University of Alberta

Who Ya Longs To? Indigenous Land-Based Learning

by

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Abstract

"The purpose of education is to help students recognize who they are, to see their gifts, talents, and strengths and recognize the responsibility that accompanies these gifts, so they can survive, thrive, and contribute as they navigate through both the broader world and Indigenous cultures" (Goulet & Goulet, 2014, p. 5). As educators, we continue to try and incorporate ways to encourage all students to thrive. This research project focused on educators who have successfully implemented land-based learning programs to engage students and as a way to incorporate and validate an Indigenous World View. By interviewing three teachers who have implemented or have been involved in successful land-based learning experiences and using a thematic qualitative analysis approach, themes of success were identified. The key findings that emerged were that land-based learning is an excellent pedagogical practice that benefits many students, generally has a higher success rate in engaging students in the learning process, and is an ideal vehicle for developing relationships with students. Finally, the paper concludes by exploring some of the barriers to implementing land-based education and potential future steps regarding assessing and reporting land-based learning experiences. The recommendation from this study is that when incorporating land-based learning into one practice, one should pay attention to the pitfalls and barriers, plan accordingly, budget for such learning activities, and, if possible, incorporate local Elders or Knowledge Keepers into the learning plan and process.

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Who Ya Longs To?

The title of this section is a colloquial expression from the island where I spent the first twenty-five years of my life. Using this expression was a common practice where I grew up. Your family name often identified you, and in turn, that would often indicate what area or bay your family originated or resided in Newfoundland.

Within the Indigenous community, tracing one's lineage and expressing one's heritage and origins is common practice to provide context. When presenting through an indigenous worldview, it is important to put who you are in context. (Personal communication, Dr. Noella Steinhauer, November, 2021) Through my journey of learning about Indigenous perspectives and connecting with Elders and families, I have learned about many similarities between the family and community dynamics within the Indigenous community and those of growing up in rural Newfoundland. One important connection is through family and family lineage. I recall being in the presence of Elder Dave Matilipi when he would connect with students and ask who their grandparents were, then he would probe more and identify who the family were. After identifying who the student was, he would confirm by saying, "oh, you're so and so's boy, your grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. Whitehead; yes, I know your family."

I longs to Murdock and Rowena Pittman from Roddicton and Stephenville, Newfoundland, respectively. My family lineage originated from Wales, Great Britain and Flanders, Belgium and was among some early European settlers who established a home on Newfoundland Island. My father was a clergy member, and we moved around many parts of the Island as a child. Through this journey, I established connections with many different folks around Newfoundland. Once I completed my undergraduate degrees, I moved to Peace River, Alberta, with my wife. It was in Peace River during my journey in school administration that I

took responsibility for the portfolio of supporting and incorporating Indigenous perspectives into our school building. This was when I began to learn much about the history of the Indigenous in Alberta and Canada. I discovered the many similarities between the Indigenous culture and the culture I grew up with in Newfoundland. These included the importance of oral history shared through a story or song, family connection, showing respect for your elders, the joyful banter of teasing one another to develop a connection, and the hardships of living in remote and sometimes harsh environments. I have developed a passion for continuing to learn and connect with members of our Indigenous community as I learned from them about the value of the land and from mother earth. The following work is a result of this learning experience.

Research Problem

This study aimed to interview educators who have successfully implemented place or land-based learning experiences into their pedagogical practice. The study also explored using place or land-based learning as a vehicle to increase student engagement and foster effective relationships. Subsequently, the researchalso addressed any pitfalls and barriers that exist through the data collected or current literature regarding the implementation of place or land-based learning experiences.

The research question guiding this study was: How are educators successfully implementing land-based learning experiences? Sub questions emerging in relation to the main question were: How has land-based learning affected student engagement? How do teachers assess and report land-based- learning? What are the pitfalls and barriers teachers experience while incorporating land-based learning experiences into their lessons and classrooms?

Literature Review

The literature review for land-based learning provided a robust repository of material. This literature review focused on the following areas, good pedagogy benefits all students, student engagement, and effective relationships.

Good Pedagogy is Good for All Learners

Good pedagogy is good for all learners and is a common understanding amongst educators. "The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers" (p. 13), and "the best school systems are those that have the best teachers" (Barber & Mourshed, 2007, p. 7). The impact on student learning from teachers who practise good pedagogy is astounding. Barber and Mourshed claimed:

> Bringing the lowest-performing 5-10 percent of teachers in the UK up to the
> average would greatly boost attainment and lead to a sharp improvement in the
> UK's international ranking. All other things equal, in 5 years the UK's rank
> amongst OECD countries would improve from 21st in reading to as high as 7th,
> and from 22nd in maths to as high as 12th…; over 10 years (the period a child is
> in the UK school system before the PISA examinations) the UK would improve
> its position to as high as 3rd in reading, and as high as 5th in maths. (p.5)

Land-based learning experiences are one pedagogical practice with the potential to benefit all learners. Although there are several learning experiences to consider when establishing a journey of pedagogical development, land-based or place-based learning is of particular interest when trying to engage Indigenous learners or learners who thrive in a contextual learning environment. It is a learning approach capable of incorporating more Indigenous perspectives into the classroom, an area many educators try to practise

but sometimes struggle to integrate (Aikenhead, 1997; Aikenhead & Huntley, 1999; Coalition for the Advancement of Aboriginal Studies, 2002).

Experiential learning pedagogical practices, such as land-based, gamification, project-based, and hands-on learning, combined with creating a safe space where students feel cultural heritage is valued, can create engaging spaces for students (Rebeiz & Cooke, 2017; Rigney, 2002; Bin-Sallik, 2003). These methods can increase student learning by providing better learning experiences, instant feedback, and better learning environments and can be used to catalyze behavioural change (Furdu et al.,2017). When students are invested in learning and enjoying what they learn, it develops deep learning connections. Bisson and Luckner (1996) stated: "fun turns the learning experience from a required project to [a] wanted experience" and "fun is critical to learning in that it allows spontaneous interest, [and] allows participants to have more energy for [the learning] process" (p. 111).

Much of the literature on using the land as a place for learning centers around land-based learning. This was most likely influenced by a national call for reconciliation from the Truth and Reconciliation Report, which recommended steps toward reconciliation and healing. A critical medium for incorporating this practice and perspective to drive change is education. This was reiterated in the commission's final report identifying education as "the key to reconciliation" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 234). In Alberta, the directive was clear when signed into ministerial order #28/2020 on August 6th, 2020 (Government of Alberta). According to the Memorandum of understanding between the Government of Alberta and the Nations of Treaties 6, 7, and 8 "...the parties agree to enhance or develop culturally appropriate strategies to address land-based and experiential education, health and physical education, excellence in the arts and sports, extracurricular opportunities and to prepare the next generation

of leaders and elders" (Government of Canada, Alberta, and Assembly of Treaty Chiefs in Alberta, Memorandum of Understanding, 2010, p. 8). Due to these initiatives, there has been a push and an increase in the number of place-based and land-based learning experiences students have in schools. This was evident through the research literature that has steadily grown since the release of the Truth and Reconciliation report in 2015.

Engaging in pedagogical practice allows students to find a sense of place and belonging and gives power to their cultural heritage; furthermore, incorporating more Indigenous perspectives is a good pedagogical practice. "When our (people) engage in the journey of education that does not do violence to their culture, it teaches them to dream of possibilities and not be a prisoner of certainty… [e]ducation that welcomes Indigenous identities reinforces Indigenous cultural views of the world" (Rigney, 2002, p. 1). Creating a safe and caring environment is an objective for all schools. When we make a place for cultural safety, we do more than just create space. "Cultural safety extends beyond cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity. It empowers individuals and enables them to contribute to the achievement of positive outcomes. It encompasses a reflection on individual cultural identity and recognition of the impact of personal culture on professional practice" (Bin-Sallik, 2003, p. 21).

Student Engagement

All educators desire classes full of engaged students. "The roots of interest in engagement are, at least in part, driven by the desire to enhance student learning" (Reschly & Christenson, 2012, p. 3). The question often discussed among educators is, how do we engage students? What tactics do you use? What pedagogical practices do successful teachers use in their classrooms? Lamborn et al., (1992) stated, "for teachers, the challenge is how to get students to do academic work and to take it serious enough to learn" (p. 3). This was evident in these past few years while

teachers were navigating teaching in a pandemic. Coming through two pandemic years of schools, the assigned work became a compliance piece, and there was little numerical value placed on work presented by students, so the tasks became even more difficult for teachers. One study reported the following data and information, noting the language that changed from thriving to surviving.

> We reviewed student GPA and motivation before and during the pandemic. The average student GPA before the pandemic was 3.47, and after the pandemic was 3.43. Meanwhile, the student's motivation before the pandemic was dominated by the answer " thriving " (63.3%), which changed to the answer " surviving" (45.6%). (Nurhopipah,et al., 2021, p. 165)

"Meaningful learning cannot be delivered to high school students like pizza to be consumed or videos to be observed" (Newman, 1992, p. 3). They further explain the process has to be one in which students are invested in the process of learning. Students' "learning develops largely through the labour of the student, who must be enticed to participate in a continuous cycle of studying, producing, correcting mistakes, and starting over again" (p. 3).

Newman (1992) also noted that the opportunities for student disengagement have increased over time because they have more activities available. Many academics would concur with Newman that personal devices, particularly cellphones, negatively impact student academics (Feliison & Godoi, 1999; Rosen, 2017: Ophir et al.,2009). "In fact, every ten additional minutes of cellphone use is associated with a steady reduction in academic performance" (Dontre, 2021, p. 383).

Student engagement can be subjective. Scholars have noted the multilayers of the concept of engagement. Reschly and Christenson (2012) stated;

From the earliest review to include the term engagement (Mosher & McGowan,

1985), to the publication of seminal theory about the underpinnings of school

dropout and completion (Finn, 1989), to more recent conceptualizations

(seeEpilogue, this volume), engagement is viewed as multidimensional, involving

aspects of students' emotion, behavior (participation, academic learning time),

and cognition (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004) . In other words, academic

engaged time is important but not enough to accomplish the goals of schooling

students learning across academic, social-emotional, and behavioural domains.

Student engagement is the glue, or mediator, that links important contexts—home,

school, peers, and community to students and, in turn, to outcomes of interest. (p.

3)

In a case study of the H'a H'a Tumxulaux Outdoor Education Program, Rebeiz and

Cooke (2017) write about the program's significant impact on student engagement. The program

is an alternate learning experience for students who may not fit or have been removed from other

school settings. This case study is a land-based learning experience; most students are

Indigenous or Métis. The authors used a quote from sociologists DiPrete and Hout (2012) as a

mantra for their program: "Education plays a dual role in the intergenerational transmission of

advantage. It is both; the main channel for socio-economic reproduction and the main avenue for

socio-economic mobility" (pp. 25-26). Using the theme of engaging Indigenous learners and the

work of three researchers, Dr's Michelle Hogue, Sean Lessard, and Gregory Lowan-Treadue, the

H'a H'a Tumxulaux program was developed.

Student engagement was the overarching framework of the program and used the

following three pillars;

1. Social engagement: creating a space and a sense of community and belonging were crucial parts of this program.

2. Academic engagement: integrating kinaesthetic learning opportunities and unconventional assessment techniques allowed students to find empowerment. Students who previously struggled with conventional ways of assessment through reading and writing often found success through differentiated assessment practices such as oral expression of understanding, skits, visual arts, and storytelling.

3. Intellectual engagement: the nature of the program demands that students work in collaborative critical thinking groups. Developing skills that would have any student climb the rungs of Bloom's taxonomy, reaching some of the highest levels of learning.

The program developers hoped this framework would drive the learning within their program. An accurate evaluation of the effectiveness and success can be found in the testimonials of the program participants.

My high school wasn't working for me and my grades were plummeting. These classes were long, and we would be asked to sit down, fill in a sheet and bring it back in 45 minutes. The H'a H'a program was the last effort before dropping out. Here, we go outside, the teachers pick your brain, and you don't even realize you're learning. I am Indigenous, and I have found my spirituality here, in a sense. I'm not really spiritual at all, but I now find inner peace whenever I come to school. My classmates are valuable to me; I see them for who they are, and I see that even more when we go outside. Overall, I treat a lot of things in my life

with a lot more respect thanks to the H'a H'a program (student, 16 years old).

(Rebeiz & Cooke, 2017, p. 28)

As educators, we are often concerned about student engagement and have struggled with allowing the learning to naturally occur within the student's experiences. Considering an Indigenous worldview lens, educators would benefit from the wise words of Elder Dennis Whitford when asked about assessing the learning of some cultural experiences such as a sweat lodge "each individual's learning experience is different and personal, one can be sure, if they were there, they were learning." (Personal communication, D. Whitford, May 2020)

Fostering Effective Relationships

Within the province of Alberta, Canada, educational professionals are to adhere to a set of quality standards. The framework guiding the conduct of certificated Alberta educators is the Teacher Quality Standard (TQS). Certificated Alberta School principals are also held to the Leadership Quality Standard (LQS). Fostering Effective Relationships, LQS number one and Supporting the Application of Foundational Knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit, LQS number five, are two essential competencies to consider when implementing and supporting land-based learning experiences. "Establishing relationships with First Nations, Métis and Inuit parents/guardians, Elders/knowledge keepers, local leaders and community members" (Alberta Education, 2019, p. 3).

Creating positive and trusting relationships leads to academic success for students. It is well documented amongst many academics (Baker, 2006; Pianta, 1999; Liew et al., 2010; Opdenakker & Minnaert, 2011; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2017). The development of these relationships happen in several different scenarios. There seem to be more opportunities outside of a regular classroom setting that allows for strengthening the teacher-student relationship.

Lowman and Lowman (1984) explained that building rapport with students is vital to success and anything you do to show interest in their lives helps solidify that rapport.

Within the Indigenous community, developing relationships is crucial to the path towards reconciliation. Creating authentic relationships with families and students will break down barriers between the home and school (Personal communication Elder Dave Matilpi, September 2021). Using techniques such as teasing, storytelling, creating space, and honouring Elders, validates the significance and value of Indigenous heritage (Goulet & Goulet, 2014).

Summary

Throughout the literature review, the key findings that emerged were land-based learning is an excellent pedagogical practice that benefits many students, generally has a higher success rate in engaging students in the learning process, and an ideal vehicle for developing relationships with students. These key findings were well documented in the literature, along with other additional benefits of land-based learning. Some of these additional benefits included integrating an Indigenous worldview and giving cultural credit to students who may be of Indigenous cultural backgrounds. Another benefit would be in the power of building relationships with Elders and members of the indigenous community, in turn working towards reconciliation and strengthening the relationship between the indigenous community and school.

Method

I implemented a thematic qualitative analysis of data gathered through personal interviews to conduct this research. Creswell (2007) emphasized the importance of positioning oneself in a worldview, a paradigm. The construction of this paper was developed using an Indigenous Worldview paradigm. Three individual interviews were conducted with educators

who had implemented place-based or land-based learning into their pedagogical practice or worked within school systems based on place-based or land-based learning. Using the data gathered, I analyzed themes and patterns existing in the data set. By coding and constructing themes from the literature and the interviews, I developed understandings of how educators successfully implemented place- and land-based practices to practise good pedagogy, engaged students, fostered effective relationships and assessed and reported on learning.

Respondent Group

I connected with interview respondents through several methods. First, I was able to obtain an interview with Alberta educators through a connection within my master's cohort class. One of the interviewees, Frank, was in my cohort group, he was a teacher in Alberta, but his land-based learning experience came from his time teaching in the Northwest Territories (NWT). Another, Bill, was the husband of a member of my cohort. When my cohort partner heard of my topic, she volunteered her husband to be interviewed. Thankfully, he obliged me with the privilege to learn about his experience of teaching in a northern Alberta community. During his time there, he frequently incorporated place-based learning into his practice. The final participant was Sally. She and I completed our undergraduate degrees together, and she responded to a social media post on Facebook, where I had put out a call for participants interested in being interviewed. She incorporated the pedagogical practice of land-based learning in an alternate school she worked in Nova Scotia. All interviewees were seasoned educators with experience as classroom teachers and in other leadership and administrative roles.

Frank's and Bill's connections to place-based learning came from their passion for nature and spending time in the forest, camping, fishing, or hunting. Sally was also a passionate outdoor

enthusiast, spending much time outdoors engaging in activities such as hiking, kayaking, swimming, hunting and fishing. All educators lived and taught in communities near landscapes that provided ease of access for place and land-based learning.

Sally taught in an alternate school in Nova Scotia. The school's framework was developed around the place and land-based learning. It was a school for students who struggled or were removed from traditional school systems and buildings. Shortly after finishing her education, she was given "an opportunity I couldn't turn down," as she expressed.

Frank taught in the NWT, and one of the major learning activities for the year was a week-long traditional learning camp for the students. This was a time away on the land where students stayed over a few nights and learned about transitional knowledge and ways, such as fishing and hunting. The individuals involved were school staff, local Elders and traditional knowledge keepers.

Bill had components of land-based learning as many of his stakeholders were of Indigenous heritage; however, his planning was focused on place-based learning. Some land-based learning concepts naturally infiltrated the learning experience, although the activity did not intentionally incorporate Indigenous perspectives or include Elders. The interview with the educator who practices this pedagogy while in the Northwest Territories indicated the program was developed through the framework of Indigenous perspectives. The program developers strategically incorporated traditional ways of knowledge, substance living, and Elders and knowledge keepers.

Data Collection Process

Due to geographical distances, current pandemic protocol, and ease of access, data for this project were collected through personal interviews using the Google Meet platform. The

participants were to establish an environment and a time that worked for their convenience and around their busy schedules.

Another advantage of using Google Meet was using a digital transcription tool. Using the virtual tool called Scribbl saved a significant amount of time in transcribing the interviews. Of course, nuances in speech are not perfectly transcribed during the interview process, but it ultimately allowed me to format instead of directly transcribing the conversation.

Interview Design

Using Merriam and Tisdell's (2016) categories of questions, I designed the schedule (see appendix A) to allow the respondents to provide first-hand details of their experience of a successful land or place-based learning experience. I was able to incorporate hypothetical, ideal positions, and interpretive style of questions to invoke responses from the participants that would elaborate on their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell).

I approached the research using a thematic coding approach (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). While analyzing the data, I used thematic codings such as student engagement, differentiated assessment or learning, relationships and connections, rural versus urban proximity, human resources, and capital resources. These codings allowed me to organize the themes emerging from the data. It also helped to highlight unexpected data leading to potential further research topics.

Drawing on Julia Ellis' (2006) work, I designed my interview questions to be more open-ended, allowing the respondents to extend and express their perspectives on their successful implementation of place or land-based learning. Ellis stated, "you need to create conditions that enable participants to recall significant experiences, analyze them, and reflect on their meaning" (Ellis, p. 5). I strategically developed one question that allowed the respondent to

identify memories of sight, smell, and sound and to express those learning experiences. I also asked an open-ended question about how they assessed and evaluated the students' learning experiences.

Ethics

Maintaining ethics was of utmost importance throughout this research. This project was conducted under the guidance of the Educational Policy Studies Department and the research ethics boards of the University of Alberta. This ethics approval form included some guidelines to follow. One of these guidelines included drafting letters and consent forms for participants to be informed and to give written informed consent (see appendix B) to conduct research and to use this research analytically for a concluding paper for this course. Additionally, it outlined areas we could not research; one of these areas fell within researching Indigenous communities and people. Although some of my participants did indeed teach Indigenous students, this study did not directly study Indigenous communities or people. In addition, some school divisions had research protocols in place and submitting a request for permission had to be done. Attached is an example of the process required within the Peace River School Division (see appendix C). Once these essential formalities were fulfilled, it was time to communicate with the participants about how best to gather data from their experiences.

Data Analysis

Analyzing the data using thematic coding (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) highlighted the following codes aligned with the literature review; good pedagogy is good for all students, student engagement, and effective relationships. During the interview, all interviewees expressed great examples of these coded-themed experiences with students while learning off the land. After the first interview, I used a group of peers from the master's cohort class to provide feedback on my

questions and some of the themes that emerged from the data collected. Using their input and my reflection, I made slight revisions to the questions and adjusted the amount of input I provided as an interviewer. I used member checking with the respondents to ensure I was capturing what it was they were meant to portray during their interview.

Trustworthiness

To maintain trustworthiness and accountability, I confirmed my understanding of parts of the process along the way. I received verbal confirmation that the participants received the questions, introduction letter, and consent form before beginning the interview. I also confirmed throughout the interview process what I perceived participants were saying was actually what they intended. Finally, after editing, I allowed participants access to their final transcriptions to confirm their ideas were portrayed faithfully.

These are essential steps to help readers understand there was a due process to ensure the presented data was adequately reported to increase internal validity. I assume this may be a very delicate process for research that may be considered controversial. To my advantage, this topic carries minimal controversy, and the research group was very passionate about sharing their experience.

Limitations

When conducting research, there are often limitations that need to be highlighted to solidify the trustworthiness of the research data and reporting. Some of the limitations of this research project were; the number of respondents, personal connection to the respondents, and other themes emerging from the data that were not highlighted in this report but were examples of successful land-based learning experiences.

While collecting data, there were only three interviews conducted. It is most likely that the themes of success highlighted in this paper would have been themes of any participant running a land-based learning program. What may have been missed due to a small number of participants might have been potentially barriers or pitfalls not experienced by this respondent group; in other words, I did not reach the point of data saturation in my thematic analysis.

A personal connection can be great while interviewing, but can also cause limitations. The emotional connection can create a comfortable environment between the interviewer and the participant if they have a positive relationship. However, it can also create a scenario of conversation where the interviewer may inject his or her own stories, and opinion on the examples presented. This may have caused some barriers to the authenticity of the participant's response. This was an adjustment I had to make after my first interview.

After coding the data, several themes could have been incorporated into a report about successful land-based learning programs. However, due to time constraints, the pieces related directly to the research questions were highlighted to populate this paper.

Findings and Discussion

In this section, I will review the findings of the main themes emerging from the data, and highlight experiences from educators who successfully implement land-based learning into their practice. Following the findings will be a discussion to compare, contrast, or address the lack of literature for each theme. Upon further analysis, literature was incorporated into this section of the paper that was not included in the literature review.

Good Pedagogy Benefits All

These research data were viewed through an Indigenous worldview framework. Although it was not designed to focus directly on incorporating land-based learning into practice to increase Indigenous perspectives in classrooms, it has been a part of the learning journey for the educators interviewed. The research was intended to explore how educators ran successful land-based learning experiences and the components of those programs.

All interviewees stated incorporating hands-on learning was a pedagogical practice beneficial to all students in their classes. For some students, it was more valuable than others, particularly those who had previous experience learning off the land. Bill stated, "I have had students that were difficult to engage, but then when they come out and are doing the land-based learning, they're fully engaged and show quite a bit of leadership in the classroom because that's an area that they, maybe have experience in and are good at and are able to help out other students in the class and the kind of share what they do" (Line 337-341). He described these students as taking on a leadership role while out on the land and said it was a real confidence boost for some of them. Sally talked about the significance of changing the setting. She believed getting students outside and in the fresh air helped with their learning. She had made specific reference to coming through the restrictions of the covid pandemic and how important it was for students to have the ability to move around and express themselves. She stated it was paramount to the student's mental wellness. "It's like all the kids need is fresh air and to get out. So when you know the power of what it can do, when their mental health is struggling, and these restrictions are put on schools or put on teachers, and I understand the safety bit being so important, but we have to find ways to work with that to get the kids out" (Line 281-284). Getting out of desks and rows and bell schedules is beneficial for all students to learn.

Well-planned outdoor learning environments are good pedagogy for all students' brain development (Gill, 2014; Morris, 2003; Office for Standards in Education, 2008; Rickinson et al., 2004). These learning experiences provide engaging learning environments where students get instant feedback and can often result in their learning and inspire behavioural change (Furdu et al., 2017). Hall et al., (2020) argue for the "the value of getting students outdoors" (p. 37) using their research to support the already existing literature that argued the benefits of learning outside. The best educators are teachers who do just that; ones who engage students, inspire, become change agents and create an engaging learning environment. If good pedagogy is good for all students and "the best school systems are those that have the best teachers" (Barber & Mourshed, 2007, p. 7), then the best teachers practise land-based learning.

All interviewees expressed the valuable experiences and skills students learned while facing challenges in their learning adventures. Bill recalled an overnight trip to the lake "When we left town, it was minus 15, and by the time we got to the lake, it was minus 30" (Line 474 - 476). Much to his surprise, the students did not complain. The students used this challenge to form bonds. There was an increase in engagement as the whole group fully engaged in solutions to mitigate the fridge temperatures and construct shelters and fires that would increase comfortability while on the land. "They were laughing, having a good time, and working their tails off to get our shelter up and running, getting wood" (Line 384-385). When students enjoy learning, it becomes meaningful to them. "[F]un turns the learning experience from a required project to [a] wanted experience" and "fun is critical to learning in that it allows spontaneous interest, [and] allows participants to have more energy for [the learning] process" (Bisson & Luckner, 1996, p. 111).

When asked about unsuccessful experiences with land-based learning, Sally stated something perceived as a failure could also be an opportunity to learn through adversity. Her example was while on a canoe trip, the capsizing of the canoe could be viewed by others as a failure when it allowed the students to engage in safety practices they had learned for the trip. She also expressed how it increased the group's bond as they sat around a fire to dry their saturated clothing and gear and warm up their bodies. During this time, the students expressed what they had learned, how they deployed safety practices, and everyone safely emerged through the ordeal.

Engaging Students

Some of my questions were directed toward student engagement. During the interview, I specifically asked, compared with other pedagogical methods, how would you describe your student's engagement level, understanding, and expression of learning through land-based learning compared to others? When I asked Bill this question, he stated:

> Well, I mean obviously, if you look back at what we were talking about there, it's a high-interest, high activity, high engagement type of thing. I've got kids moving, they're building their snares, they're involved in the class because they want to be. So it's fantastic because they are fully engaged the whole time that you're doing something like that, and they're learning to a certain degree. It's hard, and in this particular case, to compare that to teaching fractions in a math classroom, it's, I don't think it's necessarily fair in that aspect because I'm gonna get more engagement doing that land-based activity than I am in (pause) I shouldn't say more engagement, different kind of engagement, a more enthusiastic and smiling engagement with kids enjoying that versus fractions in a math class. (Line 307-311)

Frank recalled his time at camp when students would arrive with technology (cell phones or ipods) and lots of junk food snacks to partake in. This is what captured the engagement of the students' attention for the first few hours. "Once the students had eaten all their snacks and their batteries died on their devices, they were ready to sit and engage" (Line 298-299).

The importance of reciprocity of receiving from the land and, in return, giving back while developing respect for the land was a common theme. Interviewees expressed how students would gain a sense of wonder and awe; they were able to express their understanding through oral presentations or demonstrations of their learning. Bill said this when sharing about moments of the class eating together a stew made from rabbit harvested by one of their place-based learning experiences. Sally expressed how powerful the learning experience was sitting around a fire in the evening after a day of learning. The students would be asked questions such as "if you could take anyone on this trip, dead or alive, who would you take?" (Line 410). She still reflects on the depth of their answers, she said, "it was amazing and powerful the answers these students would give" (Line 412). The students would talk about how much they learned from the land, working with it, and on it. They would comment, "when I have kids, I'm going to take them camping. There is so much to learn" (Line 415). Although this school was developed on place-based learning, the perspective of relationship building is a crucial building block of the Indigenous worldview of learning.

Lamborn, Newmann, and Wehlage (1992) address factors influencing student engagement. They explore the diversity of student learners and learning needs. They state if a school is to focus only on "abstract verbal or mathematical competencies" (p. 25), they miss opportunities for engagement. The intrinsic value of the land-based learning experience expressed in the data concurs with Lamborn et al. Through a land-based learning lens, an

individual cannot disconnect the rich history that exists with the land and all creation's elements.
(McGure-Kishebakabaykwe, 2010; Styres et al., 2013)

Students being involved in their learning was a theme which emerged from the literature.
Youth are beginning to want to reconnect with their cultures and are increasingly looking for
ways to reconnect with the traditional ways of living and their cultures (Friedel, 2011;
MacDonald et al., 2015). One of the findings was the empowerment of allowing students to
engage in this alternate learning environment. Where the empowerment came from was allowing
students to be involved in their learning process and learning through experiential learning in a
hands-on approach.

Students were also empowered when allowed to express their learning through different
assessments. Many students who struggled with the written expression of learning found success
in an opportunity to express their knowledge orally. All interviewees spoke passionately about
the shift in engagement for students who did not possess skills in the traditional classroom
setting but had many valuable skills in the field. It allowed these students to be seen differently
by their peers and allowed classmates to observe the student's power of knowledge.

Relationship Building

Engaging with students in alternate settings provides an opportunity to develop different
relationships. I have always encouraged teachers to go on field trips with students or supervise a
class or team trip because on those trips, you get to connect with your students on a different
level. Bill states, "you kind of developed those relationships with those, with maybe some of
those kids that it might be difficult to develop a relationship in another setting. I really, really
appreciate that piece of it" (Line 380-382). All interviewees spoke passionately about their
experience with the students while participating in the land-based learning activities. Each

expressed great times of enjoyment as they learned and experienced together. Bill recalled when the students had engaged in a snaring activity where they harvested a rabbit from the land, then proceeded to process the rabbit and make a stew out of the meat. When interviewing Bill, it was evident from his facial expression this experience was of great value to him and the students. Bill stated:

> For example, we would go out and snare rabbits and bring them back, but I'd also give the kids an opportunity if they'd been out chicken hunting to bring chickens in the class, and we'd go make a fire and cook, all of that together and have a meal and sit down around and talk and everything like that. And they can show what they've done and learned how to cook these things. So that's a pretty cool experience with it. (Line 341-346)

When I asked the respondent group about unsuccessful experiences, Sally took the opportunity to express that, despite something we may consider unsuccessful, there is value in the learning experienced during challenges. She reminisced about when they were on a trip, and the wind speed increased while they were on the water. Shortly after, they capsized their canoe, and all parties were immersed in water. Sally indicated that safety is a big part of the program, and the supervisor trained lifeguards, CPR and wilderness survival. She recalls how impressive it was that everyone kicked into the proper safety practice, and the group safely got themselves and their gear to shore. Then they started a fire, dried off, warmed up, and debriefed about the situation. She expressed the relationships that were forged through this challenge and the learning that came from the experience. Sally stated:

When we pull together, and we're able to debrief that and talk about that, you know, those

are the experiences you just can't write in, right? You don't plan them. You don't want

them, but when you work through them, that's the best, right. (Line 238-241)

All interviewees reiterated the importance of developing relationships with one another,

expressing through examples how place and land-based learning provided opportunities to build

authentic relationships with students. Developing genuine relationships is essential in

incorporating an Indigenous perspective into one's pedagogical practice. Part of the journey is

sharing your journey of who you are and where you come from (Personal communication, Dr.

Noella Steinhauer, November, 2021). Relationships with the land and one another are of utmost

importance when learning through land-based experiences. Building a relationship with each

other and the land developed trust and was imperative to a successful learning experience.

Fostering effective relationships between students and teachers is crucial to students' success

throughout several aspects of their schooling, from social interactions to improved academic

success and reduction in overall failures (Alderman & Green, 2011). Trust is a big component of

developing relationships, some scholars would say critical. Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2017)

stated, "Trust is defined as the willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the

confidence that the other party is benevolent, honest, and open" (p. 154). Given the history of the

education system and our Indigenous communities, educators and leaders must be benevolent,

honest and open. This is also true when working with youth (Baker, 2006; Pianta, 1999; Liew et

al., 2010; Opdenakker & Minnaert, 2011). Engaging in land-based learning where challenges

arise, "creates opportunities for students to participate in leadership activities and to exercise

their voice in school leadership and decision making" (Alberta Education, 2019, p. 5). You will

find no better example of when Lowman and Lowman (1984) write about the advantages of

building rapport with students, particularly by showing interest in their lives, then allowing a student to bring in an animal they hunted to make food for their peers.

Assessing and Reporting

One area for this research topic I was specifically interested in was how teachers assess and report on land-based learning. During data collection, the respondents gave examples of how they would assess the learning experience. This ranged from oral presentations to journal entries to a pass or fail method of reporting. One thing is clear, there is limited literature regarding the successful implementation of assessment practices for things such as land-based learning experiences. Our current model of education requires teachers to assess students for the purpose of reporting to stakeholders on students' understandings of a prescribed curriculum approved by the office of education. Datta (2018) stated, "the evaluation process (i.e., the grading system) was identified as the main problematic issue in environmental science education. They explained that the sciences (such as physics, environment, biology, and math), particularly associated with evaluative approaches, lead to apathy toward science education" (p. 11).

When viewing these learning experiences through an Indigenous Worldview, it is believed the learning happens within the experience. "Land-based learning, ceremony, and cultural experiences are opportunities to learn on a personal level; the experience itself is learning" (Elder Denis Whitford, personal communication, May 28, 2021).

Barriers to Land-based learning

Although there is some literature on the barriers to this pedagogical approach, it is limited, particularly with relation to land-based learning. When trying to implement programming and activities into the learning environment, one can encounter barriers to implementation. Some of these barriers can create extra work, extra cost, and challenges for

place and land-based learning (Giles et al., 2020; Gruenewald, 2006; Dawson & Moore, 2011; Ritchie & Coughlan, 2004). The data collected during the interviews noted the following barriers: proximity to land-based resources, red tape, cost, and attitudes.

Proximity to land-based resources

All three interviewees noted the importance of their proximity to the land as a resource to teach land-based learning. They noted, if teachers are looking to incorporate land-based learning, they have to consider the time for travel, cost, and time away from school for these experiences. Students and staff could leave the school and reach their learning destination on foot for many learning experiences shared through interviews, a luxury for schools located in rural settings. Schools in an urban setting can certainly incorporate land-based learning, just be aware that travel to the location will have to take more time to organize. It is a reason some schools or university programs are seeing reductions in field experience participants, place, time, and cost (Giles et al., 2020).

Red Tape-Paperwork, insurance, and certification.

Red tape referenced in these interviews included insurance liabilities, institutional paperwork, access to budgets to run such programs, and staff with proper training (certification outside of that required to be certified as a teacher, such as first aid, lifeguard training, and survival training). All interviewees addressed these as barriers one may encounter when planning to incorporate land-based learning into their practice. After a recent school administrators' meeting where a new insurance policy was introduced, Bill noted some restrictions will create barriers to continuing with land-based learning activities. Currently, insurance companies have banned using an axe in a school setting. Bill's question was, "how am I gonna build shelters and go out and do that stuff if I can't teach my kids how to use an axe properly?"

Sally addressed the importance of training received outside of her formal education. She had received lifeguarding, CPR, wilderness survival, and outdoor education certification. She stated that this could become a barrier for educators looking to incorporate activities with insurance restrictions. These barriers can be overcome, but one should consider the time it will take to become fully certified and the cost.

Cost

When running any learning program, there are costs associated. During the interview process, Frank shared that implementing the cultural week-long camp was one of his largest budgeted projects for the school year. Sally talked about the cost of certification for staff training to ensure safety protocols were being met during these learning experiences. These costs need to be considered when budgeting for these learning experiences. Sizes of organizational or school budgets will impact the amount of engagement a school can support for land-based learning. As Giles et al., (2020) stated, "The cost of field trips themselves can present further roadblocks" (p. 1). In this article, the authors write about university courses, and initially, the costs were incurred by the students, creating barriers to engaging in such fieldwork. In a publicly funded school, the costs would fall within the school-based budget. Costs are reported in other articles as barriers as well. Hall et al., (2020) express cost as a barrier to outdoor physical education, and provide alternatives to educators looking to add variation to their program in a cost efficient manner.

Attitudes

One final barrier was with colleagues and attitudes toward place-based learning. Sally expressed how the program could be difficult to implement if administration did not see the value in such programs. "When I worked at the alternate school, my administrator understood the program's significance and supported the land-based learning opportunities." Unfortunately, she

recalled an administrator who would create paperwork barriers to the planning portion of these place-based learning experiences. She also highlighted the attitude of some staff that these adventures were of no value and not teaching. Combatting and changing those attitudes were also part of her journey of advocating for place-based learning. Intertwined with these attitudes are often questions of accountability of such programming. Gruenewald (2006) stated, "[f]ormal educational systems in the USA are currently controlled by systems of accountability that disregard place—the local cultural and natural environment" (p. 280). A shift in mentality needs to happen to implement land-based learning into one practice. "If place-based education is to emerge as a legitimate pedagogy within these formal systems, its advocates will need the widespread support of community collaboration and a systematic method of demonstrating accountability and effectiveness (p. 280).

Research Conclusions

This research project explored how educators successfully implement placed-based or land-based learning into their teaching routines. The interviews revealed that strategic planning, supportive administration, and collaboration with local community members and experts resulted in successful land-based learning experiences. Because of these experiences, students experienced good hands-on pedagogy and learning, higher engagement rates, and developed strong relationships with teachers and peers.

When asked how teachers implement successful land-based learning pedagogy, the results were clear, concise, and conclusive with all respondents. First, consider ways to incorporate land-based learning into your current curriculum. This includes implementing a plan, gathering all necessary resources (human, paperwork, safety equipment, and materials), creating

safety plans, and executing your lesson. Second, be sure that the administration and guardians are in favour of the learning experience. Thirdly, budget accordingly. Finally, get out there and do it. These are the ways these teachers have incorporated successful land-based learning experiences. From the literature and the data collected from the interviews, if you are looking for a good pedagogical practice and wanting to incorporate an Indigenous perspective into your routine, land-based learning in one lesson plan is to consider.

It is evident through the interview responses and the literature review, the following areas are benefits of land-baed learning: (a) good pedagogical practice to incorporate Indigenous perspectives, (b) higher student engagement, and (c) fostering effective relationships with students. If these are areas in your teaching practice you are trying to improve, consider land-based learning as a part of your lesson planning.

Numerous examples from the interview data and academic literature expressed the increase in student engagement once given these opportunities. It provided an avenue for students who may struggle with traditional classroom practices to show their peers their knowledge prowess. At the same time, in the bush, it boosted the confidence of students to be able to do tasks such as making fire. It provided students with a connection to the land while preparing their food from animals they harvested. It helped students respect the land and animals they harvest for sustenance.

Finally, it is without a doubt that these experiences increase student and teacher relationships. When the respondent groups were asked about one of the most rewarding things they gleaned from land-based learning, the overwhelming response was about the relationships built while working together. This is also clear in the literature and in case study examples such as the H'a H'a Tumxulaux program. The testimonies of students in that program indicated that

these programs have positively impacted their relationships with staff and, in turn, their attitudes towards learning.

The goal was to highlight place or land-based learning as one option to increase student engagement and, in turn, incorporate more Indigenous perspectives into a teacher's practice. The interview process was intriguing and informative. Many of the participant's responses aligned with current research and the benefits of place or land-based learning. Students' engagement while participating in experiential learning was more significant than in the traditional classroom style of pedagogy, such as the stand and delivered method or worksheets.

Place-based and land-based learning is but one pedagogical tool to engage students. I believe there is great value in this type of learning that supersedes other teaching methods, including building relationships, empowering students who struggle with traditional ways of learning, engaging students in the learning process, building perseverance, developing character, and incorporating cultural relevance and perspectives for Indigenous learners. These reasons are why I advocate for place and land-based learning to be part of any school's regular learning experiences.

The findings are helpful if a teacher wants to incorporate place or land-based learning into the pedagogical repertoire. The barriers and pitfalls in the data and literature are beneficial for planning. The proximity to land-based resources is useful; teachers finding themselves in a place where access to this resource is challenging must consider alternative ways to overcome these obstacles. The cost of running such programs and certifying staff will need to be addressed in the planning stage. Opposition from other staff or leaders will need to be considered. Insurance liabilities and time frames will have to be a part of planning such an enriching experience.

My understanding of place and land-based learning changed throughout this learning journey. Bowra et al., (2020) explain the difference between place-based and land-based learning. "Placed-based learning differs from land-based learning because it does not connect the place with Indigenous history, knowledge, or stories. Place-based learning fails to acknowledge that all places were once and continued to be Indigenous lands" (p. 34). According to this definition, only one of the three interviews fit the description of land-based learning, while the other two were place-based learning experiences.

It would appear that many people do not know the distinction between place-based and land-based learning. The differences can be challenging to establish as place-based can easily become land-based learning if an Indigenous perspective is incorporated. It was commonplace to see place-based learning be easily adapted to become land-based learning from the interviews conducted. Since many educators I interviewed taught a mixed cultural population, including many Indigenous learners, the line between place-based and land-based learning was often blurred. To explain further, when the interviewees provided examples, some of what they referred to as land-based learning would be, by definition, place-based learning. However, the experience could change mid-way through the example if a student or the teacher would incorporate a connection to the land and Indigenous ways. I state this to highlight the challenge of the minute distinction between place-based and land-based learning.

It is to be noted, although only one could genuinely fall into the land-based category, the data collected from all respondents contained components of land-based learning. The valuable information obtained from the interviews was important to incorporate into this report. As stated in the opening paragraph, good pedagogy is good for all learners and place-based or land-based learning is good for all students.

Recommendations

When incorporating land-based learning into one's classroom, it is imperative to incorporate local Elders and, or Knowledge Keepers into the planning and implementation stage. To understand true land-based learning, the experiences need to be filtered through an Indigenous Worldview; incorporating Elders or Knowledge Keepers helps draw connections to the land and follow local protocol.

Budgeting is important to consider when planning these activities. Both Frank and Sally had stated the cost of the program while being interviewed. Frank referenced it as one of the biggest costs of the school for the year. In developing a budget for land-based learning, remember to include the protocol. The protocol can change from Nation to Nation and between regional Indigenous groups. Be sure to check with local Elders to understand what the protocol is for the exchange of knowledge Elders will share. For many, a gift of tobacco is a common protocol and a monetary honorarium. Costs could include but are not limited to; transportation, honorarium, protocol gifts, food, supplies, and certification for staff.

Understand why you want to incorporate land-based learning into your practice. During this research project, many benefits have been highlighted. These are reasons to incorporate land-based learning into your practice. Many other benefits well documented in the academic literature would enhance one's position for engaging in land-based pedagogy. Knowing these benefits would be of value if one were to encounter a reluctant colleague or administrator that may struggle to see the cost to value benefits of such learning experiences.

Potential Next Steps

An area lacking in the literature is assessing and reporting land or place-based learning. Traditionally, within our current education system, place or land-based learning experiences

demand some sort of assessment. However, land-based learning experiences do not lend well to traditional reporting methods. It is difficult to take an experience such as sitting around a campfire and unpacking the learning of safely navigating a capsized canoe. Then present that learning in a quantitative or qualitative form to report to stakeholders.

One could argue that you actually should not report on land-based learning experiences. Through an Indigenous worldview lens, the learning would occur when people are present and involved in the activity; the learning is a personal journey. We would trust that learning occurred, and there would be no need to quantify or report that journey. Elder Dennis Whitford stated, "land-based learning, ceremony, and cultural experiences are opportunities to learn on a personal level; the experience itself is learning" (personal communication, May 28, 2021).

When I specifically asked about assessment practices, the respondent group had incorporated assessment pieces into their student's learning experiences through activities such as talking circles, reflective essays, oral presentations while hiking a trail, presenting after every kilometre, and visual displays. The question remains: are our current requirements of reporting to stakeholders driving this practice? One interview stated that these activities are best as experiences and not to assess them. An argument could be made that there is a need for reform within our current education system if we are to start to expand our pedagogical practices, we need to differentiate our learning environments and assessments. Perhaps we need to abandon the concept of reporting on everything and trust, as elder Whitford expressed, "that learning is happening if someone is allowed to be involved in the experience" (personal communication, May 28, 2021).

An important question that needs to be asked is, how do we continue to develop enriching learning experiences based on place and land-based learning opportunities and move away from

traditional assessing and reporting practices? Exploring the assessments of or the need to assess

these types of learning experiences are valuable next steps for further research topics. They

would add great value to an evolving educational system.

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Appendix A

Schedule of interview questions asked to the respondent group.

<u>***Questions***</u>

1. *Tell me about a land-based learning activity that you conducted with the students that you felt was a success and one that was, in your opinion, unsuccessful?*

2. *Compared with other pedagogical methods, how would describe your student's engagement level, understanding, and expression of learning through land-based learning compared to others?*

3. *Tell me about a time when you ever experienced a student who has never engaged in other methods of learning but was fully engaged and excited about land-based learning or vice versa?*

4. *What do you feel are some of the rewards of land-based learning? What are some of the challenges?*

5. *If you were to close your eyes could you describe your observations of your student's learning experience? What did they say, what did you observe of how they approached this style of learning, what was the general feeling amongst the group, and were there sounds, smells, and images that stick in your mind?*

6. *How did you assess, and report students' experiences and the relevance of that experience to their learning? How do you feel about assessing and reporting on land-based learning?*

7. *How did you or would you make this a common incorporation of your teaching practice?*

Appendix B

Letter of introduction to potential respondent group members, outlining the nature and intent of the research interviews.

Jonathan Pittman

Educational Policy Studies Dept
7-133E Education Centre - North
8730 - 112 St NW
Edmonton, AB T6G 2R3
pittman@ualberta.ca

February 5th, 2022

Recipient Name
Recipient City, Province Postal Code

Dear <Recipient Name>,

I am a graduate student in the Educational Policies Studies 509 courses. This is a graduate course within the Education department at the University of Alberta. The purpose of this letter is to you to take part in a research assignment for my EDPS 509 Research Design and Data Analysis course. My assignment is intended to determine how educators have successfully engaged students learning and understanding through land-based learning and to learn of any barriers or pitfalls of your experiences. Your participation would involve a series of 7 questions asked through a personal interview via Google meet (or another acceptable platform) about land-based learning and your experiences as an educator with such pedagogical practice. Your requirements should you choose to participate, the interview process will last approximately an hour, once the interview has been transcribed, I will send it to you to assure my credibility in properly capturing your responses, and finally if you desire, I can share a copy of my final work. Your participation is voluntary; there will be no consequence to you should you decline to participate or decide to withdraw from participating.

To gather data for my research assignment, I will be conducting personal interview via Google meet (or another acceptable platform). The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed. Please note:

Educational Policy Studies

7-104 Education North • University of Alberta • Edmonton • Canada • T6G 2G5
Telephone: (780) 492-7625 • Fax: (780) 492-2024

Appendix B (continued)

- You may choose not to answer any question.
- You may opt out of this research assignment once responses have been submitted. To do so, please submit your request by email by March 16th, 2022 and I will destroy all data.
- I will send you a transcription of the interview as well as a summary of the main points I understood you to make by email; you will have the opportunity to verify the accuracy of the transcription and my interpretation of it.

Should any concerns, complaints, or questions arise from your participation, you may contact me or my instructor, Dr. Jose da Costa (jdacosta@ualberta.ca).

All data will be handled in compliance with the University of Alberta Standards for the Protection of Human Research Participants:

- Participant names will not be revealed. To protect confidentiality, pseudonyms or numerical coding will be used in all written representations of the data.
- Hard copy data will be locked in secure files and will be destroyed on my completion of my graduate program.
- Digital data will be stored on my computer under a secure password-protected system and will be destroyed on my completion of my graduate program.
- Data will be used to complete my EDPS 509 course, my graduate program, and may be used in future presentations and publications in educational contexts.

Thank you for considering this invitation to participate in my research. If you wish to participate, please sign the attached consent form and return it to pittman@ualberta.ca or pittmanj@prsd.ab.ca by February 28th, 2022 . I have included two copies of the consent form: one is to be signed by you and the other is for your own records.

The plan for this research has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines and approved by Research Ethics Board 1 at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, you can contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615.

<div align="center">

University of Alberta Ethics ID# Pro00096710

Educational Policy Studies

</div>

Should you wish a copy of my research findings, I would be pleased to provide one on your request.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Pittman
Graduate student in the Master of Educational Leadership and Administration
Faculty of Education, University of Alberta
780-625-5254 or 780-624-4221
pittman@ualberta.ca or pittmanj@prsd.ab.ca

Appendix C

Participant consent form.

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

EDPS 509 Research Assignment: Jonathan Pittman M. Ed student researcher.

Researcher: Jonathan Pittman

Date Range of Research: January 8th to April 20th, 2022.

I, _____ (name of participant), hereby consent to participate in the research, Jonathan Pittman M. Ed student is conducting.

I understand that my participation includes:

- The intention is to interview you with a series of 7 questions about land-based learning and your experiences as an educator with such pedagogical practice. Here are your requirements should you choose to participate. The interview process will last approximately an hour, once the interview has been transcribed I will send it to you to assure my credibility in properly capturing your responses, and finally if you desire I can share a copy of my final work.
- The interview will be recorded and conducted over Google meet (or another suitable video conference platform that is most comfortable for the participants i.e Zoom, or Teams)

As per the Letter of Information, I understand that:

- My participation in this research is voluntary.
- I may withdraw from the research without penalty until March 31, 2022.
- All information gathered will be treated confidentially.
- No identifying information will appear on written representations of the data: pseudonyms or numerical coding will be used to convey the data.
- The data will be used for the purposes of completion of the Master of Education in Educational Studies (MES) program and may be used in future presentations and publications in the educational context.
- The plan for this research has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines and approved by Research Ethics Board 1 at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, I can contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615.

University of Alberta Ethics ID# Pro00096710

Educational Policy Studies

7-104 Education North • University of Alberta • Edmonton • Canada • T6G 2G5
Telephone: (780) 492-7625 • Fax: (780) 492-2024

_____   _____
                Signature of Participant   Date

Appendix D

Peace River School Division consent form to conduct interviews

Peace River School Division
Learning Together - Success for All

Assistant Superintendent - Teaching & Learning   Jeff Thompson (780) 624-3650

RESEARCH REQUEST CHECKLIST
(To be completed by the researcher and submitted along with other relevant documents)

Name of Researcher: *Jon Pittman*

Organization /Affiliation: *PRSD – UofA Master Cohort*

Title of Research:

Date Submitted: *Feb 1/2022*   Proposed Start Date: *Feb 5/2022*

1. Is the proposed study related to the PRSD's mandate and primary lines of business?   Yes ☑   No ☐

2. Is the proposed study associated with a post-secondary educational institution?   Yes ☑   No ☐

3. Has a list of the target schools been provided?   Yes ☐   No ☐

4. Have you indicated how the proposed study will be conducted in a manner that does not negatively impact on instructional time?   Yes ☐   No ☐

5. Has ethical approval been granted for this proposed study?   Yes ☑   No ☐

    a. If so, have you included a copy of the approval letter in this application package?   Yes ☑   No ☐

6. Have you included a copy of the letter you will use to inform potential participants of the nature and extent of the research project?   Yes ☑   No ☐

7. Does the proposed study involve students under the age of 16?   Yes ☐   No ☑

    a. If so, have you included a copy of the parental consent letter that you will be sending to parents?   Yes ☐   No ☐

8. Will the proposed study use:
    a. Quantitative methodology?   Yes ☐   No ☐
    b. Qualitative methodology?   Yes ☑   No ☐
    c. Mixed methods?   Yes ☐   No ☐

9. Have you provided a list of the methodological instruments to be used in the study (e.g., tests, surveys, interview questions, etc.)?   Yes ☑   No ☐

10. Will the results of the proposed study be made available to the division and any of the participants/schools that request same?   Yes ☑   No ☐

Peace River School Division   4702-51 Street Box 380 Grimshaw, AB   T0H 1W0   T 780-624-3650   F 780-332-1050   www.prsd.ab.ca