The broadness of these concerns could be played out all over Canada, and to some extent worldwide.

Chapter 8. Conclusion

This dissertation sought to uncover some of the concerns Inuit educators have expressed about their role and the challenges they combat on a daily basis. In order to find these answers, I began with three broad questions. 1) What do Inuit teachers perceive as challenges to their own educational practice? 2) What shifts could occur to support Inuit educators? 3) What is the message Inuit educators wish to share about their practices in order to interrupt the status quo and create narrative to counter the damaging master narrative?

These questions were answered poignantly and thoughtfully by the 36 Inuit educators whom I interviewed; educators from 13 of the 14 villages that comprise the Nunavik region of Arctic Quebec. I conducted these interviews using guided questions, but encouraged an open-ended approach that allowed the Inuit educators to share their own perspectives and shift the interviews as needed. This process was time consuming, arduous, challenging, and thought provoking all at the same time. The process not only supported the above mentioned research questions, but supported me as a person, seeking to unlearn and relearn.

Next, I began the process of transcribing the interviews. While having them transcribed professionally may have appeared to be a reasonable option, my own knowledge of the Inuit and some parts of the language, and my general understanding for the phrasing Inuit used, including pausing and code switching between common Inuktitut words and English words, led me to believe that it was integral to the process that I listen to, listen to again, and transcribe the interviews.

Hand coding the transcriptions was eye opening, and painstaking, but again an essential component in this research. Going page by page, back and forth, in a recurrent

manner, allowed me to find nuances that I would have missed otherwise. I did not enter into the coding looking for specific themes, but rather, I was led by the words of my participants, to find the important words, phrases, and pauses within the transcripts.

Once I completed the hand coding, the core ideas, recurrent words, concepts, and messages became clearer and clearer, until they crystallized into themes. Once the four central themes became clear, I used my theoretical framework to consider these themes: Teaching is Caring; Relationships and Equity; Racism...Still; and Language Planning.

From here I intertwined the direct words of those I interviewed and analyzed these concepts alongside CRT and TMP. I used quotations that I felt had the power to show the passion behind the words. Using CRT, I discussed how these quotations showed a clear bias, racial concerns, and a lack of equity. Using TMP, I was able to gather information that connected racial concerns and language issues. From that point the answers to the first two of my three major questions became quite clear. I still had to search for the deeper meaning within the texts to ensure that a counter narrative of substance was created.

I created a counter narrative, using words, ideas, and concepts from those I interviewed, with a purpose of sharing a story that would combat the status quo and review the role of the Inuit educator. This counter narrative was shared with some of the people I interviewed and the consensus was that this was a valid representation of how most Inuit educators felt. My desire was to make it their words and not my own. I believe I was successful, however, at best this is a fictionalized account.signific

8.1. Discussion Points

8.1.1. Implications of power

The data analysis completed showed a thread of racialized practices pervasive in the schools. This is a core issue which needs to be dealt with and considered. Before policy enactment, language planning, pedagogical development, and shifts in classroom practices happen, the sense of privilege that appears to extend to Qallunaat teachers, and the racial bias that is clearly felt by the Inuit, must be put on the table, opened up, dealt with and moved beyond. Since it is not part of the vernacular and it is not considered to be true, it is never dealt with. Quick fixes will not work, and changes in practices that are foundationally laid upon these attitudes will never improve the education of the Inuit. P. Berger (2009a) in his work on schools in the Arctic agrees that the Eurocentric vision of what is the norm must first be acknowledged before anything can change.

Part of the decolonizing process will be to shift the locus of control from Qallunaat to Inuit. This can be done via the introduction of more Inuit into positions of leadership (Tompkins, 2006). Tompkins (2006) demonstrated how Inuit in positions of leadership create a more conducive learning and working environment for Inuit. This claim was validated by many of the Inuit educators interviewed. Inuit who worked in Inuit led schools felt that they were listened to, felt Inuktitut had a higher status, and felt that they were regarded as competent educators; those who worked in Qallunaat-led schools did not feel as valued, did not see a focus on Inuit language or culture, and did not feel that they had a voice.

Many researchers (Battiste, 2000; D. Rasmussen, 2002; Simon, 2008; Smith, 2002; Tompkins, 2006) discuss the need for vast improvements in Aboriginal education, and yet the majority of research focuses on the students, the L2, or the administration. This research

purposefully did not attend to those issues; rather, it considered what the Inuit felt could be done to support them.

As an educator, researcher, and activist I feel a great sense of despair, that in the 21st Century we are still combating these issues. Wink (2010) discusses the concept of self-doubt. She shares that a belief in your own inabilities can be brought on through continuous exposure to domination by other groups. This sense of incapability may not only exist for the educators, but undoubtedly, it will filter to the students creating a feeling that they are not able to be successful, or that success will not be an option for them. This negative self-talk is dangerous to Inuit education. This is an area that has had minimal studying and needs to be considered more closely.

8.1.2. Implication of policy change

There is a need for significant revisions in policies. The necessity to keep the Inuktitut language alive in an ever encroaching world is very real. While policies are written that state the need for Inuktitut, shifts have recently occurred in language mastery. The Inuit I interviewed suggested that they are concerned about current practices of introducing ‘just a bit’ of English early on. English, as the killer language (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2003) can easily supplant other languages. For this not to occur, changes must happen. Skutnabb-Kangas and Heugh (2012) suggest that minority language students are better served when they are in an additive bilingual programs. The movement towards adopting an additive bilingual program model could be very beneficial to both the students and the Inuit educators. Currently the weak, early/late exit language program that KSB uses is cited as being potentially problematic (Wright et al., 2000). S. K. Taylor (2010b) states that “ELLs that have instruction in their mother tongue outperformed ELL peers enrolled in the mainstream

English program” (p. 4). If English is given more time in the language planning than Inuktitut will suffer. No parent should have to choose between the L1 and the L2 (Fukudo-Parr, 2004; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000).

Policies surrounding benefit packages were a significant issue brought forth by many Inuit I interviewed. Housing is critical in the North. There is such a severe lack of housing that being given a house, just because you are not a local hire, seems like a very large gift. Many of the Inuit wondered why the policy could not be changed. Many Inuit want to see this change. Simon suggests that adequate housing is essential in the education equation (Keevil, 2014).

8.2. Limitations

This study only shares the perceptions of Inuit in Nunavik at this point in time; however, while specific to the Inuit of Nunavik, the research shared in this text may be supportive of people working in other Aboriginal populations and in settings involving other CLD groups. As well, there are limitations to conducting interviews where anyone who meets the criteria is welcome. The interviews, while open ended, did present some time constraints. Most interviews were completed in off-work time hence, the length of the interviews was subject to the participants’ availability. Finally, due to constraints of this study, the interviews were conducted in English, with support given as requested. If the interviews had been conducted in Inuktitut, it is possible that the research would have been more in depth, and told a broader more poignant story; however, translators were used as needed and my understanding of the culture, and familiarity with the language allowed the research to continue. Many of the participants shared their excitement about this project and the prospect of sharing their voices.

8.3. Future Directions for Research

There are many possibilities and significant needs for future research involving Inuit educators. First, it would be highly beneficial to do a longitudinal study on the effects of having Inuit principals. While this study determined some significant benefits for Inuit educators, a study with this as the focal point could be a beginning of a large scale change in Inuit education.

Second, racial issues are wrapped around the study, like a child in an amautik¹². These layers must be unwrapped and exposed in order for new development to occur. An action research study, stemming from the needs indicated in this study would be highly appropriate. This study, using a foundational base of critical race theory and anti-racism education, could look at the effects of Inuit perceptions of racism in the school, given an initiative to deal with this ongoing, pervasive issue.

Third, the balance of power and the struggles of the Inuit teachers to be seen as equal to their Qallunaat colleagues needs to be investigated. The implementation of transformative multiliteracies pedagogy and then a longitudinal study to see the effects of the pedagogy on teaching relationships would be an excellent start.

Finally, there is a new National Strategy on Inuit Education (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2011). This strategy focuses on bilingual education, supporting children to stay in school, and developing Inuit leaders and educators (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2011). Utilizing this Strategy as a springboard, I would suggest researching various language planning options and determine the most effective strategies for L1 maintenance and L2 development for the Inuit

¹² An Amautik is a coat that Inuit women wear that has a pouch on the back in which to carry a baby or your child.

of Nunavik. As well, the focus on Inuit leaders and educator would support the children and lead to better school success

8.4. Contributions

This research is about Inuit educators, racism, the deficit perspective and changes that need to happen. This study used a critical base to consider what is thought to be known and what might not be true after all.

This study contributes to the literature in multiple ways. There are a plethora of studies that focus on Inuit students. There are many studies that discuss L2 learning and how to use strategies to better support language acquisition. Journals are rife with studies that consider what teaching is like for educators who move up North. There are, however, very few studies that focus solely on Inuit educators and specifically the perspective of Inuit educators. This study contributes greatly to this gap in the research.

This study focuses on the underlying racial tensions that are still at play in the Arctic region of Nunavik and how that plays out in schools in terms of cultural/linguistic relationships and connections. There has been very little focus on this and most of these studies begin with the student and move out from that point. This study begins with the Inuit educators and considers how racism impacts their practice. The Eurocentric focus on education is the norm in North America. This study considers the need to understand how this may not connect well with Inuit values and goals, and discusses the need to reframe education. Finally, this study may contain the only counter narrative created with the Inuit educator as the focal point. This counter narrative was designed using the words of the Inuit educators. The creation of this counter narrative is intended to disrupt the status quo.

8.5. Recommendations

I have an Inuk friend who once asked me if all Qallunaat teachers were White. I was surprised at this question, and then, as I looked around the staff room, what I saw were White teachers, speaking either English or French. These teachers were living in another culture, with majority Inuktitut first language speakers, and yet nothing really changed for them. They were still dominant. The reality in schools across Canada is that student population are increasingly diverse and educators are not (Ryan, Pollack, & Antonelli, 2009). Regardless of the city, the school, or the demographics, teaching is a White calling in Canada. As long as this is true, there will be issues and battles to deal with. The curriculum will be written from a Eurocentric perspective and teachers who are not White will be seen as less than.

While this study was grounded in the Inuit of Canada, particularly that of Quebec, it has far reaching implications when considering teachers diversity and anti-racist education. The Inuit of Nunavik, while in a unique situation, are also in a situation that is not novel in other parts of Canada or the world.

Using Cummins' (2009) TMP, any school desiring support for diverse teachers would need to connect to tenets of TMP and move to enact clear guidelines to support administration, educators and students alike. Within these guidelines there would be a need to construct the teachers as intelligent and imaginative and shift school practices so that see differences are seen as desirable. To change the perception of diversity it would be essential for schools to build on the funds of knowledge of every teacher. By showcasing varied knowledge and abilities, teachers begin to be viewed in a positive manner. One way to increase the status of teachers in a given school is through the introduction of identity texts (Cummins & Early, 2011). These can be written texts, oral recordings, video, collages etc.

The focus however is on showcasing the identity of the participant. These texts delve in to a person's self-identity and allow differences to be seen as desirable. By following these steps schools could support, rather than alienate diverse teachers. This too could be true in both Inuit schools, other Indigenous schools, and all schools where diverse educators teach.

The Inuit educators who participated in this study shared their frustration about the lack of value placed on their role in the school and how their qualifications are continually under question (St. Denis, 2007). CLD teachers across Canada, may too have their knowledge questioned. My discussion about Jeannie and Farrah in section 7.3.2 highlights the challenges for many CLD educators. By utilizing Cummins (2009) framework, schools could support all teachers. Well it will take time for schools to change, this framework can be used as starting point.

8.6. Final Thoughts

In listening to all the interviews and reviewing my field notes, the angst of so many Inuit educators became clear. I had been in difficult situations before and understood what it was like to be challenged as a person, but I could not imagine living, every single day of my life that way. I simply could not conceive of how these educators persist, while feeling so put down and judged. It is imperative that change happens. The Inuit participants in this study have called for it.

The goal of this research project was to disrupt the status quo, to give an opportunity for the Inuit to share their voices and to consider how to improve education in the North. As the themes became clear it was apparent that Inuit educators had grave concerns about their place within the educational milieu, their role within the school, and how Qallunaat treated

them. Question one was easy to answer, when the questions were asked and time was given. The Inuit educators spoke in unison and all shared a strong concern for the challenging environment in which they work. This challenge was not directly linked to the actual pedagogy of teaching, but rather the location of the Inuit educators as less capable and competent than their counterparts. This binary of Us versus Them, has been built over time, even while attempts have been made towards developing more equality between the Inuit and Qallunaat. The cultural capital that is deemed desirable, is still that of the Eurocentric, hegemonic perspective and thus the Inuit educators, who have many attributes to share and are stakeholders within their communities, continue to be marginalized as their strengths and abilities are deemed as less than that of the Qallunaat. The challenge of being accepted within the educational milieu as equals and capable was mentioned by 34 out of the 36 participants. While the tone of the conversations changed, and the perspectives varied, the concept of being seen as lower, less capable, and unimportant, rang throughout many of the discussions. The inequity and bias expectations were the central focus in over half of all the interviews. Others focused on the supports and resources that they felt were less available to them and how this impacted their teaching practice. There were also many Inuit who pinpointed issues of racial basis, racial profiling, and preferential practices that supported the Qallunaat educators. As well, many Inuit had issues with the language planning. They shared their concerns about L2 encroaching on the limited space reserved for L1 and the fear of language loss.

When asked about what could be done to improve the environment in which they teach, Inuit educators focused on reframing education, building better working relationships, improving access to professional development, and focusing on Inuktitut.

The phrase “The road is long” seems highly appropriate. The road is long and there is much to do. Many of the Inuit educators I have spoken with are ready for change, but fearful that it may not come. A few of the educators I spoke with felt that the status quo was acceptable, but they too felt that there was no point in complaining because change was not likely; however unlikely, this change is essential if Inuit educators are to be the catalyst in education in the North. Currently Inuit educators struggle with few resources, in educational systems organized along Eurocentric, hegemonic lines, with abounding racism. This must change, and it must change now.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Letter of Information

Our stories: Inuit teachers create counter narratives and disrupt the status quo

My name is Dawn Fyn and I am a PhD Candidate at the Faculty of Education at Western University. I am beginning a research project on looking at what common perception of education in the North and working towards creating a new narrative about education: a narrative that comes from the perspective of the Inuit teacher. You, as an Inuit teacher who teaches in Kativik School Board, are invited to participate in this study.

The aim of this study is to present counter stories, created by Inuit teachers, which serve to empower and build capacity for the Inuit. To participate in this study you must be an Inuk teacher with teaching experience in the North.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview, to be held in Nunavik, during the regional pedagogical days. Topics such as power within the school, racial bias, privilege and identity will be discussed during this interview. The interview can be organized around your schedule and will be held at a private location agreeable to you and the researcher. The interview should take no more than one hour. The interview will be audio-recorded to ensure accuracy and transcribed into written format. You will have the opportunity to review the transcripts to ensure accuracy. This might take you about 20 minutes.

The information collected will be used for research purposes only. Neither your name nor information which could identify you, the school, or the village will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential. The information collected throughout this project may be used in publications, or in conference presentations. All data collected through this project will be kept in a locked container in a secure location. Paper documents and electronic records will be kept for five years and then destroyed and/ or shredded.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time with not effect to your employment status. If you choose to withdraw from the study, all data pertinent to you will be destroyed and will not be used in the data analysis or the presentation of the study results. There are no known risks to participating in this study.

As a sign of appreciation for your assistance with the study, you will be given a \$25 gift card for either the Northern Store or the Co-op Store.

If you have any questions about the conduct of this study, or your rights as a research participant, please contact the Office of Research Ethics, Western University at X. If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact my supervisor Dr. Shelley Taylor X, or myself, Dawn Fyn at XYou may keep this letter for your future reference.

Thank you

Dawn Fyn

Consent Form

Appendix C

Our stories: Inuit teachers create counter narratives and disrupt the status quo

Dawn Fyn, Faculty of Education, Western University

CONSENT FORM

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me, and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Name (please print)

Signature

Date

Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent: _____

Date: _____

10. Please indicate which traditional activity you participate in and how often.

Appendix 2

Information questionnaire. Completed verbally with participants.

Our stories: Inuit teachers create counter narratives and disrupt the status quo
Name:
1. Age
2. Current village in which you live :
3. Previous villages/ cities in which you lived
4. Current grade you are teaching
5. Previous grades you have taught
6. Are you a homeroom teacher or a specialist?
7. If you are a specialist, what subjects do you or have you taught?
8. How many years have you been teaching for?
9. Describe your education

Hunting					
Circle the one that applies/ or make a comment	Never	Sometimes	Often	Frequently	Comment
Fishing					
Circle the one that applies/ or make a comment	Never	Sometimes	Often	Frequently	Comment
Sewing/Knitting etc.					
Circle the one that applies/ or make a comment	Never	Sometimes	Often	Frequently	Comment
Preparing traditional food					
Circle the one that applies/ or make a comment	Never	Sometimes	Often	Frequently	Comment
Preparing/ using furs and skins					
Circle the one that applies/ or make a comment	Never	Sometimes	Often	Frequently	Comment
Carving					
Circle the one that applies/ or make a comment	Never	Sometimes	Often	Frequently	Comment
11. Please indicate your level of mastery in Inuktitut					
Circle the one that applies/ or make a comment	Weak	Good	Very Good	Fluent	Comment

Appendix 3

Research Questions

Preamble:

The research I am conducting looks at the perception of Inuit teachers. Mostly I am considering how other teachers, mainly those from the south, and administrators, and head office staff, think about the Inuit teachers and how this affects you.

The goal in my research is to examine these narratives/ or what I call myths and to combat these stories by creating new stories. However, your experiences are unique to you. Every village, every school, every teacher will have a different story. I want to share some of my experiences with you and have you share some of your experiences with me. I want your honest impression. Please do not tell me what you think I want to hear, or simply agree with me. This is your time to stand and tell me what you really think.

With this research I am hoping to create a new narrative, or story about Inuit educators. To do this I need your honest impressions, both good and bad, about the challenges you face as an Inuit educator and what could be done to support you more.

I have certain questions that I want to ask, but I also want you to share anything you feel is important.

1. Why did you become a teacher?
2. Can you describe what being a teacher means to you?
3. Can you tell me about a time when you felt that you were really being a great teacher?
4. If I went into your classroom what sorts of things would I see happening with you and your students?
5. In your opinion, do you think there is fair or equitable treatment between Inuit and Non-Inuit teachers?
6. Can you discuss your feelings on benefits such as a) flights, b) cargo, c) salary grids, d) housing, e) control over holiday schedules.
7. Power in the school often belongs to the largest group- in many schools this is the Quallant teachers. Who do you feel has the real power in your school?
8. It is my understanding that dominant groups, such as the Quallant, often assume that they know the best and are correct. Do you ever see this played out in the schools?
9. Meritocracy is the sense that you get what you deserve in life, or that is you work really hard you get things. This is a problem in my opinion as it perceives the privileges of

Qallant teachers as 'earned'. Do you feel that at times the Qallant teachers feel that they have earned their privileges?

I am going to share with you some comments that I have heard:

I have heard these comments recently:

- 1) We don't have any good Inuit teachers.
- 2) We have to teach some English in grade 1 because the Inuit aren't teaching well enough.
- 3) All they ever do is colour.
- 4) They (the Inuit teachers) don't have any education.
- 5) Real teaching starts in grade 3... before that it is just play time.

10. What do you want to say to people who make these comments? What is the story they need to hear?
11. Comments like the ones I mentioned, are often a result of seeing things through a negative lens- what we call a deficit perspective. Can you think of a time when teachers or a principal used this lens when considering you and your work?
12. I believe that at times there is a bias against Inuit teachers- some people think of Inuit teachers as 2nd rate. Do you ever feel that way?
13. What can be done to challenge the dominant ideology and create a greater sense of power amongst the Inuit teachers?
14. In your opinion, what needs to happen in the schools for the Inuit teachers and students to have the best opportunity for success?
15. In the Nunatsiaq news there was a recent article about Francophone parents fighting for French first language for their students. What do you think about this?
16. What are the perceived challenges you face when attempting to be the best teacher you can be?
17. What should the grand narrative about Inuit teachers be?
18. If you could say something to the new southern teachers/ admin, what would you want to tell them?

Appendix 4



Council of Commissioners Meeting

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Meeting No. 772

Resolution No. CC 2011/2012-31

Subject: "OUR STORIES: INUIT TEACHERS CREATE NARRATIVES AND DISRUPT THE STATUS QUO" PROJECT

WHEREAS the Department of Training and Research receives and reviews all research project proposals that follow the Kativik guidelines;

WHEREAS the Council of Commissioners has the mandate of recommending projects that have the potential of benefiting the school board for implementation;

WHEREAS the proposed research study will look at issues of power imbalance, racial bias and teacher identity;

WHEREAS the proposed study will be guided by the Critical Race Theory (CRT) framework that examines, and challenges how race and racism impact practices, discourses and institutions, such as schools;

WHEREAS the proposed study has the potential to generate multiple data, including transcripts and visual displays that showcase the identity of Inuit teachers;

WHEREAS the researcher has been awarded the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Grant of Canada and has secured 3 grants that will help defray the costs of the research;

WHEREAS the above proposal titled: "Our stories: Inuit teachers create narratives and disrupt the status quo" presented by Dawn Fynn follows the department's criteria;



Council of Commissioners Meeting

Page 2/2

Meeting No. 772

Resolution No. CC 2011/2012-31

Subject: "OUR STORIES: INUIT TEACHERS CREATE NARRATIVES AND DISRUPT THE STATUS QUO" PROJECT

THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED:

THAT Ms. Fynn be informed that her proposal has been accepted;

THAT Ms. Fynn be given the permission to proceed with the steps necessary to carry on with her project as proposed while respecting the time schedules and availability of schools and the teachers;

THAT Ms. Fynn be informed that she must give periodic reports on the project to the Training and Research Department so as to keep the Kativik School Board informed of the progress of the research.

Appendix 5

WESTERN UNIVERSITY FACULTY OF EDUCATION USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS - ETHICS APPROVAL NOTICE

Review Number: 1207-5

Principal Investigator: Shelley Taylor

Student Name: Dawn Fyn

Title: *Our Stories: Inuit Teachers Create Counter Narratives and Disrupt the Status Quo* Expiry

Date: August 31, 2013

Type: Ph.D. Thesis

Ethics Approval Date: September 7, 2012.

Revision #:

Documents Reviewed & Approved: Western Protocol, Letter of Information & Consent,
Advertisement

This is to notify you that the Faculty of Education Sub-Research Ethics Board (REB), which operates under the authority of the Western University Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects, according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario has granted approval to the above named research study on the date noted above. The approval shall remain valid until the expiry date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the REB's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information.

During the course of the research, no deviations from, or changes to, the study or information/consent documents may be initiated without prior written approval from the REB, except for minor administrative aspects. Participants must receive a copy of the signed information/consent documentation. Investigators must promptly report to the Chair of the Faculty Sub-REB any adverse or unexpected experiences or events that are both serious and unexpected, and any new information which may adversely affect the safety of the subjects or the conduct of the study. In the event that any changes require a change in the information/consent documentation and/or recruitment advertisement, newly revised documents must be submitted to the Sub-REB for approval.

Dr. Alan Edmunds (Chair)

2012-2013 Faculty of Education Sub-Research Ethics Board

Dr. Alan Edmunds Faculty of Education (Chair)
Dr. John Barnett Faculty of Education
Dr. Farahnaz Faez Faculty of Education
Dr. Wayne Martino Faculty of Education
Dr. George Gadanidis Faculty of Education
Dr. Elizabeth Nowicki Faculty of Education
Dr. Julie Byrd Clark Faculty of Education
Dr. Kari Veblen Faculty of Music
Dr. Jason Brown Faculty of Education
Dr. Susan Rodger Faculty of Education
Faculty of Education, Associate Dean, Research (*ex officio*)
Dr. Shelley Taylor Faculty of Education, Western Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (*ex officio*)
Dr. Ruth Wright Faculty of Music, Western Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (*ex officio*)
Dr. Kevin Watson Faculty of Music, Western Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (*ex officio*)

The Faculty of Education Research Officer

Copy: Office of Research Ethics

Appendix 6

WESTERN UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS - ETHICS APPROVAL
NOTICE

Review Number: 1207-5

Principal

Investigator:
Shelley Taylor
Student
Name: Dawn
Fyn

Title: *Our Stories: Inuit Teachers Create Counter Narratives and*
Disrupt the Status Quo Expiry Date: December 31, 2013
Ty

pe: Ph.D. Thesis
Ethics Approval
Date: July 26,
2013.

Revision #: 1

Documents Reviewed &

Approved: Revised Study End Date

This is to notify you that the Faculty of Education Sub-Research Ethics Board (REB), which operates under the authority of the Western University Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects, according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario has granted approval to the above named research study on the date noted above. The approval shall remain valid until the expiry date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the REB's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information.

During the course of the research, no deviations from, or changes to, the study or information/consent documents may be initiated without prior written approval from

the REB, except for minor administrative aspects. Participants must receive a copy of the signed information/consent documentation. Investigators must promptly report to the Chair of the Faculty Sub-REB any adverse or unexpected experiences or events that are both serious and unexpected, and any new information which may adversely affect the safety of the subjects or the conduct of the study. In the event that any changes require a change in the information/consent documentation and/or recruitment advertisement, newly revised documents must be submitted to the Sub-REB for approval.

Dr. Alan Edmunds (Chair)

2012-2013 Faculty of Education Sub-Research Ethics Board

Dr. Alan Edmunds Faculty of Education (Chair)

Dr. John Barnett Faculty of Education

Dr. Wayne Martino Faculty of Education

Dr. George Gadanidis Faculty of Education

Dr. Elizabeth Nowicki Faculty of Education

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Dr. Jason Brown Faculty of Education

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The Faculty of Education Faculty of Education Building

Copy: Office of Research Ethics