REMOTE AND UNRESEARCHED:
A CONTEXTUALIZED STUDY OF NON-INDIGENOUS EDUCATIONAL
LEADERS WORKING IN YUKON INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

by

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ABSTRACT

This study engages in a critical analysis of the lived experiences of non-Indigenous educational leaders working in Indigenous communities in the Yukon Territory, Canada. It sheds light on the epistemic and cross-cultural tensions underpinning much of the literature on educational leadership, and aims to address Walker and Dimmock's (2000) concern that studies of comparative education have been generally absent from educational leadership and management, thereby limiting the available body of knowledge specific to culture and leadership.

The study focuses on five questions: How do non-Indigenous Yukon principals construct their professional identity and their role as educational leaders? How do they construct their notions of educational leadership and practice? Given the Yukon's distinct governance and policy contexts, how do they construct understandings of 'indigeneity' in relation to local Indigenous culture? How do they address the tensions arising at the juncture of policies imported from outside the Yukon and the Yukon Education Act (1990)?

A critical ethnographic research approach is used to shed light upon these questions. Extensive semi-structured interviews with two male and two female participants in four Yukon schools are conducted. Detailed observations create unique 'portraits' of each school and their principals. Pertinent documents are also examined to provide further information and context.

This examination suggests that non-Indigenous Yukon principals are caught at the center of micro (school), meso (community), and macro (government) operational and policy levels that powerfully shape their professional identities and their perceptions of their roles as principals. While referred to as 'educational leaders' by the extant body of literature and governments, they do not use this term in their identity constructions. Trapped betwixt and between their schools, communities, and government policies in a fragmented Yukon educational field, instead they refer to themselves in managerial and administrative ways as they juggle educational ends mandated by distinct, and somewhat competing, jurisdictions.

This study presents another lens through which to examine educational leadership, and offers insights into the use of ethnographic methods as a powerful research tool. Based on these contributions, this study should be informative to current and future practitioners and scholars of education and educational leadership.

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"Bernard of Chartres used to say that we are like dwarfs on the shoulders of giants, so that we can see more than they, and things at a greater distance, not by virtue of any sharpness of sight on our part, or any physical distinction, but because we are carried high and raised up by their giant size."

John of Salisbury, Bishop of Chartres, The Metalogicon, 1159, p. 167.

I have been exceedingly fortunate to have been carried aloft on the shoulders of many giants. Being accepted to a doctoral program, let alone engaging in it, is of such magnitude that it would have truly been impossible without the help of many.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my wife, Janine, and our two sons, Matthew and Christopher. Without your love, support, and understanding, I would not have been able to complete this dissertation and Ph.D. program, nor would I have wanted to.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Positioning the researcher

As an educator and administrator in rural, isolated schools with predominantly Indigenous populations, I have been intrigued by the lack of contextualised and culturally-sensitive approaches to educational leadership that would help Yukon educational leaders understand their role in small, rural northern communities. My urge to understand why tensions exist between the principalship and the community contexts in which such leadership is embedded is based upon my lived experiences. Neither my previous professional practice as a teacher, nor training or post-graduate study adequately prepared me for the complex and diverse role of principal in Indigenous northern communities. Once in the position of new principal, there was no explicit indication of how I could or should lead, or direction given (beyond those aimed at meeting broader organizational mandates) specific to what it was an educational leader was supposed to do, or how to develop a professional identity as a school administrator.   These observations led me to wonder how the prior life experiences and educational trajectories of school principals impact their praxis as educational leaders in the Yukon.

While dedicated and committed to working hard in the schools and communities to which I was assigned, particularly at the beginning phase of my career I perceived, yet did not understand, the extent to which epistemological differences existed between my conceptions of educational leadership and those held by community constituents. At this emergent stage, despite completing a leadership program at the magisterial level, I had little awareness that the daily drama of being an 'educational leader' in rural, isolated, and Indigenous communities could be situated within a complexity of broader cultural frames.

It has been my perception, based upon my experience as a school-based administrator that, in rural, isolated locations the role, profile, and importance of the school (and the school principal) is perhaps greater than in urban or suburban areas. The school is a focal point extending beyond the daily educational activities in which schools normally engage, and is often the site where communities gather for dances, funerals, potlatches (ceremonial feasts or celebrations to mark important events) and other important cultural events. Most often, it is the school administration, with the support of staff, that is ultimately responsible for providing a "welcoming culture of leadership" and sustaining positive relationships in this broader context.

Upon reflection, my professional practice, particularly at the beginning of my career within the field of educational leadership in Canada's north, was most certainly disproportionately influenced by a Eurocentric perspective of leadership. In short, there appeared no other perceptible way to view and understand leadership. As I learned from conversations with my administrative colleagues, the vast proportion of whom are also non-Indigenous, this was not solely my own experience or perception. This multiplicity of factors serves to underpin my desire to illuminate, understand, and hopefully alleviate such tensions through future educational research.

My early observations resonate with Hallinger & Leithwood (1996) who describe culture as a missing variable in leadership, in light of the domination of western theories of leadership "despite the notion that leadership is contingent upon the context in which it is exercised" (p. 100). Translating this assertion to my own contexts, I am cognisant of the reality that the Yukon educational leadership field has received limited attention by researchers. The research that has been conducted includes a case study of a Yukon

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residential school (King, 1967), and an examination of teaching in rural Yukon communities (Davidson, 1988). As a result, the generation of Yukon-specific theory aimed at fostering culturally relevant educational leadership development therefore remains difficult at present, particularly given the historical absence of an Indigenous cultural lens through which to examine educational leadership coupled with an understanding of how school leaders work within Indigenous contexts . This limits the opportunity for greater understanding specific to contextually and culturally relevant educational leadership theory and practice which takes into account the epistemic foundations of non-Indigenous educational leaders in relation to the aspirations of Indigenous populations, the need for which is a central line of reasoning of this research.

Years later, my feelings of dissonance are captured by Jules (1999) who states the following point specific to differences between Native and non-Native conceptions of leadership:

> It is frequently asserted that Native Indian leadership is different from non-Native Indian leadership and that non-Native Indian models are not suitable for describing it. What appears to be missing, however, is an examination of what Native Indian leadership is and of the application of non-Native Indian models to Native Indian leadership (n.p).

Reinforcing this assertion and identified need for further examination are the findings associated with the *Fostering Tomorrow's Educational Leaders* report (Stack, Coulter, Grosjean, Mazawi, & Smith, 2006) on which I served as a research assistant at the commencement of my doctoral program. This in-depth examination of Educational Leadership and Administration (ELA) programs in British Columbia identified that:

> In general, the existing 'silence' and indeed, absence of any significant focus on aboriginal aspirations both within and as specific outcomes of educational leadership programs in British Columbia needs to be critically interrogated. In the

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broader consideration of aboriginal leadership generally, (and which moves beyond a specific focus on 'educational leadership'), there are a number of concerns that have been raised within various contexts and forums within British Columbia as well as across Canada more widely. (p. 63)

With these aspects in mind, I set out to conduct an in-depth examination of how non-Indigenous school administrators (principals and vice-principals) working in Indigenous school and community contexts understand leadership in rural, isolated communities; how they establish their identities and what it means to be an educational leader; how they determine what it is that leaders do and why, and how they construct their conceptions of leadership specific to the unique contexts of the Yukon Territory. Thus, this examination is distinct in that it is not a study of cross-cultural educational leadership, but rather a study of educational leadership in Indigenous contexts.

Using this point of departure, this research study examines educational leadership in a cross-cultural context situated an isolated, rural, and diverse region that has not been researched to date: the Yukon Territory, a jurisdiction where the majority of First Nations have settled Land Claims with the Federal and Territorial governments in the process of facilitating self-determination.

Statement of the problem

Limitations of the Eurocentric leadership paradigm constrain how educational leadership is conceptualized within the unique self-governing Indigenous context of the Yukon. These limitations impact how educational leadership is construed and enacted by non-Indigenous educational leaders in Indigenous Yukon contexts. Illuminating how non-Indigenous Yukon educational leaders construct themselves is hampered by a limited array of research tools with which to discuss educational leadership in ways that do not replicate

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colonizing research practices. As will be elaborated later, the aforementioned aspects

intersect with the stated recognition by the Government of Yukon that education in the

Yukon requires reform. Therefore, in order to construct a solid foundation leading to the

statement of the problem, the following interrelated topics and issues have been isolated as

a means of refining the problem statement:

1) The dominance and limitations of the Eurocentric leadership paradigm within the

    Yukon context

2) The legacy of colonizing ethnographies with regard to research on educational

    leadership in Indigenous contexts of practice

3) The context of self-governance in the Yukon

4) The recognized need by the Government of Yukon to reform the Educational

    System so that it meets the needs and aspirations of all Yukoners, "addressing the

    disparity of First Nations and non-First Nations student outcomes" (Yukon

    Education Reform, 2005, p. 8).

These four elements provide a foundation upon which to build a sound research

framework.[1]

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[1] A note on terminology

Throughout this research, a number of different terms are used when referring to Indigenous
peoples, including Aboriginal peoples, First Nations, and North American Indians. Such diverse
usage is evident between the countries of Canada and the United States, where the terms First
Nations, Indigenous Peoples, or Aboriginals are predominantly employed in the former, and the
term Indian for the most part in the latter (Friesen and Friesen, 2002). In the Yukon, the term First
Nations is primarily used when self-governing First Nations refer to themselves, as in the case of
the Carcross-Tagish First Nation. For the purposes of this study, the terms First Nations and
Indigenous predominate, though others are employed dependent upon what is being referred to: i.e.
Aboriginal languages. In every case, unless specifically cited, all terminology will be capitalized
as a vital and important means of respecting and valuing the identity of those described, much as
should be expected and required of any ethnic group or by a citizen of any nation.

The predominance and limitations of the Eurocentric leadership paradigm

Eurocentric thought, broadly defined, has been transported and carried throughout the world by colonization (Battiste and Henderson, 2000). Related to my own experiences and professional development as a school administrator, this dominant conception was assumed to be the only one related to considerations of how educational leadership may be construed and enacted, with little, if any room for others to be contemplated and examined-even if they were acknowledged to exist. This reflection and observation of "one right way" aligns well with Battiste and Henderson's assertion that, "although these assumptions have been challenged by both Eurocentric and Indigenous thinkers, they remain the foundations of orthodox educational and political thought" (p. 29).

Examinations of educational leadership within Indigenous contexts are complicated by a number of specific factors related to the overarching dominance of Euro-western conceptions. When examining the ends of traditional western leadership models, factors such as rationality, system effectiveness, profit, and efficiency, present as dominant and valued ends of such leadership. In his critical study of educational leadership, Maxcy (1991) identifies the dominance of individualism, authority for the purposes of obtaining compliance, and power and control- and the vital need to rethink such tenets and argues that "our educational institutions and educational leadership must make a better fit within the societal problematics we see operative" (p. 5).

Deeper understandings of conceptions of leadership in Indigenous communities are further hampered by the elusive and controversial nature and inability of those from the Western world to define leadership within their own context (Allix & Gronn, 2005), and by the unwillingness of educational thinkers to accept contradictions within the field (Maxcy, 1991). The historical conceptions of leadership underpinning Euro-western

conceptions, as outlined by Storey (2005) and Yukl (1999) are limited in their ability to understand and accept the roles that gender, race, and culture play in what may constitute leadership. Through such a perspective, not all knowledge may count or matter in this regard: "…what counts as knowledge in a given context is relative to what is known in that context" (Fenstermacher, 1994, p. 4). This raises a serious limitation specific to Euro-western leadership models: If other perspectives, including gender, race, and class count for little when examining leadership employing a Euro-western perspective, the question arises as to why Indigenous (or other) conceptions of educational leadership would matter and be considered of import.

These factors serve to reinforce the goal of this research project, which is to investigate the epistemic foundations of educational leadership of non-Indigenous school leaders working in Indigenous contexts. Specific emphasis will be directed to identifying how school administrators 1) know themselves to be educational leaders, in the absence of policy or a grounding in an explicitly articulated epistemological foundation perpetuated by a dearth of educational leadership research, 2) how they understand their leadership role and construct, and make sense of, their personal and professional identities, and 3) articulate what it means to be a non-Indigenous leader in Indigenous contexts.

Comprehending the complexities of Indigenous leadership in the Yukon is problematic due to the overlay of bureaucratic, western-based government models and hierarchies onto First Nations governments with settled Land Claims, as a means of facilitating the ability to work "government to government". First Nations were required to adapt their systems of government to relate more closely with their bureaucratic Euro-western counterparts within such a frame. Indigenous governance structures rooted in clan systems or familial relationships are operationally and structurally different, often running

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counter to hierarchical systems of government. Therefore, little evidence is found outside the rural communities in which they are located, despite attempts to build a more culturally representative work force in larger government systems.

Within this defining context, there is a diminished ability of systems with distinct organizational cultures, goals, and modus operandi to be understood by their respective counterparts. As a result, misperceptions and tensions specific to the roles and purposes of both individuals and groups emerge within organizations, and between organizations themselves. This further complicates the ability of non-Indigenous school administrators to identify and makes sense of their multiple roles and duties as professionals and community members. These structural aspects can further serve to hinder the generation of an expanded array of knowledge which could serve to address issues of student achievement in Yukon schools, and the training, development, and retention of current and future school administrators. This may result in diminished efficacy, career dissatisfaction, physical and mental exhaustion, and burnout.

The legacy of colonizing ethnographies

Historically speaking, the researching of Indigenous peoples has been complicated and limited by the historic portrayal of them by early ethnographers (Battiste & Henderson, 2000). Eurocentric anthropologists have traditionally organized the descriptive details of the Indigenous cultures into ethnographies" (p. 30). This has created a legacy for Indigenous peoples and scholars alike to address: the breaking down and changing of classic descriptions:

> Because classic descriptions do not present fair interpretations of Indigenous world views, Indigenous people have had to suggest a total revision of anthropological analyses. Around the globe, Indigenous thinkers have had to prove that European

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scholars were mistaken in their notion of Indigenous culture as unchanging and homogeneous. (p. 32)

Eurocentric ethnographers recorded many aspects of the culture under study, and then defined the culture as a shared set of meanings. Smith (1999) identifies the history and legacy of extraction of Indigenous knowledge and the misplaced ownership of that knowledge by evocatively stating:

It galls us that Western researchers and intellectuals can assume to know all that is possible to know of us, on the basis of their brief encounters with some of us. It appals us that the West can desire, extract, and claim ownership of our ways of knowing, our imagery, the things we create and produce, and then simultaneously reject the people who created and developed those ideas and to seek and deny them further opportunities to be creators of their own culture and own nations. (p. 1)

A legacy of Eurocentric domination of thought in attempts to research and understand Indigenous cultures was the depiction of the view of Indigenous populations as having limited variability between internal cultures, harmonious in their interactions, and inherently static over time. Brayboy (2000) poignantly reinforces the effects of this legacy in the current day on the practice of Native and non-Native researchers alike, offering the following perspective and caution:

My own experiences as an Indigenous person, who is also an "academic", in this area are complicated. I have used racial categories as a way of identifying people and ascribing group membership; I have also been labelled and classified by others based on physical characteristics. As an academic, I have fought against unfairly categorizing individuals and not fully examining the complexities of labelling and classifying. I have also participated in the various behaviours- as an Indigenous person- that I have argued against as an academic. This experience has left me wondering how we, as researchers, will be able to make sense of labelling and classifying that plays a definitive role in the identity politics of the ethnic groups that we study. Complicating this idea is the paradox in which some researchers of groups may find themselves. That is, intellectually we understand that there are not essential traits commonly held by all members of a group and that members of a group may be defined in multiple ways. In real life, however, many in our group- including ourselves at times- may use essentialized notions to define membership. Reconciling this tension is a difficult process. (pp. 418-419)

Colonial ethnographies were considered to be the sum total of a culture, they were incontrovertible, objective, and the only legitimate form of truth regarding the culture under observation. In such a manner, the study of "zones of difference" (Battiste & Henderson, 2000, p. 31) was made problematic if not impossible, and as a result Indigenous cultures became homogenized and essentialized, rather than viewed as different, dynamic, and adapted both to and by context over time.

The dualistic tensions described above by Brayboy (2000) are highly applicable to my own situation as a researcher and school administrator in the Yukon context, and are even further complicated by my non-Indigenous background. This generates a critical ethical question to ask of myself: How can I, as a non-Indigenous researcher, attempt to credibly and legitimately investigate, determine, and proffer a viable and epistemologically consistent understanding of my role as a non-Indigenous educational leader in an Indigenous community setting? With the same considerations outlined by Brayboy, as a researcher I need to ensure that I do not employ essentialized notions of school administrators, schools and students, and the Indigenous communities in which they are situated, remaining attuned to the fact that each school and community is distinct and defined, with characteristics not necessarily existing across all contexts.

Investigating the educational leadership practices of predominantly non-Indigenous school principals within Indigenous contexts, reflected against the Eurocentric paradigm of leadership would serve to broaden the epistemological foundations of educational leadership to include a larger array of thought and understanding of practice specific to the concepts of indigeneity and educational leadership in northern, isolated, and remote Canadian communities. This research, therefore, is directly relevant to the Yukon context and will address a critical knowledge gap in the literature associated with the trans-cultural

and spatial facets of leadership. Nearly one-third (30.1%) of children enrolled in Yukon schools self-identify as First Nations students of Aboriginal descent (Yukon Bureau of Statistics, May 2005). The percentage of First Nations students is not distributed evenly from school to school. Rural schools are likely to have a much higher proportion of First Nations students that those defined as urban, or within the Whitehorse city limits. In comparison, in British Columbia only 9.5%, or approximately 57,000 of the province's 599,000 students, self-identified as Aboriginal (BC Ministry of Education, 2006).

The intersections of legislation, policy, and culture are significant to this study. Agbo (2005) reinforces this assertion by stating, "The trend of First Nations control of education is inextricably linked with the trend of First Nations self-government" (p. 290). Given, as stated previously, that Yukon First Nations can draw down the power to take over schools currently operated by the Yukon Government, understanding and fostering notions of educational leadership situated within the context of self-determination is of vital importance for the future of Yukon schools and their relationships within their respective communities. Most importantly, the depth, breadth, and relevance of the educational experiences and opportunities for children are of prime consideration.

Understanding contextually and culturally relevant educational leadership takes on even greater importance in light of accountability policies in education, standardization of administrative practice, and the predominant hegemony of leadership for systemic effectiveness. Yukon schools are influenced by programmes and policy initiatives devised and instituted in British Columbia, and predominantly rely upon BC curriculum, with local adaptation and program development. School rankings conducted by the Vancouver-based Fraser Institute have begun to include data from Yukon secondary schools situated in Whitehorse, Dawson City, and Watson Lake. While debating the validity, relevance, and

applicability of such rankings is beyond the scope of this research project, it follows that, as the emphasis on standards and rankings from other jurisdictions increases, this will impact the way Yukon schools, educational leaders, and leadership are perceived and thought about, both in the Territory and externally.

As a result of the distinct differences between Yukon community contexts and those to the south in BC, Yukon schools, and particularly rural schools, generally do not rank very highly. One Yukon school received a ranking of 0.0 out of a possible score of 10 in 2007. Such de-contextualized ratings employing small sample sizes present as profound challenges for school administrators who, in light of such an annual publication, must continually be advocates for their students, school, and community. In such situations, and particularly in light of the assertion by advocates of standards that "the effect of principal leadership on student achievement is now well established" (Waters and Kingston, 2005, p. 14), it is easy for school administrators as the focal point for their schools to become disheartened, eroded, and left feeling disempowered.

Specific to school-based leadership, standards have recently been drafted by the British Columbia Principals and Vice-Principals Association (BCPVPA). These standards are stated to be for 1) professional growth and program coherence, and 2) to provide leadership standards for professional growth (Dukowski, 2007). While the purpose of the standards (at least initially) does not appear to be for evaluative and certification purposes, Les Dukowski, President of the British Columbia Principals and Vice-Principals Association does not rule this out, stating in a recent article:

> The standards were not constructed to facilitate certification. However, decisions regarding whether or not to certify school principals is one that does not lie solely within the principal and vice-principal community. That said, as in the case of evaluation and supervision, one would expect that any certification criteria, whether they are internally or externally imposed, should take into account the leadership

standards and the professional learning activities that the profession believes to be key to successful school leadership. (p. 4)

Based on the above, I propose that, having agreed to the standardization and certification of professional practice, the BCPVPA has assisted the BC Ministry of Education to implement a process leading to the eventual government-imposed definition of educational leadership through the standardization and certification of school administrative practice. Conversations specifically focused on examining whether or not standardization and certification of practice is worthy, valued, or of benefit to public education and students have now, in effect, been made redundant.

Brown (2006) offers the following concerns specific to the standardization of school administrator practice. First, standards apply to all members of the profession, and this is equivalent to all members of a sports team playing the same position rather than differing yet complimentary ones. A second concern is of a regulatory nature, where passing laws or over-regulating a profession is considered an effective means of making things orderly. A third concern is that standards may be "got wrong", and therefore outmoded, inappropriate, or irrelevant standards potentially hamper or restrict the evolution of a profession.

As a result, the policy initiatives of rankings and standards of practice blur and obliterate concerns for Indigenous education, further obscuring understandings of educational leadership situated in various contexts. These concerns are reinforced by Anderson (2001) who emphasizes the importance of context and its relevance to leadership and schools as being complicated by the implementation and enforcement of standards, the application of which may impose Foucault's notion of a "regime of truth" (1980, in Anderson, 2001). Dimmock & Walker (2000, in Glatter & Kydd, 2003) refer to the one

"right way" or "false universalism" of educational leadership that inhibits the creation and enactment of new, innovative, or responsive possibilities.

Attempts to introduce standards do not go far enough to explicitly recognize leadership that identifies the epistemic and substantive foundations of leadership in Indigenous contexts. The relative absence of Aboriginal perspectives are a concern reinforced by Goddard (2002) who states, "Given the ethnocultural diversity of peoples living in the area (Canadian North), the absence of [educational leadership] research explicitly located in northern settings is problematic" (p. 125). For these reasons, the elements of standardized practice and certification for administrators pose serious challenges to both the recognition that there may be contextually and culturally derived notions of educational leadership in Yukon, and the identification and articulation of them beyond the limits of the dominant Eurocentric paradigm. In effect, the question emerging is how can standardization be applied to that which is not understood?

Educational leadership relevant to the unique and multifaceted nature of Yukon schools and communities, therefore, requires examination and understanding extending beyond the provision of standardized knowledge-based 'tool kits'- checklists, how-to articles, and best practices imported from other times and places. This narrowing of practice becomes increasingly problematic when presented to prospective or new educational leaders in the hopes they will increase 'effectiveness' (however defined) and make the transition from teacher to school administrator an easier, and perhaps less traumatic one. Tools-while important- can result in unintended consequences if one knows neither what is broken nor how to fix it, or has no idea of what one is attempting to build, and why.

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An additional aspect reinforcing the need for knowledge specific to culturally relevant educational leadership relates to the issues of demographics and current nature of the Canadian labour market specific to school administrators. The prevailing Yukon strategy has been to recruit school administrators predominantly from Saskatchewan, Newfoundland, and the Northwest Territories on the generally held belief that there would always be a plentiful pool of skilfully trained and experienced candidates willing to come to the Territory from which to select the "best and the brightest". This approach has been applied counter to labour market conditions in which there appear fewer skilled and experienced school administrators or teachers willing to apply for administrative positions and enter the field, particularly in rural and isolated areas (Blakesley, 2000).

As a result, retired principals from other jurisdictions have accounted for new administrative hires, particularly in rural and isolated schools. While ostensibly a short-term human resource strategy, this approach has served to effectively preclude the development of longer-term sustainable leadership capacity with an emphasis on understanding Indigeneity, the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives, and their relationship to educational leadership development in Yukon. So far, emphasis has been placed on external recruitment rather than locally-based development. This has generated two related outcomes: first, the current cohort of Yukon school administrators is aging; with the average age for principals of 52 years in 2000 (Blakesley, 2000). Many members of this group are now eligible to retire. Second, the continued reliance on external resources, in the absence of fostering broader Yukon-situated knowledge specific to educational leadership leading to a locally-developed resource pool, will very likely serve to limit the understanding of how educational leaders weave indigeneity into their practice.

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In summary, much remains unknown regarding the epistemological foundations upon which non-Indigenous school administrators construct and enact their practice in Indigenous contexts.   The intersections and current inadequacies reinforce the vital importance of this research project, calling for an expansion of current educational leadership to include the perspectives of non-Indigenous school leaders in Indigenous contexts.

The context of self-governance in the Yukon

Distinct from other jurisdictions in Canada, 11 of the 14 Yukon First Nations have settled land claims and self-government agreements with the Government of Canada and the Government of Yukon. Self-governing agreements are separate from land claims, with the First Nation Self-Government Agreement setting out the powers of First Nations to govern themselves. The context of self-governance as stated here refers to the relationship between Yukon First Nations and the Yukon government, and is distinct from school governance at the local level.

While, at the present time, the education of Yukon children is directed by the Territorial Government through the Yukon Department of Education, "the First Nation has the power to make citizen-based laws which apply to their citizens no matter where they live in the Yukon. Examples include child welfare, health care, language, culture and education (Government of Yukon website, 2007). Self-governance is a key defining aspect of the Yukon governance and political structure, and therefore the educational context is greatly influenced by them. The settlement of land claims has not, to date, resulted in the devolution of education to First Nations (there are also three First Nations that have not been able to settle), and in theory it could be that this power is never devolved.

Non-Indigenous Yukon principals are therefore located at the intersection of two distinct tiers of educational governance and policy: these are the self-governing agreements negotiated with the Territorial and Federal governments which include ability of First Nations to draw down their powers of education, intersecting with the fulfilment of their duties as stipulated by the Yukon Education Act (1990). The implications for non-Indigenous Yukon principals are that they must ensure that BC curriculum is taught in Yukon schools while also ensuring that the education of Yukon children is culturally relevant, situated locally, and reflective of the aspirations of their respective communities.

Further, in light of land claims settlements, non-Indigenous school principals in rural communities are positioned as Yukon government employees in schools situated on First Nations settlement lands. As a result of this particular governance construct, principals, at times, find themselves on contested terrain and engaged in power struggles as a result of being embedded in the intricate relationship between the government and the First Nation when effecting educational policies. Mazawi (2005) illuminates the tensions in which principals can find themselves immersed when public schooling, "a system paradigmatically rooted within conceptions of modernity, individualism, and social organization" (p. 111) intersects with Indigenous cultures.

The Yukon's distinct self-governance context therefore validates the need for research that specifically takes into account the juncture of history, culture and language, policy and governance, and the extent to which they influence how educational leadership is constructed and comprehended, as a means of understanding the aforementioned tensions, with the intent to reduce them.

The recognized need to reform the Yukon educational system

There is recognition in the Yukon of the need to reform the educational system to better meet the needs of students and communities. To this end, the Yukon Government has initiated a number of attempts to reform the Yukon educational system to address disparities between First Nations and non-First Nations student outcomes. From 2001-2004, the Yukon Government implemented the Education Act Review, reviewing the current Education Act that was instituted in 1990. There is a sense that this review process did not result in substantive change and is still outstanding. As a result, the Government of Yukon is currently engaged in a broad educational reform process titled the Education Reform Project (ERP), which employs a partnership between the Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN) and the Government of Yukon. The process is co-chaired by an appointed representative from each aforementioned body. The mandate is as follows:

> The Education Reform Project is a partnership project of the Council of Yukon First Nations and the Yukon Government. It is mandated to involve all partners in education, consult on education matters and make recommendations to all governments to initiate change to improve the education system. (Education Reform Project website, 2007)

High hopes are placed upon the outcomes of this reform initiative by Yukon First Nations. The majority of Yukon First Nations have expressed a vital interest in ensuring that their aspirations are realised within the Yukon Education system, while others have suggested that they will draw down their powers as outlined by the First Nation Self-Government Agreement should the ERP not address their concerns. Should this occur, individual First Nations in future may choose to redefine their relationship with the Yukon Education system and seek local control of schools. In a relatively small and remote system, the ramifications of such actions on education in remote communities would very

likely be profound.   These factors and the gravity of such decisions reinforce the need to

more thoroughly examine and understand educational leadership specifically within rural

Yukon schools and communities. This is even more the case in light of the fact that the

majority of Yukon school administrators are of non-Indigenous backgrounds. Therefore,

understanding more clearly how non-Indigenous leaders make sense of their professional

identities, their subjectivities and how they are constituted, and how they construe and

enact their role and practice in Indigenous contexts will serve to provide vital information

to guide reform initiatives.

Significance of the problem

The significance of the problem is four-fold: First, Yukon communities can be

characterized as small, rural, and isolated First Nations communities. Communities outside

of the capital of Whitehorse range in size from approximately 80 to 750 inhabitants. In

towns or villages of this size, most everyone knows each other, family relations are

intricately interwoven, and regardless of age, community residents have (or have had) a

connection to the local school. The vital importance of the cultural relevance of schools for

the children in Yukon communities is not to be underestimated, particularly so given the

assertion by Brentro, Brokenleg, & Van Bockern (1998) that:

> The school is the only institution providing on-going, long-term relationships with
> all of our young. Some children only spend minutes a day in conversation with
> parents, but all are required by law to be in extended contact with the adults who
> staff our schools. Educators have not yet risen to such challenges, and too often the
> school itself is a breeding ground for further alienation. (pp. 13-14)

Viewed through the eyes of the students in schools, the relevance of the school

experience to their own lives takes on a far greater magnitude than that of an academic

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examination. The significance of the effects educational leaders have on school culture, the development of a caring climate, the promotion of equity and reduction of discrimination (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003) cannot be underestimated.

While the reference above may initially carry with it critical overtones, conversely it presents as a beacon of opportunity when considered in light of the highly important influence of educational leadership and the centrality of the school in small, rural communities. Yet, despite the centrality of the school in the lives of children, it is not clearly understood how Yukon principals-the vast majority of whom are of non-Indigenous backgrounds- create positive learning climates that are nurturing of children, welcoming of parents and embracing of community involvement, and who continuously seek to constitute and re-constitute their schools in order to enhance student success, however defined. Specifically, it is these school administrators that this research seeks to focus on in order to identify how they construe their role and define themselves (and are defined) as professional educational leaders. Therefore, a primary goal of this research is to contribute to the growing body of educational leadership research to include the perspectives of non-Indigenous leaders in Indigenous contexts.

Secondly, this research can also contribute to a better understanding of Indigenous education in Canada. In 1991, the Government of Canada conducted a five-year study of issues affecting Aboriginal peoples in Canada. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) came to a central conclusion: "The main policy direction, pursued for more than 150 years, first by colonial then by Canadian governments, has been wrong" (A Word from Commissioners, INAC, 2002). With this in mind, this research project, which endeavours to shed light on how an educational leader's practice within Indigenous

contexts, serves as one essential initiative to foster greater understandings and realizations of the educational aims and aspirations of Aboriginal peoples within the broader Canadian society.

Thirdly, public education forms a cornerstone of a democratic, free, and equitable society. Educational systems and schools carry the profound responsibility of ensuring that students are both aware of their democratic rights and freedoms, and able to exercise them judiciously as contributing members of society. Employing an American perspective, Zou & Trueba (2002) underscore the importance of understanding both schools and educational research by offering: "[the means] to understand the best ways to educate children and strengthen teacher preparation, the philosophical foundations of democratic organizations (schools, cities, churches, etc.) in a modern and highly diversified world" (p. 2).

This sentiment is directly linked to the Yukon context in a number of important ways: first, it is echoed in the decolonizing Yukon-based land claims processes; second, the development of the Yukon Native Teacher Education Program (YNTEP) at Yukon College as a vital means of developing Indigenous teachers for Yukon students and; third, in the aforementioned desire to examine the Yukon educational system and democratically reform it to better meets the needs of Yukon First Nations.   As identified in the Education Reform Project introductory document, these improvements include increasing First Nations student successes and greater involvement of First Nations in decision-making related to education in Yukon schools.

Fourthly, the increased experimentation of ethnographic research methods holds promise as a method which can illuminate cultural differences and similarities in educational contexts. Zou & Trueba (2002) affirm the power of educational ethnography

as an illuminating and powerful research approach that holds promise as a means of improving education in the future. With this in mind, this research project aims to identify the epistemological foundations upon which school administrators build their knowledge and construct their practice, as a means of contributing and broadening the field of educational leadership to include perspectives from northern, isolated, cross-cultural environments.

Summary

This research project aims to address Walker & Dimmock's (2000) concern that studies of comparative education have been generally absent from educational leadership and management, thereby limiting the available body of knowledge specific to culture and leadership. Currently, there appears no identifiable educational leadership research in the Yukon which examines non-Indigenous leaders in Indigenous communities. Therefore, this research project aims to contribute to and illuminate this particular unexplored facet of the educational leadership field.

Consequently, this research project holds the promise of broadening conceptions of the field, given, as Walker & Dimmock state regarding educational leadership that "Anglo-American scholars continue to exert a disproportionate influence on theory, policy, and practice. Thus, a relatively small number of scholars and policy makers purport to speak for the rest" (p. 145). This creates a number of significant challenges that can be addressed through the conduct of this research project, including: first, diminishment of the continued domination of and reliance upon the prevailing Euro-western paradigm of educational leadership, second, broadening the ways in which leadership is researched and considered to be understood, and third as a result, reducing the continued limitations of the

current body of literature in its ability to inform the fostering of prospective educational leaders at post-secondary institutions.

The following section, Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework and Literature review, draws upon relevant literature to examine a number of aspects relevant to this research project. These include educational leadership and the criticality of culture when applied to Indigenous contexts, educational policies, and gender and ethnicity. This textured review situates my research questions and foregrounds the study. It also provides a historical and contextual basis for the study, illuminating tensions and contradictions present in the literature. Chapter 3: Research Methods, provides a detailed description of the research methods and my own positionality as a researcher. Chapter 4: Data Collection, presents fine-grained 'portraits' of the four principals in this study and the schools in which they work based on extensive observations and document reviews at each site. In Chapter 5: Findings, comprehensive and in-depth interviews with each participant are presented as they addressed the research questions. The rich narratives they offered are then woven together in ways that shed light on the research questions. Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusions, in which each research question is addressed, the significance of this study is emphasized, and future areas of research are put forward.

CHAPTER TWO
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In this chapter I illuminate and inform particular aspects impacting the under-examined experiences of non-Indigenous school administrators in the Yukon: how their habitus or embodied dispositions and their educational trajectories informs how they construe educational leadership in Indigenous contexts, how they construct their professional identities, and upon which epistemological foundations they build their knowledge and enact their practice in the culturally diverse contexts of Yukon schools. Further, the historical challenges and limitations of educational leadership research in Indigenous contexts will also be examined as a means of positioning the research methods identified as suitable to this study. I begin by situating the confusing epistemology of educational leadership.

The confusing epistemology of educational leadership

A central challenge facing both researchers and practitioners specific to the topic of educational leadership is the confusing epistemology, lack of clear meaning regarding the notion of leadership, and the limitations of the current body of educational leadership literature. I will explore these issues in detail, attempting to underscore the difficulties which have prevented broader notions of educational leadership to emerge. This identified narrowness of the field serves to limit the epistemological base upon which non-Indigenous educational leaders in Indigenous contexts build and enact their practice.

Obstacles to be analyzed are: the epistemic foundation of educational leadership, the historical foundations behind this conceptual vagueness, and the limitations and constraints preventing broader notions of educational leadership from emerging. Further,

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the identification and analysis of these topics serve to underscore the broader goal of this

project, which is to expand conceptions of educational leadership to include the

perspectives of non-Indigenous educational leaders in Indigenous contexts.

The confusing epistemic foundation and conceptual vagueness regarding

educational leadership is perhaps best described by Allix & Gronn (2005) who state that:

> Almost no area of inquiry or interest has shown itself to be more elusive, or more
> controversial, to human understanding, than the notion of leadership.   It has been,
> and remains, a notoriously perplexing, yet tantalizing preoccupation for those who
> research it and/or expound upon it, and for those who, more pragmatically, wish to
> embrace it and master it, to effect change or effect organizational performance. (p.
> 181)

Allix and Gronn identify a core challenge to researching leadership, particularly in light of

the following question: What is educational leadership? Reinforcing the complexity

identified above, and serving to further complicate understandings of educational

leadership in the aim of answering such a question, is the historical reliance upon what

Rayner & Gunter (2005) describe as "an abstraction of propositions and required

behaviours, often derived from non-educational settings by those at a distance from where

this leadership is practiced" (p. 151).

The limited knowledge base of educational leadership further makes elusive the

answer, or answers, to the educational leadership question. Rayner and Gunter (ibid.)

argue that "we draw on very limited knowledge claims: we tend to discount the self and

our experience as being meaningful to such a question; we tend to comply with established

norms about how organizations work" (p. 151). The inability to define leadership is

further reinforced by the findings of the *Fostering Tomorrow's Educational Leaders* report

(Stack et al., 2006).   Based in part on interviews with Deans of Education at institutions

that offer educational leadership and administration (ELA) programs to educators in

British Columbia, this report concluded:

> Despite much promotional activity, there is no widely accepted definition of leadership and no consensus on how to best develop it or foster it. Our participants disagreed substantively about what leadership means and how it is related to management or administration. (p. 31)

The confounding issues related to what leadership means within diverse

educational contexts also creates dissatisfaction and generates tensions on the part of

practicing school administrators and researchers alike. Practitioners have strong opinions

regarding the lack of effectiveness and transferability of what they have learned relative to

the needs of the position. In an American study of school principals, Portin, Schneider,

DeArmond, & Gundlach (2003) found that most administrators felt that they were short-

changed by the training they received.

> Principals saw their preparation programs as unhelpful because the course work emphasized only instructional and managerial leadership. Most said their training programs did not touch on the more complex combinations of leadership skills used in cultural, strategic, or external development leadership. Moreover, managing the complex push and pull within districts and district directives wasn't part of the curriculum either. (p. 38)

Murphy (2005) provides a North American historical context, suggesting that the

school leader as manager of the corporate enterprise ("and its apotheosis, the CEO", p.

156) is a concept that emerged in the early 20th Century. Much of the language of the

educational leadership field is reflected in these roots: management by walking about,

management by objective, best practices, benchmarks, are all borrowed terms.

After World War Two, a science of administration perspective was applied to

educational leadership, giving rise to a two-pillared foundation, leading to one branch

focusing on management, the other on the social sciences. This bifurcated foundation adds

to the epistemological confusion surrounding educational leadership and adds further uncertainty to the lives of non-Indigenous leaders in Indigenous communities. Left to navigate the tensions resulting from the incompatibility of managerial approaches to leadership with educational desires and aspirations embedded within broader cultural frames, principals cannot rely upon their educational leadership development experiences and knowledge alone to assist them, for reasons which will be outlined below.

The aforementioned twinning is evidenced and perpetuated in the "traditional" curriculum content of many educational leadership and administration graduate programs. Expressing his frustration with the inadequacies of administrative preparation, Murphy (2007) argues that, "by design, and by the accumulated sediment of the decades, current structures in the preparation of school leaders have failed and will continue to do so. They cannot be salvaged in any real sense, nor should we continue to pursue that goal" (p. 583).

Adding further to his dissatisfaction, Murphy expresses concern that the historical inadequacies of educational leadership development available to current and prospective school administrators, will translate to practice: "because universities, especially research universities, have constructed their programs with raw materials acquired from the warehouse of academe. In the meantime, they have marginalized practice" (p. 583).

Reinforcing this inability of educational leadership to emerge as its own "stand alone" discipline or field of practice has been the grafting of ideas and philosophies taken from other areas. The resultant legacy of doing so has served to seriously hinder the development of educational leadership and hampered its emergence as a profession in its own right. It underscores the foundational problem that understandings of educational leadership continue to be limited ones.

Such grafting from other knowledge bases onto the educational leadership field appears to have largely guided and informed the development of the profession, leading to the positioning and replication of school principals into an imbalance that focuses more on management (the term Site Based Management being a representative example) and less on educational leaders and leadership (Lingard & Christie, 2003). Leader traits and abilities have become more the focus than, for example, assisting the development of good teacher practice throughout the school. This is replicated in professional journals and policy documents that focus predominantly on the managerial aspects of job, with little regard to curriculum, pedagogy, or assessment (Thompson, 2000, in Lingard & Christie, p. 329).

This is particularly the case in light of the aforementioned aim of the Yukon educational system to become more inclusive of diverse cultural viewpoints and community dimensions. A result of this underlying problem is the limitations it poses to broader understandings of educational leadership. Difficulties in understanding and articulating how non-Indigenous principals within Indigenous communities identify and construct themselves as educational leaders thus becomes even further compounded.

At this point, it becomes clear that two prevailing theories of educational leadership development are dominant: On the one hand, Murphy asserts that practice is a dimension of educational leadership preparation that is underemphasised at the university curriculum level. On the other hand rests the assertion by Stack et al. (2006) that the educational leadership programs examined in their report have not afforded enough attention to the epistemic facets of educational leadership. In relation to this study, such a distinct inconsistency of belief points directly to the following question: Where do non-Indigenous educational leaders in Indigenous contexts locate themselves in such confusing and

contested terrain? While perhaps safe to wager that the answer to this question lies

somewhere in between, one can only assume this to be the case in the absence of specific

leadership research involving non-Indigenous school leaders in remote and isolated

Indigenous contexts.

Educational leadership literature is often marked by a diminished focus on

descriptions or explanations relating to the contexts, situations, and the nature of

constituents (students, teachers, parents, community) that may influence and be influenced

by educational leadership.   The educational leadership literature base focuses more on

what a specific leader "does" and less on the "how" and why" he or she chooses to do it,

therefore explorations regarding conceptualizations of educational leadership employing a

broader sense than its sole embodiment in one person- the school principal-are warranted.

This is reinforced by Spillane et al. (2004) who argue that:

> [w]e know relatively little about the how of school leadership, that is knowledge of
> the ways in which school leaders develop and sustain those conditions and
> processes believed necessary for innovation. While there is an expansive literature
> about what school structures, programmes, roles, and processes are necessary for
> instructional change, we know less about how these changes are undertaken or
> enacted by school leaders. (p. 4)

It is here that two schools of thought come into obvious conflict with each other in

direct relation to educational leadership - the first typified by the belief that leadership is

culturally, contextually, and situationally located, the second by the certainty that

leadership can be prescribed, standardized, and reduced to quantifiable traits or

characteristics generalizable across contexts.   Despite the aforementioned significance of

culture and context specific to attempts at broadening notions of educational leadership,

efforts made in order to quantify, codify and simplify educational leadership practice are

very strong, particularly in the US. These efforts and policy trends impact educational

leadership in Canada, particularly given the recent publication of leadership standards in

the province of British Columbia which do not include culture as a significant component

of leadership. Given the proximity of British Columbia to the Yukon, and the attendance

of Yukon teachers and administrators at courses and professional development (i.e. the

British Columbia Principals and Vice-Principals Association short course for educational

leaders) the reinforcement of cultural deficiency in educational leadership gives cause for

concern.

While the question of what constitutes educational leadership is a highly

challenging and problematic one to answer, Stack, et al. (2006) add a further important

aspect for consideration: "How do we determine which leadership skills, knowledge, and

values are required, who decides them, and by what criteria?" (p. 18). This further adds to

the vagueness of what comprises educational leadership, particularly when it comes to

Indigenous contexts which, as will be discussed below, have remained on the margins of

any systematic consideration.

Best practices and standards in educational leadership

The absence of a sound epistemological base of educational leadership raises

questions regarding the validity of the body of literature specific to the identification and

application of best practices in the educational leadership field. Such assertions become

highly problematic if, as indicated by the *Fostering Tomorrow's Educational Leaders*

report, consensus regarding what constitutes educational leadership that may be "good" for

the purposes of quantification and codification of practice cannot even be attained in a

relatively small geographic area as the province of British Columbia. As a logical

extension, this observation raises the question of why educational leadership "best practices" should be considered relevant when applied and stretched across contexts and cultures which display variability. Glatter & Kydd (2003) reinforce this concern by explicitly stating: "the idea of learning from best practice implies bottling a prescription formula" (p. 238), and cite James (2001, in Glatter & Kydd, 2003) who offers the following regarding the significance of context: "The transfer of best practice is a complex issue because what is done in one place may not suit another…There is no single "one size fits all" solution when the requirements may be very diverse" (p. 238). Should this assertion be taken as true, it serves to further justify the need for a detailed examination of non-Indigenous leaders in the highly diverse and varied schools of the Yukon Territory.

The application of best practices in educational leadership is highly problematic within a Yukon context, as it removes the consideration of context and culture, making any influence or effect that these factors might exert on educational leadership noticeably absent. This raises the particular concern that best practices are in direct contrast to Hallinger and Leithwood's contention specific to the impact of situational and contextual considerations. These researchers caution that the very nature of current perspectives of educational leadership are grounded in Western cultures that, in addition to their prevalence in the Western world, are transferred to other contexts with little question given to their cultural validity (Hallinger & Leithwood, 1996). Therefore, I argue, such approaches or policy initiatives aimed at instituting best practices very likely serve to reinforce rather than mitigate the tensions between school principals and their communities identified in Chapter 1.

The above concern notwithstanding, in the United States deep faith is placed in the power of best practice and performance standards for educational leaders by some

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educational leadership researchers. Owings, Kaplan, & Nunnery (in Waters & Kingston, 2005) consider "the most critical step in reforming the current [American] system is the development of clear, functional performance standards for what principals know and should be able to do" (p. 15). The effects of educational leadership in this instance are narrowly focused on student achievement, on the belief that leadership effects have a direct and quantifiable result of improving student learning in the absence of other factors that may influence student learning- either positively or negatively. Such views are readily proffered with ease, confidence, and numerical efficiency, as in the case of: "Principal leadership is positively correlated with student achievement and has an average effect size of .25" (Waters & Kingston, 2005, p. 15).

Detailed attempts are made to measure and quantify educational leadership behaviours and relate them specifically to academic achievement. One illustrative example is offered by a Mid-Continental Research for Education and Learning (MCREL) study titled "Balanced leadership: What 30 years of research tells us about the effect of leadership on student achievement" (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003).   In this study, "21 specific leadership responsibilities that are significantly associated with student achievement" (p. 2) are identified and ranked in order of magnitude, as if they can simply be applied as a template that can be laid over all schools in a decontextualized manner.

A disturbing representative example of this concern is the simplistic suggestion that there can be direct transference of the aforementioned "21 responsibilities" across schools and organizations that may have entirely unique and different contexts and cultures, thereby reinforcing the limitations of both the understanding and practice of educational leadership. Little thought is given to the possibility that the suitability of the practice of educational leadership and the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required of a principal at a

large, urban high school may, in fact, be quite different or even opposed to those that would serve well the principal of a rural elementary school and its constituents.

Yet despite the confident assertions of the proponents of best practices and the quantification of educational leadership, dissenting views abound regarding correlations- and the degrees to which they exist- between leadership and student outcomes. Not all who study educational research share such confidence in the measurement and correlation of educational leadership to student learning. The very notion of what constitutes "achievement" in diverse cultural settings further complicates the ability to make distinct the correlation between educational leadership and student achievement, however defined. Murphy (in Witziers, Bosker, & Kruger, 2003) concludes in his review of leadership and student achievement that "the existing knowledge base fails to offer proof that educational leadership matters" (p. 399). He goes further, stating that "not much research is conducted in this area and that (b) most studies in this field are of poor quality". School effectiveness related to student achievement has been criticized based upon the narrow focus on cognitive outcomes (Witziers, Bosker, & Kruger, 2003). Factors such as location, working conditions, levels of efficacy on the part of teachers and the nature of the organization rarely appear as interrelated dynamics that could influence (or be influenced by) educational leadership.

The concerns specific to the standardization and certification of the incoherent field of educational leadership are driven home further by Stack et al. (2006): "On the first, the nature of educational leadership, we found few attempts to distinguish it from, for example, business or military leadership" (p. 3). Given the absence of a coherent definition of educational leadership in a democratic context, this report argues that

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conversations surrounding educational leadership need to be broadened rather than narrowed by a focus on the issues of certification that envelop it.

Attempts to broaden the field are exhibited by research conducted in small school settings by Bauch (2001) who reinforces the distinctions between schools and communities based on context, stating: "Rural schools are vulnerable to imitating the reform standards of national and urban school. Urban schools, to which much of the research on current reform efforts has been directed, are not rural schools writ large. Neither are rural communities like urban neighbourhood communities" (p. 204). This sentiment reflects strongly of Yukon schools. Adding further to the distinctions of the roles and duties of rural principals relative to their urban counterparts is the identification of the dual role of teacher and principal (Wilson & McPake, 2000), given that many rural principals also carry a substantial teaching assignment in addition to their leadership and administrative duties.

The complexity of the educational leadership field has resulted in a body of literature deficient of descriptions or explanations taking into account the richness and diversity of the contexts, situations, and the features of constituent communities in which educational leaders work. This is particularly the case regarding educational leadership research in the Canadian North (Goddard, 2002). A preponderance of the literature aimed at simplifying educational leadership through the mandating of best practices, standards, and certification, along with examinations of what a specific leader "does" and less on the "how" and why" he or she chooses to do it in a contextually dependent manner has, counterproductively, served to further complicate and confound the field for those wishing to understand it- be they scholars or practitioners. Therefore, further exploration of educational leadership employing a broader sense than its sole embodiment in one person,

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the school principal, and enlarged to include considerations of culture, context, and location, is highly warranted. With these aspects at the forefront, the following section explores educational leadership in light of the criticality of culture and Indigenous contexts.

The criticality of culture and the intersections of culture and leadership

The preceding discussion leads to the observation that conceptions of educational leadership only marginally incorporate Indigenous epistemic worldviews. Existing notions of educational leadership – however approached – remain predominantly Eurocentric. And yet, in the Yukon context, non-Indigenous educators wield a great amount of influence in Indigenous contexts, given their predominance in the Yukon educational system. Even though the Yukon does not have reserves, the following point nonetheless bears thoughtful consideration: Underscoring this prevalence on a national scale and its effect on students, Taylor (1995) reinforces the Yukon reality, offering: "Presently in Canada hundreds, perhaps thousands, of non-Native teachers work on reserves…The native student's self-image, perception of Native/non-Native interaction, and the chance of graduating will all be influenced by their non-Native teachers" (p. 224). This reality must be kept at the forefront throughout this entire research proposal, particularly when framed with Hampton's (1995) assertion that: "No aspect of a culture is more vital to its integrity than its means of education" (p. 7).

Every Yukon school possesses its own distinct contextual and often micro-political landscape of which school administrators need to be aware. This is no small challenge. In small communities, whether a long-time resident or newcomer, it can be difficult to navigate through such complexity, given that interpersonal relations are coupled with the reality that what happens in the community can often be transferred into the school, and

vice versa.   Being an educational leader in such places, I argue, requires particular types of knowledge, judgment, and reason, based upon experience considered with a thorough understanding of context (Coulter & Wiens, 2002). Every school and community has its own complex combination of needs that are not always easily defined. This may serve to explain why the reliance upon skills and knowledge that served an educator well in a particular context with a specific group of people may be relatively ineffective or even counterproductive in another where languages, community history, and cultures are different. Admittedly, the stresses are not easy ones for school leaders to cope with. While in populated areas it can be easier to distance oneself from work (at least geographically) at the end of the day, in small and isolated communities this may not be possible.

Given the predominance of the school in Yukon communities, this complexity of interrelated factors places particular emphasis on the school principal as the focal point and nexus responsible for many outcomes, both educational and community-based. In times ranging from growth and celebration to crisis and anguish, the role, perception, and relationship of the school to the community is often defined by the very nature of the school principal as educational leader. Therefore, there is the need for greater understandings of both the complementary and divergent aspects of educational leadership in such contexts, as well as identification of the gaps that may exist between local perceptions and the expectations of educational leaders and leadership in Yukon schools on the part of the Yukon educational system. This need has been identified by Goddard & Foster (2002), who describe the challenge school administrators face when trying to balance the, at times, competing requirements and needs of the profession with the voices of those in their communities. This is done with varying degrees of success, where

educators may be "purposefully or naively, contributing to the development of an artificial divide between Western and Indigenous knowledge" (Goddard, 2002, p. 124). Specific to the BC context, Stack, Coulter, Grosjean, Mazawi, & Smith (2006) reinforce the need for further conversations leading to greater convergence of these distinct viewpoints by stating: "There is a need to understand the implications for Aboriginals in British Columbia of the linkage of the word 'education' to 'leadership'" (p. 63). So too is this the case for the Yukon Territory.

Based on the aforementioned complexity of Yukon communities, a brief examination of the literature specific to the historical absence of culture, and in particular Indigenous cultures, frames and serves to reinforce the importance of cross-cultural research and understandings of educational leadership. Offering a basis for this examination as it relates specifically to this research project, Hallinger & Leithwood (1998) assert:

> Research outside education suggests that there are differences across cultures in terms of how people define leadership. The early stages of research into cross-cultural conceptions of leadership should try to explore the meaning of leadership from the perspectives of people within a given culture…[Among other techniques, this research should examine]…the use of different models of leadership in different cultures. (p. 31)

While there has been considerable study and research on women and educational leadership (Chase, 1995; Grogran, 1996; Shakeshaft, 1987, in Fitzgerald, 2002), the preponderance of it has originated from the USA. This implies that educational leadership research presents and reinforces the dominance of the Euro-western paradigm of educational leadership, severely limiting how educational leadership is construed across cultures and contexts. Much less research appears to have been conducted surrounding the cultural diversity of leadership, cross-cultural understandings, and specifically,

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conceptualizations and descriptions that include Indigenous perspectives and contexts.

This is stated in the literature (Hallinger, in Bryant, 1998; Hallinger & Leithwood, 1996),

and appears especially applicable to a Northern Canadian context. Goddard &Foster (2002)

underscore this by stating that while there have been examinations by Bryant (1996),

Capper (1990), and Shields (1996) within American Indian contexts:

> …there have been few examinations of school leadership that have been grounded in Canada's northern region. This lack of research focusing on northern education generally, and the relationship between educational leadership and the local culture in particular, identifies a serious gap in the literature. (Goddard and Foster, 2002, pp. 5-6)

How culture may be integrated into the limited body of literature specific to

northern Canadian community contexts could serve us well in clarifying what a cultural

understanding of leadership actually means. Going beyond the definition of culture as:

"The normative glue that holds a particular school together" (Sergiovanni, 2000, in

Goddard & Foster, 2002, p. 3), I prefer the broader definition employed by Agar (1996, in

Goddard & Foster, 2002.) who describes culture as: "The knowledge you construct to

show how acts in the context of one world can be understood as coherent from the point of

view in another world" (p. 3). This important distinction avoids the view of culture as a

school-centric one, encouraging the inclusion of the cultural aspects of society and

communities within which schools are embedded. This viewpoint is particularly suited to

the Yukon educational research context in order that the school itself not be viewed in

isolation from the community.   To view the school as an entity separate from the

community would only serve to further entrench the historical disparity and dissonance

existing between Indigenous communities and state-run schools as a result of Canadian

government residential school policies.

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The identified gaps in the literature specific to northern Canadian contexts, coupled with the broad-reaching and profound effects of non-Indigenous educators in relation to their Indigenous students, adds further justification for this examination of educational leadership in the Yukon. In the heretofore unexamined context which this Canadian territory represents, how educational leadership is construed in Indigenous contexts by non-Indigenous principals, how they define themselves as professionals, and upon which epistemological foundations they build their knowledge and enact their practice takes on two crucial dimensions: first, informing the identified lacuna in the knowledge base of educational leadership, and two; broadening notions of pedagogy to articulate a culturally-grounded understanding of educational leadership.

Reinforcing this justification, Hallinger & Leithwood (1996) describe culture as a missing variable in leadership, in light of the domination of western theories of leadership "despite the notion that leadership is contingent upon the context in which it is exercised" (p. 100). The absence of cross-cultural leadership, and particularly the inclusion of Indigenous culture in educational leadership theory and practice, is identified and reinforced by Fitzgerald (2002):

> Despite changes that have been made in definitions and descriptions of educational leadership to provide a focus on gender, there is an implicit assumption that while educational leadership might be practiced differently according to gender, there is a failure to consider the values and practices of Indigenous educational leaders. Thus, the construct of educational leadership needs to be more broadly theorized in order for knowledge of Indigenous ways of leading to emerge. (p. 1)

This stated absence identifies a founding cornerstone which further justifies this research project. The issue identified in this subsection presents more broadly than simply an identification of the "absent" culture and its addition to the extant educational leadership literature. More to the point, the elaboration and articulation of a fully-

grounded cultural theory and understanding of educational leadership specific to the

Yukon context, one that is sensitive to Indigenous community contexts, values, and

identities, is called for.

Bryant (1998) further proposes that culture is an area from which there remains

much to learn in regards to leadership, supporting Hallinger's (1995) earlier assertion that

in studies of educational leadership, culture has been a missing variable in leadership

theory. So too may this be the case in the Yukon context, where much also remains to be

learned through the examination of educational leadership embedded in the cultural

contexts of this Territory. Yet, challenges exist which have served to hinder the expansion

of educational leadership theory to include the aspect of culture. In the following

subsection, these barriers will be examined in greater detail.

Challenges to understanding cross-cultural conceptions of educational leadership

A particular challenge to understanding cross-cultural conceptions of educational

leadership is the pervasiveness of the functionalist view of discourses on leadership that

are embedded within intellectual paradigms rooted in the 19th and 20th Centuries.   This is

not a new realization, given the observation by Giroux (in Maxcy, 1991) that:

> The meaning of leadership has been narrowly defined by neo-conservatives as a
> practice that emulates the style and ideology of corporate executives *and*
> legitimates the style and legitimates training students for the world of work as the
> primary objective of schooling (p. xi).

Such a confined and limited view of the valued ends of education and educational

leadership runs counter to particular goals expressed in the Yukon Education Act (1990).

This guiding piece of legislation for educators and policy makers indicates the vastly

broader aims of the Yukon Educational System than simply training for workforce skills. Explicit importance is placed upon a diverse array of dimensions, including "the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, cultural, and aesthetic potential of all students to the extent of their abilities" (p. 8). This divergence serves to position the examination of non-Indigenous leaders in a light which is particularly interesting and intriguing. While we do not currently know how successful non-Indigenous educational leaders shape, craft, and reconstitute their leadership, extending it beyond the limited bounds of a functionalist paradigm to achieve the goals stipulated by the Yukon Education Act, elucidating answers to these questions should result in a highly illuminating educational leadership study.

Cross-cultural examinations of leadership have been further challenged by the limiting conceptions of leadership that traditionally placed particular emphasis upon the sole leader, titled principal or head teacher (Storey, 2004). Simkins (2005) refers to this "traditional" view of leadership and described as being marked by the following "characteristics":

- that leadership resides in individuals.
- that leadership is hierarchically based and linked to office.
- that leadership occurs when leaders do things to followers.
- that leadership is different from and more important than management.
- that leaders are different.
- that leaders make a crucial difference to organizational performance.
- that effective leadership is generalizable. (p. 11)

Such beliefs on leadership have proven to be particularly limiting when the unit of leadership analysis has been that of the "hero" or solitary leader (Gronn, 2002). This has resulted in further confounding the understanding of what educational leadership constitutes, ways to define it, how it can be developed in others, or understood in different

cultural contexts where leadership may be distributed amongst many people in many complex ways.

While the concepts of leadership and management have been examined extensively across the professional fields of business and science, the discourse of the ongoing interrelatedness and struggles between them continues to have particular influence upon and relevance to educational leadership, where leadership is still presented as a range of behaviours often extracted from other professions. This is due to the limited knowledge and the discounting of self and experience when attempting to define leadership (Rayner & Gunter, 2005), particularly in educational settings.

The criticality of culture and the intersections of culture and educational leadership

Hallinger (1995) underscores this historical absence of culture as a variable of educational leadership, identifying that conceptions of leadership and management are often transferred to different cultures with little concern given to their validity. This is reaffirmed by Hallinger & Leithwood (1996) who point to the dominant application of Eurocentric concepts of leadership and the limitation this poses specific to understanding educational leadership employing a cultural frame:

> Without placing blame anywhere, it is time to enrich theory and practice in education by seeking out the diversity of ideas and practices that have existed largely hidden in the shadows of the dominant Western paradigms that have guided the field. (p. 100)

In proximate geographic and contextual relation to the Yukon, Berger, Epp, & Moller (2006) employ the term "cultural clash" in their Nunavut-based educational study. These researchers highlight school-specific examples of where an understanding of cultural difference is crucial for educators, and particularly school administrators, in the way that

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education is delivered to students and schools are operated in Inuit communities. Given that "it is not unusual to find street hockey games being played at 2:00 a.m. in Nunavut, or hunters heading out onto the land at 8:00 p. m." (p. 187), school schedules that are inflexible present as artificial to Indigenous community members and policies of attendance incongruent with embedded family values. As a result, nonattendance and dropping out by students occurs chronically. While inadequate curriculum and resources are not specifically related to educational leadership, the adaptation and development of resources to more appropriately fit the culture, and the identification and promotion of culturally appropriate pedagogy, benefits from the impetus and attention given to them by educational leaders who are attuned to the cultural context of their school and community.

Offering an historical underpinning for educational leaders to culturally adapt their practice Friesen & Friesen (2002) identify the need for a reversal of the historical assimilation of Aboriginal peoples into mainstream society. As indicated in the 1967 Hawthorn Report, they urge that educators should be integrated into Aboriginal ways of knowing, getting to know the background, culture, and identify of their students more thoroughly. These authors also base this assertion upon the findings of Taylor (1995) who estimates that "90 percent of Native children will, at one time or another, be taught by a non-Native teacher" (Friesen & Friesen, 2002, p. 27).

Cultural familiarity and sensitivity does not rest upon a numerical foundation alone. Rather, raising the awareness and understanding of Indigenous cultures on the part of non-Indigenous teachers is suggested as a means of reducing the "culture shock" which can manifest itself in non-Aboriginal educators new to Indigenous communities. The effect of this can be overwhelming, causing otherwise well-intentioned teachers to isolate

themselves, cocoon themselves from the community, or resign and leave. Friesen &

Friesen (2002) underscore the following epistemological distinctions specific to

Indigenous perspectives from Western Canada which underpins the aforementioned

phenomenon. First, there is a spiritual worldview that all things, both animate and

inanimate, have a spiritual element. This includes rocks, plants, the sky, animals, and of

course, humans. Specific to First Nations knowledge and learning before contact, "all

appeared to have been going well until the Europeans came" (p. 15). Second, just as

individual students exhibit different learning styles, the learning styles of Aboriginal

students differ in that concepts and skills are learned through the repetition of many tasks

and "learning by doing", making the classroom setting and the reliance on abstract contexts

and verbalization more of an artificial one. Third, it is accepted by parents and community

that students progress with learning at different rates, in contrast to the expectation of

educational systems that all students attain a specific learning point by the end of a school

grade. Lastly, Indigenous students rely on a different range of classroom activity patterns

than may be evident in non-Indigenous classrooms. Friesen & Friesen cite Hodgeson-

Smith (2000) who states the following specific to the learning styles of Indigenous

students, describing them as:

> …field dependent learners, which means they are more apt to depend on
> confronting situations when inculcating knowledge. Thus they tend to show a
> preference for precise guided assignments, and indicate a greater need for a variety
> of different classroom interaction patterns than their non-Native peers. They also
> prefer more student-teacher interaction, are more peer-oriented, and more
> positively inclined towards collaborative and small-group learning tasks.
> Significant difference in behaviour often come in to play when teachers and
> students represent different cultural backgrounds. (p. 32)

Based upon these identified factors, one can assume that non-Indigenous leaders in

Indigenous Yukon contexts need to take into account cultural variability as they construct

and enact their educational leadership in different ways, engage in pedagogical practice, and interact with students and the community in which they reside. Reinforcing this postulation, Ryan (1989) emphasizes the need for principals to construct distinct educational leadership approaches that "depart in any number of ways from standard schooling practices" (p. 381). And yet, in his study of an Innut school in Labrador, Canada, he observed that "the methods [the school] uses to promote student learning vary only marginally from those practiced in most schools throughout the western world" (p. 391).

While such a statement could perhaps present as a broad overgeneralization, it nonetheless raises vitally important questions specific to this research project: despite the identified need for school practices to be distinct ones in Indigenous communities, schools operated by non-Indigenous educational leaders in Indigenous contexts appear to replicate Eurocentric institutional arrangements and curricula. Applying Ryan's assertions to this study would suggest that non-Indigenous educational leaders in Indigenous Yukon contexts rely on Eurocentric paradigms to inform the way in which they construe and enact educational leadership. Ryan identifies a large gap between rhetoric and practice which serves to inform the need expressed by the Government of Yukon for educational reform recognized on p. 5, expressing the need to narrow First Nation and non-First Nation student outcomes. What role, therefore, do non-Indigenous leaders play in both closing and widening this gap through their conceptualizations and enacting of educational leadership? Such questions serve to reinforce further the vital need for this examination as a means of understanding how educational leadership both constrains and enables the realization of the educational goals of the broader Yukon society.

The relative absence of cultural diversity related to educational leadership raises another issue that makes understandings of leadership (and specifically aboriginal leadership) in education and schools all the more difficult to define and sustain. While programs such as the Ts'kel program at UBC have been developed as a means to include First Nations perspectives and voices, Jules (1999) points out, "It is here that a difficulty arises: the only models of educational leadership readily available to trainers and students are those developed in the non-Native Indian cultures (usually that of North America)" (p. 1).

An additional limitation affecting the understanding of leadership when employing a cultural perspective is the "quest for universal leadership principles that apply across all cultures" (Dickson, Den Hartog, & Mitchelson, 2003, p. 729). Despite this, there has been a measure of progress made to adopt a different epistemic position regarding the intersections of culture and leadership. For instance, while the 1974 edition of the *Handbook of Educational Leadership* hardly mentioned cross-cultural leadership, the 1990 edition included 40 pages on this topic. At the time of Dickson, Den Hartog, & Mitchelson's examination of the field, these researchers suggest that it would be next to impossible to assemble a single, comprehensive chapter on cultural issues and leadership.

Yet, there is still a vast amount of ground to be covered in order to bring greater visibility to Indigenous cultural perspectives. This is particularly so in the case of academic journals. Reinforcing the identified absence of Indigenous leadership perspectives, in January, 2007, I conducted a review of 183 peer-reviewed articles published in two predominant educational leadership journals: The U.S. based *Education Administration Quarterly* and the *Journal of Educational Administration*, published in the UK. Noted in

this examination was the absence of educational leadership research specific to Indigenous populations, and particularly North American Indigenous populations. None of the 183 articles examined were identified to have a focus on educational leadership with the intent of broadening the field in respect to the inclusion of Indigenous cultural perspectives.

While such an absence may perhaps be expected in a UK-based journal given that Indigenous education may be of little relevance or interest to their readership, nevertheless such a lack of presence in a predominant US journal raises a number of specific questions: Are few researchers conducting Indigenous and cross-cultural educational leadership in a North American setting? Are few researchers choosing to write about it in journal article format? Does the current array of research methods or tools limit engagement in such research? Do the predilections of editorial boards influence the relative absence of studies and articles on Indigenous and cross-cultural research? Could there perhaps other factors reinforcing this absence? While answers to such questions lie beyond the specific scope of this research project, findings extracted from this review of the literature affirms the relative 'silence' of Indigenous cultural perspectives in current mainstream educational leadership literature.

Whereas the above points alone present a further justification for this research project, an additional supporting factor was also noted as a result of this examination. A specific absence in regards to research methodology was also identified. In particular, only one article in this research study stating the employment of "ethnographic observations" (Giles & Hargeaves, 2006) was extracted from the 183 examined.[2]

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[2] These observations were utilized as part of three larger case studies of three high schools as a means of analysing change over time. The aspect of research methods will be discussed in a following subsection of this study.

Despite the identified relevance and need for greater cross-cultural understandings of educational leadership, the broadening of the field is unfortunately limited by the absence of such research or perspectives in two of the mainstream educational leadership journals. In this regard, editorial policies may exert influence upon the extent and depth of the pool of knowledge made available in the area of Indigenous educational leadership, and serve as a filter which determines what is considered worthy of knowing specific to the broader field of educational leadership.

This is of particular concern in regards to the US-based EAQ, given the relevance of Indigenous perspectives to American contexts in light of Escobar-Ortloff & Ortloff's (2003) argument that "Culture has a powerful influence on how and what people think about knowledge, learning, and education" (p. 256) . Given the variability of conceptions of leadership across cultures, their relative absence in a leading journal at the advent of this millennium is most certainly noticeable and serves to reinforce the monolithic predominance of the Euro-western educational leadership discourse.

The critical need for Yukon-situated research illuminating the vital role of educational leaders who are attuned to school and community cultures is one not to be underestimated: "Only by establishing links between those social practices that pervade Western society and everyday life in Native communities and schools, can we begin to capture the complexities involved in seeking out not only explanations of, but solutions to, the problems in Native education (Ryan, 1989, p. 382). Focusing squarely on the principal, Goddard & Foster (2002) affirm:

> If schools are to serve the legitimate needs of their communities, then efforts must be made to review and shape not only the institutional structure of the school but also the culture of the community within which the school functions. It is incumbent upon the school principal to take a lead role in this effort…In removing the planks from the palisade, the community has shown how principals in northern

schools must reconceptualize their schools as being integral parts of the communities they serve. (pp. 14-15)

To conclude, it is evident that cross-cultural understandings of educational leadership, which take into particular account the role of culture in northern Canadian Indigenous contexts, are noticeably absent. This deficiency serves to further reinforce and add legitimacy to this research project. Given the narrowness of the predominant Eurocentric educational leadership paradigm, the following subsection attempts to further enlarge the educational leadership conversation to include the issues of gender and ethnicity, and the influence they exert upon educational leadership.

Educational policy contexts, professional trajectories, and identity

How non-Indigenous educational leaders in Indigenous Yukon contexts construe and enact their practice appear shaped by three factors. These are the educational policy contexts extending into the Yukon from other provinces or federal bodies, the characteristics of the post-secondary educational leadership programs in which Yukon principals may have been educated, and the identities of the individuals themselves.

Educational policy contexts

At a federal level, the identification of specific educational leadership knowledge and practice in Indigenous communities is supported by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) recommendation 3.5.17 which states:

> Teacher education programs, in collaboration with Aboriginal organizations and government agencies that sponsor professional and para-professional training, adopt a comprehensive approach to educator training, developing career paths from para-professional training to professional certification in education careers that:
>
> > (a) prepare Aboriginal students for the variety of roles required to operate Aboriginal education systems; and

(b) open opportunities for careers in provincial education systems.

A dominant theme of the recommendations of the RCAP report was stated as: "Aboriginal peoples must have room to exercise their autonomy and structure their solutions" (AFN, n.d.).

The historical underpinnings of this study which aims to expand the predominant Euro-western paradigm to include the perspectives of non-Indigenous educational leaders in Indigenous contexts, is warranted by the reality that, in the Yukon, no attempt has been undertaken to date to clarify how notions of educational leadership as construed and exercised by non-Indigenous school administrators are further impacted by the position of Indigenous communities within the broader Canadian context; how memories of dispossession, community dislocation and colonialism inform educational leaders' notions of what constitutes educational leadership, community, and what education and schooling stand for. These aspects are important for both educational leaders and Yukon First Nations communities, given the role education plays in facilitating self-determination, and in defining identities of children and the sense of purpose of the communities that schools serve.

I argue that such educational policy contexts give rise to contradictions and foster tensions and dissonance which non-Indigenous principals must address in their daily practice. For school-based leaders in general, Leithwood (2001) directly states the impact of educational policies on them: "Among the several contexts in which school leaders are enmeshed, the context created by educational policies is among the most powerful influences on the nature of their work" (p. 227). This subsection will outline these contradictions in order to surface the daily struggle in which non-Indigenous educational leaders in the Yukon must engage should they wish to address them.

A number of policy factors impact the practice of school administrators in the

Yukon. Three such contextual factors are identified.

First, in the Yukon, the Yukon Education Act (1990) takes a greater role than

solely that of legislation, in that it is also serves as the predominant policy document that

defines not only the powers, roles, and duties of school administrators, but the broader

mandate and the operation of the Yukon educational system as a whole. Specific to the

Yukon society, the Education Act recognizes the following in its preamble:

> ...that Yukon people agree that the goal of the Yukon education system is to work
> in co-operation with parents to develop the whole child including the intellectual,
> physical, social, emotional, cultural, and aesthetic potential of all students to the
> extent of their abilities so that they may become productive, responsible, and self-
> reliant members of society while leading personally rewarding lives in a changing
> world. (p. 8)

It is important to note the reference made to the development of culture. Further

emphasis is given to culture in a subsequent citation:

> ... that the Yukon curriculum must include the cultural and linguistic heritage of
> Yukon aboriginal people and the multicultural heritage of Canada; (p. 8)

These two references underscore the significance of the need to more thoroughly

understand educational leadership and its relationship to learning in Yukon schools and

communities. While not all leadership resides in the principal's office, the importance of

the principal is reinforced by Leithwood & Riehl (2003) who state: "Scratch the surface of

an excellent school and you are likely to find an excellent principal" (p. 1), which aligns

with Barth's (1990) assertion that the key to a good school is a good principal. If the role

of the principal as educational leader is one that cannot be underestimated, then a greater

understanding of how school principals practice culturally and contextually relevant

educational leadership in the Yukon would be an essential endeavour that would assist in the realization of the societal goals recognized in the Yukon Education Act.

Second, the curriculum underpinning the delivery of education in Yukon schools originates from the British Columbia (BC) Ministry of Education. BC provincial examinations are also required at the high school level. As a result, Yukon school principals are charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the aforementioned ends of education, as prescribed by the Yukon Education Act, are met using externally generated BC curriculum. School administrators must therefore reconcile external curricular specifications with the development and implementation of educational programming deemed appropriate at a local level. Facility to do so is provided in the Yukon Education Act (1990):

> 42(2) Locally developed courses may constitute up to 20 per cent of the educational program offered to any student in a semester or a school year.

This suggests that BC-generated curriculum alone is inadequate to meet the educational needs of Yukon students. The Yukon Education Act mandates the length of the school year to be 950 instructional hours. Therefore, 20% translates to 190 instructional hours or approximately two months of school. This substantial allotment of time as designated by the Yukon Education Act underscores the import of locally developed curriculum in Yukon schools. Relating this directly to the school principal, Section 169 of the Yukon Education Act further states that it is the duties of the school principal to:

> (s) ensure that instruction in the school is consistent with the courses of study prescribed pursuant to this Act; and,

> (t) include in the activities of the school, cultural heritage traditions and practices of members of the community served by the school if the number of members who possess the cultural heritage so warrant;

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Based upon this section of the Act, BC-based curriculum deployed in Yukon

schools and locally developed programs must therefore compete with each other for

adequate exposure in Yukon schools. Specific to the praxis of Yukon school principals,

they are therefore situated at intersection of locally developed programming and BC

curriculum. The responsibility rests on them to direct the educational activities of the

school to make certain that BC curriculum is adequately delivered in Yukon schools while

concurrently ensuring that this programming is culturally relevant to students and the

community.

As a result, a number of questions emerge: How do principals determine the

amount of time and extent to which locally developed programming is delivered in their

schools? Which factors mediate their professional judgment in ensuring that the

instructional requirements of the Yukon Education Act are met with the deployment of BC

school curriculum while concurrently ensuring that cultural heritage traditions are

adequately present in their schools?

Maxcy (1991) illuminates the tensions which as a result can arise in the interstitial

space existing between large organizations and policies and the individual educational

leader in their school, stating:

> It is precisely the complex nature of organizations and the ways in which missions are
> held and implemented that make the leadership-policy question so difficult. By its
> very nature, policy regulates larger states of affairs rather than individual behavior:
> policy involves collectivities of individual persons (organizations) whose interests and
> needs tend to surmount individual personal interests. (p. 91)

The tensions which arise as a result of individual behavior and broader policy

initiatives are evidenced in the Yukon. For example, similar to the other provinces and

territories in Canada, education in the Yukon is a territorial (and not federal) responsibility.

The guiding legislation is the Yukon Educational Act (1990) which specifies the territorial administration of education. Notwithstanding this local responsibility, elected officials, the Yukon educational system, and its employees interface with other provincial jurisdictions and national bodies.

The above introduces a second factor affecting non-Indigenous Yukon school principals: As a result of this provincial-federal interface, principals are impacted by the mobility of senior educational officials between the Canadian provinces and territories. This may result in new educational agendas and policies being brought from other jurisdictions directly affecting their praxis. Examples include the school evaluation model currently employed in the Yukon, originally imported from School District #63 (Saanich) on Vancouver Island by the Yukon Department of Education. In addition, the document *Leadership Standards for Principals and Vice-Principals in British Columbia* (BCPVPA, 2006) was circulated to Yukon school administrators by the Department of Education in the fall of 2007. At a time where leadership development takes on heightened importance in light of impending retirements, the possibility exists that the aforementioned BC leadership standards will be relied upon to inform and guide future leadership in the Yukon, despite the cultural, political, governance, and historical differences between BC and the Yukon (Blakesley, 2007).

Third, at the Canadian and international levels, external standardized assessment schemes affect the professional practice of Yukon school principals. Yukon Ministers and Deputy Ministers of education attend the twice-yearly meetings of the Council of Ministers of Education (CMEC), with Deputy Ministers also attending the Association of Canadian Deputy Ministers of Education (ACDME). CMEC ensures that the country participates in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) educational

indicators projects which result in quantitative comparisons between countries. Policy initiatives of CMEC include the School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP) and its replacement, the Pan-Canadian Assessment Program (PCAP). Nationally, The PCAP program measures student achievement in reading, math, and science as indicators of high school preparation and readiness of 13 year-olds (CMEC, 2007). Yukon schools participate in these external measures, and as a result, individual principals must devote time and resources to their deployment. Yukon schools are also included in rankings by the Fraser Institute which compares them to BC schools based in-part upon BC Provincial Exam results, despite the many differences between their respective jurisdictions. These rankings reflect upon the school, and by extension, the school principal.

As a result, external instruments are used to gauge the effectiveness of education in the Yukon in comparison to other jurisdictions. How a school scores reflects upon the school principal. The implications for non-Indigenous Yukon educational leaders is that they balance the following three demands: first, they must ensure that BC curriculum is adequately delivered to students within a prescribed school year; second, that locally developed curriculum is designed and implemented, up to 20% of the aforementioned school year in order to ensure cultural relevance to students, and third; they must deploy external indicators deemed suitable for all Canadian children as a measure of academic achievement despite a shorter timeframe in which to do so. Clearly, the intersection of the local exigencies of Yukon education, external educational policies and curriculum, coupled with broader Canadian initiatives results in weighty and competing demands which the Yukon principal must endeavour to reconcile. This leads to the following question: how do Yukon school principals determine the allocation of instructional time in light of such competing educational, policy, and cultural factors?

The implementation of educational policies can lead to tensions or contradictions in practice which Patterson & Marshall (2001) refer to as "policy paradoxes" (p. 372). They surface the apparent irony of granting more autonomy and local control of schools while concurrently employing standardized accountability mechanisms. In the Yukon such a paradox arises when schools are given the ability to employ locally-developed curriculum yet are assessed using large-scale standardized tests. Leithwood (2001) further offers an example pertaining to school principals working in site-based management environments. While a goal of such an initiative may be to make schools more responsive to learning needs, principals spend more time addressing budgetary concerns than they give attention to curriculum and instruction.

In response to such paradoxes, Patterson and Marshall pose the following question which has application to non-Indigenous school principals in Indigenous Yukon contexts: "How do educators responsible for serving students…manage these pressures and conflicting directives?" (p. 372). At a community and school level, Berger, Epp, &Moller (2006) underscore the "cultural clash" which occurs when northern and Indigenous cultures and educational policies encounter one another. In a similar manner, non-Indigenous Yukon school principals must navigate the distinct differences between language, curriculum, pedagogical practices grounded in western or southern conceptions of instruction and learning, and the extent to which they are culturally relevant. Community conceptions of time, punctuality, and attendance can contrast with the mandated structure of the school day and school year, resulting in tension or conflict between school principals, students, and parents. Non-Indigenous school principals in Yukon contexts must deal with these contradictions as part of their daily practice, though it is currently not understood how they may attempt to do so.

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Professional and educational trajectories

Non-Indigenous educational leaders in Yukon contexts bring with them a wide range of external post-secondary experiences to their praxis. While post-secondary education may be presented as a preferred qualification on Department of Education job postings for principals, as in my own case, it is not a required condition at the time of appointment. This therefore has resulted in a Yukon school principal workforce constituted by individuals possessing credentials ranging from solely a Bachelor of Education degree, to magisterial degrees, to some who are working towards or already possess doctoral-level qualifications.

A factor limiting the attainment of post-secondary educational leadership credentials resides in the fact that the Yukon does not offer post-secondary programs specific to educational leadership development, despite the findings of Bush and Glover's (2004) meta-analysis of leadership development literature which indicated: "Leadership development should be based firmly within participants' leadership contexts" (p. 4). As a result, non-Indigenous Yukon school leaders bring to their practice a diversity of backgrounds and beliefs regarding what may constitute educational leadership from their engagement in a wide range of post-secondary programs external to the Yukon. This has serious implications for educational leadership in the Yukon: post-secondary educational leadership development therefore does not take into account the distinct Yukon context. New principals in the Yukon would thus have no greater understanding of the epistemic foundations of Yukon-based educational leadership as a result of post-secondary educational leadership development. Further, the absence of any locally-situated

educational leadership programming largely precludes the opportunity for research leading to greater understanding of educational leadership in Yukon contexts.

In the Yukon, there exists only one Indigenous principal, appointed to a very small rural school in 2007.   This person has been teaching for approximately 5 years and has not currently pursued any post-secondary educational leadership development.   Should a person in such a position wish to pursue such development, the absence of any locally-grounded educational leadership program, paradoxically, necessitates that they leave the Yukon to engage in coursework. It is reasonable to assume that any such external programming would not take into account the specific educational, cultural, linguistic, political, and historic contexts of the Yukon.

Further, there are currently no attempts to develop a locally grounded educational leadership development program which would articulate an epistemic framework of educational leadership in the Yukon.   This effectively diminishes the opportunity for the development of either future Indigenous or non-Indigenous educational leaders who can ground and locate their practice in ways relevant to Yukon education.

The diversity and incoherence of educational leadership university programs is indicated in the *Fostering Tomorrow's Educational Leaders* report (Stack et al, 2006). In its detailed examination of post-secondary educational leadership and administration (ELA) with a specific focus on the BC-based, American, and on-line programs accessible to BC educators, the report identified a range of factors, each indicating significant diversity in the way that ELA programs are designed, staffed, and delivered to both prospective and current educational leaders. The distinct areas of difference included a range of areas which will be outlined briefly below.

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First, ELA programs showed significant variances, with the total credit hours ranging from 18 to 54 credits. They employ wide range of delivery modes, from on-line offerings, to cohort models and programs with greater student-to-student and student-to-faculty interaction. Particular elements also appeared under exposed in ELA programs. For example, little attention appeared to be given to the moral and intellectual dimensions of educational leadership.

Specific to Indigenous conceptions of educational leadership, the Deans of Education who participated in the research for this report made comments such as "not much is being done to offer programs in Indigenous education" (p. 35). Another program coordinator stated that while they had no Indigenous students, they did have "Caucasian folks who have worked with reserves" (p. 35). Thus, students of ELA programs graduate without specific thought or exposure given to issues related to educational leadership from Indigenous perspectives or Indigenous contexts.

Secondly, ELA programs state a wide range of goals, and there appeared "no widely accepted definition of leadership and no consensus on how to develop it or foster it" (Stack et al., 2006, p. 23). The aims and ends of ELA programs varied greatly across the programs studied in this report. Further, the globalization and Americanization of programs further obscure gaining clarity regarding the declared educational ends of the programs available to BC educators, and by extension, those in the Yukon.

This identified incoherence of ELA programs raises concern in light of the re-population of the Yukon educational leadership workforce due to impending retirements. Currently, it remains unclear the extent to which the professional education of non-Indigenous Yukon school principals influences how they think about educational leadership and practice it. The aforementioned underexposure of Aboriginal education by

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these programs raises further concerns regarding the suitability and applicability of these programs to the preparation of non-Indigenous Yukon school principals.

These factors therefore combine to indicate the following: if you are an Indigenous school principal from the Yukon, then you are likely not to have engaged in any locally grounded program on educational leadership; if you are a non-Indigenous Yukon school principal, then it is more likely that you have engaged in post-secondary development programs which have no particular understanding of the Yukon and/or of its Indigenous contexts. This further indicates that there is no Yukon-based attempt to articulate an epistemic framework for educational leadership, leaving the understanding of educational leadership for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous principals unclear.

Identity

Clarke (2009) presents the concept of identity with respect to teachers as one that is marked by a growing body of research, suggesting that, "the trend towards employing identity as a conceptual tool in teacher education has been paralleled by an increasing emphasis on identity in education generally" (p. 185).

But, what is meant by the term 'identity' in relation to the constructions of professional notions of educational leadership? Clarke (2009) offers the following definition which is germane to this study: "Identity references individuals' knowledge and naming of themselves, as well as others' recognition of themselves as a particular sort of person" (p. 186). With respect to the self and experience, he further posits that, "Identities are formed at the nexus of the individual and the social" (p. 189). With respect to the identities of the non-Indigenous principals, Clarke's assertion draws into question how the

participants in this study may reconstruct their respective selves and define their role in relation to schooling and the larger social contexts in which they operate.

Murphy (2007) points to the marginalization of practice with respect to educational leadership. If practice is indeed informed by the identity of the leader, identity may then be marginalized in university education programs as a result of the emphasis placed on the teaching of management and administrative aspects. He describes the education of school administrators in the following manner: "…prospective school leaders have been largely miseducated because universities, especially research universities, have constructed their programs with raw materials acquired from the warehouse of academe. In the meantime, they have marginalized practice" (p. 583). Thus, identity does not appear to be considered by those who study leadership or expound upon it as one vitally important pillar of an interconnected triad comprised of theory, practice in context, and the individual.

In summary, the convergence of external policies with the Yukon context, coupled with the incoherence of the formal developmental experiences of educational leaders, raise specific questions regarding how these factors shape the manner in which non-Indigenous Yukon principals construct their professional identities, construe their meaning of educational leadership, and enact their professional practice in the distinct Yukon context. The extent to which external policies and diverse educational leadership development shapes how non-Indigenous Yukon educational leaders construe and enact their practice currently remains unknown.

Intersections of gender, ethnicity and class and non-Indigenous constructions of educational leadership within Indigenous contexts

While the above review establishes the need for more sensitive studies that would examine how non-Indigenous educational leaders act within Indigenous contexts, there are very few studies which provide insights into the complexities involved. Many questions arise at this junction: How do non-Indigenous educational leaders perceive and construct themselves in relation to their practice and to the Indigenous communities they serve given their own background, as men or women and affiliated with different ethnic and social class groups? In what ways does their location as non-Indigenous actors – along gender, class and ethnic lines -- inform their sense of purpose and the way they address the tensions embedded in their practice? Answering these and related questions requires a broader discussion of the intersections between gender and ethnicity of non-Indigenous educational leaders and how these intersections shape their visions, understandings and actions within Indigenous contexts.

Gender

The term gender refers not just to identity but also to "the symbolic level, to cultural ideals and stereotypes of masculinity and femininity and, at the structural level, to the sexual division of labour in institutions and organizations" (Oxford Dictionary of Sociology, 2004, p. 240). Dickson et al. (2003) affirm that "[r]esearch has shown that successful managers are stereotypically viewed as more similar to men than to women on attributes considered critical to effective work performance, such as leadership ability, self-confidence, ambition, assertiveness, and forcefulness" (p. 745). This is further illustrated by the work of Trinidad & Normore (2004) who observe that "[r]ecognizing women's styles of leadership represents an important approach to equity as long as they are not

stereotyped as "the" ways women lead but as 'other' ways of leading" (p. 575). However,

Fitzgerald (2003) seems to disagree when he states that studies of gender specific to

women's ways of knowing are based on the debatable premise that women as educational

leaders "form a collective identity based on their gender and the sharing of common

experiences and struggles" (p. 432). The end result is a homogenization of women's

voices and their essentialization. With regard to the intersectionality of gender and

educational leadership in Canada, Young (1994) indicates a historical absence:

> Whereas scholarship on educational administration in this country has for over a decade incorporated "Canadian" and "education" as dimensions of our knowledge base, gender is still hardly acknowledged as an issue. Given the power of many educational administrators to define or influence educational agendas in many settings, this is a serious omission. (p. 352)

While Young's assertion extends back 15 years, it serves as foundational to the

more recent assertion by Coleman (2003) who suggests that little progress has been made,

referring to the orthodoxy of male educational leadership:

> In the world of education, where women tend to numerically predominate, it is easy to assume that the sex of the individual is irrelevant to the holding of authority. However, findings from research that I undertook in the latter half of the 1990s show that this is far from the case, and that the identification of leadership with men and a male stereotype of leadership in education, as elsewhere, is still the underlying norm. (p. 327)

In her studies of educational leadership in South African contexts, Chisholm (2001)

argues that while women have dominated the educational profession as teachers, in

contrast, educational administration is predominantly a male-centric domain where

leadership is associated with "masculinity, rationality, and whiteness" (p. 387). Her

research, conducted in the Gauteng Department of Education, identifies two particular

aspects specific to the construct of leadership: the "colour of competence" and "gender of

competence" (p. 398), First, competence of colour in relation to leadership is described as:

"The construct of leadership as 'competence' came in the form of 'colour'; its obverse was clearly 'bad' or 'weak' 'leadership', 'weak leadership' itself constructed by its opposite as 'incompetent' and 'black'" (p. 389).

Second, competence was also identified in its relationship to gender:

> 'Competence' was bound up with notions of masculinity, control, and performance. 'Incompetence' and 'weakness' were, by contrast, associated with femininity, lack of assertiveness and performance. This discourse co-existed with real men and women who did not conform to its assumptions and indeed contradicted it. (p. 389)

Comparing English and Singaporean female secondary school head teachers (principals), Morriss, Tin, & Coleman (1999) illustrate the effects gendered perspectives have upon how leaders perceive, construct, and define themselves. Stereotypes of gender identified by English head teachers fall along the following lines or attributes similar to those described by Chisholm (2001). Masculine attributes are predominantly typified as "evaluative, disciplined, and objective", and feminine attributes were identified as "caring, creative, intuitive, and aware of individual differences" (Morriss, Tin, & Coleman, 1999, p. 194). Indicating how these stereotypical conceptions of gender extend across cultural lines in this comparative, Singaporean female head teachers indicated much the same, expressing female attributes as "caring, humane, intuitive, and aware of individual differences", and those of males as "evaluative, disciplined, objective, competitive, and formal" (p. 194). While the gender stereotypes of the female head teachers were similar in nature between the two identified cultures, in practice they selected a wide range of the aforementioned attributes, extending across both gender paradigms. The researchers argue that successful leaders do not rely upon one form of locked-in behavior or approaches, but instead rely upon a broad array of skills and attributes employed in a participatory manner.

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Offering a representative example, head teachers may at times be democratic in their practice and autocratic at others, though will not totally rely upon only one form of practice. This conclusion finds support in Strachan's (1999) work in New Zealand. She argues that "feminist educational leadership includes but goes beyond being woman centered and embraces a wider political agenda that is anti-racist as well as anti-sexist" (Joyce, 1987, Gosettie & Rusch, 1995, in Strachan, 1999, p. 310). In her research, Strachan concludes that the leadership practices of the three women educators she studied focused on "social justice, sharing power, and the ethic of care" (p. 312), though there were the personal costs of stress, increased workload, and isolation from family and friends attached to the implementation of a feminist educational leadership agenda. Each of the women involved in the research project by Strachan (1999) described and engaged in their own "alternative theory of educational leadership" (p. 321). This is described in the following manner: "They were not just passively responding to the demands imposed by the educational bureaucracies, the school context and the school community. Their practice was characterized by its diversity, shifting nature, its flexibility, its creativity, its emotive quality, the dominant role played by their personal value system and the school context….There is no prescription for successful educational leadership" (p. 321).

If Strachan's assertion is indeed the case and school principals do develop and engage in alternative leadership theories and practices outside of prescribed ones, then how would this dynamic be reflected among non-Indigenous women educators working in Indigenous Yukon contexts, given the intersection of gender and culture? First, the distribution of male and female school administrators is worthy of note, particularly in light of the distinction between rural and urban contexts. It may be that all schools in the Yukon could be viewed as rural and isolated when viewed through a southern Canadian

lens. This view notwithstanding, in the Territory itself, delineation is made between urban schools located in the capital city Whitehorse and the rural schools located in smaller communities outside of this one major center. An examination of school administrator distribution by gender results in the following breakdown: Of the 15 urban Whitehorse schools, 5 schools are led by female principals and there are 6 female vice-principals. In contrast, in the 14 rural schools located throughout the Territory, 3 schools have female principals and there is only one female vice-principal. These figures indicate that there is a substantially higher concentration of female school administrators in urban areas. Conversely there is a predominantly male rural administrative complement, presenting as a dominance of male-centric educational leadership in rural and isolated Indigenous communities.

Hence, when exploring how non-Indigenous leaders construct, enact, and identify themselves as educational leaders in Indigenous contexts, one is bound to ask how does this gendered urban-rural distinction in the Yukon shape their perceptions? Upon further consideration, additional questions emerge. What power configurations underpin this gendered spatial distribution and how does it impact the relationship between educational leaders and Indigenous communities? To what extent, if at all, do non-Indigenous principals in Yukon Indigenous settings identify gender attributes extending across gendered leadership paradigms? What factors motivate their choices in doing so?   In what ways do non-Indigenous educational leaders possess and critically employ judgment, defined by Coulter & Wiens (2002) as "an amalgam of knowledge, virtue, and reason that enables people to decide what to do" (p. 16) in order to guide their practice within Indigenous community contexts? In raising these questions, the present study offers space for the voices of non-Indigenous female educational leaders working in Indigenous

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contexts in broadening the understanding of how they construe their professional identity and practice.

Ethnicity

Relating ethnicity and leadership specifically to this research project, the Yukon educational system can perhaps be described as a "patchwork quilt" made up of a diverse, yet loosely stitched collection of culturally, linguistically, and contextually distinctive pieces.

A similar observation can be made of the backgrounds of Yukon school administrators, a diverse cadre of individuals with diverse educational experiences and qualifications. Their individual ethnicities are as distinct as their schools and the communities in which they live. Individual personal histories include, though are not limited to, roots extending to Ireland, France, central Europe, and England. Many, including the researcher, are Canadian-born and have practiced in other distinct regions of the country- the Maritimes, Quebec, the Prairies, and the West. In addition to this geographic diversity, each brings a diverse and varied personal background. It should be noted that while much of the non-Indigenous Canadian national fabric is represented by them, there exists a relative absence of Indigenous Yukon school administrators. Only one school principal and one vice-principal are of Yukon First Nations descent.

If educational leadership, as Hallinger & Leithwood (1995) postulate, is culturally influenced, then the issue of ethnicity must be drawn in to sharper focus specific to this research project. The construct of ethnicity can be defined in the following way: "Individuals who consider themselves, or are considered by others, to share common characteristics that differentiate them from the other collectivities in a society, and from which they develop their distinctive cultural behavior form an ethnic group" (Oxford

Dictionary of Sociology, 2004, p. 197). Two questions arise here, with regard to non-Indigenous educators working in the Yukon: First, how does the intersection between ethnicity and indigeneity inform how non-Indigenous educators' construct their professional identity, their perceptions, and their subjectivities? Second, how does it shape the educational and administrative strategies of non-Indigenous principals who work in Indigenous environments?

The criticality of ethnicity in the influence and determination of who one is as a leader within a particular culture or context is identified by Dickson et al. (2003) who describe the decline of universal principles of leadership with a subsequent focus on the differences between cultures, including "…leadership traits, characteristics, and relationships that conform to or can be explained by the various cultural dimensions" (p. 734). One basis for this expanded focus is their recognition that leadership theory is predominated by an American bias, thereby increasing the interest in the broader range of cultural dimensions discernable in leadership across non-western models. To substantiate this assertion, Dickson et al. rely upon research by Mellahi (2000) which indicated that MBA programs in the UK neglect Indigenous leadership values, thereby creating the perception on the part of students within such programs that such values outside of the predominant American view are insignificant.

Specific to the Yukon context, we do not know the ways and extent to which non-Indigenous principals working in Indigenous contexts construe, construct, or otherwise perceive Indigenous culture along ethnic lines. Given the dearth of educational leadership research specific to northern Canadian contexts more broadly, the examination of educational leadership, broadened to include the influence of the ethnicity of both

educational leaders and followers holds promise as a means of expanding how leadership is conceived and enacted in Yukon contexts. Despite the promising assertion by Hallinger & Leithwood (1996) regarding the role of culture as a construct in leadership, they echo the sentiments expressed in reference to the neglect of the inclusion of Indigenous leadership values, stating: "Consequently, we find few modern discussions of leadership and administration grounded in non-Western cultural contexts" (p. 101). Linking this assertion to the study conducted in the cross-cultural contexts of the Paheka (non-Indigenous New Zealanders) and Pacific Islanders, Chong & Thomas (1997) reinforce this perspective by stating: "Effective interaction between leaders and followers in organizations may be influenced by the ethnic identity of both the leader and the follower. However, traditional leadership theories only offer limited help in understanding this relationship" (p. 276). This suggests that leaders and followers of diverse cultural backgrounds may therefore be guided by different, perhaps conflicting prototypes of leadership. Variations in behavioural expectations of the other, communication style, the level of belief in the causal influence of leadership, and satisfaction with leaders and leadership may reinforce tensions between and amongst leaders and followers (Chong & Thomas, ibid). Relating their assertions to this research project, how leaders perceive themselves and others, upon which foundations they establish their values, their habitus or dispositions of thought and behavior, and the very language they employ appear strongly based on their cultural background. Conversely, how they are perceived by those around them is influenced in a reciprocal manner. Yet, the manner and degree to which this is the case in the Yukon context is at present, unknown and further justifies the need for detailed research.

School effectiveness has often been based upon student achievement on standardized tests, but these data have not taken into account the achievement of minority ethnic groups. The frustrations emerging as a result of the dearth of literature specific to multi-ethnic contexts is perhaps best expressed by the voice of the following head teacher:

> There is so much stuff written about what makes an effective school but virtually nothing about multi-ethnic contexts. I mean, there are something like 30 languages spoken in this school, and probably as many cultural backgrounds. What does one actually do to make the school effective for all pupils in the face of such diversity? (Blair, 2002, p. 181)

Perhaps intended to address the concern evocatively expressed above, the UK-based National College for School Leadership commissioned a report titled *Priorities, strategies, and challenges: Proactive leadership in multi-ethnic schools* (Walker, 2004). This report explicitly states both the promise of building more equitable and socially just societies through educational leadership in schools systems, coupled with the seemingly insurmountable challenges relating specifically to educational leadership in multi-ethnic contexts. Reinforcing the tensions identified by Blair (2002), Walker (2004) affirms: "The challenges are frightening because they confront prejudice, injustice, and historical conceptions that are so profoundly entrenched in the fabric of our systems that they often appear insurmountable" (p. 3).

The challenges outlined above relate specifically to non-Indigenous Yukon principals in that they too face them in their daily practice, particularly when a large percentage of children that attend rural schools are of Indigenous heritage and they, predominantly, are not. The Yukon educational context continues to be challenged by the lingering residue of resentment and mistrust resulting from the historic dislocation, dispossession, attempted extinguishment of native languages, in the attempt to assimilate

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Indigenous people and cultures by residential schools. As the lead representative of a government-run school, a white non-Indigenous principal can still be viewed as the embodiment or agent of the fallout of this disturbingly destructive legacy, yet be unaware of how they may be perceived. It can take many years of living, working, and raising a family in rural Yukon contexts for trust to be established - if it ever is. Transposing the question above by Blair (2002) to the Yukon frame, just what does a non-Indigenous principal in an Indigenous context do to make their school a welcoming and open place for students, parents, and community members, while concurrently ensuring their school is "effective" as measured by external yardsticks?

Speaking from direct personal experience, the tensions experienced by non-Indigenous principals in Indigenous settings are most certainly not trifling ones when framed in this manner. A newly appointed, well-intentioned non-Indigenous principal may operate on the premise that the dominant focus of their practice is to address academic achievement. In shaping their beliefs and actions in this way, they may inadvertently isolate themselves from the community through a lack of unawareness of the community's valued ends of education for their children and achievement which may be defined as much by cultural values as academic ones. This then raises particular questions: What does it mean to be an effective leader in the absence of a specific reference point; how do you know if you are effective and why; what does one do to be effective in a multiplicity of ways?

Is this stated absence of ethnic considerations also prevalent in Canadian educational contexts? I argue that they most certainly are, specifically in the case of non-Indigenous perceptions of Indigenous communities and societies. Underscoring this lack of understanding, research conducted in Innut communities by Ryan (1989) identifies the

inability of educational systems to accommodate the cultural differences of their

Indigenous students and presents the following challenge to educational researchers:

> Only by establishing links between those social practices that pervade Western society and everyday life in Native communities and schools, can we begin to capture the complexities involved in seeking out not only explanations of, but solutions to, the problems in Native education. (Ryan, 1989, p. 382)

Ryan employs Foucault's notion of "normalization" or the employment of

perpetual observation, evaluation, documentation, and disciplining in order to achieve

conformity to non-Innu or Western standards. This presents as a direct contradiction to the

stance taken by Hampton (1995) who counters this drive to achieve Indigenous conformity

with Western notions, stating:

> If Native nations are to have engineers, managers, business people, natural resource specialists and all the other experts we need to meet non-Indians on equal terms, then we must have educational leadership that makes mathematics, science, and computers accessible to our students. (p. 6)

The key distinction to be made here is the focus on equal terms in direct contrast to

a drive to achieve assimilated conformity. This places the non-Indigenous school

administrator clearly at the crux of the intersection of the historic goals of the educational

system and the self-determining goals of Indigenous societies and communities

(particularly in the land claims settlement environment that is the Yukon) to be self-

sufficient and sustaining, both economically and culturally. Arriving at this junction

prompts the following question: How do non-Indigenous school principals perceive both

themselves as educational leaders and their communities at this intersection, all the while

managing such a complexity of tensions, divergent goals, and conflicting agendas?

Class

The inclusion and scrutiny of social class is important to this research project in that it recognizes Knapp & Wolverton's (1995) assertion that class is a hidden factor that is foundational to understanding how schools work. The intersection and importance of social class is underscored in their review of social class and schooling literature. From their perspective, they argue that:

> We embark on this review in full recognition that social class is hard- perhaps impossible in some respects- to disentangle from other categorical social descriptors such as race, ethnicity, and gender; from culture (viewed as a set of shared meanings held by social groups); and from ideology (the system of values and beliefs to which societies subscribe and that serve as a justification for actions). (p. 548)

Two predominant views hold specific to the relationship of schooling and social class. The first is that schools serve as a social equalizer which diminishes class distinctions. While ideologically sound, this is not reflected in the second view that the reality is that schools and schooling reinforce class distinctions in that they hierarchically order children in ways that support and reflect what is considered socially good by society. Employing a functionalist perspective to make this point, schools strive to produce the best and brightest learners to take their place in the labour market. School thus takes on the role of social sieve or filter of human talent, promoting those with higher cognitive abilities to receive the training required to take on high-paying and high status positions.

If, as Zeichner & Gere (1990) argue, educators do bring class-based sensibilities to their work, this raises the question as to the extent to which class mediates the perceptions of non-Indigenous educational leaders. More specifically, to what extent does the intersection of self-perception, perceptions of their students, and the community in which they reside intercede in the construction and practice of educational leadership? If, as

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previously stated, the majority of educational leaders in the Yukon bring a diversity of

backgrounds and experiences, to what extent do class-based perceptions determine for

them the "rules of engagement" (Whitty, 2001)? This may serve to shed light on the

incongruence between community culture and/or reconcile tensions and dissonance

between the valued ends of education, however defined. In this vein, to what extent do

social class incongruities take on an assumption of deficit, thereby shaping and

determining the experiences of children in schools and their academic and social

placement? In light of Knapp & Woolverton's (1995) position that "lower-class children

frequently lack the "cultural capital" that is valued in schools" (p. 559), shedding light on

the extent to which educational leaders' perceptions of social class shapes the very

sociology of education in the Yukon warrants thoughtful and concerted examination.

To summarize, this subsection has identified a number of concerns specific to the

way that educational leadership is thought about, understood, researched, and developed,

raising a number of issues impacting how non-Indigenous principals may conceive of and

enact educational leadership in Indigenous contexts. The gravity of these effects is not to

be underestimated, given, as previously stated, that the vast majority of Yukon Indigenous

children will go to schools where the principal and teachers are predominantly non-

Indigenous.   First, the limitations and conceptual vagueness of educational leadership are

reinforced by a history which has generated a shaky and incoherent epistemological

foundation. This neither serves to inform non-Indigenous educational leaders in

Indigenous contexts nor offer them a contextually relevant base upon which to situate their

professional identities, beliefs, and practice. Second, the aspects of culture, ethnicity,

gender, and class, have heretofore remained in the margins of Western educational thought

and research. These aspects further serve to blur and complicate how educational

leadership may both be construed and enacted by practitioners and academics alike, the continuing conceptual vagueness afflicting educational leadership development programs at post-secondary institutions.

In response to the under-examined diversity and richness of the educational leadership domain, the relevancy of context, coupled with the aforementioned conceptual vagueness, has precipitated policy initiatives on the part of governments and professional associations endeavouring to bring definition, order and coherency to the field and to the development of school leaders. This has been attempted through the isolation of 'best practices', standardization, and the subsequent policy initiatives mandating that they be stretched across diverse contexts. The inadequacy of such efforts, and their resultant narrowing of the educational leadership, is echoed in the voices of researchers and practitioners alike. For educational leaders, such mandated definitions serve to complicate and obstruct how non-Indigenous principals in Indigenous contexts develop and define themselves in relation to their unique communities and diverse context of practice. In effect, rather than take an under-examined and misinterpreted field of practice and expand understandings of it, the drive to standardize and prescribe practice limits knowledge production and the relevancy of the educational leadership discipline to diverse contexts.

In light of the above, how then can one research educational leadership in Indigenous Yukon contexts in a manner which realizes and takes into account both the dominance of Eurocentric leadership perspectives and a predominantly negative historical research frame? With this question at the forefront, the following subsection will examine both the historical challenges (Smith, 1999; Battiste & Henderson, 2000) and the current and future promise of ethnographic research (Zou & Trueba, 2002; Brooke & Hogg, 2004;

Horner, 2004; Lassiter, 2005) as a research method suitable as a means of illuminating educational leadership in remote Indigenous contexts.

The limitations of ethnographic research and the promise of critical ethnographic methods

How educational leadership is understood, and the extent to which knowledge gaps exist regarding particular aspects of leadership, has been driven by the types of research methodological choices that have guided research in the field. The history of educational leadership research demonstrates a heavy reliance upon quantitative methods (Heck & Hallinger, 1999). While we may be able to understand the extent to which a phenomenon exists, or, given the use of case studies, understand what occurs in a given situation by groups of people within a bounded setting, as a result of the limited employment of other research traditions (phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and narrative forms) we remain less informed as to the experiences of people in the field and how they make sense of their experiences and perceptions of educational leadership. Therefore, we are less able to theorize and generate new theories regarding educational leadership based upon the inadequacies and limitations posed by this dependence upon quantitative methods. These factors apply particularly in the case of the Yukon educational system, a statistically small jurisdiction where limited educational leadership research has been conducted. As a result, little progress has been made specific to enlarging educational leadership theory in this context and therefore much remains unexamined.

Battiste & Henderson (2000) provide the following deficiencies related to "the ethnographic tradition" and the manner in which it is deeply marked by the dominance of Eurocentric thought engrained within it. Through this lens, and to avoid subjectivity

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entering into the analysis of cultures, positivist scientific approaches endeavoured to

"impose rational patterns on human behaviour in the same way that science imposes

general paradigms on observed events. Eurocentric anthropologists have traditionally

organized the descriptive details of the Indigenous cultures into ethnographies" (p. 30).

Eurocentric ethnographers recorded many aspects of the culture under study without

inviting input, but then defined the culture under study as a shared set of meanings. Smith

(1999) identifies the history and legacy of this extraction of Indigenous knowledge and the

misplaced ownership of that knowledge by evocatively stating:

> It is a history that still offends our deepest sense of humanity. Just knowing that
> someone measured our 'faculties' by filling the skulls of our ancestors with millet
> seeds and compared the amount of millet seed to the capacity for mental thought
> offends our sense of who and what we are. (p. 1)

Colonial ethnographies were taken to constitute the sum total of a culture, were

considered incontrovertible, objective, and the only legitimate form of truth regarding the

culture under observation. In such a manner, the study of "zones of difference" (Battiste

& Henderson, 2000, p. 31) was made problematic if not impossible. As a result

Indigenous cultures became homogenized and essentialized, rather than viewed as varied,

different and in a state of flux over time.

A further legacy of Eurocentric domination of thought in attempts to research and

understand Indigenous cultures was the depiction of the view of Indigenous populations as

having limited variability between internal cultures, harmonious in their interactions, and

inherently static over time. One outcome of this historical lack of understanding, and the

resultant racism it generated, is evident in the writings of New Zealand anthropologist

Diamond Jeness (1954). Jenness asserted at the time what he believed to be the view of

the "average Canadian" and the overt prejudice of the time: "But the Indians, [the average

Canadian] thought, lacked any true cultural background: they were but half-regenerate savages. Accordingly, he treated them with hardly concealed contempt" (p. 96). Transposed to the present context of this research, it becomes directly obvious that such research approaches are morally misguided, ethically improper, counterproductive, and limiting. Therefore, they are to be avoided at all costs.

The opportunities offered by critical ethnographic research

In light of this disturbingly negative historical frame, how then can researchers of educational leadership in Indigenous contexts avoid the colonizing and homogenizing legacy of colonial ethnographers? Promise and potential exists in a critical ethnography approach, defined by Masemann (1982) as one that attempts to "transcend the limitations of a functionalist social science" (p. 4), given that comparative education research has been marked by "the legacy of nineteenth- and twentieth- century positivist philosophy [that] was accentuated by the historical relativism of Max Weber in his separation of normative judgments from factual statements, a separation which made it possible for him and his future American followers to think of science as autonomous and morally neutral" (Mafeje, in Masemann, ibid., p. 2). Building upon, and attempting to address the historical limitations of ethnography, Simon & Dippo (1986) offer the following definition of critical ethnography as a research methodology which provides the means for researchers to identify and expose their particular interests and those of broader social relations :

> Thus the interest that defines critical ethnographic work is both pedagogical and political. It is linked to our assessment of our own society as inequitably structured and dominated by a hegemonic culture that suppresses a consideration and understanding of why things are the way they are and what must be done for things to be otherwise. (p. 196)

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Relating the above specifically to this research project, the pedagogical aspect is underscored by Friesen & Friesen's (2002) assertion that, in Indigenous communities, the majority of educators are non-Indigenous. Non-Indigenous educators bring with them a distinct pedagogical worldview that is constructed differently and founded upon epistemological bases distinct from residents living in Indigenous communities. The political aspect of critical ethnographic work in this context pertains to the building of culture between schools and community in order to decolonize and empower communities to be meaningful participants specific to how educational leadership is understood and how education is framed to benefit the children attending schools. The proposed research project therefore aims to bridge these two aspects as a means of generating deeper understandings of educational leadership on the part of those who are non-Indigenous educational leaders.

Extending their explanation of critical ethnography further, Simon & Dippo (1986) further state:

> …we simply mean to stress that ethnographic inquiry has to be concretely understood as an interrelated set of concepts and research practices constructed for the purpose of producing a particular articulation of knowledge. For us, a critical ethnography requires that this particular articulation be accountable to the pedagogical/political project specified above. We view all modes of knowing and all particular knowledge forms as ideological, hence the issue is not whether one is "biased"; but rather, whose interests are served by one's work. (p. 196)

It is here that the legacy of traditional ethnography collides directly with the promise shown by critical ethnographic methods. Despite the oppressive and colonizing legacy of ethnographic research, associated with the anthropological study of "primitive" cultures which has "collected, classified, and represented other cultures" (Smith, 1999, p. 67), Zou & Trueba (2002) counter with a view that positions critical ethnography as an empowering research method which can be of value in diverse educational settings typified

by cultural difference and diversity, Zou and Trueba refer to ethnic scholars of diverse cultural backgrounds as ones who are "turning educational ethnography into one of the most incisive tools and powerful research instruments in the exploration of new horizons and hopes for a better future" (p. 2). Further, the employment of critical educational ethnography appears to be in the pursuit of vastly different research goals than those of traditional ethnographers: in contrast, modern ethnographers appear less interested in identifying and generating broad generalizations of a whole culture or group (Foley, in Zou & Trueba, 2002) and instead seek different goals. "They are more interested in producing focused, well-theorized ethnographies of social institutions or subgroups" (p. 140) rather than a detached totalization of a particular group or culture under examination. This distinction relates specifically to this research project in that it will strive to produce a specifically focused and well-theorized critical ethnography aimed at broadening how leadership is examined and understood in the Yukon context.

Critical ethnography therefore appears to hold promise and potential as a research method for an examination of non-Indigenous educational leaders and educational leadership as it presents in the social institution of Yukon schools. The application of critical ethnography in this research project provides the opportunity to, as Guajardo & Guajardo (2002) assert, serve "as the voice and vehicle for challenging the power structures and working to equalize power dynamics" (p. 282) for northern Canadian educational leaders working within Indigenous school contexts. Therefore, the application of a critical ethnographic approach generates the opportunity for the non-Indigenous Yukon principals to tell their stories, offer their perspectives and perceptions, and share their leadership experiences as non-Indigenous professionals working in distinct cross-cultural settings. This serves as the means with which to reveal and examine in greater

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detail the tensions, distinctions, and contradictions which underpin Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations within school contexts. Critical ethnography exposes the multifaceted and conflictual power structures embedded in the relationships between and amongst educational leaders and the communities they serve. Extensive narratives and stories frame these contradictions and tensions which constitute the politics of educational leadership within the Yukon context.

What are the implications of the employment of critical ethnographic method specific to this research project? First, addressing Simon and Dippo's previous statements regarding interrelated concepts and research practice, this research project incorporates the use of theoretical reflexivity as a means of disrupting the dominance of Euro-western educational leadership theory by "rethinking how we interpret and write up our field experiences"(Foley, 2002, p. 163) in order to preclude solely a mapping the present Yukon reality. In the case of this research project, this signifies that I do not simply present research from an objective interpretive position either distanced or removed from the field itself. Instead, self-reflection and narrative are employed in this research project as a means of diminishing the view of the researcher as expert or specialist. This transforms the traditional view and role of the researcher into one who is discovering, interpreting, and not solely offering one "right" explanation or prescription relative to a given research setting.

As outlined by Simon and Dippo previously, the issue is not whether or not my research efforts are biased, but the degree to which and the directions in which they are, and whose interests are served. First, my own interests are served, as the conduct of this research presents a major hurdle in the completion of a university degree. A doctoral degree confers status and may offer career advancement. Secondly, the Government of

Yukon's concern and desire to close the achievement gap between non-First Nations and First Nations students may be informed by this research. Thirdly, this research may inform the future of leadership development programs initiated by the Yukon Department of Education. Fourthly, the educational leadership academic community serves to benefit through the broadening of knowledge by research conducted in a remote region of Canada.

Gilmore (2002) offers a relevant northern example specific to the use critical ethnographic approaches as a means of breaking with this disturbing legacy. Countering the assertion that "The word itself, "research", is probably one of the dirtiest words in the Indigenous world's vocabulary" (Smith, 1999, p. 1), Gilmour presents the distinctive vantage point of working with Alaskan Indigenous researchers in order to develop a base of critical ethnographers, in part to acknowledge and address the aforementioned concern by stating: "By exploring and critically dialoguing with his students in Alaska around the grand and master narratives, and mainstream academic texts that frequently misinterpret, misrepresent, and stereotype Indigenous populations" (p. 187), such efforts have generated counter narratives that are accomplishing the following, in that they:

1) More accurately and respectfully present Indigenous knowledge, epistemologies, and world views

2) Reflect presentations of self (both in style and content) more consistent with individual and community Aboriginal identities. These narratives attempt to both rewrite and reright existing academic research. (p. 187)

Reframed to apply directly to this research project involving non-Indigenous educational leadership in Indigenous settings, Gilmore's (2002) counter serves to validate and justify the use of critical ethnographic research as a decolonizing process in Indigenous contexts. In doing so, ethnographic research steps beyond its historical

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limitations and becomes reciprocal and collaborative (Lassiter, 2005), serving the more contemporary contexts of Yukon schools by not replicating the traditional ethnographic approach of knowledge extraction, manipulation, and misrepresentation. As researcher, this meant that I conducted myself and guided this research project in a manner which ensured the incorporation of reflexivity and multi-vocality. Foley (2002) describes reflexivity as the replacement of the researcher and author as "the omniscient tape recorder and grand interpreter" (p. 145) by one who is a "living, contradictory, vulnerable, evolving multiple self who speaks in a partial, subjective, culture-bound voice" (p. 145). This changes the knowledge produced by critical ethnographic research from that of a one-dimensional, authoritative account to one that is transparent. In such a manner, the researcher "pays particular attention to how the practices and discourse of their own discipline affects what and how they think and write" (Foley, 2002, p. 146).

Multi-vocality is another approach aimed at bridging the hierarchical divide between researcher and participant (Horner, 2004). Multi-vocality creates the opportunity for participants, or the "other", to "speak in the text rather than be spoken about by the ethnographer" (p. 23). Blakeslee (1996) suggests the following techniques which I incorporated in the effort to make this research report more multi-vocal: "writing collaboratively with subjects...having subjects read the research to see whether they hear and recognize their voices in the work...[and] negotiating and modifying those parts of the text that subjects find questionable or inaccurate" (p. 147).

This approach strives to ensure that the knowledge produced is more impartial and relevant recognizing the contributions of others and their representations of themselves. The knowledge produced by critical ethnography is thus less about the acquiring of a particular knowledge than it is about social transformation (Brown & Dobrin, 2004).

Based upon the previous examination of the literature, the following research questions are posed for the study:

Research questions

1) How do non-Indigenous principals in Yukon Indigenous contexts construct their professional identity and their role as educational leaders?

2) How do non-Indigenous Yukon principals construct their notions of educational leadership and practice?

3) Given the Yukon's distinct governance and policy contexts, how do non-Indigenous principals construct their understanding of "indigeneity" in relation to local Indigenous culture?

4) How do non-Indigenous Yukon principals address the tensions that arise at the juncture of the external policies imported from outside the Yukon and the Yukon Education Act (1990)?

5) In what ways do the gender, ethnicity, and class location of non-Indigenous principals inform their practice and their relations with different Yukon Indigenous educational and community contexts?

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHOD

Introduction

I am a non-Indigenous school administrator who has lived and worked for 11 years in the Canadian north, specifically in the Yukon Territory. My aim is to undertake a critical ethnographic study which will address the research questions posed in Chapter 2. Specific to methodological choice, Glesne (1999) offers, "The research methods you choose say something about your views on what qualifies as valuable knowledge and your perspective on the nature of reality or ontology" (p. 4). The ontological position taken in this investigation is founded upon my belief that there are multiple realities and truths that will be identified, hence the research decision to employ a method which allows for such an inclusion. Glesne (ibid.) affirms such a position stating, "Qualitative methods are generally supported by the interpretivist (also referred to as constructivist) paradigm, which portrays a world in which reality is socially constructed, complex, and ever-changing" (p. 5).   This description aligns well with the reality in which non-Indigenous school administrators live and work in the Yukon context and underpins the research decisions outlined in the following subsections.

Data

Multiple sources of data were gathered in the conduct of this research project. These data included observations, interviews, and document reviews as a means of examining the patterns of behaviour, interactions with others, way of life, and language and beliefs of non-Indigenous principals in Yukon Indigenous contexts. The purpose of gathering multiple sources of data is not solely to compile and combine them, but rather

that they compliment each other, add richness to the research, and counteract each other as a means to limit issues of validity.

I gathered research data through the conduct of fieldwork in Yukon schools. Creswell (1998) describes the actions of the researcher through offering the following definition of fieldwork: "...the ethnographer engages in extensive work in the field, called fieldwork, gathering information through observations, interviews, and materials helpful in developing a portrait and establishing 'cultural rules' of the culture-sharing group" (p. 60).

Rather than be seen as merely informants, I viewed participants in this study in the manner expressed by Lassiter (2005) who identifies them as "co-intellectuals and collaborators who shape our ethnographic understandings, our ethnographic texts, and our larger responsibility to others as researchers, citizens, and activists" (p. 79). In such a way, I ensured that this research is both reciprocal and reactive in nature: by this I ensured that participants were given something back through our ongoing exchanges of thoughts and information as we engaged in the research process. Participants also had the opportunity to react to any effect that I may have had on the research site itself or people under study (Creswell, 1998).

Observations

In order to create as complete and comprehensive a "picture" of the settings where research participants work, I employed observations as a data gathering instrument. Observations provide the means which allow researchers to gather and "record important details that become the basis for formulating descriptions from which stakeholding groups produce their accounts" (Stringer, 1999, p. 72). Where I position myself as an observer falls upon what Glesne (1999) refers to as a continuum spanning from primarily observation to mostly participation.

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A psychologist researching children at play in a classroom from behind a one-way mirror places themselves firmly at the observer end of the scale. Conversely, a researcher who is a fully functioning and working member of the community in addition to being an investigator places themselves at the other end of the continuum. In my own case, I position myself in between, in the role of "observer as participant" (Glesne, 1999, p. 44) who was primarily an observer that interacted with study participants. I felt that this was an appropriate positioning in light of being a known employee of the Yukon education system for the past 11 years, yet not a staff member at the specific school settings where I conducted observations.

A particular strength of this approach is reinforced by Kirby & McKenna (1989) who state: "Direct participation and observation by the researcher is thought to provide meaning for the behaviours and attitudes expressed by individuals being researched" (p. 76). The use of such a data gathering technique therefore appears highly applicable to this research project, given its goal of illuminating how non-Indigenous school principals construct and enact their role as leaders. A further strength of observations is that they place the researcher in the research setting, allowing not only participation in the research setting but also engagement with research participants, including conversations and interviews that "extend the pool of information available" (Stringer, 1999, p. 72).

In order to access observation sites, gatekeeper individuals (Creswell, 1998) were identified to facilitate access to them. In the case of this research project, this entailed advance contacting of the appropriate principal to gain permission to access the school site. This said, in advance of approaching any individual for any purpose related to this research project, I ensured that I had passed all requisite ethical reviews. Only after this point I sought to receive in writing the full consent from the Assistant Deputy Minister of Public

Schools in the Yukon to enter the research setting and conduct research with Yukon Department of Education employees.

I conducted observations of specific school activities and events. These were readily observable at all sites and included:

- The beginning and end of the school day, and the manner in which the principal interacts with the students at these times

- School assemblies and other whole-school events

- Community events held at the school

- School office operations and the principal's interaction with students, staff, and parents

- Parent/teacher interviews or "open house" events

- Staff meetings led by the principal

In conducting these observations at four specific sites, it was my aim to gather data which helped to answer the research questions specific to how non-Indigenous principals construe and enact educational leadership in the Yukon context.

Specifically, I observed the school functions indicated above in order to gain an understanding of how locally developed curriculum is deployed as a means of fostering local Indigenous culture in the school. These events, as well as describing the school setting in operation were indicative of the manner and extent to which local Indigenous culture is evidenced and underpins the school programme. Observing the principal's behaviour and interaction with Indigenous parents and caregivers, students, and staff provided indications of how the principal enacts their role as educational leader.

Observing both male and female administrators shed light upon gendered perspectives and ways of leading. Given that school principals may be considered privileged by their education and professional and social status, observing their practice through this lens also illuminated the manner and extent to which social class differences mediated the actions of non-Indigenous school principals in relation to their community, the social organization of the school, and how student ability is perceived.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted with principals of each of the four schools in this study. Extensive and in-depth interviews were conducted in this research project as I aimed to broaden the understanding of educational leadership to include how non-Indigenous school principals in the Yukon construe and enact educational leadership and define themselves as professionals. I intended that the interviews were to be conducted in the same broader sense that Kirby & McKenna (1989) describe: as more than solely a question and answer session with a passive research participant who simply talks of their experience or shares data. Interviews are far more rich and in-depth than this narrow definition, these researchers suggest. Interviews are powerful in that they permit a sharing of ideas, philosophies, and the self. Admittedly, the research participants may know more insightful and appropriate questions to be addressed in the interview, filling in gaps that were perhaps created by the researcher's initial questions or research plan. While I posed specific questions in my interviews with non-Indigenous school administrators, I intended that the interviews were, as Lofland & Lofland (1984) describe: "a guided conversation whose goal is to elicit from the interviewee rich detailed materials that can be used in qualitative analysis" (p. 12).

Specifically, I conducted interviews with principals at each site as a means of addressing the aforementioned research questions and gather information on the following aspects: the principal's life experiences, career trajectories, post-secondary training and the manner and extent to which they believe these factors have shaped how they construe and enact educational leadership; how they construct their professional identities and perceive themselves; what it means to be an non-Indigenous educational leader in Yukon contexts; the foundations upon which they establish their educational leadership beliefs, and; how they address the multiplicity of tensions embedded in their practice as a result of the conflicting educational ends.

All principals in the Yukon are members of the Yukon Teachers' Association. I employed the Yukon Teachers' Association (YTA) Code of Ethics (2008) to guide the interview process throughout. The YTA Code of Ethics guides the behaviour of members with the following statements:

> 5.2.1 A member does not criticize the professional competence or professional reputation of a colleague, except to proper officials and then only in confidence and after the colleague has been informed of the criticism.

> 5.2.2 When unfavorable criticism of the professional activity of a member is necessary, it is made in confidence to the proper officials and only after the member concerned has been informed, except in the case of suspected child abuse where the official protocol shall be followed.

Adhering to these principles I ensured that attention remained focused on the observable behaviours of the principal in specific relation to the research questions, and not put either the participant or the interviewer in the unethical position of passing judgement on another YTA member's practice. This possibility is not uncommon when one is conducting what Glesne (1999) refers to as "backyard research" (p. 26) in one's own

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institution. Glesne illustrates this with the following explanation appropriate to this

research project:

> When studying in your own backyard, you often already have a role- as teacher or
> principal or case worker or friend. When you add on the researcher role, both you
> and your others may experience confusion at times over which role you are or
> should be playing. (Glesne, 1999, p. 26)

The abovementioned caution further indicates the need for such guiding principles

as the YTA Code of Ethics as a means of protecting both researcher and participant (Palys,

2003), providing clarity and ensuring ethical behaviour throughout the entire interview

process.

Documents

Documents can offer the researcher a vast amount of information relevant to the

contexts under examination (Stringer, 1999). Specific to this study, I sought permission to

gain access to following documents in order to shed further light upon the nature of the

research context: annual school growth plans which should identify areas of strength or

future growth; enrolment data; newsletters and memos to staff and/or the community

which report recent accomplishments, new initiatives, or identify current and emerging

issues; school handbooks (these include mission, vision, and values statements identifying

the stated purpose of the school); other policy documents including the Yukon Education

Act and British Columbia Integrated Resource Packages (BC-IRP's)[3]. I did not solely view

documents as new or additional sources of information. Instead, documents can play a

vital role in two important ways: first, they can serve to corroborate or contradict data

gathered in observations and interviews; second, they can raise new questions that I can

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[3] BC-IRPs are the curriculum and resource guides which outline the subjects and content that should be
taught in BC and Yukon classrooms.

employ to shape new interview questions (Glesne, 1999). Further, documents can serve to inform the creation of a broader picture of the research site and its participants: "They also provide you with historical, demographic, and sometimes personal information that is unavailable from other sources" (p. 58).

It is common practice in Yukon schools that the principal drafts the school newsletter. Generally, these are distributed on a monthly basis. While teachers and students also contribute to its compilation, often included in the newsletter is a personal message from the principal. This therefore makes them a source of data to be gathered and analysed. Newsletters may contain evidence of past, current, and future school events and educational programs. The work of students may also be showcased. Invitations for parents to attend specific events may also be extended. I reviewed these newsletters as they indicated particular aspects, such as the principal's expressed priorities and both current and future areas of attention for the school. At times, the principal would also write an editorial or opinion piece. Newsletters produced a multiplicity of insights into the principal's educational beliefs and practice.

The school principal is also responsible for the drafting of school growth plans. These documents outline the priorities and directions of the school. It is not intended that the principal develop them in isolation, but rather include the input from students, teachers, parents, the community and the Yukon Department of Education. Reviewing this plan, as well as dialoguing in an interview with the principal over their content and development could produce insights into how, as an educational leader, the principal approaches this task, engages others, establishes priorities, and effects the school growth plan.

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Interviewees

It should be noted that before interviews and observations took place, all participants were offered a lay summary of the research project (Glesne, 1999). The purpose of the lay summary was not solely to inform participants what the study was about. In a far more proactive way, the lay summary identified who I am, what I was attempting to undertake through this investigation, and the role that I would like participants to play. In such a way, this prepared participants to participate as co-investigators in an informed manner. It also served to inform those who are not direct participants in the study of the purpose of my presence in their school. Sample lay summary questions are included in Appendix 1.

As indicated previously, interviewees were purposefully selected as key informants, invited to be participants in full in-person individual interviews. All interviewees were required to give informed consent, based upon a full awareness of the purpose of the study before participating in the study. Their anonymity was maintained throughout the research process through the use of pseudonyms and removal of any other identifying features. This is reflected in the written report. Interviewees were made fully aware that their interviews were to be recorded and that their narratives would appear textually in the body of the report. All participants were permitted to withdraw at any time, and were offered a full copy and/or summary of the final report.

Research design

The following institutional context informed the research design of this project. The choice to employ a case study approach is based upon Yin's (2003) assertion that "case studies are the preferred strategy when "how" and "why" questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on some

contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context" (p. 1). This description suited very well the research proposed by this project.

Stake (2000) makes an important distinction worth stating here, in order to avoid confusion with the previously stated critical ethnographic approach. "Case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied. By whatever methods, we choose to study the case" (p. 435). A representative public school educational example of an ethnographic study bounded by a particular case would be Wolcott's "The Elementary School Principal: Notes From a Field Study" (1994, in Creswell, 1998) which studied the culture of a principal's selection committee tasked with recommending candidates to the superintendent for consideration as future school principals.

The research design employed can also be considered as a "nested case study" (Patton, 2002). Patton indicates that a nested case study is produced "When one or more object of study or unit of analysis is included in field work case studies may be layered and nested within the overall primary case approach" (p. 298). Patton further states: "Fieldwork, then, can be thought of as engaging in a series of multi-layered and nested case studies often with intersecting and overlapping units of analysis" (p.298).

Taking the multi-layered concept further, as indicated by Figure 1, a second perspective of a nested case results when viewing the principal as operating within a multi-layered operational and policy context. Figure 1 indicates the overlapping and permeable aspects of the multi-layered context in which principals enact their daily practice.

Figure 1: The nested context of Yukon school principals

Principal
School
Community
Territory
Canada
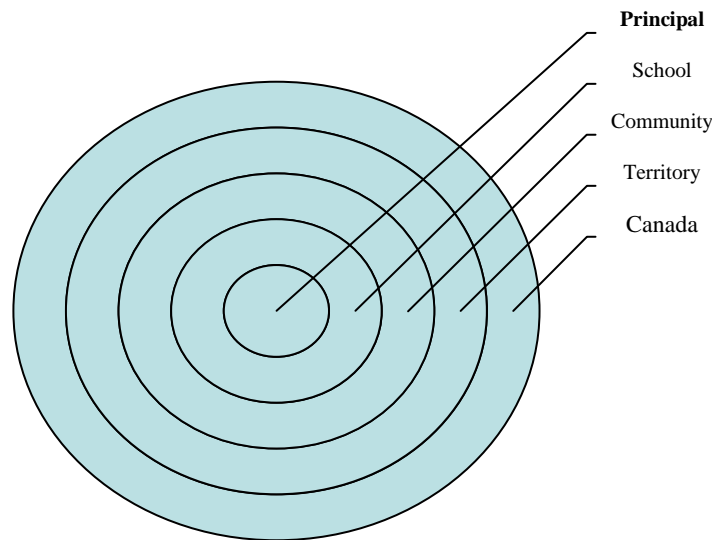
The above relates to this project and the design of this study in that it indicates that the principal does not operate in a vacuum. How non-Indigenous educational leaders construe and enact their practice is mediated by inputs from the multiple layers of the nested case. Therefore, when interviewing principals, the multi-layered framework can be used as a guide for the crafting of interview questions. Further, this multi-layered framework can be employed as an organizer when analysing data and organizing research findings.

With this in mind, four Yukon school sites were selected as institutional cases to be studied. This is referred to by Yin (2003) as a "multiple case design" (p. 46). Multiple case designs bring the particular strength that they are often viewed as more compelling, as "a major insight is to consider multiple cases as one would consider multiple experiments- that is to follow a 'replication' model" (p. 47). Thus, the goal of such an approach is not solely to have a broader sample, but to also have the ability to replicate significant findings from one case to others as a means of determining the robustness of findings. Further, the

ability to compare particular cases is seen by Stake (2000) as "a grand epistemological strategy, a powerful conceptual mechanism, fixing attention on one or a few attributes" (p. 444). Given the contextual distinctions which exist between individual schools in the Yukon, this approach fit well in the case of this research project.

The aforementioned research questions specifically focus on non-Indigenous educational leaders in Yukon contexts, therefore purposeful sampling (Creswell, 1998) was used to select research sites.   In light of the goal to examine intersections of gender, ethnicity, and class in relation to how non-Indigenous Yukon principals construe and enact educational leadership, four distinct case settings, each bringing definite and particular combinations of the aforementioned constructs were chosen. They are:

1) A rural Yukon school with a non-Indigenous male principal

2) A rural Yukon school with a non-Indigenous female principal

3) An urban Whitehorse school with a non-Indigenous male principal

4) An urban Whitehorse school with a non-Indigenous female principal

There are 31 schools in the Yukon. The selection criteria for these four schools required that they:

1) Are geographically located within the Yukon,

2) Are governed by the Yukon Department of Education,

3) Are located on the traditional territory of a Yukon First Nation, and,

4) Are staffed with a non-Indigenous principal

When a large group or target population exists, Palys (2003) suggests taking a sample that is representative of the larger group: in this case, non-Indigenous Yukon school principals in rural and urban contexts. With this in mind, the four schools chosen reflect

these intersections and are identified below with pseudonyms and a brief description of each:

Hillside School

Hillside Elementary School is located in one of the many neighbourhoods of Whitehorse (pop. 23, 638). It offers Kindergarten-Grade 7 programming to approximately 300 students. Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous children attend this school. The male principal of Hillside Elementary is a long-serving "administrator".

Klondike School

This school is located in a neighbourhood of Whitehorse and has between 50 and 100 children enrolled. The female principal of this school is a long-serving teacher and administration.

Mountainview School

This rural Yukon school offers K-12 programming to between 100-150 students. It is situated in the traditional territory of a Yukon First Nation. The female principal of the school has been a long-term community resident, teacher, and "administrator".

Moose Meadow School

Moose Meadow School is located in rural Yukon. Situated in the traditional lands of a Yukon First Nation, the school serves a population of 50-75 students. The male principal, a teacher for a number of years in another Yukon community, was appointed principal over five years ago.

Appendix 1 identifies the design of this research project, modelled after Yin's (2003) "case study method" (p. 50), with specific adaptation to include the techniques of the critical ethnographic method.

Qualitative ethnographic analysis

In this investigation of non-Indigenous educational leaders in Indigenous Yukon contexts, data analysis was conducted in an on-going and simultaneous fashion with data collection. This approach is supported by Glesne (1999) who offers the following perspective on data analysis: "Data analysis done simultaneously with data collection enables you to focus and shape the study as it proceeds. Consistently reflect upon your data, work to organize them, and try to discover what they have to tell you" (p. 130). Such an approach is supported by Morse et al. (2002) who claim that "qualitative research is iterative rather than linear" (p. 10). These researchers further assert the rigour of qualitative research is more likely ensured when: "a good qualitative researcher moves back and forth between design and implementation to ensure congruence among question formulation, literature, recruitment, data collection strategies, and analysis" (p. 10).

With these aspects in mind, prior to commencing this investigation, I established a reflective field log, in which I recorded memos to myself, thereby serving to immediately capture preliminary analytical thoughts and ideas. In this way, I was able to record new thoughts and perspectives as a result of the conduct of the study. Second, I constructed analytical files in order to methodically organize data and thoughts. Glesne (1999) suggests generic categories be used, such as interview questions, people, and places. As the research progressed, additional categories were added, further suggesting that a file be created for emergent titles appropriate for narratives that emerged. Titles also served to add form to the data, giving particular emphasis to emergent and germane aspects. A quotation file also served to capture quotations suitable to future chapters: some appeared as epigraphs at the head of chapters or sub-sections, serving to emphasise what a particular

section was about. Others serve to link new and emergent data to previous studies.   The data gathered through these activities were entered into a computer database and analysed in the following manner.

Prior to the data collection phase commencing, I became conversant in the use of the qualitative data analysis program Atlas t.i. This program was specifically chosen given its presence for over 10 years at the forefront of qualitative data analysis. It is particularly suitable for systematically approaching data which do not lend itself easily to statistical analysis. It is used by major universities and educational institutions around the world. Additionally, Atlas t.i. offers strong service and support: a consideration should any technical or other difficulties arise during the conduct of this research project. This software facilitates the handling and organization of large amounts of qualitative data in a variety of forms and is used in the fields of anthropology, economics, education, medicine, and criminology. These aspects made it particularly well-suited to this qualitative investigation.

Atlas t.i. was used to sort data and generate field codes from the data gathered through observations, interviews, document reviews, and my reflective field journal. Atlas t.i. was also used to facilitate the analysis of the interviews, the data gathered through observations, and documents, allowing for the generation of themes as a result of this data analysis.

Themes

Throughout the iterative process of gathering data, organizing the information collected, and engaging in the process of analysis a number of specific themes from the data analysis process were generated. Themes are "abstract (and often fuzzy) constructs

that investigators identify before, during, and after data collection" (Ryan & Bernard, 2000, p. 780). Within the data collected, patterned regularities (Wolcott, 1994, in Cresswell, 1998) were searched for and identified as a result of the data analysis.

Limitations

There always exists a partial state of knowing in social research (Glesne, 1999). Applied to this research project, a limitation of this research is that it cannot be considered the "complete state of knowing" for all schools, communities, and educational leaders in the Yukon, given that it offers a window into a specific point in time into the lives of specifically selected school principals. While this research may be considered to represent participants in a particular way, findings, while potentially applicable, should not be considered in the same manner when stretched over different contexts in the Yukon and the Canadian north. Therefore, the generalizability of research findings should be taken into account in light of the assumption that contexts are different and varied. While the results of this research study provide thoughtful and useful insights, they should not be transposed to other contexts without consideration given to this important aspect.

More specifically, research methods each come with their own set of strengths and limitations that I needed to be aware of in order to minimize and eliminate their effects. For example, interview question construction needed to be thoughtfully undertaken in order to limit inaccuracies and bias, as was the entry of bias on the part of the researcher when observing events (Yin, 2003).

Validity

The term validity can be defined a number of ways. For the purposes of this investigation, a dictionary-based definition of validity alone is inadequate. Kvale (1995) employs the following dictionary-based definition, stating: "In ordinary language dictionaries, 'validity' refers to the truth and correctness of a statement. A valid argument is sound, well-grounded, justifiable, strong, and convincing. A valid inference is correctly derived from its premises" (p. 21). While not disagreeing with these descriptions of validity, which Kvale asserts are grounded in psychology and psychometric testing, qualitative inquiry requires broader criteria than correctness and numerical legitimacy alone in order for validity to be asserted. Pervin (1984) indicates this to be the case, offering that validity in a broader sense also rests upon "the extent to which our observations indeed reflect the phenomena or variables of interest to us" (p. 48).

While a formal explanation of validity serves as an initial framing for this subsection, as stated previously, this definition alone is inadequate as a means of explaining how I ensured the validity of this research project. More important and applicable than definitions alone is the surfacing, identification, and exploration of bias and how it was attended to in relation to this endeavour in order to ensure validity of the research.

The argument could be made that, having been a Yukon school administrator for the past 11 years, I am biased by my own knowledge, experiences, and attitudes which have grown and taken shape during this substantial period of time. In acknowledging this argument and responding to it, counterarguments can also be made as to the importance and value of my experiences as a non-Indigenous school principal in Indigenous rural

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Yukon communities and their relation to this research endeavour. Framed in such a manner, this constructive perspective on bias is reinforced by Wolcott (1994) who asserts:

> Good bias not only helps us get our work done; by lending focus, it is essential to the performance of any research. In the total absence of bias a researcher would be unable to even leave the office to set off in the direction of a potential research site....The critical step is to understand that bias itself is not the problem. One's purposes and assumptions need to be made explicit and used judiciously to give meaning and focus to the study. (p. 165)

Reflecting Wolcott's statement on to this study, were it not then for bias, it is reasonable to assume that this research endeavour would not have occurred. Bias thus becomes foundational to this undertaking. Employing this perspective in order to ensure validity of this research and attend to the issue of bias, I therefore offer the following as a means of framing my experience as not a limiting factor but instead as a vital resource which facilitated the successful completion of this research project and added value to it.

First, my administrative experience in a number of Yukon schools, and the relationships developed with my educational leader colleagues have served to generate trust between us, both personally and professionally. In rural, isolated locations where people are relatively few, inhabitants are interdependent and rely on each other in multiple ways, therefore maintaining and upholding trust is, arguably, more foundational to relationships than in more populated areas. This reinforces strongly the need for me to honour all research participants, our relationships, and the information and perspectives they share with me in this endeavour. In effect, once this research project is complete, I must not only live with the results, but continue to live and work with the participants for the foreseeable future. Based upon these relationships, trustworthiness of data can be better ensured as interviews will become more akin to conversations, self-disclosure will be more likely, the result being richer data (Harrison, MacGibbon, & Morton, 2001).

Second, the professional relationship I have with Yukon school principals afforded me valuable access in a number of ways. At a straightforward operational level, I was permitted access to the school research sites by both the Yukon Department of Education and the school principals themselves. The crucial importance of this in relation to this research is not to be underestimated, given that schools are not places which give free and open access to the public. Entry can be permitted only for certain activities deemed appropriate by school boards and the school administration, with permission granted to occupiers under the Criminal Code of Canada to eject those considered trespassers (Brown & Zuker, 2002). Thus, my knowledge of schools, coupled with the concurrent Yukon educational system's knowledge of me and my research initiative became a vital resource for the successful execution of this research project in that, together, both open doors which otherwise could have remained closed to me as a researcher. Harrison, MacGibbon, & Morton (2001) employ the term reciprocity in regards to access, and expand upon it specific to access and trustworthiness, stating:

> Reciprocity, the give and take of social interactions, may be used to gain access to a particular setting...By asking participants to examine field notes and early analyses, researchers can give back something to their participants and engage in member checks as a means of ensuring trustworthiness. (p. 323)

The above applies directly to my own case in that, as the research project proceeded, I incorporated into the research process time and opportunity to review with research participants my field notes, preliminary observations, and analyses resulting from interviews, observations, and document reviews throughout in order to ensure the trustworthiness of emergent findings. In such a manner, reciprocity built into this research project became a means of both limiting bias or opinion and surfacing further the participants' perspectives. This view is supported by Glesne (1999), who offers: "as a

researcher, you want to learn the respondents' beliefs, experiences, and views rather than to persuade them of your perspective" (p. 85). Doing so further reinforces the verisimilitude of this inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

Third, my personal, professional, and craft knowledge of educational leadership in the Yukon context arises as a result of my aforementioned career trajectory. These aspects form a solid foundation which effectively limits the imposition of preconceptions, thereby opening access to the realities of the research participants not necessarily afforded to others with dissimilar histories. As a result, I had access to the phenomenon and experiential realities under study to a degree that may not have been possible for an outsider. My experience serves as a backdrop against which reflexivity, or the process by which we are "implored to rethink how we interpret and write up our field experiences" (Foley, 2002, p. 163) can be reflected. While not considered to be a matter of "getting things 100% right", Foley suggests "But a more reflexive interpretive and narrative practice, although not a panacea, will help us produce more honest, believable stories" (p. 163).

Fourth, my knowledge and experience as a Yukon educational leader was a valuable resource in that they helped to ensure that my inferences and assumptions are more likely to be correct ones than if I did not have the benefit of them. In such a way, both this knowledge and experience became crucially important tools with which to critically problematize rather than arrive at preconceived judgments. (When viewed in such a manner, my trajectory and location within the broader Yukon educational leadership context served to transform my bias into an indispensable resource which reinforces and supports the assurance of validity rather than limits or diminishes it). Such a view is supported by Lassiter (2005), who in reference to ethnographic honesty offers: "...personal experience can be an intimate part of an ethnographic equation which links coexpereince,

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intersubjectivity, and co-understandings, both in fieldwork and the writing of the ethnographic text" (p. 115).

Having positioned my experience and bias as a resource to be capitalized upon, what criteria then can be employed to ensure validity of qualitative research, specifically relating to this investigation of how non-Indigenous principals construe and enact educational leadership in Indigenous Yukon contexts? In answering this question, I relied upon Lincoln's (1995) meta-analysis of emerging and appropriate criteria for inquiry which determined "that nearly all of the emerging criteria are relational, that is, they recognize and validate relationships between the inquirer and those who participate in the inquiry" (p.278). In support, Lincoln offers specific relational criteria that I followed in all encounters and interactions with research participants to ensure validity. This research project adhered to the following standards for judging quality in the inquiry community.

First, the positionality or standpoint judgments of the epistemological positions and standpoints behind representations of truth in texts are acknowledged in this report. Lincoln illustrates standpoint judgments "as a text that displays honesty or authenticity and 'comes clean' about its own stance and about the position of the author" (p.280). Thus, works that claim whole and complete truths and do not indicate the positionality of the author(s) will be considered to be misleading. "Detachment and author objectivity are barriers to quality, not insurance of having achieved it" (p. 280).

Second, the incorporation of discourse and dialogue into the body of the report will ensure that the research conducted does not present as a standalone and detached academic pursuit. In effect, it will not be the voice of the researcher alone comprising the report, but also those of the research participants. To clarify this point I rely upon Lather and

Smithies (1997) description of their book "Troubling the Angels: Women living with

HIV/AIDS" where they describe what it is not:

> The question of what this book is can be approached by talking about what it is not. This is NOT a chronicle where we as researchers record events as unobstrusively as possible. This book is laid out so that, rather than only "giving voice" to the stories of others, this is also a book about researchers both getting out of the way and in the way. As filters for the stories that we heard, we have written a book that is about others who both are and are not like ourselves (p. *xiv*).

Third, and closely related to the previous point, Tierney (1993) refers to the

inclusion of voice in research by stating: "postmodern research demands that the researcher

be involved both with the "research subject" and with changing those conditions that seek

to silence and marginalize (p. 5). In the case of this research, the inclusion of female school

administrators as research participants will serve to broaden and inform the limitations of

the male-centric nature of educational leadership research.

Fourth, I employ critical subjectivity through the use of a reflective journal as I

engage in conducting research, making note of my psychological and emotional state as the

process unfolds. Doing so can lead to personal and social transformation, leading to new

insights. This journal was used to record and acknowledge my own opinions, views, and

biases, which were coupled with data gathered from research participants, and discussed,

examined, and analysed.

Fifth, I strived to engender a sense of trust, caring, sharing, mutual respect, and

involvement in keeping with the person-centered nature of qualitative inquiry. This was

done by maintaining an open and thoughtful demeanour, as well as ensuring that

participants were fully aware that all ethical protocols were followed to protect their

interests.

Sixth, acknowledging the privilege of being a researcher, throughout the conduct of this inquiry I respected the vital concern for justice, human dignity, and the appreciation of the human condition as a means of diminishing power imbalances.

Seventh, I acknowledged to participants the debt we owe as researchers to all who contribute to qualitative inquiry, offering them the opportunity to receive a summary or complete copy of the final research report. Further, I will attend teacher, parent, community, and Department of Education meetings to present and discuss the study. Our research is not only written up for our own use and consumption, but is also intended to be of benefit to participants and the broader community, therefore it will be shared with all interested parties upon its completion.

These criteria served as guidelines throughout the conduct of this study. Not intended as strict absolutes, Lincoln offers the following considerations along with them. First, specific criteria may be more or less applicable to particular types or classes of research, and based upon this may therefore be highly suitable or of less utility as the case may be. Second, some of the criteria may be more useful or applicable at various points of the research process. Third, these criteria are relational, and therefore validity is contingent upon both the knower and what is to be known (Reason & Rowan, 1981). Finally, Lincoln argues in relation to the criteria that:

> the naturalistic/constructivist paradigm effectively brought about the irrelevance of the distinction between ontology and epistemology, so too does this paradigm and interpretive social science in general bring about the collapse of the distinctions between standards, rigor, and quality criteria and the formerly separate consideration of research ethics. In effect, many of the proposed and emerging standards for quality in interpretive social science are also standards for ethics. (pp. 286-287)

This study falls within the constructivist paradigm mentioned above in that it examines contexts which Glesne (1999) describes in the following manner:

> [The constructivist paradigm] portrays a world in which reality is socially constructed, complex, and ever changing...To understand the nature of constructed realities, qualitative researchers interact and talk with participants about their perceptions. The researchers seek out the variety of perspectives; they do not try to reduce the multiple interpretations to a norm. (p. 5)

The above citation aptly reflects the nature of the school sites which comprise the research settings of this project. Therefore, engagement with participants sought out their perspectives, integrated with the discussion and examination of the perspectives from the researcher's field journal occurred in a manner which was naturalistic, in that it is "paradigmatically incommensurable with quantitative social research" (Carspecken, 2002, p. 55).

In practical terms, this investigation employed Creswell's (1998) verification procedures which are often used in qualitative research (Glesne, 1999).

1. Prolonged engagement and persistent observation- extended time in the field so that you are able to develop trust, learn the culture, and check out your hunches,

2. Triangulation- use of multiple data-collection methods, multiple sources, multiple investigators, and/or multiple theoretical perspectives,

3. Peer review and debriefing- external reflection and input on your work,

4. Negative case analysis- conscious search for negative cases and unconfirming evidence so that you can refine your working hypotheses,

5. Clarification of researcher bias- reflection on your own subjectivity and how you will use and monitor it in your research,

6. Member checking- sharing interview transcripts, analytical thoughts, and/or drafts of the final report with research participants to make sure you are representing them and their ideas accurately,

7. Rich, think description- writing that allows the reader to enter the research context,

8. External audit- an outside person examines the research process and product through "auditing" your field notes, research journal, analytical coding scheme, etc. (Glesne, 1999, p. 32)

Reliability

Both reliability and validity are vitally important concepts in qualitative research: "Without rigor, research is worthless, becomes fiction, and loses utility" (Morse et al., 2002, p. 2). These researchers draw upon Lincoln & Guba's (1981) parallel concept of trustworthiness in qualitative research. Trustworthiness, they suggest, is not something that is established post hoc, but is ensured through the implementation of aspects built into the research process as means of ensuring reliability of research.

Lincoln & Guba (1985) identify the following criteria to ensure trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Built into this investigation of non-Indigenous Yukon principals are specific strategies recommended by Lincoln and Guba to attain trustworthiness, including: negative cases and unconfirming evidence, peer debriefing, prolonged engagement and persistent observation, audit trails which clearly describes the processes of gathering and analyzing data, and member checks. The importance of trustworthiness to be established and embedded in the research process is underscored by Glesne (1999) who identifies its foundational role in ensuring credibility of research findings and interpretations.

Although related terms, validity and reliability are not synonymous, with Palys (2003) defining reliability as a construct synonymous with consistency. Specific to the investigation of how non-Indigenous educational leaders construct and enact educational leadership in Indigenous Yukon contexts, this suggests that a key element of reliability of this research would be that the findings could also be arrived at by different observers or investigators. While not disputing this assertion, clearly, the logistics of conducting research in the Yukon preclude a number of researchers also conducting the same investigation in order to ensure that the results generated are reliable. Such an effort would be unreasonable in many ways to effect. This notwithstanding, the employment of the aforementioned points are specific and realistic measures with which I can ensure to a reasonable extent that this research project and its findings will be considered reliable.

Bringing these points to bear on this research project, and building upon the aforementioned aspect of consistency, reliability of research findings were addressed by adhering to the following consistent procedures: first, all participants were interviewed employing the same semi-structured questions in order to ensure consistency of questioning and process. Participants were afforded adequate time to engage with the researcher in order to ensure credibility was established and maintained for each encounter. Procedurally, in all cases, research participants were provided the opportunity to review and comment upon the data gathered and analysed as a result of their participation in interviews.

Reliability is supported by the aforementioned use of multiple data gathering techniques which can be triangulated- an approach in ethnographic research considered by Wolcott (2002) to be far more preferable and reliable than to solely "go around checking up on what your informants have told you by asking whether what they are telling you is

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generally accepted as true" (p. 37). Specific to this research endeavour, triangulated findings are comprised of multiple data collection methods, a variety of sources, and perhaps negative cases which do not confirm those things Wolcott refers to above as "accepted as true". Connelly & Clandinin (1990) describe the result of such a process is the creation of "The sense of the whole is [then] built from a rich data source" (p. 5) These multiple methods were employed through prolonged engagement with participants and research presence in schools. Further, an audit trail (Stringer, 1999) clearly describes the process of gathering and analysing data and provides access to raw data generated in each interview.

Ensuring reliability and validity is paramount to making certain that this investigation into Yukon educational leadership is thoughtful and credible in nature. Given the unique prospect that this critical ethnographic study presents - the first known attempt to shed light on educational leadership in this unique Canadian setting - the opportunity to surface contextualized understandings of educational leadership - further affirms the crucial need for reliable, valid, and trustworthy research processes as the underpinnings to subsequent research findings.

Reflexivity and validity

This section describes the rationale, value, and uses of reflexivity in the production of knowledge claims, the purpose being to elaborate "...the intersubjective contexts in which co-understandings emerge. Ultimately, the issue is one of honesty, of placing co-interpretation squarely in the world of coexperience, intersubjectivity, and dialogue rather than distance, objectivity, and authority" (Lassiter, 2005, p. 104).   These are methodological issues which need to be grappled with in order to reinforce and ensure the validity and reliability of any knowledge claims resulting from this project.   In order to

address these issues the work, insights, and tools provided by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and American multicultural educator James Banks are presented and discussed in this section.

A key issue at stake is that of honesty. The matter of honesty relates specifically to this project in that the nature of the research methods employed in the social settings of four Yukon schools generate data from many different people with different roles in four distinct educational contexts. In such a way, the meanings which emerge are intersubjective in that there will be multiple, perhaps divergent meanings generated by individuals within the same context. These data are then interpreted by me-the researcher-who is also located across these four contexts. I then co-represent this myriad of information in particular ways in a written text, allowing for my own biography and trajectory to intersect with these field experiences and how I interpret and present them. As a result, this places the responsibility upon me to ensure that processes are used to ensure honesty in the formulating and recounting of this co-experience. In order to achieve as honest a recount as possible, I will describe three forms of reflexivity and how they are used in this project as a means of identifying potential impediments to the generation of new knowledge.

Why do I need to take these aforementioned steps as a means of ensuring ethnographic honesty? Duranti (1993) identifies the two concepts of truth and intentionality and the interpretive processes of them as receiving relatively little attention, stating that "Ethnographies rarely give us the amount of detail needed to assess exactly how truth was defined, agency represented, intentions taken into consideration, or responsibilities assessed" (p. 214). Duranti further asserts that truth is a social matter, something that people must reckon with together, and intentionality is a vast, perhaps

infinite set of relations between the mind and the object or situation. I then follow by

locating my positionality in relation to my site of research, using Banks' (1998) typology

for cross-cultural researchers with which to do so. Once done, I move to offer a

description of each research site and school principal. This serves to set the scenes in

which the research activity took place, to familiarize readers with the four principals in this

study, and to further situate myself as researcher within the described Yukon educational

leadership field.

Ethnography, reflexivity, and the researcher

The present research draws on critical ethnography. Increasingly, ethnographic

researchers include their own biographies and narratives in the production of their work,

intersecting them with the writing of their field experiences. This practice is referred to as

reflexivity. Specific to the employment of reflexivity, Finlay (2002) explains how this has

become more prevalent in qualitative research of this nature:

> In terms of current practice, it could be argued that reflexivity, in its myriad forms, is now the defining feature of qualitative research (Banister et al., 1994). Most qualitative researchers will attempt to be aware of their role in the (co)-construction of knowledge. They will try to make explicit how intersubjective elements impact on data collection and analysis in an effort to enhance the trustworthiness, transparency and accountability of their research. The debate resides largely between qualitative researchers of different theoretical persuasions who lay claim to competing accounts of the rationale and practices of reflexivity. (p. 211)

The manner and degree to which a qualitative researcher employs reflexivity varies.

Foley (1998) describes reflexivity as having many guises and offers three forms which are

outlined here, along with their degree of relevance and relationship to this project. These

three forms are based on Marcus' (1994) typology of reflexivity.

The first form of reflexivity is termed "confessional reflexivity", whereby the ethnographer includes reflections upon their own experiences along with the thoughts and feelings generated as a result of their field work. In this study, I draw on my own observations and reflections upon them both as Yukon-based educational practitioner and researcher in the field, presenting them throughout the text. In doing so, I am cognizant of the extent to which researchers' own subjectivities influence and affect their interpretations (Foley, 1998). As a result, the positionality of researchers change in the following way: "The author as omniscient tape recorder and grand interpreter is replaced by the author as a living, contradictory, vulnerable, evolving self who speaks in a partial, subjective, culture-bound voice" (Foley, 1998, p. 145). This form of reflexivity includes descriptions of where researchers encountered dilemmas or had to face making decisions in the field. The point of view being offered is not that of participants, "but that of fieldworkers, reflecting upon themselves as researchers" (Glesne, 1999).

A second form of reflexivity is termed "intertextual": Intertextual reflexivity calls for the reliance upon previous studies, whereupon the interpretations of ethnographies are grounded in research that has been conducted on the same topic. Doing so encourages greater transparency in that researchers who engage in intertextual reflexivity illuminate how "the practices and discourses of their own discipline affects what they think and write" (Foley, 1998, p. 146) and what an author may claim are "facts". Employing intertextual reflexivity in this project therefore encourages a multivocality in that the stories, autobiographies and assertions of the participants are reflected upon and compared with those of other similar studies.

Complicating textual reflexivity is the fact that this study is the first of its kind specific to educational leadership and non-Indigenous school principals in Indigenous

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Yukon contexts. This point notwithstanding, research conducted in other areas of northern Canada (Ryan, 1989, Goddard, 2002, Goddard & Foster, 2002, Berger, Epp, & Moller, 2006) provides the opportunity for similar texts to be brought into play and reflected comparatively against this project. It must be understood that the purpose of drawing on other studies is not to put forth a literature review of educational studies situated in the Canadian north. Rather, employing them assists in making more transparent the truth claims or facts presented in this particular study and how they are constructed and ultimately interpreted.

The third form of reflexivity presented by Foley (1998) is termed "theoretical reflexivity". Pierre Bourdieu illuminates this process by stating that it "relentlessly tacks back and forth between social science metalanguages and the learned dispositions (habitas) of everyday actors in their constraining historical/cultural contexts/fields" (p. 147). Specific to this endeavour, theoretical reflexivity requires in-depth explanation and is examined in the following subsection.

Theoretical Reflexivity

In the Yukon educational context, Bourdieu's notion of theoretical reflexivity provides a tool which can be used to examine the social location of the individuals in this study (the researcher included), the aspects that shape them, and value we assign them. In such a way, what Bourdieu offers helps us to better comprehend ways in which to understand culture in the diverse contexts of Yukon schools and the non-Indigenous principals in them. Bourdieu further provides us with a language which helps dialogue around issues of culture to occur, introducing the terms habitus, agent, field, and illusio in order to assist our examinations.

Everett (2002) offers that fields can be thought of as a market or a game, "sites of struggles and endless change that makes fields different than systems" (p. 60), in that the term system suggests a common and cohesive function. Employing this definition, in this study I understand the Yukon educational field to be a network of social relations in that "when one comes to think in terms of field, one focuses on power, domination, and class, making Bourdieu's field somewhat different than the notion of field appearing in Anglo-Saxon organization" (p. 60).

A way that habitus can be thought of is interconnected to the concept of field in that it is "the corporeal dispositions that interact with the social relations" (Hunter, 2004, p. 176). In such a conceptualization, habitus denotes the incorporated values of the field that one is familiar with. These values guide what you feel you should or should not do with respect to what you would consider appropriate in a given situation and guide possible courses of action. Based on Hunter's assertion, habitus is constituted by aspects such as our life experiences, our upbringing, and our schooling. These aspects may not be easy to change: "acting as an agent may be mediated by influences that are beyond our conscious realization. Therefore, agents may actually reproduce the very structures that limit them" (Hunter, 2004, p. 176). Lynam et al. (2006) shed further light on habitus, describing it as:

> …features of the individual, his or her viewpoints, and physical 'dispositions' towards navigating the social world. Bourdieu's writings characterise habitus as our 'comfort zone'; the physical places and social spaces in which we do not need to 'look for clues' to know how to participate. (p. 29)

These points above identify the need for reflexivity on the part of the researcher in that there is "the need to consider one's relation to the research object" (Everett, 2002, p. 71), and that "Bourdieu's call for reflexivity is a call to acknowledge the way in which the researcher's knowledge about the world influences research claims" (Cicourel, 1993, p.

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112). To be reflexive, Bourdieu asserts, requires that there must be an understanding on the part of the 'agent' (in this case the researcher) of their habitus. Habitus, and knowledge of the field (both physical spaces and social terrains to be navigated), or context in which the agent (or agents) are conducting their work combine to form what Bourdieu refers to as practical knowledge (Schirato & Webb, 2003).

While seemingly a straightforward assertion, upon further examination this is not necessarily the case. Bourdieu does not describe the agent and the field as two distinct and separate entities. An important condition can occur where, in effect, the agent is the field, or to use Bourdieu's own words, 'I am in the world because the world encompasses me' (p. 542). What Bourdieu cautions against here is a situation where the researcher may simply accept the field as it is, at face value. I understand this to be a vitally important consideration to which I must be attuned, in that my practical knowledge can therefore serve as a detriment in that it can limit or constrain practice to where conditions of the field are submitted to without thinking about them. Schirato and Webb (2003) employ the following illustrative example:

> …Bourdieu compares to a sportsperson's feel for the game. A good player in a sport, for instance, understands the rules, traditions, values, moves and possibilities that define the game, and their relation to the moment. This kind of practical knowledge is, for Bourdieu, largely unreflexive. The player incorporates the history of the game (or the cultural field) into her or his self, but that incorporation functions, simultaneously, as an (unconscious) interdiction that delimits non-reproductive thought. I can know what the game or the field knows, but I cannot know what is foreclosed within those institutionalized points of view. The 'enchanted' relation to the game that is illusio not only (re)produces knowledge as the 'vision and division' of the world; it also produces a (tacit) self-interested ignorance or illiteracy. (p. 542)

Related specifically to this research project, I am well-served as a researcher by employing this consideration. As stated previously, I have been a Yukon school

administrator for over 10 years. As a result, were I unaware of the cautions stated above, I

could easily fall prey to the unconscious acceptance of popular opinion or beliefs, or

"illusio" of the field. Were I to do so, I would then accept 'the game', or what I observe,

unquestioningly as it is and at face value. Illustrating this would be whether or not I probed

my own beliefs and reflections, accepted educational policies in unquestioning ways, or

did not critically reflect on observations made in the field.   As a result I would be

reproducing knowledge, retelling and recycling that which is already known rather than

expand the understanding of the field and logic of the actors playing upon the Yukon

terrain.

Following Bourdieu's logic, to assume that Yukon-centric illusio does not exist is,

in itself, the perpetuation of an illusion. In her examination of the social space of physical

education classes in schools, Hunter (2004) employs Bourdieu to state: "Illusio is an

investment that one has in maintaining the game consciously but 'one is born into the

game, with the game'; and the relation of investment, illusio, investment, is made more

total and unconditional by the fact that it is unaware of what it is" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 67).

Drawing this concept from Bourdieu accomplishes two vitally important things: first, it

surfaces the fact that there will indeed be illusio and taken for granted assumptions both by

the researcher and the participants in the field. Second, Bourdieu's concept of reflexivity

provides the analytical tool with which to crack open and examine these taken for granted

assumptions in the Yukon's educational context. In such a way, their complexities can be

laid bare, analyzed, and questioned, in effect ensuring that I am not projecting an illusion

of the truth. Just as a surgeon knows the names of her tools, she also must know how to

use them to proper benefit. So too is the case of reflexivity, used in this project as a tool to

facilitate the exposure of illusio for the purposes of examining and better understanding

educational leadership in the Yukon context. In the same way as Lynham et al (2006)

propose, "Bourdieu can assist us to understand the ways in which culture can be

conceptualized as embodied, enduring, and in some cases, constraining, but also as

dynamic and shifting, depending on habitus and capital and the fields that people must

navigate within" (p. 32).

The employment of reflexivity comes, according to Bourdieu, with the following

limitations to the habitus which, if not acknowledged, would serve to delimit my thoughts

and reflections. The first are our social and cultural origins. In my own case, I am a white

male of middle class origins. Second, taking into account my position in the field, I am

also a student-researcher who has been a school administrator working in the contexts in

which this study is situated. As a result, who I am, and the course of study I have engaged

with results in the third consideration- intellectual bias. I must acknowledge that I am also

located in the field of academia. The concern which Bourdieu and Wacquant raise in this

case is "a tendency for subjects from certain fields (academe for one) to abstract practices

from their contexts, and see them as ideas to be contemplated rather than problems to be

addressed or solved" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 39). How this consideration applies

in relation to this project is perhaps best illuminated by an example: attempting to draw a

skill-set of leadership behaviours from the research participants and generalize them as

useful and required across all contexts, rather than identify the factors influencing and

mediating educational leadership within the context of this study.

How does one advance and encourage the goal of self-reflexivity in empirical

research? In his report titled *The Weight of the World*, Bourdieu presents five main areas

meant to promote self-reflexivity and achieve this end. Under each, a brief description

relating Bourdieu's points back to this project is given:

1) Make explicit the intentions, goals, and procedures of the project so the reader and those being interviewed can make sense of what is happening (Schirato & Webb, 2003, p. 547).

Chapters 1, 2, and 3 of this study present my positioning, the conceptual framework and literature review, and the research method. In such a way, readers and participants are able to frame their experiences and contributions within the broader enterprise of the project. I problematize issues of truth and intentionality, addressing them by describing the tools Bourdieu offers us and how I will use them. Further, a clear statement of the intentions, goals, and procedures is also ensured throughout the project by engaging UBC's Research Ethics Board. A required condition of receiving ethics approval before any research activity can commence is the demonstration by the researcher that knowledge on the part of all participants of the intentions, goals, and procedures through letters of invitation, permission, or consent is made certain. In these letters to participants (which are submitted for review prior to ethics being granted), the rationale of the project, its goals, and the research methods and procedures employed are clearly explicated.

2) Clarify what interviewees can and cannot say and the contexts which work to censor their responses (p.547).

A distinction Bourdieu makes is that between implicit and explicit knowledge. Implicit knowledge refers to knowledge which is passively held, taken for granted, accepted at face value, or we fail to recognize consciously. This is distinct from explicit or "practical" knowledge, knowledge which can be articulated and shared, the aforementioned "knowledge of the game" from the point of view of the rules, moves, and possibilities. The knowledge held implicitly by the participants in the specific context of

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this research project is surfaced and examined through questions employed in the research questionnaire. These questions, and the dialogue around them, therefore serve to examine those things that participants unconsciously do, probe how they construct themselves, or surface the ways in which they think about their practice. In such a way, they attempt to uncover the tacit knowledge of participants, how this knowledge operates and reinforces the illusion of the 'game' played by non-Indigenous educational leaders working in Indigenous Yukon contexts.

3) Address the limitations of transcription (p. 547).

Transcription edits out key elements as body language and emotion. To address this, digital recordings were listened to by the researcher with specific emphasis given on making notations where stress, irony, humour, or anger was expressed during the interviews and identified so that this could be included in the written report.

4) The need for interviewers to have extensive knowledge of the social contexts of their subjects through general research and as a result of having a history interviewing that subject (p. 548).

To address this point, I rely upon my own experience in the social contexts of the Yukon as an educator in rural and isolated communities- the same contexts in which the research participants live and work. Over the past 10 years of working in Yukon schools, much of my time has been spent engaged as a magisterial student and now doctoral candidate examining educational leadership in Yukon contexts. This point notwithstanding, I must rely on this experience with Bourdieu's aforementioned cautions of illusio of the field firmly at the forefront in order to ensure that I question and challenge

my own beliefs, assumptions, and prejudgments, taking nothing for granted or at face value.

    5) Interviewers need to objectify their own social and professional contexts and try to "forget them; that is they need to free or distance themselves, as far as possible, from preconceived notions and values taken from their own habitus and field"(p. 548).

This requires that I acknowledge, recognize, and clearly articulate through reflexivity prejudgments as a means of limiting or eliminating the entry of my own points of view or beliefs into the narratives which are included in this report.

Bourdieu's final caution relates to his assertion that the scholastic point of view challenges the ability to be reflexive in that the scholastic point of view abstracts the practical, thereby replacing the points of view of practitioners in the field, namely the researcher and the participants in this research project. As a result, this constitutes what Bourdieu asserts is the "most serious epistemological mistake in the human sciences, that which consists in putting 'a scholar inside the machine', in picturing all the social agents in the image of the scientist" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 133).

Herein lies a strength of the critical ethnographic method in this regard. In order to limit or eliminate that which Bourdieu cautions above, all participants in this project had the opportunity to review and comment on the transcripts of their contributions. In such a way, this vitally important aspect of the research process serves as a further step to ensure that the scholastic point of view engages the thoughts, perspectives, points of views and experiences of the research participants.

Positioning of the researcher in relation to the research sites

Understanding and making explicit the biographies and values of researchers, Banks (1998) posits, allows social science researchers to "more closely approach the aim of objectivity in social science research" (p. 6).

Specific to researcher objectivity, Banks frames the importance of objectivity in social science research in the following manner:

> An important aim of science is to strive for objectivity. Objectivity must be an aim in the human sciences because there is no other way to construct public knowledge that will be considered legitimate and valid by researchers and policy-makers in diverse communities. *However, we need to rethink and reconceptualize objectivity so that it will have legitimacy for diverse groups of researchers and will incorporate their perspectives, experiences, and insights…*Researchers should strive for objectivity even though it is an unattainable, idealized goal (Banks, 1998, p. 6, italics in original).

Based upon this indicated need for researchers to position themselves in relation to their context(s), I offer a biographical reflection on my experiences, history, and values, accepting that they influence and have been influenced by the Yukon context, and the research participants and research sites in this project.

I am a school administrator who has been a teacher and school principal and vice-principal since 1989. Most of my experience has been in rural Canadian communities, and particularly in northern Yukon schools. I have been a principal at four schools during this time, and in 2005, I commenced the PhD (Educational Studies) at the University of British Columbia. Since then, I have been developing skills as an educational researcher. For me, being a teacher and administrator results in my bringing a school and child-centered focus to my work. After all, this has been my *raison d'être* for many years. Yet, to say that this was the sole basis for my educational values and beliefs would be incomplete at best.

Looking back on my own engagement with Canadian public schools as a child, I experienced many elementary schools when growing up given that my family moved approximately every 2 years. By the time I completed grade 12, I had experienced 8 such transitions. While such frequency may at first appear problematic, my extroverted nature meant that I made friends quickly- but unfortunately did not get to keep them long. In hindsight, I feel now as an educator that I benefitted from the exposure to a wide range of diverse school contexts in rural and urban areas across Canada, different educational systems, and varied curricula. As an adult, I believe that this trajectory has reinforced my belief that schools are all different and should be, based upon their community context.

Never one to have met with great academic success in high school (nor did I really enjoy this phase of my education as it did not feel applied to life), I finished school with a school leaving certificate a year early at age 16, having been advanced from grade 3 to grade 5 for reasons still unclear to me. My parents believe that I and a number of my peers were part of some broader educational experiment, the results of which were never made apparent. Fervently wishing to leave home and spread my wings, two days after I turned 17, I convinced my parents to sign the forms permitting me to enroll in the Canadian Air Force as an Aero Engine Technician, given my passion for tinkering with all things engine-driven.

For the next six years, I was progressively trained and worked both as a full and later as a part-time airman in various locations across Canada and Europe. Eventually, I was promoted to be the lead aircraft engine instructor in my squadron.   The bulk of my experience was with a unit responsible for Search and Rescue. For me, I valued this coupling of technical skills framed within a greater, more humanitarian purpose. This part-time engagement with my trade afforded me the opportunity to return to high school and

upgrade my marks, leading eventually to acceptance in the Bachelor of Education (Secondary) program at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Alberta. When I commenced my first teaching job in a very small rural Alberta community, it was with mixed feelings that I was honourably released from the Air Force. I had enjoyed very much this phase of my life but felt that it was important to apply my newly developed pedagogical skills in the classroom. As an educator, I feel my military experience is useful in that it gives me the ability to relate well with parents working in the trades, and with students considering similar pursuits when they finish school. Rather than enter university directly from high school, I view this experience as giving me invaluable perspectives on the labour force which I can bring to my work in public education.

As a result of these experiences, I bring a number of perspectives with me to the four sites in this research project. As mentioned previously, I have been a Yukon school administrator in both rural and urban settings for over 10 years. This experience has been predominantly within the small school frame. I find that I am drawn to small schools as an area of interest given my belief that the relationships between small schools, families, and their communities are closer, can be more personal, and more meaningful than in large institutions. For me, it is of greater importance to know everyone's name than be an employee in a larger educational system. With this in mind, I have always engaged in efforts to involve community elders in the school and facilitated opportunities where the students in schools from different communities (but of the same Indigenous group) can come together for shared activities.

When I enter many Yukon schools, I am greeted by teachers both Indigenous and non-Indigenous who have also been my students. Since 2001, I have maintained a close relationship with the Yukon Native Teacher Education Program (YNTEP), serving first as

a Faculty Advisor, then as a sessional instructor, and as a guest speaker on such topics as teaching multi-grade classes in rural Yukon contexts and educational leadership.   As a result, many Indigenous teachers that I encounter in Yukon schools know me from our times spent learning together in the classroom. When I visit schools, they often seek me out, wish to talk and share their experiences, and from time to time ask my advice or perspective on an educational topic of interest to them. It is with pride that I see them flourish as teachers and realize that, perhaps in a small way, I have been a part of their continued successes. I believe that the Yukon educational system needs more Indigenous teachers, particularly in rural schools where the majority of children may be Indigenous themselves.

I also engage with the Yukon educational system as a parent of two elementary school-aged children, enhancing for me what I would term my child-centered focus rather than a system-centered view of the role of schools. Once again, the teacher of my eldest son is a former YNTEP student of mine (as was his Kindergarten teacher three years ago). "Schools are for kids" I believe, and not the other way around, hence I find myself drawn more to instances of student success (however defined) than system effectiveness and efficiency. For me, being a parent of a child in a Yukon school elevates the examination of educational leadership above that of an academic endeavour to one which, perhaps, may impact someone I care very much about. Based upon this diversity and depth of engagement, my work as a researcher is something I have come to feel very passionate about and dedicated to.

While Banks offers the following typology of cross-cultural researchers, I find it difficult to situate myself neatly and clearly into one of these four "types of researchers" given my aforementioned layers of engagement with Yukon schools, communities, and

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educators over the past 13 years. I make this clearer following the table below. For the

purposes of this discussion, Banks employs the following four typologies, offered below

with a description of each. I will use these as a means of positioning myself in relation to

the broader research project:

Table 1: A typology of Cross-cultural researchers (taken from Banks, 1998)

Type of researcher	Description
The Indigenous-insider	This individual endorses the unique values, perspectives, behaviours, beliefs of his or her Indigenous community and culture and is perceived by people within the community as a legitimate community member who can speak with authority about it.
The Indigenous-outsider	This individual was socialized within his or her Indigenous community but has experienced high levels of cultural assimilation into an outsider or oppositional culture. The values, beliefs, perspectives, and knowledge of this individual are identical to those of the outside community. The Indigenous outsider is perceived by Indigenous people in the community as an outsider.
The external-insider	This individual was socialized within another culture and acquires its beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge. However, because of his or her unique experiences, the individual rejects many of the values, beliefs, and knowledge claims within his or her Indigenous community and endorses those of the studied community. The external insider is viewed by the new community as an "adopted" insider.
The external-outsider	The external-outsider is socialized within a community different from one which he or she is doing research. The external-outsider has a partial understanding of and little appreciation for the values, perspectives, and knowledge of the community he or she is studying and consequently often misunderstands and misinterprets the behaviours within the studied community.

Specific to this research report, and given that the research sites are four schools,

there are perhaps two ways in which to view community and culture. First, from a school

perspective, Sergiovanni (2000, in Foster & Goddard, 2002,) offers a definition of culture

as "The normative glue that holds a school together" (p. 3). From a community

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perspective, Agar (1996, in Goddard & Foster, 2002) offers a description of culture as "The knowledge you construct to show how acts in the context of one world can be understood as coherent from the point of view of another world" (p. 3).

Viewing both school-based and community-based definitions of culture as relevant to this research project, it becomes clear that, depending on where I position myself, I will span more than one typology rather than drop neatly into a singular category. For example:

1) From the position of Yukon Indigenous cultures (which are varied, multi-faceted, and diverse), I may be viewed as an external-outsider. I am neither Indigenous, nor even a Yukon born non-Indigenous researcher. This notwithstanding, while I may have only partial understanding of the values, perspectives, and knowledge of a community, counter to this typology I do have an appreciation of these differences. With respect to my own positioning, early in the development of the present project the question of representation came up. Indeed, throughout, I had to negotiate the intricacies associated with how I narrate the non-Indigenous principals who acted as my participants. As a non-Indigenous principal myself , and hence as an insider, I knew so much about the research participants that I could have ended up speaking for them in my study. I grappled with this concern in light of Alcoff's (1991) assertion that:

> "[I]t may be impossible to speak for others without simultaneously conferring information about them. Similarly, when one is speaking about others, or simply trying to describe their situation or some aspect of it, one may also be speaking in place of them, that is, speaking for them" (1991, p. 9).

On this basis, throughout the study I simultaneously had to negotiate being both an external outsider in the communities I visited, and an insider by the participating

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principals. This kaleidoscopic positioning is an aspect that Alcoff (1991) points to as particularly difficult for researchers to negotiate, given that "divergences in social location between speakers and those spoken for will have a significant effect on what is said" (p. 7).

2) From the perspective of Indigenous persons who know me and have worked with me as educators over a period of years, I could be viewed, to varying degrees, as an external insider based upon my involvement in culture-based activities in schools over many years and working closely with Indigenous teachers and their development and induction into the Yukon teacher workforce. In the schools in this study, many of my former teacher-trainee students are now working as classroom teachers. As a result, my Indigenous colleagues and I may interact in a variety of ways: as professional educators who may share with each other questions and insights related to our respective practice; our family lives as parents of young children growing up in the Yukon context; or in personal and caring ways such as "checking in" to see how we are each doing. As a result of this ongoing relationship, it counters any tendency to view my Indigenous colleagues as what Smith (ibid.) refers to as "the Other…constituted with a name, face, a particular identity, namely *Indigenous peoples"* (p. 2; italics in original) as a result of my non-Indigenous birth and upbringing. This means, from my perspective, that regardless of whether we are Indigenous or non-Indigenous, we are respectful and caring of each other.

3) From the perspective of educational colleagues in public schools, and employing Sergiovanni's school-centric definition of culture as a frame, I could be viewed as a

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legitimate Indigenous-insider based upon my varied experiences and training in the field of education. Thus, when I walk into schools in the Yukon, I am welcomed as a known colleague and as someone who is in pursuit of academic studies. This affords me access to places where members of the general public may not have free entry- to classrooms, libraries, offices, and staff rooms. This creates for me the opportunity to view a wide range of school contexts, ranging from staff to staff interactions at a professional level, on a social level over coffee or lunch in the staff room. As a known entity within the Yukon educational system, I am welcomed and engaged with by teachers and principals alike, given that, at one time or another, we may have worked and learned together.

4) As previously described, I interact in a number of ways (resident, colleague, parent, educator, and researcher) simultaneously within the educational communities where this study takes place. I have more than a partial understanding of the communities I am studying and appreciate very much the values, perspectives, and knowledge extant within them. This point notwithstanding, I must ensure that I in no way take this knowledge for granted in order to ensure I never misunderstand or misinterpret behaviours within the community.

As I engage with participants in their school sites, I must be aware of my thoughts, perceptions, biography, and shifting positioning based upon these aforementioned factors. To be unaware or unheeding of the relationships between the researcher and participants would serve to limit the insights that may emerge as a result of being thoughtfully aware of and about them. Of even greater concern, to not take into account my own biography and trajectory in relation to the research sites and participants would seriously draw into

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question the depth of insight and legitimacy of knowledge claims made as a result of this research project.

To conclude, this discussion of Banks' typology in relation to this study clearly identifies that my locations are simultaneous, dynamic, and operate during the conduct of this research study. The implication of this is that I must be cognizant of my location and positioning at all times throughout this study. I must be attuned to and sensitive of the social situations and contexts in which I interact, aware of my own thoughts, beliefs, and perceptions as I move through this dynamic field.

CHAPTER 4
DATA COLLECTION

Rather than describe the technical merits and characteristics specific to employing

data gathering methods in this study, what follows is a description of the actual execution

of these fieldwork processes in which I engaged with participants at each research site.

Thus, in addition to the factors specific to the use of these data gathering processes

described, the considerations employed when engaging with and navigating the field where

these processes were deployed are also explicated.

Over a six-month period, ending with the conclusion of the Yukon school year,

four principals agreed to participate in the interview process in the four school sites chosen

for the present study. The series of interview questions (Appendix 4) were conducted over

three to five visits with each participant. Prior to conducting any interviews, and in view

of gaining access to the school site and establishing a rapport, I arranged a meeting with

each school principal and teacher to review the study and provided them with an Invitation

to Participate letter and the Letter of Informed Consent (Appendix 2).

Once this review was complete, I offered each participant an opportunity to ask

further questions regarding the study, the nature of their involvement, the time

commitments required of them, or any other aspect relating to the study. In most cases,

participants signed the Letter of Consent forms after this review. For those participants

requiring further time to consider their involvement, 72 hours were given to allow for this

(as outlined in the letters shared with them).

Most often, one interview was conducted per visit. Conducting two interviews

during one visit occurred primarily where a participant was located in rural Yukon

communities: both researcher and participant felt that the time the researcher spent

traveling to their community would be best capitalized upon by addressing more than one research question during a visit. I was sensitive not to overload or saturate any participant at any time, and always asked the permission of the participant before engaging in a second interview during the same visit. Between questions, interviewee and researcher took a break and agreed mutually whether or not to continue.

There were occasions where participants did not have what they felt was sufficient opportunity to adequately address a research question in the time allotted. While this did not occur frequently, when the need arose, we mutually agreed on a suitable time in the future to continue and complete the interview. This ensured that neither researcher nor participant felt hurried or rushed.   In a related way, there were times when participants gave the research questions additional consideration after a particular interview and would then contact me. When this occurred, I thanked the participant for informing me of this, and asked whether we could capture their emergent insights in an addendum to the previous interview next time we met.

Interviews were conducted whenever possible in private and quiet locations at participants' schools. Most often, this was in the participant's office if they were the principal or in the library or staffroom if it was a weekend. Regardless of location, I ensured that privacy was respected throughout and that interruptions would be kept to a minimum at all times. There were times where a participant from a rural community was coming to Whitehorse to engage in Department of Education meetings. In such instances, I was contacted by them and asked if their visit to Whitehorse would facilitate an interview session taking place. When this occurred, offices in the Department of Education provided a convenient and private site to meet. A total of 27.5 hours were spent in interviews with the four principals.

Schools are very busy places during the instructional day, and the focus is primarily placed upon the children and their learning. Well aware of this, based upon my own experience as a teacher and school administrator, interviews were conducted after school or on weekends unless the participant suggested another time suitable to them. For example, in the case of one participant, we agreed on a series of interview sessions on Sunday afternoons at 1 pm in order that we could proceed without distraction. Contact with participants was made most often via e-mails, whereupon I would ask when would be a suitable time for them to engage in an interview. Employing such an approach, it was always the participant who set the interview time and I who accommodated them.[4]

After the first of the series of five interview questions was completed, I would thank each participant for their time and thoughtful engagement. Often, participants would respond along the lines of "I hope I'm giving you what you want", or "I hope I'm giving you the right answers". When such comments were offered, I ensured that I took the time to assure the participant that the goal of this data-gathering activity was not about right or wrong, or what I wanted to hear. Rather, it was about illuminating the points raised in the research question and that, in their doing so, there was no "right" or "wrong" answer, nor was my satisfaction with their answers of import. For some participants, this was their first engagement in such an in-depth research project, and this helped to reframe their perception of their participation and what they were offering. By the end of the interview series, many of the participants thanked me for asking them to participate. Their

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[4] To capture each interview in the best quality possible, a high-quality Roland Edirol R-09 professional digital recorder was employed. Prior to turning it on, I reviewed its operation briefly with each participant and explained that it would record digital sound files for subsequent transcription by a professional transcriptionist (see Appendix 7 for a copy of the Confidentiality Agreement). At this point, I also reminded the participant that they would receive transcribed copies of each interview for their subsequent review and further comment, as per the Letter of Invitation to Participate (see Appendix 2).

involvement in the interview process, they expressed, had served as a catalyst for reflection on their own careers, life paths, practices, and beliefs.

Of concern to me as a researcher was whether or not this initial response to the first series of research questions could have been affected in some way by this right/wrong presupposition. Instead, I believe the observations and reflections of the participants are rooted in the desire to be helpful. By surfacing this question right at the very beginning of the study questions, points raised were acknowledged and clarified. As a result, this may have had the positive effect of encouraging participants to be more insightful and informative in future interview sessions. Upon reflection, I am thankful that I methodically presented the study and its aims to them using the Letter of Invitation, Letter of Informed Consent, and UBC Research Ethics Board approval. Having these documents helped ensure focus on the study by being able to refer back to them whenever questions arose.

Observation procedures

Observation visits occurred on an ongoing basis during the fieldwork phase of this project. A total of 66.0 hours were spent conducting observations at the four research sites. Prior to commencing any observations, I ensured that I met with the principal in order to review the purpose of the study and share with them all documentation supporting my presence in their schools. I was welcomed by each school principal to visit their school at any time I chose. I greatly appreciated their openness and willingness to grant access, and ensured that I expressed my sincere thanks to each principal for their consideration.

To ensure that all school staff members were aware of the nature of my visits, prior to conducting any observations, I delivered to each principal sufficient photocopied numbers of a one-page "lay summary" which provided an introduction to the researcher

and gave an outline of the research project. Each lay summary was personally signed by me, and included a clear head-and-shoulders picture of me in the upper-left corner. This was done so that any staff member regardless of their level of involvement, be they a teacher, educational assistant, custodian, or administrative assistant, would be aware of who I was and the purpose behind my presence in the school.

This lay summary also included the following pertinent information: that I had received permission from the Assistant Deputy Minister (Public Schools), Yukon Department of Education, to be in the selected Yukon schools, and that my research project had undergone rigourous examination by UBC's Behavioural Research Ethics Board (BREB). It also included the name and contact information of my academic supervisor, should they wish to contact him for further information. I offered to present at staff meetings, if the principal felt that this was required. The principal of the largest school in this study invited me to a staff meeting, where I gave a ten-minute overview of my research project and invited any questions from present staff members.

The principals of two schools also invited me to whole-school assemblies so that I could introduce myself to the student body. These invitations were readily accepted. I was given a brief introduction by the principal. I was then afforded the opportunity to mention that I anticipated being in their school until the end of the current school year. I ensured that I thanked everyone present for their hospitality and invited them to visit and talk with me at any time afterwards at their convenience.

Teachers and school administrators in the Yukon all belong to the same professional association: The Yukon Teachers' Association (YTA). This differs from the Province of British Columbia, where school administrators and teachers are represented by different unions and are in distinct bargaining units. As a result, this affiliation between

teachers and school administrators in the Yukon fosters collegiality and encourages positive relationships. This is assisted by a professional Code of Ethics which both teachers and administrators can rely upon to guide their interactions. When potential conflicts do arise, they can be framed within this collaborative relationship and not one of difference. As a researcher who is also a Yukon teacher and administrator, this Code of Ethics applies equally to me. This professional framework and long-standing relationship, I believe, served to reduce or eliminate any polarization of teachers and administrators or of me by either group in the execution of this research project.

Mindful of the responsibilities which come with professional membership, at the commencement of the study I paid a courtesy call to Mr. Jim Tredger, President of the YTA, and reviewed the study and my procedures with him. I felt this was important, fair, and prudent to do so in the event that any of the membership (regardless of whether they were a teacher or administrator) should direct questions to him, he would be able to demonstrate his awareness of my research activities and speak from an informed position regarding the nature of my study in Yukon schools. Once this preparatory work was complete, I also informed Superintendent David Sloan that I was ready to commence with the study.

Observations began initially with visits where constructing a thorough description of the physical setting was at the forefront. This permitted me the opportunity to become attuned to the school's surroundings, climate, and rhythm of operation. Conversely, I felt that this created the opportunity for teachers, students, and other visitors (such as school council members and parents) to get used to having me around in as unobstrusive a manner as possible. Once the observations were complete and documented, I then gave more focused attention to the activities and behaviours of the principals in the study.

Given the open invitation to visit schools at any time, I ensured that my visits occurred on a random basis. This is not to imply that there was no thought on my part as to when I would visit a particular school: rather, I ensured that all my visits were not at the same time, nor on the same days of the week. In this way, I could view a school's operations and the principal's behaviours on a Monday morning as they welcomed the children, on a Thursday after school when they supervised in the gym, a Wednesday at recess time in the hallway, or an assembly and community lunch over Friday's noon hour. Doing this, I felt, gave me the opportunity to see the principal in a far wider range of scenarios than if I forced a routine schedule onto my visitations, and would have ultimately been counterproductive given the open-door welcome I had been offered. The principals in this study were very responsive to this approach, and the principals in rural schools were attentive to the fact that visitations could require up to four hours of driving (round trip). Often, they would contact me in advance to help with my planning and let me know when there was a particular school event that they felt I might like to observe.

When I visited a particular school, staff members always greeted me. During the winter months, I would be wearing my parka and snow boots. Needing somewhere to place these items, I would head for the staff room and hang them up. This gave me the opportunity to greet any staff present, visit with them, and perhaps share a snack if it was recess or lunch break. Given the typical design of many schools, where the staff room and school office are adjacent to each other, this also afforded me the opportunity to greet the school secretaries and let them know that I was in the building (many schools require that visitors report to the office). If they were present, I would also exchange greetings with the principal and vice-principal (if the school had one). Most often, I was able to station myself in a number of different school areas: the staff room, the front foyer, the hallways,

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the playground (before and after school) or other places where the principal may enter my field of view at a given time (the gym before school, or the library).

Often, it was the situation which influenced my level of participation therefore I had to employ my own judgment depending on the event or situation observed. This need for judgment is outlined by Palys (2003) who identifies that when to be a participant or when to be an observer "in itself may not be particularly clear-cut and participant observers often float back and forth between the two, depending on the particular situation" (p. 213). For example, I would not intrude upon the principal to observe them by entering his/her office, particularly if the door was closed and they were engaged in what appeared to be an important conversation with a staff member, parent, or child. I would remain in the outer office area and observe from that vantage point. To have entered and attempted to participate without having ascertained prior approval would have been unwelcomed and highly inappropriate. It would have clearly transcended boundaries of confidentiality and would have drastically altered my role from that of a researcher to one of uninvited intruder. Conversely, if observing a school event where food was being prepared for a celebration or potlatch, I would readily engage in assisting the staff with setting tables, carrying pots of stew, or helping to clean up. To not have done so, I felt, would have been a disrespectful response to the open and welcome manner in which I had been treated.

In order to record the events under observation and capture my thoughts, I used an observational protocol taken from Creswell (1998) included in Appendix 10. This allowed me to record events either as they occurred or a short time thereafter, along with my own reflective notes which accompanied each observed point described. I first recorded my observations by hand in my field journal. I noted the date, time, and location of each observation recording, ensuring that I typed up my notes as soon as I returned to my office.

This focused, quiet time afforded the opportunity both to record the observation notes and also my reflections on them.

Each school presented a different floor plan, which required that I station myself in different places in each setting. In some cases, the school's main foyer gave an excellent view of many activities, and in another, the school office presented as a hub around which may school activities occurred. In yet another, observing was made difficult by the disconnected, disjointed, and modular design, which created many small spaces making it difficult to situate myself without being obtrusive. In such a case, I remained mobile, moving from place to place after a short time. Given the wide variation of each school in terms of size and layout, varying amounts of observational time was spent in each school.

A dominant feature of living in the Canadian north is the winter climate. One challenge to conducting observations where driving to the research site is required involves the weather. In the case of the Yukon, the cold of winter is a constant that generally does not discourage travel or engagement in day-to-day activities. Winter is accepted as a season to which people need to adapt, not retreat from. This said, there are times when temperatures drop to where safety becomes a very real issue and the cold can be deadly. This was the case in February 2008, when the temperature in the Yukon dropped to the -45 Celsius (-45 Fahrenheit) to -55 Celsius (-67 Fahrenheit) range for a period of over 2 weeks. At such temperatures road traffic ceases, diesel fuel gels, vehicle batteries freeze solid, visibility is reduced due to ice fog, and flesh can freeze in less than a minute. Many parents choose to keep their children home at these times and therefore many school activities are reduced or cancelled. As a result, to be safe, any visits to rural communities did not occur during this period. Instead, I diverted my efforts to local schools and commenced visits to rural communities once this "cold snap" was (thankfully) behind us.

Admittedly, there were times when I came to schools to conduct observations that the principal was nowhere to be seen. This could have been due to the principal being in the classroom and teaching (many principals also carry a teaching load). At other times, the principal may have been transporting students to an activity off-site or attending a meeting that called them away from the school. I most certainly did not view these times as less-than-useful. Conversely, I viewed them as an important opportunity to record the operations of the school and the activities of those in attendance, and to conduct observations for the purpose of describing the school sites.

The collection of documents from the field

The documents gathered for this study included newsletters generated by the school, "weekly minders" (notes that a principal sent out to staff at the beginning of each week to share new information or remind of upcoming events) or school handbooks for staff, students, and parents. In some cases, when school events generated media attention, I strove to capture a copy of the resultant newspaper article from the local paper.

School secretaries were instrumental in ensuring that I had copies of the school newsletter. In one case, the secretary of a rural school copied all versions of the school newsletter dating back two years and had them delivered to my home when she knew of someone making the trip to Whitehorse. Other secretaries directed me to the school's website, whereupon I could download various editions of the newsletter. One school principal generated a large bi-monthly newsletter and e-mailed copies to me for my files. Another principal ensured that I had copies of their large and comprehensive "Wall Tent Tribune", generated by students as a result of this school's bison hunt. Most, if not all, Yukon schools have a website. These include examples of student work, messages from the principal, descriptions and configurations of the applicable school, and samples of

student art. All collected documents were filed either electronically or placed in my

research binder for future analysis.

A portrait of four Yukon schools and their principals

In Chapter 3, I problematised my own locations – both epistemic and ontological.

Having outlined the data collection methods employed in this research project at the

beginning of Chapter 4, I now introduce the four Yukon schools and their principals who

participated in this study.

Jim, principal of Hillside School

Hillside School's catchment area covers a number of neighbourhoods which are all

connected together and within the municipal boundaries of the City of Whitehorse. The

socioeconomic status of these neighbourhoods is diverse. Some of the neighbourhoods are

more affluent areas, with new large houses in the highest price range in Whitehorse.

Boats, recreational vehicles, and campers are often seen in the driveways, alongside new

cars and trucks. The lawns are well-kept and trimmed with trees and flowers. Often, when

new professional workers such as government employees or police come to Whitehorse,

this is where they will look for their new home. Another neighbourhood near the school is

comprised not of houses but of semi-permanent mobile homes of lesser financial value

than a fixed home. These homes are on smaller plots of land.   Another neighbourhood is

referred to locally as "the village". The residents of this area are predominantly of

Indigenous descent. Within the neighbourhood there are the offices of the local First

Nation, a health centre, a day care, and a small store and gas bar.

The differences between the neighbourhoods are apparent. Homes in "the village"

vary in terms of their upkeep. Not all properties here have sodded lawns and there is

relatively little in the way of formal landscaping. Cars and trucks that appear no longer in

use based upon their flat tires, age, and level of upkeep, are also parked in some yards. As a result, the distinctiveness of the socioeconomic spectrum of Hillside's surrounding neighbourhoods is readily apparent.

The architectural design of Hillside School permits a level of transparency not necessarily evident in the physical plan of older schools. This is apparent in a number of ways. First, even before a person enters the building, the inside of the school office can be clearly seen to the right of the broad concrete pathway leading to the front door. Once inside the school, large glass windows afford views into the expansive main reception area and all of the offices (principal, vice-principal) from outside. The inner offices are enclosed predominantly by plate glass, giving direct views into each one.

In such a way, the use of large sections of glass at Hillside projects a feeling that the school is open and transparent to all who enter. This appears in contrast to previous schools designs where the principal's office was often not visible, was embedded within the larger school structure, and may not have even had a window built into the door. There are perhaps two reasons for this: first, teachers and students are highly aware that being alone with students in a situation where they cannot be seen leaves one open to allegations of impropriety or misconduct. Being visible to others is considered sound educational judgment and practice. The second may be the desire to portray schools less as institutions and more as places where people of all ages come to work and learn together. Whatever the reasons behind this, Hillside's office area appears bright and feels inviting and welcoming- in contrast to my childhood reflections of the school office as mysterious, the principal as an apparition rarely seen but known to exist, and a place you never wanted to be called to as a student.

This use of large segments of plate glass extends to other areas of the school as well. The library, located in the center of the school, appears very open and visually accessible given that it is enclosed by high glass at both ends. Across from the library, the doors of multi-purpose room are also framed with glass. Skylights allow for natural daylight to enter the school, and the use of glass between spaces allows for light transmission especially during the winter months when the daylight may only be present from 9:30am to 3:30pm.

Rain, shine, or -35C air temperature, Jim arrives at his school at the ritual hour of 7 a.m. Each and every day he arrives and opens up the school for the children who arrive early. Students begin arriving in this 90 minute period before school, often as a result of being dropped off before school commences by parents who are on their way to work. His peers could perhaps refer to Jim as "the elder statesman" of the Yukon principal cadre. By his own admission, he began his first teaching position in a southern Canadian location in 1969, making him one of the oldest (if not the oldest) practicing Yukon school administrators. Expressing no concrete thoughts of retiring at the end of the 2007 school year, in his late-60s, Jim is approaching his 40th year as an educator.

Originally from eastern Canada, Jim came to the Yukon in the mid-1990's after being in a rural and isolated northern British Columbia school as principal for 8 years and a teacher in Indigenous communities in central BC prior to moving north. Prior to his extensive educational career he worked as a stockbroker and for the Canadian National Railway. In our subsequent discussions, he suggests that this is a most interesting career path leading to life in public schools. This said, Jim feels he learned an important lesson from these experiences: just how much he wanted to get out and away from those jobs and get into something he really enjoyed doing. He appears to have made the right choice,

based upon his stated belief that he has the same drive and determination to work with his students as he did 35 years ago, and believes he chose one of the most rewarding careers possible.

When I visit the school in the mornings, Jim can be found in the same location: he is stationed at the doors of the gymnasium, supervising the kids who come inside to play with the sports equipment. He is not only there to supervise the children, there is another purpose behind locating himself at this highly strategic spot: it gives him a chance each and every morning to greet and check-in with each student that comes into the school. That way he can get a sense of which child may be hungry, may be experiencing difficulty, or is in fine form. For Jim, it is an opportunity for interaction with his students before classes begin.

Despite there being hundreds of children in his school, he knows each one by name and most often has a question for them. His questions could pertain to whether they've got their form signed for an upcoming field trip, how they enjoyed the hockey game on TV last night and whether their team won, what kind of a start they're having to their day, or how their grandmother is doing these days. A dedicated hockey fan, Jim's love of hockey helps him connect with many of the boys who also play the game. Choosing to be at the doors at this time also makes Jim visible, creating an opportunity for parents to come and ask him any question they might have. One moment he may be cheering on a fellow fan, the next discussing with a student's mother the criteria for her daughter wishing to join the Hillside's girl's wrestling team.

Being highly visible and accessible is something that Jim tries to maintain as often as he possibly can. He is constantly traveling in the hallways, working with students, and (by his own design) can be found just about anywhere except behind his desk.   Teaching

half time and splitting a 1.0 FTE (full-time equivalent) position with his vice-principal for a school of over 300 students and upwards of 40 staff means that the demands on his time are many and diverse. In order to maintain this focus on students and families, Jim and his vice-principal schedule their time in such a way that they are in the school each Sunday to meet and catch up with each other, address emergent issues, write up the "weekly minder" or newsletter for the staff and prepare for the week ahead.

Jim's school straddles two distinct socio-economic communities, and therefore the children who come to his school bring with them a diversity of needs. As Jim describes in one of our subsequent interviews, his school has very close to a 50/50 split between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. A goal of Hillside School is the focus on the inclusion of Indigenous culture, and this is evident in a staff structure which reflects this 50/50 Indigenous and non-Indigenous composition. As a result of the cross-cultural focus in his school, Jim shares with me that parents from all across the community (and not just within his own catchment area) wish for their children to attend Hillside despite there not being room to accommodate all of them.

In talking with Jim, I ask him how it came about that the school has Southern Tutchone name plates located at various places. He responds that it certainly wasn't his idea. Rather, the school's Native Language Instructor (the term employed in the Yukon for teachers of Indigenous languages) suggested this to him as a means of bringing the language out of the classroom and exhibiting its use more broadly throughout the school. Jim thought that this was a great idea. By his own admission, when staff members come up to him with a new initiative (as did this teacher) he readily says "Yes" and encouraged him to take on this project. He follows this story up by stating that he sees a key role for

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him is to trust people and encourage staff when they share new potential initiatives that may benefit both children and the school.

In our conversations on this point, Jim explains that many words in Southern Tutchone do not translate as directly as perhaps *library* and *bibliothèque* may match up in English and French. In Southern Tutchone, the library is referred to as Kwändür Dákù, which translates to "Our Story House".   In a similar way, there is not a clear and specific word for "school principal" in Southern Tutchone. Jim's office door is thus labelled with *Dänchi* or "Chief", which he explains was chosen by the elders the Native Language Instructor consulted to ensure that his spelling and terminology was correct. Jim explains that this is how his role is translated by the elders: he takes on the role of a traditional chief in the school.

The local Indigenous language is not only limited to classrooms and door signs but is also part of some school operations. At each of Hillside's school assemblies, all children sing O Canada in Southern Tutchone. While a literal translation is not possible, the melody remains the same for the following verse:

O Canada, our home and grandfather's country
Our children, you should protect our country
With all your heart you should look after it
For truly it is our ancestor's land
Into the distant future O Canada
We will protect you
May God look after you
O Canada we will protect you
O Canada we will protect you

When I ask Jim how these initiatives foster Indigenous culture in the school, he shares that there are three main staff committees in the school. These committees are

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founded upon the school's three main goals, developed collaboratively by the school staff and School Council (comprised of parents and community members living in the school's attendance area). In the Yukon, varying upon school size, the Education Act (1990) guarantees Indigenous representation on the Council. The three areas of focus are titled Respect and Responsibility, First Nations Education and Culture, and Literacy and Numeracy. Jim sits as a member on each committee. It is the First Nations Education and Culture committee that leads these initiatives at Hillside.

Another example of Indigenous language at Hillside is present each morning when announcements are delivered to the student body over the intercom system. The Native Language Instructor (NLI) and two students get in front of the microphone. The students get to pick a word or a phrase of the day. For example, they may ask the NLI what the expression is for "It is raining". The NLI repeats the word or phrase in Southern Tutchone, and then has the students repeat it, assisting them with their pronunciation. Then, the NLI will introduce the French teacher over the intercom, he greeting her in Southern Tutchone, and she responding with a corresponding salutation in French. He then asks her the same question and then the student shares the expression in French. In effect, what occurs is a multicultural conversation employing three languages. This is broadcast to the whole school. In such a way, Southern Tutchone forms part of a trio of "official" language at Hillside. While it is not woven into all school operations, Jim sees this as a continual "work in progress".

The welcoming atmosphere and presence of Indigenous language may be displayed in this observation and experience with the young Native Language Instructor (NLI), a former student of mine when I was faculty advisor at the Yukon Native Teacher Education Program. By his own admission he isn't entirely fluent in Southern Tutchone. As I have

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come to know him, I see his passion when working with children based on my past observations of him. Learning his language is vitally important to process, therefore over time he has taken courses and engaged with his grandparents, elders, and other NLI's to continually improve his language knowledge and teaching skills.

> The Native Language Instructor sees me sitting in the office. I greet him with his native name, and he invites me to see the dancing class that he teaches at lunch hour. I heartily take him up on his offer, and once the class is underway, slip in to watch 30 children of all backgrounds sing and dance. The singing and dancing is done in the traditional language of the local First Nation. The teacher uses a drum and sings with the students. The children genuinely enjoy the session with the teacher. They know the words well, as do they the dance steps and movements to well over 10 songs. Some of the dances are done in a circle, others in groups, and others where there are specific children dancing in the centre, perhaps with beaded grouse wings in their hands as props/decorations.
>
> They play a game called "freeze": the teacher calls out a dance, begins drumming and singing, then stops the music. Anyone caught moving has to join the teacher and sing the next song. The kids love it and concentrate so well.
> The bell rings and all the students line up to leave. The teacher has a checklist and ticks off each student and gives them a positive comment as they leave. After the class is over, the teacher comes over to me. He was a student of mine a few years ago during his teacher training. I shake his hand and tell him how proud it makes me feel to see him flourishing as a teacher with his students. (Site 1 observation notes, Feb. 19, 2008)

An interesting aspect to note is that it is not solely Indigenous children who take part in Native Language Instruction and the Southern Tutchone activities offered at Hillside School. Some of the children are clearly of Southeast Asian descent, and others appear Caucasian. When I talk about this diversity in the Native Language class with Jim, he comments that there is a wide range of parental desires when it comes to Indigenous language and cultural instruction in the school. This can vary from Indigenous parents who do not feel that their child need take part in Indigenous language or cultural activities because they themselves teach it to their children. Conversely, there will be non-Indigenous parents who feel it is important for their children, as citizens of the Yukon to

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learn an Indigenous language and about Indigenous culture. Whatever the case may be, parents and student can engage in Indigenous language and cultural instruction for the reasons which are most important to them.

A further example of the ability for all students, regardless of their heritage, to engage in traditional Indigenous activities is the annual bison hunt. Each March, Hillside School participates in a bison hunt and holds a community feast after a successful journey on the land. The bison hunt provides an example of where a non-Indigenous teacher proposed the idea to Jim and he could find little reason to reject it. This was approximately 8 years ago, and the bison hunt has become an annual event at Hillside School and now others across the Territory (including two other schools in this study), participate in the hunt.

The bison hunt is chronicled in the "Wall Tent Tribune", a student-generated newsletter of 12 pages. The newsletter provides an example of how a curricular subject such as Language Arts can be readily adapted and supported through engagement with locally developed activities. The students' articles describe the trip to the hunting area, the animals seen along the way, and the journal entries of a number of students. For light-hearted humour there is also a horoscope section and an advice column addressing such topics as wet boots, car sickness, and staying warm at night in freezing conditions. There is also a large Southern Tutchone word-find puzzle. Throughout are pictures of the Grade 7 students engaging in many aspects of traditional Indigenous lifestyle on the land during winter conditions: gathering and sawing up firewood for the stoves which heat the tents, setting up camp, drilling holes through the ice to fish, preparing meals, and scouting the vast countryside for the bison. Over time, Hillside School has worked to expand this traditional event by inviting other schools to partner with them and learn from their

experiences. Bison are large animals weighing over 2000 lbs each, thus when the Hillside

hunters got two bison this gave them ample meat for their celebratory feast which caps the

endeavour. The entire school community is invited to this very large event.

Regardless of how many times I enter Jim's school, the first thing that strikes me

when I walk into this school in regards to the architecture is the incorporation of wood into

the décor. The second is that I am entering a building that departs from the layout of the

"traditional" government or institutional design of schools from the 1960's-80's,

characterized by long straight hallways, 8 foot ceilings, and classrooms and clocks

regularly spaced down the corridors. Built in the 1990's, the design of Jim's school finds

its roots in local tradition and materials and appears modeled after a traditional First

Nations longhouse. Not only is the appearance of the rich wooden paneling a welcoming

sign, additionally, the huge (14-18 inches in diameter and 15-20 feet long) golden-

varnished log beams comprising the foundation of the supports for the school are truly

striking given this size. In contrast to the aforementioned long, narrow institutional

hallways to which I have become accustomed, in this school everyone is welcomed into a

grand and impressive hall. The wide corridors emanate from this space and go off in a

variety of directions.

Everywhere one looks, it seems, evidence of Indigenous culture is present. This is

congruent with the information provided in the Hillside Elementary School Handbook

(2007-2008) which is provided to students and parents at the beginning of each school

year. The handbook, while published by the school under Jim's guidance , is developed

and revised annually with input from school staff, the Community Education Liaison

Coordinators (who provide links to the local First Nation), the Yukon Department of

Education and Yukon Education Act, and the Hillside School Council (comprised of both

Indigenous and non-Indigenous membership).   Specific to cultural awareness, the

handbook section on Cultural Awareness states the following:

> We recognize the need in our society for all people to develop an awareness of, an appreciation of, and a tolerance of other cultures.
> While we have students at Hillside Elementary from many different countries and cultures, a very large number of our students are of Canadian First Nations heritage.
> We wish to celebrate the traditions and cultures of our First Nations students.
> Under the guidance of our [Community Education Liaison Coordinator] CELC, we schedule a fall, winter, and spring cultural camp which teaches our students many of the traditions of this culture. Southern Tutchone is the language spoken by the first people of this area of the Yukon, and it is offered in our school as a second language.
> Hand Games (stick gambling), drumming and traditional dance are a few of the lunch hour activities open to all students. We generally have a lunch hour "feast" of native foods during the year when we invite elders from the community and the Chief and Council of the [local] First Nation. Also, many of our field trips include visits to First Nations Activities. We hold a Welcoming Feast at the end of September.
> As outlined in the Mission Statement, we strive to be a "…model of cultural cooperation in education through a true partnership of students, staff, parents, and community." (Hillside School 2007-2008 School Handbook, p. 28)

Specific particularly to this last point, while conducting an observation in one of

the school's hallways, I witnessed an example which I believe reflects this aforementioned

partnership.

> As I sit, unobstrusively reading the school's handbook, one of the grade 7 teachers passes by to collect a visitor at the front door. The Indigenous man is someone I recognize: he is a former Minister of Education and currently sitting independent member of the Yukon legislature. He too has on his beaded moose hide vest and a bag of materials. He heads down the hallway with the teacher, and we exchange nods and greetings. As he walks down the hallway, I hear him comment to the teacher, "This sure is a really nice school, eh?" (Site 1 observation, Feb. 19, 2008)

All who enter the school are first presented with the view of many glass cabinets in

the front entryway and main foyer of the school. These cabinets contain numerous local

First Nations items which include beaded work, student-made models of traditional camps,

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canoe paddles, beaded medicine bags, and beaded slippers and gloves all made out of smoke-tanned moose hide. All cabinets are illuminated by halogen spot-lights in such a way that places them at the forefront. A concerted effort is made to immerse all of Hillside's students in an environment where Indigenous articles are showcased and held in esteem[5]. Jim himself wears traditional clothing at various times by way of a beaded moose hide vest that was given to him as a gift from the First Nations community.

Departing from the conventional corridors with their attached classrooms, the classrooms in Jim's school are grouped in pods that combine to form distinct wings of the school. These wings are clustered around the school's library. Once a visitor passes through the main vestibule, they are greeted by the largest dream catcher I have ever seen. A dream catcher is an example of a First Nations circle, made of willow and perhaps moose hide with lengths of sinew stretched across its diameter to form a web. They are often decoratively beaded, and eagle feathers may be hung from the bottom of the circle. In the majority of cases, a dream catcher is designed as a window hanging or perhaps something hung from the rear-view mirror of a vehicle. When created for these purposes, they are often 6"-8" in diameter. In the case of Hillside's dream catcher, it is approximately 4 feet in diameter, is beaded and decorated with eagle feathers and hangs from the left wall. To the right, there is a framed picture of the First Nations elder (upon whose philosophy of cultural cooperation and coexistence the school is founded) prominently displayed on the wall next to the brass plate commemorating the opening of the school. On the other side of this plate, a student-crafted mural depicting a Yukon community in winter is painted upon numerous sheets of 4x8' finished plywood and

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[5] While the name "Hillside School" is admittedly a pseudonym, the school is named after a Southern Tutchone Elder who is to a large extent responsible for the initiation of the land claims process which gained momentum during the 1970's in the Yukon. As stated previously, many Yukon First Nations have signed off on their agreements with the Federal and Territorial governments.

affixed to the wall. This is done in the playfully colourful style of the iconic Yukon artist (and former school principal) Ted Harrison and presents as a vibrant combination of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous artistry.

Despite its size and height, the main foyer of the school is not an empty space, but rather is "airy" in that it has a very high vaulted ceiling supported by large peeled and varnished logs as beams. The predominant paint colour is a natural shade of a cool green similar to that of new leaves in the spring. Two large semi-circular wooden bench seats are located to the left of the foyer, on either side of the library entrance. Each easily accommodates 10-15 students (and most often does before school, at recess, and after school) and within the semi-circle sits a large work table where students can place their books, work on homework, draw, or wait for their parents. Between these two seating spaces, a larger than average picnic table with a solid 4X8' table top gives further space for students to sit and work, eat their lunch or a snack, or just visit and talk with each other. A large bin on wheels, stacked full of snowshoes, rests in the corner of the foyer near one of the exits to outside.

On a laminated poster, the school's philosophy is displayed next to the library entrance. It reads:

Respect
Love learning and do your best
Be kind to others and considerate of all people
Be safe
Keep the school environment clean

I queried Jim as to whether or not the school's philosophy had been translated into Southern Tutchone. To this point it has not, though he did feel that this was a good idea. As he stated previously, not all initiatives in the school originate with Jim. In this case, he

felt that this was an item for consideration by the school's First Nation's Education and Culture committee.

Directly across from the library on the other side of the foyer, there is what is referred to as the "Multi-purpose Room". The term "room" is perhaps a misnomer, given it is approximately half the size of Hillside's 60x90 foot gymnasium. A kitchen/serving window and stage with retractable doors make a room such as this very useful for assemblies, presentations, potlatches, and other gatherings without taking up the school's gymnasium. The entire student body and staff can fit into it, as I witnessed at one assembly. The room also doubles as the music teacher's classroom during the day, and is easily convertible to suit this conversion from classroom to meeting place. Above the large glass doors and entryway are two majestic carved symbols of the Wolf and Crow clans, the two moieties of this particular Indigenous society.

The high walls of the foyer create spaces for artwork, and these walls are readily taken up with student-generated work. Four murals painted on wood, perhaps 5x10 feet in size, look down from the upper spaces of the foyer. One mural uses the traditional First Nations medicine wheel as the organizer for four quadrants titled: physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental. Each quadrant depicts pictures of activities applicable to each quadrant- running, traditional sports, hunting, being on the land. Other murals depict Yukon scenes and animals both modern and prehistoric. Natural materials, including moose hide, are used in the construction of these murals. These projects were completed by students under the guidance of their teachers. Given that approximately 50% of Hillside's teachers are of Indigenous ancestry, and that Jim has made the conscious effort to hire teachers in such a way that the staff complement is reflective of the student

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population, they serve as resources for their students in areas of Yukon Indigenous culture and philosophy.

Once past the entry-way around the corner of the left wall, there is a large picture wall comprised of photographs of all staff members. These pictures are not the usual "mug-shots" taken on the school's picture day each fall, with an engraved nameplate underneath. In warm contrast to such a presentation, these are pictures of the staff in a variety of life's important events including: wedding photos with a teacher surrounded by her family, a staff member holding last year's prize Lake Trout drawn from the depths of a beautiful Yukon lake, or another posing "on the land" with a freshly harvested bull moose before the butchering begins. This personalized collection displays the school staff, representative of the school's student body in that they are approximately an equivalent Indigenous and non-Indigenous mix as a group of individuals (based on what I know of their backgrounds through my professional experience). As mentioned previously, Jim has made a concerted effort over his more than 10 years at Hillside to build his staff team in such a way that they are reflective of the student population.

Coming back to the gym, Jim is still there, welcoming and talking with students when the bell rings. It isn't really the ringing sound of a bell in the true sense, but of a softer, electronic pulse akin to what one would hear in an airport or hospital. If anything, it is far gentler than an electronic buzzer, ringer, or fire alarm. Perhaps the use of a more traditional Indigenous indicator would be another area of consideration by Hillside's First Nations Education and Culture committee? There is a flurry of noise, energy, and activity as the many children in the gym run to put equipment and balls away. Jim yells a few times to the kids scrambling in the gym with his "teacher voice", but these are not yells of correction or admonishment. Most often, they are yells of encouragement, coaching, and

thanks given to specific students for the responsibility they've shown putting the equipment away. What was a bustling, thriving, commotion-filled beehive of activity, marked by a heap of winter coats and backpacks clears in mere minutes and is silent and emptied. The students have made their way into their classrooms, and while the school day started for Jim almost 2 hours ago, for the students their instructional day is just beginning.

Bob, principal of Moose Meadow school

I drive through the village to the Moose Meadow School on this brilliantly sunny winter's day. I've arranged to meet with Bob, the principal. Moose Meadow is a small, community school of less than 100 students, over 90% of whom, Bob tells me, are of Indigenous descent. I can see Moose Meadow School down at the end of the long street (the village doesn't really have the Main Street which may be found in larger, southern towns or cities). The school is a single-floor building located in the middle of the village. The paint scheme on the outside- a pale yellow colour- is brought to life by the addition of the multi-layered blue wave and water pattern across the lower 30% of the outer siding. Riding along the waves are families of loons. The waves are three layers deep, giving a three dimensional effect. This reflects the fact that large bodies of water bound the school community on two sides and portrays the school as part of the local flora and fauna.

The village in which Moose Meadow School is situated is in the traditional territory of a Yukon First Nation. As a result, there is a First Nations government office located on the main road which goes past the community. It is a new and modern building. The area has been settled by Yukon Indigenous people for thousands of years, and the community is strategically located near large lakes which have provided both transportation routes and sustenance for those living here. The region has also been a traditional migratory route for

large animals and birds. During the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898, the area around Moose Meadow's community was a direct transportation route for gold seekers. After the Gold Rush, the community was once again subject to an influx of American Army soldiers sent north in 1942 to build the Alaska Highway. Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people live in the community and over time and given the influx of people from all around the world, a segment of the population is of mixed heritage. In the Yukon, the practice exists that, regardless of heritage, if one's background includes Indigenous ancestry, then often the person identifies as Indigenous. While this cannot be said in each case, this form of self-identification predominates.

Today, the community provides a summertime tourism destination for visitors from around the world. Near the tourism information centre there is a 5-foot tall cairn of rock and mortar declaring the community a Canadian National Historic Site. The cairn displays a bronze plaque on each side (one in English, one in French, and two each in a dialect of the Tlingit language), commemorating that this is where James "Skookum" Jim Mason, discoverer of the first gold nugget which was the precursor of the Klondike Gold Rush, hailed from. The small town population is indicated by the aforementioned school population of less than 100 children. The community would be considered no more than a hamlet by southern standards.

Walking up the cleanly shovelled steps to the front entrance of the school, I'm struck by the fact that, despite it being a winter's day, the front door is open to the surrounding environment. This open door seems to project a welcoming and an invitation to enter. (I note that this is the case with each subsequent visit). Even before proceeding through the boot room/vestibule and into the building, I'm immediately struck by the reflection of the sunlight on the clean and highly polished waxed floors. Similar to the

high level of cleanliness at Jim's school, this tells me that Moose Meadow must also have a dedicated custodian to keep the floors to such a high sheen this time of year when boots are wet and/or muddy.

I barely get my boots wiped on the long carpet and pass through the boot room when I am greeted by a heavily accented voice booming "How are you doing there, laddie?" erupting from inside the office area of Moose Meadow school. This sends a clear signal to one and all that Bob, the late-50's principal of the school for the past 12 years, is in the office, readily greeting all who come through the doors of the school. Never one to sit still for very long, Bob leaps up from behind his computer, envelops me in one of the signature bear-hugs he willingly shares with visitors, and immediately proceeds to take me on a tour of Moose Meadow (while in one fluid motion, drawing the special key to the juice machine from his pocket and offering me a cold drink).

Bob has had a long and varied experience in the Yukon. Originally emigrating to Canada with his family from a European country in the late 1950's, he drove up the Alaska Highway with his family towing a trailer with all their possessions. It was 1964 and Bob's father had secured work in a small, rural, isolated community. As a result of his father having forged ahead first, the 16 year-old Bob drove the family vehicle which held his mother and 8 siblings. The Alaska Highway was very rough then, and he recalls every few miles seeing the signs and crosses with names on them indicating where groups of people had been killed in car accidents.

Bob quit school before grade 12 and decided to work in order that he could travel the world. After leaving the Yukon for a number of years, Bob returned and engaged in a number of different lines of work. He has been a truck driver, a millwright (building and maintaining mechanical equipment), a heavy equipment operator, and a small-aircraft pilot

to name a few things, yet found that he never really enjoyed doing any of them despite their decent rates of pay. As a result, he left the Yukon once again to pursue a Bachelor of Education degree at a southern Canadian university. As fate would have it, when he returned to the Yukon a few years later to take his first teaching position, it was in the small community which his family first moved in 1964. After teaching in that community for 6 years, he decided to apply for the principal's position at Moose Meadow. As Bob explained to me one day, the school had gone through seven principals in two years and was out of control at the time, hence he felt it was a challenge for him.

While the name Moose Meadow, admittedly, is a pseudonym for the school, it is important to note that the school name was changed from the designated Yukon Government appellation (usually the community name followed by the word "school") to that of a respected Indigenous elder's name in the local Tlingit language. Yukon Government News Release 06-90 (2006) describes in detail the renaming of the school after this elder's Tlingit name. Then Education Minister John Edzerza, himself of Indigenous ancestry, adds his comments in this release:

> The Government of Yukon is renaming the school to [Elder's name] Community
> School in honour of Carcross/Tagish First Nation Elder [Elder's name]. [Her]
> Tlingit name translates in English to "Wolf Mother."
> "This government is deeply honoured to recognize the integral role that [Elder's
> name] has played in maintaining and enhancing current knowledge of the Tlingit
> and Tagish languages and cultures, both in and out of the classroom," Education
> Minister John Edzerza said.
> "On behalf of the Department of Education, and the staff and students of [Moose
> Meadow] Community School, I would like to thank [the Elder] for all of her work
> at the school," Edzerza added. "She has invested her time and energy to make the
> classroom a more culturally relevant and engaging place to learn."
> The request to rename the school was brought forward by school staff and the
> [Moose Meadow] First Nation due to [her] significant contributions as an Elder.
> [The Elder] was in her mid 80s when she retired from her job as a First Nation
> language teacher at Moose Meadow Community School, and today at 89 she
> continues her work in advancing First Nation language and culture.

[The Elder] still spends time in the classroom teaching students about the First Nation's language and culture, and most recently, she played a key role in helping to create the First Voices digital language archives. A public renaming ceremony will take place this spring. The date and time of the renaming ceremony will be announced in the local media and the public will be invited to attend.

Prior to this, the school's name was simply the name of the community followed by the term "school". The above act marks a significant event in that it presents a further shift away from centralized, government control of schools to that of more localized input where local Indigenous culture, voice, and autonomy are heard and realized. It should be noted that this community was a site of a previous residential school, a goal of which was to systematically assimilate Indigenous children into the dominant white society of the day. While the physical structure of the residential school no longer exists, the shadow of the effects of this attempted forced assimilation remains for Indigenous communities in the forms of a lack of trust, anxiety with, and reluctance to enter modern-day schools. As a result, this act is meaningful in a number of ways. First, it allows the school to show that it affirms and strives to validate Indigenous language and culture. Second, it is an attempt to make school relevant and meaningful to Indigenous children, their parents, and for them to see that their language and culture are valued by the broader Yukon educational system. Third, it presents an opportunity where, when working on shared goals, the educational system, community, and the local First Nation can achieve mutual success and together strengthen their relationships.

The friendly and welcoming atmosphere of Moose Meadow School is evident in a number of ways. Bob takes an active role in this regard, making sure that he is visible in the school particularly at times when student movement is high and parents are present in the school. The following observation was made at the end of one school day, and shows

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how Bob uses his personality and sense of humour to ensure close contact with kids and

parents alike:

> Parents come into the office at the end of the school day. Given the open construct
> of the office, they can come right in and talk with the principal. Some parents
> come right out and ask, "How's my kid doing?" The principal jokes with them,
> appearing hesitant with his answer. "Wellllllllll, okay, I suppose". He is quick to
> follow up with serious praise for the child in question, and gives the parent a
> concrete piece of info. "Jill is carving a great paddle in shop", for example. (Site 3
> observation, April 9, 2008)

Bob's sense of humour is most apparent when he is working directly with his

students. He uses this sense of humour judiciously, not in a way that puts down or

diminishes individuals or groups. Instead, Bob's humour is often situational or employs a

play on words. There were times when he had me nearly incapacitated with laughter, as a

result of the following observation near the end of the school year when the staff and

students were preparing to go out and conduct their annual community clean-up.   Not

what may be considered a fun job by many, Bob nonetheless used his sense of humour as a

motivator for the children. Prior to commencing, safety vests, work gloves, thick rubber

gloves, and garbage bags were distributed while the students and their supervisors were

each allocated a sector for which they were responsible:

> The principal calls all the students into the library, where he stands in front of them
> to give a briefing about the process for garbage cleanup.   There are some children
> absent due to the loss of the elder [who had just passed away this week]. Once
> again, the principal's humour comes through. He has all the kids grouped into
> teams for garbage pickup- the Rancid Rats, the Putrid Pigs, for example. The kids
> all chuckle at their names. The principal gives a safety briefing about needles and
> bears- two things that might be encountered in their clean-up activities. He
> cautions them not to touch any needle- he is very emphatic on this point.
> As for bears, he jokes, "just be sure you're picking garbage with the slowest runner.
> That way you've got nothing to fear". He asks the slowest runner in the group to
> hold up their hand and self-identify. Many kids glance around at each other in
> disbelief, but nobody raises their hand. (Site 3 observation, May 27, 2008)

Bob's humour does not take away from the core purpose of this talk with his students. Once the laughter subsides, he emphatically cautions the students not to touch any intravenous needles, should they find any. He repeats this firmly but in a way that does not come across, in my opinion, as lecturing or preaching. The tone of his voice is one that expresses that he truly cares about their well-being and he has the children captivated as he speaks. Should they find a needle, they are to call immediately for one of the supervising adults.

While Bob's sense of humour could be construed as projecting a cavalier attitude towards his role as principal, this is not borne out of my observations of him when he is faced with a serious issue or parental concern. When this occurs, Bob responds in a manner which shows a proactive and solution-focused orientation, as in the case where a parent calls with the concern that her son is being bullied by another student:

> The principal serves as the secretary while she leaves the school for her lunch break. The phone rings, and principal answers it. He uses the school's native name and his first name (Not "Mr….") when doing so. The phone call is about an incident of bullying. A parent is phoning in about her son, the reported victim. The principal handles the concern very calmly. While I can't hear the voice on the other end of the phone, it is nonetheless a concern for the parent. The phone call resolves calmly, with a plan in place for Monday. (Site 3 observation, March 28, 2008)

After witnessing this exchange, I recorded the following reflection in my fieldwork journal:

> I was impressed with how the principal handled this. What impressed me was the direct concern for the student. This was evidenced by his repeated request for the parent to direct her son to him first thing Monday a.m. The principal advised the parent that he'd set up a code system with the student when they met Monday. That way, they could monitor the bullying, if any occurred, through a signal system that would not promote repercussions by appearing as a "tattle-tale" who ran to the principal. (Site 3 reflection, March 28, 2008)

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In handling the situation in such a way, Bob was able to ensure that his problem-solving did not create further problems or issues for the student in question, and could monitor the situation closely should any bullying occur.

Not only is the welcoming atmosphere projected by Bob, but is also fostered by members of the Moose Meadow School staff. One day, I visited the school over lunch hour and joined the staff in the teachers' lounge to share lunch. The following describes a conversation with an Indigenous elder once lunch hour was over and those that had a class to teach right away returned to their rooms.

> The bell rings and the staff head out. I don't have a class to get to, so the Native Language Instructor and I have a few minutes to visit. She begins talking- I ensure that I listen. She tells me of growing up with her grandparents. She didn't really move into a house until all of her children had left. By then, she observes she would have been around age 55.
>
> Now that she is a widow, she wants to be in the school with the children to keep her mind active- not sitting at home. She tells me when she told this to the principal, he told her to just come into the school. She agrees with me heartily when I say that that was a good thing for him to do.
>
> We talk of native languages and the distinctions between Tlingit communities. She really welcomes this discussion and becomes quite excited when I can share a few small examples from my limited experience. She shares with me the distinctions between Atlin, Teslin, Carcross, and American Tlingit people. Each has a distinct way of expression- "Americans speak loud Tlingit", she explains.
>
> She gets up and gets ready to head to her native language classroom. "Good luck and really nice talking to you", she says. I've really enjoyed it too. (Site 3 observation, April 9, 2008)

The school office is directly to the left of the front entrance way. Not simply a doorway to an inner sanctum, based on my experience I can tell that there have been major structural modifications implemented in this area. The term sanctum is used deliberately here in reference to the outmoded view of the principal as manager who carries out their work in an office, completing administrative tasks and rarely interacting with staff,

students, and parents other than in formal ways. Contrary to this conception, Moose Meadow's office is very open and accessible to the rest of the school on two sides, and even has a door leading directly to one of the classrooms at the back. A very large opening has been created by the excision of a 4x8 piece of wall. This makes for a highly accessible physical setting, and reminds me of what one could find at a concession in a cafeteria. The permeable sliding screen is pushed fully back, opening the office to all who walk by and enter the school.

Students and visitors can lean into the office and readily converse with its occupants. Similar to the office area at Hillside School, this area feels open, welcoming, and transparent. It certainly appears this way given how I later note the manner in which students and community readily enter the office, engage with staff, and converse with the principal. Whenever I visit the school, Bob is never in his office but is either in classrooms or in the outer office area. When I comment on the design of the school office, he animates with his arms to indicate how walls were moved and removed. In his tour, Bob mentions that the previous (larger) space of his office was subdivided to facilitate the reconfiguration to a more open, welcoming space.

This accessibility over time has become something which parents have become aware of and take advantage of. For example, the end of a school day in the office can end with the following exchange between principal and parents.

> A parent drops by: The principal asks: "Want me to find your kid?" The parent replies: No, I'm here to show you my new puppy. The parent has an 8-week old Golden Retriever puppy. She knows that the principal has 5 of them. There is a big loving session between the puppy and the principal. After this parent moves along (the principal is now trying to arrange to get a sibling of the puppy), another parent comes in. He is clearly Indigenous. "How you doing, bye" the principal calls out (using a Newfoundland accent). The parent gives a big smile back and they engage in conversations. (Site 3 observation, May 6, 2008)

It appears that, regardless of who you are or the reasons for which you drop by the school, you will get a hearty greeting and welcome into Moose Meadow School, and Bob intentionally locates himself near the front entrance so he can be accessible and available to all who enter.

Prior to leaving for our tour, it strikes me that this area looks less like an office and more like a combination lounge and workroom. A full size couch rests underneath the large opening, and a workspace takes up the middle of the approximately 8x10 foot space. The secretary's desk and work area is off to one side (created by the principal cutting his office space in half to make more space for her) and is surrounded by windows which give a view to the entry way and the front of the school. During the school day, Bob does not use his regular office, but instead has a large table set up in the outer office where he can work with his computer and be readily accessible to students, parents, staff, and community members.

While Bob closes the door to the juice machine, I note that I'm at the 90 degree intersection of two very long hallways. On a large segment of wall, from floor to ceiling, is a mural approximately 20 feet long. Yukon images are splashed all over it, and the work looks like it was undertaken by students under supervision of an artist. It is a collection of images old and new, in contrast to Hillside Elementary, perhaps as a result of Bob's school being 20 years older that Jim's. Scenes of the local mountains are decorated with paddle wheeler boats from the turn of the 19th Century, and the face of James "Skookum Jim" Mason, a local Indigenous man who was instrumental in the 1896 Bonanza Creek discovery of gold in the Klondike, is placed prominently in the middle. Five beautifully made native drums adorn the mural and are hung on the wall. Each bears the distinct emblem or crest of the five clans of the local community (Bob proudly points out that two

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of the drums won in a drum competition in Whitehorse). These clans are split-tailed beaver, wolf, crow, frog, and eagle. The mural is a very beautiful representation and places local Indigenous culture directly in central view of all who enter the school.

Bob leads me from the office, down the hallway, through a set of double doors and into a very large room that is the school's Industrial Education work shop. I am welcomed by the pungent smell of fresh wood and can see through the light streaming through the windows that there is a lot of sawdust in the air. Clustered around one of the workshop tables, a group of 4-5 older boys and girls are working away diligently and thoughtfully as they trace the pattern of a canoe paddle onto wooden blanks of birch and alder. Taking a closer look, I see that the blanks are substantial pieces of wood with grain patterns- I estimate them to be 5-6 feet long, 8 inches wide, and 2-3 inches deep. Our entry causes little, if any, disruption and the students strike me as very engaged given their high level of concentration and devotion to the task.

A world-renowned Indigenous artist and carver leads the students in this activity. I ask the artist about the project and he readily tells me that they'll soon be cutting the blanks into paddle-shapes in preparation for him to teach the students to carve and paint in the traditional Indigenous way. I am welcomed warmly- we remember each other from when his son went to one of my schools some 10 years ago. I wish them well in their project, and Bob leads me to a small room off of the workshop. Bob shares with me afterwards that the artist's work has been received by Queen Elizabeth, such is his renown as a Yukon Indigenous artist.

I feel that this is an important activity going on here, and for a number of reasons. First, it models for the children the importance of learning traditional knowledge and culture, particularly when a world-renowned artist feels compelled to come back to their

traditional territory and share his skills with the younger generation. Secondly, it models an Indigenous way of learning, where mastery learning is guided by an older, more experienced community member. Third, that this activity is taking place in Moose Meadow School reflects the value that the school places on community members working with children in the school and the reinforcement of local traditional knowledge.

In the smaller room extending from the shop, he proudly shows me a technically-advanced solar powered vehicle made of a combination of bicycle parts, large solar panels, and a skilfully riveted polished aluminum body. Definitely not a "home-built" job by any means, this vehicle reflects a high level of technical skill and craftsmanship.   Bob shares with me that the students built their craft with the help of community members. The car was entered into national solar competitions against schools from other parts of Canada and did very well, I am told.

I ask Bob a few more questions about the vehicle, and then we leave the shop and retrace our steps towards the office. Instead of heading straight there, we make a left-turn detour into a small room. There is a large amount of technical and electronic equipment on the tables and on racks. I immediately clue in that this is the school's radio station. Moose Meadow School has its own Frequency Modulation (FM) transmitter, broadcasting music continuously to the community and surrounding area.

I recall that, 10 years ago, I attended the grand opening of the station when I was principal at a school approximately 100km away.   Bob reviews with me the origins of the initiative: at the time, a Yukon company was specializing in low-wattage radio transmitters for use in isolated areas or Third World countries.   When Bob was appointed principal at Moose Meadow School he felt that a project to engage students and work towards unifying the community and the school was required. The result was the creation

of one of the very few school-based, Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) licensed radio stations in all of Canada.

The music played comes from vast a collection which includes the genres of "pop", rock and roll, and country and western. Local Indigenous artists are also included in the playlists. In order to capture their music, 3 years ago Bob arranged to have the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) come to the school to record local artists singing Tlingit songs. Moose Meadow students ran the studio while these recording sessions took place, and now this music is captured so that it can be included in the radio station's play list. Bob also has an arrangement with the Native Music Association whereby they send him the latest music recorded by Indigenous artists who sing in a variety of musical genres (rock and roll, rap, etc).

When asked who decides the music which gets added to the play list, Bob informs me that he reserves the right as principal to decide which songs will be included. In the radio station's early days, Bob would get phone calls (not frequently, but they would occur) from community members that a particular broadcasted song included swear words. Very sensitive to this, and not wishing to not to offend anyone in the community, Bob procured editing software that allowed the students to take a song which contained swear words, delete the offending word or words, and then splice the song back together in a seamless fashion.

Bob gives me the "quick tour" of the station, built into its own room at the back of the school's computer lab. There is a large glass window, giving the room the feel of a sound booth that could be found at any radio station. A computer warehouses over 5000 digitally recorded songs, and enough music is loaded into it that the station can play non-stop for over 7 days before ever repeating a song. I am struck that this is not a project

which, in any way, is a simulation. The radio station, with its own CRTC approved four-letter identifier, serves the entire community. At times, students will run the radio station, and community elders will speak to the community through the school's station room. I can sense the pride that Bob feels in his school's accomplishment 10 years on.

Exiting through the very well equipped computer lab, we head down the very long other hallway to the gym. (I work to keep up with Bob, given his pace). Once again, I am struck by the use of vivid colours in the Ted Harrison artistic theme throughout the school's hallways and classrooms, much the same as in Jim's school. It makes for a very bright and warm feeling. We enter the gym by passing through the lunch room first. Not solely a place to sit and eat, the lunchroom is equipped as an industrial kitchen and provides a large and practical space for making meals both large and small. It is very clean and functional, very likely an excellent resource for students and community events alike. As we pass through a set of doors leading towards the gym, Bob informs me that he uses the kitchen himself each Wednesday morning, coming in early to prepare breakfast for the school's children.

We pass through double doors and the principal flicks on the switches to the large reflective gym lights. As they slowly warm up and emit more and more light, I begin to see a monstrous shape with a discontinuous form protruding from the wall in the one corner of the gym. At first, I can't quite make out what this thing is, but as the light slowly increases, I see that what is before me is a climbing wall extending from floor to ceiling. Not flush with the wall, the surface protrudes to create overhangs that must be climbed over and around. It is covered with a variety of handgrips. The surface has been painted by the students and is an incredible asset for a small school such as this. Bob can't contain his pride at this latest revelation when he tells me that this wall is considered to be the most

technically challenging climbing wall north of Vancouver, and that he has Whitehorse

schools bring their students to use it.

While this description may initially convey that Moose Meadow's community is

affluent, this would be a misrepresentation. The community is a small village with no

major industry (such as logging, oil and gas, or year-round tourism). Much of the

population is employed in roles which provide community services, First Nations

government workers, educators, or small business owners. There is a small post office, a

Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) detachment staffed by three police members,

one store with an attached gas station, and a tourism information center. Other seasonal

tourism stores exist. The fire department is staffed by volunteers from the community. The

houses reflect the use of local materials: milled lumber projects a cabin-style theme, and

the outer walls of many are decorated with old snowshoes, saws, and moose antlers.

Contrary to suburban areas, the properties do not have seeded lawn but are grown-in with

locally-occurring plants and grasses. By southern standards the community may look

disorderly or unkempt in the absence of city bylaws regulating landscaping or where

residents may park their vehicles or plant trees.

Rather than indicate affluence, a project such as this is once again reflective of

Bob's desire over a period of years to make the school an engaging place for students. As

with the radio station, Bob is not one to do things in a half-hearted way. He has made the

concerted effort over his 10+ years at Moose Meadow to identify large, impactful projects

that help him realize this goal. In discussing these projects with him, he mentions that a

key to their realization is having a supportive School Council and fostering positive

relations with this body. (As in Jim's school, Moose Meadow's School Council has

guaranteed participation of Indigenous members under the Yukon Education Act). With

large projects such as this, Bob stresses that if a principal has the support of the School Council, he/she can accomplish great things.

Prior to Bob's becoming the principal of Moose Meadow, there was a rapid turnover of principals until he arrived. In the years that he has been principal at Moose Meadow, his School Council membership has not changed despite there being elections every 2 years, indicating a strong relationship and lasting commitment to the school. Projects such as the climbing wall and radio station reflect what can be accomplished when the school principal and staff work together with community representatives in a cooperative and collaborative manner on projects which each group deems of benefit to children. Projects such as the climbing wall reflect the individuality of each school and the importance of the principal knowing and working with the community.

I too am in awe of this massive form in the corner of the gym. For a remote and isolated school, this is an incredible feature for students. It has overhangs and crevices, movable grips, and has been covered with student artwork. Never in almost 20 years of being an educator have I seen such at thing in a school gym. While I am no rock climber, I reflect that this easily bests any of the walls I have seen in outdoor stores in major cities in Western Canada. Once again, this project reflects the commitment on the part of Bob, the School Council, and community members to provide what they collectively feel are important for Moose Meadow School to offer its students.

While I am momentarily struck silent at this point in Bob's tour, by no means are the surprises over yet. As I was standing silently and taking in the climbing wall, the lights in the gym have continued to increase in intensity. I can now see clearly to the stage built into the wall at the end of the gym. I am astonished by the most beautiful set of curtains enclosing the stage. They are made of heavy velvet or velour-style cloth, and are a deep

and rich crimson colour with black and white trim. Emblazoned on each side of the curtain is the Indigenous depiction of the two moieties: Wolf and Crow. I am struck by the magnificence of the curtains. Bob once again shows his pride in this latest feature of the school and tells me that they are new to the school this year. His pride in them is reflective of his belief that the richness of local Indigenous culture must be present and affirmed in Moose Meadow School. I can't help but agree in this regard. As I admire them, I tell Bob that they will likely be here for many years after we have retired from the education system. By this I mean to say that they will leave a lasting legacy of what can be accomplished when schools respect and value local Indigenous culture and bring this to the forefront in both physical and curricular ways.

Turning off the gym lights and retracing our steps, Bob leads me back towards the office. We stick our heads into two of the classes- enrollment is low in each one due to a sudden recurrence of head lice that has kept many children home. (I recall how, for whatever reason, this often happens in the late winter). Bob banters pleasantly with the students, and they readily reciprocate. He is high-energy with the children, and uses hand-slaps, "high-fives", and no shortage of humour to make them giggle and laugh. He is always laughing with them as well. Not wishing to interrupt the teacher's lesson any more than we already have, we take our leave. Bob leads me to a room that I initially think is the staffroom, given the couches, easy chairs, and relaxed environment it projects. He quickly dispels my mistaken thought by informing me that this is the students lounge.

Looking closer on the shelves, I become aware of stacks of board games, books, and many other items for students to use- for example tables and chairs and boards upon which to draw. The room is brightly painted, has a large window, and is created by the subdivision of a very large classroom. All in all, it is a very welcoming place. Bob shares

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with me that Moose Meadow very likely is the only elementary school in the Yukon with its own lounge dedicated to student use. He may well be right: While high schools quite often have lounges, elementary schools generally do not, I reflect.

The idea to build a student lounge within the school at first was met with resistance. When he initially proposed this idea to Department of Education officials responsible for property management and maintenance, it was rejected as unnecessary. As Bob recounted to me one day, he was told by the maintenance officials (who are engineers and technicians, not educators) that his idea was "crazy" and that elementary students did not require their own space. Despite his idea being initially met with resistance, Bob continued to pursue it with the Department of Education. The same school year, he noticed on his school budget that $10,000 had been allocated to remove sand from the playground that, once trucked away, would just be replaced by more sand carried by the prevailing winds. Bob suggested to the maintenance officials that the $10,000 would be far better used if directed towards the student lounge. Once again, Bob's idea was rejected and he was told that money allocated to "outside" projects could not be used for "inside" projects.

Around this same time, a different superintendent was appointed to Bob's school. Superintendents in the Yukon are often responsible for a number of schools and, periodically, their allocation of schools shifts is reorganized. Bob explained the rationale behind the student lounge (students have a place to go and do homework, a place to call their own in the school) and the history regarding the obstacles placed in his path to the superintendent. This new superintendent took Bob's project on personally and pushed it forward at the Department of Education level. As a result, the $10,000 was reallocated and a student lounge was created in Moose Meadow School.

Bob is a determined individual: this represents a third large-scale project where the focus is on making school more relevant, valued, and enjoyable for students. If he believes in something as beneficial to his students, has support of his School Council, and yet meets with barriers, he will strive to find the detours to these roadblocks. I sense that to tell Bob "No" in regards to something beneficial to his students only strengthens his resolve to realize the goal.

Leaving the student lounge, Bob thoughtfully shows me where the staff washrooms are located. This is good for me to make note of, I joke to him. I am then led into a very spartan room which I immediately identify, both by the scent of tincture of clove and apparatus it contains, as a dental office. All the equipment, from the x-ray machine on the wall, to the dental chair, to the autoclave on the counter appears new. I make a positive comment on this resource, but Bob responds in a disapproving manner. Bob informs me that he had no input whatsoever into the inclusion of the dental office in the school. When I ask him why it is there, he explains to the rationale. It cost over $50,000 to put the office in the school as it was not considered safe to walk the students down the street to the clinic (he points out the window and show me where the children used to walk. It is one block away.) I can tell he is not impressed: he views this as an unnecessarily large capital allocation which was determined by government departments at a distance without any input from the school. Bob feels that this funding could have been expended in other, more useful ways as the issue was not whether or not the children would have access to dental care. The care already existed. Nonetheless, I note that it is a clean, new, and very functional facility.

Our tour almost complete, we head back down the long hallway towards the school office. Despite being an older facility, it is clean and reflects the pride he feels in it. I'm

truly impressed at the innovative efforts he has taken to make the school an interesting and relevant place for his students.   We retire to his office to begin our first interview: throughout, students comfortably come into the office to use the phone, borrow a stapler, or seek out some other resource.

Gina, principal of Klondike School

Gina's school is nestled in a wooded and secluded area in an urban part of Whitehorse, surrounded on all sides by tall, majestic Lodgepole Pines. This makes for a very quiet and natural environment around the school facility. When I visit the school in the morning, Gina can be found greeting the children and their parents either on the playground, or if not on outdoor supervision, in the small front foyer of the school. Unlike larger schools, parents do not have to leave their children on the playground to line up before entering the school. Instead, each morning at Klondike School, if they choose to, parents can accompany their children to their classrooms to say good-bye to them and their teacher before instructional activities commence.

Gina is relatively new to the field of educational leadership and administration. A teacher with extensive experience in the Yukon educational system, she came to Klondike School 3 years ago from another school where she had been a teacher for over 15 years. Ready for a change she felt excited and encouraged to move into a principalship, so when the position at Klondike came open 3 years ago, she applied and was successful. Gina can lay claim to a rare distinction amongst her administrative cadre: whereas her colleagues originate from regions outside the Territory, she is one of perhaps only two principals out of over 40 administrators who can say that they are from the Yukon. Her family moved to the Yukon when she was but one year old, and other than leaving to attend graduate school, the Yukon has been home all her life.

Pursuing her education has not always been easy for Gina, as she recounts in one interview session. She originally began her career at the Yukon Teacher Education Program in the late 1970's, completing her teaching degree between locally-offered programming and that offered at a southern Canadian university. As a single parent supporting three children, she later returned to this university for two years to complete her Masters degree in Education. Like Jim and Bob, Gina has taught in rural schools, and given the large extended family that she has in the Yukon, would never consider living anywhere else. As she now reaches the latter stages of her career, Gina is a grandmother who is very devoted to her grandchildren and wishes to spend more time with them.

The first time I walked up to Klondike School, I was struck by how different it looks from what could be considered a conventional school in that it is quite small. I doubt that many other capital cities have schools of this diminutive size. In terms of size and student population, it is comparable to the rurally-located Moose Meadow School. Rather than being a permanent structure, the single-storey school is constructed out of a number of modular pieces, or trailers. These sections have been connected together by vestibules to create the overall school complex. This results in a building structure that is not continuous, but rather is subdivided by many doors and turns to be made in the hallways. Like many schools in the Territory, the outer walls and trim of this single-level school are painted in pastel colours reminiscent of the paintings by Yukon artist Ted Harrison.

From a socioeconomic perspective, Klondike School is located in a neighbourhood of Whitehorse. This neighbourhood, one of the original ones to grow outside of the actual downtown area of Whitehorse in the 1960s was once a more affluent area. This is evidenced by the relatively large 30 to 35 year-old single-detached residential housing with what were large, open areas or "green-space" between clusters of houses and streets. Over

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time, some of these open areas have been in-filled with duplexes, multiple-family units, and apartments. With this development, and the expansion of newer neighbourhoods in Whitehorse over the past 20 years, the socioeconomic status of this neighbourhood has changed over time. Whereas in the past families new to Whitehorse had few other options regarding where to live, now they have many newer housing options at a time where Klondike School's neighbourhood has aged. As a result, the established population has grown to include more single-parents, transient residents, and lower-income families.

The school faces a beautiful mountain range to the north, and is surrounded by hills on the other two sides. This means that, in the depth of winter, it gets little direct sunlight. Nonetheless, the young children who go to this school keep the playground toys busy. In the mornings, not only is it the children who are enjoying themselves outdoors. Being a small school which only serves its own neighbourhood (there are no bussed children), many parents accompany their children as they go to school and stay to play with them until the bell rings. Parents that do not join their children in play and visit with the other parents park their vehicles along the treed verge between the school and the road. From there, they can watch their children play safely until the bell is sounded for the day to commence. Of particular note is the type of bell used at Klondike: given the enclosed nature of the playground by the forest of trees, in contrast to the electronically transmitted sound at Bob's school, the teacher on duty rings a hand-held school bell to alert the children that it is time to come inside.

This bell takes me back to the days of the one-room school house and seems far less jarring than a buzzer or other electronic signal piped loudly through speakers. In fact, I too used one when principal of a two-room school in rural Yukon. Upon hearing the bell, the children head towards the stairs and up to the main doors to let themselves in to the

school in a relaxed fashion. Once again, in contrast to its more modern or larger

counterparts, there is no lining up, jostling, and waiting for permission from a teacher or

the principal to enter the school. When I comment on this to the teacher on duty, she

replies, "That's one formality that we can do without".

I also make a mental note that this must mean that there is no intercom system of

speakers to interrupt the school day with announcements. Compared to Hillside

Elementary, this makes sense, at least to me, in that Klondike School's student population

is approximately 1/8 the size and has a much smaller physical footprint. It is very easy to

talk face-to-face in an expeditious manner if required, therefore an intercom system would,

to my mind, appear out of place in such a small primary school.

Based on my own experiences, I have a particular bias against electronic buzzers

and intercom systems and how they are used. I believe judgment and discretion is required

with their use. As a school administrator, I have relied on personally delivering a note or

message to a teacher as it creates the opportunity for me to talk with them and visit their

classroom. Predominantly I have found intercom systems interruptive and intrusive.

Further, at a time when students are interacting with each other and their teacher, the

intercom is, at times, a distraction that is ignored. When employed during the instructional

day, the intercom can interrupt teaching and learning. While I acknowledge their value

and importance in regards to student safety (when a message must be transmitted

immediately) I find that, for the routine transmission of information, they are impersonal

when compared to the close personal interaction of teachers and their students. This open,

individualized contact appears reflective of the school culture at Klondike School.

Evidence of the individual and personal contact shown by Gina to both children

and their parents was recorded in the following observation:

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The teacher rings the old-fashioned brass hand bell. The children run to the front doors of the school and willingly want to go in. The principal is waiting for the students and parents in the front foyer. She greets each one as they come in and head to their classrooms. There is no formal checking in- the principal is very relaxed, friendly, and checks in with each student. (Site 2 observation, March 4, 2008)

Coming up the entryway stairs, upon entering the school, the first thing that presents itself to visitors is a beautiful wood-framed mosaic of tiles. No small work of art, it covers an area 5x5' and depicts two young children- a boy and a girl- playing happily in the sunshine. Underneath is the school's motto: "Respect, responsibility, and reaching for our best". It easily forms the centerpiece of the school entryway. It creates a warm and welcoming atmosphere which is readily apparent, particularly when Gina has positioned herself in the foyer to wish the students and their parents a good morning.

The front foyer offers an immediate presentation of student work. This area, small for a school at perhaps 14x14 feet, holds many examples of the instructional outputs of the children. In contrast to Moose Meadow School, student artwork here does not present as Indigenous in theme, but is more closely related to areas of the language arts, science, or math curriculum. They may be written reports, stories, or pictures created by the children. On the left wall of the foyer, visitors are presented with a display of the school staff "team", comprised of large picture portraits of Klondike School's teachers, the principal, educational assistants, and the secretary. On the right, there are science projects on display that are readily available for viewing.

Posted directly to the right of the front door is a prominently displayed laminated sheet clearly showing pictures of students who may have health risks or particular allergies. Over the past number of years, the number and severity of allergic reactions by students appears to have increased in schools, therefore this shows a proactive and caring

approach by the staff at Klondike School which places student safety at the forefront. This way, people who are not familiar with the children (new substitute teachers, or researchers for that matter) can be aware of children with specific requirements. On other parts of the wall are student art examples of many kinds and styles. In contrast to Hillside and Moose Meadow Schools, there appears to be less attention given to ensuring that Indigenous artwork and culture is displayed. This may be as a result of their being relatively few Indigenous students at Klondike School when compared to Hillside and Moose Meadow and that, as one of the two urban schools in this study, the presence of Indigenous culture in Klondike School is not as directly stated a goal as at Hillside.

Directly to the left of the front main door is a large message board. It is neatly maintained and up to date, presenting a comprehensive collection of parent resources, reports on literacy and homework from the Canadian Council on Learning, brochures providing information for counselling services, the role of School Councils in the Yukon and an advertised vacancy, school and School Council newsletters, and a calendar of events for the month. To the right is posted the UN Declaration of Rights of the Child, written in "kid friendly" language. Student work is further presented in the front foyer in glass display cases - much like those you would find in a jewellery store. Many plants also adorn the area, as do colourful posters offering greetings and welcoming messages.

The school rules are laminated and posted on the wall at eye level on a poster and reflect a predominant safety focus. The rules state:

1) We treat each other with respect

2) We play where teachers see us

3) We only throw balls

4) We stay out of the parking lot

5) We do not ride our bikes, scooters, and skateboards on the school grounds

6) We keep our hands and feet to ourselves.

The school rules are posted at the eye-level of children in order that they can see them. In our subsequent interviews, Gina mentions that when she arrived at Klondike school the rules were written in the negative (Do not do this… do not do that…) and were exhaustive in nature and scope. In her first year at Klondike School, Gina undertook the effort to re-draft these with the staff and School Council as she found that this created difficulty for students to actually know what the school rules were. As a result, the rules are now framed positively (except for #5 which offers a caution of where not to ride your bicycle), and are short and written in "kid-friendly" language. In such a way, the students can know of the school rules, act upon them, and repeat them when asked. While I am not aware of the origins of the expression "You get more of what you pay attention to", it appears that in the case of Klondike School, the attention is given to positive behaviours and student safety.

Of note is how Gina brings about such changes. Rather than decree changes, Gina makes many attempts to involve her staff in the running of the school. I observe this particularly where school assemblies are concerned. When I attend whole school events at Klondike School (which always include invitations to parents), Gina is often not leading them, as this observation makes note:

> The principal informed me that assemblies at this school are largely teacher-led. The teachers approach her with the time, date, and theme of the assembly. In the case of this assembly, it was for Valentine's Day today and Flag Day tomorrow. It was led by the Kindergarten class.
> The school's assembly is not what one might expect. The principal is not at the front, as in many assemblies. Instead, the principal is off to the side. While she

does welcome everyone and thanks the audience for attending at the end, she is otherwise out of the "spotlight". (Site 2 observation, February 14, 2008)

Gina also approaches her staff meetings in a manner which is not managerial and administrative in nature, with the focus being on her as the positional leader and sole decision-maker at Klondike School. On one visit to the school, I checked-in with Gina when I was observing and, based upon my experience as a school administrator, she shared with me the nature and structure of the school's monthly staff meetings.

> She shows me how she has revamped the staff meeting agenda to put the majority of management/admin items in writing in order to save discussion on the more mundane aspects of school operations (like the "ball cap and bubble gum" policy, I joke). The agenda is crafted so that pedagogical issues are the topics for discussion. She understates this approach, saying, "I'm sure all principals do this". (Site 2 observation, March 7, 2008)

Turning to the right and heading down a short hallway brings you to the main area of classrooms. Being a small school, there is only one class per grade, and one room allocated for French instruction. There are also small rooms-offices in effect- for individual or small group instruction. Sitting in the hallway connecting the classrooms, I note that the walls are covered with student work. Not solely artwork, there are also student assignments, such as Yukon Quest Sled Dog Race posters and write-ups of that event. One wall is completely covered with a Yukon-Alaska map showing the course of the sled race from Fairbanks to Whitehorse. Each student has their own "dog team" that they use as markers along the route to show how their musher is doing. Along one whole wall for approximately 12' there are levelled reading series organized for students to select from. It is comprised of literally hundreds of books. There appears to be no shortage of reading materials in Klondike School.

In the short hallway leading to the grade 3 classroom, there are student-designed newspapers posted on the walls-each is approximately 24x36 inches in size. Each sports the student's own picture and many stories which they have crafted. The opposite wall has been covered with paper from floor to ceiling and the students have created a winter sledding scene. Outside of this classroom, as with all other classrooms, each student has a brass coat hook with their name above it. This signals to me that each student has their own place or "home" in the school and is encouraged to keep their items accounted for. Once again, it also reflects a safety orientation in that students' coats do not accumulate on the floor and create a safety hazard should an evacuation ever be required. In all cases, Indigenous language is not apparent, perhaps once again due to there being few Indigenous students enrolled at Klondike School.

Despite being small and build tout of modular pieces, the school has a sturdy feeling to it and is very clean, bright, and well maintained. The way the school is assembled feels somewhat like a rabbit warren might: short conduits (hallways) which lead to individual dens (classrooms). The classrooms are distributed and somewhat isolated from each other in a compartmentalized way. This results in many doors to go through which serve as partitions between each modular piece.

The design of Klondike School is rooted in its history. Only 10 minutes walk away there exists another, larger elementary school in Klondike's neighbourhood which has the capacity to absorb Klondike's student population. The history behind Klondike School's modular form is that it was built as a temporary school in order to deal with a rapidly burgeoning student population in the 1980's. (The school's temporary nature may also explain why intercoms were never wired in). Never intended to exist this long by the Yukon Department of Education, Klondike has defied closure based upon the vehement

opposition to this on the part of parents. When student populations began to decrease in Whitehorse schools in the late 1990's operational discussions regarding the closure or re-designation of Klondike School quickly entered the political arena when parents became aware of them. For a Member of the Yukon Legislative Assembly (and particularly the 2 MLA's representing the northern and southern areas of Klondike School's catchment area) to suggest closure of the primary-aged Klondike School and moving its students to the larger neighbourhood elementary school would likely be viewed by the electorate as a wish to commit political suicide in the next Territorial election. This signifies the depth of passion that parents and school staff feel towards the only primary school in the Yukon.

At various locations in the school's hallways I note the presence of a series of posters (approximately 11x14 inches in size) reflecting, in a more general way than at Hillside or Moose Meadow, North American Indigenous culture. They offer a number of English-text phrases to the children who read them and show a number of images including Indigenous teachers in classrooms comprised of students from many different backgrounds from around the world. Pictures of elders, or groups of elders, are shown beading (an activity not limited to Yukon First Nations but of many North American Indigenous groups) or the design of a dream catcher is used to shape the message. The messages include: "Be polite: Always wait your turn when speaking or listening", and "Respect your elders, parents, and teachers at all times". Other posters model messages on respect or citizenship.

In the absence of a defined and specific Indigenous cultural grouping and presence (i.e. Tlingit or Southern Tutchone) in Klondike school- in contrast to Hillside or Moose Meadow, this appears to be, in a more generic or broad way, an effort to represent Indigenous culture at this site. The messages presented by these posters are framed in a

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way similar to the school rules. The implication here is that the school rules are modeled

or framed in a way similar to the messages projected by the posters which model

Indigenous values.

While the school does not have a distinct Indigenous population, this is not to say

that efforts are not made in this regard. Gina informs me that one of the events that she has

started at Klondike School is an annual potlatch. I attended the 2nd annual potlatch and

recorded the following in my observation journal:

> This school does not have a large First Nations population, as both indicated by the
> principal and by my own observation. Yet, all of the school's children are dressed
> in traditional robes, button blankets, and scarves, regardless of their background.
> The traditional First Nations structure is being followed here: the school has been
> divided into two clans: Wolf and Crow. Two students have been appointed as
> chiefs or clan leaders, and they welcome each other's clan. All historical
> references and background information is read out by the two clan leaders to the
> audience.

> The students tell the story of the potlatch- a Chinook word meaning "to give". The
> two students tell of the history of how the Canadian Federal government banned
> potlatches in the 1850s and would imprison those who were caught engaging in
> them. The students tell a number of First Nations legends and act them out.
> Costumes have been hand-made, and teachers also participate as actors with the
> children. The grade 2 class tells the story of how raven brought light to the world,
> the grade 3 class tells of how salmon was brought to the people, and the grade 1
> class explains how the bear got his crooked feet- when the sun came, he had to put
> them on quickly and didn't get them on straight. (Site 2 observation, May 29,
> 2008)

I reflected afterwards that I was very impressed at how engaged the children were

and how well they knew their lines and roles, indicating a high level of preparation and

practice for this event. This was very much a student led presentation. I noted that

children of various backgrounds participated meaningfully in this presentation given their

active engagement. For example, the lead actor in the story of raven was of Southeast

Asian origin. In my own notes I captured how I felt about this event:

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> …I can't help but feel that we have made some culture shift or progress here. Here we have children of all cultures, learning about, engaging in, and celebrating First Nations culture on a First Nation's traditional territory. This is a long way from the banning of practice and imprisonment. I reflect upon the important role of schools in being one forum for facilitating this cultural shift. (Site 2 reflection, May 29, 2008)

Perhaps most profound for me was the final closing comment made by one of the Grade 3 clan leaders:

> "I recognize that we are a diverse group, but as in life we have to share what we have with all human beings".

The ceremony then ended with the giving of gifts. Each student grade had made gifts for another grade and exchanged them. The gifts included such items as handmade bracelets, button blankets, placemats, and salmon dishes. Understanding that Klondike School does not have the resources available to assist with cultural projects such as this, Gina relied on assistance from Jim's school. The young Native Language Instructor at Jim's school was invited to bring his group of singers and dancers to assist in this regard. While we were enjoying a lunch of salmon chowder and caribou stew made by Indigenous elders in the bright noonday sun, I ask him to reflect on his school experiences and on how the presence and role of culture in schools has changed over time:

> I get to spend a few minutes talking with my former student, the First Nations teacher. He mentions that he used to go to this school when he was young. I ask him whether he partook in events such as this when he was a student here. He can only recall the Christmas concert. I ask him if he believes we have made some progress since then. He smiles warmly. (Site 2 observation, May 29, 2008)

My reflections on this event capture what, to me, signifies the importance of what has gone on here today:

> So, here we have children of all origins, singing and telling First Nations stories. This takes place in a government school on First Nations traditional territory. I

can't help but think that this is a wonderful convergence, given the historical role that schools and government policies have played in the extinguishment of First Nations language and culture. Today was the Aboriginal National Day of Action. (Site 2 observation, May 29, 2008)

Walking from one classroom wing towards the office, I pass through the front foyer and head over to what could be considered the other half of the school. Gina's small office, surrounded by large plate glass (approximately 3'x6' in dimension) on two sides, looks out onto the office and across the main hallway. The children can wave to Gina (and she to them) as they walk past on their way to and from the gym or the library. Across from her desk, on the opposite side of the hallway, is a very large quilt. Each square has been created and stitched in by a student with their handprint on it and represents the range of ethnic backgrounds of Klondike's students. Similar to Hillside and Moose Meadow, an effort has been made to open up the office. Even if Gina is engaged in work at her desk or is meeting with someone, she has the ability to interact with the children. Once again, this appears to be an effort to make more visible and transparent the principal's surroundings and work.

On this side of the school, there is a large classroom for Kindergarten children. Once past this, a short flight of stairs leads down to the school gym. I poke my head in: while not as large as a regular school gym and without a stage, it is bright and has a high ceiling. The upper one-third of the gym wall is beautifully painted with scenes styled in the ubiquitous Ted Harrison Yukon theme.

I head back to the staff room in order to retrieve the winter coat I hung up there earlier. It is a very comfortable space, akin to the combining of a kitchen and dining room of a suburban home found in the local neighbourhood in that there is a complete kitchen built into two walls and full-sized couches, a coffee table and easy chairs situated in the

other half of the space.   The staffroom table is covered with local magazines such as "Yukon North of Ordinary" or "MacLean's", and newsletters and papers from various provincial teacher associations.

Before I began viewing the school in order to write a descriptive word picture or thick description (Creswell, 1998), I checked with Gina to ensure that it was acceptable to wander about the school and purposefully make note of what I saw. (I did have all protocols in place but wanted to be polite by asking). This gave the principal the opportunity to apprise me of any potential activities that may have developed in the intervening time of Letters of Informed Consent being signed, such as school events, assemblies, or other visitors to the school. My goal with asking once again was to ensure that I was never "in the way" of any activities and to preclude any disruption whatsoever as a result of my presence.

In response to my desire to observe she jokingly replied that the school was "pretty boring" in the mornings. She elaborated on this point by informing me that the time from the ringing of the bell until morning recess (approximately the first 90 minutes of the school day) was called "protected time" at Klondike School. This means that there are no student movements or transitions to other classes at this time- the children remain in their home-room with their teacher and the curricular focus is on literacy and numeracy. Judging from the amount of carefully done student work which I can see on the walls all around the school, I think to myself that it appears this time is being well used. As a school administrator by vocation, I have found that walking through the hallways of a school gives me the opportunity to gain an understanding of what has taken place in a school. Often, teachers display student work on bulletin boards or on walls made of a material which can purposely withstand the impact of a staple or push-pin. They do this so

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that other students can learn from their peers, can take pride in their efforts, and so that children can show their parents their work.

Almost all of the wall and bulletin board space around the classrooms contains examples of student writing, such as where the students have written a story about the Yukon Quest Dog Sled Race and drawn a picture of the event which reflects their story. Activities such as this help accommodate a wider range of student interest and learning styles. I can infer that the "Quest" has been a thematic unit for the children spanning a number of weeks, and this is reinforced by the activities planned for students which elevate such studies from classroom-situated to ones that are hands-on and realistic. This is reflected in one of the Yukon Quest race teams visiting the children and staff of Klondike School:

> As I walk out onto the playground, I see that there are many dogs in harnesses. It is a dog sledding team that has come to the school. They have come in to meet with the students, many of whom have studied the Yukon Quest and incorporated the event as a theme into their schooling. All of the children get a ride in the dog sleds- great fun! They get their pictures taken. All of the staff members go for a sled ride as well. (Site 2 observation, March 7, 2008)

In such a way, literacy and numeracy curricula can be framed in an active way within a relevant and local context, making learning more fun, interesting, and meaningful for students.

Rose, principal of Mountainview School

If there is an appropriately named school, it would have to be Mountainview. Looking almost any direction from the school presents a beautiful alpine vista that is absolutely eye-catching. Whenever I drive up to the school, I can't help but reflect that it must be located in one of the prettiest settings of any school I have ever visited.

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The community from which Mountainview's students come each day is a diverse one. The school and town site is located on the traditional territory of the local First Nation and defined by their land claims settlement with the Territorial and Federal Governments. As a result, approximately 45-55% (based on the principal's estimation) of the students are of declared First Nations ancestry. There is a First Nations government office which employs Indigenous community members in various departments.   The remainder of the student population is non-Indigenous, with a number of families originating from Germany and Switzerland, perhaps in part due to the similarity of topography to the Alps. The socio-economic base of the community is diverse. Like Moose Meadow, there is a diversity of seasonal tourism and hospitality industry employment. The Yukon welcomes many German-speaking tourists each year, thus this fits well with there being many German-speaking residents.   This community is located on the edge of a Canadian national park, and thus there are many federal government employees as a result.

In her mid-fifties, Rose has been a teacher at the school since 1979 and took on the principalship of Mountainview in 2001. Rose and her husband came from a large city in eastern Canada to Mountainview's community sight-unseen.   Her teacher training experience covered both elementary and secondary facets, and when she graduated in 1978 there were few teaching positions to be had in her home province. Such was the labour market for teachers at the time that Rose felt that she would never become a teacher. As a result, Rose took a job outside of education working in a government office after the completion of her Bachelor of Education program. Both wishing to leave their home province in search of employment, Rose's husband bought a multi-stop plane ticket which took him across Canada, whereupon he could disseminate their resumes wherever they felt

it appropriate. Their pact was whoever got the first job would be the direction in which they would go. The Yukon Department of Education building was one of the stops on his cross-Canada tour.

As a result of her husband hand-delivering her resume, Rose was subsequently contacted for an interview in a Toronto hotel with the Yukon school superintendent of the day. The superintendent was on a Canada-wide tour conducting interviews, and had reviewed the resume that Rose's husband had dropped off at the Yukon Department of Education when on his job-hunting expedition. Rose recalls that she was very relaxed during the interview as she felt that she would never get a teaching job based on the current labour market conditions. As they sat talking in the upper floor of a hotel, taking in the panoramic view of the city around them, the superintendent asked Rose if she would miss the urban life around her. Her response was emphatic that she wanted to move away from her home province and away from cities. After conducting one more interview in Winnipeg on his way home to the Yukon, the superintendent contacted her once again. Rose was subsequently offered (and accepted) a high school-level teaching position at Mountainview

By her own admission, she had no clue as to where she was really being interviewed for, nor how much her salary would be: in those days there was no internet with which to search and conduct research, nor was the community located on any map that she could find. Having just completed her university training and carrying a student loan, Rose was (pleasantly) shocked to learn from the superintendent that her starting salary would be $21,000, fully $7,000 more than what she would earn in her home province if she could get a teaching job.

In one of our initial interviews, she laughs as she tells the story of how, on their initial journey, she and her husband drove through the community and carried on down the highway for some way before realizing the cluster of buildings they passed through was actually the town itself. The only image she had seen of the area was an old black and white photo of a friend whose father worked for the Yukon Department of Transport and had a picture of the local airstrip runway.   Yet, for all this ambiguity at the time, Mountainview's community has been home for Rose and her family since then and she feels that she could never have been luckier to have had such a fulfilling life opportunity come her way. Since she began teaching at Mountainview, her children have passed through the school and gone on to adult life in other locations. By her own admission, Rose feels that, in hindsight, she could not have been luckier to have had this Yukon experience, sharing during one of our interviews that "it has been a wonderful life" filled with adventure.

As I enter the school, I attempt to follow the directions on the sign (written in English) which states that "All visitors are requested to report to the office". It also reminds visitors to turn off their cell-phone ringers while in the school so as not to disturb children and their classes. Before I can heed this instruction to check in with the secretary, Rose comes through the office door on a mission to somewhere. I later realize that it is to teach one of her Grade 12 classes. Greetings are exchanged quickly as she shows no signs of stopping on her way to destinations unknown, and she waves as she resolutely continues down the hallway. I enter the school office, receive a warm welcome from the school secretary, and am shown to the staff room where I can hang up my parka. The smell of hot coffee wafts down the hallway- most welcomed on this -20°Celsius day. As I round the corner to enter the staffroom, I recognize a familiar profile: it is one of the Department of

Education's four superintendents sitting at the table talking with a number of the staff members. This school is not assigned to this superintendent but he has lived in the Yukon for a long time and knows many Yukon residents and their families. He has made a point of being present today for the fair, and this school is on the way to two other schools for which he is responsible. We exchange friendly greetings and spend some time chatting cordially for a few minutes.

Rose returns from her previous mission and momentarily catches her breath. She asks if I would like a quick tour of the school. The suggestion to make it a quick tour is in relation to Rose's own admission that her school is perhaps more aptly named "Chaos Central" today. She jokingly makes the reference to her job as akin to being an Air Traffic Controller at Toronto Airport, a metaphor I find interesting. I reflect that much the same as at an airport, she too safely manages the flow of traffic in her school, juggles with competing and at time conflicting inputs in order to avoid collisions, and even handles emergency landings from time to time (with minimum frequency, I dearly hope based upon my previous experience working with aircraft in the Canadian Air Force. Emergency landings are highly stressful and unanticipated events where the outcomes can have severe consequences). Rose appears very concerned that the school appears to run smoothly and with minimal disruption, and I suggest to her that this level of unregulated activity is only to be expected on days where the school schedule is altered.

An important aspect which makes Rose's role as principal even more complex than in the other schools in this study is the fact that Mountainview offers a Kindergarten to Grade 12 program. As a result, her school calendar and scheduling is more regulated and complex than for the other schools in that she must accommodate the British Columbia (BC) Ministry of Education timeframes specific to the delivery of departmental exams.

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This is as a result of the Yukon following BC Ministry of Education curricula. Offering a Grades K-7 full-year program coupled with an 8-12 (semester) program results in there being two "tracks" which students and staff must follow.

In order that her high school students are prepared for these externally developed exams, Rose must ensure that her students receive sufficient instructional hours and that she can offer a breadth of programming sufficient to meet with Ministry of Education requirements for graduation. A further layer to consider is that, in the Yukon, the Education Act affords the opportunity for locally-developed activities and curricula to be delivered in schools. This is not a small allocation of time, but can constitute up to 20% of the educational program offered to students. As a result Rose must balance community and school needs (such as a week spent bison hunting that may not "count" on a transcript) with these aforementioned external graduation requirements and those of parents who wish for their children to graduate with marks sufficient to meet the requirements for university acceptance and be prepared for entrance and success. I note that this added dimension compounds the administrative and managerial tasks that Rose must attend to, in addition to her teaching upwards of 50% of her day.

As we begin our walk from the staff room, Rose reminds me that it is the Heritage Fair at Mountainview today. This event is conducted much the same as the more conventional science fair, with booths set up all around the gym and attended by students and community alike. The distinction is that heritage fairs showcase and celebrate heritage and culture. This year, the theme for the event at Mountainview is evident in the title: "Our Elders and Ancestors are Our Wealth". It is a non-typical day in that there are many visitors in the school (a superintendent from the Department of Education being but one),

kids are out of classes and in the gym for the fair, and as a result of this fluidity the day is less structured.

It is easy to tell that Mountainview is a school that has been built in a number of phases over time as school needs and community population has changed over the past 30 years. Building materials change depending on which section of the school you are in- most often noticeable when you walk through a set of double doors in the hallway. Rose begins the tour at the intersection of two long hallways that meet at a right angle just outside of the school's main office. This school is one of the few rural Yukon schools with a large enough school population to support a Kindergarten to Grade 12 program. As a result, when students in the community reach high school age, they do not have to move into Whitehorse, reside at the dormitory (run by the Yukon Department of Education) and attend one of the larger high schools in the Territorial capital.

As schools go in rural Yukon, this one has a large physical footprint. We proceed down the hallway which leads to the gym and walk past the main entryways located on both sides of the hall. In the boot room on the right, a large tanned hide of a grizzly bear hangs stately on the wall (I reflect to myself on what the reaction of visitors to the school would be if this was an urban, southern Canadian school). I do not wish to overgeneralize, but I've come to realize a distinction between small northern communities and large urban centers is that in rural areas people rely on hunting for work, for sustenance, for recreation, and as a means of interacting closely with the environment.

Hunting is very much a lifestyle choice in the Yukon as playing golf is in southern Canadian areas, and a distinction is that hunting is more than solely a form of recreation. While I cannot be certain, I would predict that having a grizzly bear hanging on the wall of a school in an urban location would likely be viewed in some way as disrespectful to the

animal in some southern contexts where hunting is not part of daily life. As a result, it would be out of context and therefore could be unwelcome. Animal rights activists and anti-hunters may protest the presence of an animal shot, mounted, and displayed on the wall of a school. In contrast, in northern contexts, where student field trips may include bison hunts, mounted animals can be present in the school setting and not evoke a negative response.

Walking up the small flight of stairs to a newer wing of the school, Rose pops into what appear to be classrooms along the left hand side. There are no classes in session given the Heritage Fair. These rooms are not set up as regular classrooms in that they have large tables in them and not the standard individual student desks. Rose tells me that this area is intended more for high school students. One room is used for applied skills such as cooking or home economics, the other as a classroom for smaller groups of students. One of the rooms is set up as if it is ready to receive luncheon guests. I am not incorrect in my assumption. Later in the day, there will be a meal prepared and served to community elders, Rose tells me.

We head to a third room, but before we even arrive I can tell by the smell of sawdust and wood what is offered here: it is the school's Industrial Education lab. This large, high-ceilinged room also serves as a classroom, but of a different kind. While there is a blackboard on the wall, the students are clustered around small wooden work-tables, complete with vices and stools around them.

The Industrial Education lab, or "shop" as it is often called in the school vernacular, is very well appointed. All manner of wood working equipment- lathes, belt sanders, a planer, drill press, and other "tools of the trade" are located around the room. At the back of the room, there is a welding station, metal lathe, and other metalwork tools

clustered together, next to a small office for the teacher. Given the amount of sawdust on

the floor and examples of student work at varying stages of completion, I sense that this is

a busy and valued school resource.

We break off the tour at this point: Rose checks her watch and indicates that the

Heritage Fair is about to begin shortly. As principal, her presence is required in the

gymnasium, and I encourage her to head there as I finish looking around the shop.

Watching her walk down the hallway, I can see students and teachers seeking her out to

ask questions about any number of things. She handles each one quickly and in their turn,

and then disappears into maelstrom of activity in the school gym.

A few minutes later, I also head to the Heritage Fair and take a seat in the gym.

There is a buzz of conversation all around as students, family, and members of the

community move about and cluster around the heritage projects. I note that the school's

gym is full-sized and has recently been updated to include a brand new floor, replacing the

old cork floor of 1970's vintage. Hundreds of chairs are set up facing the stage, and

behind this phalanx are tables upon which students have set up their heritage projects.

Looking back, I make note of the large student-made log benches (each with the Wolf and

Crow carved crests) positioned adjacent to the main doors.

A heritage fair project is completed on a large bristle board tri-fold and has the

family name of the student upon it in English. If a picture is portraying an Indigenous

elder from long ago, their Indigenous name may also be shown.   The amount of work and

dedication is clearly evident based upon the amount of time and effort that has gone into

these projects and by the willingness of the students to engage with their various audiences

and judges. The projects are neatly done, well laid out, well organized, and present a large

amount of information to viewers. In many cases, the historical intersections of

Indigenous and non-Indigenous families in the Yukon are woven together and proudly indicated. Many student projects are completed with written family histories, family trees, numerous old family photos, pictures of ancestors, and elders out on the land. Of interest are the pictures containing elders who themselves are in attendance at the Heritage Fair, showing them as younger people in black and white photos.

Of the approximately 20 displays, the majority are complimented by the inclusion of many items: native drums, moose-hide mittens and moccasins adorned with beading, and other artifacts (letters to and from relatives living in Europe, the World War II ID card of a grandfather, medals). As I mill about, the students readily engage with their audiences. For many of the elders, the fair gives them a chance to talk with each other- they point to items and photos that surface memories which spark new conversations. Throughout, there are judges moving from project to project with scoring and comment cards. They are many and varied in that there are not only community members fulfilling this role. Children from grades 1 to 4, appointed "junior judges", also bring their perspective to the evaluation process.

A teacher performs the role of Mistress of Ceremonies. Similar to Gina at Klondike School's potlatch, I make note that it is not Rose who is in the 'spotlight' at this event, but that it is led by a Mountainview staff member. She takes the stage and speaks through a microphone to the audience. We are asked to return to our seats and prepare for the afternoon's presentations. After greetings and expressions of thanks to the many contributors to this event, a group of student native dancers takes the stage. An adult leads the children with a drum as they dance their way onto the stage while singing the Welcoming Song in Southern Tutchone local language. All wear robes of black and red felt, adorned with white buttons which appear to be made of either oyster or abalone shell.

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Local Indigenous languages may be viewed as going through a revival in schools over the past three decades. Most Yukon schools, if they have a defined Indigenous student population, offer Indigenous language instruction as a school subject. (This can be difficult to implement in some urban Whitehorse schools where students may come from a diversity of First Nations, each with their own language).   Many elders still speak the Indigenous language their parents spoke with them when they were young, though due to age their numbers are decreasing. The Residential School era broke the natural process of language acquisition that had occurred for generations by removing the children, who are now elders, from their homes and families. Students in residential schools were punished for speaking their Indigenous language and were forced to speak English. Thus, the younger generations may not have acquired their Native language to a fluent level and thus Indigenous languages are not generally heard in use in the carrying out of public daily activities. As a result, Indigenous language is often evidenced in school activities by way of songs, and as at all schools in this study except Klondike School, Native Language classes are taught at Mountainview.

The age of children ranges from pre-school to teenager, and appear to be both Indigenous and non-Indigenous in background. The word "appear" is used purposely here in that, as stated previously, a segment of the Yukon school-aged population are children of mixed heritage. The history of the Yukon has been marked over time by the influx of white settlers over the last several centuries, slowly at first with the development of the fur trade, then more rapidly with thousands of gold seekers from around the world during the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898. This influx was further facilitated by the building of the Alaska Highway in 1942 which either ran through Indigenous communities or resulted in the sedentarization of nomadic peoples at year-round locations along the Alaska Highway.

In the present day, there are now at least 3 daily flights connecting the Yukon to major Canadian cities and the world, a further conduit of access to the Yukon. After hundreds of years of interracial contact, many children in the Yukon share a heritage which may be rooted, to varying degrees, in many different backgrounds. This point notwithstanding, it would not be an exaggeration to state that Indigenous culture takes prominence in this regard, given that nearly one-third, or 30.1% of children enrolled in schools were identified by their parents or guardians as First Nations students of Aboriginal descent (Government of Yukon, 2005). Thus, when observing children in Yukon schools, one cannot assume based upon physical characteristics alone the degree to which they may be of Indigenous heritage.

For those very young children who are just learning to native dance, they are shepherded through handholding, carried, and assisted by the older children in a caring and nurturing way. The students sing and dance traditional local Indigenous songs. They do the Owl Dance, dancing and singing to the beat of the drum, arms outstretched and fingers splayed in the form of the Great Horned Owl. The Grouse Dance follows. Students take turns entering the center of the circle, walking in the form of a grouse attracting a mate. By their concentration and smiles, the children show that they are dedicated and enjoying what they do. Once the dance is completed, the students dance off of the stage, single-file, to the sounds of the drum and a warm applause from an appreciative audience.

Once the more formal aspect of the Heritage Fair is complete, the audience is given time to review the projects again. I see Rose at a distance, engaged in conversation with a near-continuous stream of people. I take in a few more of the projects and then use her engagement as an opportunity to continue with a self-guided tour of the school to complete that which Rose and I did not finish together. Leaving through the large gym doors, I see

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(and smell) the cooking classroom located across the hall. Approximately a dozen community elders, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, are seated at the tables. There is a very large pot of moose stew on the stove. Bannock – a popular treat comprised of flour, baking powder, and water combined to make a dough and fried in vegetable oil or shortening– is also being prepared on the stove. Community elders sit and chat with each other, all the while being served their meals by student helpers.

I take the time to sit and talk with a few parents and students who I know from my time as a principal in another rural community 10 years ago. They are interested to learn how my family is doing and what brings me to their school today. I share with them a very brief overview of my trajectory over the past few years and inform them that I am attempting, through my program of study, to broaden the understanding of educational leadership in Yukon contexts and develop my research skills. As an educator and parent, I am genuinely interested in learning how their children- the children I knew as primary students have now progressed to high school and are about to spread their wings and take flight. I reflect that this is one of the rewards and satisfactions that take many years to realize in public education: to see how your students grow as a result of their time in our care. After enjoying some time with them, I continue on my tour of the school. I head back to where our tour began at the intersection point of the two main hallways near the main office and turn right down the other main hallway. This leads me past a number of classrooms for children of various ages and ends with a new resource centre and library. This centre is named after a community elder, teacher, and volunteer. It is bright, well equipped with books and magazines and a small bank of computer terminals for student research.

From all of this I'm left with the sense or feeling of the school as not solely a place to which children come each day, but as a much broader community resource where all who wish to come can feel valued and take part.   All ages and groups are welcomed here. While the nature of the enterprise is "education" this does not come as something which must create an artificial divide between school and community. In this way the school is a vital forum in which the community can see itself as present, rather than present as an edifice which works in isolation from the community.

At the end of this long hallway, a right turn leads to the wing for primary-aged children. Before looking into that area of the school, at the end of the hallway there is a button blanket displayed prominently on the wall. I look at the blanket and notice the two clan-symbols of Wolf and Crow outlined with the iridescent white buttons which give the blanket its name. I see a third symbol on the blanket, that of a butterfly. I make a mental note of this and remind myself to ask Rose about this later. I continue my right turn at the end of this hallway and look briefly into each of the primary rooms. They look newer than the other parts of the school. I remind myself that these rooms must also form part of the addition containing the resource centre.

Retracing my steps, I sit momentarily in the empty resource centre to collect my thoughts and look down the hallway back towards the office. The centre is a bright and well-organized space. Student movement is sporadic, given that most students are attending the Heritage Fair. Looking down the hallway, back towards the office and what would be the initial section built, I am reminded of the contrast between old and new school designs. This first section, while clean and well maintained, displays the conventional, institutional appearance of its age: rows of lockers along each wall,

classroom doors at regular intervals, and clocks protruding from the wall every 5m. The difference between old and new architecture is readily apparent.

Taking note of one of the clocks, I see that the school bell will ring in less than five minutes. In order to beat the hallway rush, I quickly make my way down the long hallway and position myself at the intersection of the two main corridors. Rose hurries down the hallway in order to be at the doors prior to the students exiting. It is readily apparent that she cares genuinely for her students in that she laughs with them, asks what they are up to for the weekend, and compliments them on a job well done with the Heritage Fair. Other than her presence and that of the vice-principal in the hallway, it is the first time I note anything approaching what could be considered "surveillance" of students by staff at Mountainview.

At the end of the day, announcements are made in English to the staff and student body through the intercom system. In contrast to Gina's small school, reaching all students is aided by the intercom due to the large physical footprint of Mountainview School. Similar to Hillside School, there is student engagement when announcements are made. Being a Friday afternoon, there are a number of activities both school and community related. These include:

1) A meeting of the Running Club

2) Junior Rangers meeting

3) An invitation to attend community movie night

4) A meeting of the High School Graduation decorating committee

5) The Grade 1 and 2 class will be having a bake sale next week

6) A call for students to bring in last year's phone books to be recycled

As we stand near the front door wishing the students a good weekend, Rose points out to me an Indigenous male student in Grade 7 who is leaving the school permanently today to transfer to another school in Whitehorse. At the end of the day, his name is announced on the Public Address system by the vice-principal (after student announcements are made), who wishes him all the best on behalf of the students and staff, stating that all will miss him. As the students slowly leave the school at the end of the day (it is the last day of the week before a long weekend), Rose is in the hallway wishing the students well and checking in with them. She sees the student who is departing for the last time, calls him over using his nickname, embraces him with a hug, and wishes him the very best with the new phase which lies ahead. Afterwards, she tells me the lengths she had gone to in order to make sure his transition to Whitehorse is a smooth one- phoning the principal of the receiving school, contacting the Special Programs department in Whitehorse, talking with his new teacher. She is worried he will get lost in the system in the "big city", and is genuinely fearful that this will happen.

The winter sun has set behind the mountains. Students and staff have largely departed to get a start on the long weekend. While standing with her and giving the students her best wishes for the weekend, I remind myself to ask Rose the meaning of the butterfly on the button blanket displayed at the end of the hallway. She tells me that, in addition to the two moieties of Wolf and Crow, the non-Indigenous designers included the butterfly to represent non-Indigenous people in the school. When I follow up with Rose on the meaning, if any, of the butterfly, she tells me that a butterfly in Southern Tutchone is a *Lalala*. Checking with the Native Language Instructor, it appears that there was no

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specific reason a butterfly was chosen. I surmise that it was picked as it is distinct from the other animal symbols which represent Indigenous moieties and clans in the Yukon: the wolf, the crow the beaver, the frog, and the eagle the principal symbols.

I gather my coat and boots for the drive home. I give thanks to Rose for a most interesting day and for the time devoted to my presence in the school today despite it being very busy and hectic.   As I depart, Rose carries on with her work and heads back to her office- a place I note that she has not been in all day.

Summary : Non-Indigenous principals in Indigenous Yukon contexts

The four Yukon school sites and the principals included in this study offer four different contexts which non-Indigenous principals work in and with Indigenous communities. In what follows I examine aspects of these four contexts in further detail.

Earlier in this chapter Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and field were introduced and described. How do Bourdieu's concepts then assist us in foregrounding particular aspects of the lives and work of non-Indigenous principals in Indigenous Yukon contexts? Based upon the descriptions of each school setting, it becomes apparent that each constitutes a distinct field or social context situated within the larger Yukon educational field. If it is accepted, as Lynham et al. (2007) assert, that fields form and shape habitus, then further examination of the similarities and differences of each context is required in order to illuminate more clearly and analyze the ways in which the Yukon field may shape the habitus of the principal.

Four distinct school contexts

The two urban schools, Hillside Elementary and Klondike School, are both contained within Whitehorse city limits. Yet, each school serves a distinct clientele, caters to similar and different age groupings, and are at each end of the spectrum in terms of

school size, with Hillside being one of the largest elementary schools in Whitehorse, and Klondike school one of the smallest. A similar distinction may be made between the rural Moose Meadow and Mountainview Schools: Mountainview provides a K-12 educational program that Moose Meadow does not. As principal, Rose therefore has an additional administrative activity in ensuring that high school graduation requirements as set forth by the BC Ministry of Education can be attained through the programming offered at Mountainview School. This involves additional layers which include scheduling and timetabling semestered and unsemestered courses together, advising students (and their parents or guardians) on course selection, and ensuring that the programs offered at her school are British Columbia Ministry of Education-approved in order for them to count for credit towards a high school diploma. These are aspects the principals of the other three schools do not engage in, given one offers a K-3 program and the others K-7 and K-9 programs.

For each principal, their life story plays an important role in how they construe and enact their educational leadership practice. Each became a school principal following individualized pathways and timelines, and therefore there appears no specific, standard, or prescribed pathway to the principalship. For example, while Jim and Gina are relatively close in age and are at a stage of life where they are both grandparents, Jim has over 30 more years experience as a principal than does Gina, given that she began only three years ago as the principal of Klondike School. Given the length of his career, Jim is the only principal who has been a principal in another school prior to his current assignment.

None of the participants arrived at the principalship as a result of any specific organizational initiative to assist them with getting there, such as a leadership development program, or having taken a masters-level degree prior to becoming a principal. It could

perhaps best be stated that they aspired to the principalship by submitting their curriculum vitae and application to the competition for the position they now each hold. All four principals in this study have a teaching assignment, and regardless of the school are not full-time school administrators, thus becoming a principal has not removed them from the classroom or regular interaction with their students. This duality between teacher and principal, and how principals navigate the two distinct roles of principal and teacher is an important point which will be particularly important to explore in Chapter 5: Findings.

CHAPTER 5
FINDINGS

Question 1

How do non-Indigenous principals in Yukon Indigenous contexts construct their professional identity and role as educational leaders[6]?

Past school experiences: "It was more of a factory than a school"

Stories about past school experiences of the four Yukon principals in this study emerge as significant frames of reference in relation to which they positioned their professional identity and role as leaders. Each of them attended public school in various locations across Canada. The power of their memories, and their lasting influences, was underscored early on in the interview process by Jim, principal of Hillside School:

> It just seemed to me to be such a restrictive atmosphere at my school. Even the building. I think over the years as I've actually had the opportunity to be an administrator and realize that I had the power to affect change. Those are the memories that directed me. (Jim, interview 3)

All four participants indicated that their school experiences were predominantly negative ones. They recalled the fear and anxiety they felt in school, as students. In the case of both male

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[6] Chapter 5 presents a "thick description" (Denzin, 1989) or rich, detailed recount of the responses to the research questions in order to present a nuanced, evocative and fine-grained examination of each of their lives and their identities. As articulated in my discussion of a critical ethnography, the aim is to present the webs of social relationships, and the voices, feelings, actions, and interactions and meanings of interactions of the participants around the issue of their work as school principals, all this by means of rich textured account. As a result, Chapter 5 contains a somewhat lengthier account compared to the other chapters of the present dissertation. The chapter's length, however, offers readers with the opportunity to sense the shades and nuances reflected in the positions and perceptions expressed by participants in ways which may be otherwise difficult to present.

principals in this study, such was their level of contempt for and disengagement with school that they dropped out early on in high school (Grade 10) and entered the work force in order to escape what was, for them, an ordeal.

Jim recalled that his school experience in the Montréal area was rigid and akin to a "factory", characterized by straight rows, where nothing new was ever tried in terms of the teaching methods. He described his school experience as follows:

> It was more of a factory than a school…So I left school, I had to repeat grade 9 and then left school at the end of Grade 10 so I did not graduate. I like to think that I was smart enough but school just did not work at all for me after a while. (Jim, interview 3)

Not only were the reflections on his negative school experience limited to his encounters with school, but Jim's recollections also surfaced memories of what he viewed as disaffection on the part of his parents in relation to school in the 1950s:

> I also think that school to me was a relatively unwelcoming place as a kid. It wasn't horribly hostile, but I mean you could see it in your parents. Your parents were tense when they walked into the school that I can remember to this day, and I think it's just institutional, that's how institutions work. (Jim, interview 1)

The negative experience of the public school was reinforced even more strongly by Bob, who, like Jim, quit school in Grade 10 and returned to it later on in life. In Bob's case, due to his father's work requirements, he moved around constantly during his youth and no sooner established friendships with peers that it was time to move again. Regardless of the location, Bob's experiences in many communities culminated to form a lasting memory of schooling for him:

> I was the baddest of the bad when I went to school…literally…I went to Catholic schools…run either by nuns or priests depending on the school…I fooled around so I got the strap a lot. I hated school. (Bob, interview 1)

In contrast, when Gina and Rose reflected upon their school experiences, fear was an

emotion that emerged as formative in their past experiences. Gina described the principal from

her early days in a Yukon school:

> I guess you remember feelings that you had. I remember rows of desks and sitting
> and being afraid of the principal…I mean I never want to have children feel like
> that. (Gina, interview 1)

Rose surfaced even stronger recollections of fear when talking about her early experiences

as a student in eastern Canada, and reflected that, perhaps, they could be similar to how school has

been experienced by some Indigenous members of her present school community. She viewed her

past experience as "180 degrees opposite" to how she viewed her school today. She forcefully

brought to the surface her entry to school by offering the following reflections from her childhood:

> In kindergarten I spent the first half of the year screaming, crying at the window as they
> ripped me away from my mother. In grade one, we moved from a little country school into
> the suburbs of [a large city]. I used to run away at recess and run home and my mother
> would have to return me. I had a grade one teacher…and I hated school- I lived in
> absolute fear that I would do something wrong. And that's how I…schools were, you
> know, they were strapping kids…I can certainly identify with what First Nations people
> talk about…my school experience wasn't warm and fuzzy. I was scared stiff every day I
> went to school. (Rose, interview 1)

Rose's invocation with her past school experiences operates as a means to create insight

and understanding into the predominantly negative Indigenous encounters with residential schools

which have impacted residents in her community.

For the participants in this study, their reconstructions of past memories of schooling

inform how they construct their professional identities and role as educational leaders. These self-

narratives are constructions which represent their experiences, how they think about who they are

and what they do, and the meaning they make of these things. Each of the participants clearly

articulates their experiences as students as characterized by fear, anxiety, and the use of corporal

punishment. They also describe what these experiences mean to them: Not only do they recollect

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these negative experiences, as they describe in the following subsection, they are also able to

identify and describe how these experiences-and the memories of them- are at the forefront of how

they construct themselves as principals and construe and enact their role as educational leaders.

School experiences: "I just don't want that atmosphere in the school I run"-Rose

Despite negative memories, each of the four principals clearly articulated how they

conceptualized their role and identities as educational leaders in the Yukon. In some instances, as

in Bob's case, this connection flowed from negative recollections.

> To come full circle, what that has done for me as an administrator and a teacher…for me
> it's important to really go out of my way to give these kids guidance, and I do it in a very
> friendly, joking, reward-based way…and the kids love it. My experiences in school were
> always pretty negative, so as a teacher and as an administrator I've gone 180 degrees
> totally opposite. (Bob, interview 1)

Rose's comments were similar to those of Bob. Her own school experiences and her

memories of them, characterized by such emotions as fear and anxiety, are highly influential in

how Rose views her current role as principal at Mountainview School. She sees a role in making

the school a place that children want to come and feel comfortable engaging with adults:

> I just don't want that atmosphere in the school that I run. I don't want kids to be shaking in
> their boots or hating to open the door of the school or feeling physically ill or trying to run
> away at recess. So what I try to do is make it a warm and fuzzy place. You still have rules
> and you still have respect and order and all that sort of stuff but I don't want a kid not to be
> able to come and talk to me. (Rose, interview 1)

In discussing this aspect, Rose brought up the issue of corporal punishment. Jim and Bob

also described how corporal punishment, in the forms of beatings or strappings the children were

subjected at the hands of staff members, were conducted as acceptable practice when they were

students. Now prohibited by the Yukon Education Act (1990) in all Yukon schools, Rose recalled

her visceral response to corporal punishment when asked by a previous principal to witness the

strapping of students prior to the institution of the aforementioned Act:

There was still a strap when I got here because I used to have to go and witness Tony strapping kids but it used to make me feel physically ill. (Rose, interview 1)

This presents a stark contrast to how, in her previous comments, she feels the atmosphere of her school should be today. Bob also recalled the use of corporal punishment in his own school experiences. For him, holding his past experiences up against the current system in which he works today presents as two fundamentally divergent constructs. He shared these differences with me:

Night and day. I mean, you're a little younger than I am, but when you went to school in the good old days you just didn't talk back to a teacher. I mean, there was corporal punishment. It was tough. So, there's two totally different systems, and me personally having gone to school in that system it's probably one of the main reasons I quit school in grade 10. (Bob, interview 1)

While Gina did not recall such vivid images to mind from her own school experiences, she did recollect how the involvement of her own parents in her school experience influenced how she now sees her role with parents at Klondike School. She illuminated the contrast between these two aspects:

I know that my parents were absolutely not involved in the school. If there was a problem, if there was a huge problem, they would come. That is something that I work really hard at this school is to make it very welcoming and opening to parents, so that they feel comfortable and safe in talking to me about anything with the kids where I can help. So, that's a huge thing, the whole parent issue. (Gina, interview 1)

In contrast to the negative memories of their own school experiences, participants underscored how important it was for them, as principal, to make school an open and welcoming place for children and parents. Both Gina and Rose shared reasons why the role of principals had changed from that of authoritarian or disciplinarian. From Gina's perspective, the current schools are viewed as communities. Rose more generally suggested that life was just different in the 1960's than it is now, and that societal values at that time were such that it was normal for teachers

to be unapproachable by parents.

Specific to working with Indigenous children and families, Jim framed his experience as having a strong impact in that regard. He described how important it was for him to recall and talk about how the children from Oka (which was later the site of the 1990 armed standoff between the Mohawks of the Kanesatake reserve and the Canadian Federal government) were treated in his school. His early negative school experiences were a trigger that led to the emergence of his understanding of how others may have perspectives on schooling that may diverge from the dominant Euro-western paradigm. He referred to his reflections and their impact on his thoughts on these distinctions as he grew as an educator:

> I think it was a crucial part of the puzzle. One of the things I learned very slowly over the years was how First Nations kids and families, how many of them looked at school and that view is radically different from non-First nations just because of their own experience and their own worldview, the way they educated kids in their own society for thousands of years. It is diametrically different from what we're trying to do in schools right now. (Jim, interview 1)

Jim identifies the tensions that exist as a result of the imposition and delivery of core curriculum designed and mandated by a dominant educational system overtop of Indigenous education and learning modalities. He describes the distinctions between what he believes occurs in schools- the teaching of mandated curriculum as something abstract and detached from the lifeworld of children and the way that Indigenous children were educated in their own society:

> I think we have to spend way more time and energy on the land with kids and connecting that with their language, whether it's their language or whether it's just *the* language because a lot of the kids who take Southern Tutchone here are not Native kids, not First Nations kids, but that whole business of separating the language from the land that's a tremendous problem that occurred over the years, and it's starting to dovetail, it's starting to come back through the schools now, which is great. (Jim, interview 5).

He explained the struggle between the hegemony of the dominant educational system with the Indigenous cultural and educational traditions. The emotion that Jim injected into his voice

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reinforced my belief in his conviction that his formative experiences shaped his views of schooling and that how schools treated children must change.

In sum, the experiences of non-Indigenous school principals as children in schools emerge as formative in narrating their professional identities and role as educational leaders. In contrast to the memories they recall as students themselves, they do not wish to act as authoritarian, inaccessible, and threatening to children, parents, or the community. Rather, they seek to make their schools more open, engaging, non-threatening for all, and a place children and parents wish to come every day and feel free of fear. Their own vivid and not altogether pleasant recollections of the past inform their professional identities and role in their current assignments.

This examination of their early lives and school experiences reveals that three of the four participants grew up in Indigenous communities or went to schools that had identifiable First Nations populations when they were students. They therefore appear to have followed similar trajectories in that they came to the principalship with prior experiences or encounters with Indigenous people. These encounters emerged later in their careers as teachers and principals. Further, the principals in this study began to substantively learn about Indigenous culture and traditions, and engage in contact with Indigenous people after they relocated to the North from other areas in southern Canada.

Life experiences: "I think being a parent for me has been my hugest asset"-Rose

Yukon school principals draw upon a wide range of life experiences and bring these experiences to bear on how they construe and enact their role in schools. In some cases, it is the previous life experience that propelled a particular principal into teaching. In other cases, a principal sensed early on that teaching was a career goal for him/her. Principals readily talked of

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their life experiences as formative ones. Perhaps exemplifying this is an example shared by Jim. The length of time he has been a teacher and school principal-almost 40 years- has fostered a particular depth and breadth of experience upon which to reflect and comment at length. During his early years as a principal, he actively sought out experiences that have come to inform how he views his role in schools in the present. The lessons he learned were not readily and immediately apparent, but took a measure of time for him to realize and later on, apply to his practice. For Jim, the power of this formative time was easy for him to express, and he did so readily and without pause when he stated:

> …what I think has transferred to me from life in general to the school is say living in Tincup Lake where I spent eight years. I spent a lot of time talking to Elders (older native people in town), I spent a lot of time sitting in kitchens, and talking to people, having coffee with families and so on. One of the things that struck me every time was the gentleness of the people that I worked with, that I talked to. The indirect way they had of dealing with almost everything in life. Whereas culturally we are attuned to just the opposite, to be very direct, let's get the job done, and it took me a long time, listening to some of these people to understand that they were really teaching me through these long involved stories that I had trouble sometimes getting the point out of. So the stories are one thing, but the technique is something that I think I was able to gradually absorb. So in the school, I think it is conscious now, at one time it was unconscious, I do practice that approach with kids. There are times when you need to be very direct but often I take a roundabout route and in order to do that you need time. So if you're an administrator you have to somehow in the course of the busy day carve out enough time to work with kids in that manner, because if you're day is so chopped up and fragmented and full of jobs, you never get that quality time with the kids, and it's that time that really makes the difference. The kid in crisis who I need to spend an hour with, I have to have that hour, I can't say, hey – 10 minutes and if your problem isn't solved you're out the door, and off to someone else, and yet we do it all the time. That's enough, and off we go. And yet a whole hour or an hour and a half is what's going to help that kid. (Jim, interview 1)

The stories of Indigenous Elders present as foundational to shaping Jim's thinking about schools. He draws a clear link between these formative experiences spent with Indigenous families and elders and how he interacts with children in his school today. As a result of these experiences, he describes the stark contrast and differences between Indigenous and Eurocentric epistemologies of learning, illuminating the contrast of an indirect Indigenous approach where

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stories are used with that of the hurried, results-oriented Euro-western way of viewing life in schools. In his own case, he has adopted these Indigenous approaches- indirect ones which permit listening and the building of understanding to guide his practice and interactions with children. Further, Jim described the influence of an Indigenous colleague and educator whom he respects very much. The world-view of this colleague has been a guiding force for him throughout his career, and specifically his work at Hillside School:

> [A former colleague], years and years ago when I taught in Tincup Lake, I remember him saying that First Nations kids must have a foot in both worlds, the traditional and the modern world. I like to think that kids who come to this school, whether they are First Nation or not have a foot in each of those worlds. That's what we've been concentrating on here. In words and in deeds. (Jim, interview 2)

Jim's reflections reveal important elements that require further examination. First is his description and construction of two worlds characterized as different from each other: one Indigenous, the other non-Indigenous. From an educational standpoint, the historical legacy of the dominance and hegemony of public schools in the Canadian north rests within the dark shadow cast by the residential school experience. A role of residential schools was to not only submerge Indigenous language and culture, but to assimilate Indigenous children into Western society through the marginalization and obliteration of Indigenous culture and language. In such a way, Indigenous culture, way of life, language, and sense of identity was seen as deficient and inferior, and thus marginalized by colonizing groups nearly to the point of extinguishment.

When inquiring about life experiences, both Rose and Gina recollected their experiences with motherhood as being formative and having an influence on their identity and role as educational leaders. For Rose, being a parent of two children was identified as the most important asset to which she could bring to her role as principal of Mountain View School. While she did not elaborate on this at length, Rose made clear how parenthood was foundational to

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informing her practice:

> I think being a parent for me has been my hugest asset because once I became a parent and watched my kids go through a school system I knew what it was like from the other side of the fence. (Rose, interview 2)

Gina similarly indicated she drew heavily upon her experience as a single parent. In her case, she left the Territory with her three children to pursue teacher training at university, and described this as a life experience that constituted much of what she brought to bear when interacting with parents in her daily practice. Her experiences, coupled with the fact that she has lived in the Yukon all of her life is important to Gina. Except for leaving for the aforementioned professional training at university, all of her professional work experiences have been Yukon-based. Her family has grown over time and now her grandchildren attend the same elementary school that she did as a young student. Much like Rose, it was with emotion that Gina shared how, from early on in her career, being a parent influenced her practice:

> You know, I think that more than courses I've taken, and I don't know how professional it is or whatever, is I rely on life experiences. The reason I'm saying that is because for many, many years, a single parent raising kids. Now, as a grandparent, you know, with the kids, the little ones again, but of relating to parents and the school community on that level. That always, above everything, it's about the kids. I remember my first year of teaching, it was horrible just because I was hired the day before school started. It was a Grade 2 class. It was a wicked class, but my kids at the time -- Steven was in Grade 1 -- they were in Grade 1, Grade 4 and 8. When I looked at these kids I would think, "Oh, God." I would go to do something and I would think of Steven in Grade 1. I would think, "Oh, no. Do I want the teacher to [do that to him]" (Gina, interview 1)

Jim and Gina both communicate an ethic of care, speaking of listening and nurturing, yet they do so presenting two distinctly different perspectives. While both speak of their childhood experiences and their desire to make school different for the children in their schools, Jim described his role as a broker between two worlds, and Gina conceives her role in terms of mothering children. These gendered narratives are indicative, as Rose employs the comment of "two worlds" when making her distinction between school and home as two different places, each

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separated by a fence. This resonates with Jim's reference to there being two worlds: one identified as a result of the dominant Euro-western frame, the other typified by home and community.

Gina further recalled her experiences as a mother and teacher in a small community where children of the same age grouping would play together after school. The circumstances of such teaching assignments are that there may only be one classroom per grade (or combined grades in the same classroom) based upon student enrolment. As a result, the roles of parent, mother, and teacher become intertwined:

> I was teaching my own children and a lot of the kids in the school, because they were all friends and a lot of them used to come over to our house, it was so funny in the school because lots of them would call me Mom instead of Mrs. Brown. So, it was this whole motherhood thing, and then, I had foster children…certainly in the same school as me. So, there's always been that end of it. (Gina, interview 5)

For both Gina and Rose, how students are viewed, and the relationships which exist between the children and their teacher in small, rural, and isolated schools are associated with the experience of motherhood. In contradistinction, Jim and Bob did not recollect aspects related to parenting as life experiences that shaped their identity and role as educational leaders. Jim looked back on his early years in the stock market and as a railway worker as being a key factor propelling him towards a career in teaching. For him, this diversity of life experiences resonated with the assertions of an educational philosopher he encountered when completing his post-graduate study:

> I forget which educational philosopher, I think it is Thomas Greenfield [who] emphasizes that in his writings that principals should have a certain degree of life experience because why should there be a distinction between life out there and school. It's all really the same package. And I think in my case just living in the North, and all the experiences I've had in the North, outside the school as well, shapes the way I look at kids in the school - formal training, very little indeed in that area at all. (Jim, interview 1)

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Jim raises two interesting points here: first is the questioning of why there should be distinctions between life outside of schools and that within schools. Secondly, his views of children in his school are partially formed based on his lived experiences in the North and validated by his reflection on Greenfield. His experiences both in other fields of employment, and in life in the North in general, take prominence over professional formal training in relation to how he views children and schools. When asked whether his prior work experience outside of education shaped his views as an educator and educational leader he replied:

> One of the lessons I learned by working in other areas was how much I wanted to get out and get into something I really enjoyed doing, which is part of work. I worked in the stock market, worked for [the railway], and so on. (Jim, interview 1)

When I remarked that this was an interesting combination of experiences underpinning a career as a teacher and principal in the Yukon, Jim reflected for a moment. Punctuating his comments with the laughter of someone looking back over many years on how his life-course had followed a convoluted path, he shared more on this particular phase of his life:

> Yes, isn't that an interesting combination? I think in the back of my mind I always wanted to teach and I was on my way actually to work on a doctorate many years ago in the 60's when life kind of derailed me, and when I got back on track again that was no longer an option, but the idea of teaching was still there. I was fancying myself teaching at the university level in history actually. But the idea of teaching was always there, and I think it is probably from childhood. And so when the opportunity came to shift a little bit and go into high school teaching (which is what I specialized in at first) it was a very natural thing to do and has been a natural thing ever since. It wasn't a hard sell at all for me. I don't think there was anything in the stock exchange or [the railway] that propelled me towards teaching except that I wanted to get out of those jobs (laughing). (Jim, interview 1)

By his own admission, Bob brings both a diversity of life experiences gathered from his travels around the globe and a diversity of careers to who he is as a principal. After dropping out of school in Grade 10, he describes the wide range of life experiences he engaged in which, ironically, led him back to the classroom as a student:

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So, I quit school in Grade 10. After that I got my millwright's papers, heavy equipment operator, I got into flying. Anyway, did all kinds of really crazy jobs. I worked for [a Yukon department store] for a little while even. I worked for [a trucking company] for a number of years in the Yukon, and then, after my stint with [the trucking company] I took off to Europe for two years…and when I got back from Europe I just thought - I was very well read. I just couldn't get enough of reading, so I felt pretty in tune with a lot of stuff, in other words: current events or just reading the classics...So, I did a lot of reflecting and I decided when I got back that I'd go back to school. So, I packed up everything, went down to College, got my Grade 12. It took me a year, so I did it. (Bob, interview 1)

Bob was determined: Grade 12 completion behind him, he then went on to university, where he completed his Bachelor of Education degree. Looking back on his life path, he described how his diversity of experiences brought him right back to the same remote and isolated Yukon community where he moved with his parents and siblings many years before. The difference was, this time, he returned as a teacher.

How then does this breadth of experience inform how Bob constructs his professional identity and role as an educational leader? Entering teaching and the principalship later in life, and informed by this diversity of life experiences, as a principal, he acts in particular ways that are grounded in his desire to make school fun for his students:

I think, because when you go back to school in your forties, you've got a whole lot of life experience behind you and nobody's going to pull the wool over your eyes. You're pre-seasoned although I'm pretty zany and crazy and stay very young at heart. That, I guess, is another thing is my childish nature, if you will. I think it's really served me in good stead here because I'm not afraid to make a fool of myself with the kids and I do lots, like purposely. (Bob, interview 1)

For Bob, having an extensive background upon which to draw is important as it informs how he engages with the children in his school. As someone who believes he has a "childish nature" he walks a fine line between being the principal, and someone who the children do not take seriously. Bob clarifies this by describing that the children do see him as principal, but not through the traditional lens of principal as authoritarian and someone who metes out punishment.

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While Rose previously identified motherhood as a key life experience which informs her professional identity and role, she did not subsequently invoke other experiences which either propelled her into teaching or were formative in terms of professional identity or how she constructed her role as an educational leader. Thus, it appears that she frames her professional identity primarily through the lenses of her motherhood role. Rose did not want to be a teacher, and instead had her sights set on being a tour guide or a lawyer. Yet, after working in offices (and not enjoying the experience) she enrolled in a teacher training program at a small university which was, from her perspective at the time, designed differently than programs found at another larger university in the area. It was only after completing this program that she felt that she wanted to be a teacher:

> I'd say probably my experience at [small university] opened my mind a little bit to different ways of doing things, although it was still pretty 60s even in the 70s but you're still reading Discipline Without Tears and all those things but I think at [the small university] it was kind of a maverick university because it wasn't [another large university]. (Rose, interview 1)

In Rose's case, a key distinction of the program she engaged in many years ago is reflective of the K-12 school she is in today. Rather than engaging in a particular stream such as Primary, Elementary, or Secondary education, her teacher training encompassed the three grade divisions present in Mountainview School. In hindsight, as someone who did not want to be a teacher, Rose's engagement with post-secondary education was a transformative experience in that it led her to her first teaching job located in the Yukon, and eventually to the principalship which she is in currently.

Post-secondary experiences: "I didn't set out to be an administrator"- Rose

Jim reflected on the relevance of the mid-career professional preparation he engaged in once in the principal position for a number of years. In doing so, he referred

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back to his magisterial studies, framed within the context of already having a number of

years of diverse experience as a principal behind him as he engaged in post-graduate study:

> Very little of what I myself took, my studies at the graduate level were in curriculum not administration...I was actually specializing in curriculum at the time), very little of what I learned has that kind of applicability now. So if the question is...how should [administrators] be trained...I'm really torn about that question, that whole concept, because I think we need to really radically shift our thinking. But we need to do it first by redefining what administrators are, and what they should be doing in schools. In other words, I think that there is a sort of a conception out there of what a principal does, and is. And then there is reality. (Jim, interview 1)

Jim raises questions of educational purpose and the need for alignment between

what it is that principals do, and better definition of what it is that principals should be

doing. He struggles with training and development of administrators when he believes that

the role of principals needs to be redefined and articulated, indicating his belief that there is

a disconnection between training and development, and the realities if the job. Thus, the

question he raises is not whether principals need training and development, but whether or

not there is congruence between the role of the principal and what graduate students are

offered in magisterial-level educational leadership programs. When probed further in our

interview to reflect more upon his magisterial experiences (which, he admitted, were well

over 20 years ago) he recalled the following:

> To take a year, to spend time in Victoria, and to spend time in that course and to actually sit and start reflecting on what I was actually trying to do was transforming for me, because when I left there I wasn't any wiser I guess, but I suddenly had a tool that I didn't have before and I guess it's metacognition to step outside myself and watch myself as a leader, and ask myself all sorts of questions about what I was doing (Jim, interview 1)

Of note is the importance Jim places on the reflective space magisterial study

created for him as much as what was taught. Rose engaged in magisterial studies and

found them to be of benefit, even if they were removed somewhat from her particular

context. Similar to Jim, while she began her studies in the area of Educational

Administration, she switched out of this program and into Curriculum Studies:

> I would say going back to do my masters over three summers there were a lot of visiting professors- Australia, Florida, you name it. They weren't familiar with my situation but I think the most valuable thing is just sharing ideas. You're in a room with a whole bunch of people, some of whom are administrators. I started out doing my masters in administration. I switched to curriculum. (Rose, interview 1)

Rose recalled how she did not intentionally set out for herself the goal of becoming

a school principal. Rose described her perceptions of the students enrolled in

administration programs, and the degree of specificity on the part of educational systems in

terms of the field of study required of principals engaging in a master's degree. She

elaborated on this distinction:

> ...you knew they were all administrators first off, even though it was summertime this is a room of dead serious administrators, some of whom were much younger than me because I think I was 45 when I started, and they were clearly going to be administrators by the time they were 30 and 35. And that's what they wanted to do. They were career administrators. I'm not. I didn't want to be. I didn't set out to be an administrator. Curriculum was way more fun. (Rose, interview 1)

When probed as to why she felt the way that she did in regards to her brief

experience in the Educational Administration stream, Rose identified the aspect of

personality as a driver behind the career choices educators make and what is required of

them by employers when engaging in post-graduate study, suggesting that the purpose of a

magisterial degree in educational administration is to primarily meet career aspirations and

employer requirements:

> Again, it must be personality. It must be a certain set of goals, a certain life path that they've chosen. I don't know that a master's degree in curriculum would be okay for some people. I think whoever they work for, their board, may be demanding an administration degree. Well, nobody told me I had to do administration, they just said you have to have a masters. I said, "Okay, I'll do it." (Rose, interview 1)

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Rose raised the aspect of professional preparation which intentionally included

Indigenous aspects in the curriculum. This was not in response to questions specific to

masters-level programs, but rather in regards to the value of practical experience and

professional development which was contextually relevant to the Yukon. Rose recalled

that she had engaged in a week-long course titled "A Short Course for Principals of First

Nations Schools".   Describing the value of this course, she shared the following

recollection and observations:

> ...well it was run by First Nations people for a start. Experienced people who had ended up in administration for whatever reason who are dealing with all kinds of First Nations problems so it was very focused on First Nations which is a big component in my community so it was good to just realize that there are problems everywhere and that I think the Yukon in a lot of ways is leaps and bounds ahead of other jurisdictions. (Rose, interview 1).

Rose found value in professional development that was offered from a First

Nations perspective by Indigenous scholars and practitioners dealing with issues similar to

those in her own context. This short course added further perspective to her work and gave

Rose a reference point against which to gauge Yukon developments and situations. This

presented as a highly valuable and informative learning opportunity for her, in contrast to

her previous experiences in an educational administration program.

Professional interactions: Self-made islands and fractured networks

There are approximately 45 school-based educational administrators in Yukon schools.

They are affiliated with a professional association titled the Association of Yukon School

Administrators (AYSA). Distinct from principals in British Columbia, Yukon principals and vice-

principals are members of the Yukon Teachers' Association in conjunction with the Territory's

teachers. This creates a dynamic different from other jurisdictions where teachers and principals

are members of different bargaining units or unions. Informed by his experience as a principal in both BC and Yukon, Jim describes this nuance:

> …when I was in BC as an administrator, I belonged to the local chapter of the principals and vice-principals association of BC and I found that useful, but I find that being a member of AYSA very much more immediate, very local. We don't have any outside jurisdiction at all or affiliation really so I find that because we are part of the YTA anyway it is not as critical that we have our own association, as opposed to BC where we were two separate entities after 1988. (Jim, interview 1)

For Jim, engagement with colleagues must be centered on some practical purpose related to his school. In terms of professional socialization with other administrators outside of the Territory, he offers the following example:

> To some extent, not to a great extent at all, usually to people I've met at conferences. E-mail is wonderful, because you can have that instant contact, for example, in November this year I was in Winnipeg for the Sharing Our Success conference and met a principal of the school in Ganawakee outside of Montreal - Mohawk immersion and we have been talking back and forth. That is one of my great interests so, yeah… but again it is not something I do a lot of, but I do some. (Jim, interview 1)

When asked how this type of professional interaction informed his role as principal of his school, Jim suggested that it was an opportunity to learn new things and inform his practice as a means of addressing a particular problem or issue:

> Typically if I contact somebody I met out there it is because I have an interest here that I would like to get more information on.   That is the case with the fellow from Ganawakee. I am interested in Aboriginal language immersion. This guy runs a school that specializes in it. How do you do it? What does it look like? So it's usually a very specific thing and the information that comes back to me and forms that very specific issue that I'm dealing with. (Jim, interview 1)

It appears that professional interactions with local colleagues within the Territory occur on an ad hoc basis depending upon the issues to be addressed. As Jim describes, engagement occurs in such a way that it is individuals who select and engage only with the individuals with whom they wish to consult. If required, this person may be external to the Yukon, as in the case of Jim's engagement with the principal offering Mohawk immersion. Professional interactions flow within

defined social relationships, and this in relation to problem-solving issues.

This suggests that principals navigate professional socialization on their own, and within the frame of established social networks. Jim knows who to call. In contrast, newer, less experienced administrators, whose social networks are more confined, may feel left to their own devices when dealing with problems or issues, particularly if they do not know who to call (or are not called upon). Jim observes:

> I rarely just sit or stand and chat. I would rather talk about "what are you doing here", "what does your field trip policy look like in your jurisdiction", that kind of thing. So I tend to get very specific information back. It must have some impact on what I do here. To me it is just accumulating more information from somebody who is more experienced in a certain area. (Jim, interview 1)

> From what Jim describes above, there appears to be little in the way of an actual

professional community. Contact is initiated based on there being a "problem" to be solved. Further, professional socialization occurs primarily amongst people who are perceived as competent by their peers in the quest of gathering more information in order to help solve their problems. Thus, professional interactions are minimal. As a result, what emerges appears to be a fragmented sense of professional community.

In contrast to Jim, for Bob, prior unpleasant experiences with unions in another profession colour how he views engagement with professional organizations. He struggled somewhat to explain his position:

> I've never found AYSA to be - from my perspective I don't dislike it, but I don't like it. I pay my dues, and they do good work. I will say that, but I guess I've just grown used to the fact that I'm isolated out here. There are times when I know I should go to AYSA meetings, and I just always can find an excuse not to go. It's not from disinterest. I don't know what it is. I think it harkens back, and I don't know if this is really the reason, but it harkens back to I used to be union president out (a Yukon mine) with 450 miners. (Bob, interview 1).

> Bob's comments are revealing for a number of reasons. First, he expresses indifference in

regards to his engagement with his professional association, and encounters difficulty when attempting to articulate the reasons why. While he does not see AYSA as an educational forum in which he feels he would like to contribute as a member, he nonetheless pays his fees in order to maintain his membership but does not contribute more than that. Conversely, he appears to get little in return for being a member.

When reflecting upon the reasons why his engagement is limited, he associates participation as an AYSA member with his negative memories as union president at a mine, despite there being differences between 'association as professional community' and 'union as body organized to negotiate with the employer'. AYSA, as a sub-association of the Yukon Teachers Association, does not engage directly with the Yukon Government in contract negotiations but acts as an advocacy mechanism for Yukon school administrators. Rather than feel an affiliation with a larger professional community of Yukon school administrators, Bob admits to feeling isolated in relation to AYSA, referring to this isolation as an existential fact of his life. While he may associate with community members and colleagues in his school, he avoids the Department of Education meetings to which he is summoned, eschews AYSA meetings, and has difficulty clearly articulating the reasons behind this.

For Bob, when principals do come together, it is within the frame of Department of Education meetings which are called three to four times per school year. For him, this adds a negative element to the gatherings:

> … there's all kinds of administrative stuff, which affords you the opportunity to interact. Usually when we're called into whether we're having an administrative meetings or, you know, special meetings or whatever, the one thing that keeps me going is the fact that I can interact in a more personal way with my colleagues and find out what's happening. Carmacks, is it similar? Attendance issues we may discuss because we're having some attendance issues here right now with a couple of students. So, that kind of stuff is invaluable, but when we sit down to whatever the department has in store for us it's

sometimes like, "What's the point?" There's a lot of that. (Bob, interview 1)

The language that Bob uses indicates that, for him, Department of Education meetings are perceived as top-down events, forced upon him, and to which he is summoned to attend by his employer. His apathy towards these meetings is clear, as is his desire not to go to them.   He describes these meetings as bureaucratic in nature, with a set agenda focused on information and technical details. Bob reveals that what keeps him going back to these meetings, albeit reluctantly, is an opportunity for personal interaction with colleagues and to find out what is going on elsewhere. The nature of the personal interaction is not necessarily to engage in broader educational conversations, but instead as an information gathering strategy to learn what is happening at other schools. It appears that this type of learning only occurs at these mandated meetings, and not as the result of the ongoing interaction of members in a larger professional community. Given the geographically dispersed nature of Yukon schools, AYSA meetings led by the association president, and with full attendance of AYSA members, occur when school administrators are called in for management meetings by the Yukon Department of Education.

Thus, if Bob does not leave his school to attend meetings that he does not really want to be at in the first place, he is isolated as principal of Moose Meadow School and has little awareness and understanding of what goes on in other schools. Much the same as Jim, in Bob's case, the engagement in educational conversations occurs only as a result of there being functional issues to attend to- the "administrative stuff" on the agenda or problems to be dealt with- and not at a philosophical or conceptual level. Attending such meetings is primarily about gathering information from colleagues. Beyond that, Bob sees little merit in the meetings which the Department of Education summons principals to attend.

Further reinforcing his view of professional associations, Bob recalled issues he faced over

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the past number of years at Moose Meadow School where he felt that his professional associations have not been there to support him. Thus, when asked questions about professional interaction and the role AYSA and the YTA may play as a vehicle for socialization, Bob found it difficult to answer. He struggled with the lack of support he feels to have received with dealing with issues in the past:

> The issue came up with the interview I did with CBC and I phoned AYSA to get some support and didn't. That put another bad taste in my mouth, so all of it all together, let's just say I'm neutral when it comes to unions or AYSA. Even though I am a member of AYSA, I don't participate. I stay so busy with our school and stuff we're doing, extracurricular stuff we do in school and everything, maybe this is a self-made island, Simon, I don't know. It's beginning to feel that way. It's a very comfortable feeling...You do begin to feel like a bit of an island, but it's a nice island. (Bob, interview 1)

> From Bob's comments, the following construct emerges: as long as Moose Meadow

School's test scores are up, and so long as he has minimal engagement with AYSA and the Department, Bob is happy to be largely left alone with his school, and to not be called upon to participate in the broader educational system. He appears content with this arrangement. He operates within what he feels is a safe and isolated space where Bob is neither engaged with his professional association nor the Yukon Department of Education. He emerges from that space only in order to react and gather information in the hope that doing so will assist him in solving current problems. Thus, Moose Meadow School becomes a secluded enclave, or as Bob puts it, a "self-made island".

Bob confided that he shared his passion for his work with one person with whom he interacted closely as a colleague: a relative and fellow principal who does not live in the Territory. When referring to this significant other, he brightened right up and became quite animated:

> …watching [this person], sort of, informed me though I'm up here and they're living down in [that Province]. I'd be reading about her and phone calls, letters, and when I go to visit, just all the really neat stuff. Always telling me, you know, "I'd really like to think outside

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the box. Rules are rules, but rules can really get in the way." She was a very, very forward-thinking, very creative, very innovative teacher. (Bob, interview 1)

Bob's significant other continued to inspire him once he became a classroom teacher and then a principal. The high level of engagement, diversity of thought, and stimulating educational conversation provided Bob with meaningful and supportive professional socialization and encouragement.

The effects of this individual's motivation on Bob's willingness to push the boundaries and try new things appear to be profound ones.   Given the high levels of innovation at Moose Meadow School (a climbing wall and a radio station being two examples), Bob's engagement with this person was foundational in shaping his professional identity and desire to be an "out-of- the-box" thinker who endeavoured to make school a fun and welcoming place for children. This one individual was instrumental in Bob meeting with success as a principal at Moose Meadow School and helping him form and achieve his vision of the school as a place that children wish to come.

Bob injected a high level of emotionality into his description of his relationship with this person. He powerfully described his relationship with her, using terminology that did not surface when describing his counterparts at other Yukon schools. In stark contrast with the information he gathers from Yukon-situated colleagues at meetings he does not readily attend, he seeks (and is provided with) innovative thoughts and ideas from her.

This said, what does present as absent in Bob's descriptions of his engagement with this person are conversations specific to aspects of education in Indigenous Yukon contexts. Admittedly, they live in another province, teach in a non-Indigenous context dissimilar to the Yukon, and is a principal in another provincial jurisdiction with different educational policies and governance structures. While her role in Bob's growth and development as a principal appears

foundational, at no time does Bob describe a similar counterpart in the Yukon, familiar with the Yukon context and the nature of being a non-Indigenous principal in the Yukon.

Further, in contrast to Jim, Bob does not identify or describe having an Indigenous reference points that inform his thoughts and practice. Thus, many of Bob's ideas and innovations originate as a result of his engagement with a colleague external to the Yukon. Despite what he feels are enriching interactions with this person, his engagement has the result of emphasizing the isolation from colleagues who are principals in contexts similar to his own. Similar to Bob, Gina also did not share a positive view of her professional association as a vehicle for professional socialization:

> I find that for the most part AYSA is an old boys club. When I first became a principal, I really looked forward to those kinds of things that I tend in new situations to sit back and you listen and you get the feel of things. Sometimes you put in your two cents, but the longer I'm in that association I find I sit and I listen, and I get all the directives and everything from the department. In terms of what I'm doing in this school is so far removed from what happens in those meetings it's pathetic. (Gina, interview 1)

Gina perceives that AYSA is a patriarchal organization. While initially excited to take part in gatherings, she feels marginalized as a woman principal. She identifies information- seeking as underpinning her interactions, and similar to Bob and Jim, does not to engage in broader educational conversations and debates with colleagues (and, in particular, male colleagues). In order for Gina to gain the information she needs, she will access her superintendent, or only a few select principals with whom, she feels, will provide assistance.

Four Yukon principals describe their role

Examining the challenges and tensions non-Indigenous Yukon principals face daily in their work and how they address them sheds light on how they construct their professional identities and their role as educational leaders.

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Challenges faced by Yukon principals: 'It is like being an orchestra leader'- Jim

Bob offered immediately that challenges were to be found almost everywhere in relation to

his role as a non-Indigenous principal working in an Indigenous context:

> Oh, there's challenges every which way. Challenging parents, challenging school council
> meetings, challenging issues with the Department (of Education). (Bob, interview 2)

Similarly, Jim willingly shared a number of challenges, separating them into two

categories. The first included challenges dealing with over 300 children and over 40 adults. Jim

referred to these as the stress of the day-to-day operations of the school, invoking a musical

metaphor when outlining the challenges facing him:

> I'd say that the bigger ticket items for challenges would be to try to, in any school, to try to
> make everything run as smoothly as possible. It is like being an orchestra leader.
> Everybody should be on the same page and the instruments should all sound wonderful,
> and there should be harmony. Sometimes that doesn't happen. (Jim, interview 2)

Moving from the functional challenges of being the orchestra leader, without prompting,

Jim shifted from talking about administrative issues to talking about what he considered the

second form of challenge: the "big picture" challenge of being principal of a school such as

Hillside:

> The underlying challenge is that 50% of the kids are First Nation kids, and the other 50%
> typically come from a very different socio-economic background, so I would say the
> biggest single challenge at Hillside is to try and meld those two worlds together in such a
> way that both worlds still have identity, and that you don't submerge one for the other.
> (Jim, interview 2)

Jim makes the distinction between the socio-economic backgrounds of students attending

Hillside School, suggesting that 50% of his students are First Nations and come from a lower

socio-economic background (as described in Chapter 4) while the other 50% are non-Indigenous

and come from higher socio-economic conditions. Jim describes the challenge at a school such as

Hillside is that both of these student populations must have their identity acknowledged, validated,

and reinforced:

> We have been very lucky in the school to maintain roughly 50/50 and there is no numerical pressure for one group, typically the First Nation group to be simply submerged by the weight of numbers. And so the idea then is to try and make the school as open and welcoming as possible and to really keep in mind that our mission as far as our First Nation kids are concerned and that is to make sure that they see that their culture is reflected back to them when they walk through the doors of the school.
> (Jim, interview 2)

As Jim describes, a conscious effort has been made to create an educational environment at Hillside School that presents as culturally relevant and affirming to Indigenous students and families. Yet, in his description, doing so does not come at the expense of non-Indigenous families having to give something up. Instead, non-Indigenous children grow up and learn in an educational context where they learn more about the Yukon, its Indigenous languages, and the people who have lived in the Territory for thousands of years.

Stress experienced by children and staff alike is an aspect that Jim finds challenging, thus a goal of Jim's is to make Hillside School a place that feels welcoming and is not anxiety-inducing. At Hillside, the socio-economic status of children is one that the school attends to by offering breakfast to all students who desire it. This nurtures student success by helping children focus on learning instead of being distracted by feelings of hunger. Stress, or distress, is not solely limited to the children in the building, as Jim suggests here:

> The kids who come to school with all sorts of distress, or stress, who need to be helped in order to succeed in school. The staff members that come to school stressed, or distressed, who need to be worked with in a positive way as well. Those are the day to day big issues and then there is on top of that the whole issue of curriculum, programming and so on. I would say if I had to pick one challenge it is simply working with a lot of individual personalities every day, all day, and trying to make it as smooth as possible. (Jim, interview 2)

Jim suggests that his greatest challenges are not educational ones alone. Mediating and mitigating stress, distress, and anxiety within the context of the distinct personalities of all in the

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school setting presents as a specific challenge which he faces every day. Managing conflict positively in the quest of making sure things run as smoothly as possible-distinct from avoiding conflict-is a key aspect of his role. Framed in this manner, this suggests that the terrain of the school is viewed as a collection of problems to be solved. Thus, the principal is located at the intersection point of multifaceted conflicts that require attendance.

Making things run as smoothly as possible in a school like Hillside is not an easy task. While Jim must attend to issues on the part of staff members, his focus is on the children who come through Hillside's doors each day:

> How do I do it? My emphasis is, that we developed in the school many years ago, is to put people first – the kids and their parents, and the staff before anything else, so a large part of my job involves working with individual people. To make sure that whatever they are going through can be dealt with in the school context. As a school, how do we do it? Well I mentioned open school, we open the doors early, and we keep them open late. As a staff we are very available to kids at all times, during the school day or on the weekends. I think the idea behind open school is to make our parents feel as comfortable as possible when they enter the school...Just having the school open so that parents who work know they can drop their kids off at 7:15 or 7:30 in the morning and have a safe, clean, well lit place for the kids to go to. (Jim, interview 2)

The terms "anxiety", "tension", "distress", and "stress" were employed numerous times in Jim's description of the feelings that school may foster in children, teachers, parents, and families. In his descriptions, it is as though he is describing a construct in which there is inherently something not quite 'right', is deficient in some ways, and recognizes this to be the case. School is an anxiety-producing place, and stress and anxiety affect learning, thus a key role for him is to create a school environment that is as relaxed and harmonious as possible. In order to do so, he constructs his role as that of a mitigator of these aforementioned aspects, seeking to create the harmonious relations he would like to see between the actors that converge at Hillside School.

Principals also face challenges in regards to support workers, or educational assistants.

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These are the paraprofessional staff members who assist teachers in the delivery of specific

programs to individual students. More precisely, the challenge is not specific to support workers

themselves, but in regards to the relationships between staff members as a result of them

performing different functions in schools. The pressures of working in schools are surfaced

through competition between these different groups, and the role the principal plays in alleviating

them illuminates the challenge faced in this regard:

> My job is not only to be [an arbitrator] and say look, we have to do it this way rather than
> that way, and also keep that smooth relationship going at all time. People who are okay
> with each other, like each other, are harmonious with each other, are apt to solve problems
> with each other. So, it's rare I find a situation where two colleagues are at loggerheads and
> cannot find a solution. Most of the time by often it's me sitting with them talking and
> conciliating. (Jim, interview 2)

In a subsequent interview, Jim illuminated how the pressures of time are factors that

contribute to the occurrence of conflict. From his perspective, he sees conflict originating as the

result of putting a diversity of human beings in a school where there are limits, differing priorities,

and a finite amount of available time in the school day and the school year to teach the curriculum

and offer other educational programs.

Rose identified a similar challenging role for the principal: that of team builder. From her

perspective as an experienced principal, making hiring decisions aimed at building a team, and

then striving to keep that team playing and working together, was a critically important

responsibility for her. This was foundational to her role of principal:

> Within the school, I guess a big challenge when you take a job as principal is to get people
> working as a team. That's probably your biggest challenge to start – to have everyone
> agree that we have common goals and move forward with those. If you've got that in
> place and you've got people working together everything else will fall in as long as you've
> got a team (Rose, interview 2).

Jim sees himself as a supporter of teachers, understanding that they, like him and their

students, are humans who will have good days and bad days. On those days, he sees himself in a

role of helping them to keep things running smoothly. Similarly, when he is less than optimum,

teachers will also try and help him:

> I think the other thing about colleagues I've always found as principal is teachers are
> human beings. They have the same issues as the kids coming into the school, as the
> parents, they have problems at home, they wake up feeling tired.   They get very stressed at
> times, and as an administrator I always have to keep that … teaching is an art, not a science
> and there are many, many days where I have to work closely with one or more of my
> colleagues to try and keep everything going smoothly.   (Jim, interview 2)

The expressed need to keep things running smoothly, to keep staff relations harmonious,

and the role of principal as that of mediator, conflict resolver, stress reducer, presents as a

dominant and recurrent theme as stated by the principals in this study. This stated, there are other

roles which principals identified throughout our interviews.

The public face and interface between many groups: "Capital for me means trust … I think a lot of my job is building that all the time"-Jim

A role that Yukon principals see for themselves is that of the public face of their school.

The reasons behind this were numerous. For Jim, being accessible is not just about being seen, but

is about fostering trust with parents. Jim readily acknowledged that schools historically have not

been friendly and welcoming places:

> My own feeling is that most parents, whether they are First Nation parents or not, are
> somewhat intimidated by school and that has a lot to do with the way they went to school
> themselves.   You cannot assume they are going to be happy and relaxed when they come
> through the doors of the school.   School has a tendency to try and twist this around a little
> bit. So anything I can do as the administrator to counteract those forces I do. (Jim,
> interview 1)

What Jim appears to be suggesting is that the intimidation of the school experience

transcends cultural lines, not that it is equivalent for everyone. Rather, Jim asserts that, based on

the nature of the engagement of many with schools (including himself and his parents, as he

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described earlier), this was an intimidating experience. The operation of schools as normalizing, regulated, and controlling sites continues to generate alienation between schools, children, and parents. Jim is aware of this historical legacy of schools, indicating that he will do anything he can in his interactions with children and parents to counteract these sentiments in the present.

As he describing earlier with respect to the challenges of his role, stress, distress, and anxiety are felt in schools by students, parents, and teachers. What, then, does Jim do in order to countermand the forces of intimidation he identifies? As he describes it, his job is to build trust among parents and children. Jim goes further and provides insight as to why he fosters trust:

> I'd rather do it that way as parents are very special. We all know as teachers if a parent is feeling good about his or her child's experience in school [then] the whole thing works very well. But if there is some tension there, there is some lack of trust, then the wheels fall off very quickly when there is a crisis. I think that part of looking at the part of my job is to develop a certain amount of capital with parents. Capital for me means trust. They have to trust me to do the right thing; they have to know that I will act in a timely manner with their children. They have to know I'm going to be there if there is a problem with either myself or [the vice-principal]. (Jim, interview 1)

Jim places particular emphasis on himself, as principal, in reference to the development of trust: as he describes, it is important for parents to trust him, and know that it is he who will act in a timely manner when a problem or crisis arises. He places a particular individualized importance on the principal as the person to be trusted, in contrast to the school as a whole being trusted. A distinction is therefore made between trusting the school and trusting the principal. This trust of the principal on the part of parents is then drawn upon when problems are encountered:

> …and so I think a lot of my job is building that all the time. It is everything from spending a lot of time with parents, just greeting them in the hallways, making sure they are comfortable, making sure they have a place in the school. We have a lot of parent volunteers, down to the staff room; let's have a coffee, and talk, talk, talk. And make sure they feel welcome in the school. (Jim, interview 1)

As Jim indicates, this is for him a crucial role in terms of making the school an institution

with which parents and children will engage and wish to come. He invites parents to places

where, traditionally, they did not go (the staff room), and makes the time to engage with them, in

contrast to the descriptions of fear and anxiety he described earlier in reference to his experiences

and those of his parents with school.

Rose underscored how she felt that being the interface between many groups or agencies

carried with it the requirement to have what she referred to as a "thick skin".   She made this in

reference to the role of the principal as one who makes many decisions on a wide array of topics

or issues. She reflected on this aspect of the principalship and commented that:

> You have to realize that not everyone is going to love you and whatever situation you get
> into, whatever decision you make, it is not going to be everybody who thinks that it is the
> right one. (Rose, interview 1)

She refers to the challenges of being the intersecting point for many different groups and

agendas, stating:

> Sometimes it's other people's expectations. It could be some policy that comes from the
> Department of Education. It could be a parent who's totally disgruntled or really unhappy
> with what is happening to their particular child. It could be a First Nation who has an
> agenda and would like to put something into the school or change something about the
> school. Whatever, there are forces always at work because everybody's an expert because
> they've all gone to school. And it could be somebody over at Government Services who
> won't get someone over there to fix the door that's falling off. (Rose, interview 1)

Rose provides an interesting metaphor to accompany this discourse, offering that her role

of principal was akin to that of an air traffic controller. Not only did she have to manage a

diversity of issues and challenges in her daily practice, the frequency or tempo of these challenges

added a further aspect to her role: being able to prioritize this multiplicity of inputs at any given

time. The tension in her voice was clear as she described what it could be like some days:

> Well, you're there by yourself making decisions every day and it's a little like being the air
> traffic controller at Toronto International. I've got 5 planes in a holding pattern at this
> level, you know…Somebody's dumping fuel over here and I got to bring this one in on this

runway and that's what it feels like some days…I'm landing a plane here. And I'll say to someone, "I can't deal with that right now. Hold that thought." And then I have to do this. Or I'll give them a sticky and say, "Write whatever work it is. Write budget on there and I'll know." So when I pull that sticky up I'll remember, budgets, so and so wanted…And then I can deal with the issue. But sometimes I can't deal with everybody's wants and needs all at once. I'm landing the planes as best I can. (Rose, interview 1)

The rapidity and emphasis with which Rose expressed these sentiments was indicative of how she felt about the staccato pace at which she was faced with a cascading series of demands. As a result, she perceives her job as requiring managerial skills, and less so than those of community builder. In a similar way, Gina further reinforced the relative absence of boundaries and limits to being an educator, thereby resulting in emphasis being placed on being a manager responsible for working in the school on school-related matters, and less so as a community leader:

> …we've all seen administrators and teachers who are married to their jobs, and that's all they do. They work until 6:00, 7:00 and 8 o'clock every night, and come in on the weekends…It's just one of those professions where it's easy to slip into. There's no clear defining line. (Gina, interview 3)

What emerges from these comments is that while principals would wish to be in the role of an educational leader who engages with the community in ways that promote ownership of the school, due to continuous and on-going demands they end up in the default role of manager, fielding a myriad of immediate requests and needs at the same time. Despite what she describes as her best efforts, Rose identifies the difficulty of being an educational leader given that she is struggling to do her best to keep up with an incessant flow of managerial demands. To address them all would require, as Gina describes, a marriage to the principalship that would be all-consuming. In contrast, when asked whether there was a distinction between the self as principal and self as community member, Jim spoke to what was, for him, an intimate connection between the two:

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At this point I'd be willing to argue that there is no distinction, that is it is a seamless relationship because I like to think what I do here on a daily basis, or what I do out there is an extension of what I am doing in here. If I am going to a Potlatch… I am showing respect and honouring, let's say it's a funeral potlatch, honoring a member of our community which to me it's directly related to the work I am doing here which is to encourage respect and to honour our community. So, when I go out and coach or whatever I am still in the same bubble that I am when I am in the school. I don't separate the two. (Jim, interview 2)

Going further on this point, Jim explained how he conceptualizes the principalship as a job that cannot be compartmentalized as separate from other aspects of life. For him, this is how he likes to view the job:

To me the job is all-encompassing anyway, and I don't mean this in a negative way at all but I am at work for almost all the time and that is the way that I prefer to do it. If I am downtown at Superstore and I run into some parents or grandparents, I am still working as a principal of that school. (Jim, interview 2)

What Jim presents once again is a highly personified perspective of educational leadership in relation to its community articulations and expressions.

Comparing the principalship to teaching: "You're listening, you're mediating"-Rose

One way of shedding light on how principals see their role and how they construe their professional identity is through comparing and contrasting their prior experience as classroom teachers with their current assignment as principal. Jim offered the following observations:

I always try and teach 50% of the time…It is not always direct teaching but it is learning assistance or working with a kid who is in crisis, so I never left the classroom even though I'm not responsible for a full classroom at any given time. So even though I come from an experience in BC where I was probably 0.4 principal and ran a full grade 5/6/7 class the rest of the time, I still see myself as a teacher even though I am called a principal now. (Jim, interview 1)

When asked about the differences, Jim struggled to identify them, finding it easier to speak to the similarities between each role. When speaking of the differences, he inadvertently ended up returning to the similarities, as he does here:

My orientation is so much principal/teacher it seems to me that if we took a teacher and a principal and set them side by side, the way I look at the model, we are both doing jobs that are very similar. If I have a skill set that I have or I need that the teacher perhaps doesn't need it might be the ability to work with them even that doesn't work, because the teacher's job is so multi-faceted, but it is just at a different level. I was thinking right away that I have to work with parents, I work with groups, but so do teachers. And so I think the term principal teacher is a very strong one, a good one, because it is simply a matter that one teacher on a staff becomes then, what's that expression? "First among equals" and that is the way I like to see it. (Jim, interview 1)

The similarities Jim expressed between the role of teachers and principals were not shared

to as great an extent from the perspective of the other principals. Rose found it quite easy to draw

clear distinctions between the two.

I think an excellent teacher is not necessarily an excellent administrator. I think an excellent teacher has a rapport with their students and knows their curriculum and has an interesting and steady way of providing it to the kids; whereas, a principal has to have a different skill set. (Rose, interview 1)

Bringing the perspective of someone relatively new to the principalship, Gina saw clear

distinctions between the principalship and teaching, but not in the sense of role differences. She

viewed the distinctions in terms of the extent to which each group was responsible for particular

aspects in the school. For example, teachers are responsible for the delivery of the curriculum, but

so too are principals responsible for the teachers who deliver the curriculum. Much like Jim

expressed earlier, she too saw for herself a distinct role as a supporter of her teachers.

Oh, (laughs), it's so different. I mean, the teachers are responsible for the actually teaching strategies and everything that they use in the classroom, of the discipline within the classroom. They're responsible for knowing what the curriculum is. I mean, all those things. As a principal, you're responsible, I think, on the parameters for that, too. A huge role of mine is supporting the teachers. That's probably my teaching background, is that I just think that's huge. (Gina, interview 1)

The challenges Bob identifies could be described as ones that occur within the school

building. Within these he also describes the distinct responsibility of keeping things running

smoothly in terms of being responsible for the positive resolution of conflicts. Yet, he does not

limit himself to simply those within school walls. He describes how one distinction between

teacher and principal is the mediation of issues between parents and teachers:

> You're the buffer between the teacher and the parent if a parent comes in. You take the flak and make sure that when they do go to see the teacher that they're at least in a calm, sort of, non-threatening way. I mean, they're such a difference between teachers and administrators, and yet we're all teachers. The buck stops with you is the bottom line. No matter what happens in the school, you're answerable. That's a huge responsibility, huge. (Bob, interview 1)

In closing this area of examination, Bob engages in an interesting self-reflection when

comparing the differences between principals and teachers in relation to how he sees himself as a

person:

> I'm not a teacher's teacher because I honestly don't think a lot of teachers or administrators think like I do. That's not to say that how I think is better, but I know through observations that some administrators are very administrative and are very by the book. That drives me crazy. (Bob, interview 1)

Bob points out one thing and reinforces another: first, in words, he names the

administrative and managerial aspects of the principalship identified by the other participants,

indicating the negative effect that these aspects have on him. He resists the bureaucratic aspects of

the job and does not admire colleagues who model "by the book" tendencies. Second, he

reinforces how engagement with parents is framed in a problem-based way, emerging as a result

of conflict.

When asked whether there are different bodies of knowledge and experience required by

principals that are distinct from those of teachers, Rose shared what she believed to be a key

distinction. Much the same as the other participants, the issue of mediation, conflict resolution,

and buffer between a number of constituents surfaced as a distinct role of the principal:

> … So I think a lot of it has to do with listening, being proactive - seeing there is a forest fire starting over here and getting your hose out and ready. It's a different skill set for sure. (Rose, interview 1)

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Job satisfaction: "I don't feel like I'm ready for retirement yet"-Gina

Given the myriad conflicts and tensions which each of four principals describe, do they

actually enjoy the jobs they describe? When describing the degree to which they are satisfied in

their role, the Yukon principals interviewed shared how they construct their professional identity

and role as educational leaders. Looking back on an extensive career as an educator and school

principal, Jim, without hesitation, responded that he felt fulfilled in his work in the Yukon:

> I feel my work is very fulfilling. How do I know that? Well a number of ways. One is
> that I am delighted to go to work every day. It's got to be one of the key factors right there,
> if you didn't find your work fulfilling I think you would… even if you work for years to
> make the money you would not have that drive at the end of your career that you had at the
> beginning. I have the same drive now that I had 30 or 35 years ago. (Jim, interview 1)

In similar ways, Ruth expressed how her satisfaction was grounded in the belief that what

she was doing was important. For her, fulfillment was founded upon creating "a legacy":

> I think to me it's really important. I think what I do is of value and I think that if in some
> way I have helped to create a positive school atmosphere and in some way sort of a legacy
> of how you move forward and a good way to treat each other then I have done a good job.
> (Rose, interview 5)

For Gina, satisfaction was rooted in the variety and diversity that accompanied the

principalship:

> I really like what I do. I don't feel like I'm ready for retirement yet. I like it. When I first
> started, I missed teaching, but I don't anymore. I like the diversity, I like that it's so
> interesting. Sometimes pressure. There's always pressure for different things, but there's
> good pressure and there's bad pressure. The whole idea that your staff might be cut, that's
> bad pressure. (Gina, interview 1)

Gina's sense of personal pride in relation to her career was clearly evident. As a lifelong

Yukon resident, her pride was grounded in achieving something that few others could:

> I really enjoy what I'm doing. I'm really proud of it. It's a very rewarding thing, but it's
> also really neat to think that we've only got -- we don't have that many schools in the

Yukon. We don't have that many administrators. It feels really good to know that I've lived here all my life and that I am a principal. That's really neat. (Gina, interview 1)

Despite discourses that identify isolated members of a professional community, and an emphasis on the managerial aspects of the job given the volume and urgency of demands, the interviewed principals each stated that they enjoyed the jobs they did and found satisfaction in their engagement and the roles they fulfilled.

In summary: Orchestra leader, buffer, air traffic controller, and parent

The past school experiences of the four school principals shape their views about their practice and the perception of their role in the present. In contrast to their descriptions which typified schooling as fearful, anxiety-inducing, oppressive, and punishing, each of the participants articulated how they believed that they shaped their own practice in ways which endeavoured to make their schools open, welcoming, and caring places where children and parents would wish to come. They did not attribute this to a cause other than their own vivid recollections of schooling, and the desire for schools to be different for their students than it was for them as children.

Thus, participants in this study construct their professional identities and role as principals along gendered lines. While Rose and Gina frame their role through the lens of unpaid labour when invoking parenthood and its influence on their identities and roles, Jim and Bob do so than through the social and political construction of their prior paid labour experiences in the workplace. Their presentations suggest that the four non-Indigenous principals working in the Yukon rely on stories of leadership which articulate gendered narratives through which their self-identification as educational leaders is constructed.

Professionally, however, the four principals depict a milieu in which interaction with peers

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could perhaps best be described as limited and on a "need to know basis", where contact occurs with a select individual or group, and then, only when factual information is required or when a problem needs to be resolved. As a result, there is little sense of community fostered, and as Rose indicates, being male is a requirement for membership within what she refers to as an "inner circle". Professional meetings are attended when absolutely necessary, resulting in what Bob describes as a "self-made island" on which, despite the isolation, he feels comfortable to reside.

An analysis of the language used by the non-Indigenous principals in this study reveals a deficit discourse where schools and communities are concerned. The demands placed upon school principals surfaces the tendency to become managers of the school, distinct from educational leaders within a community. Exemplifying this is Rose's "Air Traffic Controller" metaphor. Facing all of these challenges, the pursuit of "harmony" emerges as a paramount objective among those interviewed, resonating with Jim's metaphor of school principals as the "orchestra leader".

At the juncture of these competing forces, the school and the community are perceived as distinct entities. Rose describes being a parent as giving her the ability to view the school from the "other side of the fence" as a parent, implying distinct lines are drawn between the experiences of children in schools and how they are perceived by parents. Jim describes the interaction of the school with the community in a highly personified manner: it is he who engages with the community as principal, it is he who fosters trust with the community, and it is he who sets the tone, akin to the solitary "orchestra leader".

To conclude, the use of metaphors is interesting in that they serve as powerful identifiers for the four educational leaders in this study: Jim leads an "orchestra" and is also a mitigator of stress and anxiety while building trust which he views as capital. Bob is the "buffer" between many distinct groups on a self-made island on which he appears content to reside. Rose is both an

air traffic controller and team builder, while Gina is a mediator and mother to her student family. These metaphors illuminate the highly individualized manner in which the four participants in this study construct their professional identity and role as educational leaders.

Question 2

Given the Yukon's distinct governance frameworks and policy contexts, how do non-Indigenous principals construct their understanding of "indigeneity"?

Yukon principals work in school contexts where their student populations vary according to the percentage of children that are of Indigenous descent. Enrollment figures shift yearly based on student mobility, thus the percentage of Indigenous students varies depending on location and context. In the case of Moose Meadow School, Bob indicated that over 90% of his students were of Indigenous descent. Jim approximated a 50/50 split between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students at Hillside School. At Mountainview School, Rose estimated that approximately 30% of her students were of Indigenous ancestry. While not identifying a distinct percentage, Gina observed that relatively few students at Klondike School were Indigenous.

Understandings of indigeneity: "I started thinking there has to be more than this"

Specific to understandings of indigeneity, Jim was the only participant who recollected experiences specific to Indigenous students from his own experience as a school-aged student. The other principals in this study did not have the range and length of experience that he did. As a result, their understandings of indigeneity do not appear to be informed by the depth of experience which Jim outlines in the following subsection. What follows are Jim's reflections upon his own school experiences and an educational career spanning over 35 years.

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Looking back on his own experiences in school as they relate to Indigenous students, Jim remembered there being perhaps two First Nations children that went to his school. Here, he describes how he recalls their engagement with school:

> My school had a few hundred kids. I can remember and count maybe two native kids in my high school. That was it. They were like ghosts, they drifted off the bus in the morning and never said a word to anybody and went home again. But when I walked, our school was K-11 and when I walked through the school sometimes I would notice large First Nation boys sitting in little, little desks in Grade 4 and 5. These were kids who were waiting for the school-leaving age of 16 to finally vote with their feet and get out. They were being failed repeatedly and they were basically strapped into submission, so "if you shut your mouth we will let you sit at the back of the room until you are old enough to quit school." That was my first encounter with First Nations learners, students, and it was a terribly negative one. (Jim, interview 2)

Jim's memories of Indigenous students were that they were disciplined into submission until they were of an age to leave school. He articulated the extent to which his memories of Indigenous children serve to underpin his understanding of indigeneity and First Nations children in schools. Thinking about these recollections, he identified the treatment received by most of his fellow students as a result of how children were viewed by the educational system:

> What a formative memory that whole business of being in a school which included kids from Oka - that really has shaped how I look at First Nation kids in school. And in many ways, my whole early education in the public system in the 50's has shaped the way I look at kids in school.. (Jim, interview 3)

When looking back at his initial experiences as a high school teacher in northern British Columbia, he commented on the similarities between his early memories as a student, and those emerging from his later experience as a teacher. What struck him was that little appeared to have changed in the interim specific to First Nations students in school:

From there, years later to go to [a community in British Columbia] which served, among other places, the [local] Reserve. I was a high school teacher then and to see kids in my class who were obviously from Stony Creek, and obviously in most cases really were at a loss to figure out what they were even doing in the school. They were, for the most part, ignored. Again, they were just part of the woodwork, the furniture. And as long as they didn't cause any trouble nobody said too much to them. So that was my first real look at First Nation kids in school and it was only after that I started thinking that there has to be something more to this. (Jim, interview 2)

Jim's voice carried a timbre of disappointment as he recollected the marginalization and repression of Indigenous children in the schools he was in at the time. In the recollection above, Jim identifies the beginning of critical examinations of his experiences. Now looking back on 35 years in northern isolated and Indigenous communities, his view of schools and his interactions with parents and grandparents who shared their experiences as Indigenous students with him, inform his current practice at Hillside School as it relates to his construction of indigeneity in relation to Yukon Indigenous culture:

I think that most First Nation people who have gone through the system didn't benefit particularly well from it and many, many of them have negative views toward school. But, many of them went through a system which was quite rigid and I'm talking about grandparents now who went through the residential school system who don't know any other kind of system and so I have had some really interesting talks with people who say "Look - I hated school. I couldn't wait to leave, at least to learn something. I want my kid to learn how to read and write." So there is that basic need to do what schools are supposed to do, learn how to read, how to write, how to compute. And that's always part of the equation, but the other part is "I want my kid to like school, I want my child to appreciate his/her culture. I want them to understand being a northerner, and being a First Nation kid as well." (Jim, interview 2)

Thus, Jim's engagement with Elders- grandparents who endured the colonizing experience of residential school- presents in stark contrast compared to what he is trying to accomplish at present as principal of Hillside School. His description of the open, accessible, and welcoming climate of the school is diametrically opposed to that which he described from his past:

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As a school, how do we do it? Well I mentioned open school, we open the doors early, and we keep them open late. As a staff we are very available to kids at all times, during the school day or on the weekends. I think the idea behind open school is to make our parents feel as comfortable as possible when they enter the school. (Jim, interview 2)

Specific to being a principal in the Yukon's governance and policy educational context, Jim described how he employed an 'interagency' approach, reaching out as principal to the local First Nations government and other Yukon government agencies in the quest to create an interlocking system and community of practitioners in order to meet the needs of children and the community:

I think my job there is to build those bridges to every possible community area if I can. In the case of this school, [the local] First Nation is by far the most important and I do a lot of leg work with [the First Nation] but also the government agencies, Family & Children's Services is a good example. Any group that is connected to the school, after school user groups, anybody who has impact on the school is part of my jurisdiction. I spend a lot of time with [the First Nation government] people, directly and indirectly. (Jim, interview 2)

Based on his description above, it appears that Jim employs a highly individualized approach to engagement with other agencies or groups which interact with the school. Thus, it appears that the relationship which others have with the school is mediated by direct engagement with him, placing particular focus on the principal as the interface with the local First Nation and the other groups or agencies he identifies.

Curricular initiatives: "It makes no sense without the land"

Specific to the development and delivery of curricular initiatives aimed at addressing the educational goals of the community, Jim outlined a number of initiatives Hillside School engages in to do so. These initiatives require the endorsement of his School Council, thus the activities Jim outlined below are sanctioned and supported by the elected educational representatives of the community:

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The bison hunt would be the biggest single example because it is the biggest ticket item in the Grade 7 curriculum. It involves not just going on a hunt but all the preparation, hunter training, the biology of bison, the language arts part before then there is the whole hunt. All the preparation for that which the kids are involved in, which means it does become part of the curriculum.   Then there is the post-hunt activities, the "Spruce Tree Gazette" is one example of a post-hunt activity right down to meat cutting and all that has to be put into a curricular bubble of some kind as that's the program.   That is probably the biggest single one that I've been involved with here and that's been going for quite a few years now. (Jim, interview 2)

While Jim was able to identify the bison hunt as a core educational initiative that increased the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and pedagogies at Hillside School, to view it the sole vehicle carrying Indigenous culture, language, and values into the school would be incomplete at best. Indigenous culture and pedagogy transcends curriculum at Hillside school and permeates the broader day-to-day operations of the school. Jim described to me the significance of these initiatives:

And the same, [the Native Language Instructor] has made sure that we have Southern Tutchone room titles on all our major rooms. Dännche is the Chief, which happens to be my office. We have most of our major rooms now labelled in Southern Tutchone. I think we have a long way to go, but we're at least starting down that path now. And you know, so much of it is about learning some of the language, but so much more of it is simply validation. I mean when people, when First Nations people come in and see Southern Tutchone phrases and words around the school, oh boy, are they happy. And that's really what it's for I think. It's saying look, this is as valuable as French. This is as valuable as anything else. (Jim, interview 5)

As Jim outlined, ensuring that the vision of the school is reflective of the local First Nation and Indigenous community requires greater thought and effort than solely the implementation of curriculum itself. Jim grounds this view in the principles behind the conception of Hillside School:

We like to think that this school, when it was created, was seen as the school for [Hillside's] First Nation, so I think we've always had a built-in vision which meant that kids from [Hillside's First Nation] and First Nation kids in general should

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enjoy success in this school and feel comfortable in this school.   Those are connected. (Jim, interview 2)

The dynamic tension created by finding a balance between conventional academic curriculum and the inclusion of Indigenous culture is a reality to which Jim identifies he must attend. He indicates that working to achieve a balance is not an insurmountable challenge, and is one that appears to have lessened over time as the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and pedagogy has increased in presence:

> Certainly in the attempt to bring those two worlds together there have been some pressure points, not so much lately, but in the past we've had a small number of parents who have felt that we were over-emphasizing one over the other, for example too much First Nation content, or not enough -there is always that tension. I have had a few First Nation parents over the years tell me they didn't send their kids to school to learn traditional dancing and all that - they can teach them that themselves, they are here to get their ABC's.   We've had non-First Nation parents who will tell me that there is way too much culture in this school; again they need their ABC's.   (Jim, interview 2)

Despite these tensions, Jim is resolute in his belief that teaching and learning at Hillside School must be resonant with Indigenous epistemologies and pedagogical practices:

> … it needs to dovetail more with a growing experiential education movement which this school and many other schools are beginning to develop now where we've always understood why hands-on is really important for learning, but we're actually beginning to do more than talk about it…And if you think of the way kids, First Nations children, learn - before we came along with this "great" educational system of ours, for thousands of years kids learned by walking out, working out in the bush with their uncle or their dad and their mom, learned their language and learned how to apply it because Southern Tutchone is a language that is rooted in the land…And it makes no real sense without the land...that whole business of separating the language from the land that's a tremendous problem that occurred over the years, and it's starting to dovetail, it's starting to come back through the schools now, which is great. (Jim, interview 5)

Jim makes an important observation specific to the disconnection between education in classrooms and education taking place out on the land, where Southern Tutchone language was traditionally used. As he describes, there is value in the pursuit of

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educational initiatives which reconnect the land, learning, and the Southern Tutchone language. Thus, as principal, he supports experiential approaches to learning for all students which merge learning, language, and the land.

Curriculum development: "The fact that they've been kind enough to draw us in is huge"-Bob

In terms of curriculum development and integration, Bob shared the recent initiatives occurring at Moose Meadow School in conjunction with the community and the local First Nation government. The excitement in his voice was readily apparent as he described the curricular initiatives underway. For Bob, this is clearly groundbreaking work which he fully endorsed as the principal of Moose Meadow School:

> We're working very closely with [Moose Meadow First Nation] developing the new First Nations curriculum that they're putting into our school for social studies. It's going to be major. It's a major undertaking. We've had two huge meetings and brought in really excellent people. This is above and beyond what the Department [of Education] is doing. They're also working on some new First Nations curriculum. (Bob, interview 2)

Bob emphasizes that these initiatives are aimed at developing First Nations curriculum are occurring between the school and the local First Nation. They are not being led by the Yukon Department of Education, but instead are being spearheaded at the local community level by the Moose Meadow First Nation for inclusion in the school's curriculum. This is a distinctly different approach from the implementation of curriculum developed externally from the school by a central authority or by external jurisdictions. Bob's excitement was evident as he identified just how important he believed this locally situated approach was to the inclusion of local culture and language in Moose Meadow School:

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This is their developing curriculum that's really going to enhance and promote and encourage their cultural ideals and their cultural history. The fact that they've been kind enough to draw us into it is huge. It makes for great partnerships. It just doesn't get any better or any more intimate really when you're invited in to help them develop their cultural identity. (Bob, interview 2)

As principal, Bob underscored the extent to which he values this process not only for its curriculum outcomes but as a vehicle for enhancing partnerships between the school and the local First Nation. Bob's excitement continued as he described the pace at which the deployment of this curriculum is slated to occur:

It's a First Nations curriculum which will take up one whole term of our social studies program based on Tlingit -- the clan system and governance. They're hoping to have it finished by the end of April, proofed and agreed upon, and all the changes and editing done by the end of May, and then, in our school for August. (Bob, interview 2)

Bob's endorsement of this local approach to curriculum development and implementation was clear as he shared his perspective and understanding of indigeneity in relation to local Indigenous culture:

We've got to become one. It can't be 'us' and 'them' or 'we' and 'they' or they're the First Nations, we're not. We have to be a blend. We have to be -- we're all part of this community. Our school is 90 percent First Nations, so it is paramount that even for our non-First Nations kids, the fact that we do so much culture here just enhances their learning. They begin to appreciate the cultural significance and importance of the local First Nations. They see it in a different light when they look into the clan system and the art of it and how sophisticated it is. So, even if they're not First Nations, they get this incredible insight into what is an incredibly powerful and beautiful culture. Just building those relationships, becoming one so that we're all on the same page, we're all working together. A school can't function in a First Nations community unless you're one. It just goes without saying, really. (Bob, interview 2)

For Bob, the school must model the culture of the community through working together to develop curriculum that reflects the community in the school. Bob shows his reverence for local Indigenous culture and language, describing it by using terms such as "art" "sophisticated", "powerful", and "beautiful". His understanding of Indigenous

culture and respect for it appears to have grown as a result of the years he has spent in the

Moose Meadow community as principal of the school.

In contrast to the relationships Jim and Bob describe which model the positive

results of school and local First Nation working together on aspects of curriculum

development and inclusion, Rose described a curricular integration process which was less

successful as a means of addressing the educational goals of her community. In our

conversation, she described how, as the principal of Mountainview School, she was not

even included in preliminary conversations on the potential deployment of an Indigenous

education program developed in the United States.   She described the unfolding of the

process initiated and led externally by the Department of Education, and its eventual

outcome:

> What happened was that this was picked up by a superintendent, and I'm not sure
> who or how it all sort of started, but it was initially the [local First Nations
> government] and [the superintendent] and some people I think in the [First Nations
> Partnerships Unit at the Department of Education] and they decided that this would
> be a great program to input into either Bear Canyon School or Trapline School.
> Those were the two. So at first I didn't know anything about it and then there was
> a big switch and they decided, no, those schools wouldn't be appropriate and it
> should come to Mountainview School. So the first round I wasn't involved in. So
> I asked to be sent to Juneau (Alaska) and I sat in on the program for the day and
> you know, there's not a lot there that's different from what we are already doing,
> but for people who don't come to our school they have no idea what we're already
> doing. (Rose, interview 2)

Rose recounted the above story with a tone best described as frustrated. She

identifies what appears to be a disconnection between what occurs in Mountainview

School in terms of Indigenous cultural curriculum, and the knowledge of what happens in

the school, on the part of Yukon Department of Education personnel who do not come to

her school. She elaborated on the frustrations and tensions she faces as principal with

respect to trying to make Mountainview School a place where local Indigenous culture was

supported and enhanced. When curriculum is prescribed and mandated externally, this

creates problems:

> Yeah, so here we are with Native language [offered at Mountainview School] since the 70s. We've had cultural stuff in our schools for years and years. We'd like to have more. It's been our third school goal for a number of years to integrate more First Nations culture into everyday classroom, not just to have cultural week and so we've been struggling with that but we don't get a lot of input from, like we don't have an elder, so we don't have a lot of input from [the local First Nations government] to do that, but that's where we're going. (Rose, interview 2)

A similarity between Hillside and Moose Meadow School is the belief on the part

of Jim and Rose that the inclusion of Indigenous culture is not only for the benefit of

Indigenous students, but all students. Despite 70% of the students at Mountainview School

being of non-Indigenous descent, Rose and the staff believe that Indigenous cultural

programming is for all students regardless of their background. Yet, in contrast to Hillside

and Moose Meadow Schools, by Rose's admission there appears to be less input, direction,

and support from her local First Nation government specific to cultural inclusion. This

suggests that more needs to be done in order to foster the kind of relationship between the

First Nation and the school that Bob describes in the Moose Meadow community.

Regardless, as Rose indicates, Mountainview School will continue to include more

Indigenous culture in the programs for children. For her, it is imperative that Indigenous

culture in her school is not compartmentalized and reduced to an event (such as a 'cultural

day or week') but instead permeates the school and its operations.

Distinct from the other three schools, Klondike School does not have a defined

Indigenous student population. It is a small school and, as Gina describes, the student

body is made up of a diversity of cultural backgrounds. In contrast to the other schools in

this study, while Indigenous culture is included in the school programming, this is done

employing a more situational and event-based approach (presented as a theme at a school assembly, on a specific day where an Indigenous cultural event such as a potlatch is held). Gina indicated that Klondike School does not have the human resources and expertise on staff to proficiently present Indigenous culture to the students and weave it into the educational programming of the school. In order to address this, Gina directs financial resources to effect the inclusion of Indigenous culture and knowledge through the hiring of elders or other Indigenous resource persons:

> With the First Nations, now we have the cultural [budget] account, right. So, the First Nations, last year was the first year that we had a potlatch, so we hired somebody to come in, teach the children about potlatches…The clans, and they put on a whole potlatch for the parents. We had the food and everything. It was wonderful. You'll have to come back again this year. So, there's that part of it, but also with the cultural diversity, we've done things like the quilting out there, which represents the different ethnic groups that are in the school. (Gina, interview 2)

From the perspective of constructing her understanding of indigeneity in relation to local Indigenous culture, Gina shared her own views on the inclusion of Indigenous culture at Klondike School. When asked whether there were challenges in regards to the school's curriculum matching up with the needs of the community, she identified Indigenous culture as the only issue:

> The only thing, the whole First Nations push right now. We don't teach native language in the school, and that comes from the School Council. We've got French. (Gina, interview 2)

When asked to elaborate further on reasons behind this programming choice by the Klondike School Council, she described the composition of her school population as one which was diverse in terms of the cultural backgrounds of the children:

> The other thing is, is that in terms of First Nation population in the school, we have just as many ESL, Asian, East-Indian children as we do -- in fact, more than First

Nations. So, we haven't been jumping on the bandwagon about a lot of that stuff. (Gina, interview 2)

While Gina values the presentation of Indigenous culture to the students at

Klondike School at events such as assemblies or on specific school days, she views

increased inclusion of Indigenous culture as an organizational imperative that she finds

difficult to accept within the context of the needs of all students in the educational system.

Gina shared her thoughts on the Education Reform Project, the goal of which was to gather

a broad foundation of input from a wide range of stakeholders, the aim being to change the

Yukon educational system based on what the committee learned. This multi-year,

comprehensive examination of the Yukon educational system was co-chaired by a

representative from the Yukon Department of Education and the Council of Yukon First

Nations. The final report was released to the public in December 2007. For Gina, this

process, and its focus on Yukon First Nations, was problematic:

> ...The other thing about the whole education reform thing was it was so focused on First Nations, and I think it's so -- that if they were in the schools to see, there isn't any difference how we treat First Nations kids and non-First Nations. Everybody has access to the same resources, that they're in the classroom. It's not like that they're picked out or picked on or anything. It just bothers me, I guess, that it was so focused on First Nations. Like, the First Nations are the only kids in the school system who might have problems. I mean, we're seeing it more and more, our kids in learning assistance aren't First Nations. They're from those single mom families who are working their butts off with two or three jobs and don't have time, and dad isn't available. Those are the kids that we're seeing more of. So, I really struggle with that issue. (Gina, interview 2)

Gina has difficulty with what she feels is an inordinate amount of focus and

attention being placed on Indigenous education in the Yukon. While she values and

supports the inclusion of Indigenous culture at her school on an event-level basis, from the

perspective she offers above, at issue for her is not cultural inclusion but an identified

group receiving more attention or resources than others who may, in her opinion, also need support. Based on her perspective and experience as a life-long Yukon resident, Gina believes there are children who may be in similar or greater need of attention than First Nations students.

Gina perceives the debate on greater Indigenous cultural inclusion as a matter of addressing children with learning problems. Distinct from seeing the goal of cultural inclusion being the development of a Yukon education system that is more reflective of Yukon Indigenous heritage, language, and culture, Gina conflates indigeneity with special education and the treatment of children with "problems". Framed in this way, she sees that there are children in greater need than Indigenous children, thus large-scale reform efforts to make the Yukon educational system more reflective of Indigenous populations present to her as specific to one particular group of students at the expense of others.

In summary

The non-Indigenous principals in this study present a range of differences in regards to how they construct their understanding of indigeneity in relation to local Indigenous culture.

Beginning with Jim, he is the only participant who draws heavily on past experiences as a student and high school teacher in the early 1970's to inform how he works with a number of partners to make his school reflective of the community and local Indigenous culture. His understanding of indigeneity has formed as a result of years spent talking with elders, grandparents, and parents of children who may have attended residential school.

At Moose Meadow School, Bob is very excited with the initiative whereby the local First Nation government is taking the lead on developing its own Social Studies curriculum, with a focus on the local Tlingit governance structures and clan systems. He views it as a privilege to be invited to participate in such a ground-breaking project. He fully supports this initiative which takes an approach distinct from the conventional approach of curriculum development and delivery conducted external to the school and community. In effect, it is curriculum development conducted *by* the First Nation for its children, distinct from *for* the First Nation by an educational system. For Bob, this is a vitally important opportunity to help foster the cultural identity of Moose Meadow School's students.

In the case of Jim, Bob, and Rose, they see the inclusion of Indigenous culture in their schools as being the 'right' approach. Jim sums it up:

> The whole idea is to make it as seamless as possible. As a school I think we share the idea that any Yukon student coming through the system, certainly through this school, whether they are First Nation or not, should have a good understanding of both worlds by the time they reach Grade 7. It has not been a hard sell - not at all. Many of our First Nation, Southern Tutchone students are non-First Nation kids because the parents see the value. Those kids are learning enough about their neighbours to carry them through adulthood. (Jim, interview 2)

The presence of Indigenous culture is viewed as beneficial to all of students, a view shared not only by these non-Indigenous principals, but also by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous parents. None of the three advocate separate and distinct programming for students based on cultural background. Instead, they see that striking a balance whereby cultural inclusion becomes the vehicle through which curriculum is delivered. Gina supports the inclusion of First Nations culture and language in Klondike School, this is done only on an event-level basis and not as part of the modus operandi of the school

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itself. From her perspective, one which is distinct from the other three principals, there is

an inordinate level of attention being given to Indigenous education in the Yukon.

An identified issue appears to be the manner in which curriculum is developed and

deployed. Curriculum which is locally developed, in a partnership between the local First

Nation and the school, appears better received than centrally developed curriculum which

is mandated and overlaid onto the school. As Rose identifies, there appears a frustrating

knowledge gap between the Department of Education that selects externally developed

curriculum to be deployed at her school, and what is already being done at Mountainview

School.

Question 3

I do a lot of reading always, but you put your finger on something. I don't do a lot of
reading about leadership in education or leadership theory.   School is life and life is
school.

(Jim, interview 3)

How do non-Indigenous Yukon principals define their role? In what ways do they

see themselves as educational leaders, and what attributes do they apply to their concept of

leadership? Examining these questions sheds light on how they represent themselves,

define their role, and construct their identities as principals working in Indigenous Yukon

contexts.

Defining educational leadership: "Hmmm, that's a good question"-Bob.

As the participants in this study indicate, defining educational leadership either

conceptually or through their own behaviours was not an easy task. When asked, Bob

paused for a moment and then only could share the following attempt at an educational

leadership definition:

It is really an almost indefinable…maybe not indefinable, but complicated… (Bob, interview 3)

Bob described how one grows in the role by first becoming a principal and gaining experience and expertise in the role over time. Much of what Bob shed light on in terms of educational leadership was grounded in personality traits and experience which helped to develop what he termed "common sense":

Being happy and bubbly, and people that are outgoing and really friendly with the kids and they're good teachers. As experience comes, you start to grow comfortable in your position. When all is said and done, and I don't care how intelligent you are or how articulate you are, it comes down to common sense. There's no big secret to it. (Bob, interview 3)

Providing specific examples with respect to the application of 'common sense', Bob elaborated on this, describing how it guided his relationships with others and permeated his educational practice in a multitude of ways:

What I have found in administration is you need a whole lot of common sense. It just doesn't go much beyond that. It's not the world's toughest job. Common sense, keep your cool, develop a great relationship with your parents and your staff and your school council. (Bob, interview 3)

Bob's comments with regard to common sense with respect to the 'job' of administration (distinct from any mention of educational leadership) presuppose a common world view for all others. As Bob sees it, there is a universal understanding of what makes sense in the running of a school and relationships with stakeholders. Enunciating a definition of educational leadership, or even components or aspects of educational leadership without invoking administration and management clearly was a difficult task for Bob.

When attempting to define educational leadership, Gina identified a number of actions which she viewed as integral to how she saw herself as an educational leader.

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Much the same as for Bob, defining educational leadership was not an easy task for her

initially. In a similar manner to him, she identified educational leadership's elusive nature,

prefacing her comments by referring to the concept as enormous. She then deconstructed

educational leadership into the actions or tasks she engaged in on a daily basis:

> It's so huge -- in any way that I can support teacher, whether it's in terms of resources, in terms of professional development, in terms of encouraging visitations. Whether it's pulling children out of the classroom for learning assistance, of making sure that everybody knows that they do not have to put up with behaviour problems, that that's what I'm there for…I guess, those are my two overall priorities. From there it goes, of course, into parents and community. (Gina, interview 3)

In attempting to define educational leadership, Jim reverted back to what he

believes are the origins of the term 'principal': the principal teacher. He made a point of

not distancing or removing the role of 'principal' from that of 'teacher', thus a distinction

he made is that he carries these responsibilities in addition to (and not separate from) those

required of him as a career teacher.

> Well, I guess on the basic level as the principal of this school, by definition, even though the term principal means principal teacher, in fact it has evolved in our society to mean actual person who runs the school, there is the obvious answer. I guess I look at myself as the educational leader by virtue of the experience I've had already in education. (Jim, interview 3)

An important aspect Gina identified is the notion of educational leadership as being

connected to parents and the community, not solely a school-centric phenomenon. This

characteristic of educational leader as community leader was also surfaced by Jim.

> The other thing I see about being a principal as a leader of course, is that you are not only leading the school, you are leading a community, and I learned that from being an administrator in small towns where you truly are a community leader by ipso facto - there is no question. (Jim, interview 3)

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Based on his experience in small, rural, and isolated Indigenous communities over many years, from his perspective the difference between leader of the school and community leader was an indistinguishable one.

In summary

The participants in this study found it difficult to define educational leadership without drawing upon the aspects of administration and management to do so. Bob struggled with the question and was never able to enunciate an answer. Gina suggested that educational leadership was "huge". Rose described educational leadership as doing a number of things in order to make the school a better place. Jim suggests that there is little difference between being a teacher and being a principal.

For the participants in this study, being a good educational leader is to be a good administrator and manager who runs the school, ensuring that the daily tasks and functions of the school are attended to so that all performs smoothly. They allocate resources, attend to behaviour problems, and attend primarily to the managerial functions of the school.

The principals in this study refer to themselves as principals, administrators, and managers. In their attempts to define educational leadership, the study participants did not use the term 'educational leader', nor do they describe themselves as being educational leaders in a larger educational system, nested within the broader educational framework identified in Chapter 2. By not identifying themselves in this way, they situate themselves as autonomous agents who work largely independent of each other in the Yukon educational field.

Experience and judgment: "That is truly the job"- Jim.

Looking back on a career spanning almost 40 years, Jim identified an important

component of his current practice and how he knows himself as a principal: extensive

experience in the field of education. For him, his experience is a key piece of what forms

how he sees himself. Jim surfaced the concept of judgment when attempting to define

educational leadership.   This is a core aspect of being an educational leader- exercising

sound educational judgment. He elaborated on this concept, providing an example of how

a principal must employ judgment on a moment-to-moment basis at all times. In the

following example, he also illuminated the aspects which served to inform his educational

judgment:

> It happens every day, all day - that is the job. That is truly the job. It is not a
> systems job. I don't know how people can turn it into one.   It is judgment call
> after judgment call, after judgment call. The reason for that I think is that if you
> know your kids and know your staff, and know your families - life is not black and
> white.   Why wouldn't you make these judgment calls (Jim, interview 4)

The aspect of judgment was very important to Jim, and he elaborated readily on his

belief that judgment was foundational to being a principal. He provided a number of

examples where the decisions he made were "judgment calls", or situations where a

number of options were present. In this case, he describes the use of judgment in regards to

decisions affecting the staff:

> We are in the last week of the term, everybody is absolutely exhausted, and the
> judgment call today was let's not have a staff meeting. Let's wait until April… it is
> such a simple idea - I get to school this morning and my mind-set is staff meeting
> because every first Wednesday of the month is a staff meeting. The agenda is
> ready, I'm ready to remind people, I put in on the Monday bulletin. A teacher
> comes to me and says "do you really think we should have one?"   My first
> reaction, I'm out supervising with him, and busy, my first reaction is "of course we
> should have one." But you see again, we know each other so well that teacher was
> persistent, others may not be, he said "you know, we have one scheduled for April
> 2nd, we have two weeks coming off now for Spring Break, you're going on the

Bison Hunt"… and the light just went on. Do we want to have a staff meeting now? (Jim, interview 4)

In regard to his subjective use of judgment, Jim's conviction was evident. He emotively shared what he felt to be one of the most important aspects of all in terms of his work as principal:

> ...I feel so passionate about the fact that schools are very subjective institutions filled with people, and we have to keep that foremost in our minds. There is nothing in the university post-graduate or teacher training curriculum that I am aware of that actually shows young educators how important this is. Maybe they are not ready for it when they are starting off - you've got to have some life experiences first. That's the kernel of the school is those personal relationships. (Jim, interview 4)

Jim calls into question the ability of post-secondary education to assist in this formation of judgement. The subjectivities of schools and the importance of relationships based on knowing the people you work with are components he believes are lacking in the post-graduate development of educational leaders. The theme of effective management and administration- making the correct decisions based on knowledge of context and experience- appears central to the concept of educational judgment as Jim defines it. The decision-making examples Jim describes are immediate, functional, and managerial in nature: whether to hold a meeting now or later, how to discipline students, how to deal with staff on a particular issue. These are the aspects he identifies as the 'job' of 'running' a school.

Changing over time: conceptions of educational leadership: "I had no idea principals had such power"-Gina.

When asked whether his conception of educational leadership had changed over time, Bob reflected back on his early days at Moose Meadow School. Now a school where exciting projects occur and the staff works with the Moose Meadow First Nation, the

school council, and the wider community, it was with a great deal of emotion that he recalled the nature of the school when he first arrived:

> Well, how it changed over time for me personally, obviously, I can only speak for me, is when I came in it was survival. I had no idea what I'd gotten myself into. This school was out of control. They were smoking drugs in the bathroom and telling teachers to, "F**k off." I had a staff that was just horrendous. One lady that I fired the second day here smashed a kid's head into the door twice. Stuff like that. So, you go from that whole survival mode -- zero support from the department when I was put in here. When I think back it almost sickens me. (Bob, interview 3)

Not being able to define educational leadership at the onset of the interviews, it was difficult for Bob to shed light on how his conception of educational leadership has changed over time. This said, it appears that Bob's practice has changed while at Moose Meadow School: while at first needing to exert control of the school in his early days at Moose Meadow School, he now tries to create an environment relevant to children, fostering an atmosphere where they thrive in their learning and wish to come each day. Bob's vivid description of his early days at Moose Meadow School sheds light on his early identity as a principal: grappling with a school in chaos developed a mindset of 'survival mode' until he was able to get the school stabilized and under his control.

Rose described a similar progression- one from control to that of facilitating learning and supporting staff members. When asked whether her conception of educational leadership had changed over time she replied:

> Yeah, I think so. Well, when I started teaching up here I was 23 so I think I view a lot of things differently - that's 30 years ago. So if I didn't figure something out in 30 years, where have I been? So yes my idea of who a leader is and how they lead is different. I looked at someone being the "boss" and I got some "boss" instructions when I first got here…maybe it's just I've developed my own style. (Rose, interview 3)

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As someone with fewer years experience as a principal than other participants in this study, Gina's comments focused less on change of conception over time than they did on what could be described as realizations about the principalship once in the position:

> I had no idea that principals had so much power. I had no idea...As a principal, you're constantly making decisions, and personal decisions based just on how you think and feel about issues. I mean, within a short period of time, you realize that's why there's such a huge difference between schools, is because the school reflects the principals personality. (Gina, interview 3)

Gina's comments above resonate with Jim's earlier assertions with respect to the nature of being a principal and the managerial aspects that define the position.   The principalship is personality-driven and highly subjective, with the subjectivity of the principal being applied to exercising of these managerial and administrative functions. The job is characterized as one that is functional, with large amounts of administrative decision-making: determining rules, dealing with immediate issues, wielding power as issues are grappled with and kept under control.

For the three participants in this study who were appointed to their first principalship in the Yukon, power and control appear to be the primary foci when newly entering the position.   Of particular note are the similar references to the discovery of the power that principals possess. Over time, they learn to domesticate and apply their power as they come to know their distinct styles of administration and management, to develop their contingent philosophies, and to identify their educational priorities. Their application of their power appears mediated then by the development of educational judgment through experience identified earlier.

Based on the comments of each of the participants in this study, it appears that conceptions of educational leadership change relative to where one finds themselves in

their career. Jim highlighted the pressures to make decisions quickly at the start of one's

career, and shared what he had learned over time. Looking back he shared:

> You are seen as "fuzzy". It's a perfectly understandable feeling, and I know when I started as principal I was more inclined to, you know the old thing about make a decision right now - and that's probably the worst thing you can do is to make a decision on the spot. And yet that is seen as such a virtue, to be decisive. Something happens - do this [snap]; something happens - do that [snap].   Yet what you really should be doing is reflecting on what you saw, what you heard, and so on. That takes a certain amount of confidence that comes with doing your job well. (Jim, interview 4)

Linking back to earlier comments by the other participants, Jim identifies the

emphasis given to managerialism, particularly at the early stages of one's career as a

principal.   While suggesting that being a quick decision-maker is a trait some admire in a

principal, based on his experience of nearly 40 years, he identifies once again the

importance of reflection. He disagrees with the perception that rapid decision-making is a

virtue, and instead advocates for thoughtful decision-making.

What it means to be a principal

To varying degrees, participants were able to either articulate their philosophy or

describe the books, stories, or narratives that were most meaningful to them in informing

their educational philosophies. The length of time in the profession appears indicative of

the depth and breadth of experiences which serve to inform their educational leadership

theory and practice. A case in point- nearly 40 years in education gives Jim an

accumulation of experiences from which to elaborate extensively. While this cannot be

said of all participants, nonetheless each was able contribute meaningfully and share

insights into their educational philosophies.

I asked Jim about the narratives and stories which informed his leadership theory and practice. His responses were deeply insightful and showed how his depth of experience as one of the longest-serving Yukon principals underpinned his expertise:

> I know that philosophically the one piece of work that started me off on a certain path was John Goodlad's book "A Place Called School" which by contemporary standards isn't all that radical, but for its day it certainly was. The concept of actually looking at children within the context of school, children as part of school was a fairly radical thing for me to read about. So looking back at that I'm guessing that that is the kind of reading that got me thinking that you cannot separate the child from the school, you can't see them as separate entities at all. (Jim, interview 3)

The educational experiences comprising Jim's formative years carry forward to inform what he sees as two fundamental approaches which can be taken by educators, schools and educational systems. As we continued, he made what is for him a vitally important philosophical distinction on how to conceptualize schools:

> I see education as so much more than systems and I think that many people who write about education tend to write about systems. Kids don't necessarily fit into systems particularly well so historically we have spent a lot of our time trying to make the kids fit. If you follow [psychologist Gordon] Neufeld's writing especially, every child is different to a lesser or greater degree. Many, many children need some kind of modeling in their lives and his contention is that quite a few of these kids aren't getting it at home anymore for various reasons and if there is no significant adult in a child's life, as Neufeld said, then his or hers peers will then become the model. So I think, without giving it a lot of thought, what we are trying to do is develop that relationship at the most basic level. (Jim, interview 3)

Jim's identification of Dr. Gordon Neufeld is the only mention by any of the principals in this study of a book, recently engaged with, which informs current practice. This was despite being asked specifically in the interview series whether there were authors or books that they relied upon. When asking Jim what he read presently in relation to his educational leadership theory and practice, he suggested that we had identified something important through our conversation: he does not read very much, if any, pertaining to educational leadership or leadership theory. As he shared this point with me,

he tried to locate a pamphlet which he felt reflected his belief above that education is about students and to a lesser degree systems:

> I do a lot of reading always, but you put your finger on something. I don't do a lot of reading about leadership in education or leadership theory. School is life and life is school. People have been writing about schooling forever and they are not necessarily educational sponsors at all. I think peoples own experience in school is extremely valuable. I have a little pamphlet on this shelf which is from Seven Oaks School Division in Winnipeg. I'm trying to see it here… it is a tiny little pamphlet but what it is are interviews with dozens of middle-aged people in Winnipeg about how they felt and how their lives were affected by failing a grade in school. Very modest little book, but in it, if you read it, it is heartbreaking to realize what has happened to these people. So much of their lives have been turned by the fact that somebody said "you don't measure up, you have failed, do it again." It is personal experience and personal recollection and now we have a body of literature from First Nation saying what schooling has been like for them. That's all I can think of for now. (Jim, interview 3)

This recollection of the resource he encountered years ago and has since kept close reinforced Jim's belief that the needs of students must overcome the needs of the educational system. It signifies the extent to which Jim's educational philosophy is informed not by the formal knowledge presented to him in post-graduate study. Instead, Jim's educational philosophy is constructed through reflection upon his experiences accumulated over many years, cast back against books he has identified as informing his thoughts and practice.

The belief in a student centered approach where her decisions would be guided by what was in the best interests of her students was also identified by Gina.

> If I look at, in terms of philosophy, what I feel are most important things with me, it would be always -- any decisions I make are always based on what's best for the students. (Gina, interview 3)

Gina's educational philosophy appears to be situational and mediated by the context of her school and its students. Formal training does not appear to specifically inform and mediate her educational philosophy.

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In contrast to Jim, Bob did not draw upon books or other writings as informing his educational leadership theory and practice. Instead, most prominent were his own life experiences, and he reflected upon his own immediate family as foundational aspects of his educational philosophy and practice.   He described how important his family was to him. In doing so, he connected one specific tenet that he was raised with by his parents as underpinning his beliefs on how to work children in schools:

> Our parents, they always taught us about the basic - and you can go out into that hallway, ask any kid - the one thing I say the most, which my parents used to drill into us, "Treat others the way you, yourself, would like to be treated." Not in a religious way or anything because I'm certainly not a religious person by any stretch of the imagination. It is the one - if we all follow that one rule. (Bob, interview 1)

Bob employs the "The Golden Rule" as a means of providing a mechanism to guide his behaviour and to present as an example for students to model with respect to relationships. Much the same as Jim described attachment being key to the relationship between children and adults in schools, for Bob, relationships are key to his educational leadership philosophy.   This is, perhaps, best echoed in the vision of his school and what he wished to accomplish as principal of Moose Meadow School. For him, the goal is not about academic achievement alone, but about fostering a love of school and learning in the children he spends each day with:

> I truly believe that with a little luck I can make a huge difference. Without any luck I can make a huge difference in every kid that comes through here, but with a little luck my making a difference is going to make a difference on a national level, on a local level, on a Yukon level, maybe a world level. Who knows? Maybe one of my kids going through here will have enough creative juices poured into him to make some kind of huge contribution to the world. That would be my dream. (Bob, interview 3)

While Bob showed passion in his description with respect to making a difference, he did not elaborate specifically on what that difference would look like, or what differences would actually constitute making a difference as a result of his actions. Instead, he identifies luck as the crucial ingredient that is the catalyst for producing a difference- however defined. The first participant to articulate a vision for his school, he follows up his uncertainty of whether or not he will make a difference by stating that he does not care if it is ultimately realized.

In summary

The non-Indigenous Yukon principals in this study initially found it challenging to define educational leadership.   This was a very difficult question for them to answer and what emerged was a focus on the managerial, administrative, and functional aspects of their role. The concept of educational leadership that emerged was that of a teacher who had an expanded role which included many additional managerial responsibilities and duties. Jim referred to this using the expression "first among equals".

The participants in this study speak about what they do in managerial and administrative ways, referring to themselves as principals who hold a 'position' and do a 'job'. There was little discussion about the purposes and goals of schools and the ends of education, and what discussion did occur was only offered by one participant. Thus, it appears that when asked to define educational leadership, the participants in this study see themselves as principals and do not refer to themselves using the term 'educational leader'. Instead, they describe themselves as principals who are problem-solvers, responsible for dealing with the inconsistencies in the educational system in order that their schools run in an orderly fashion

The non-Indigenous principals in this study do not rely heavily upon educational leadership literature as a means of informing their practice. What mention there was of educational leadership theory, books, or authors was recalled from their early years. It is only in more recent times that Jim mentions reading a book outside of the field of educational leadership that informs and/or reinforces his current philosophy and educational practice.

To this point, it appears that the basis upon which non-Indigenous principals ground their practice are created through their experiences both as principals and as teachers. Participants referred to being 'dropped' into the principalship, having no idea of what they were getting into, only to become the administrative and managerial 'masters of their own domain'. Thus, professional isolation in a fractured community is a theme that emerges as the participants in this study describe their role and their construction of themselves as non-Indigenous principals working in Indigenous Yukon contexts.

Question 4

> I'll break every rule, I'll bend every rule. I'll do whatever I can. My only concern is my kids and my staff. I don't give a shit about the Department of Education. I say that with a certain amount of honesty, because I don't think they give a shit about me. (Bob, interview 5)

On page 95, Chapter 2 of this study, Figure 1 outlined the multi-level context in which non-Indigenous Yukon principals are nested. This context located the principal at the centre of the micro, meso, and macro levels of policy and curriculum thrusts that impact their practice and the decisions they make in relation to their school and community. How do the principals in this study address the tensions that arise at the intersections of the delivery of external curriculum measured by external tests, in a policy

context that allows for 20% of the instructional year to be devoted to locally developed

curriculum aimed at making school culturally relevant to students and their communities?

Addressing tensions: "We definitely feel the curriculum crunch"-Jim

Looking first at standardized testing, Jim highlighted the importance which is

placed upon these exams at the elementary school level and the negative effects of them on

educators:

> Curriculum-wise at an elementary school I guess the biggest thing in administration would be the YAT tests - the Yukon Achievement Tests for Grades 3 and 6, and their interpretation of how we kind of twist ourselves up in knots over how we did and so on. (Jim, interview 2)

Jim described the delivery of standardized tests as stressful events for teachers and

children. While he does not disagree that there should be some benchmark against which

to assess educational activities and attainment, based on nearly 40 years of educational

experience, he readily offered his opinions on the topic of standardized testing and the

effects of them:

> I'm not a big fan of that kind of test and although I think we've improved from the days when every kid in the school did the CTBS (Canadian Test of Basic Skills) test every year which really killed us.   But I do think we have to have some sort of a benchmark approach to learning, but I think it is better served with rubrics rather than simply running through these multiple choice tests.   There is an area where I think there will always be a certain amount of tension in the school and policy. (Jim, interview 2)

Jim's reference to the CTBS tests describes the standardized tests which have been

used over many years in elementary schools across Canada. While these specific tests are

no longer mandated in the Yukon, nonetheless Jim identifies the tension that is created at

the school level as a result of mandated Yukon Achievement Test (YAT) standardized

testing regime.

Fragmented curricular policy: "You don't muck around"-Rose.

At Mountainview School, as a high school, Rose has the additional responsibility
of overseeing the deployment of an additional form of standardized test: BC Provincial
Exams. Yukon students must write five mandatory BC provincial examinations in Grades
10, 11, and 12 in order to meet the 2004 graduation requirements of the BC Ministry of
Education. These are administered in a variety of subjects. These exams could be
considered 'high stakes' given that how students fare affects their final mark in a course,
whether they graduate from high school, and the post-secondary options available to them.

At the high school level, courses are credit-based and must meet BC Ministry of
Education specifications in order for a student to be eligible to graduate high school. When
asked whether the topic of meeting graduation requirements arose in her practice, Rose
replied candidly:

> I'm sure it happens on a regular basis. I don't always hear about it but I think my
> opportunity is to as much as possible, you can't have your cake and eat it too, like
> you can't say, "I want my kid to have all these cultural opportunities or all these
> sports opportunities but I want them to graduate with enough credits and enough
> courses to go on to university." Well, you know, there is going to have to be a
> compromise here somewhere. (Rose, interview 2)

Rose described the steps she takes in order to ensure that children are programmed
in ways that meet parental desires. Despite her efforts to ensure that she meets parental
academic expectations, she identified the disjointed relationship between school, parent,
child, curriculum, and educational programming that she must mediate to varying degrees
depending on the individuals involved. Rose attempts to address these challenges by
serving as a career counselling resource for students and parents in addition to her role of
principal:

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Some parents are phoning you saying, "Well, if my kid takes this math can they become a lawyer?" And I'll say, "Well, we have to go online and look at every university because they are all different. But I'll tell you generally what my thoughts are." Or "Doesn't my kid have to have French 12?" And I'll say, "Well, no." But you have to keep directing them back to college and university websites to see. And a lot of parents have visions of their children all becoming brain surgeons and the kids aren't interested in being a brain surgeon. (Rose, interview 2)

In the previous three excerpts, Rose identifies the various fractured and disconnected curriculum policy levels that she must deal with in her daily practice. First, she must decide what courses to offer depending whether they are mandated courses or locally developed curriculum that may not necessarily count for credits in the BC educational system. Then, she must align BC Ministry of Education credit-based curriculum employed by the Yukon Educational system with the course and credit requirements of post-secondary institutions, validating her decisions by these two external measures. Further, at the local community level, she must deal with the pressure of balancing the competition over instructional time between these external factors in ways that allows for the incorporation of local Indigenous language and culture. Finally, Rose must accommodate the visions of educational attainment held by parents, despite them being ones not necessarily shared by their children.

Rose stated the academic imperative on the part of many parents that their child(ren) be provided with educational programming that would not limit their future academic opportunities after leaving Mountainview School. For her, this meant that she must carefully ensure that each student's three-year high school program is planned to ensure that sufficient credits are earned and all BC graduation requirements are met:

You don't muck around. Generally, every parent will tell you they want their kid to graduate. They may not all understand how that's going to happen or they may not all be rowing with you but that's what they want. They want their kids to

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graduate and what they mean is they want their kids to get enough credits that they could move onto college or whatever. (Rose, interview 2)

Here, Rose identifies the tension arising as a result of the inclusion of locally developed programming competing against instructional time devoted to credit-based courses which are accepted towards graduation. Further, she describes how she has tried to address this at Mountainview School by getting some locally developed courses to be recognized for credit towards BC graduation:

> Well, if you're doing locally developed and you're in a credit system, which is Grade 10, 11 and 12, you better be really careful because only so many locally developed courses will be accepted towards graduation so I try to avoid those in Grade 10, 11 and 12. We have now got Athabascan as a recognized course, but that used to be called locally developed. Southern Tutchone was locally developed. Now it's recognized as Athabascan because in B.C. they have several languages, which I can't pronounce, for credit…So we have moved a lot away from locally developed just because otherwise you get kids in tight spots trying to graduate. (Rose, interview 2)

Rose illuminates the challenges created as a result of having to meet the BC Ministry of Education graduation requirements while concurrently offering locally developed programs aimed at meeting the needs of students in their community. As she points out, this results in her avoiding more culturally relevant locally developed courses, programs, or activities as they may not be accepted towards BC graduation. Such courses take instructional time away from those courses that do count towards graduation, and only a certain number of these courses may be authorized to count towards graduation requirements. Despite her efforts, as a result of the Yukon educational system being tied to the BC Ministry of Education graduation requirements, locally developed and culturally relevant programs are discouraged as they inadvertently take away instructional time from BC-recognized subjects, thereby creating an obstacle for Yukon students attempting to graduate in the BC system.

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Thus, as outlined in Figure 1, p. 95, Rose is located clearly at the intersection of disjointed and disharmonious curricular policy spanning territorial, regional, and national levels. She must alleviate local tensions and address the desires of parents and children. As the principal, she is therefore trapped betwixt and between the procedures and structures of multiple systems, with little leeway to manoeuvre. Her sense of frustration and futility with this construct was apparent with her summation: "You know, I don't know that there is an answer to that. I just keep trying."

"Curriculum crunch": "So much is expected and you just don't have enough time"- Gina

Curriculum implementation issues grounded in the competition over instructional time are informally referred to by Yukon educators as "the curriculum crunch". The "crunch" comes as a result of there being a finite amount of instructional time in the academic year (and over a three-year period for high school students) that must be divided amongst externally mandated educational courses and locally developed programs and initiatives. As a result, principals have to navigate amongst specific choices with regards to what programs will ultimately be offered to the children attending school. Not all can be included within this finite timeframe.

Gina shared the practicalities of having x amount of instructional time while concurrently attempting to divide it by y amount of curriculum and programs. She identified the tension she feels as a principal as a result of having a range of options and convincing teachers of the merits of one choice over another:

> I mean, in terms of delivery, we definitely feel the curriculum crunch where there is so much expected and you just don't have enough time. We're in the business of academics, so the stuff that comes across my desk of constantly making decisions about what you want to introduce into your school that is going to be part of or enhance rather than take away, and then, you have to present it to the teachers in

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such a way that they see it as enhancing and not taking away, for example. (Gina, interview 2)

The aspects of managing time and schedules-what Gina refers to as the "business of academics"- identifies the managerial and administrative demands placed upon principals, along with expectation that they will make it all fit in and work. This appears as a shared problem amongst schools, given her use of the pronoun "we". While Gina mentioned previously that principals had a lot of power, when it comes to the curriculum crunch, they appear bombarded by a multiplicity of demands to which they must react and address.

The effects of the "curriculum crunch" on the school, the teaching staff, and children were brought together concisely by Jim:

> I think generally the biggest challenge in curriculum is not that we don't have it, but we have so much curriculum that we have to be fairly selective as to what we are asking the teachers to deliver at any given time. That then falls into the whole area of time tabling and deciding what's important and what's not as important as something else. (Jim, interview 2)

The frustration Jim felt arose as he spoke of the consequences of the "curriculum crunch" at Hillside School:

> You know that we've succeeded at least in the Yukon that we're cramming our day full, and fragmenting at the same time. So children are as early as we'd want, even Kindergarten are moved around the school constantly - they are off to Music, back to the classroom for half an hour, off to PE, back to the classroom. There is a certain frustration level I think we all face just from the movement alone. (Jim, interview 2)

Jim paints a portrait of the fragmented school reality that occurs as a result of the dismemberment of the school day at the hands of the externally driven and mandated "curriculum crunch". Not only is it he, as the principal, who expresses frustration: so too do the teachers in the school who must coherently deliver the ever-expanding expectations on the part of ministries of education, universities, community, and parents. Despite his

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earlier assertion that principals are "masters in their own domain", at the hands of curricular polices, the principals in this study are clearly deposed by them, their ability to be a leader reduced to manager and administrator by the outer layers of the sphere of control.

Bob describes similar tensions that exist for him at Moose Meadow School, a place where, much the same as at Mountainview School, both student academic achievement and culturally relevant instruction are important components of educational programming. The inclusion of locally developed programming requires a large commitment of instructional time throughout the school year:

> ...as much as we hate [it], we can't afford a five day culture camp. So, we cut it down to three, normally five. So, doing the culture camps, the bison hunt…you have to remember just doesn't take up the five days of the bison hunt. It takes up five days of the HEED (Hunter Education and Ethics Development) program. So, those students are giving up ten full days…but parents looking at it and going, "There's ten full days my kid's not getting their math, their science, their socials." They are, in a sense. (Bob, interview 4)

Bob estimates that up to two months (40 instructional days out of 180) are devoted to culturally-based learning which takes place outside of the classroom. This creates tensions for Bob where some parents are concerned. The intersection of externally mandated BC curriculum, locally developed programming, cultural relevance of education, time, and parental expectations of learning taking place in the classroom converge at this point, leaving Bob (as the principal) to mediate these competing elements, much the same as the orchestra leader or air-traffic controller metaphor identified earlier:

> I've got parents -- not just one or two, three or four that have said, "We have way too much…" Of course, they're non-First Nations, actually, no, one of them is, who have said we have way too much cultural stuff. So we bring [a local Indigenous artist] in every Friday. So, there's an afternoon, every afternoon through the entire school year, ten days for the bison hunt, ten days for the culture camps, not to mention all the other little cultural stuff we do when we bring stuff in. Over the course of a year between art

and the hunting, and all that kind of stuff, we probably devote almost a full month to cultural stuff if you were to add it all up…I think it's fantastic. (Bob, interview 4)

How then does Bob navigate these distinctions and the seemingly conflicting educational philosophies of classroom-based instruction versus culturally relevant learning beyond the school walls and the competition for instructional time that surfaces as a result? He does so by taking the time to talk with parents and his School Council about their concerns, reframing teaching and learning as not solely school or classroom-centric pursuits. When he meets with parents to talk about these matters, he finds that it becomes a positive learning opportunity. His enthusiasm was clear as he described the nature of these conversations:

> …but when you sit down -- you sit down one-on-one with the parents, or in a case like this when [the concern] came to school council. You sit down and people are -- they've got their ears on and they're willing to listen, it's amazing. You can sit down and really rationalize and work it out. Get them to see that those kids are not missing anything, really. (Bob, interview 4)

Thus, as Bob explains, addressing this tension is done by sharing with parents his educational philosophy that learning is not entirely school-centric and does not happen solely in the classroom. He explains to parents that curricular ends can still be achieved through the creation of learning opportunities based outside of the classroom. He reframes teaching and learning in ways illuminating that, for children, there is more value to learning when it incorporates local, traditional content and teaching practices not only in the school, but on the land and in the broader Yukon context as well.

This point was also underscored by Jim, who works to ensure that, whatever the origin of the curriculum, it is delivered in ways that are engaging for students:

> …when I think of curriculum I think of it as a big package, not subdivided into local and even mandated curriculum [which]is going to be open to all sorts of different approaches and challenges in delivery anyway. I guess the other way to

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look at the question is that it's not so much curriculum itself, but how it's delivered that is part of my job. The whole idea of managing the most effective, or encouraging the most effective way of teaching to engage kids is the issue here. (Jim, interview 2)

Jim's comments above are particularly revealing with respect to presenting the principalship as a job where he is manager of a fragmented, subdivided, and territorialized curriculum. While he believes that the curriculum should not be parsed out as it currently is, he is nonetheless directed as principal under the Yukon Education Act to make it work to a timetable and delivered within a defined amount of externally determined resources and staff. Thus, there is little room left to accommodate the educational visions of a principal, let alone the space and resources with which to realize them, if they existed.

While the intentions of stakeholders may be good ones, the principal is left holding a curricular Pandora's Box that they must manage effectively. They are responsible for ensuring that the multiplicity of good intentioned curricular prescriptions are adequately addressed on time, with the resources at hand, and to the satisfaction of students, parents, and policy makers. When asked how he addressed these challenges, Jim shared the aforementioned example of the bison hunt to illuminate how curriculum can be developed and delivered in ways that make them concurrently relevant to students and cover academic subjects, thereby helping to address this tension. As he describes its evolution, the bison hunt does not substitute learning of the curriculum but rather creates a context different from classroom instruction through which the curriculum can be taught and learned:

Very simply, it came about because one of our teachers came up to me and asked if I would consider us going into the bison hunt because the bison herd in the Yukon has to be culled every year. So there were tags which were made available to private hunters and this teacher's idea was "why doesn't the school apply for a tag"? I said sure, let's try it. And that has led from a single unique event to a

piece of the curriculum which is not only of great intrinsic interest but also of value to kids because it is consistent with a hunting tradition in the Yukon, it is very much consistent with First Nations experience going and living on the land for a full week. Finding the animals, killing an animal, butchering it, honoring that animal in the process.   We always bring our Southern Tutchone teachers on the land with us to be sure the kids respect the whole process of hunting. (Jim, interview 2)

This initiative points to an example where, in light of there being little time and space to do so, it is not the principal who identifies opportunities to develop new initiatives that bridge curriculum and Indigeneity. In this instance, it was the idea of a teacher who, with Jim's approval, pushed forward the concept of the bison hunt as a means of relating prescribed curriculum to Indigenous contexts.   This identifies one of the few educational leadership initiatives of curricular integration with respect to this study- yet is initiated by a teacher, and not the principal.

Jim identified further examples where students at Hillside School were covering the academic curriculum in ways which were culturally and contextually relevant to them. These included a pond study at the Grade 3 level where students learned the Indigenous vocabulary with a community Elder fluent in Southern Tutchone, along with the medicinal properties of local plants in areas found near the school. An important distinction for Jim was the difference between process and product in relation to curriculum:

> Product is the important part here, in other words, the process is really important and we think the kids are gaining through the process, but some kind of a product is also important. I use the example of the "Gazette", the feast, the stories that the kids in Grade 7 write when they get back, the mural that hangs in the foyer is a Grade 7 hunt from four years ago, so that became an art project.   So when I say product, it's not the best word, but it's the only one I can find to describe it. There has to be some kind of an outcome, and those are very tangible ones.   When we have our bison feast and the kids from Grade 7 get up and talk to the audience about their experience on the land - that's product.   In Grade 3 we produced a Paddy's Pond booklet. (Jim, interview 2)

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Here, Jim defines the product which can be placed into the curricular "bubble" he mentioned previously. In order for the bison hunt to be deemed legitimate from the perspective of those inhabiting the outer layers of the sphere of control, it must be packaged and labelled, the curricular achievements clearly identified for all to see. This is done to justify the allocation of time and resources required to engage in this cultural activity.

To conclude, this subsection presents the fragmented and conflicting curricular contexts through which the non-Indigenous principals in this study must navigate. The competition between a finite amount of time and resources is theirs alone to manage as they deploy both locally developed and externally mandated curriculum. Standardized assessment practices require that principals must strike a balance between the amount of time dedicated to locally developed and culturally relevant learning practices. When culturally relevant learning is incorporated, it must be packaged, delivered, and performed in ways which meet with system approval by fitting into the curriculum. While doing all these things, principals must somehow strike a balance agrees with the career desires parents have for their children.

The principals in this study describe how they are placed squarely in the middle of the competition of the creation of local and relevant school experiences while meeting the requirements of a regime of external curricula and standardized assessments to measure educational attainment. Thus, the effect of these curricular struggles on principals is that they have little opportunity to be educational leaders who develop curricula and instigate new initiatives that are relevant and meaningful to their Indigenous children and communities. The policy tensions that further delimit the ability of principals to be educational leaders are explored in the following subsection.

Field trip policies: "There was no input from anybody"-Bob

A policy challenge identified by non-Indigenous Yukon school principals working in Indigenous Yukon school contexts was that of field trip policies as they relate to taking students outdoors onto the Yukon landscape. While individual Yukon schools may follow their own procedures for field trips, they are not to develop their own individual policies. These are designed and mandated by the Yukon Department of Education.

Given the vast distances between communities and the need to move students between the school and the particular sites they may be visiting on a field trip, student transportation, as an aspect of the field trip policy, is an issue for Bob. He feels that there is no consultation with him on matters pertaining to field trips and the transportation of students. His frustration came readily to the surface when asked to what extent he felt included by the Department of Education with respect to policy development, their transmission, and deployed at the school level:

> Well, the van policy was…that just came out of the blue. There was no input from anybody. We had our school vans and we used to have a luggage rack on the top of the school van. We used to have a hitch on the back…It was a fifteen passenger van, which was ideal for us because our biggest class size is fifteen. Then we get this edict, this ruling from above that says, "Take off your roof rack, take off your trailer hitch, remove the back seat, and don't you dare put any luggage in the cavity that's left where the seat was"… making it totally useless. (Bob, interview 2)

Without the school van, the facility for the school to deliver such programming was seriously restricted. His anger now fully exposed, Bob vigourously repositioned himself numerous times in his chair as he described the extent to which this unilateral policy enactment seriously constrained the educational and cultural opportunities Moose Meadow School could offer its students:

> You can't pull anything, so you'd have to have another truck along to pull all the gear if you're doing an extended field trip, which we do a lot of or we're going to

culture camp or whatever. They may as well have thrown away the van. After that, to us, it was virtually useless. (Bob, interview 2).

The effects of unilateral policy directives were far-reaching and felt immediately at the instructional level for the principal to grapple with and address. In this particular case, the response by Bob and other principals resulted in new vans were purchased by the Department of Education. Not only is the aspect of transporting students of issue. As the participants in this study point out, hiring the teachers they feel are best suited to their children and their school also brings them into conflict with Department of Education policies.

Hiring protocol: "Sometimes there's not a good fit. I'm all about good fits"-Gina

Jim identified the staffing of the school as the biggest policy issue for him to grapple with as principal. When asked to identify the challenges he faces in relation to educational policies, he shared two: the Yukon Department of Education hiring protocol and the staffing formula. The Department of Education staffing protocol directs that priority is to be given to First Nations teachers when hiring decisions are made. He describes the balancing act between adhering to Department of Education policy directives and meeting the instructional needs of students in his school:

> We never seem to get enough support….The other area of staffing is that we have a hiring protocol, which means that certain groups have to be looked at before other groups and it makes a lot of sense, and it's a good idea, but there are a lot of gray areas. Every year what we try to do is book half of our classroom positions as being taught by First Nation teachers at any given time reflecting our population. But trying to maintain that in light of all the other protocols is sometimes pretty difficult to do. Plus you want to choose the best teacher for the job, not just somebody who fits the protocol. There is a huge issue. (Jim, interview 2)

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Here, Jim describes three important aspects: first, he believes the level of staffing

for his school, as determined by the Yukon Department of Education's staffing formula, is

inadequate to meet the needs of the children in his school. Then, within the framework of

this policy directive, he strives to balance his staff in order that it is reflective of the

student population at Hillside School. This poses challenges as he concurrently hires and

assigns who he believes are the best teachers for his students. These factors combine to

make the adequate and appropriate staffing of his school with the best teachers (however

defined) for his students a complex and demanding task.

Gina also isolated the hiring protocol as a policy challenge for her. She believes

they constrain teacher transfers between schools and the principal's ability to select who

they feel are best suited to the school:

> I don't disagree with the whole idea that when a job is posted, first dibs is for
> permanent teachers. I don't disagree with that part of it. Then, the hierarchy with
> First Nations people, with people from [the Yukon Native Teacher Education
> Program], that kind of thing I do disagree with. I mean, we have to be looking at
> what's best for the kids and what's best for our school. Sometimes there's not a
> good fit. I'm all about good fits. (Gina, interview 4)

Getting that best "fit" for his students and his school despite the application of the

hiring protocol is also of primary importance for Bob, and he was effusive when it came to

this topic. The most reactive of all principals, Bob has deliberately offered jobs to teachers

in clear contravention of this Department of Education policy. From his perspective,

whatever may be the consequences of his actions really does not matter that much to him

so long as he can hire who he feels is best suited to his school and the children:

> I've broken the rules, I've gotten my fingers slapped many a time by the
> department because I didn't follow hiring protocols, but my position has always
> been: I don't care if they're one legged, two legged, black, blue, green, missing an
> eye, blind, as long as they're the best teacher available for what I need. Now, I
> know the department has different rules; they have hiring protocols and all that sort

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of stuff. I've never used them, and it's got me in trouble, which is fine because for me the bottom line are the kids. I mean, there are rules and, you know, you can always get around [them]. I really, truly do believe, and I know I shouldn't be saying this, but asking for forgiveness is a whole lot easier [than asking for permission]. (Bob, interview 1)

Such is Bob's disregard for the hiring protocol and the constraints it places on his practice that he has been investigated by the Department of Education after, in contravention of the hiring protocol, took it upon himself to offer a teacher a position. Bob explained his strategy of offering the position to the teacher he wished to select first, thereby making it highly problematic for the HR Department to rescind his offer and present it to another candidate:

> I was investigated by [the head of Human Resources] because I hired somebody I shouldn't have hired because I broke all the protocols of hiring. My argument to her was I best know my school, I know what I need in this position. I know what the community wants, I know what my School Council wants, and I know what's best for the kids. I'm hiring this [person], I'd already hired her, they couldn't go back [on this offer]. I even said to her on the phone, I said, "Gertrude, I hope you're asking all these same questions to all the administrators in the Yukon, because I've got a feeling I'm getting singled out here." (Bob, interview 3)

The battle over who will staff the school reveals an important construct: while Bob and the Yukon Department of Education grapple with each other to determine who will extend offers of employment (and to whom they will be extended), the involvement of the Indigenous community in the staffing decisions of the school appears absent. While through his disregard for educational policy Bob may wrest control of hiring to apply his judgment, this presents an instance where non-Indigenous decision-makers may marginalize Indigenous contributions with respect to important workings of the school. In such a way, the fight between the non-Indigenous actors over who will staff the school becomes a struggle of substitution: One form of centralization competes with another, in

the absence of inclusion of Indigenous community input into important decisions such as who will teach the Indigenous children attending Moose Meadow School.

In our final interview, Bob reinforced the primacy of his devotion to his students, regardless of what he believed to be a constraining policy context with the potential for punitive consequences as a result of his actions. He passionately expressed what his job meant to him and what gives him validation as Moose Meadow's principal:

> My kids. I'll break every rule, I'll bend every rule. I'll do whatever I can. My only concern is my sixty kids and my staff. I don't give a shit about the Department of Education. I say that with a certain amount of honesty, because I don't think they give a shit about me. As you know from other interviews, there have been a number of situations where I have been cut loose. Just totally cut loose for all sorts of political reasons that has left a very bad taste in my mouth. (Bob, interview 5)

The principals in this study feel constrained by Department of Education policy, unable to exercise their educational judgment to hire who they believe are the best teachers for their school. They expressed intense frustration and stress as a result of such policy disjunctures. In the following subsection they share how they deal with the intense challenges as a result of the disharmonious curriculum imperatives and fragmented policy development practices.

Coping with challenges and tensions: "I found a counsellor"- Rose

How do the participants in this study cope with the aforementioned challenges in order to maintain their strength, perspective, and personal well-being? Depending on the individual, their interests and personality, the degree of challenges faced at a particular time, each describe personalized approaches to coping with the challenges and tensions they describe.

Without going into explicit details, Bob made reference to a legal action that he initiated after he believed he had been defamed by one of his School Council members.

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Doing so exacted quite a personal toll on him, and the level of stress he experienced was compounded by what he perceived to be a lack of support from the Department of Education. For a person of his high energy level, who finds pleasure in his work and enjoys being with his students, his response was to leave the school and his position:

> I was so fed up at that point, after those accusations … The crap I was getting from the Department [of Education] rather than support. It was like, "How dare you say that to one of your school council members?" It was like, "What?!" So, I just took two months off. I went away. I went back home, and I did absolutely nothing. I just stayed with my family and built up my family ties again. (Bob, interview 3)

As Bob describes, dealing with challenges and tensions requires an on-going effort to keep busy, pursuing hobbies, and engaging in a variety of outdoor pursuits. Engaging in a diversity of activities allows him to mentally disconnect from the challenges and tensions that accompany his occupation. Bob illuminates how his outdoor pursuits provide a diversion, and how his mental processes work to help preserve him:

> I really stay busy with outdoor stuff. When I go sledding or I go four-wheeling, I just leave school behind. I can really compartmentalize things. I can truly block off school. When I leave school, I can really leave it behind me. I don't get hung-up on -- I sleep like a baby. When I walk out of this door, I don't care what's happening in my school, I have this knack -- I've always had it -- I shut it out. (Bob, interview 3)

Rose identified different strategies than Bob for dealing with the challenges and tensions which she faces in her role:

> I think there are several things. I think experience helps you a lot. After you have lived through the meat grinder for a few years you figure out what's going to get you in [trouble] and what's not, so experience is a big one. (Rose, interview 3)

Rose describes the conflicts of practice and policy using the metaphor of a 'meat grinder'. Important to learn is to avoid conflict as a result of being caught between the principalship and Department of Education policies. She actively seeks help and support in dealing with the challenges and tensions which accompany the principalship. For her,

confidentiality and establishing distance from her community is very important in this

regard. Talking with a person removed from her context appears beneficial as a means of

preserving her mental health:

> What I did was I found a counsellor who is completely confidential. He comes to where I live but doesn't live in that community, so I go to him. At first I was going more regularly but now I go about every 6 weeks or so. He doesn't really want to see me that much [laughing]. I think for my own mental health I had to have someone that I could speak to about issues, no matter what they were, to understand why a certain parent saying a certain thing pushed my buttons or why a certain kid doing a certain thing pushed my buttons, and he helped me to do that. (Rose, interview 3)

> On a highly personal and individual level, Rose engages in a number of actions

which further assist in her self-preservation and maintenance of mental well-being.

Similar to Bob, these are activities framed within the natural splendour of the Yukon:

> More and more I've protected my personal time from my school time… I've started a book club, I quilt, I ski, I walk a lot, go boating… Walking around in the outdoors and just soaking in the landscape and I think that really helps. So I try to walk to school and walk home. I also sometimes pray during that time. (Rose, interview 3)

Bob and Rose, as the two principals in rural and isolated Yukon communities,

identify the need to separate their work life and personal life, indicating that this is a

challenge they face as visible principals in their respective communities. From their

description, it appears that the role of principal is more intense in rural communities as

compared to Whitehorse in that it is difficult to be anonymous outside of working hours in

a rural community. Professional isolation as a result of the maintenance of confidentiality

becomes a challenge when there is no one else to talk things through. Thus, Bob and Rose

engage in relatively solitary activities with small groups of individuals with whom they

interact. Regardless of the approaches taken, they are highly personal, largely

individualized and meaningful to each individual.

In summary: Addressing the tensions of 'the meat grinder'

The principals in this study readily identify a number of policy challenges that they face and reconcile in their daily practice. Recalling them evoked strong emotions and reactions. They indicate that being trapped in the middle of the contradictory discourses of curriculum and policies is highly frustrating and stressful: being located at the center of this context exacts a personal toll requiring that, in some cases, serious measures taken to address them. That these challenges are faced by the rural principals in this study suggests that being a principal in rural and isolated locations, where the principal is a highly visible community member at all times, can be particularly challenging.

The study participants mediate the tensions that arise as a result of the contradictions found at this intersection, and as a result, their practice focuses on administration and management. This restricts their ability to be educational leaders who can engage their communities and enact their own visions and educational initiatives. Thus, they exist as disempowered managerial agents, placed squarely in the midst of meso and macro-levels of external control. On the one hand, they are the policy operatives of the Yukon Department of Education and on the other the educational advocate for their school. Not always do these priorities align, and as indicated here, contradict each other in ways that are frustrating and disappointing.

Illustrative of this is the implementation of locally developed curriculum: in order that the bison hunt be deemed worthwhile activities by the Department of Education and/or the BC Ministry of Education, the merge of local and externally mandated curricular priorities is done through the creation of a spectacle or an illusion, referred to as a "curricular bubble" by Jim. In such a way, traditional cultural activities must be repackaged and labelled to suit Ministry-approved curriculum. Thus, while local and

culturally relevant curriculum is identified as valued by the Yukon Education Act, it is colonized by a larger, externally created and superimposed BC curricular system.

In relation to the Yukon Department of Education, struggles exist between this organization and the participants in this study. What results is a distraction and loss of focus on the Indigenous communities for whom they work. While the non-Indigenous actors are locked in struggles with each other, they may not be listening to the voices and engaging with their respective local Indigenous communities. As a result, broader educational conversations that include community voices do not occur.

In such a construct the principal is disempowered from emerging as an educational leader, able to employ their own judgment in the pursuit of an educational vision that includes the aspirations of the school community. Instead, they are constrained and confined to being a small, frustrated cog in a larger educational machine. Their job is to be responsible and accountable for the management functions required to balance competing educational ends, to the satisfaction of multiple external levels of control.

Question 5

I don't know whether being a woman has helped me. I think maybe in some cases being a woman has hindered me. There is definitely an old boys' culture. The Yukon is definitely a frontier so women have to be almost non-traditional in order to go someplace.

<div align="right">(Rose, interview 5)</div>

The final series of interviews conducted with the non-Indigenous Yukon principals in this study shed light on three aspects: how gender, ethnicity, and class location informs their practice and their relations with different Yukon Indigenous educational and community contexts. The sub-questions posed attempted to shed light on the following aspects: their habitus, as constituted by their perceptions of themselves, their dispositions, and their practices (Schirato and Webb, 2003); the extent to which they believe being a man or a woman helps in their role as principal; the efforts they made, if any, to ensure that their schools were socially just; the nature of the attempts they made to engage with their communities, and; whether or not they created opportunities to attend to issues of social and cultural diversity, social justice, fairness, and equity.

Gender: "…is something that I don't spend a lot of time thinking about"

Attitudes related to issues of gender vary greatly, ranging from statements indicating that gender had no bearing at all on their practice, to assertions that gender is highly influential. From Bob's perspective, he initially asserted that gender has no influence at all in relation to the principalship.   When asked whether, from his perspective, gender made a difference in regards to being a principal, he responded:

> No. Not to me it certainly doesn't, no. When I'm interacting with principals it doesn't enter my head that I'm dealing with a female principal or male principal. It doesn't. (Bob, interview 5)

When examining gender in relation to ability to be the principal, Bob modified his initial assertion that gender made no difference by stating that a woman could not have

stepped into the highly challenging principal position, as he did a number of years ago.

Thus, being male or female does become a factor for Bob in terms of whether or not one is

able to do the job of principal. Reflecting upon being hired as Moose Meadow's principal,

he recalled once again the difficult situation he walked into after the school had gone

through 7 principals in 2 years. Bob is uncertain whether a female could have come in as

he did and been successful:

> For a female principal to have come into my situation…would have been next to
> impossible just given all of the dynamics. Could they have done it? Well,
> probably. They would have had to have been a very special, hard as nails kind of
> gal to do it. (Bob, interview 5)

His statement above in reference to being "hard as nails" appears grounded in what

he sees to be the cultural nuances of patriarchy and matriarchy within the local community.

This was not easy for him to verbalize and elaborate on, though he did so in a hesitating

manner:

> I'd almost hate to say this, but the situation that I walked into here in this
> community, and probably in most communities, but in this community where it's a
> -- as far as the culture goes it's a matriarchal society, but as far as reality goes, it's a
> patriarchal society. Don't ever think otherwise. Culturally, everything is based on
> the mother, but in reality everything is based on the man. That said, the situation
> that I had here where probably, and even in our school now as it was then, probably
> eighty percent of our students are latchkey kids. So, the predominant person in
> their life is the mom. (Bob, interview 5)

While gender may not appear to be a factor to Bob when interacting with

colleagues, he did share that gender is a mediating factor in the relationship between the

principal, the teachers, and the community. He elaborated on this distinction, shedding

light on what he believes to be gender influences as a result of the matriarchal influences of

Moose Meadow School's Indigenous community. These distinctions within the

community appear to have direct bearing on how Bob views gendered distinctions as they

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relate to educators in the school. Based on his assertion above, gender does appear to make a difference in terms of the relationship between educators at the school and children from the Moose Meadow community:

> In the situation that I walked into here, you know, twelve years ago with the drugs and the sex and the swearing, a woman principal coming into that situation at that time, given what I just said about it being a patriarchal society even though it is matriarchal when it comes to culture, the man is the main thing. All these kids, their primary caregiver is the mother, they have no male influence in their life, so they tend not to listen. Even with my female staff now, they tend to listen more closely, especially the boys not so much the girls, if it's a male teacher. (Bob, interview 5)

From Bob's perspective, based on his experience in the Moose Meadow community, the male in local Indigenous society is the disciplinarian, while the female is the caregiver and nurturer of the young. He continued to shed light on what he saw were important gendered characteristics:

> Yes, that's absolute. Not to say that my female staff are soft or anything. They're tough, but a man can put a different edge on it. He's one of them. Their main influence is their mother who they don't tend to listen to to begin with, so their mother, their female teacher. Now, having said that, my Grade 1, 2, 3 teachers have that class running like clockwork. To answer your question, had that been a female principal coming into this situation here, eleven years ago, I wouldn't say it would be impossible. Given all that I've said, I think it would have been really close to impossible. (Bob, interview 5).

An important distinction needs to be made here: while Bob appears indistinct regarding the influence of gender and the efficacy of a female principal to do the principal's job (a female might have succeeded when she became principal if she was "hard as nails kind of gal") he states later in our interview:

> To broaden that question out, these days I don't think it matters if you're male or female. It's totally, one-hundred percent equal, and it should be. (Bob, interview 5)

Yet, when asked whether men or women have particular ways of knowing that inform their practice as educational leaders, Bob suggests that men and women will have

different approaches based on their life experiences, and that one approach would be no better or worse based on gender differences. His response appears contradictory in this regard: a female principal may do things differently than him; female life experiences are different than male experiences; but how males and females problem solve would be fundamentally the same, yet with nuanced differences. Bob struggled when attempting to grapple with matters of gender in relation to the principalship:

> Their life experience as a female versus the life experiences of a male are going to be different. That's not to say that her approach to problems that I would approach -- I may approach them, and I'm sure I would approach them a different way in some cases. Everything we do is based on our life experience. Being raised a woman and being raised a man is totally opposite. So, what they bring to it is not going to be any better or it's not going to be any worse. (Bob, interview 5)

A distinction which emerges during this interview sequence with Bob is that of equality and difference. While it appears that Bob believes that there is equality (or should be) between male and female principals, males and females do approach leadership in different ways, based on their life experiences.

From a community perspective, Bob reveals what could be considered Yukon-centric illusio in regards to the role of gender and power in his community: while the community is matriarchal in nature based on the role of females in the raising of the children, in reality it is really a male-dominated society. As a result, Bob believes that, while men are less involved in the raising of children than are women, men get more of an immediate response from children than do women. This translates directly to the interaction between children and their teachers at Moose Meadow School. Women teachers, should they wish to be successful need to exhibit what Bob considers male traits: be tough and "as hard as nails". Bob clarified this when asked whether a female principal would make a difference at the present time at Moose Meadow School. In contrast to his

perspective on this question looking back over his years at the school, Bob unequivocally

stated:

> No, zero. You could bring anybody in, and for awhile, until they put their mark on it, it would run like a clock. (Bob, interview 5)

> From the perspective of the other male study participant in this study, Jim shared

his views on gender in relation to being a principal at an urban elementary school:

> Well, I know in elementary school, because the vast majority of the people who work at the school are female, there's very much a gender imbalance, so just by an accident of birth I'm able to redress that balance in some small way. I'm not really sure where to go with a question like that because gender is something that I don't spend a lot of time thinking about….You know, again I haven't given it much thought. My gut feeling says no that the Yukon tends to be pretty egalitarian as a society. (Jim, interview 5)

By his own admission, Jim has not put much thought into the influence gender may

exert in the Yukon's educational field. In contrast to Bob, Jim views Yukon schools as

democratic spaces that are egalitarian in nature, notwithstanding there being an imbalance

with respect to the lower ratio of males to females in schools. He suggests that equal

compensation and job specifications reinforce equality between male and female

educators. While Jim may believe that gender makes no difference on whether one is an

effective administrator, he nonetheless makes reference to a retired female principal,

known in the Yukon for her stance that the Yukon Department of Education is a male-

centric organization.

> I think women have somewhat a disadvantage in the labour force say as administrators because quite often their childbearing years collide with the time in your life when you're trying to get ahead as far as a career is concerned. I see that as a major, major issue for a lot of women, but in terms of, my perception since I've come to the Yukon is that an effective administrator is an effective administrator without regard to gender at all. Now, Colleen MacDonald (a retired female principal) may something to say about that. (Jim, interview 5)

I asked Rose whether or not she felt being a woman helped her in her role as principal in relation to working with the Yukon Department of Education. She responded frankly with an observation on how she felt the Yukon historical context reinforces a male-centric attitude:

> I don't know whether being a woman has helped me. I think maybe in some cases being a woman has hindered me. There is definitely an old boys' culture. The Yukon is definitely a frontier so women have to be almost non-traditional in order to go someplace. And I'm not one of these people who set a goal for myself, yes I want to be the Deputy Minister by the time I'm 40, that's not me. (Rose, interview 5)

Thus, it appears from Rose's assertion that, to get 'ahead' in terms of career advancement, a women needs to be non-traditional in terms of how women are thought about by men in the Yukon context. This said, later in the interview, Rose offered the following which appeared to diverge from the above statement when referring specifically to her own self and how being a female may have been a hindrance to her practice:

> I don't sense, maybe I'm wrong, but I don't sense that gender has been an issue. I think being part of an inner circle is more of an issue and most of the inner circle was male, but hunting and fishing and farting and all those things that guys do up here, you know…(Rose, interview 5)

Based on Rose's assertions above, it appears that if you don't aspire to be a member of the inner circle or seek advanced career levels (as Rose refers to senior management levels at the Yukon Department of Education), gender plays less of an influencing role on practice and organizational status.

The extent to which gender exerts an influence appears to differ between schools and the Yukon Department of Education: if one wishes to be a principal, being female would be less of an issue than if you were to aspire to a position in the Yukon Department

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of Education. As Rose sees it, better to be male, or display male tendencies if a career goal is to work in the Yukon Department of Education offices.

When asked of the influence being female had in her interactions with her professional group- the Yukon Teachers' Association- she offered a further response contrasting with her views on the degree to which gender didn't matter, once again, in contrast to the Yukon Department of Education:

> I don't think that makes a big difference. I think integrity makes a difference. I don't think whether you're a man or a woman makes a difference. (Rose, interview 5)

Similar to Bob, Rose described the gender perspectives embedded in her community as being factors related to her educational leadership practice as a woman in relation to the Mountainview School community. In this regard, as a female principal, the behaviour of males appeared to have a distinct bearing upon her relationship with some of them:

> Okay, well you've got some men who are bullies and I think they feel free to try and bully me more because I'm a woman. It doesn't work but they try it. (Rose, interview 5)

At this point, Rose reflected upon what she felt could now be viewed as an outmoded view of women in leadership positions. While male-dominated perspectives still appear in the current, along with the belief that a female leader should lead like a man in order to be successful, Rose asserts that they seem to be less apparent now than in the past:

> I don't think it's a big issue. We have a woman who is the First Nations chief and we have me at the school now and we've had a woman mayor. I mean, yes there are probably people who have problems with that but the thing about being a woman anytime is you can never show your weaknesses. You know, that was always the theory – you have to be as tough as a guy and I think, "No, you don't, just be yourself." (Rose, interview 5)

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The perspectives of the women principals in this study shed some interesting light on issues of male domination and masculine ways of leading. Women principals, in order to be successful, should exhibit leadership traits attributable to men- one which both Bob and Rose illuminated in this regard was the need for a woman to be "tough like a man".

A recurrent topic appears to be the use of power, bullying, or intimidation on the part of male parents in relation to the three schools described up to this point. Gina shared with me the following representative story, describing a very tense situation which she had to address:

> … for example there was an instance this fall where we had a male parent who came in. I was actually at the Department [of Education building] at a meeting and I was called out. He came in, he didn't agree with what the grade 1 teacher was doing, referred to the fact that she was running her crafts like the Gestapo – exactly [the words he used] -- and then, proceeded to walk around shouting and this and that, shook his finger in her face, this kind of thing. I was called back over. By the time I got back over here, he had left, but the police had been called. He had gone. He did come back. His daughter was here. He did come at lunch time, and when he came back I walked out of the school. I met him in the playground, and I told him he didn't have the right to treat the teachers like that. (Gina, interview 1)

Specific to being a woman and a principal in the Yukon educational system, the issue of male dominance permeating the educational hierarchy surfaced in our conversations. For Gina, this is an important and problematic area:

> I mean, certainly I feel that the whole hierarchy, [the] old boys club is still very strong. It comes out in so many ways. In meetings and everything, you know, who does the talking, who does the leading, who does the decision making. You know, I said this before, but you say something, and it's polite listening, and then, we go back to what we were talking about. (Gina, interview 5)

This last comment was made in reference to, once having listened to the messages the Department of Education presented in management meetings with principals, the approach Gina advocated was that of passive resistance: In effect, if, as a woman you say

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something, you are listened to politely.   When done, the conversation reverts back to the

Department of Education's message with little or no impact caused by her comments.

Reinforcing this, Gina shared a story how she feels that being a woman has resulted in her

being marginalized. Her emotion came to the surface and her language clearly conveyed

the anger that she felt:

> I had never done a PowerPoint [presentation], so one of the staff helped me. I
> spent hours and hours preparing for that external review and the PowerPoint
> presentation, and knowing exactly the process. I shared it with Ken up at Trapline
> School about what I was doing and the process. He did pretty well the exact same
> thing. When [the superintendent] talked about it at one of the administration
> meetings, and about how well some of the schools had done, he talked about Ken's
> power point presentation and how wonderful it was. I thought, "F**k you. I was
> so pissed off." (Gloria, interview 2)

As a result of the superintendent's feedback, which made no reference to her efforts

and the work she had done, Gina felt marginalized based on the fact that she was a woman

who presented ideas which, when re-presented by a man, became more credible and were

laudable. For her, this episode was representative of cases where, if you were a man, you

were afforded more respect and validation in terms of professional competence.

Based on such distinctions, Gina has learned to cope by shaping her practice when

working specifically with either males or females in the Yukon educational system. She

elaborated on how gender influences her interactions- in effect, playing a 'game' when

interacting with men. While Gina wishes that she did not have to operate in such a

manner, she does so nonetheless in order to get things done:

> It's like pulling teeth out of a bloody chicken. It's just ridiculous. So, you play
> these games of getting ignored, or these attitudes about, "Don't you understand
> how it works?" This is not the way things are done. Somehow you're some kind
> of an idiot because you're even asking in the first place. It gets frustrating, and
> then, you end up -- I hate this. I end up playing these stupid games where you joke
> and laugh and jolly. It's always men. You never have to do that with women --
> into getting what you want. On the one hand, I mean, I've been doing that all my
> life. (Gina, interview 5)

While Gina has learned to navigate the system based on gender, not always does her strategy work. The following story related to the initiation of maintenance to be done on the school's electrical plug-in system for cars in the parking lot (Yukon winters are very cold, and temperatures regularly dip below -30° Celsius. Car engines and batteries can freeze up if engine-block heaters are not plugged in). When the plug-ins were originally installed, the electrical receptacles were placed on the opposite side of the wooden railing, pointing away from the parking lot and vehicles. This rendered them inaccessible to school staff, and thus Gina asked that they be modified to face the vehicles in order to make them usable. Gina angrily described her interaction with a male Department of Education maintenance supervisor in charge of this project:

> So, I had given him all the information, why I wanted them changed. So, that didn't work, right? Then I tried the jollying thing. That didn't work because he didn't have a sense of humour. I kept bugging, thinking, okay, squeaky wheel approach. Finally he sent me this email back. I know I saved it because I was so mad. I didn't even answer it because I thought, "I'm going to say or do something that I'm really going to regret." And in it he told me to suck it up. He used those words, "Suck it up." But there were a few other phrases he used, and I remember it took me a few days to stop----seething. I used those exact words. I told [the superintendent] about it. I sent him a copy of it, and I said, "He never, ever would have sent that email to a male principal." It was true. Never would he have done that. (Gina, interview 5)

Despite changing her tactics of the 'game', Gina nonetheless met with frustration. Her perspective in regards to the Department of Education was not limited to that organization, but was also reflective of her regarding her professional association, the Association of Yukon School Administrators (AYSA). She also felt that AYSA was an "old boys club", describing how, when she was a new principal, she really looked forward to opportunities for professional socialization through her association, though now felt that she could no longer rely upon this body as part of a professional learning community.

Gina shared a scenario describing how she was included as a person to be mentored as part of a Department of Education and AYSA collaborative mentoring effort. Her experience was not an engaging one. When asked whether or not she felt that she could share her views with colleagues as part of a professional community in this mentoring initiative, she was quick to reply:

> No, and I think that really became obvious to me when I went to that meeting that Larry and Pierre had started. So, I was named as one of the people that should be mentored. I went to that first meeting and we broke up [into groups]. I shared some of my experiences as a first year principal in terms of -- because the whole gist of it was all about communication and relationships. They were talking about relationships with parents, with the community and everything. I made the comment that, "Until you have the relationships with your teachers and staff in the school underway, not much good is going to happen in the other areas." I shared a bit of what had happened. The reaction from the more experienced people that came back was so far removed from my philosophy and my style…(Gina, interview 1)

As her voice trailed off, I prompted Gina to tell me more and explain that which she had just begun to describe. She quickly picked up on this thread, pointing out what, for her, is a distinction between male and female perspectives on the value of collaboration:

> Well, just in terms of what we had talked about before, in terms of collaborating and talking and sharing. I attributed it to a more male viewpoint is that, "Well, yeah we can collaborate a bit on" -- basically it wasn't said, but basically "things that don't matter" or, "the things that we have to come to the parents with." On all the other stuff it's from the top down. It was this hard line, "Well, you have to make decisions. If your staff doesn't agree, tell them to hit the road kind of thing." (Gina, interview 1)

Gina followed this up with a comment in such a way that could best be described as explosive. Her anger quickly boiled to the surface and she became very animated as she described her response to this episode with her peers:

> It was like, "Bullshit!" Because there's so many men as opposed to women in the admin -- it's not only men. Some of the women are like that too in administration, but it feels like a lot of the men are. So, then when I get into conversations with

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them I feel like I'm coming off as a [soft or weak] person who is out there collaborating and this and that and the next thing. You're not tough enough…(Gina, interview 1)

Once again, the reference to 'toughness' surfaced in conversations relating to gender. Gina poignantly describes a stereotype relating to male and female leadership tendencies, identifying that even some of her female colleagues adopt what could be considered the male characteristic of 'toughness' over being collaborative.

In summary, as is clearly evident, Gina was very expressive, emotionally charged, and insightful on issues of gender in relation to her interactions with the Yukon educational system. The impact of such interactions on Gina was clear, as were her deep frustrations as to the extent which gender played a diminishing role for her as a woman in the system. She commented upon this and the role our conversations played in nurturing her reflections, evocatively stating:

The whole thing with the Department [of Education] and the old boys club, I don't think I realized it bothered me as much as it did, but it obviously does. I thought I had kind of stepped back from it, and just, "Phooey, that's the way it is."…You know what it is? It's the whole idea that somehow there's an attitude -- when you're in situations like that the attitude is that because of your gender you're not worth listening to or that you don't have anything important to add. That is really hard to stomach sometimes. (Gina, interview 5)

Clearly, for Gina, engaging with the interview questions on issues of gender was very important to her. Our discussions raised her consciousness regarding the extent to which gender affects practice and the way that she feels women principals are thought about by some males in the education system.

Habitus: "How would you not bring that to the forefront? Is that a rhetorical question?"-Rose

The inseparability of the self and being principal was echoed by Jim. At first he

struggled to find the words to describe the apparent interrelationship between the two.

Being a hockey fan, he offered the following analogy:

> You know, it's like…what's a good analogy? Hockey is a good analogy... A good
> hockey player, after a while, internalizes his or her skills to the point that they're
> not in the front of their mind all the time… It's just what you bring to the game
> every time you step on the ice. Well, I see working here very much the same. It's
> not a question of breaking down and compartmentalizing what I bring to the
> school. I am the sum knowledge, I am the sum total of all my experience. Who
> was the poet who wrote that? Doesn't matter. And that's what I bring to the
> school. (Jim, interview 5)

Based on Jim's comments above, it appears that his professional identity has grown

and developed over many years as principal in northern and Indigenous contexts. As he

describes, the self and experience meld to form the sum total of who he is.   Similarly,

when Rose was asked whether or not she brought who she was to the principalship, she

initially responded with disbelief that I would ask her such a question. Once she was

beyond this primary reaction, she followed up with an elaboration of which aspects of her

habitus mediate her practice:

> How would you not bring that to the forefront? Is that a rhetorical question? Of
> course you do. You bring everything you are, yeah. I don't have a professional
> persona and a private persona… I think if you subdue it you're a little less
> human…Probably the thing that has helped me most as a teacher and as an
> administrator is being a parent because if I read a report card and the teacher has
> written in it I read it as a parent would read it. (Rose, interview 5)

For Rose, being a mother and a parent of children who had gone through the Yukon

educational system is foundational and a core aspect of her habitus. Gina responded in a

similar way, sharing with me deeper details and recollections from her past which showed

how motherhood, and being perceived as a mother figure by her students, comprised a

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major portion of who she was as a teacher and is as a principal. She offered the following

vignette as an example of the inseparability of the self and experience:

> ...I had three kids when I started. I remember my very first year of teaching I was
> approaching it more from the motherhood end of it. It was a disaster. So, it took
> me a few months to realize that what I was doing was just ridiculous. Fortunately I
> had a very supportive principal and got through it and changed things, and turned
> everything around. It turned out to be a very positive experience…I was teaching
> my own children and a lot of the kids in the school, because they were all friends
> and a lot of them used to come over to our house, it was so funny in the school
> because lots of them would call me Mom instead of Mrs. Rogers. (Gina, interview
> 5)

I asked Gina whether what she described above- being both a teacher and a parent

at the same time and bringing her habitus to her work with students-were two difficult

roles to balance concurrently. From her perspective, this was not the case at all. When I

commented that this must be a tricky balance she was quick to respond:

> Well, no, actually it isn't, because you can do the nurturing thing, but you can also
> have a high expectation of behaviour and not put up with any garbage, that kind of
> thing. (Gina, interview 5)

For Bob, being himself is crucial to how he sees himself as principal of Moose

Meadow School. His use of humour is a core strategy to build and maintain relationships

with parents, School Council members, and students. Employing humour gives him the

ability to express who he is, and serves as a means of making school fun, engaging, and a

place which students want to come each day. His enthusiasm clearly bubbled over as we

talked on this point. On the day we conducted our last interview, he giggled as he shared

his beliefs and recollected the School Council meeting from the previous night:

> You've got a persona. You want to leave all your stuff outside the door, and you
> want to come in and you want to put on that good smile, positive, teaching those
> kids to take chances and learn. You are in a sense performing, but you're
> performing within your personality and within who you are. That's how I've
> always approached this job, Simon. I've always been really funny, friendly, goofy,
> silly with kids, with parents, with school council. (Bob, interview 5)

As we talked further on aspects of his habitus, Bob made explicit the importance to him of his own life experience. In previous conversations, Bob shared how he had engaged with many different occupations in his life. By his own admission, he refers to himself as "The Blue Collar Principal". At this point, he exposed how the amalgam of his life experiences shaped him and developed within him the ability to relate with all people, regardless of occupation, background, or class distinction:

> I'm kind of a common guy, so I can relate with whether they're rich people or the government people. Like the Premier [of the Yukon], who I grew up with. I can walk into his office and slap him on the back, or just kids that have been out of school and are on drugs and alcohol. I can relate to them because I've been there, too. Not an alcoholic or with drugs. I did drugs and I did alcohol when I grew up in the 60s. So, it was part and parcel. I feel I can relate to anybody on whatever level. I can, if I wish, speak very intelligently although I try not to...I like just the common guys. The truck drivers, the guys that work at the grader station, because I've been basically a blue collar worker my whole life…blue collar principal, absolutely. (Bob, interview 5)

When asked how his personal background informs the ways in which he takes on the role of principal, he was quick to respond with the following reflection on his life and the degree to which his life path informed how he engaged with his work:

> I've been mining or a heavy equipment operator or truck driver. I've done some flying, I've done some trapping. You name it, I've pretty much done it. All of that stuff sort of comes in where you're dealing with the public all the time and you learn how to deal with people and read them…You learn techniques and ways of recognizing people and reading them. That comes in really, really handy when you're dealing with irate parents. (Bob, interview 5)

In the case of these four participants, a distinction emerges between the male and female participants in the ways which they state that their habitus informs and mediates their practice. A clear distinction is how the female participants immediately draw upon their experience as mothers as being the key aspect of their habitus as they go about their

work which they rely upon. For them, this is a vital component of their being which they bring forward.

In contrast, the male participants, while both parents of children now grown, did not mention being a parent as an aspect which they brought to their practice. While no less expressive regarding the aspects of their habitus which they brought to their practice, they instead drew upon their past experiences in the workplace as foundational ones.   In Jim's case, he reflected upon his experiences in the stock market, the railroad, and as a teacher. Similarly, Bob drew heavily upon his engagement in a diversity of occupations prior to becoming a teacher and a principal.

Social justice: "… everybody has a voice, everybody gets heard."-Bob

In the final series of interview questions, the participants were asked the extent to which matters of fairness, equity, and social justice were attended to in their school. Given the significant role the principal plays in promoting and supporting programs and initiatives, and fostering a climate where such issues can be surfaced and addressed, their responses provide insights into the manner in which gender, ethnicity, and class location informs their work.

Bob explained how Moose Meadow School endeavoured to have a system of student governance which modeled local Tlingit systems:

> We wanted to mirror their system rather than have a student council president, a student council secretary, we wanted to have clan leaders, and we wanted to have all the students -- if they were Crow clan they would go into the crow, if they were Wolf they would go into the Wolf [clan]. (Bob, interview 5)

While keen to use this system as a model in the school, as Bob described, doing so was not without its challenges. Being aware of, and culturally sensitive to, Tlingit protocols is highly important. As Bob indicated, Moose Meadow School would not adopt

any system that is not developed without prior consultation and approval from the local

First Nation:

> There were some issues as to whether it's proper. They're very sensitive on doing
> things proper, whether we could do that. So, we held off, and then, it was just too
> late. We said, "We'll just go back to the regular system this year, and hopefully
> next year we'll be able to initiate that." I think we will, so we didn't do it this year.
> We held off for half a year waiting to get their go ahead to go ahead and do it.
> (Bob, interview 5)

While not in place at the time when we conducted our interviews, on matters of

social justice, Bob described a culturally relevant system of problem solving and conflict

resolution which has been adopted at Moose Meadow School. This is the use of the

talking circle, modeled after the alternative justice process referred to as circle sentencing.

Instead of taking on the conventional role of principal as judge and jury, when addressing

problems or conflicts, Moose Meadow School follows a more traditional Indigenous

justice model. In the talking circle, Bob described to me how each participant has a chance

to participate in the resolution of problems:

> The whole idea of the circle based on the First Nations culture is whoever has the
> feather [is the only one to speak]…and that's the approach that they use a lot of the
> times within the justice system here for First Nations. We've mirrored that… So,
> those sorts of things so that everybody has a voice, everybody gets heard. It's done
> in a culturally sensitive way. Kids like it. They feel comfortable doing it. We've
> actually done that with a couple of issues that we've had with parents. (Bob,
> interview 5)

Bob's mention of the School Council is in reference to the council of parents and

community members who provide the principal with direction on the overall running of the

school. There are times where a principal or parent may take a problem or issue of a

serious nature to the School Council for their advice and adjudication. Using the talking

circle method appears to foster a culturally relevant problem approach where all

participants can be heard and resolutions achieved in a consensual manner.

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As a teaching principal, Rose spends a large portion of her time in classes with her

students and not in the office. She shared the following story which illuminated the

passions, tensions, and 'teachable moments' arising from her deliberate selection of a

novel with an Indigenous theme for her Grade 8 students to read. Often, when novels are

read in classes, much discussion occurs as the issues in them are uncovered and grappled

with:

> We read a novel, No Word for Goodbye, about First Nations people in Manitoba
> and it was a friendship between a First Nations boy and a boy who came as a
> cottager in the summer. And then we got an excerpt from "Together Today for our
> Children Tomorrow" and we talked about that. And we talked about apartheid in
> Africa. We talked about a number of sort of "hot button" issues and when we were
> reading "Together Today for our Children Tomorrow" one of the kids in my class
> said, "I really hate this stuff. And I really hate what white people did to us." And
> another kid, who was also First Nations said, "It's not all white people." And they
> got into a bit of a discussion and then the kid who had said, "It's not all white
> people" turned to me and she said, "How do you feel about this?" and I said, "Well,
> I'm introducing this whole thing to you because I want you to think about why
> Elijah Smith started this process and I'm saying to you that wrongs were done but
> I'm also saying to you that he had a vision for the future and that I don't think he
> saw it as a First Nations/non First Nations thing... You really need to understand
> that why I'm even introducing this to you is just for discussion purposes and to
> realize that the whole land claims thing wasn't set into motion because Elijah Smith
> wanted revenge, he wanted some justice and some social justice basically." (Rose,
> interview 2)

In her classes, Rose presents her students with sensitive topics and issues, drawing

in multiple resources to provide historical and international perspectives on racism,

segregation, and domination. As the teacher, it is Rose's choice to select such novels as

vehicles to address such issues, and while not easy topics to grapple with, she nonetheless

engages her students in them in order to foregrounding for examination issues of social

justice relevant to the Yukon history and context.

Eliminating financial barriers to student access: "Every kid is looked after"-Bob

Financial barriers to educational opportunities are addressed in a variety of ways by the non-Indigenous principals in this study. Each principal described that, if financial considerations were a barrier to student access and opportunity, they would endeavour to find a way around it. If the principal was not able to fund a particular opportunity out of their own resources, they would search out other funding sources. Offering one example, Bob spoke expansively on the measures that he, along with other community agencies, will take to ensure that financial considerations pose no limitations on what students can participate in. As he describes, this ranges from food, sports equipment, or program fees:

> ...when we're running the breakfast program, it's open to everybody irrespective of whether they can afford it or not afford it. There's no cost involved. If we're doing something that requires the kids to get a new pair of skis or they might want to get into hockey and they need some hockey equipment. Either the school will purchase it for them, which we have done, or the community will or the First Nations will…Every kid is looked after. (Bob, interview 5)

Jim raised the issue of lowering barriers and improving communication as they relate to assisting students and parents with funding. As he explained, this reveals two related issues:

> You know, the parent who comes in and says, "Look I'm a little short of money this week" or "I can't pay for pictures" well we have our little fund in the school that allows us to subsidize almost anything. And one of the keys there is to allow, to encourage parents to be open enough to ask because all too often in schools, as you know, there's a problem, but nobody wants to talk to us about it…So, you have to first of all break down that barrier and so when somebody phones us and says "Look I'm a bit, it's near to the end of the month and I can't afford four pizza lunches for my four kids" or "I can't afford pictures right now" we just say, "Hey, don't worry. We'll take care of it". (Jim, interview 5)

In a similar way, Rose described the nature of inclusion in a rural community, where there is a limited number of children and thus the tendency for children to play together with less consideration given to socioeconomic status or class:

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I don't know if I organize things so much as in a rural school you have kids who if they want a sports team they all have to work together so it doesn't really matter whether they come from a lower or higher socioeconomic class, they all play on the same team, and I think if anything that's what I've tried to do is create the sense that we're all one team, we're all one unit. (Rose, interview 5)

As she points out, there is a sense of community that serves to lower barriers and promote inclusion and participation from all students regardless of socio-economic status.

In summary

This sub-section reveals the gendering of the principalship, and contributes how notions of gender are viewed differently by the participants in this study. What appears clear is that there are distinct differences in the ways that gender informs and mediates their practice. Their responses identify that educational administration in the Yukon is a space fractured along gendered lines.

For Jim and Bob, gender initially appeared to present as non-issue from their perspectives, though Bob did present gender bias with regards to his admission that it would have been difficult for a woman to do his job. For him, women are not seen as "tough" enough, though he later did offer that a woman could take over his school and it would run smoothly. For the male participants, gender is described as a matter that is not thought about very much. When it is considered, it was difficult for them to articulate how gender influences educational leadership in the Yukon context. Jim admits that he does not think about gender much, and when he does, does not consider it a factor that mediates leadership practice.

Jim views the Yukon as an egalitarian place, where male and female school administrators are paid the same, hold the same offices, and that schools are inherently democratic spaces where gender is not an issue. By his own admission, he was unsure how to engage with questions on gender: While he believes that "an effective

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administrator is an effective administrator", he is quick to refer to a female colleague who would very likely challenge his assertion. Bob struggled with the questions and found them difficult to answer concisely and in a consistent manner. These responses reinforce a dominance of a male-centric view of educational leadership on the part of these two male participants, and that little thought is given to this on their part.

In stark contrast, the interviews with Rose and Gina evoked such terms as "old boys' club". Both participants recalled how being a woman was a mediating factor where their careers were concerned, if the principalship was the highest level of attainment considered. Rose recalled her belief that being male was a prerequisite to advancement in the Yukon educational system beyond the principalship, she still did not believe that being a woman made a difference. Gina's responses with respect to gender were far more emotional, drawing upon instances of bullying, dismissal by male colleagues, and sexism that, upon reflection, drew out her anger and frustration.

Gina felt diminished and degraded by male peers, parents, and also identified the "old boys club" as being prevalent in the Yukon Department of Education system. She angrily identified how masculinity is the 'gender of competence' and how she has developed strategies to "play the game" in order to cope within such a construct. Thus, while the perspective of the males in this study is that gender does not matter greatly, for the female participants in this study, anger, resentment, and resignation towards a male-centric system prevails. So embedded is this construct that it pervades not only the Yukon Department of Education but the association to which principals belong, further reinforcing the professional isolation and fragmentation of this body.

For the principals in this study, they cannot believe that one could not bring who they are to the principalship.   Life experiences form the basis of their professional

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identities, and not engagement in training or post-secondary education. This has implications on the utility of developmental activities in the development of educational leaders, and the standardization and certification of educational leadership practice. Each participant brings their highly individualized perspectives and life experiences to the forefront of what they do.

With respect to creating opportunities for equity and social justice, a key aspect of their role is identifying sources of funding to ensure that students do not miss out on educational opportunities due to financial constraints.

In the case of Jim and Bob, a close working relationship with their respective First Nations governments is important to ensure that curricula that is reflective of Yukon Indigenous language and culture is developed and deployed in their schools. This appears highly individualized: for Bob, the majority of his students are of Indigenous descent, thus the development and deployment of Tlingit curriculum is an important endeavour in his rural school. This is in contrast to Gina's school, where Indigenous language is not taught, nor is Indigenous culture highly prevalent in Klondike School's programming or décor.

CHAPTER 6
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

I embarked on this study based, in large part, on my experiences as a non-Indigenous school principal working in Indigenous Yukon contexts. I was perplexed by the lack of contextualized and culturally sensitive approaches to educational leadership, particularly in the Canadian North where there exists relatively little educational leadership research (Goddard & Foster, 2002). Given my public school experiences in southern Canada and magisterial studies informed entirely by Euro-western leadership perspectives, and despite Escobar-Ortloff & Ortloff's (2003) assertion that "Culture has a powerful influence on how and what people think about knowledge, learning, and education" (p. 255), I was, at this early stage of my career unaware that the daily drama of being a principal could be situated within a complexity of broader cultural frames than those in which I had previously been immersed.

The paucity of relevant educational leadership studies conducted in northern Canadian regions applies, more specifically, to studies of non-Indigenous educational leaders working in Indigenous contexts. I had observed earlier in my career that studies of principals in similar contexts to which I could refer appeared absent. In contrast, western-centric approaches to educational leadership dominate the field and 'stretch over' Indigenous contexts, with little regard for either local contexts and indigeneity. Thus, this study is significant in that it broadens the educational leadership inquiry field by accounting for context and indigeneity and how they shape constructions of educational leadership in Indigenous Yukon contexts, specifically by non-Indigenous schools

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principals. This research contributes to bring forward, and create scholarly space, for the voices, perspectives, and subjectivities of educational leaders living and working in the Canadian North as actors in the 'daily drama' that is played out in schools and communities.

I started my journey by locating this study within five theoretical considerations that were identified in Chapter 2 (Conceptual Framework and Literature Review). These perspectives, briefly restated here, provide the foundation through which the findings of this study are presented and discussed. The five perspectives noted are:

1) The confusing epistemology of educational leadership

2) The criticality of culture in its complex intersections with educational leadership

3) The need to situate the educational policy contexts and professional trajectories of educational leaders working in the northern Canadian regions.

4) The conceptual centrality of considering the intersections of gender, ethnicity, and class in relation to the constructions of educational leadership by non-Indigenous educators working within Indigenous contexts.

5) The limitations of ethnographic research and the promise of critical ethnographic methods as incisive tools that can be used to broaden understandings of the educational leadership field.

Over this backdrop, I indentified the following research questions with regard to non-Indigenous school principals working in the Yukon Indigenous contexts:

1) How do non-Indigenous principals in Yukon Indigenous contexts construct their professional identity and their role as educational leaders?

2) How do non-Indigenous Yukon principals construct their notion of educational leadership and practice?

3) Given the Yukon's distinct governance system and policy contexts, how do non-Indigenous principals construct their understanding of "indigeneity" in relation to local Indigenous culture?

4) How do non-Indigenous Yukon principals negotiate the tensions that arise at the juncture of the external policies imported from outside the Yukon, and the Yukon Education Act (1990)?

5) In what ways does the gender, ethnicity, and class location of non-Indigenous principals inform their practice and their relations with different Yukon Indigenous educational and community contexts?

In what follows I now turn to discuss each of these questions in relation to my theoretical framework and research findings.

1. Constructions of professional identity and of 'educational leadership'

The principals in this study rely on their re-constructed childhood and adolescent experiences as children in schools to communicate their professional identities. Emphasis was placed on negative school experiences. These memories, vividly reconstructed in the stories they told, served, in part, to underpin how they construe their role as principals and why they enact educational leadership in the way they do. Their recounting of their school experiences were marked by fear, corporal punishment, and an oppressive organizational culture. Based upon these experiences, their expressed desire is to ensure that their schools are not like the ones from their childhood, but instead are welcoming places for children and their families, and are free of fear and oppression.

This finding interrogates the narratives that underpin much of the study of educational leadership from a Western-centric point of view and which are limited to a-historicized notions of organizational power, control, and authority (Maxcy, 1991). Rather, what emerges is that, for the principals in this study, educational leadership is situated primarily in relation to one's experiences. This resonates well with Foucault's (1988) useful definition of the technologies of the self as the forms of knowledge and strategies that: "permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality". (p. 18)   The understanding of the self, and its relationship to the social world, Foucault argued, was central with respect to how individuals represent themselves and "how an individual acts upon themselves to effect some change on themselves and the interaction between oneself and others" (Le Coure & Mills, 2008, p. 11) .

Relating Foucault's technologies of the self to the present study, the participants constructed their identities through the vivid invocation of memories they have of their experiences as students attending school. The striking array of memories recalled are foundational to how the interviewees construed their role as principals in the social world of schools. Further, their constructions of professional identity and their engagement with the social world of their schools- including teachers, students, parents, and their broader school communities- is mediated by these memories.

It is particularly worthy to note that for the female principals, their unpaid labour experiences as a parent inform both their identities and guides their practice and takes

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prominence over professional preparation or coursework with regards to informing their identities and role. In contrast, the male principals did not view parenthood as foundational to their practice, as did their female counterparts. Instead, they reflected upon their diverse paid labour experiences in fields different than teaching: stockbroker, trucker, millwright were offered as examples. Thus, the influence of the life experiences of each participant were gendered in terms of their epistemic foundations and the shaping of notions of educational leadership.

Noticeable as well is the absence of any reference to the utility of magisterial study specifically in educational administration and leadership.   Course work specifically in educational administration was perceived as being of little use to those participants who engaged in it, with the participants who did enrol in educational administration programs expressing that they subsequently transferred to curriculum or special education programs. While particular theories, authors or books were identified by participants, the greatest benefit resulting from engagement in post-graduate study was the space it created away from the continuous stream of demands one faces as a school administrator. Engagement in the Association of Yukon School Administrators (AYSA), the professional association for Yukon principals and vice-principals, was also indicated to assist little in informing their constructions of educational leadership.

Consistent with the findings of Portin et al. (2003), in their study of American principals, the principals in this study who did engage in magisterial programs did not expound upon the value and benefits of their post-graduate development.   Much the same as their counterparts in the American review, the participants in the current study indicated that the de-contextualized and de-personalized curricula of the educational leadership and administration graduate programs they engaged in, with their emphasis on 'training for

skills' rooted in managerial and business fields, excluded the importance of life experiences.

The implication of this finding is that formal educational leadership education underemphasizes the importance of identity, and what Foucault calls 'care for the self' as instruments of professional growth and identity formation, as Clarke (2009) and Le Coure & Mills (2008) suggest. With respect to the importance of identity formation in relation to the work of educators, Clarke offers:

> If the commitment to identity is not just a metaphysical proposition but a serious recognition that our work as teachers shapes and is shaped by the very mode of our being, then thinking about the formation of our identities is crucial for all of us in education (p. 186).

Reinforcing Clarke's postulation above, the participants in this study articulated their identities in ways that are central to how they construct their professional identities and enact educational leadership in their individual contexts. In regard to identity and context, Le Coure & Mills (2008) observe: "Foucault's technologies of the self are very personal in nature and focus on the ethics of the individual and small communities, and as a result, resistance and agency is located primarily at the level of the individual" (p. 12). Yet, in contrast, despite the centrality of identity in the construction of educational leadership, educational leadership programs in BC focus on the delivery of course content in disciplinary clusters such as policy, administration, leadership, curriculum planning, and psychology (Stack et al., 2006). On this very point, Le Coure & Mills (2008) propose, following Foucault, that "the taking care of ones self is a constant evaluation of one self in relation to the society in which one belongs" (p. 6). As Clarke also adds, it is the basis on

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which care for the other emerges (2009). Therefore, recognition and articulation of the self and the role of identity in the construction of educational leaders presents as an important facet that could be taken up by formal educational leadership development programs.

What then, does the invocation of previous school experiences, reflections upon parenthood, engagement in prior careers, and professional development have to do with the educational leadership field? To what do these aspects contribute? From an epistemological standpoint, these findings illuminate a dimension that has remained underrepresented in the extant educational leadership literature, with its prevailing emphasis on the examination and explication of the managerial and administrative aspects of leadership in schools: the influence of the self and life experiences of educational actors as mediating how educational leadership is construed and enacted in the educational field. This finding serves to broaden substantially the way that educational leadership can be understood and examined. Therefore, educational leadership in northern and rural locations needs to be conceptualized and seen through a lens that focuses upon the identities of non-Indigenous principals.

Applied to this study, this individuality of experience, and a lack of awareness of the role it plays, serves to explain the difficulties of the educational leadership literature to adequately articulate an understanding of the principals in this study. It is not that the participants in this study cannot communicate "a definition" of sorts regarding what represents educational leadership or explicate how they construe and enact the phenomenon. They have done so in ways that are highly contextual and individual.   Each participant put forward his or her own conceptions of educational leadership, invoking unique metaphors described earlier as they found the words with which to do so. Each of

these metaphors- 'orchestra leader', 'buffer', 'air traffic controller', and 'parent'- captures what researchers would construe as educational leadership in distinctive ways.

Clearly, then, the extant body of literature is at present ill-equipped to account for their experiences and for the ways in which school principals engage the construction of their roles and related identities. In similar fashion, Geertz (1973) identifies the distinction between *le mot* and *la chose,* employed to identify where the 'words' used to describe the phenomenon under study are inadequate to describe it. Applying Geertz's distinction to this study, the 'words' currently employed in the extant body of educational leadership literature do not adequately capture and represent the phenomenon called 'educational leadership' as it is construed and enacted by the non-Indigenous principals in this study. While they are referred to as 'educational leaders' using the rhetoric of the extant body of educational leadership literature and by the Yukon Department of Education, the present Yukon educational context calls for and reinforces a form of practice that requires doing rather than reflection, action rather than thinking, and a primary focus on means over ends. The existing institutional reality is that their identities are blurred and obliterated by standards and political and policy contexts that require them to be managers and administrators.

Despite the finding of Bush & Glover's (2004) meta-analysis of leadership development literature suggesting that educational leadership development should be based within the context of the participants, there appeared to be no evidence of this in the Yukon based on the views and experiences shared by the participants. The findings indicate that those participants who entered the principalship within the previous 10-12 years, perceive themselves as being "thrown in" with neither preparation or support once in the

principalship or a clear sense of what it was that they were to do beyond a managerial frame. Thus, a further disjuncture exists between such meta-analyses of the educational leadership literature with respect to its development and the historical absence of pre-service development for prospective or currently serving principals in the Yukon.

In summary, the dynamics and processes associated with the emergence of the principal's self identity play a key role in the way educational leadership is construed and enacted in daily practice. This complex and multifaceted inter-relation between perceptions of self, life experiences, and approaches to the principalship run counter to the current trends associated with the standardization of educational leadership and its certification. Specific to the context of this study, currently in the Yukon, the Leadership Standards for BC Principals and Vice-Principals (2007) have been applied by the Yukon Department of Education as the framework to guide the development of future principals and vice-principals. Hence, to define and delimit how one should think, act, and be as an educational leader, as defined by the BC Leadership Standards for Principals and Vice-Principals, severely restricts educational leaders from being themselves, limiting their identities and abilities to mediate how they may construe and enact contextually relevant leadership.

This imposes a false consciousness or faulty understanding due to the ideological belief that such a complex phenomenon can be codified, simplified, and mandated by standards developed outside of the Yukon regardless of the individual, their life experiences, or the context in which they are embedded, particularly in Indigenous contexts, as shown in the present study. Consequently, the prevailing epistemological foundation of educational leadership is one that is based upon an emphasis not on

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educational leadership and educational ends but to one on means, administration, and management.

As a result, principals can more readily become the instruments of governments and Departments of Education in order to fulfil agendas that, at times, may not align with the valued educational ends of Indigenous communities. Thus, the moral, worthwhile, or valued ends of educational leadership (Coulter & Wiens, 1999) have been traded for managerial means in the pursuit of order, efficiency, accountability, and achievement. While principals are referred to in the literature as 'educational leaders' situated at a micro-level, from the macro-level governments require that they instead place emphasis on management and administration.

Rather than placing a continued emphasis on a managerial and functional conception of educational leadership on the part of the Yukon Department of Education, coupled with the delimiting prescription of standards in order to regulate the educational leadership field, educators' identities must be seen as a crucially important lens through which they can conceptualize and understand their role, as educational leaders, in relation to their lived experiences and the communities they serve. Conceptualizing educational leadership through the lens of identity should then present as a new approach to how the principalship is examined and understood, indicating the need to shift the epistemological basis upon which we construct our notions of educational leadership, with a particular emphasis on the politics of the self.

2. A fragmented Yukon educational field

The previous sub-section identified the self and identity of the principals in this study as new lenses through which to examine and understand educational leadership. Perhaps more than anything else, the findings of the present study shed light on the centrality of the Yukon field of schooling as a fragmented space of possibilities, one that is characterized by disconnectedness between the various actors, principals, professional associations, Department of Education, and the larger communities. At this point, one wonders what sustains this field, and the actions of principals in it, despite its manifold disjunctures?

In Chapter 3 of this study, Bourdieu's notion of reflexivity, and the concepts of habitus, field, and illusio were introduced to offer a language to assist in the examination of the social location of individuals. As educational actors, the principals in this study appear to accept the Yukon educational field in an unquestioning way. This is referred to by Schirato & Webb (2003) as follows: "The 'enchanted' relation to the game that is *illusio* not only (re)produces knowledge as the 'vision and division' of the world; it also produces a (tacit) self-interested ignorance or illiteracy" (p. 542). The implication of such a finding is perhaps best illuminated by Schirato and Webb's definition of illusio and its effect:

> The condition whereby an agent comes to accept the game of the field on its own terms, relatively unquestioningly, and is thereby incorporated into it (a condition Bourdieu designates as 'illusio') is one of the most obvious manifestations of both the productive power of the habitus (in virtually requiring that subjects be literate with regard to the operations and rules of the field), and of the limits it places on a subject's agency – or freedom of thought and action. (p. 542)

Lynham et al. (2006) describe habitus as the "features of the individual, his or her viewpoints, and physical 'dispositions' towards navigating the social world", and a

"comfort zone" (p. 29). With respect to habitus, the principals in the present study rely almost entirely upon tacit knowledge of what being a principal stands for; that is, they rely on the knowledge they gained through their life experiences (St. Germain and Quinn, 2005) to inform their habitus. Their experiences left largely unquestioned, the Yukon educational field thus remains a "comfort zone" of sorts for the participants in this study in that they play the game and are incorporated into it in an unquestioning manner, their habitus unchanged through reflection on the nature of the game itself. This explanation sheds light on the Yukon educational field as it relates to the work and embodied dispositions of non-Indigenous principals in this study.

With respect to illusio, they too are incorporated into the Yukon educational game, accepting it as it is in a relatively unquestioning way. This acceptance places limits both on their agency and their thought and action: The principals interviewed do not actively seek links to other colleagues either in the Yukon or in other jurisdictions as a means of broadening their knowledge of the game through a questioning of it. When they did contact colleagues, they described it as occurring on a situational or 'need to know' basis as a means of dealing with managerial 'problems', in effect, signifying their acceptance of the rules of the game by not critically examining and questioning them.

This unconscious *modus operandi* is occurring in the Yukon: By retreating to their self-reinforced islands, as Bob described that he does, or like Gina who indicated she avoids AYSA meetings, few fundamental educational questions are therefore asked by them, and little changes with respect to the relationship between schools, principals, communities, and the Yukon Department of Education. The participants, while literate in terms of the rules of the game, do not engage with each other as members of the

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Association of Yukon School Administrators, nor with each other as a meaningful learning community where matters of educational leadership could be discussed, debated, and examined, thereby opening up for examination the rules of the game. In sum, they accept the illusio of the field, neither seeking out new conceptualizations of education in the Yukon context, nor of themselves as educational actors in the Yukon field. By retreating into their organizational positions, principals ultimately take part in reproducing the status quo of the broader field of education in the Yukon, with its underlying configurations of power.

Thus, the principals in this study find themselves unwittingly constrained within the bounds of the Yukon field of education, and the 'game' it prescribes. Rarely engaging with their colleagues to question the nature of this game, they do not conceive themselves as agents of educational leadership who can 'play' across the micro, meso, and macro-levels of the Yukon educational system. Rather, they see themselves confined to running and managing their small 'islands' of sorts. This finding sheds light as to why they do not refer to themselves using the term 'educational leader'. To be an 'educational leader' in the Yukon is to unquestioningly be constrained within a narrowly defined managerial role. Living in isolated contexts, where engagement with colleagues or educational fora occurs sporadically at best further reinforces this construct.

This political, institutional and social fragmentation of the field of education in the Yukon further serves to reinforce the reliance and independence of oneself and one's own experiences; yet it also consolidates fragmented informal networks of support, creating a 'mental trap' for principals whereby, as Schirato & Webb (2003) describe as "the commitment to *illusio*" and a "non-reflexive form of literacy" (p. 542) they are immersed

within a particular location in the field, or school community. The illusion of being actors in a 'system' therefore prevails unquestioned and unchallenged. The non-Indigenous principals in this study are fragmented as a group, they do not readily engage each other through reflexively questioning, inquiry, or the sharing of ideas and new practices, nor do they develop together new lenses through which to view their schools and communities, reconceptualising them, and what it may mean to be an educational leader, in new ways.

In sum, the nature of the relationship between schools, communities, principals, and the Yukon Department of Education leads to an unspoken acceptance of the Yukon educational field the nature of which is static and unquestioned. Thus, the development of a 'vision' of educational leadership by the players in the Yukon field of education that includes the aspects of identity, context, and examinations of how educational leadership is construed and enacted remains hindered by the tacit acceptance of the managerialist conception of the principalship in this fragmented field.

3. Engaging "indigeneity"?

A central concern of the present study is related to how non-Indigenous principals working in Indigenous contexts come to understand indigeneity and its implications for their work and professional engagement. Hocking (2005) defines indigeneity in a multifaceted way, stating that: "Indigeneity is an attribute. A person has indigeneity by holding Indigenous status. People's Indigenous status adheres to particular places of the earth…Indigeneity is also an aspect of personal self-identity, and as such, carries special meaning of particular places" (p. 191). Employing this definition, indigeneity presents as a complex construct, carrying with it attributes specific to identity, place or geographic

location, legal status, and epistemology or multiple ways of knowing and engaging the world.

The non-Indigenous principals interviewed for this study engage indigeneity within their contexts of practice in different ways. Only one participant in this study explicitly described, in detail, how he constructed his understanding of indigeneity. This was Jim, the veteran principal of Hillside School. He was the sole participant who related, through his recollections, how Indigenous students were treated in school followed by an extensive career living and working with Indigenous students, their families, and Elders. When he became a teacher in the 1970's and saw that little had changed, he felt there "must be more than this" with respect to the negative experiences that Indigenous students were subjected to in school.

While Jim engages Elders, the local First Nation, and other community members, there appeared one other example of evidence of the initiation of such conversations by the other principals at the local community level. Bob identified the First Nation's invitation to the school to participate in the piloting of a Tlingit Social Studies curriculum. This raises the following question: Why does such engagement not appear to be more prevalent? As they describe in their narratives, the principals in this study are preoccupied and engaged in a struggle with the daily policy challenges they face with respect to the daily running of the school, field trips, hiring staff, the "curriculum crunch" and student transportation. Grappling with such matters, the non-Indigenous principals in this study have little time that could be devoted to community participation in the pursuit of gaining greater insights into indigeneity and the desired educational ends of the Indigenous communities in which they live and work.

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This is in no way to suggest that they do not already incorporate to varying degrees Indigenous language and cultural learning opportunities in their schools. Evidence of this was found in the present study. Instances were noted where the school adjusts their current structures to accommodate Indigenous culture through the displaying of artefacts, the obligatory teaching of Indigenous languages, and the labelling of doors and rooms with Indigenous words. The allotment of instructional hours and curricular content may be also somewhat adjusted to include field trips on the land. While these may be important and valued activities, what did not surface are examples where principals are engaged in regular and ongoing educational conversations with their Indigenous communities aimed at identifying what the desired educational ends of the community might be with respect to the inclusion of Indigenous languages, cultural activities and traditional knowledge, and Indigenous ways of knowing. How these aspects might fit into the designated BC curriculum, and what role the principal could play in the examination and facilitation of changes to the curriculum also did not emerge.

What then limits the emergence of educational conversations which engage indigeneity in the Yukon as part of the articulation of a viable educational vision? In Chapter 1 of this study, the introduction by Henry Giroux to Maxcy's (1991) book, *Educational Leadership: A Critical Paradigmatic Perspective*, identified the pervasiveness of the functionalist discourse in education. While principals in this study did engage in conversations with respect to educational ends, the exigencies of the principalship command a focus on means: They are required by the Yukon Department of Education to place greater focus and attention on the delivery of externally mandated curricula and the attainment of BC graduation requirements at the expense of the articulation of goals and

purposes of the curriculum delivered to Yukon students. Thus, an effect of externally mandated curricula is that they leave untouched their relevance to students and their communities. Left unadapted to local context, curriculum delivery takes on a form of a colonizing spectacle in that it is something that must be shown as being delivered to, and learned by, students to meet external requirements. This was recognized most notably in this study by the "curriculum crunch" that leaves principals and teachers struggling to compact an overabundance of BC mandated curricula into a finite Yukon school day, the efficiency of their teaching and student learning measured by the Alberta-based Yukon Achievement Tests. In the quest to manage this compacted curricular space and exhibit suitable numerical results for comparative purposes, there is little room created for discussion and debate as to how its meaning is relevant to the children living in Indigenous communities, nor attempts to initiate new or alternative conversations with Indigenous communities in this respect.

While, to varying degrees, each principal valued and promoted the inclusion of Indigenous culture beyond what has been previously prevalent in public schools, two important points remain: First, the inclusion of Indigenous languages is, at present, mainly symbolic in its existence in the schools. Indigenous vocabulary is used as written labels or signs on physical structures such as offices and school rooms, or orally in school announcements, re-enacting the organizational structure of the school. Second, the inclusion of Indigenous culture remains subordinate to the BC Ministry of Education curriculum in order to be included in Yukon schools. Providing one example countering this, Jim employed a number of experiential programs (the bison hunt and the pond study) that brought together and melded mandated BC curricula with engagement on the land,

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traditional land use practices, Indigenous language, the involvement of Indigenous elders as a means to do so. These important and valued activities notwithstanding, 'products' that needed to fit within the BC Ministry of Education curriculum still had to be identified in order to legitimate the allocation of time and resources to such events.

Thus, while principals in this study endeavour to push forward an increased presence of Indigenous culture and language in their schools, as expressions of indigeneity, they remain constrained and limited in doing so by policies requiring that primary importance is placed on the delivery of mandated BC curriculum. As a result, the emphasis placed on meeting the requirements of BC curriculum as measured by standardized tests situates managerialism as simultaneously reinforcing the continuation of the 'colonizing spectacle' and confining principals as the instruments of its deployment. While Hallinger & Leithwood (1996) suggest that, "It is time to enrich theory and practice in education by seeking out the diversity of ideas and practices that have existed largely hidden in the shadows of the dominant Western paradigms that have guided the field" (p. 100), the dominance of managerial discourses operates as a colonizing force in the Yukon. Space is given to indigeneity and Indigenous culture only if it can be narrated and articulated in a subservient way within what one participant referred to in his narrative as a "bubble".

To varying degrees the principals in this study have taken up Hallinger and Leithwood's call, describing ways that they develop and adapt the curricula offered to their students in order that it is culturally and contextually relevant to them. Yet, they are often thwarted in their efforts by the overlay of mandated territorial and out-of-territory curricula that must be taught conjointly. Principals are constrained by time and the current policy

structure to the point that they are curtailed from engaging in conversations with their communities that could lead to the development of a vision of Indigenous education. A representative example is the invitation extended to Bob by the Moose Meadow First Nation to be part of the development of a Tlingit curriculum. It is worth noting here that this invitation was initiated neither by Bob nor the Yukon Department of Education, but instead by the Indigenous community.

Bob's willing acceptance of the invitation points to the possibilities available to educational leaders who seek to foster the development of locally relevant curricula in the school. Accepting such invitations gives rise to the tensions experienced by non-Indigenous educational leaders, placing them betwixt and between the roles of principals as policy operatives of the Yukon Department of Education and as promoters of local cultures, languages, and educational aspirations.

4. Juggling educational ends: betwixt and between external policies and the Yukon Education Act

The strategies the interviewed principals employ are not ones that may exist in the broader body of educational leadership literature: in light of the macro level challenges they face, the participants employed micro level strategies, including both the subtle and the blatant circumvention of policy (such as manipulating and contravening the hiring protocol) and convincing parents and staff to shift their views on teaching, learning, and what constitutes 'education'.

Thus, while constrained by their responsibilities and the exigencies of BC and Yukon policy contexts, the principals in this study nonetheless seek ways to improvise and navigate through and circumvent the policies that confine them, openly challenging

policies they found restrictive or not serving the interests of their school, despite the possibility of sanction by their employer.

As a result of an organizational relationship where unequal power is the norm, the Yukon Department of Education employs policy as a mechanism through which to maintain an unequal power relationship over schools, communities, and individuals. Frustration and anger was readily apparent and expressed by the participants with respect to the manner in which macro-level policy is used as a constraining mechanism at the meso and micro-levels of the school community and the principalship, and to the relative absence of their inclusion in policy development. In particular, field trip policies and the staffing protocol stood out in this regard. Thus, while the Yukon Education Act (1990) provides school principals with broad responsibilities, the Yukon Department of Education concurrently attempts to control their power in a contradictory manner through the application of policies that do not meaningfully include the input of principals, as the end users, at the stage that such policies are developed. Thus, despite being referred to as educational leaders by the Yukon Department of Education, for the participants in this study, power exerted by the Department of Education serves to reinforce the managerial and administrative nature of the principal's role.

Located betwixt and between the principal's office as 'administrative manager', the school community as 'leader', and the classroom as 'teacher', the principals in this study nonetheless navigate the continuous ambiguity that exists in the spaces between being a teacher in the classroom and a principal responsible for the operation of the entire school, particularly when they also carry a teaching assignment. The wearing of these multiple

'hats' produces and reinforces vague and conflicting notions of what a principal is to be and what a principal is supposed to do as they navigate the educational field.

In their narratives, interviewed principals provided numerous examples indicating their perception of the policy context of the Yukon educational system to be conflictual, reactive, and problematic for them, confirming Leithwood's (2001) assertion that: "Among the several contexts in which school leaders are enmeshed, the context created by educational policies is among the most powerful influences on the nature of their work" (p. 227). The participants repeatedly, and with emotion, expressed their concerns regarding the dissonance created by implementation of policies affecting their school and their students, developed and mandated from a distance, by the Yukon Department of Education and the BC Ministry of Education. Beyond the principal and teachers in classrooms are politicians, policy makers, and a complex constellation of mediating variables: resource allocation, recruitment and hiring of staff, professional development, community relations, and competing curricular goals, to name a few. Located at the center of this multi-layered, overlapping, and fragmented policy context stands the principal, constrained by the responsibility for ensuring that these aspects avoid collision with each other and that all runs smoothly.

As a result of this ambiguity, the participants in this study who are newer to the field expressed feelings of anger, frustration, burn-out and disengagement from the broader system as a result of the absence of development and an understanding of their purpose beyond a managerial frame. In effect, they had little idea of what they had been hired to do or how to do it, and thus struggled in their early years as principal. When they asked for help, little, if any, was forthcoming. For those participants who had completed magisterial

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studies, in the absence of locally-developed programs their engagement was outside of the

Yukon context and actually served as a welcome removal from it. Further, those

participants actively switched out of programs in educational leadership to curriculum

studies, based on greater interest and perceived utility of what was being taught and

learned in curriculum studies as compared to educational leadership programs. This

suggests that the participants who engaged in magisterial study perceive that the nature of

what is taught to children holds primacy over the administrative and managerial functions

of the school.

In their narratives the study participants do not describe themselves as participating

as members of a professional community. The effects of this are poignantly stated by

Barth (1990) who writes that, "Professional isolation stifles professional growth. There

can be no community of learners when there is no community and there are no learners"

(p. 18). Rather than engaging themselves and each other as components of a professional

association, they instead act as autonomous agents who engage in contact with other

members primarily when information is sought after, or there exists a managerial or

administrative problem to be addressed. The reasons for this vary: while Gina perceives

the Association of Yukon School Administrators (AYSA) to be a male-dominated "Old

Boys Club", Bob feels he is isolated and AYSA involvement reminds him of his past union

experience. Jim finds going to meetings informative, but in a way that helps him address

issues of practical relevance at that time.

What emerges, therefore, is a picture of a Yukon educational system that has great

difficulty defining itself, and what it stands for. The educational actors struggle to identify

who they should be and what they should do in this construct. They experience a loss of

agency as they grapple with identifying what desired ends should be accomplished beyond the mandates of government and policy directives. The principal is located at the center of this nebulous educational leadership phenomenon. Principals find themselves in the contradictory position of being referred to as an educational leader in the extant body of literature, the BC Ministry of Education, and Yukon Department of Education, neither able to be one, nor readily articulate what it is an educational leader needs to be or do other than in the aforementioned prescribed managerial or administrative ways.

Thus, rather than engaging is conversations of "whose curriculum" and "what should be taught", broader questions to decide what might constitute education such as these proposed by Coulter & Wiens (2008) should be asked at the community level: "What kind of learning? For whom? Who decides? On what basis?" (p. 15). In proposing that these are important questions needing to be asked, Coulter and Wiens suggest that: "The central educational responsibility becomes preparing people to engage with their equals in deciding how they will live together...no easy task" (p. 16). Non-Indigenous principals in Indigenous Yukon contexts are therefore situated in a critically important location. When they engage in the development of locally developed curricula (i.e. bison hunts, the engaging of local Indigenous artists to work with the children, and an increased presence and use of local language in the school's operations) and other activities that weave local culture and language from their community contexts into their schools, the non-Indigenous principal in the Yukon context is transformed into a catalytic force that draws more closely together schools and communities and shifts the focus away from the managerial and administrative functions of the job.

5. Non-Indigenous principals in Indigenous contexts: Multiple locations and intersections

This study offers the space for the lives of non-Indigenous principals working in Indigenous contexts to be examined and presented. What power configurations underpin the gendered positions of these educational leaders? In examining this question, gendered aspects of principalship emerged in a number of ways.

First, within the Association of Yukon School Administrators unequal power based upon gender is evident. Gina and Rose identified numerous examples where masculinity was the gender of competence with respect to professional identity, professional efficacy, and to whom opportunities for career advancement into senior levels were afforded. This was referred to as "The Old Boys Club" by both female participants.

In order to be affiliated with this club, women must play an elaborate strategic "game" with respect to their interactions with male colleagues. This game is not played in the same ways by individual participants. Strategically speaking, Gina described how, if she needs to get anything done, she purposely tries first to interact with a female colleague. If it is necessary that she engage with a male colleague, this is done through the application of a false form of interaction to help to ensure that she gets what she needs or gets done what she wishes to accomplish. Thus, the extant gendered power relationships are mediated and negotiated by her, dependent upon the gender and behaviours of the other person.

With respect to the Yukon Department of Education, the patriarchal organizational culture was identified by both female participants. Women are treated differently than men. The field is gendered, and principals are not positioned in the same locations. What

exists, therefore, is an asymmetrical power relationship in the Yukon Educational system, exacerbated by gender, between schools with female principals and their professional association and the Yukon Department of Education. These findings align with those of Chisholm (2001) who, in her educational leadership studies in South Africa, identified that educational leadership is a male-centric domain. In light of this, the female participants, seen as less competent by their male peers, feel the need to play a 'game' on male terms, and need to play this game effectively (meaning emulate male-colleague behaviours) if they wish to advance in their careers.

While the term 'game' is used with respect to the relations between female principals and the Yukon Department of Education, it identifies one aspect of what Strachan (1999) describes as "an alternative theory of educational leadership" (p. 321). In order to get what they want or accomplish what they set out to do, the female principals must shift their practice and be flexible and creative in their interactions with their male counterparts. Thus, while the gendered stereotypes of school principals identified in other countries exist in the Yukon context, female principals devise their own strategies in order to mediate their effects. Yet, by doing so they are constrained within their own discourses and networks: in effect, if they don't get 'into the game' and play it by the gendered rules in place, they are sidelined, their opportunities for advancement and their opportunities for impact are limited and diminished. This is neither easy for them to do nor accept without cost: feelings of anger, resentment, disengagement, and bitterness surfaced as they described the challenge of what it was like for them to be a female principal in a male-centric organization.

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The issue of gender clearly presents as an area marked by the following aspects. First, matters of gender in relationship to educational leadership do not appear to be discussed easily by both male and female participants in this study, but for distinctly different reasons. For the male participants, they encountered difficulty acknowledging and articulating that gender is a mediating factor in leadership, and second, struggled to that enunciate that gender does plays a role with respect to the principalship and the Yukon Department of Education. For the female participants, anger surfaced when they recollected their past experiences and treatment at the hands of male colleagues or parents. Thus, while matters of gender do not appear to matter very much to the male participants, gender most certainly matters to their female colleagues in this study.

Ethnicity and class

The social backgrounds of the study participants were surfaced in their discussions of their families and their early work experiences prior to entering teaching, and later, the principalship. They did not describe themselves as coming from affluent or privileged backgrounds, or as having excelled as students themselves. Two participants indicated they were high school drop-outs. Instead, they worked in jobs requiring manual labour, such as truck driver, millwright, or secretary, only later engaging in post-secondary study as a means of leaving these occupations.

Thus, in relation to class location, the study participants were themselves from underprivileged backgrounds and were marginalized. This informs their engagement with their school populations and communities in that they can understand and relate to students and families who come from class locations similar to their own as students themselves. With respect to addressing how their own class location informs their practice, the principals in this study identified an aspect of their role that they expressed as being very

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important to them: working to remove financial barriers in order that all children could participate in school activities. Where matters of finance were concerned, flexibility was extended to parents with regards to fees for such things as school photographs or involvement in sports activities. Perhaps based on their own experiences as students facing similar financial constraints, the participants were resolute in their beliefs that financial matters would, in no way, limit student participation in school or extra-curricular activities.

Distinct from the other participants, Gina was the only principal in this study to indicate that she was raised in the Yukon. This presents as an important finding with respect to the importance placed on becoming the principal of a school. As she reflected, while her parents were not involved in her school experiences, it was meaningful for her to have lived in the Yukon all her life and to have become an educator and a principal. As she indicated, there are few positions for principals in the Yukon, and by her assertion it is a position that one should be proud to achieve in an educational career. Coming from modest means, Gina engaged in her post-secondary education at a university outside the Yukon and did so as a single parent of three children. Now, at the latter stages of her educational career, where spending time with her grandchildren is of importance, it is with pride that she looks back on what she has accomplished along a path that has not been an entirely easy and privileged one.

Strengths and limitations

Studies specifically examining non-Indigenous educational leaders working in Indigenous contexts are rare. This study contributes to the literature with respect to educational leadership in that it illuminates an aspect of education heretofore unexamined: the extent to which the identities, lived experiences, and the specific contexts of non-

Indigenous principals mediate their practice. Therefore, a strength of this study is that it provides an insightful window through which to view the lives of non-Indigenous principals working in Indigenous contexts.

There is a dearth of similar studies in Canada, and in particular, intense studies that examine principals in the contradictory locations which they are embedded.   With respect to the significance of this study, it is the first to delve in depth into educational leadership in Canada's Yukon Territory and one of the few conducted to date on the principalship in the Canadian North. As part of a historical record, this study comprehensively captures the sights, sounds, smells, interactions, and the daily drama that plays out in four Yukon schools at a particular point in time for future generations of scholars and practitioners to examine and make reference to.

A particular strength of critical ethnographic research is that it can reveal specific power relationships. It can help us understand the lives of participants in ways that other methods could not allow. This was certainly the case in this study: The manner in which power is culturalized in the Yukon Department of Education, and its effects on principals, shows the extent to which they are trapped within the Yukon and BC policy and curricular contexts. Such a finding presents a particular challenge: researchers who engage in ethnographic research may indentify findings that are sensitive in nature and not entirely welcomed by all readers:

> …the ethnographer is often faced with the embarrassing situation of discovering many of the "warts and all" aspects of the context; a great deal of tact and care is needed which is best handled through the development of honest and thoughtful relationships with those in the situation. There are many ethical research issues associated with ethnography because of the in-depth and holistic nature of the discoveries which emerge. These have to be tackled thoughtfully and self-reflectively by the researcher (Harvey & Myers, 1995, p. 23)

This notwithstanding, the limitations of ethnographic study can also be viewed as their strengths. For example, while it could be said that this study is limited by the fact that ethnographies do not lend themselves well to being generalized across contexts, it reinforces an aspect that emerged repeatedly throughout this project: the importance of context. Thus, while not affording themselves well to generalization, ethnographic studies nonetheless provide in-depth knowledge about specific contexts and situations (Harvey and Myers, 1995). Countering this perceived limitation of generalizability, ethnographic studies are powerful tools that provide greater explanatory power than a generalized study. In effect, this ethnographic study allowed for the contents of a heretofore sealed box containing the personal and professional lives, and the relationship between the individual and the social lives of non-Indigenous principals working in Indigenous contexts, to be opened up and brought to light. In this study, ethnography reveals its strength not in its ability to be stretched and applied over contexts, but its ability to penetrate into new worlds and uncharted territory.

The point made above with respect to generalizability notwithstanding, this is not to suggest that there are no aspects of this study that may be transferrable for consideration in other contexts. I base this on my own experience, having been a non-Indigenous principal living and working in Indigenous Yukon contexts. It would be reasonable to assume that the methodology of this study and the ethnographic methods used could be applied and be suitable to shed light on those contexts. With respect to transferability to other contexts in Canada and beyond, this should be done with caution in light of the relative absence of other similar studies with which to compare and contrast, and with the identification of the importance of the self, experience, and context.

This is not to suggest that matters of power, educational leadership, gender, and identity with respect to the principalship could not be transferable to other contexts, but that to do so, the aforementioned aspects of the self, experience, and context must be held firmly at the forefront to ensure that the findings of this study are not simplistically and counterproductively stretched over complex and nuanced individuals, schools, and communities.   Thus, a strength of this study is that the findings identified here are perhaps best suited for comparison to those of future studies conducted in other contexts.

The significance of this study

The present study examines educational leadership as construed and enacted by non-Indigenous principals in the cross-cultural context of Canada's Yukon Territory. It opens up and illuminates the heretofore unexamined lives and perceived experiences of non-Indigenous principals actively involved in the education of children living in Indigenous communities. In a way not previously done in the Yukon, unique portraits were created of each of the four principals and their distinct school contexts. The study reveals the nature and extent of the power relationships existing between a diverse array of educational actors: principals, teachers, parents, students, schools, communities, the Yukon Department of Education, and other external organizations.

With respect to the extant body of educational research literature, this study provides a contribution from the Canadian North, and more specifically, the Yukon Territory. It presents the perspectives of a group of principals hitherto unexamined and illuminates the importance of identity with respect to how they construct themselves as principals and construe educational leadership.   Thus, this study is distinct in that it is not a study of cross-cultural educational leadership, but rather a study of educational leadership in Indigenous contexts. It sheds light on the centrality of the school in rural

communities where land claims have been settled with territorial and federal governments. Significant is that it presents and holds up another lens through which to examine educational leadership.

From the perspective of the contribution this study makes to the extant body of educational leadership literature, this study sheds light on the daily lives of principals working in a particular location in the Canadian North. There has not been such an intense study of principals that is autobiographic in nature while concurrently locating the principal within local community contexts and broader policy dimensions. Further, it offers insights into the use of ethnographic methods as a powerful research tool.

Based upon these contributions, this study should be informative to both current and future practitioners in the field and to scholars of education and educational leadership. With respect to the research participants, I sincerely hope that this study will be deemed significant in that it brings to the surface their voices and heretofore unarticulated lives and work in Indigenous Yukon contexts, presenting both the joys and challenges they face in a multifaceted, complex, and disjointed role.

Researcher's reflections

This study is also significant in that it is my largest research undertaking and comprehensive learning opportunity to date. As an insider-practitioner, I am "deeply situated" (Kanuha, 2000, p. 442) in the Yukon education public school context while concurrently learning new knowledge, skills, and insights as an outsider-researcher. I needed to constantly question my objectivity, assumptions, biases, and my ability to be reflexive. In light of these factors, 20 years experience in the educational field was concurrently a resource and a potential handicap. It has not been easy for me to make the transition from practitioner to researcher in 4 years, given, as Labaree (2003) identifies:

"teachers' own experience as practitioners naturally emerges as their primary bank of professional knowledge" (p. 20). The effects of this are apparent in my own thought processes in a way that Labaree describes specifically with respect to doctoral students in education programs:

> This position encourages doctoral students in education to stay at arm's length from the arguments they encounter in the theoretical and empirical literature. Why? Because at any point in the discussion of an academic paper, the student can (and in my experience, frequently does) introduce an example from his or her practitioner experience that automatically trumps any claim made by the authors. No matter how much data authors bring to the table or how effectively they make their arguments, personal experience can still carry the day. (p. 20)

This is not intended to be a negative comment towards the value of research: instead, it realistically identifies that moving from the experiential to the theoretical can be a long and arduous process fraught with frustration. It also identifies another perspective I must consider: that of the practitioner-reader of this study. Regardless of the contents of this study and whatever it purports, so too will their personal experiences carry the day. Thus, I must be prepared for this at any point in this study is discussed with them, and not take it as a personal critique if they counter its findings with their own experiences.

Managing this project in an isolated location, 900 miles (1500 kilometres) to the north of campus required that I develop new levels of independence, organizational abilities, writing skills, and facility to search out, digest, analyze, and synthesize large amounts of writings that may have served to inform my work. Conducting this study broadened extensively my conception of the role of schools and education from my practitioner roles as a principal and teacher. This required that I consider my own positionality in ways heretofore not contemplated. Conceptions of power and micro/meso/macro levels of understanding schools were elevated from abstract concepts to

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one which required consideration and application to the findings and conclusions of this study.

That its culmination has taken four years of persistence while concurrently working, exacted a toll in the time taken away from my young family, and required faith in a process not always readily apparent makes this study profoundly significant to me. The determination required to maintain both a clear sense of purpose and the personal resolve not to abandon this endeavour at numerous points from beginning to end should not be underestimated. This point notwithstanding, my learning has been enormous. As a result of the effort required to carry out this study and bring it to a close, I have developed the skills necessary to research the complex intersections of policy, culture, and education, and have made a valuable contribution to understandings of educational leadership and to education in the Canadian North.

The dedicated involvement and commitment of the participants was absolutely vital to this study. From their perspective, what might their involvement in this study signified to them? At various points individual participants expressed how much they appreciated being asked to talk on matters that they felt as meaningful and of personal import. As Jim emphatically and appreciatively stated at the end of one interview session:

> I just want to underline the fact that it is rarely that I am asked to talk about the more subjective side of running a school, but I feel so passionate about the fact that schools are very subjective institutions filled with people, and we have to keep that foremost in our minds. (Jim, interview 4).

Not only was the opportunity to talk of educational matters appreciated. For Gina, engagement in this project was meaningful to her both personally and professionally. In the final moments of our last interview she shared with me:

I've sure thought about a lot of things, and things have come out that I hadn't thought about before. (Gina, interview 5).

Insights and afterthoughts

There is little that is standard when considering the identity of principals and the specificity and importance of context. Variability exists with respect to the extent to which the principals in this study foster the promotion and inclusion of Indigenous worldviews and epistemologies in their schools, or conversely, reinforce the presence of Euro-western paradigms of pedagogy and educational leadership.

While the examination of the efficacy of standards of educational leadership was not an explicit aim of this study, the identified importance of context signals a concern with respect to the efforts of governments and Departments of Education to standardize the educational leadership practices of principals. This finding suggests that the purposes and efforts to standardize educational leadership practices identified in Chapter 2 of this study, in the absence of widely accepted definitions and understandings of this concept, need to be critically examined and rethought.

A better understanding of how the micro-level activities of principals may inform the macro level initiatives that principals are charged with the responsibility to successfully implement. As Renihan (1999) offers, while "the task of providing educational leadership would be downright impossible" (p. 212), the principals in this study do what they do despite the challenges posed by macro level 'intentions'. Therefore, future ethnographic studies need to be sensitive to these multiple levels of analysis.

To reform or change the micro (the principal), meso (the school community), and macro (the broader system the Yukon Department of Education and BC Ministry of Education) levels, each level must be conceived in a manner that considers the interactions

and interrelationships of all three. As a result of the asymmetrical power relationships

extant between these three levels, a multifaceted framework indentifying and recognizing

these levels is required both for examination of these levels and changing of the

relationships between them. Future studies in education aimed at producing change need

to take into account such distinct levels. When three such levels of analysis align, then

meaningful and lasting change may occur.

Students and education in the Yukon would be better served by the relinquishing of

an externally mandated curricula in favour of a Yukon-defined curricula that better allows

for locally-based development and adaptation. This is in no way meant to imply that the

Yukon educational system should disengage from consortia such as the Western and

Northern Canadian Protocol curriculum framework. Just as Alberta and BC employ their

own provincial curricula, so too could the Yukon contribute its own territorially developed

curricula to this partnership.

A participant in this study referred to the need for cultural activities to be placed

within a curricular 'bubble' that would fit within the mandated BC curriculum deployed in

Yukon schools. Advocating for more that "bubbles' in which to place locally-developed

activities within an externally mandated curricular frame, in their study of Nunavut

education and schools, Berger, Epp, & Moller (2006) suggest:

> A major effort should be undertaken to develop northern curricula and resources
> locally, and policy should make it explicit that teachers should use their
> professional judgment in prioritizing the needs of students rather than adhering to a
> set curriculum (p. 194).

Rasmussen (2001) points to the historical legacy that must be overcome, decrying

the unconscious assimilation of Indigenous children into Euro-western ways by schools,

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reinforcing the call for northern-developed curricula and resources by stating: "We must give up our blind belief of our cultural superiority and cease to force our Euro-American values, institutions, technologies, and lifestyles on other civilizations in the name of progress" (p. 114).   Much the same as Berger, Epp, and Moller describe, non-Indigenous Yukon principals should also draw upon their professional judgment and experience to further the development of contextually relevant curricula, thereby ensuring that students' learning opportunities are not simply prescribed ones that fit into a 'bubble', but ultimately are ones that are relevant to students, their lives, and their communities.

The above presents as a very tall order, requiring the alignment of micro, meso, and macro levels. How could this process be engaged? Johnson (1991) sheds light on a possible course for this to occur in his presentation of Habermas's typology of action with respect to social interaction. Within this typology, "Habermas differentiates between action oriented to success and action oriented towards reaching understanding" (p. 183). Habermas refers to this as communicative action, which Johnson (1991) describes as: "Communicative action consists of attempts by actors to cooperatively define the context of their interaction in such a way as to enable them to pursue their individual plans. It is the paradigmatic form of social interaction oriented towards reaching understanding" (pp. 183-184).

An important distinction above is made between the orientation of communicative action: either to understanding or success, and through either consent or through influence. In the case of this study, it is recommended that parties to communicative action, regardless of level, consent to understand one another as a means of moving forward together regardless of the micro, meso, and macro level they are located.   This distinction

and identification provides a framework through which the consensual alignment of the three aforementioned levels could occur.

This study points to the need to redefine what a principal is to be and to do as an educational actor in the Yukon context. Currently, principals are referred to as 'educational leaders', despite the inability on the part of universities, the extant body of literature, educational systems, or principals themselves to articulate what this term even means. With respect to gendered discourses, there appears the need for the development of a professional community of principals in the Yukon that acknowledges and works to mitigate the power of gendered discourses as a factor that marginalizes and limits the growth and learning of its members. What is thus required is the development of spaces where conversations can occur that would lead to greater understandings of what educational leadership may mean in a Yukon context.

Future areas of exploration

This study identified and addressed five specific research questions. As with any inquiry, new questions emerged as a result of this project.

The principals in this study did not problematize their own positions, and thus they appear trapped in their own configurations as principals responsible primarily for the managerial and administrative functions of their schools. In part due to time constraints and workload, there was little evidence of reflexivity, where they critically examined their role as a central cog within a larger, layered, and disconnected educational machine. Currently, the principals in this study appear trapped in a structure that sees them limited as managers, despite being referred to by policy makers, employers, and the extant literature as educational leaders- whatever the term means.

How then do we break up current constructions that limit principals to being administrators and managers? How can new spaces be created that allow for new discourses to emerge? How can spaces be created that allow principals to facilitate visionary leadership? What role, if any, could Freire's notion of conscientisation be brought to bear in facilitating the emergence of new discourses? Sleeter et al. (2004) suggest that "Conscientisation about one's actual reality takes place by submersion and intervention in it; hence, the necessity of doing inquiry mediated by reflective dialogue" (p. 81). Would efforts in this regard permeating throughout micro, meso, and macro levels perhaps serve to break up the constructions identified in this study?

How can the preparatory practices of university departments of educational leadership and administration be changed to create new spaces that allow for the voices, the self, and the experiences in the development of current and future principals to be surfaced? How do we create new spaces where discussion with respect to matters of gender, ethnicity, and social class can be scrutinized, analyzed, and addressed in a safe and proactive manner? Therefore, how can a new analytical framework that takes into account and alleviates these factors be created?

Through what processes would the renegotiation of the relationship between externally mandated curriculum and the learning needs of students in Indigenous Yukon contexts best occur?

The Yukon Territory is not the only jurisdiction in Canada and the United States where non-Indigenous school administrators work in schools attended by Indigenous children. Thus, a future area of exploration exists in that this study could be replicated in

other regions, engaging a different group of non-Indigenous principals in other Indigenous contexts.

In closing, a further significance of this research study is that it serves as a trigger for many more educational questions to emerge and be considered for examination in potential future studies. While this study penetrates educational leadership in a manner perhaps best described as 'pencil thin but a yard deep', in light of the increasingly diverse composition of the Canadian population due to federal policies of multiculturalism, it unpacks and problematizes issues relevant to schools across Canada with respect to the multi-level intersections of identity, culture, and policy. Such an approach thus serves to disenclave this study, opening it up for comparison, analysis, and consideration with respect to different contexts.

In conclusion

At this stage of the journey, standing at the end of this study with both the insights and questions raised as a result of it, I cannot help but to think of the need to clarify my role as a researcher, educational practitioner, and citizen of the Yukon. Many of the rich and detailed stories shared by the participants resonate with my own experiences as a school principal in rural, isolated, and Indigenous contexts. Now, at this final stage, I understand many things that I could not fully grasp before in terms of their underpinnings and implications: in particular, the political educational culture of the Yukon and the ways this culture influences the way schools are run and how educational leadership is construed and enacted by non-Indigenous educational actors.

Both the complexity and perplexity of educational leadership in Indigenous Yukon contexts reinforces the significance of critical ethnography as an incisive tool, yet they also

problematize the role of research, and of the researcher in one's own 'backyard'. With the hindsight of both my professional experience and insights generated by this research study, it is disturbing to me that, 15 years since I became a principal, first-time principals are still hired into what is clearly a challenging and demanding role, while perhaps having little clue of the complexity of educational leadership and what they are expected to do. At this juncture I see before me not the completion of a dissertation. Vitally more apparent are the emergent opportunities to carry these insights forward, through further research, to enrich our understanding regarding how educational leadership is construed and enacted in the Canadian North, hopefully to the benefit of future principals and the communities and children that they serve.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Research design process

Define and Design		Prepare, Collect, Analyse		Analyse, Confirm, Conclude	
Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5	Stage 6
• Develop theory • Conduct literature review • Develop conceptual framework • Design research plan • Secure committee approval • Secure ethics approval	• Receive institutional permission to conduct study • Select cases • Design data collection protocol • Become proficient with Atlas.ti data analysis program	• Conduct studies of each case, engaging in extensive fieldwork • Conduct interviews • Observations • Review of Documents • Self-reflections • On-going data entry and review	• Analyse data • Reflexive engagement of data with participants • Generation of thematic findings	•Draw cross-case preliminary conclusions •Draft preliminary report •Re-engage participants with data and preliminary findings	• Write final report • Develop implications of findings • Prepare for defence of research project

Modelled after Yin's (2003) "case study method" (p. 50)

Appendix 2:   Invitation to participate

Printed on UBC Department letterhead paper

Department of Educational Studies
2125 Main Mall,
Vancouver, B.C., Canada V6T 1Z4
Tel: (604) 822-5359
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www.edst.educ.ubc.ca

<div align="center">

Letter of Invitation to Participate

</div>

Simon Blakesley

November 29, 2007

Dear_____,

My name is Simon Blakesley, a PhD Candidate in the University of British Columbia's Department of Educational Studies. I am at the preliminary phase of designing and implementing the dissertation research stage of this program. My dissertation is titled: Remote and unresearched: A contextualized study of non-Indigenous educational leaders working in Indigenous Yukon contexts.

The purpose of this letter is to invite you to be a participant in this study. I have received written permission from Ms. Christie Whitley, Assistant Deputy Minister (Public Schools) to conduct research in Yukon schools and been assigned Researcher Number 35053 by UBC. My academic supervisor is Associate Professor Dr. André Elias Mazawi. Should you wish to contact him regarding this research, he can be reached at the following: andre.mazawi@ubc.ca

The aim of this research will serve to increase understandings of educational leadership in unique northern Canadian contexts such as the Yukon. You have been selected given your position as a principal or as a teacher in the Yukon educational system. Specific data gathering techniques will involve observations, in-depth interviews, and document reviews at your school:

- My observations are intended to be of both general school operations and specific school events.
- I would like to conduct in-depth interviews with you specific to these general and specific elements of school operation. These interviews would be scheduled at your convenience.
- Document reviews include public documents, such as the school's mission statement, growth plan, school newsletters, and parent and student handbook.

As required by the University of British Columbia and as stated in the Tri-Council Policy Statement for the Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, all ethical protocols shall be adhered to throughout the conduct of this research. The proposed research plan has undergone review by the UBC Research Ethics Board. Specifically, participants will only give their free and informed consent to participate, and will reserve the right to withdraw from this study at any time, with no consequences whatsoever.

Should you wish to participate, I will ensure that your confidentiality is maintained throughout, and that both I and participants are guided by the Yukon Teachers' Association's Code of Ethics. If you agree to participate, you will have the right to read and comment on your transcribed interviews. Your comments will be integrated into the final transcribed interview version. All data gathered will be secured in a locked cabinet in my office, and any electronic data will be stored only on a password protected computer. Any data will be stored for 5 years after the completion of the study, in order to facilitate the writing of academic articles as a result of this research.

After the completion of this research activity, I will share with you a full copy and an abstract of the final dissertation. Should you wish, I shall be only too happy to offer a presentation of the findings of this research.

Thank you for considering this request to conduct research in Yukon schools. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research subject, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail to RSIL@ors.ubc.ca.

Simon Blakesley
UBC PhD Candidate

Appendix 3: Letter of Consent
Printed on UBC Department letterhead paper

Letter of Consent

Title of Study: **Remote and unresearched: A contextualized study of non-Indigenous educational leaders working in Indigenous Yukon contexts.**

Principal investigator: Dr. André Mazawi	Co-investigator: Simon Blakesley

Description of Study: You understand that Simon Blakesley is a doctoral student at the University of British Columbia (Vancouver) engaged in research for the purpose of satisfying a requirement for a Doctor of Philosophy (Educational Studies) degree. You further understand the purpose of this study is to enhance the understanding of educational leadership in Yukon contexts.

If you agree to participate, you are agreeing to be interviewed, permit Simon Blakesley to conduct observations in your school, and will share with him school newsletters, school growth plans, and parent/student handbooks. The data from interviews will be used to address the research questions identified in this study. You will have the right to read and comment on all transcribed interviews, and your comments will be integrated into the final transcribed interview version. Interviews and observation visits will be arranged in advance with you.

Risks/Benefits to the Participant: There will be minimal risk involved in participating in this study. There are no direct benefits to for agreeing to be in this study. Please understand that although you may not benefit directly from participation in this study, you have the opportunity to enhance knowledge as it relates to educational leadership in Indigenous Yukon contexts. If you have any concerns about the risks/benefits of participating in this study, you can contact the investigators at any time at the numbers listed above.

Cost and Payments to the Participant: There is no cost for participation in this study. Participation is completely voluntary and no payment will be provided.

Confidentiality: Information obtained in this study is strictly confidential. All data will be secured in a locked filing cabinet and on a password protected computer. Your name will not be used in the reporting of information in publications or conference presentations.

Participant's Right to Withdraw from the Study: You have the right to refuse to participate in this study and the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

I have read this letter and I fully understand the contents of this document and voluntarily consent to participate. All of my questions concerning this research have been answered. If I have any questions in the future about this study they will be answered by the investigators listed above.

I agree to participate in this study.

_____
   Participant's Name

_____   _____
   Participant's Signature   **Date**

If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research subject, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail to RSIL@ors.ubc.ca.

Appendix 4: Interview Questions

Interview questions

Remote and unresearched: A contextualized study of non-Indigenous educational leaders working in Yukon Indigenous communities

Research Question #1	Interview Questions-Principals
How do non-Indigenous principals in Yukon Indigenous contexts construct their professional identities and their role as educational leaders? How do their prior life experiences, educational and professional experiences, and career trajectories affect and shape their understandings of educational leadership in Indigenous contexts?	1. Can you please tell me how it came about that you are now working in the Yukon? In other words, what brought you here? Describe the path you travelled which got you to the Yukon. 2. In retrospect, how do you come to think about your work in the Yukon? To what extent do you feel fulfilled in your work? 3. How does your past school experience as a student shape how you view the school you work in now? 4. If you are asked to think about your own past school experience as a student, how different is it compared to the school you work in now? 5. How formative was your own school experience as a student in terms of shaping your view of schooling and education as an educator in the Yukon? 6. Reflect on your professional education and training: To what extent have they shaped your views and perceptions of yourself as an educator? To what extent have they shaped your views of yourself as a school principal? 7. Based on your experience as a school principal, what would you consider as crucial components in the education of Yukon school leaders? How did you learn these components? Please illustrate with a story. 8. Do you believe your experiences outlined in the last question are reflective of how Yukon school leaders should learn these components?In your opinion, are there specific things that all Yukon principals need to know? What are those things? In your opinion, are there different, perhaps better ways that the components you've identified could be learned by principals in Yukon schools? 9. Which program or course best helped you to make sense of your work as an educator and educational leader in your school? Describe how this program or course helps you make sense of your work as school principal. 10. Which program or course best helped you make sense of your work as an educator and educational leader in your school community? Describe how this program or course helps you make sense of your work as school principal.

	11. When you reflect upon your prior experience, including that of a career prior to education if you had one, what components contributed to the shaping of your views as an educator and educational leader? 12. If you were asked to think about the differences between a teacher and a school principal, how would you characterize each role? Are there different bodies of knowledge and experiences that inform each role in particular ways? Why do you believe this to be so? 13. Do you interact with other colleagues in the Yukon? What does it mean, for you, to be a school principal in the Yukon? In your opinion, is the level and frequency of interaction with other school principals adequate for professional socialization? Do feel that you are able to share your experiences and views with other Yukon school principals as part of a professional learning community? Do you interact with principals outside of the Yukon, in other jurisdictions? How does this interaction inform your role as school principal in the Yukon? 14. When you look at your practice today, how and to what extent does your professional socialization inform and shape how you understand and practice your role as an educational leader? 15. In what ways does being a member of a professional community such as the Association of Yukon School Administrators (AYSA) shape your identity as a school principal in the Yukon? Can you please share a story which illustrates how your professional affiliation has aided you in your practice? 16. Have you been involved in setting up informal networks or support groups with other principals? If so, how has this impacted your practice, if at all? Why did such a group or network form? Can you please share a story to illustrate how this informal affiliation has aided you in your practice?
Research Question #2	**Interview Questions**

Given the Yukon's distinct governance frameworks and policy contexts, how do non-Indigenous principals construct indigeneity in relation to local Indigenous culture? How do they develop and deploy curricula which concurrently addresses the educational goals of communities, the educational ends expressed in the Yukon Education Act (1990) and external policy initiatives?	1. Are there challenges in your role as school principal? Could you please speak to the challenges you experience as a school principal?
	
	2. Can you share with me stories which best illustrate the challenges and tensions a school principal in the Yukon faces in regards to:
	   • Colleagues
	   • Staff (support workers, aides, custodians, etc)
	   • Students
	   • Community
	   • Educational policies
	
	3. What do you feel are the challenges you face regarding the delivery of curricula in your school community? Have you been involved in particular curricular initiatives? If so, could you please speak to these initiatives?
	
	4. What are the particular challenges related to curriculum delivery in your school? As a follow-up question: have you been involved in particular school-based curricular initiatives? If so, could you speak to these initiatives?

	5. How do you assess the relevance of the initiatives you mentioned in the last question? What led you to engage in them in the first place and why? How do you assess the benefits of these curricular initiatives? Are there particular guidelines or criteria which you employ to do so? When you reflect upon these experiences, please describe how they relate to your community.
	6. Do you have a vision for the role of your school in your community? Could you please share it? How did you come to arrive at this vision? Has this vision been realized, or is it a work in progress?
	7. Can you share with me a story which identifies conflicts or tensions faced as a result of the interface of curriculum and community? In your opinion, what gives rise to the conflicts and tensions you describe? How do you believe that these conflicts and tensions could be alleviated? What roles do you see yourself playing to that end?
	8. How much is the broader Yukon educational community served by your school participating in the development of a locally developed curriculum? Please share a story which illuminates how your school community is engaged in the curriculum development process. How are these activities evident in your school's programming for students?
Research Question #3	**Interview Questions**
On which foundations do non-Indigenous Yukon principals base their educational leadership theory and practice? What writings, books, authors, stories and other learning do they engage with to build their own conceptions of leadership. How do they integrate these understandings with their work in communities in order to address tensions and contradictions?	1. How do you see yourself as an educational leader? In your own words, what defines you as an educational leader? Can you share a story which personally illuminates the way you see yourself as an educational leader?
	2. How do you personally cope and deal with the tensions and challenge you identified previously? Could you share with me a story that informs how you personally cope with the challenges and tensions you face in your role as a school principal? How do the strategies you describe serve to inform and help you address the tensions and challenges you describe?
	3. How has your formal professional development informed how you make sense of the administrative and educational challenges you face? Please share a reflective story highlighting this integration of your learning with your practice. Are there challenges associated with shaping or changing your practice based upon what you have learned? If so, please share a story which illustrates these challenges.
	4. What narratives, stories, or other learning do you rely upon to guide your educational leadership? Why are the examples you've chosen relevant to educational leadership (particularly if the examples shared are outside of educational contexts)
	5. As you have gained experience as a principal in the Yukon, has your conception of educational leadership changed over time? If so, how? What accounts for this change? Share a story which brings into view your earlier conceptions with the ones that you hold today. Do you think that your changing conceptions of educational leadership have made it easier to address the conflicts and tensions of practice which you mentioned previously in Research Question #2?

Research Question #4	Interview Questions
How do non-Indigenous Yukon principals address the tensions which arise as a result of the conflicting and contradictory education ends at the intersections of external policies and the Yukon Education Act(1990) ? Which factors guide their educational judgment as they operate in policy contexts and community locations where each may possess divergent educational ends?	1. In what ways is your participation in policy making and development with the Yukon Department of Education solicited? To what extent do you feel that your voice is heard on matters related to policy formation in your school, community, and the Yukon? Please share an example illustrating how your educational leadership expertise and experience was solicited in policy development at the Yukon Department of Education. 2. Please share an example where you have been caught "betwixt and between" conflicting educational policies and community priorities. (These could relate to funding, staff allotments, student transportation, etc.) 3. As an educational leader do you have to deal with the mediation of distinct educational ends? If so, which ones? Do you have a story to share which illuminates how you do so? Can you illustrate the kinds of judgment calls you have to make in relation to navigating in contexts where there may appear to be no "one right answer"?
Research Question #5	**Interview Questions**
In what ways does the gender, ethnicity, and class of background non-Indigenous principals inform their practice and their relations with different Yukon Indigenous educational and community contexts? How do social class differences in communities impact the education Indigenous children receive, the social organization of the school, relationships with the community, and teachers' perceptions of student ability?	1. Do you bring who you are to the forefront when you are fulfilling your role as principal? If so, how do you bring your habitus- your personal background, thoughts, behaviours, habits, routines- to the forefront of your educational leadership practice? How and why does doing so shape your practice? 2. How much do you think that being a man/woman has helped you in your role as principal, in your community, in relations with the Yukon Department of Education, students, teachers, and the Yukon Teachers' Association? In which ways? Please share a story which illustrates how this may have helped you in your role. Conversely, how much do you think that being a man/woman has not helped you in your role as principal? In which ways? Please share a story which illustrates how your gender has not helped you in your role. 3. Do men and women have particular ways of knowing that informs their practice as a Yukon school principal? How do you believe being a man/woman informs your practice as a school principal in the Yukon? How do you believe being a man/women informs your practice as a principal in relation to the community? Please share a story that illustrates your answer. 5. How does your own knowledge inform your practice as a school principal in the Yukon? In what ways? 6. To what extent do you participate in community life in events not related to your role as principal? What events do you participate in? Please share a story about your involvement in the community and how it connects to your reality as a principal. How does this participation in the community inform your role as principal?

| | 7. Are opportunities are created to attend to issues of social and cultural diversity, and social class (socio-economic status, educational attainment, parental occupation, language, and sexual identity) amongst the children in your school? If so, please describe the initiatives or programs at the school level which are developed in relation to issues of social and cultural diversity and social class.

8. Are opportunities created to attend to issues of social justice, fairness, and equity in your school? Please describe the challenges you face as a Yukon school principal related to addressing issues of social justice, fairness, and equity. Please share a story that illustrates how you address these challenges.

9. Please describe to me what you would consider a representative day in your work as Yukon school principal. What does your work mean for you as a person? As an educator? As a member of your school community? |
|---|---|

Appendix 5: Letter of Request to conduct research in Yukon schools

October 15, 2007

Christie Whitley
Assistant Deputy Minister (Public Schools)
Yukon Department of Education
P. O. Box 2703
Whitehorse, Yukon

Simon Blakesley

<center>**RE: Permission to conduct doctoral research in Yukon Schools**</center>

Dear Ms. Whitley,

The purpose of this letter is to request your permission to conduct educational research in Yukon schools. As you are aware, I am a PhD Candidate in the Educational Studies program at the University of British Columbia. My academic supervisor is Dr. André Elias Mazawi. This research will be conducted in order to complete my doctoral dissertation, titled: Remote and unresearched: A contextualized study of non-Indigenous educational leaders working in Yukon Indigenous communities.

This research will address a knowledge gap associated with the trans-cultural and spatial facets of leadership. Currently, we do not know how non-Indigenous school principals construct both themselves and valued educational ends in relation to the broader enterprise of schooling and to First Nations communities. By drawing on post-colonial theory this research will critically problematise conceptions of leadership in northern Canadian contexts to account for gendered, ethnic, class, cultural, and policy perspectives. This research will theorize leadership more broadly to include the influence and intersection of educator and community social classes.

The research methodology for this research project is a critical ethnography study. Specific data gathering techniques will involve observations, in-depth interviews, and document reviews at four school sites. The aim of this research is to better understand how non-Indigenous principals in the Yukon construct their professional identities, to illuminate the epistemological foundations upon which they base their beliefs and practice, and how they position themselves in the unexamined space between cultures. The anticipated methodological contribution will be the demonstrated use of critical ethnography as an incisive tool with which to illuminate cultural, gendered and ethnic leadership perspectives.

To this end, I wish to conduct research at four sites, specifically chosen to ensure that gendered perspectives be included.

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The outcomes of this research are intended to have multiple benefits to the Yukon and the field of educational leadership. It is intended that his research will shape the education of future educational leaders through the generation of contextually relevant post-secondary courses and locally-based leadership development. More broadly, this research will serve to increase understandings of educational leadership in unique northern Canadian contexts such as the Yukon.

As required by the University of British Columbia and as stated in the Tri-Council Policy Statement for the Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, all ethical protocols shall be adhered to throughout the conduct of this research. The proposed research plan will undergo review by the UBC Research Ethics Board. Specifically, participants will only give their free and informed consent to participate, and will reserve the right to withdraw from this study at any time. I will ensure that confidentiality and anonymity are maintained where required, and that both I and participants are guided by the Yukon Teachers' Association's Code of Ethics.

After the completion of this research activity, I will share with you a full copy and executive summary of the final report. Should you wish, I shall be only too happy to offer a presentation of the findings of this research.

Thank you for considering this request to conduct research in Yukon schools. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Simon Blakesley
UBC PhD Candidate

Appendix 6: Yukon Department of Education permission to conduct research letter

Yukon
Education
Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6

October 29, 2007

Mr. Simon Blakesley
18 Tamarack Drive
Whitehorse, Yukon
Y1A 4W2

Re: Permission to conduct research in selected Yukon schools.

Dear Mr. Blakesley,

I am in receipt of your letter of October 15, 2007 requesting permission to observe and interview non First Nation education leaders, (primarily Principals) and teachers, working in Yukon Indigenous communities. I understand that you have or will be contacting the Principals of the following schools, to observe them in a number of school activities.

I grant permission for you to carry out this field work from January 2008 – December 2008. Should you require additional time to complete this work, a further letter of request to this effect shall be considered.

I also understand that participation in this study is completely voluntary and that at any time a Principal or teacher may chose to withdraw from the study. I am pleased to hear that all information will be held in the strictest of confidence where required, and only shared with permission from the participants. I would like to recommend that you also contact Peter Johnston, Co-Chair of the First Nation Education Advisory Committee to consult with him on your proposed research.

Thank you for your assurance of high ethical standards. I look forward to the results of your study.

Sincerely,

Christie Whitley
Assistant Deputy Minister

Appendix 7: Confidentiality Agreement

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

BETWEEN:

> Dawn Priestly
> Fireweed Consulting and Data Management

AND:

> Simon Blakesley, UBC Ph.D. Candidate
> (The "Investigator")

I, Dawn Priestly, hereby agree that I and all of my staff of Fireweed Consulting and Data Management will maintain strict confidentiality with respect to all information and all matters pertaining to any transcription we do for Simon Blakesley as part of his fieldwork related to his PhD dissertation.
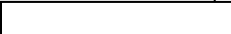
For the purposes of this agreement, confidentiality specifies that there will be no discussion about the data with any other party than Simon Blakesley. As transcripts are generated, names and other identifying information such as institutions or addresses shall be deleted. Moreover, no copies or reproductions of the data, in any form or medium, would be done without explicit agreement with Mr. Blakesley. Such copies or reproductions will be handed over to him with the completion of our task. In the same vein, no data or part thereof will be shown, shared or otherwise transmitted to any party outside the strict framework provided for in this agreement.

The storage of data shall be in a locked cabinet/drawer only accessible to those authorized in this agreement: the transcriptionist or the investigator. Electronic transcripts shall be locked up and kept secure until all materials are returned to the investigator. We are familiar with and will honour the relevant provisions of the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, Sec 3 (Privacy and Confidentiality)*. All digital audio files that

have been provided to us and all documents that have been produced for the purposes of transcribing this project will be handed over to Simon Blakesley at the completion of all transcription services.

Dated in Whitehorse, Yukon, this _____ day of February, 2008

_____

Dawn Priestly
Fireweed Consulting and Data Management

Appendix 8:   Certificate of completion: Introductory tutorial for the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans

Certificate of Completion

This is to certify that

Simon Blakesley

has completed the Interagency Advisory Panel on Research Ethics' Introductory Tutorial for the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS)
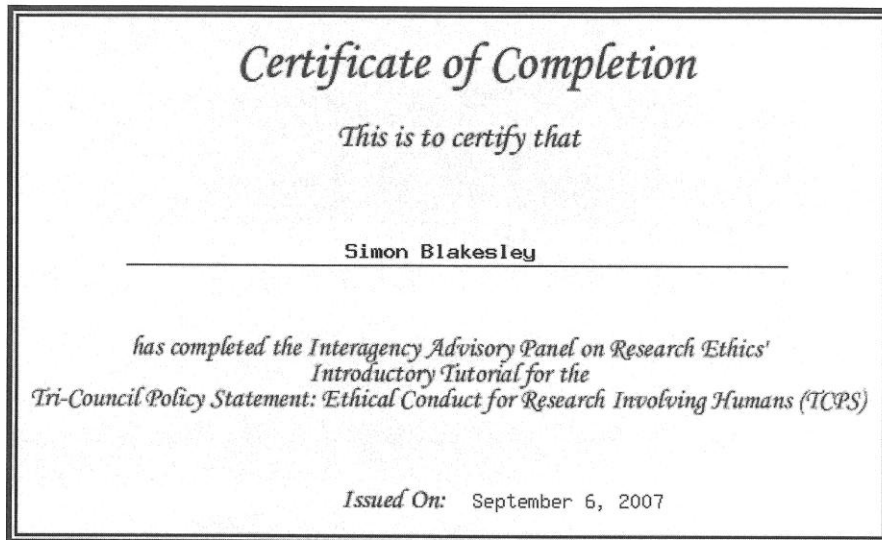
Issued On: September 6, 2007

Appendix 9: Certificate of Approval- Minimal Risk

The University of British Columbia
Office of Research Services
Behavioural Research Ethics Board
Suite 102, 6190 Agronomy Road,
Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z3

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL - MINIMAL RISK

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:	INSTITUTION / DEPARTMENT:	UBC BREB NUMBER:
Andre Mazawi	UBC/Education/Educational Studies	H07-02584

INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT:	
Institution	**Site**
N/A	N/A
Other locations where the research will be conducted:	
███████████████████████████████████████	

CO-INVESTIGATOR(S):
Simon Blakesley
Garnet Grosjean
Michelle Stack

SPONSORING AGENCIES:
N/A

PROJECT TITLE:
Remote and unresearched: A contextualized study of non-Indigenous educational leaders working in Indigenous Yukon contexts

CERTIFICATE EXPIRY DATE: January 17, 2009

DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL:		DATE APPROVED: January 17, 2008
Document Name	**Version**	**Date**
Protocol:		
Blakesley Research Proposal	N/A	November 2, 2007
Consent Forms:		
Invitation to participate	N/A	November 29, 2007
Assent Forms:		
Letter of Assent	N/A	November 29, 2007
Questionnaire, Questionnaire Cover Letter, Tests:		
Interview questionnaire	N/A	November 15, 2007

The application for ethical review and the document(s) listed above have been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

Approval is issued on behalf of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board

Appendix 10: Observational protocol (Creswell, 1998)

Observation Notes

Site location/context	Date/Time	Length

Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes

Comments/Diagram