TEACHING TOWARDS CONNECTION AND LOVE FOR PLACE THROUGH A KINSHIP/INDIGENOUS WORLDVIEW: A CRITICAL PEDAGOGY OF PLACE

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of

Antioch University

In partial fulfillment for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

by

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February 2025

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DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to observe the lived experiences of children while learning about place through a Kinship/Indigenous worldview and the impact of the experience on their love and care for place. The study unfolds from a theoretical framework at the nexus of critical theory, place-based education, and a Kinship/Indigenous worldview. The overarching question is, "Can teaching through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview grow children towards connection and love for place?" Elementary students and their teacher explored one square block of the school community, illuminating a different aspect of our place daily through Kinship/Indigenous worldview Precepts (Wahinkpe Topa & Narvaez, 2022). Students constructed their knowledge of place from unseen organisms to the power systems present and developed an understanding of their impact on place. Data gathered included Natureculture (Haraway, 2003) journal notes, sketches, reflections, photovoice, and semi-structured interviews. *Natureculture* is a synthesis of nature and culture that recognizes their inseparability in ecological relationships that are both biophysically and socially formed (Fuentes, 2010; Haraway, 2003). Findings reveal that learning to see all elements of place/community through a Kinship/Indigenous worldview supports children in understanding interconnectedness, meaning children understand their connection to nature as a biological and cultural relatedness nurtured through connecting with all beings. Data was isolated, analyzed, and interpreted to illuminate

themes giving voice to the lived experience of children learning about a place through an original kindship/Indigenous worldview and their shift to care for them. This dissertation is available in open access at AURA (https://aura.antioch.edu) and OhioLINK ETD Center (https://etd.ohiolink.edu).

Keywords: critical pedagogy, place-based education, Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview, Natureculture, phenomenology, power and knowledge

Acknowledgements

I have heartfelt gratitude for everyone who made this study possible.

To the children who participated in this study, your contributions as learners and teachers shaped this journey in ways you may not realize; never underestimate your power and influence. To my colleagues who share the vision that schools can be places where children genuinely thrive, your daily commitment to making this a reality is commendable.

For my committee: To Richard, your mentorship over time has been transformative. You understand what I want to do with this work and encouraged me to create connections with scholarship to enrich my study. Your insightful questions and adherence to truth and authenticity prompted a deeper analysis of the research questions and supported me in presenting children's learning experience "as it truly is." To Four Arrows, meeting you and exploring an Original Kinship/Indigenous worldview helped guide my ideas. Your thought-provoking questions and suggestions and mentorship with the precepts helped steer my research in a profound way. Paul, your openness to support an uncharted course in place-based education and your expertise, questioning, and suggestions were instrumental in creating a rich and multi-dimensional body of work.

To my parents, who fostered my sense of place by providing the possibility for multiple experiences at home and beyond.

To Gary and Marcelle, your love, presence, and space-giving throughout this journey have been invaluable.

Lastly, I extend my heartfelt thanks to all the human and non-human educators who have shaped my life! Your influence is truly immeasurable.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

> We are born and have our being in a place of memory. We chart our lives by everything we remember from the mundane moment to the majestic.
>
> —bell hooks, *Belonging: A Culture of Place*

An "Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview" (Wahinkpe Topa & Narvaez, 2022, p. 2) (Appendix E) is a way of relating to the world based on Koltko-Rivera's (2004) Indigenous worldview of cultures. Whereas Koltko-Rivera describes Indigenous worldview as cultures that see "subjectivity inherent in the natural world itself," Original/Kinship/Indigenous worldview transcends this description to add that Indigenous peoples regard nature as an interconnectedness with all beings and integrates body, mind, and spirit. Out of the research into this worldview, despite many unique place-based differences across Indigenous cultures, common precepts that speak to "our" original worldview are identified.

The research for this dissertation focused on how children experience place-based learning through a Kinship/Indigenous worldview predicated upon communion with all elements, including the spirit(s) of place (Deloria et al., 2001). "Place" in this research is synonymous with and inclusive of the interconnected and complex whole ecology of human and non-human animals, the rock, soil, plants, air, water, and the land. The study occurred in the place of one square block around the school in which I teach. In addition to my place of practice, the K-8 school for the research is a publicly funded charter homeschool hybrid where children attend school for two days and are homeschooled for three days. Teachers design and implement project-based learning to support children in developing concepts through hands on experiential learning. Using place as the "text," children read and explored the community block focusing on a different aspect of place each day beginning with the air, soil, plants, insects,

trees, birds, and human and non-human animals and their interactions. I have been working with children in K-12 settings for well over two decades and have developed my own critique of mainstream education, the knowledge often put into children, and the western worldview emerging from an education that sustains the anthropocentric belief that our planet is here to be managed for our benefit. I believe teachers have a responsibility to help change a dominant worldview that sustains a culture of consumerism driven by learned desire for material goods produced from non-renewable resources. Although this way of thinking and being in the world has brought us to the climate crisis (Amrilah, 2024), I do not believe things have to remain as they are. Teachers can use their power to grow children who value place and planet enough to care and advocate fiercely for them as adults. Valuing place and planet creates a consciousness about our consumer actions and how our current ways of living impact Earth.

Exploring the community of our school with children for different projects, I have observed they tend to notice the obvious aspects such as houses, cars, grass, and fences. As a scholar-practitioner I understand that education influences how children grow their worldview to "see" the obvious in a community. What would it be like for children to experience different aspects of place illuminated? What are the possibilities to broaden or transform their worldview to include one that "sees the unseen" wherever they go? Learning about the precepts that underpin an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview can support anyone in seeing their place past face-value.

Children especially have an innate curiosity about place and connect with nature in ways that are taught out of most of them as they get older through less time wandering and discovering outside (Louv, 2005). Place-based learning through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview can show us a way of being bringing us into knew or renewed relations with all

beings of place. Rather than being in a place that one is estranged from and dwelling within it abjectly as a simple location and not a living, evolving dynamic community of co-constitutive relations, we can learn with this worldview to acknowledge and connect with all who present themselves to us and the realization that caring for them is caring for ourselves. Nature has a culture that includes all species and knowing that we are a part of the culture of nature (Haraway, 2003) can lead us to care for our natural relations (Chawla, 2007).

This place-based work can inspire teachers to intentionally take learning outside of the four walls and designed boundaries of many schools to support children to develop their knowledge of place and discover different elements beyond the obvious (Louv, 2008). This work is not an easy fix and will take courage and *intentionality.* Children, teachers, parents, administrators, and other stakeholders in the community have both.

Statement of The Problem

The problem is that opportunities for children to learn through our Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precepts are rare, resulting in a worldview that continues our march to extinction (Wahinkpe Topa, personal communication, January 7, 2023) via a consumerist culture that values money and objects over time with community (Higgs, 2014). Children as future adults will need to navigate their ever-changing world and the problems that continue to arise with the climate crisis. An Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview can support children to develop ways of being in reciprocity with the earth and move them to use their voice to build awareness now, so that as adults they can advocate fiercely for systemic changes at a higher level. In an interview with Rochelle Starr (2014), noted Indigenous Scholar Dr. Marie Battiste remarked:

> A Eurocentric framework that underpins the educational system continues to have damaging effects for everyone, impacting teachers, administrators, and students, non-Indigenous and Indigenous alike. Indigenizing education is for all students at all grade-levels. We are now all facing the same terrors to some significant degree. The more non-Indigenous people can learn about Indigeneity, the more likely they can become allies for Indigenous sovereignty. More importantly, the greater the chance for a sustainable world.

From my experience teaching California history in elementary settings for more than two decades, I have learned that most children do not realize Indigenous peoples exist outside of the media when asked about what they already know about Indigenous peoples and history. The viewpoint may be influenced by the media resources utilized in traditional schooling and homeschooling and the representations of Native Americans in movies and media. Depictions of Native Americans in traditional regalia are often unquestioned and accepted as a universal representation of all Indigenous peoples (Sheyahshe, 2014). Standardized curriculum textbooks propagate myths that include the delusion that America's history began in 1492, that there is only one Native American culture, that American Indian cultures are becoming extinct, and that they are not part of contemporary society (Ganje, 2003; Kilpatrick, 1999).

Contextually, Indigenous communities who have historically and continuously occupied the place of or adjacent to our school are not included in the California standardized curriculum, meaning the Tongva people are not included in California standards curricular history and Social Studies textbooks, and must intentionally and explicitly be illuminated through media, text resources, outreach to the Tongva People, or visits to local culture centers. Not knowing Indigenous peoples exist outside of media can render them non-existent, "othering" them and

their ways of knowing (or worldview) which are beneficial to the heart, mind, and bodies of all beings in the learning community.

"Othering" place stems from reified learning, meaning learning that reproduces patterns of accepted knowledge about what capitalists believe they can take from the land and commodify without question or responsibility with the intent to turn land and its beings into real estate to be developed, sold, or its resources extracted. In her Edward Said Lecture, author, social activist, and political analyst, Naomi Klein (2016) references Palestinian American academic, literary critic, and political activist Edward Said for who her lecture was named:

> as a giant in the study of 'othering'—what is described as *Orientalism* as 'disregarding, essentializing, denuding the humanity of another culture, people or geographical region.' And once the other has been firmly established, the ground is softened for any transgression: violent, expulsion, land theft, occupation, invasion. Because the whole point of othering is that the other doesn't have the same rights, the same humanity, as those making the distinction.

Klein (2016) then states:

> "Othering" is intimately linked to the production of the current climate crisis (because) othering is needed for the creation of sacrifice zones that are necessary for fossil fuel exploitation—the main contributor to global greenhouse gas emissions—which in turn endangers the lives of those less responsible for climate chaos. Moreover, othering serves for refusing to protect climate refugees, those fleeing from areas hit by the impacts of fossil fuel-generated climate change. In this way, according to Klein, othering permits letting off the hook the neoliberal and colonial structures of domination that are largely responsible for our present predicament.

Throughout history, humans have formed culture, identity, and ideas about "the land" or nature through reciprocal relationships developing over time. They regularly acknowledge the feeling of the experience with natural beings they encounter in place with the community and sometimes alone (Gruenewald & Smith, 2008). Indigenous peoples longstanding kinship with the land sustains balance in the community (Mazzocchi, 2020) in its totality and continues to carry forward their land-based ways of knowing and being. Indigenous communities throughout the world are experiencing a resurgence of their unique cultural ways of relating to people and the environment (United Nations, 2022). Those of us who have been alienated from kinship with nature and who lack Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) of our places (Kimmerer, 2013b) have much to learn about how we can change ourselves to heal our communities locally and globally.

Most children now experience their "place" through the inhabitation of a significant amount of time in school environments, where they are "schooled" to participate and comply in a materialistic society (Seawright, 2014). Learning for such children occurs through the systematic delivery and reification of mandated, traditional, fragmented, standards-based curriculum which shapes an anthropocentric worldview, othering most non-human animals and the ecology in their totality (Kahn, 2010; McLaren, 1994).

Although the outcomes of a fragmented curriculum are children who may be book literate (Wahinkpe Topa & Narvaez, 2022), the ideals in these curricula intentionally promote and support settler colonialism, along with other associated systems of oppression and the replacement of Indigenous peoples with settlers (Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013). Influenced by these changes over time, learning in schools develops a culture where "children are less ecologically attached and more attached to possessions" (Narvaez, 2021, p. 1), resulting in a culture of place centered around consumerism. Further, textbooks are not contextual but

designed and filled with content about places other than the student's own thereby discounting the value of children's knowledge of their places (Smith, 2002). Children should spend more time in school exploring how the ecology, history, and diverse cultures of place are interconnected. Learning in this way could lead to a deeper understanding of their place, a critical recognition of their own and others' impacts therein, as well as to a greater encompassing sense of wonder and resilient possibility about the land communities they learn within. Understanding and relating to place locally in this way could then be transferred and evolved into more complex understandings about planetary inhabitation and well-being, the impact of a globalized society, and the possibility of recognizing positive forms of planetary (even cosmic) identity.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

Although this dissertation research is not about the climate crisis per se, the research is about connecting student conscience to a deeper awareness of place through learning experiences so that place matters to them. The same systems that harm place locally, harm places globally and are related to systems that are causing the climate crisis. To move into a deeper learning of place, teachers must Indigenize education (Tuck & McKenzie, 2014). According to scholar, writer, and activist for Native American Rights, Don Trent Jacobs (Arrows, 2019), Indigenizing education methodologically requires: first, the teaching of the worldview precepts that most Indigenous communities have held; and second, the induction into the Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) that has been locally experienced and sustained by a given Indigenous community in kinship relationship with their homeland. The first can be easier to learn for non-Indian teachers but place-based knowledge can usually only

come from the local wisdom handed down to by the original inhabitants of the land, if they remain in place.

For this study, I have aligned 30 Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precepts (Appendix E) which Wahinkpe Topa and Darcia Narvaez (2022) have collected, with my school's ways of being tenets of Social-Emotional Learning (Faber & Mazlish, 2008); Non-violent communication (Rosenberg, 2002), Habits of Heart and Mind adapted from the Habits of Mind (Costa & Kallick, 2008); Systems Thinking (Sweeney & Meadows, 2010), and No-Punishment/No Rewards (Kohn, 1993). Together these tenets are a throughline for our learning community. Having researched and learned through the alignment process, our school is an example that children can learn to embody many of the precepts. Following the lead of Four Arrows and Darcia Narvaez (2022), I make the argument that society needs an alternative to the dominant worldview that has been influencing school knowledge toward a consumerist capitalist culture resulting in the current climate crisis. A Kinship/Indigenous worldview can help children to understand Earth on a deeper level and care for place.

To support students with a deeper understanding of the place of our school in Southern California, I value and began a partnership with local wisdom handed down through the lineage of the Gabrielino-Tongva Tribespeople who call the land of the school their traditional homeland. A tribal elder participated in sharing their knowledge and ways of being before, during, and after the research. Over several months, Indigenous Elder Michael Whitehorse Aviles illuminated an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview through his lived experience holding to the possibility for all children to learn and live a worldview into existence, one that can change how they relate to their place locally and care more for the whole community. Seeing, acknowledging, and valuing Indigenous peoples and their worldviews, can teach those

of us who do not identify as Indigenous or who hold Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) about our places ways of being interconnected to the universe in ways that we can apply to live better with one another (Gruenewald, 2003).

Realizing how children experience their place can help educators design engaging and relational learning experiences, which will affect children to think deeply and "richly" (Cajete, 2000) about place. That "all elements, including rocks, water, mountains, and thunder, are animated with individual personalities" (Wahinkpe Topa & Narvaez, 2022) is a Kinship/Indigenous worldview that challenges the modern four-leveled view of animism proposed by the still highly influential developmental psychologist, Jean Piaget (Klingensmith, 1953). In his work, Piaget associated children's animism with their "primitive thought" (which likely displays Piaget's tacit racism), and he believed that children remain animists until they reach a more advanced and rational stage of cognitive development (Merewether, 2023). However, the perdurance of cultures informed by animist relationships with the world demonstrates both the non-universality of Piaget's developmental stages as well as a possible reason to reject them, as the Frankfurt School first postulated in its association of the rise of a culture of Reason with the catastrophic domination of nature (Horkheimer et al., 2002). Indeed, Merewether (2023) contends children's "enchanted animism" can be a "matter of care" (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017) as it can create conditions for curiosity, wonder and a sense of worldly embeddedness that ignites possibilities for more responsive and attentive ways of living with an increasingly damaged Earth" (Merewether, 2017 p. 21). Teaching and learning through the Kinship/Indigenous worldview precept of nonanthropocentrism (see Kinship/Indigenous worldview precept table in Appendix E) aligns with enchanted animism in that it transcends fragmented learning practices of Western

traditional ways of learning. Instead, an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview sees and acknowledges learning as transdisciplinary and education as a holistic and unfolding complex web of relationships that fosters connection with other than human lives, which are all around us, as opposed to analyzing subjects into separate disciplines, which can lead to disconnected knowledge and understanding and a mechanistic worldview.

In this way, applying a critical pedagogy of place offers teachers and students the opportunity to explore their place on a deeper level by "peeling back the asphalt" to critically examine the diverse, multi-layered ecology of place through Indigenous epistemologies, change any racialized perceptions of them (Scully, 2012, p. 1), and to gain comparative reflection on assumptions that were held as unquestionably true and without viable alternatives. Coming to such understanding of and meaningful relationship to place then opens educationally towards more sustainable forms of social and ecological reinhabitation as a possibility.

The intent of this qualitative hermeneutic phenomenological study aims to know the essence of children's experience (Van Manen, 2016) when learning about place through an Original Kinship/Indigenous worldview (Wahinkpe Topa & Narvaez, 2022). Western education has led to ways of knowing which function to support consumerist lifestyles that have pulled us out of a healthy relationship with the ecology of the natural world. Learning to live through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview can move us into living in reciprocity with all beings around us through the practice of gratitude (Kimmerer, 2014). I believe that a generation of children who learn, live, and embody an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview in their place/community will use their agency as they grow, turning toward a greater valuation

of love for and a need to heal their places and planet as adults. This study is guided by the following questions:

Overarching Research Question

My central question is "How can teaching through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview grow children towards connection and love for place?" This question represents the idea that to decolonize is to return to the pre-colonial worldview. Thus, critical pedagogy is a throughline in the research, meaning I am using my power to illuminate an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview as a decolonial alternative to mainstream curricular outcomes and forms of pedagogy by which to realize them, as such I am researching through the questions:

- Sub-Question One: What is a critical pedagogy of place?
- Sub-Question Two: How can children engage in the re-articulation of knowledge/power through the participatory activity of critical pedagogy of place?
- Sub-Question Three: What is the child's lived experience when learning about Place through an original Kinship /Indigenous worldview?
- Sub-Question Four: How does pedagogy of place through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview influence a deeper learning of place?

Although related research has been conducted that demonstrates how place-based education can be Indigenized (Bocko et al., 2023; Kinch et al., 2022; Streelasky, 2020; Tailby et al., 2020), phenomenological research illuminating upper elementary children's lived experience of place through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview has not been undertaken.

Significance of the Study

Generations of enduring colonialism and the reification of settler culture through hegemonic forms of curriculum and pedagogy have resulted in an anthropocentric worldview in North America and the ongoing and ever-increasing threat to life and current polycrisis internationally (Henig & Knight, 2023). There is a non-negotiable need for a way of knowingly experiencing the world that presents an antidote to the current dominant thinking which supports capitalist consumerism and moves us towards building solidarity for Indigenous Peoples globally (Bowers, 2001). Teachers can support this movement by teaching through the Kinship/Indigenous worldview precepts which can in turn lead to a return to more right relations with local tribal elders and partners to restore wisdom stories of long-standing relationships as counter stories (Machado, 2023). In doing so, these relationships can be taken up for new forms of place-based identity that centers the forms of care and agency necessary to allow for the sustainable well-being of that which has been made the object of genocidal, ecocidal, zoöcidal, or epistemecidal (McLaren, 2014) activity which is in turn the hallmark of settler culture, its militarized mass consumerist global impulses, and its educational arm as hegemonic forms of curriculum and pedagogy (Kahn, 2010).

The significance of this scholarship extends well beyond pedagogy that gives teachers, administrators, teacher educators, and anyone who learns with children an in-depth way of teaching/learning and knowing what children understand about their school or home place/community. This research contributes to the history of place-based education studies by providing a curriculum and an example for teachers to Indigenize education. As a result, it responds to an intervention made therein by Indigenous scholars about the ability of critical place-based education to decolonize relationships through learning about and supporting children to construct knowledge about Indigenous Peoples' history and illuminate the impacts

of settler culture (Greenwood, 2019) in the place where they live and attend school. Here the research attempts to work restoratively at the borders of that conflict and to explore further what it would be to engage in an Indigenized place-based education by teaching through Kinship/Indigenous worldview precepts and learning about the unique understanding of a particular place (Four Arrows, 2019).

Assumptions about what teaching and learning looks, sounds, and feels like are thought to support the best interests of teachers and students when in fact the assumptions can be harmful to all members of the learning community if they reproduce and help to maintain systems of oppression. In challenging the assumptions, the Kinship/Indigenous worldview precepts offer teachers the opportunity to critically reflect and uncover our hegemonic assumptions of power and knowledge in that we are able to recognize the dominant worldview and the manner in which it informs our (often) tacit consent and acceptance of it across all manner of pedagogical and curricular norms (Brookfield, 2017). In that reflective questioning, the power to consciously act and shift away from hegemonic forms of education and social life towards forms of practice in line with the Kinship/Indigenous worldview precepts can illuminate new knowledge and ways of being with one another and Earth.

By doing so, teachers provide opportunities for children to develop an appreciation for the natural world enough so that they will care for it and act accordingly (Chawla, 2007, 2009; Kimmerer, 2013a). The Kinship/Indigenous worldview precepts of Nonhierarchical Communities, Nonanthropocentrism, and Learning as Holistic and Place-Based are a few examples of how teachers can implement the precepts. A more detailed document showing how the Twenty-Eight Kinship/Indigenous worldview precepts can align with Public School Ways of Being is included in Appendix E. I close this section and emphasize the significance

of this work with four examples of selected Indigenous worldview precepts and how teachers might learn to understand them. They relate to: (1) nonhierarchy; (2) non-anthropocentrism; (3) holistic learning and (4) other-than-human sentience.

Nonhierarchical Communities

The intention is to present a way of seeing the natural world that transcends the Western dominant view which "others" (Gruenewald, 2003) the natural world resulting in the harm and exploitation of land, people, and non-human beings through time (Klein, 2016). The study adds weight to an increasing argument for outdoor learning and a more humanizing way of learning (Darder, 2015) by making transparent learners' perspectives about how it feels to learn outdoors in place through a Kinship/Indigenous worldview that critiques societal norms of power (Deringer, 2017), as power dynamics can impede the learning experience. A nonhierarchical community in the context of our school means the power dynamics between children and adults are in alignment with the precept in that non-coerciveness is a throughline in our ways of being with one another including curriculum design and assessment. We are always working to support children and adults to be their authentic selves at their highest potential in our time with us.

Nonanthropocentrism

Regarding place-based learning outside of the school grounds, there is a kind of engagement where children feel "free," yet the learning is not chaotic but intentional. The engagement stems from seeing all that is around us through a Kinship/Indigenous worldview precept of animism; illuminating who we miss because we see elements that would otherwise not be considered alive, as animated and having life. Professor of psychology and moral development Narvaez (2022) states that "perceiving the world to be full of sentient beings was labeled by Enlightenment Western scholars as "animism" and treated as primitive or childish"

(p. 16). Additionally, the first American Indian novelist, Hum-ishu-ma (Mourning Dove), identifying as an Okanagan, Sinixt, and Colville, emphasizes in her autobiography how children shape their identity by finding spiritual powers in the natural landscape, which represents a deep faith in the living world, to guide human lives. Publishing under her Christian name, Christine Quintasket, she endured discrimination growing up in a Catholic Mission and made it her life goal to shatter the stereotypes of the American Indian (Wahinkpe Topa & Narvaez, 2022).

The nonanthropocentric precept offers teaching challenges as a typical science question for elementary and middle school students is: What makes something alive? However, nurturing an everlasting biocentric and animist view of the world in young children before their ideas are tainted later in school is possible. An in-depth explanation of nonanthropocentrism and how it can manifest in teaching and learning is presented in Appendix E.

Learning As Experiential, Collaborative, Holistic, and Placed-Based

A primary science process skill children learn in school is observation. Teaching through the Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precepts of Learning as holistic and interconnected shifts the lens through which children observe from knowing that only plants, human, and non-human animals are alive towards an epistemology that is appreciatively sensitive also to the unseen world of microorganisms and fungi that are very much part of the ecology in which they learn. Centering learning in forms of place-based observation has many benefits and affords opportunities to ask questions that promote dialogue around what and how children observe, who is present and who is not, and why? Critical discourse can be a springboard for developing essential thinking skills that influence children's subjectivity by challenging their observation, particularly as regards who and what they notice and as to who

and what remains left unattended in their experience of a place. For example, soil can be seen as “dirt” and not-supporting life.

Alternatively, we can view dirt through a microscope to see the unseen microbial life within, such that mere dirt is transformed (Williams, 2012), allowing students to think differently about soil as a substance that is teeming with life, and which is foundational for the food system supporting our and other beings’ existence. Further, understanding the role of microorganisms in the whole ecology including their role in decomposing dead organism bodies, plants, and animal wastes (Trautmann & Olynciw, 1996) can help children understand their importance and need for care. Teachers need models for transformative teaching grounded in social learning experiences in nature. The interconnectedness of physical, mental, cognitive, and social health and happiness benefits of connecting with nature is a strong motivation for children to take care of the environment and implement changes in the future as adults (van den Bosch & Bird, 2018; Chawla, 1992).

All Earth Entities are Sentient

Depending on the child’s age, developing a view that all entities are sentient can be the most difficult of the precepts to help develop in children. I say this because young children have an innate desire to care for plants and animals as displayed in their animation of rocks and trees in their play. However, as they get older, depending on their experience, they lose their sense of care and wonder, specifically for the animals they (might) consume.

To enlighten children’s thinking about all organisms as sentient, we can begin with the synthesis of the precept of nonanthropocentrism and create space for children to conceptualize the interconnectedness of all entities and the need to recognize and acknowledge all that they provide. Next, we can express our gratitude to them for all we take from them usually without

asking. Rather than being a silent or inward prayer unto ourselves, such expressed gratitude flows outward from within and is made transparent. In this way, it gives importance to entities for which we are grateful. Additionally, expressing gratitude for the nourishment from earth's abundant generosity, including the animals people consume, must be intentional if children are to learn to care for all sentient beings. Engaging in conversations about animals with children reveals that after our domesticated pets, children often feel that we should attend to and save wild animals. Although I agree and understand that we need to change the systems that continue to endanger animals (including ourselves) in the first place, there is a disconnection between the thinking about the interconnectedness of all human and non-human animals and the systems acting upon them that do not acknowledge their sentience and the knowledge they carry that could help us change our trajectory towards extinction.

I begin by focusing on the importance of children's empathizing with the animals they consume. When eating lunch, which we do together, we pause and thank the plants and animals that nourish us. The reason is that the connection between the animal products children eat in school lunches and an animal that was once alive is sometimes nonexistent. Rather than standard dissection, digital dissection can be much more effective at holding students' engagement. Students can see the interconnection of the different systems rather than focusing on the formaldehyde smell or tearing and moving around compacted organs. They can all participate rather than half the class miss because they feel sick from the animal and formaldehyde experience. Further, if they are conversing about why one dissection format is better, they are thinking about something they might not have before which adds to an awareness of their role in larger systems.

Helping children to notice and appreciate life in all aspects of gardening is another opportunity to show children our regard for fungi, plants, and animals. We do this by acknowledging and speaking to the plants crowding the garden. Acknowledgment unfolds in discussions about why we are removing them rather than just pulling them out. Although a more dedicated group cares for the animals independently and on their own time, everyone has the opportunity through a responsibilities rotation. The younger the child, the gentler and more intentional they can be when supported, fostering a sense of responsibility and empowerment in their role in caring for the environment.

Students collaborate on authentic problems they notice in the classroom, school, or the larger community outside the school. Rather than the teachers positioning themselves as the knowers, students have opportunities to explore local problems that need attention and collaborate to generate possibilities for improving the situations of those impacted. Moving from didactic learning to trusting students as meaning-makers requires teachers to question their praxis. They can ask themselves what students are learning, why it is important, who says it is important, and why they are learning it that way. From this they can teach specific learning goals through authentic experience that matters to the students. A level of trust in the students to self-organize is also essential, so teachers must be willing to release their control of how learning unfolds and step in when they observe students need support. Group norms, member roles, and opportunities to reflect on how collaboration is working are also important. In this way, students are articulating what is working, where they need support and how they are thinking about the next steps.

Personal Assumptions

I am an Indigenous-European female, a mother, a daughter, a wife, teacher, and activist with deep love for people and all entities of Earth. My careers spanning environmental geology, the food and beverage industry, and 3rd through 16th levels teaching have helped me to establish a connection between my varied life experiences. My background influences my understanding of the roles power and knowledge (Foucault, 1980) play in society, their influences on what and how children learn in schools, and schools' impact on people and who they might become through the reification of systems of oppression in pedagogical, organizational, and systems spheres (Levi, 2020), locally and globally.

Children spend much of their young lives in school resulting in an accepted common knowledge, that is (in reality) "a conceptual landmine wired with assumptions and inherited meaning" (Kincheloe, 2012, p. 152). I interpret this to mean that children become what we teach (Weil, 2016) and their worldview is shaped much by their time in school and the knowledge and social norms learned there. Suppose we want children to have the agency to address the root causes of the problems they are and will continue to live in, the climate crisis. In that case, their foresight about the future and the possibilities to begin shifting now must stem from a worldview that is very different from the one they are inheriting.

I have observed over time that children are willing to engage authentically when they have agency and freedom to move around, speak their thoughts and ideas, learn with one another, and experience joy. It is for this reason that the place-based pedagogy research I designed is through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview, underpinned by the nexus in the classroom of Critical Theory and Foucault's work on power and knowledge. Foucault's theory of power and knowledge illuminates the often unattended Western influences on the knowledge

learned in place-based pedagogy. Being critical means challenging the knowledge children are learning and how they learn as without limitation or problems being associated with such. Learning through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview transforms problematized learning in that it can create opportunities for children to develop a worldview that sees their place(s) beyond face value. An Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview can therefore distinguish a reality which emerges from interconnected ways of learning and being with place and so contrasts from a Western dominant worldview, transforming how we view our relationship to place and the world by recognizing the difference between the two experiential frames.

My position in this research is one of both teacher/facilitator and researcher. Having an insider's perspective in research has many advantages, as I deeply understand the school community, its tenets, and how they support an environment where children can express themselves in ways that are authentic to their situations and learn in interesting ways. My experience as a classroom teacher has shown me that children will mostly accept anything they are taught without question either because they feel they cannot ask questions, or they do not know how. Power differentials are ever present in schooling, and I know from teaching in a noncoercive school and classroom, that teachers who use their power productively to design curriculum make a difference in how children view the world and their place in it. The impacts of settler colonialism on schools and learning have endured with the implementation of curriculum that continues to be a project of White settler supremacy (Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013). Without a critical perspective, place-based education takes on an epistemology that promotes individualism and othering of place (Seawright, 2014) that, along with a capitalist culture of consumerism, has brought us to our current climate crisis. Place-based educators generally view place through a Western knowledge system, one that

negates the connection place has to the genocide of Indigenous peoples (Calderon, 2014) and that continues to fragment the ecology of place into an objectified "it" (Kimmerer, 2015) to be dominated (Seawright, 2014), exploited, studying it or admiring its beauty, extracting its resources, and displacing the human and non-human animals because we are taught that these acts are necessary to maintain the economy.

Learning the value of questioning phenomena and not taking place at face value is a skill children can learn in school. Knowing that learners can grow to see themselves as interconnected to and caring for their place, I feel a deep responsibility to use my power to build a movement that shifts a generation of children to see the world differently. Education plays a significant role in the transmission of knowledge and promotes a culture that views nature as either benevolent or nature as separate from them and an object to be dominated. This qualitative research integrates critical pedagogy, place-based pedagogy, and the Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precepts through a social constructivist interpretive framework. Together these theories underpin my philosophical assumptions. As a critical educator, I know how the act of teaching hegemonic values through a dominant Western paradigm has brought us to this point of climate crisis. Education is never neutral (Freire, 1970) and all teaching has an impact on the larger community (Kincheloe, 1993). Teachers choose to either unconsciously or consciously educate towards perpetuating a dominant worldview that binds us to oppressive systems that continue our movement into the climate crisis. Alternatively, I choose to consciously use my pedagogy critically to move toward emancipatory knowledge that accepts and defends our interconnectedness and relation to all beings in the community as care for them is caring for ourselves.

Learning through a Kinship/Indigenous worldview is experiential, collaborative, holistic, and can be place-based. Place-based Indigenous knowledge ultimately requires knowing the region's original language and ceremonies that come from the local landscape, flora and fauna. It requires multiple-generations of learning about the place. Since most students living in a particular place will be settlers and not have such knowledge, they must use the Indigenous worldview, which belongs to everyone, as a starting place-based to re-indigenize and create place-based knowledge. Of course, if there are Indigenous wisdom keepers in the area, they should be sought out for such learning.

For teachers to collect accurate data in a qualitative phenomenological study, the importance of trusting relationships where students are viewed as observers and question posers in the learning process cannot be understated. Students must feel confident and faithful to themselves in those moments—not coerced to behave or attend. To be authentic to the experience, students need to learn without fear of the typical repercussions and feel free to take healthy risks while exploring. I trust and accept that children are self-organizing and authentic, and learning outside the classroom and school during the research gathering will be no different.

Because students, teachers, and researchers occupy different positions in the teaching and learning context, each will interpret the experience differently through their prior knowledge. As such, their construction of knowledge will be influenced by how they relate to one another within the learning context and how they explore the interpretations of the experience (Barton, 1998; Haraway, 1988).

Definitions of Key Terms

Ecological Community: Community here is connected to Diversity (below) and synonymous with Place (below).

Diversity: Ecologies inclusive of population ecology, landscape ecosystem ecology, palaeoecology, behavioral ecology, physiological ecology (Brewer & Taylor, 1993).

Place: A diverse community of "People as beings in a situation," who find themselves rooted in temporal-spatial conditions which mark them and which they also mark (Freire, 1970). Place is simple and complex. Community is everywhere, powerful in that it can be owned, public, private (Cresswell, 2014), and virtual (Kahn & Kellner, 2005). The unseen diverse ecologies of place also find themselves in a situation where they are struggling to survive.

Othering: "Othering" refers to the process whereby an individual or group of people attribute negative characteristics to other individuals or groups of people that set them apart as representing that which is opposite to them. More than just stereotyping, othering includes an affect component, where those who are othered are irrationally feared, even hated (Rohleder, 2014).

Critical Pedagogy: Critical pedagogy is fundamentally concerned with understanding the relationship between power and knowledge. The dominant curriculum separates knowledge from the issue of power and treats it in an unabashedly technical manner; knowledge is seen in overwhelmingly instrumental terms as something to be mastered. That knowledge is always an ideological construction linked to particular interests and social relations generally receive little consideration in education programs (McLaren, 1994). According to Foucault, we are thoroughly formed by the system of knowledge and power that we are born into and raised within—even our perception of what is around us are influenced by this (Jardine, 2005).

Critical pedagogue and feminist theorist Jennifer Gore (2015) expands on the function of power in the classroom (Gore, 2002) particularly what forms of teaching constitute "good teaching" to increase equity (Gore & Parkes, 2008).

A Critical Pedagogy of Place: "Critical Pedagogy of Place" signifies the potential confluence of cultural and ecological thinking in the emerging discourse of place-based education. Two fundamental educational goals of Critical Pedagogy of Place are: Decolonization and Reinhabitation. Decolonization involves learning to recognize disruption and injury and to address their causes. Educationally, this means unlearning much of what dominant culture and schooling teaches and learning more socially just and ecologically sustainable ways of being in the world. Reinhabitation aims for people to use their understanding of the cause of oppression and collectively create ways to reconnect and restore their reciprocal relationship with one another and the land (Greenwood et al., as cited in Andrzejewski, 2009) without doing damage to other humans and nonhumans (Gruenewald, 2003, 2008). A (Critical) Place-based pedagogy moves to restore a kincentric (Martinez, 2008, as cited in Wahinkpe Topa, 2022) relationship with the earth beginning with the larger worldview that diverse Indigenous cultures share and is inclusive of all aspects of "harmony between people and other people, and between communities and people and the natural world" (Martinez, 2008, as cited in Wahinkpe Topa, 2022).

Place-Based Education: *Place-based education* is a term coined by Laurie Lane-Zucker and John Elder which emphasizes the integration of people in schools to their local community environment as a foundation for learning (Lane-Zucker, 2019; Sobel, 2013) and not involving the more politically charged cultural environment (Gruenewald, 2014).

Kinship/Indigenous Worldview: Indigenous peoples with their traditions and customs are shaped by the environment, by the land. Cardinal has discovered that there are commonalities among the 200 million or 300 million Indigenous peoples left in the world. They have a spiritual, emotional, and physical relationship to that land. It speaks to them; it gives them their responsibility for stewardship; and it sets out a relationship. (Cardinal, 2001, p. 180)

Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview Precepts: A worldview is an implicit set of assumptions that guide behavior and vital for cognition and behavior. The Kinship/Indigenous worldview as described by Wahinkpe Topa and Narvaez (2022) transcends perception and conception to include experiencing and being. It is more of a "world sense" because it involves dozens of senses and a coordinated way of moving through the world. Indigenous peoples have a broad integrative understanding of body, mind, and spirit that allows for a more holistic orientation than the narrow perspective that has led us toward extinction. As all people are indigenous to some place, we all have an original kindship/indigenous worldview stemming from learning through our primal experiences.

Conclusion

Chapter I reveals the historical, social, and theoretical background for the focus of the phenomenological study, which aims to learn how teaching through an original kinship worldview can grow children towards connection and love for place. As a critical pedagogy of place, the researcher's values are illuminated as having a personal responsibility to affect change in society for the better. The problem is named as children as future adults will need to navigate their ever-changing world and the problems that continue to arise with the climate crisis. The researcher's arguments for the problem are identified. The intent of the qualitative phenomenological study was to know the essence of children's experience (Van Manen, 2016)

when learning about a place through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview and if learning this way can lead to connection and love for place. Sub questions underpinning the research are also presented. The significance of the study, the researcher's assumptions, and a definition of terms are also presented.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The intention of these literature reviews is to present the main tenets of critical pedagogy, place-based education, and the Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precepts, their interrelatedness, and how collectively they are relevant to and underpin the dissertation research. Critical pedagogy as deployed herein illuminates the relationship between power and knowledge through a Foucauldian lens in that it challenges place-based education to value a deeper decolonial knowledge of place that can only be accessed through an experiential understanding of an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview. Providing opportunities for children to learn about and understand place through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview shifts Western epistemologies and realities through the conscious choice about whose knowledge is privileged and, in the process, shifts us from seeing to perceiving and caring about Place. In this way learning is place-based, collaborative, holistic, and interconnected. The necessity for children to care is their realization that they are stakeholders of their future and need to know, now, about how to live differently for change. The literature here informs the ways in which I have mapped the 30 Kinship/Indigenous worldview precepts onto my critical pedagogy of place work in my school. Due to the length of the document, the Alignment of Twenty-Eight Kinship/Indigenous worldview precepts with Public Schools Ways of Being is in table format and included in Appendix E.

Foundations of Critical Pedagogy: A Foucauldian Concept of Power and Knowledge

The first consideration is to understand the relationship between power and knowledge in the elementary classroom through a Foucauldian lens. I summarize Paul-Michel Foucault's concept of power-knowledge and introduce seminal scholars of critical pedagogy's own

theorizations of how power and knowledge intersect within schools in both productive and oppressive ways. I conclude with discussing empathetic, just, and agentic learning environments and how applying these change-oriented practices can be responsive to and simultaneously attempt to transform the institutional dynamics of schooling (Gruenewald, 2005) are discussed.

Foucault's work in critical theory itself centered this relationship in his concept of power/knowledge and Henry Giroux, one of the core theorists of the tradition of critical pedagogy, suggested that an examination is necessary of how what Foucault considers as power influences the curriculum of knowledge in schools, including both how, why, and whose knowledge is learned, as well as how this learned power works upon and through people as a result of that learning experience (Giroux, 1988). Critical pedagogue and feminist theorist Jennifer Gore usefully expands the analysis of the function of power in the classroom (Gore, 2002, 2015), particularly as to what forms of teaching constitute "good teaching" (Gore & Parkes, 2008) to increase equity.

Power is "the ability to satisfy one's wants through controlling preferences and/or opportunities" (Kuhn, 1963, p. 317). It can be coercive and authoritarian (Darder, 1991), thereby limiting people's agency, but also can be used productively to create new forms of social and cultural possibility. Power manifests in relationships in multiple ways because it is an embodied feature of human social life and structures (Turner, 2005). To that effect, power can be seen, heard, and felt in all possible relationships at some point. For example, in school, children can feel the influences of power in all spheres—pedagogical, organizational, and systemic (Levi, 2020)—that influence the interconnections of race, class, and gender (Collins, 1990) which are themselves products of capitalist hegemony. For example, the knowledge

teachers make available through curriculum influences and shapes children's worldviews. Whichever worldview children learn will impact their agency towards living with an ever-changing planet. Finally, children can feel power at home in the parent or caregiver-child relationship (Foucault, 1980). In all social contexts, relationships are either balanced and life-enriching, or asymmetrical (McLaren, 2014), thwarting and oppressive.

Power is not itself negative but depends on its use (hooks, 2014). It is limiting when schools, as mirrors of oppressive society (Freire, 2020), oppress teachers by maintaining systems where teachers feel they need to produce spaces that, in turn, limit children from exercising their power to construct knowledge about phenomena through experience and other modes of emancipatory learning. Seen in this way, power is productive in a negative fashion because it acts through the relationship and maintains hegemonic forms of identity for teachers and students (Giroux, 2018).

The opposite of power as a limiting force is the use of power in productive ways that benefit the agential power of others, such as student learners in the case of this dissertation. For example, teachers can make conscious choices to create spaces and experiences where students can exercise their power and are free, yet supported, to use their capacities to think critically and develop as learners while constructing their knowledge. Ultimately, administrators would use their power to build the power of their teaching staff to create these spaces because they understand the benefits for all learning community members and society. In this type of example, teachers may feel empowered to be responsive to their students such that their own power-building would not be seen as risky but rather as acceptably understandable by the administrators, teachers, parents, and students.

So, how are power and knowledge limiting and productive in society, and how does this influence organizational, pedagogical, and system spheres? Specifically, how are curriculum design, teacher student relationships, and where learning takes place, impacted by knowledge and power in the elementary classroom?

The literature for this review was recommended and self-chosen based on relevant scholars' theorization about the relationship between power and knowledge, how power can be both limiting and productive together impact classroom learning. Additionally, scholars' experience in the K-16 classroom was another criterion, as their experience demonstrates the reflective process of applying theory to their practice and their experiences relevant to the limiting and productive use of power.

Often, the selected scholars' experiences reflect or have inspired my experience in the classroom as a student and a classroom teacher. Their first-hand knowledge as practicing or former elementary or high school teachers and professors in teacher education programs enhanced their understanding of schools and the various spheres impacting the schooling system. Additionally, their experience gives them credibility and shared experience with readers of the work as they share a perspective about teaching and learning. Additionally, I can relate to their experiences as I read their work and appreciate our commonalities. Moreover, their writing conveys the continued outcomes for society, the dire need for change in schools, and the systems of oppression they perpetuate. This review was a recursive process of researching seminal texts in critical pedagogy, reading, and reflecting on my practice and writing. Although my practice has evolved over two decades, scholars' thinking validates my practice. It causes me to reflect on my fundamental reasons for doing what I do the way I do it as a critically reflective teacher.

As I read and reflected on the works of seminal scholars in the field of critical pedagogy, I followed the hermeneutic circle where the search process, reading and reflecting on the literature to glean from their selected writings and fuse (Gadamer, 1982) their theories about power as it relates to knowledge construction in school. Additionally, I am interested in how their theory about power and knowledge production plays out within the learning environment and my experience with children. Finally, as the reflective cycle of describing, analyzing, and interpreting an experience that can lead to action for change is an ongoing process, scholars, too, are in the process of interpreting and reinterpreting theory.

Foucault's Power and Knowledge

> At every moment, step by step, one must confront what one is thinking and saying with what one is doing.
>
> —Michael Foucault (in Barry, 2020)

Paul-Michel Foucault was a French philosopher born in Poitiers, France in 1926. His intellectual career was influenced by the Spanish Civil War, communism, and the carceral Tunisian state (Median, 2020). Further prison revolts in France and Attica, New York in 1971, and a visit to Attica in 1972, led him to become a spokesman for The Prison Information Group.

Foucault viewed power as a widespread phenomenon everywhere, not concentrated in one particular group or place and not as an object one owns, but as an embodied force that people express as a throughline of our existence. For Foucault, power is non-coercive but understood through relationships. I know this to mean that although concrete forms of violence are coercive in that they are seen, heard, and felt, people view specific individuals as possessing power based on their position in society, which, at some point in our lives, we learn

through interactions that establish one as having power. For example, students can view a teacher who manages students in a coercive way as authoritarian or view a teacher as having authority because they are respectful and thus, respected. Power is a widespread and esoteric force accepted in all social relationships. It is esoteric in that it is accepted and embodied and we do not know how ingrained it is until we study it and understand how power in schooling imparts knowledge. The accepted norms of a teacher's way of being have become the accepted ideology in certain schools of thought about education. These schools of thought are the dominant ideology that keep this system of truth. This "truth" is maintained because it is never questioned. For Foucault:

> "truth" is "a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and functioning of statements," it is linked 'by a circular relation to systems of power which produce it and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces, and which redirect it." And … the essential political problem for us, today, is trying to *change* our "political, economic, institutional regime of the production of truth" (where truth is modeled on the form of scientific discourse), in order to constitute a new "politics of truth." (Lorenzini, 2015, p. 2)

Power is prevalent in school and acts on children normatively through what and how they learn and how they embody power as a controlling force in their lives to be controlled and to control. The norms go unquestioned because they have an intended outcome of producing obedient children who will enter the workforce. These schools of thought are the dominant ideology that maintain the unquestioned "hidden curriculum" (Giroux & Penna, 1979) which reifies educational norms, values, beliefs, and social relations by both teachers

and students who act with unconscious compliance to institutional expectations (Jackson, 1968).

What is Critical Pedagogy? How is it Practiced?

I continue with this focus on critical pedagogy because, as I mention above, Indigenous worldview and its spiritual underpinnings is the solution to what critical pedagogy exposed as a problem. "Critical pedagogy isn't formulaic, it isn't stagnant, and it isn't an is" (Steinberg, 2007 as cited in McLaren & Kincheloe, 2007 p. 9). Although critical pedagogy is an umbrella term and there is no *one* critical pedagogy (McLaren, 1998, p. 227, as cited in Wink, 2011), most critical theorists share three assumptions about schools and society (Giroux, 1988, 2010; Kessler & Swadener, 1992). The assumptions are:

- Particular forms of knowledge are valued over others (and are accepted as truth)
- School knowledge belongs to the "privileged" group "who gets to say what counts as true" (Foucault, as cited in Lorenzini, 2015)
- People in certain positions exercise power to maintain a dominant societal role (Freire, 1998)

Upon dissecting these three assumptions, knowledge, privilege, and power, we can ask ourselves why these assumptions would warrant a philosophy of education that makes these assumptions transparent and, further, challenges teachers to take up a social movement that transforms ourselves and our students in the process. Why do we care about the interrelation between knowledge, privilege, and power in schools?

Understanding the relationship between power and knowledge and how it is perpetuated and embodied through social structures, such as schools, work, and families, is crucial to understanding how to begin to change systems within social structures. Teachers who want to

make a difference in schools should care about the relationship between the knowledge they impart in their classrooms and the role their power plays in that reification of knowledge, ways of managing students, and relationships. Teachers can reflect and make conscious choices that disrupt the processes of cultural hegemony, meaning how culture works dynamically to maintain the dominant class through an array of social practices, social forms, and institutional structures that the majority of people learn to consent to as wholly natural, preordained, and even to their own benefit (Brookfield, 2017; McLaren, 1994, p. 182). By accepting and teaching a mandated curriculum, for example, without questioning whose truth, whose knowledge is privileged in schools, teachers make a conscious or unconscious choice to deliver curriculum maintaining the regime of whose truth or knowledge is being privileged in schools thereby, teachers (either consciously or unconsciously) work to reproduce the power of the regimes of truth operationalized within that curriculum and the ways in which they will teach it.

As a democratic society should be reflected and reinforced by its schools (Dewey, 1923, 2024), critical pedagogy seeks to make transparent and challenge the relationship between teaching and learning in schools and the perpetuation of social issues, including the heteronomous nature of the class system, racism, sexism, and ableism (Kincheloe, 2008). As an alternative to the status quo, critical pedagogy aspires that its practitioners work educatively to socially reconstruct unquestioned knowledge standards and forms of social privilege and power, while it champions the further incorporation of emancipatory movements such as for human and civil rights, and emergent forms of literacy about the world that can best support them.

Illuminating these relationships between forms of power and knowledge stems from learning to name our situations, critically reflect upon them, and then act to change them

(Wink, 2011) in ways that can augment democratic freedom and just forms of peace in the world. To do this, we can begin by problematizing everyday experiences or questioning the pervasive norms instantiated across our lives inside and outside of schools. For example, in schools, teachers can reflect on how they may be inclined to position themselves as the knowing narrating teacher (subject) and the student as a "silent" (Freire, 1998) and patiently listening object (Freire, 1970) who waits for the teacher to deposit their knowledge into them.

Rather than assuming students need to be filled with prescribed knowledge, teachers can step down from being the sage on the stage and center and value students as "knowers" who bring with them funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 2006) from their lived experience with family, community, and culture. When teachers relinquish their position as "knower" it can free them to learn alongside their students and, simultaneously, create a place where the teachers' and students' own life experiences are validated as legitimate curricular "texts." Seeing children this way creates a space where they feel safe to engage in discourse, take risks, express their beliefs and ideas, and pose questions. These elements support a dialogical environment conducive to constructing meaning. In these situations, there is a level of freedom, but teachers do not take on a "Laissez faire practice" as Freire and Macedo (1995 p. 379) state and the teacher does not "failed to assume their role as a dialogical educator who can help us understand the object of knowledge" by creating an authoritative learning environment. Critical pedagogy is not to be associated with dismissing rules on behalf of a constant "feel good" classroom atmosphere. There needs to be tension in learning; otherwise, there is little opportunity to address the power present, and name, critique, and revision problematic aspects of the school, the local (and larger encompassing) community, as well as one's own role and identity in learning there.

What does it take to "name" power in the first place? When Freire (1970) speaks about "naming the world," he asks us to critically observe and reflect on what our minds are trained to "see" rather than how we simply "perceive" our world and ourselves within it. In the process of reflection and problem-posing, Freire formatively suggests that we can awaken to the powerful forces that structure our situations (along with our previous knowledge of them), and so learn to make active changes in these situations that we believe are warranted and beneficial. In this way, learn to overcome our ignorance of oppressive forms of power in our lives. Further, we learn that how we perceive a situation or stimulus determines whether we will respond or react (Covey, 1989). Responding through action to use one's means to strategically improve one's situation is using one's power productively than mindlessly "reacting" to the provocations of power in a situation at hand.

Roots of Critical Pedagogy

Although Paulo Freire, through his ideas on literacy in his seminal tome, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), is often credited as the founder of critical pedagogy, his initial theory was itself influenced by at least several major historical figures. Further, the legacy of his work is also undoubtedly due to the role of scholars who joined with him in helping to promote, evolve, and continue it as an important philosophy of education and social movement. The term "critical pedagogy" was initially coined by the educational theorist and cultural critic, Henry Giroux, in his 1984 book, *Theory and Resistance in Education* (Darder et al., 2003). Therein, Giroux argues that critical pedagogy has its inception in a lengthy and historical legacy of radical theory coupled with progressive educational movements whose goal was to illuminate the relationship between schooling and democratic principles of society to apply transformative social action through the empowerment of oppressed communities.

Paulo Freire

Humanist and philosopher Paulo Freire (Bartlett, 2008) identified the foundations of critical pedagogy and developed them into a praxis-oriented educational movement. “Guided by passion and principle, he helped students develop critical reflection and consciousness of freedom, recognize authoritarian tendencies, and connect knowledge to power and the ability to take constructive action” (Giroux, 2010, p. 67). Freire regards teaching and learning as human experiences with profound social consequences that are the result of teaching and learning that have become the mechanized delivery of pre-determined packaged curriculum with pre-determined assessments. Teachers in these classrooms have been reduced to script readers, resulting in lifeless intellectual centers transferring lifeless bodies of knowledge to children as passive learners.

Rather than transferring mandated facts and skills from teacher to student, a Freirean class invites students to think critically about the subject matter, doctrines, the learning process, and society (Shor, 2002). Freire advocates that students who are given opportunities to “pose problems” (Shor, 2002) simultaneously challenge power structures. Rather than accept and apply the rote learning “banking” method (Shor, 2002) of education and passive learning of irrelevant content for peasants and farmers in Recife, Brazil, Freire proposed a literacy model that engaged them in “cultural circles” using relevant problems in the community to participate in “a live and creative dialogue, in which everyone knows some things and does not know others, in which all seek, together, to know more” (Freire, 1971, p 61). In doing so, they are making meaning of their lives and creating new knowledge, no longer unconscious of their situation but empowered to engage in discourse to improve their situation, making learning more democratic. Like Dewey, Freire believed teaching is relational and learning should be

experiential and reciprocal where teachers and students understood that they can learn from one another.

In *Cultural Action and Conscientization* (1998), Freire writes about levels of consciousness. I interpret the first two levels of consciousness, *magical and naive consciousness,* as levels of consciousness that limit our power over our lives based on the degree of awareness we have about our situation. Magical consciousness exists where we believe our fate is predetermined by God and is out of our control. In my experience, this can be a form of generational learned helplessness that leaves one spiraling into a vortex of hopelessness. However, if one has the opportunity to think critically, one can move into the awareness that *someone* other than God can influence the outcome of their life and move into naive consciousness or blame consciousness, where we hold to the belief that we are a product of our culture and environment and someone or something else is responsible.

This relates to Indigenous worldview in a way that I must disagree with Freire who believed that the Indigenous worldview that saw oneness with all of nature as an obstacle to full humanization (Morrow, 2008). I believe the opposite. Richard Kahn (2008) writes in "Know Sweat: Defending an Indigenous Practice as Scientific:" "On the other hand, they also can display the quality of "sustainability," to which much contemporary Western science and research aspires, but often fails to manifest".

I also do not feel that the relatedness of Indigenous worldview is a "magical" proposition. A critically conscious teacher can support students to shift from power as limiting themselves, to power as productive for themselves. To do this, we must transgress to *conscientizacao,* or an awakening of our critical consciousness to our situation (Smith, 1976) by unlearning the common default to uncritical frameworks of everyday awareness in favor of taking up forms of social perception that integrate the reflective demands of ethical conscience.

The transgression from magical or naive consciousness to critical consciousness requires a paradigm shift in our awareness, and it is through critical consciousness that people who consider power as merely a limiting force upon them can begin to recognize the power that they have to imagine other possibilities for their lives and to enact change in their situations accordingly.

Ivan Illich

Significant to Freire's work was the critical theorist, Ivan Illich, who viewed the role of school in society as a compulsory state institution that functions hegemonically to deliver a hidden curriculum designed to reduce the legitimacy of non-schooled forms of knowledge and a culture that relies unquestioningly upon degreed experts. A former Roman Catholic priest, Illich was a controversial social critic and founder of the Cuernavaca Center in Mexico, which he later transformed into CIDOC (Centro Intercultural de Documentación; Hartch, 2015). After an attempt to free Freire from jail in 1964, he hosted Freire for two summers (Kahn, 2010).

Additionally, Illich taught and was a visiting professor for various institutions including Penn State and University of Bremen. Illich critiqued the connection between institutional ills of schools as rooted in the Church, industrialization, and the degradation of the earth and its resources and their long-term impacts. In *Deschooling Society* (1971), Illich's ideas emerge to illuminate the interconnection between the monopolistic power that schools (still) have to limit knowledge and maintain the dominant ideology, with the "hidden curriculum serving as a ritual of initiation into a growth-oriented consumer society for rich and poor alike" (Illich, 1971, p. 33). A system of unconscious consumerism endures when schools train students per "banking" concept of education (Freire, 1970, p. 72) to become mere objects of the social hegemony and to identify that only the institutions of the hegemony know what they want and can fulfill their

needs accordingly. As these systems continue to spin out of control, the culture that emerges when the power goes unchallenged has become an uncontested artifact of society (Giroux, 1988), whereby we continue to live in the cycle of school, work, and spending. Living this lifestyle makes us numb to the goings on in our own person, families, and local communities through an authoritarian shibboleth and attempt to create an even higher level of authority over people. Further, Illich believed that the schooling process privileges knowledge that constrains children and "renders children helpless" (Buckingham, 2021) as they are subject to teachers' power and authority over their minds (e.g., via the prescribed curriculum) and their bodies (e.g., via routine demands for seat time and docile immobility in the classroom during teaching.

In the later part of his life, Illich wrote two important works: *Towards a History of Needs* (1977) and *H20 and The Waters of Forgetfulness* (1985) in which he explored the history of how society became modernized and the connection to the thinking behind what we need and constructed needs (Nagarajan, 2020). However, despite the influential works of environmentalists like Aldo Leopold and Rachel Carson (Orr, 1994), and Illich's insightful analysis of modern society (Nagarajan, 2020), the disconnect between education and ecology persists. This is a significant issue, as education continues to fail at shifting school outcomes in favor of ecology but continues to accelerate to the point of global catastrophe (Kahn, 2010) through a mechanistic-centered STEM science education that views people and the environment as separate entities (Hufnagel et al., 2018).

There is hope as many more educators are becoming aware of social roles as teachers, along with the moral responsibilities of teaching towards the reconstruction of society. With the recent and enduring COVID pandemic, the long-lasting effects on teachers and students are made transparent by them problematizing the "get back to it" attitudes of administrators who

fail to see the depth of impact COVID has on the teaching and learning experience. In doing so, they are modeling for children what it means to use their voice and how teachers and people can respond when power acts on them and their students in crippling, othering, and dehumanizing ways.

The culture of power persists in schools through the unchallenged assumptions that what students are learning is the truth about how society is supposed to function. Most students accept the curriculum as truth because management strategies oppress them, and when their own cultural truths divert from the curriculum, they are often silenced as unlearned or curricularly irrelevant. Societal power infiltrates school and manifests itself in all spheres of schooling. Schools are a means to maintain the status quo by ensuring the systems remain unchallenged, thwarting any acts of resistance through the reinforcement of rules established by the school. Although creating a safe and effective environment for learning (Rennie, 2020) is established through school rules and norms, in general, schools rarely provide an environment where children have agency to voice their opinion (Ayers, 2015) about what the rules or norms should be.

Like a well-oiled machine, a society that functions without citizens who are aware and question who is benefitting, who is suffering, and how it came to be in the first place maintains a "regime of truth" (Lorenzini, 2015). I wonder what Illich and John Holt would say in a conversation about the movement of homeschooling and unschooling in the past 10 years.

Frantz Fanon

An influencer of Freire's work, Frantz Fanon was deeply committed to ending violence and oppression experienced by colonized people everywhere (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell 2008). Fanon contends that one needs to understand the roots of the colonial structures of the

daily interactions with the curriculum and how they control and reinforce whose knowledge is learned and how it is learned (De Lissovoy, 2007). Fanon realized colonialism moves through schooling as the teacher uses their power to perpetuate colonialism by implementing a curriculum that promotes privileged knowledge to the unknowing student (Fanon, 1963). Teachers colonize students as not all students are privileged by this information, but students learn to accept it and make themselves over in accordance with it so that it becomes true for them, and they, in turn, teach it to others who are not privileged by it. In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire (1970) writes, "The oppressed, instead of striving for liberation, tend themselves to become oppressors." Teachers who want to apply critical pedagogy toward decolonization can reflect on the knowledge and power of their pedagogy rather than reify the systems of imperialist colonization of non-Eurocentric and non-White cultures learned through their lived experiences. Fanon moves us to consider how we are passing on systems of power and colonization through our actions and to transcend to a decoloniality of power in the classroom through the conscious acts of dismantling enduring colonizing practices that continue to influence education by valuing the lives of all students and bringing their experiences into the classroom to interrogate why they endure rather than simply changing the demographics of education by including more people of color (Mulder, 2016).

Kincheloe and Steinberg

These two renowned authors wrote prolifically about the importance of Indigenous ways of being. Joe Kincheloe wrote prolifically about it in such works as "Critical Ontology and Indigenous Ways of Being," "What is Indigenous Knowledge" and "Critical Pedagogy and the Culture Wars." Although he is no longer with us, Shirley Steinberg continues to solicit authors for her edited books that reveal Indigenous worldview as the ultimate outcome of critical

pedagogy. For example, in one volume of the *Sage Handbook of Critical Pedagogies*, she offers an entire section on Indigenous worldview that is edited by Four Arrows and R. M. Fisher.

In *Students as Researchers: Creating Classrooms that Matter* (1998), Shirley Steinberg and Joe Kincheloe describe how students can make meaning through research about topics that matter to their lives and how the process emancipates them from the standardized curriculum that reifies (McLaren, 1994) systems of oppression. Rather than being fed a curriculum that shapes their lives by inducting them unwittingly into a dominant ideology associated with their lessons, problem-based learning such as Steinberg and Kincheloe advocate allows for the reimagination of power relations, along with the creation of opportunities for children to learn to exercise their power (Gore, 2003) through the design and ends of their research. As researchers, students reflect on their learning process in the written material they construct. In deliberately producing alternative bodies of knowledge, teachers and students shift their perspectives of whose voice and knowledge counts and how they make meaning. At the same time, they counter inequality and oppression around issues of race, class, and gender.

Through this process, students can learn how their knowledge relates to forms of power and whether they themselves have any power in the educational and social systems. In the spirit of Foucault's theory of knowledge and power, Steinberg and Kincheloe advocate for students to know whose knowledge they are learning, why they are learning it, and who has been excluded from that knowledge thereby making transparent whose knowledge is privileged and reified (McLaren, 1994) as canonic. Rather than maintaining hegemonic assumptions about what good teaching (Brookfield, 2017) looks, sounds, and feels like, teachers can use their power productively to support children to be critical of texts by presenting multiple perspectives while intentionally engaging them in dialogue around questions such as: Who wrote this information and why? Who is the intended audience for this information? Who is left out of this account?

Why have they not been included? By creating spaces where children feel safe to take risks and learn how to begin to question assumptions in their education, children will become enculturated to forms of critical inquiry.

bell hooks

African American cultural critic, bell hooks, known for her writing on class, feminism, and race and related issues of power in the cultural work, recognizes the challenges of being a student who wants social and educational change. hooks (2014) understood that teachers play a critical role in shaping power dynamics and affect how it acts on knowledge not only of what one can know and how one knows it but also of the power of the self and how we are across spaces. hooks means that having spaces where students recognize and speak about how we live is an act of resistance in that we are challenging the system of power and how it presents itself in any social institution. For children in any environment, learning about who they are and feeling safe to express their identity and bodies freely is crucial for sound mental health. In the current environment, there is a growing push from parents and teachers for schools to provide safe spaces for children. However, there are also parents who adhere to the beliefs of the dominant culture and see self-expression as deviant, and they want to suppress their freedom to express themselves.

During hook's college years at Stanford, there was an unspoken understanding amongst the students that silence and obedience were rewarded. From this, hooks believed that what was being taught was that students such as herself should deny the cultural value of their class origins and instead learn to conform to the demeanor of the privileged class. Feminist classrooms were different, she found. They were safe spaces where female students of disadvantaged

circumstances could speak from the perspectives that revealed the values, standpoints, and perspectives of the students (Darder et al., 2003, p. 143). It is at this time that hooks became influenced by Paulo Freire and the Vietnamese Buddhist monk, Thich Nhat Hanh, whose ideas and lives she felt legitimated her challenge to what she was experiencing in college. Rather than accept learning as a passive process where the teacher transmits knowledge to students, she wanted the life experiences of her peers and herself to inform the curriculum and sought praxis to change the traditional classroom dynamic. Foundational to what became her "engaged pedagogy" (hooks, 2014, p. 15), hooks incorporated Thich Nhat Hanh's view of the teacher as healer, into her philosophy of education. An engaged pedagogy, in hooks's view, requires teachers to see their students as whole human beings rather than through the lens of Descartes's mind/body dualism. hooks (2014) realized for that to happen teachers needed to self-actualize and promote their own well-being if they are to empower students to strive for their well-being.

Now more than ever an engaged pedagogy has the potential to alleviate the suffering of people in schools that arose during the pandemic. As classrooms should be places of solace, teachers have the power and responsibility to reflect on how their teaching impacts the minds, bodies, and spirit of their students and themselves. Only through such reflection can teachers shift their teaching to a more humane pedagogy for themselves and their students.

hooks was heavily influenced by the work of Paulo Freire and there are many parallels regarding their views of love and the process of teaching and learning. hooks (2000) believed that whenever domination is present, love is lacking. It is crucial for teachers to understand the importance of love (hooks, 2000) as all students need healthy, accepting, and loving learning spaces to develop the self-esteem and self-love that can fuel their struggle for greater liberation as regards the innovative pedagogical community form of the "cultural circle" for which he is

renowned. In the same light, Freire (1971) wrote, “In order to be a good coordinator for a ‘cultural circle,’ you need, above all, to have faith in man, to believe in his possibility to create, to change things. You need to love”. In *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*, bell hooks (2014) calls on educators to “open (and renew) our minds and hearts” (p. 12) to transgress beyond what is acceptable towards a liberatory pedagogy. hooks (2014) emphasizes that, “Again and again, you and I are saying that different, more radical subject matter does not create a liberatory pedagogy” (p. 148). Also in that text, in reflecting upon how systems of power exist and function in society, hooks reflects upon the work of Foucault. For her, although Foucault challenged the mind/body duality in his work, he lived more in his mind as an intellectual of high culture but was more free in his body in the space of street culture. In the work of my school, we aim to support children in feeling safe to embody their thinking and think in non-abstract ways.

Reflecting on my own teaching and learning experiences, along with those chronicled by bell hooks, I recognize how the need to understand power impacted her pedagogical praxis. Rather than create a space where students felt they needed to choose between who they are and who they felt they needed to be, hooks invited them to be courageous and use their agency to alter those spaces on behalf of their belonging. As a scholar-practitioner, I take in and reflect on the words and ideas scholars are offering in their work to explore in my own spaces of teaching and learning. Drawing from hooks, I believe that if I and the children are engaged in our inquiry together, reflecting upon and challenging the issues that impact us while feeling a sense of well-being in our community, we know we are learning in a just and loving way.

Main Findings for Power and Knowledge in the Classroom

Critical pedagogy considers the roots of power and how it presents itself in all spheres of schooling and society. Power emanates from people and impacts them whether or not they realize it. The actions of power are outwardly displayed in people's ways of being with themselves and who they are with one another. I think of critical pedagogy as the conscious act of asking ourselves, "Why is there a need for critical pedagogy in the first place?"

During research for this literature review, I have expanded my understanding of critical pedagogy, my situation, and how power works through society into all spheres of schooling, as well as my own work and identity as a teacher therein. At the same time, I have the lived experience of what it means to be a teacher who works to embody a transformative pedagogy not only in my life as a person in the world but as a teacher who draws from those experiences. These reflections are a portal to the continuous efforts towards what schools can be if we draw from love to create a space where students and teachers struggle together to question their assumptions about the issues that impact them and their community. I have learned the importance of unlearning the dominant habits and modes of education in which I was schooled to now offer my students the opportunity to reconstruct what teaching and learning is along with me, drawing from our lived experiences as we dialogue about the possibilities of improving our live's situations and making a positive difference in the world.

Place-Based Pedagogy

> We are born and have our being in a place of memory. We chart our lives by everything we remember from the mundane moment to the majestic.
>
> —bell hooks, *Belonging: A Culture of Place*

Introduction

In this chapter I want to bring into this work some background information about connections between critical pedagogy and placed based knowledge. It will help set the stage for how Indigenous worldview AND Indigenous Place-based knowledge are two vital aspects of deeply understanding Indigeneity. I engage in a sort of conversation with the main scholars, their ideas, the tensions between them and how those ideas form the foundation of learning about place in my study and work. Additionally, I seek to unravel how critical place-based pedagogy interconnects with an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview to answer the questions: What is the intersection between critical pedagogy and place-based education? How can teaching place-based education through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview grow children towards connection and love for place? It draws on significant scholars in place-based education, critical place-based pedagogy, and Indigenous Knowledge systems.

What is Place-Based Education?

The central tenets of place-based education involve the creation of learning opportunities for students with their environment, with local phenomena and with cultural ways of knowing located there. Rather than focusing upon school outcomes prepared for students to function in a globalized, high-tech world that is driven by consumerism, place-based education seeks school outcomes for people to live and work in culturally and ecologically sustainable ways (Orr, 1994). People make and take important meaning from life experiences (Bowers, 2005a; Gruenewald, 2008; Smith, 2002), both in and out of the classroom. I argue that the aim of place-based education should support children in developing an awareness of their place's interconnected ecology, where such awareness includes an emotional connection and care for

nature (Chawla, 2006), along with a critical historical sensibility of the complex meanings of the various forms of cultural inhabitation and change that has occurred in their place.

Timeline of Place-Based Education

“Place-based education is not a new phenomenon” (Smith, 2002, p. 586). For 8,000 years, before the establishment of formal schooling, people lived in hunter-gatherer societies where children learned to live effectively in their environment. Their learning is/was mostly taken up by adults whose skills and cultural knowledge are learned and passed on by observation, imitation, socialization, and play (Eskelson, 2020). Home and community learning continued into the 19th century and weaned with the establishment of compulsory school laws and public schools (Katz, 1976). The seminal work of several scholars underpins the evolution of Place-based education, each with their own perspectives on learning and the impact place-based education has on rural and urban learners alike.

In *Experience and Education* (1986), John Dewey argued that for learning to occur, the experience needs to be continuous in a humane and interactive environment (Wergin, 2019). Dewey and other progressives felt that schools should be integrated spaces where children of all ages and classes could relate what they were learning in school more to their lives outside of school (Dewey, 1902), where there is community reciprocity and learning is a natural outcome of generational lived experience. Dewey spent a lifetime elaborating a hands-on constructivist learning (Vanderstraeten et al., 1998) ideal that appealed to many educators and inspired place-based and community learning.

Although the constructivist ideas of Dewey, Freire, and Piaget appeal to many progressive educators, in *Elements of a Post-Liberal Theory of Education* (1987), American educator and environmentalist Chet A. Bowers argued that the language used by global

constructivist-oriented teachers when working within traditional cultures impacts the valuation in education of forms of emplaced cultural knowledge in turn. A modern pedagogical focus on the construction of new knowledge can negate the value of learning traditional knowledge forms, he felt, and ironically could benefit the very capitalist society that philosophers such as Dewey and Freire criticized. The constructivist teachers, according to Bowers (2005a), potentially make students feel that their culture is "backward" and not progressive, and thus that only the construction of new ideas about their world could benefit them. The psychological stress on people to modernize (Norberg-Hodge, 2010) creates a cultural tension pulling one between what they understand and what they want to have.

Teachers can create opportunities for students to engage in discourse about their familial and cultural experiences and the "funds of knowledge" (Gonzalez et al., 2006) that develop from those experiences. Rather than assume they know "nothing," teachers and students can learn a great deal about what they already understand about subject areas and can build a connection between home and school without framing students as coming from a deficit. Seen and valued in this way, experiential development of students' cultural and community knowledge can be viewed as a type of place-based education where students' culture is understood as emergent from and related to the place they inhabit, the interactions of the people with each other there, as well as with their environment.

Like Bowers and the influence of bioregional schools on his own work, Smith (1993) published "Shaping Bioregional Schools," which emphasizes the value of contextual learning in places where students live. He argues that effective schools help children learn relevant skills and dispositions toward sustainable societies. Outcomes for children of these schools include

understanding the importance of and having value for their communities and members; having skills and being willing to use them effectively in local decision-making; understanding their interconnection to and impact on the ecology of their social ecology and prioritizing community relationships. Expanding on having value for their communities and members, an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview (Wahinkpe Topa & Narvaez, 2022) is inclusive of all living and nonliving beings and more than human animals in the land as members of the community and understands that our impact on Place is impact on all beings there and extends outside the community.

Whereas Bowers (2005b) foresaw the environmental crisis through the lens of consumerism rooted in the "forms of knowledge privileged in our public schools" (p. 191) and their impact on the sustainable ways of being of local cultures, David Orr's (1995) work lies in the need for environmental and eco-literacy education at the college level to repair 150 years of damage done to the earth through industrialization. To do this would mean rethinking the underpinnings of K-12 and higher education. "A constituency able and willing to do these things must be educated into existence" (Orr, 1995), meaning the only way forward is deconstructing traditional education and reconstructing education that teaches ecological sustainability rather than education (Orr, 1992) that supports technological futurity. To this end, Orr's (1994) ideas on environmental education specifically promote a way for education to develop citizens who are prepared to live well in a place without destroying it. As we approach 2025, education for ecological sustainability is no longer an option but a requirement if we are to make the shift Orr posits. The environment young children are growing in will only improve if they appreciate their environment and have the tools to live with climate change while reducing its impacts. Caiman (2017) emphasizes the need for adults to view of children as critical thinkers and responders to

problems in the environment that impact animals which they care about (Davis, 2008) as well as Duhn (2012) calling for adults to enable children to participate and contribute to issues that impact their lives now and in the future. In my view, the only portal to living in the climate crisis with a sound mind while attempting to shift the impacts of the crisis are by learning about and appreciating our immediate place through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview which values all beings of place as interconnected and recognizes the need to rebalance when systems are out of balance (Topa et al., 2022).

The first time we see the term "Place-Based Education" in writing is in John Elder's (1998) *Stories in The Land: A Place-Based Environmental Education Anthology*. In *Stories in the Land*, Elder here collected classroom stories from varying cultures and geographies and framed them to reflect their connection to common education principles. In Orion Society's supported stories of teachers' experiences in various settings across the United States, he illuminates how teachers working with children create and implement experiences that apply place-based learning of various formats and makes a case for connecting relevant collective stories to interdisciplinary environmental studies.

In *Place-Based Education: Connecting Classroom and Community* (2004), David Sobel advocates for the reconnection of children with their neighborhoods and the outdoors. Additionally, he calls for community leaders to step into the classroom to share their worlds with students. He describes and advocates for students in school to have opportunities to experience the community and environment as the context for learning to develop their connection and understanding of the systems of nature and community work. In Sobel's work with Greg Smith (2014), Indigenous culture and ecological knowledge are illuminated and valued in schools and represented in the literature. Prioritizing the aspects of Indigenous culture

and ecological place-based learning, and by making the environment the context for such learning, can allow for a Kinship/Indigenous worldview to be shared by members of local Indigenous tribes as part of a re-introduction to student's sense of place.

Place-based learning can also be considered as having been exemplified in aspects of what has been termed in the scholarly literature as rural education. One of the poster examples of such education was the Foxfire project organized by Eliot Wigginton. The Foxfire project used community as the context for learning in the community of Raben Gap. In this way, Foxfire practices centered: teachers and students working together, based in learner choice, design, and revision; clear work expectations; teachers roles as facilitators and collaborators; active learning in small teams co-led and taught by students; a community-based audience and context for the educational work; generative learning activities; ongoing reflection on the process; encouraging imagination and creativity in student work; and embedded formative assessment throughout the educational projects. Teachers implementing the Foxfire approach offer students opportunities to learn lifelong skills and ongoing professional development for self-reflection and assessment.

David Gruenewald, now Greenwood (2003) expanded on the scarce place-based writing that included an overt focus upon social and environmental justice in "The Best of Both Worlds: A Critical Pedagogy of Place." In that essay, he argued for place-based education that could reframe critical pedagogy's focus upon "situations" as ecologies, while also challenging environmental education's tendency towards a naive focus on nature experiences as devoid of cultural and political histories. Where Place-based educators previously had theorized the environment as a central focus of their work, Gruenewald placed the environment at the center, Gruenewald posits there is a political and (Indigenous) culture of a place absent from the

science-based environmental education models that also "lacked an analysis of cultural problems, especially issues of race and class and the issues of conventional schooling" (Greenwood, 2019, p. 5). Fusing the ideas of Paulo Freire and bio regionalists Peter Berg and Raymond Dassmann, he named this nexus a "critical- pedagogy of Place," which has two fundamental educational goals: decolonization and reinhabitation. Decolonization, underpinned by critical theory, aims to undo the damage on and in the ecology of communities by helping them to understand its socio-historical causes, while also thereby allowing for the theorization of emancipatory possibilities to address those causes. Reinhabitation, underpinned by environmental education, aims for people to experientially enact these emancipatory possibilities for change, as they attempt to learn how to reconnect and restore forms of reciprocal and nonharmful relationship with each other and the land and beings integral to their place (Gruenewald, 2003, 2008).

Indigenous Voices in Land Education

The literature chosen for this review represents different attitudes and approaches to research and Place. However, perceived through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview, learning is place-based, holistic, and experiential and collaborative (Wahinkpe Topa, 2022). Taking up education for a Kinship/Indigenous worldview in school is an act of critical pedagogy of place. By doing so, one is contributing to the decolonization of the theoretical/methodological frames of the school's reasoned approach, even as one's pedagogical practice allows for learning along lines of reinhabitation. No longer taken at face-value, the interconnectedness of the total ecology of place is transcended by the historical and cultural aspects of peoples who continue to live in place through time. Indigenous scholars make transparent the urgency to confront and deliberately unsettle the rarely acknowledged relationship between ecologically

devastated places, anti-blackness, and enduring settler colonialism in early childhood education (Nxumalo, 2019; Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2015) that is supported by the dominant Western educational paradigm. Further, Battiste (2013) argues:

> A Eurocentric framework that underpins the educational system continues to have damaging effects for everyone, impacting teachers, administrators, and students, non-Indigenous and Indigenous alike. Indigenizing education is for all students at all grade-levels. We are now all facing the same terrors to some significant degree. The more non-Indigenous people can learn about Indigeneity, the more likely they can become allies for Indigenous sovereignty. More importantly, the greater the chance for a sustainable world. (Dr. Marie Battiste, 2013, in an interview with Rochelle Star, 2014)

If Indigenizing education is for all students at all grade levels, I argue that all teachers must take great care in Indigenizing their pedagogy and design learning experiences that matter to children now and as future adults. Sabzalian (2019) argues that while Indigenous identity and experience are not available to everyone, engagement with Indigenous studies scholarship should become a central component of teacher knowledge.

In "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor," Tuck and Yang (2012) stand firmly in their reminder that decolonization is "unsettling" (p. 7) and "is about the repatriation of Indigenous land and life. Further, it is not a metaphor for other things we do to improve our society and schools" (Tuck & Yang, 2021, p. 3). I take this to mean that decolonization transcends the non-negotiable acknowledgment and intentional teaching about how Indigenous land(s) have been stolen. Rather than just recognizing the enduring generational trauma that settler colonialism has inflicted on the lives of Indigenous Peoples, Tuck and Yang are saying we

should constantly question whether our efforts to decolonize (our education) are truly benefiting Indigenous Peoples or just making us feel good.

As Indigenous people believe they are of and from a place, we cannot hope to decolonize without "unsettling" and granting back land so Indigenous Peoples who have been forced off their land can return and practice living in their lands once more. Indigenous lands are being returned (Kennedy, 2022), albeit not at the magnitude they were taken by any means. Indigenous peoples continue the resurgence of healing the deep cultural wounds they have endured. Through our learning and practicing of their Kinship/Indigenous worldview settler teachers and students can learn the value of Indigenous philosophy and land-based practices, become more empathetic to the needs for and challenges of decolonization, and so become better practitioners of moral forms of right relationship with Indigenous futurity in the places they call home and study within.

To avoid using decolonization as a metaphor, educators must therefore begin to engage robustly with Indigenous Studies (Sabzalian, 2019) and take responsibility for deliberately teaching in informed ways about Indigenous peoples' histories, while supporting children to construct knowledge that illuminates the place-based impacts of settler culture (Greenwood, 2019) in the Place where they live and attend school. Teachers can implement a Critical place-based pedagogy to help children move past seeing and accepting their place at face value and to understand, "What happened here?" "Who was impacted?" Where are they now?" "Why is that?" In this way, children learn beyond the textbook narrative of Indigenous people as being elsewhere or not present. We are still here.

To move into a deeper learning of place, teachers can Indigenize education. Doing so includes two parts. First, by teaching precepts all or most Indigenous communities hold via an

Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview. Second, by focusing on developing a deeper understanding of a particular place through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview. The first can be easier to learn for non-Indian teachers but place-based knowledge can usually only come from the local wisdom handed down to the original inhabitants of the land, if such individuals are still around (Four Arrows, 2019). One way to do this is through teaching the Kinship/Indigenous worldview precept that Education is holistic and place-based (Wahinkpe Topa & Narvaez, 2022). This Kinship/Indigenous worldview precept supports teachers in developing their and their students' understanding of Place through an Indigenous lens.

In what is perhaps the definitive treatment of place as a topic and framework for educational research, Tuck and McKenzie (2015) critique non-Indigenous scholars as not giving land/place more prominence in discussions regarding the interconnection of land/place to Indigenous Peoples. Our task is huge. However, teachers can help students to reinhabit their knowledge and understand of Indigenous peoples and the ways in which they have known their common places. This is a humble but important step towards a decolonial movement that can support mass awareness of the need for re-localization along the more sustainable lines that can become available through Indigenizing education.

Main Themes and Discussion

Feeling and Emotions

Several articles in the search results pertain to the role of emotion (Bartos, 2013; Chawla, 2006; Grimshaw & Mates, 2022; Lloyd & Gray, 2014; Tooth & Renshaw, 2009, 2020) in place-based education. "Place" has complex meanings and interpretations depending on how it is used in education (Dentzau, 2014; Gruenewald, 2008). How people experience a place, their cultural lens upon it and the situation that characterizes their experience there all impact the

emotions they will have and come to associate with a place and the outcomes that are produced in learning about it. Place-based education can increase positive feelings towards a place as learning is an emotional experience and as people have positive emotional experiences of place, they will want to return to and extend care for it—including advocacy of and for it, if necessary. Alternatively, negative emotions attached to place leave us not regarding place or wanting to be there. This, in turn, can lead us to "othering" place.

Feelings of joy and happiness can be attached to children's experience of place as they develop a fondness for a place. Dentzau's (2014) work highlights the experience of 5th-grade students' connections between earth science learning and their lived experience in local parks, beaches, and mountains. As children spend much of their early lives in schools, this is a crucial time for children to form positive attachments to place. The role of the teacher and how they have established relationships with their students cannot be understated here. From an educator lens, how we structure our learning spaces' pedagogical and organizational spheres determines how much autonomy children will feel they have over their lives in school (Levi, 2020), and this impacts their agentic engagement (Reeve, 2013). For example, traditionally, children are managed through classroom and schoolyard management strategies that seek to render them powerless. When children have agency in learning, they feel they have some control over their lives, giving them a strong sense of identity and belonging, increased confidence, and lower anxiety. As emotions and learning are inseparable and (Osika et al., 2022), teachers can transform the emotion possibilities of learning in and out of the classroom by giving children more freedom in their spaces. This can be done by giving them a voice in how they want their classroom to be. In co-establishing norms, children are learning to share power, not

experiencing power as authoritarian rule over them or their expressing such rule over another. This change leads to more joy in learning and a sense of well-being at school.

The curriculum is another sphere in which to include children's voices. Asking them how they can best learn, demonstrate what they know, and share their learning with others goes a long way to creating more joy in learning at school and establishes a fondness and desire for the school community. Alternatively, children can learn not to care about place contexts in other neighborhoods or beyond what they are told is worthy of their attention. In learning about coal extraction, K-2 children learn about non-renewable mineral resources and how they benefit our lives. The problem is that these places are not local, are in someone else's backyard, and the destruction is for the benefit of consumers. Tension arises when the "othering" of a place occurs as the local communities benefit from the jobs created in the industry. However, they also will suffer from the outcomes of the mining process. Children as consumers will benefit from learning early on about alternatives to the use of non-renewable energy resources and in later years about the health impacts of coal mining. In this way, the belief that destroying othered places is canon in most science courses (Hufnagel et al., 2018) and goes unquestioned can be a point of exploration.

Tooth and Renshaw (2009) explore emotional experience through the role of narrative, drama, and deep reflection and how they are foundational in remembering ourselves, actions, motivations, and place. These elements envelop students in sensory experience that helps them to understand the interconnection of people and places. The authors argue that narratives and deep natural experiences can lead to mind-body learning of an integral and holistic kind. Further, they extend a focus upon the relational and emotional aspects of experience to the more-than-human world and affection for a place associated with family love and security (Chawla, 1992) and for place itself (Tooth & Renshaw, 2020). Children are innately attuned to

nature and respond with wonderment, awe (Costa & Kallick, 2008), and joy in discovering new phenomena. Over time, they can grow to love their place. However, sadness and anger can arise if they experience a negative emotion or ambivalence (Chawla, 1992) in a place or the place they have grown fond of has been damaged. Having the opportunity to express their emotion through drama can help them process feelings that stem from the desecration of a place they care about.

Developing a sense of place involves feelings of belonging and attachment that can lead to students' well-being and identity with it (Grimshaw & Mates, 2022). Taking ownership of place's history makes children active participants in the telling of the story of their place. Children can then develop new ways of seeing themselves in places as they connect the past, present, and future therein. Although Grimshaw and Mates (2022) speak to place in the development of a sense of its heritage for students, it does not go past settler heritage. However, in telling stories of their place, children can think critically and develop new ways of seeing into the history and culture of others in places. Teachers can encourage students to continue going back in time to unveil Indigenous stories of place. Furthermore, students can be encouraged to inquire about the Indigenous cultures of the place and to learn about Indigenous history and culture from these descendants given that their cultural knowledge has been sustained through time and not erased through assimilation or separation from traditional space.

Attachment

In her work, *The Ecology of Environmental Memory* (1986), environmental psychologist Louise Chawla's categorizes four forms of childhood place attachment: Affection, Transcendence, Ambivalence, and Idealization. Affection, specifically, is traced to happiness and security and is rooted in a fondness for places of our youth and the feelings of warmth for

the people and place. Transcendence moves beyond our relationship with the people in the places to being in relation with the outer world in a one-to-one communion. Ambivalence is associated with the place we come from and any negative emotions we may attach to it. Finally, Idealization moves us from local concrete attachment to broader abstract attachment such as through patriotism or imagination, which shapes our ideals. To build attachment, Chawla's (2006) research advocates for the need for children to experience nature directly and have time for free play in nature. The results of her survey work show adults gave attention to their surroundings in four ways: care for the land as a limited resource essential for family identity and well-being; disapproval of destructive practices; simple pleasure at being out in nature; and a fascination with the details of other living things and elements of the earth and sky. This work represents place-based education in that it speaks to the connection to place and its relationship to family identity, giving it a place as a context for cultural formation through the connection and reciprocity with the land where both benefits. In addition to the four forms of childhood place attachments, the connection between child and place begins early with an ever-expanding ring of safety (Chawla, 2007) and well-being, which builds confidence to be outdoors in place. In my experience, children who are insecure in wide outdoor spaces and who are asked how it feels to be there often responded, "I do not (often) go outside, to the beach, to the park, or to the mountains." Some students share that their parents do not feel safe outdoors either. For this reason, providing opportunities for children to develop the affection and transcendence attachment to place early on is of high importance if they are to grow into adults that love and are willing to care for their place.

The development of children's positive relationships and understanding of the interconnection of place, body, and self at a time when a sense of place begins to occur is

explored in Bartos's (2013) 9-month ethnographic (photo) study of 120 9–11-year children. The research applies a feminist and humanistic framework that argues two points: (a) place meaning develops through the experience of sensory emotion and voice with their environment, and (b) whereas adults are more intellectual about place, children are more sensually engaged and develop a sense of place over time.

In my experience, children are more sensuous with their environments than adults. They can become entranced by natural environments and lose themselves in exploration and focused imaginary play for hours. In our tech-centric age, parents are often distracted with their phones, even while in nature. However, as viewed from the predominant medical model, these same children might not be seen as sensuously engaged in nature, but rather could be labeled as hyperactive, unfocused, or "squirrely." In this medical/pedagogical framework the adults remain the intellectuals trying to get the kids to settle down and remain on task doing what adults want them to do. I can see why a sensuous school experience would lead to enjoying the place of their school. All of their senses, then, would be receptive to the school's emotional climate, the teachers' emotions, and their learning experiences. Knowing this adds credence to letting children use cameras to study their lifeworlds, as such tools can allow them to demonstrate their "ways of seeing" the world, as a different reality than that which may be experienced by adults. Lloyd and Gray (2014) argue that pro-environment attitudes correlate with children's time in nature and that children form their worldviews based on the content, experience, and context of learning. As teaching is never neutral, teachers consciously choose what they will present to students as curriculum. The content chosen will shape children's values and beliefs. if our mission is to reinhabit place through the decolonization of education, our curricular content must include Indigenous cultural histories of place form an early age. However, being in nature

is not enough. Children need to care enough (Chawla, 2007) to develop a deep love and affection for the planet (Orr, 1993). They can develop love and affection if they understand their interconnectedness and impact on place. These understandings are powerful because teachers are creating opportunities for children to exercise their power in the construction of their knowledge of place, and this is the impetus to a more complex relationship to place because their experience and understanding of it is not simply given, but agentic.

Critical Pedagogy of Place

Gruenewald's scholarship on place evolved to include a critical perspective. Beginning with "The Best of Both Worlds: A Critical Pedagogy of Place," David Gruenewald (2003) expanded on the scarce place-based writing that included a focus upon social and environmental justice, arguing for place-based education to transcend learning about the environment as given to include the need to understand it ethically as a social ecology demanding of right relations and the undoing of past harm. He argues for place-based education to transcend learning about the environment as a stand-alone entity to one inclusive of the social ecology towards right relations. Without this form of critical perspective, place-based education can work epistemologically to promote ideological forms of individualism and the othering of place (Seawright, 2014) that reproduce such harm instead and which are complicit in the capitalist culture of consumerism that has led us to the climate crisis. Without a critical framework, place-based educators generally view and teach place through a Western knowledge system, one that fragments the ecology of place into objects to be dominated (Seawright, 2014) and used for recreation, studied and controlled, and made over into resources for economic extraction that displaces the beings there.

Gruenewald (2003) thus posits there is a politics of culture of place. Fusing the ideas of Paulo Freire and bioregionalists, he named this nexus a "critical-pedagogy of place," which has two fundamental educational goals: decolonization and reinhabitation. Decolonization aims to undo harm to the ecology of place-based communities through attempts to learn to name the primary causes of such harm. Underpinning reinhabitation collectively create ways to reconnect and restore their reciprocal relationship with one another and the land (Greenwood et al., 2009, as cited in Andrzjewski, 2009) without doing damage to other humans and nonhumans (Gruenewald, 2003, 2008).

Place-based education must care about and focus attention on the oppression which exists in a place. The oppression here is not solely of groups of people but across the place's collective ecology. A shift, then, in our awareness of place (Seawright, 2014) will help children understand that their actions now and in the future impact the well-being of the collective ecology of Place. Further, the politics and culture of a Place over time illuminates the people who inhabit(ed) the place and their ways of knowing related to the place. To understand a place robustly and seriously, we must transcend uncritical experiences of place, which in present contexts are likely to be productively ideological and in line with hegemonic demands or norms. "Beginning place-based lessons with having students ask questions like, "What is happening here?" "What happened here?" "What should happen here?" What needs to be transformed?" "Conserved?" "Restored or created in this Place" (Gruenewald, 2003) and "What do you notice?" "Who is here?" "Who is not here?" "Where are they now?" and "Why is that?" Creating opportunities where children have the power to pose critical questions, challenge the status quo of Western knowledge systems and transform institutional power dynamics (Gruenewald, 2005) can help towards the reinhabitation of place-based positionality in teaching

and learning. As decolonizing our worldviews and ways of thinking and knowing are supported by critical pedagogy, place-based pedagogy supports a reinhabitation of place by illuminating our relationship with people and the ecology of Place. More recently, In "Place, Land, and the Decolonization of the Settler Soul" Greenwood (2019) illuminates his desire not to be marginalized by the movement to decolonize the land and that the effort to decolonize at the cost of our own cultures we are denying ourselves our heritage which is in itself a form of colonization.

At the time of the publication, *Accountability and Collaboration, Institutional Barriers and Strategic Pathways for Place-Based Education,* Gruenewald (2005) argued that environmental education continues to be marginalized due to the perception of it as simply concerned with wilderness preservation. At this point, he preferred Place-Conscious Education stemming from the social context of Critical Pedagogy and the concept of Freire's (1970) Conscientizacao*,* meaning that wherever one is having an experience or situation that is problematic, the coinciding reflection illuminates the problem at hand. When one is conscious of the problem, they take action to change their relationship with the situation or Place.

Becoming conscious of one's place, feeling the pangs of conscience about the problems experienced there, and then acting transformatively upon those problems in a restorative fashion is what Gruenewald envisions as decolonization and reinhabitation through education. This informs my research in this study. Regarding decolonization, I take Greenwood's call for us to consider how people and places have been harmed and exploited a journey to understand a deeper knowledge of place specifically through the lens of local Indigenous Cultures and their Indigenous Knowledge Systems. Engaging with Indigenous studies scholarship (Sabzalian, 2019) and illuminating and affirming (Gruenewald, 2003) Indigenous ways of knowing through

teaching and learning is in alignment with rather than stop at the knowledge of textbooks (Gruenewald 2003). Teachers must look beyond the textbook canon of Indigenous History and mission projects and reveal how indigenous people have been harmed and exploited through time in our specific context of place.

Reinhabitation means for teachers and students to find spaces within places that can teach us to live well socially and ecologically. I interpret this to mean learning from living Indigenous models where we can learn to regenerate and care for place, as we are regenerated and cared for in turn. In reality, we can begin this work by teaching the value of local Indigenous cultural knowledge, their epistemological approaches, and the ways of being that have allowed them to be in place sustainably. Another early element of such work that is possible is through teaching the restoration of native plants endemic to the region, as recommended by local Indigenous knowledge carriers. From this, students can learn also about the ceremonial, food, and medicinal uses of the plants.

A core tenet of critical pedagogy is that particular forms of knowledge (e.g., hegemonic forms) are valued over others (e.g., emancipatory; humanistic; Indigenous). Decolonizing place through critical pedagogy thus mandates learning how ones experience of and identity with place is likely corrupted by ideology that in fact roots harm therein, while counter-resources of power and knowledge available to the place are drawn upon pedagogically for restorative and transformative ends. Learning to locate such counterhegemonic resources themselves is foundational for the work, as students may well have been enculturated to not recognize them or recognize their value. Reaching out to learn from, and through, the lens of Indigenous cultures and knowledge systems can allow for a process of decolonizing place to begin for students.

Teachers much also challenge misinformation about Indigenous histories in students' textbooks. It is important that they move beyond such texts and basic credentialing norms to engage with scholarship in Indigenous Studies, and by so doing, help students to reflect on historical forces of genocide upon Indigenous peoples and their places, while also providing opportunities for the recognition of the many historical contributions made to society by Indigenous peoples, their resilience, and ultimately their dignity and power.

The last major finding of my literature review on critical pedagogy of place is that, without reflection and contestation, knowledge in schools will default to the hegemonic support of privileged social groups (Freire, 1998). Forms of knowledge available, even in the classroom, that diverge from hegemonic norms will often be othered, discounted, and cast at a deficit. Students who maintain such knowledge will be left feeling backwards (Bowers, 2005a). While the cultural knowledge of students will not always be positively place-based, the acknowledgment of its legitimacy within schools can help students to find belonging in the place of school, reflect on the non-universality of predominant forms of curriculum and pedagogy, and envision themselves as learners with agency to make affirmative change in the place which they learn.

Deeper Knowledge of Place

Place-based pedagogy has traditionally viewed place superficially by focusing uncritically on the natural environment there, while failing to reflect upon the deep history of cultural change that is also present and informs any place-based inquiry. Though reflecting upon and relating to that deep history does not only mean only learning about Indigenous inhabitations of place, it is a necessary element of any lesson about a place's meaning and character. The historicity of Indigenous Peoples in the land is not often included in studies of

place (Bartos, 2013; Dentzau, 2014; Patten, 2021). I say "in" the land because the perspective of Indigenous culture is that their origin stories tell of being from the land, not separate from it. When applying a critical pedagogy framework to the study of place, we therefore can open a necessary and underutilized portal to deeper learning that illuminates ever present cultures through a deeper reading of the community's historical text of place.

A critical pedagogy framework is crucial as it questions our epistemologies of place and seeks to transform our dominant worldview and ways of being in it. In this, our prior knowledge of place can be transcended, as new knowledge about it becomes made available through critical reflection. But in the case of a critical pedagogy of place, such new knowledge may begin as learning to have awareness of the cultural history of Indigenous peoples who have inhabited a region, as well as learning to recognize the value and legitimacy of such knowledge. With these established, learning to understand how place has been shaped by political, economic, and cultural factors (including the difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous forms of the same) becomes central to a critical pedagogy of place work as well. In this way, critical pedagogy can illuminate the systems of power colonizing and inhabiting a place, and how they seek to legitimate privileged knowledge forms about it. Coming to understand how privileged knowledge is cast pedagogically and curricularly in schools, and how schools can work institutionally to reproduce and maintain unjust and unsustainable systems of power is to know place on a deeper level.

A deeper knowledge of place argues that teachers examine the relationship between place and schools by exploring the correlations between the pedagogical/curricular, organizational, and socio-ecological system contexts of schools and changes in place over time By learning to know how these system contexts work materially and ideologically to benefit

some, while harming others, that which is or has been unrecognized in place can be addressed and aspects of the decolonization and reinhabitation of place can become possible. This form of critical pedagogy, then, makes place into a primary text from which students can learn, experientially, while posing problems about how differing forms of power may work there, and to what and whose ends.

Indigenous Knowledge Systems

The theme of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS; Knopf, 2015) is synonymous with Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK; Chisholm Hatfield et al., 2018). Together these systems represent a body of beliefs, observations, practices, innovations, and oral and written knowledge that are passed down through generations. They are underpinned by an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview (Wahinkpe Topa & Narvaez, 2022) in which Indigenous peoples view themselves as interconnected with and informed by the ecology of nature. In their book, *Restoring the Kinship Worldview: Indigenous Voices Introduce 28 Precepts for Rebalancing Life on Planet Earth,* Topa and Narvaez (2022) state:

> "Indigenous Worldview" does not belong to a race or group of people, but Indigenous cultures who still hold on to their traditional place-based knowledge are the wisdom keepers of this original Nature-based worldview. All people are indigenous to Earth and have the right and the responsibility to practice and teach the IW precepts. All have the responsibility to support Indigenous sovereignty, dignity, and use of traditional lands. (pp. 4–5)

The Western science human/nature duality can be traced back to the Epic of Gilgamesh (Kahn, 2010) and breaks with an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview which stems from thousands, if not millions, of years of intelligence developed through direct connection with the

evolving land. By restoring children's access to nature through Indigenous storytelling about nature, or via other forms of Indigenized teaching, again illuminates and counters the relationship between power and knowledge in schools.

Several studies have examined the use of Indigenous storytelling and Indigenous ways of knowing in children's education. Streelasky (2017) demonstrated the positive impact of a school's collaboration with Squamish Indigenous elders and community members toward the revitalization of native language and culture for a diverse group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous early elementary students. More recently, Streelasky (2020) worked with teachers who incorporated Coast Salish ways of knowing provided by an Indigenous educator and other local community members to teach for a deeper understanding of Salt Spring Island. The historical, placed-based, Indigenous knowledge perspectives on the island's vegetation and animals were explored by methodologically engaged by integrating Indigenous Knowledge theory with critical pedagogy and a funds of knowledge framework.

A premier study with non-Indigenous middle school students (Kinch et al., 2022) applied a place-based learning framework that taught students about relationship with ecosystems through the use of narratives by the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. Cherokee community members offer storytelling to Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK). Three themes that emerged from the work were that this approach could support cultural literacy (including enjoyment though education), student well-being, and a greater respect for nature.

More recently, Bocko et al (2023) expressed the ongoing evolution of place-based education, demonstrating how an upper elementary educator grounded their place-based teaching across in Seawright's (2014) three camps of place-based education: liberal, critical place-consciousness, and Indigenous place-based education.

Several scholars (Johnson, 2012; Langran & DeWitt, 2020) advocate for reading place as a text that can contribute knowledge about the concrete experiences of communities that are grounded in shared histories, stories, and common political problems. In this way, decolonization and reinhabitation occur through "reading" the way people have been harmed and exploited through time and take social action that improves the social and ecological life of places (Greenwood, 2003). Learning about and recognizing the value of Indigenous Knowledge Systems as they pertain to Place/Land Education can help people to redress historical harms and work for place-based healing as a form of reinhabitation.

Johnson (2012) and Langren et al (2020), along with Eijck (2010), illuminate the powerful necessity of illuminate Indigenous knowledge Systems as a way of living with the land in a place-conscious fashion, as opposed to a place framework offered by Western science, which seeks to know it by abstracting knowledge about it, objectifying its attributes, and which fails to distinguish rooted or ancestral knowledge of place from that which is held by those with only a transient connection. The tension herein hinges in how Indigenous peoples view the land of their place and themselves interconnectedly, as Western science casts "it" as a "thing" that we may identify with because of its value to us only, an exploitative relationship.

These studies represent the need for teachers to bring Indigenous history and culture to the forefront by reading deeply into place as text. As children learn how Indigenous Peoples see themselves as part of the land, their western views of their relation to land may shift resulting in greater care for the land of their place as well as for the good of Indigenous futurity. This gives weight to Battiste's (2014) call for Indigenizing education for all.

Further Research Needs

The onset of this critical place-based literature review recognized the need for criticality of social and educational power relations that work to negate children's voices in and about their learning. The literature in turn suggested the need to provide students opportunities to use their power to share ideas, question assumptions, and pose problems for deeper learning. As teachers can use their power to limit knowledge or productively deepen understanding of what is learned we must begin by acknowledging and then dismantling the systems of oppression (Tuck & Yang, 2012) within all spheres of the schooling system (Levi, 2020). One such sphere is the pedagogical sphere, where teachers use their power productively with two ends in mind. First, students must have the freedom to learn in life enriching ways (Rosenberg & Eisler 2003). This approach creates a space where students can question assumptions, state opinions, and are authentic. Secondly, having freedom to learn in life enriching ways, teachers can make the foundational move is to Indigenize learning and teach students to recognize Indigenous Knowledge Systems as a different form of knowledge and relationship to the place over a long historical period.

Three areas of critical Place-based pedagogy that need further study are as follows:

1. Place-based phenomenological research with elementary school children, specifically in grades 3, 4, and 5, as this research is scarce.
2. Exploring phenomenological approaches that provide insight into the lived experience of learning through a critical place-based pedagogy. This includes understanding how children learn about place and culture through a historical-critical perspective and how they inquire about impacts on ecological phenomena,

including human and
non-human animals would benefit classroom teachers.

3. Lastly, research applying critical place-based pedagogy through relationships of power and knowledge. This area of study is currently lacking and has the potential to shape children's understanding and worldviews, and influence society.

Traditionally, teachers teach and children learn history through the lens of settler colonialism. As settler colonialism underpins the pedagogical, organizational, and system spheres (Tuck et al., 2012; Levi, 2020) of education, teachers and students are unaware of their participation in settler colonial habits and norms. Alternatively, they can learn to view the world through the perspective of the oppressed and help deconstruct structures that maintain oppression, while learning to reinhabit the place in the world they live along qualitatively different lines. The outcomes of this research demonstrate that children are portals to ways of being in the world that are transformative for everyone.

Summary

Chapter II illuminates the literature reviews and reasons for including critical pedagogy, place-based pedagogy, and Kinship/Indigenous worldview precepts as a form of theoretical framework for my pedagogy and study of it here in this dissertation. The chapter began with an interpretation and discussion of power through a Foucauldian lens, with a focus on how such relates to an educational setting and the rationale for including specific literature. The chapter continued with a discussion of critical pedagogy's diverse roots, exploring the ways in which the relationship between power and knowledge were taken up by seminal figures. A chronology for the idea of a place-based pedagogy was then provided, with a similar focus upon foundational figures for the field. Out of this, central themes for the work were identified, with a particular

focus upon the need for Indigenizing education and learning to value the knowledge Indigenous peoples have about place and why our knowledge of the same is likely insufficient by comparison.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHOD

What is Phenomenology?

To attempt to answer my research question, "How can teaching through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview augment children's connection and love for place?" I applied hermeneutic phenomenology to explore the lived experience of the students as a phenomenon resulting from them learning about and seeing their place/community through a Kinship/Indigenous worldview. Phenomenology is both a philosophy and a research method aimed at discovering how events, objects, and emotions appear, present, or offer themselves in lived experience or consciousness (Van Manen, 2017) as the experience occurs. Hermeneutic phenomenology is a qualitative research method that allows researchers to study how experiences, traditions, and culture shape ordinary everyday practices. In his text, *Researching Lived Experience*, Van Manen (2016) stresses that educators should guide their human science research in education with pedagogical principles that reflect on the texts of lived experiences and practical/actual actions of everyday life. I agree with Van Manen that the outcome of scientific research (in education) is to increase our thoughtfulness and practical resourcefulness or tact in our experiences with students.

To clarify, intentionality is a term most closely related to phenomenology (Sokolowski, 2000) and means that every act of consciousness, every experience, is interrelated with an object and applies to the theory of knowledge. This is important here because intentionality counters the long-lasting Cartesian philosophy of mind-body duality and its correlative view of human consciousness that argues for an idealistic nature of knowledge, not one learned through experience where new phenomena present themselves to us (Sokolowski, 2000).

The most widely used approach in education is hermeneutic phenomenological research where researchers apply interpretive and descriptive methods to examine the subject's lifeworld (Hatch, 2002) as it is lived (Van Manen, 2017). In research with children, interpretive phenomenology aims to reveal the child's experience as interpreted through the researcher's lens, along with their reflection upon and recollection of their own childhood experiences. Further, it is a way to effectively wake up our own inner child, drawing upon our own historical sensibilities of childhood, which as researchers then gives life to our observations and descriptions of the children we observe (Danaher & Briod, 2005). This is an empathetic observational form in that I can reflect on my childhood experiences and know what it feels like to be a child in the world, with measures of freedom similar to those my students feel that they have at home and in school. Again, phenomenology shows that the mind has a socially conditioned nature, and that it acts and manifests itself out in the open of public experience (Sokolowski, 2000). Therefore, when I observed or made a personal connection to a child's experience phenomenologically, it was because I knew what they could be thinking and feeling due to the grounding of my own past experience.

To do phenomenological research is to be curious about our world and to ask questions about those experiences we may have of it. There are several stages to doing hermeneutic phenomenological research (Van Manen, 1997). Initially, the researcher:

1. Turns to a human experience or phenomenon which seriously interests them and commits them to the world.
2. Investigates the experience as it is lived rather than how they conceptualize it.
3. Reflects on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon (i.e., coding).
4. Describes the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting.

5. -Maintains a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon.
6. Balances the research context by considering the parts and whole of the phenomenological experience.

Phenomenological researchers frame generic forms of questions such as, “What is the nature of this phenomenon?” So, then, the core question for my research is, “What is it like to be a child learning about place through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview?”

Why Phenomenology?

Although there are several reasons for collecting empirical data in research with school children, historically (McShane & Flanders, 2018), empirical research done with and on children has positioned them as objects of the research process, a distinct population for the collection of quantifiable data rather than as people with valuable qualitative experiences to contribute towards the understanding of their lifeworlds (Greene & Hogan, 2005). Mills et al. (2006) emphasize the need for researchers to align their research paradigm with their research topic (and methodology) as the foundation of a robust research project. My critical/ideological and constructivist/interpretivist paradigms are shaped by my personal history of contextual life experiences that has included both life-enriching and coercive moments, all mediated by power relations that were at once socially and historically constituted (Ponterotto, 2005). Hermeneutic phenomenology corresponds to an inquiry stance that centers an intimate researcher-participant interaction that is informed by an immersion in the participants’ world over an extended period of time. My research paradigms framed a naturalistic research design in which the research was ensconced in the community and day-to-day lives of the research participants who attend my school and in partnership with a local Indigenous Elder and educator.

Phenomenology aims at discovering how events, objects, and emotions appear, present, or offer themselves in lived experience or consciousness (Van Manen, 2017) as the experience occurs. My motivation for choosing both critical-ideological and constructivist-interpretivist paradigms is that in addition to having personal life experiences that were both rich with experience and rigid, which shaped my assumptions, both paradigms lend themselves to phenomenological research methods. The methods for gathering materials in the research process involved the students and I learning together to construct our knowledge about place and the data collected and interpreted gave voice to the students' experiences.

Ontologically, I feel as part of the nature which surrounds me, which can be challenging to explain because not everyone shares my world-view of what constitutes an earth-being. Although I understand my intimate relationship with the local and planetary ecology, my experiences and contexts shape my reality. Living is learning, and people have their knowledge base developed in particular contexts over time (Dewey, 1958). From a personal perspective, on the one hand, to exploring my community as a child with some autonomy lead to rich learning experiences about the whole ecology of place to which my community belongs—including the place's relationship to the larger city, the people who were there, the local rivers and streams, horse stables, parks, as well as the institutions located there such as schools, places of worship, and commercial businesses. Over the years those experiences have shaped how I view natural spaces, people, and animals and I have grown to appreciate and want to care for them all. With more than two decades of working with children in non-coercive, power-with environments, I have obtained deep tacit knowledge about how children are shaped by rich experiences and relationships that are reciprocal and dialectic and work to foster a learning environment that is conducive to learning and students' social emotional, academic, and developmental needs

(Rimm-Kaufman & Sandilos, 2011). Co-creating these types of learning environments with children maintains my confidence that the deeply memorable and transformative experiences we produce together can influence their worldview transformatively.

Juxtaposing the rich experiences I have had outside of school in my community with the rigidity of school-based experiences, I have become sensitive to the coerciveness of the school system. Bearing witness to the coercive harm done to children in the name of education shapes how I view schools as places of oppression, and I have made it my work to recognize and deconstruct those oppressive systems that can inhabit schools where I can use my power to do so.

My epistemological stance in this research is multi-faceted. As a critical pedagogue who studies and engages power in education, my work takes place in a critical paradigm. Applying an Indigenized and progressive commitment to student-centered experiential engagement with nature and the world speaks to a constructivist commitment. Giving voice to the experience of children's living and learning and how I find out what children can know speaks to hermeneutical phenomenology interpretive paradigm. Education requires a deep understanding of human experience, challenging common attitudes, and recognizing the importance of individuals in seeking and creating meaning (D'Addelfio, 2017). Hermeneutic phenomenology sheds light on some aspects of pedagogical practice that are often neglected in research but deeply felt by authentic educators seeking to address within their concrete situated questions such as: What can I do for this person? What can I say in this classroom, in this moment? (Friesen et al., 2012).

Axiologically speaking, I was aware of the value biases that could have influenced the research process and outcome during data analysis, and I remained conscious of distributions of

power. Given that the goal was to empower students as learners, as such is a tenet of our school, my positioning as the teacher facilitator was to support students' power, value transformative learning, and use education towards emancipatory social outcomes. This occurred intentionally and intensely over the first month of school during the establishment of our group norms. Additionally, for this research the Kinship/Indigenous worldview precept of "Nonhierarchical Society" was used as the springboard for the establishment of classroom norms.

As someone working also within a constructivist paradigm, my values and lived experience could not be divorced from the research process. Instead, in line with the expectations of hermeneutic phenomenology, as the researcher, I reflected on how my preconceptions were part of the analysis process (Moran, 2000). Professor of Human Development and Child Studies, Marc Briod PhD, and Teen researcher Tom Danaher (2005) state:

> Access to children— "childhood"—rests upon a radical empirical fact. "To be human means that one is or was once a child. The experience of being or having been a child is known to every person as an essential condition of his or her existence' (Briod, 1989, p. 115). The experiential threshold to a child-as-child is discovered through remembering and re-imagining childhood's lifeworld: the world as directly meant and immediately experienced. But this avenue of research is largely closed to adult understanding until and effort is made to attend to methods that open us, as researchers, simultaneously to the subject matter and to the child we once were. (p. 218)

Phenomenology and Critical Pedagogy

Ontologically, in experiencing the world, children construct their knowledge in the context they experience and how they have been taught to perceive a phenomenon. Through

prior knowledge of experience, each child brings forth their own socially and culturally constructed reality to build on which can often conflict with other children's realities (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Epistemologically, my constructivist paradigm parallels how learning is a social act, and children and teacher researchers co-construct their knowledge (Stuhmcke, 2012) as they investigate, reflect, and engage in discourse to make meaning of their experiences. The power dynamics of the interactions between the children and myself during the research underpinned the authenticity of their lived experience. Power plays a role in how safe children feel and can limit how they express themselves outside of school and during interactions such as interviews and dialogue. The role of power and knowledge presented itself as I made a conscious decision to deepen understanding of place by having my class explore through a phenomenological lens informed by an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview rather than through a mandated mechanistic-based curriculum and its disassociated disciplinary subjects.

Conducting research through hermeneutic phenomenology allowed me to understand how children perceived and viewed the experience of learning outdoors in their community, while also reflecting on my own experience of what it means to learn outdoors in place with freedom to be myself. As such, my biases as a researcher could not be excluded from the research. As someone with rich experiences of outdoor learning, I had a connection and perspective to add to this study. From my perspective, learning outdoors situated the experience in opposition to the industrial enclosure of the classroom and its seat time and illuminated the way in which schools (regardless of how they operate) are situated within larger ecologies of place. In my professional place of practice, my school confers me with the autonomy and power to choose to teach in ways that support the democratic and humanistic engagement with those

larger ecologies (Dewey, 1997) or to otherwise socially and culturally reproduce hegemony (Freire, 2020). I chose the former for the work of this project.

Phenomenology and The Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview

In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty and Smith (1962) augmented the work of Husserl and Heidegger. He believed that our most basic experience is already full of meaning. For Merleau-Ponty, phenomenology peels back the layers of lived experience to rediscover that first experience which he called the "primacy of perception" (Racher & Robinson, 2003). Merleau-Ponty promoted phenomenological reductions to help us see our experience in a new light and not rely simply on reflective or pre-reflective experience (Moran, 2000). Rather, he sought ways to help people connect to the meaning of their primal knowledge which existed prior to anything that they had learned. In *Natural Science and the Loss of Creativity*, Gregory Cajete (2006) wrote about carrying the Indigenous ancestral wisdom into the 21st century where environmental challenges require us to live differently with nature. He refers to Merleau-Ponty's observation that in

> reawakening the basic experience of the world, we are returning to the things themselves. It is the return to that world which precedes knowledge, of which knowledge always speaks, and in relation to which every scientific schematization is an abstract and derivative sign language. (Cajete, 2021, p. 256)

For this research I took this to mean that we need to learn to see nature through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview, which is available to each of us as a primordial sense of worldly being, rather than to objectify and control nature as external to us through a mechanistic worldview such as many of us have learned through school and as part of a general paradigm of being-in-the-world that is the modern Western imaginary.

Phenomenology and Place-Based Pedagogy

Throughout this research children experienced a renewed relationship to place multiple times over several weeks, with each experience emphasizing the observation of a different aspect of the place to which they could turn their attention. As the experiences unfolded, the participating children reflected on their feelings during the learning sessions through reflective writing and illustrations made in their Natureculture journals, through whole group discussions, and in post-experiential surveys I conducted. In this way, place-based pedagogy sat within the philosophical tradition of phenomenology. Further, claiming primacy of place is transformative (Gruenewald, 2014) in that as we become aware of place in a fuller sense, which includes the time of learning to become more aware of it, we become more invested in it. The increased awareness and investment are the ground for critical futurity and the possibility of different inhabitation.

Applying Phenomenology to My Dissertation Questions

This hermeneutic phenomenological research aimed to study the lived experience of school children who engaged in place-based education through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview. I valued children's realities and lifeworld experiences and interpreted my observations, their interview responses, Natureculture journal reflections, and Photovoice descriptions to know what it was like for them to explore their place/community (Van Manen, 2016) through the Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precepts. The pedagogy in this research differed from a prescribed and mandated curriculum in that, although it was based on California History Standards of pre-Columbian societies, I wanted this generation of students to move beyond the standardized knowledge of the Indigenous People "of the past and pre-Columbian" as presented in California History texts (Sleeter, 2002). Additionally, the

students learned through many place/community walks, presenting an alternative learning context.

To support children in thinking through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview, I began by introducing the Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precepts (Wahinkpe Topa & Narvaez, 2022) in the classroom one at a time. Although many of the Kinship/Indigenous worldview precepts are introduced and applied by the children throughout the year, the Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precepts specific to this research were: Non-hierarchical Communities, Nonanthropocentrism, Learning as Experiential, Collaborative, Holistic and Place-Based, and All Earth Entities Are Sentient. Through discussions students gained an understanding of the precepts, and their connection to our school's ways of being. Then, with the assistance of Indigenous Elder and Tongva culture teacher, Michael Whitehorse Aviles, these precepts were woven as a throughline across all aspects of the learning community and their experiences. Discussions about how the Kinship/Indigenous worldview precepts align with our school tenets are available in Appendix E. For example, the precept of nonhierarchical community connects to Nonviolent communication (Rosenberg, 2004), meaning that our learning community attempts to regard one another, regardless of age, as a person worthy of recognition, compassionate communication, and opportunity to engage in conflict resolution. Additionally, practicing Nonviolent communication (Rosenberg, 2004), in a no punishment/no rewards learning environment meant that when children caused harm that was beyond conflict resolution, they were returned to the community through restorative justice practices that coincided with the Kinship/Indigenous worldview precept of conflict resolution as a return to community.

Learning through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview was viewed as experiential, collaborative, place-based, and holistic. I make this point because taking children outside of the school and into the community for the research freed students from the constraints of four walls. Learning about place, the one square block of the community where our school is situated, allowed for the students to engage in a more collaborative form of learning and dialogue about their experiences (Gadamer, as cited in Van Manen, 1990) rather than experience their education through direct (objective) instructional methods.

Children revisited primordial and indigenized experiences of place. Those experiences were used as points of reflection and further critical pedagogical examination of why they did not know about or value that form of experience, which was available to them all along but never attended to. In this respect, the Kinship/Indigenous worldview precept that proposes learning as experiential, collaborative, place-based, and holistic opposes a disconnected mechanistic view of the world. Engaging this precept thus required a relearning of place for students in which they acted deliberately to attend to each element of their place.

Prior to each walking field trip, a class dialogue about the element of place under consideration that day occurred, and the field trip then illuminated that aspect experientially through the type of "slow looking" which leads to deeper thinking (Tishman, 2017). This deeper thinking then allowed students to perceive how each element of their place related to another as the project unfolded. The phenomenological method was optimal as it served to take us back to our original experience, a kind of re-learning, of the world by "re-awakening the basic experience of the world" (Merleau-Ponty & Smith, 1962).

Sample Size

In qualitative research, the sample sizes are generally small. Bartholomew et al. (2021) studied various sample sizes by those using a phenomenological approach. The average sample size was 16 participants for all studies sampled. Additionally, the study found a correlation between sample size and the quality of the research. Large sample sizes were related to lower quality studies overall. Whereas a sample size of 4 to 10 participants is advised for studies conducted by professional doctorates (Clark, 2010), it has been argued that a single participant study could be justified, provided that they could generate a particularly rich or compelling case (Smith, 2004). However, Ellis (2018) has suggested a sample size of between 6 and 20 individuals. For an interview-based study's credibility, enough interviews to allow the researcher insight into the topic are required but this should not be so many as to lose sight of the topic's essence or otherwise dilute it. Although I have a class of 25 students, due to the nature and extent of the research I collected with consent, my research study assessed the data of 6 participants and one alternate participant.

Recruiting Participants and Ethical Protections

Participants were selected from the current roster of students assigned to me, the teacher. The participants were chosen based on their age, sex, and from evaluation that I made to ensure that they hailed from diverse backgrounds, which was gleaned from cumulative files. A Parent Information Letter, and Parent and Child Statement of Consent (Appendix A) were sent home to families for them to review and, if in agreement, sign and return to me. The final list of participants was held confidentially between me and the school CEO. I met with the CEO and discussed my plan for the research including the schedule, timeline, and data collection methods.

A letter for permission to complete the research was secured and attached to the IRB application prior to approval for the commencement of the study.

Clearance for the research was attained through the Internal Review Board Process and the research was carried out in accordance with the practices found in the Investigator's Handbook for the Protection of Human Participants in Research. To maintain the fundamental principle of Beneficence in research with children, the tenets of Nonviolent communication principles remained consistent when off campus. The study was conducted and completed without revealing the school or organization, or any of the participants' identities. All classroom students participated in the classroom project, but only the data of children who consented was gathered and used for analysis. Parents and children whose data was gathered and analyzed were informed, and any questions they had were clarified. By signing the consent form they agreed to have their child participate through the use of their artifacts, interviews, and Photovoice recorded discussions and transcriptions. Copies of consent forms are available in Appendix A.

- ***Additional Protections for Children Involved as Subjects in Research (45 CFR 46, Subpart D)*** require that investigators explicitly address the measures taken to protect the rights and welfare of children participating in research.
- ***Definition of Children (45CFR46.402(a))***: Children are defined as "persons who have not attained the legal age for consent to treatments or procedures involved in the research, under the applicable law of the jurisdiction in which the research will be conducted."

- ***Categories of research involving children Subpart D of 45CFR46*** classifies children involved in research into one of four categories depending upon the risks and benefits of the proposed study, which can be approved as follows:
    - **Category of Risk to the child**: *Category 1(Section 46.404) Not greater than minimal risk.*

Limitations

A limitation of this research was a time constraint relating to the time children spend on campus. As students are at the school 2 days each week, this project was completed during the 2 days each week for 6 weeks. Schoolteachers in 5-day school programs would undoubtedly have had more time to weave in multiple subjects to a pedagogical study such as was conducted here.

Delimitations

Given that the school in which I work and conducted this study is a 2-day homeschool hybrid in which the students came from several zip codes, I chose to use the larger school community as our place of learning rather than to remain on campus. This allowed students a broader context of the school in place and for them to experience the same beyond the school's walls and grounds. The questions I researched were specific to children's experiences when learning about place through a Kinship/Indigenous worldview. Children learned about specific Kinship/Indigenous worldview precepts and applied the precepts to their lived experiences during community walks that occurred within the second semester. Initially, the meaning of the Kinship/Indigenous worldview precepts for local Indigenous peoples, along with their history-culture of place, was thought to be beyond the scope of the research project. However, the research project set the context for a simultaneous introduction to a larger curricular project that focused on the Gabrielino-Tongva Tribe, Kizh (Gabrielino), and Chumash peoples who

thrived and continue to live in the South Bay area of Los Angeles and Ventura counties. Although the tribes are recognized within California, all but the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash, are not federally recognized tribes. This information is important because the ultimate purpose of the simultaneous project provided the opportunity for students to create a partnership with Tongva Elder and culture educator, Michael Whitehorse Aviles so as to learn the tribes are still very much alive and a successful part of the greater Los Angeles community.

Researcher's Role

I was a participant in the hermeneutic phenomenological study that researched and gathered data of my students' lived experience of place at school. Phenomenology is an effective way to awaken our awareness of actual childhood by reminding us of what it means to be a child. Such awakening can animate our observations and descriptions of today's children who live in ways similar to those of adults in some respects, yet which are different in others (Danaher & Briod, 2005). My view of children is that for them to feel free to be their most authentic selves at school they need to participate fully in their education, while being able to communicate their emotions both physically and vocally. Education is long overdue for a shift in this way, I feel. If we want such a shift to occur, researchers and teachers need to value qualitative data that is the outcome of children who reflect on their experiences. Otherwise, the research can objectify them and simply turn their learning experiences into controlled populations for study. Childhood is becoming more complex with children spending more time at school. Taking an interpretive approach to phenomenology appealed to me because in my mind it provided greater alignment with the actual process of how children understand, interpret, negotiate, and feel about their lives (Greene & Hogan, 2005) in school places.

As both the teacher and the researcher in this study, I had a unique opportunity to gather phenomenological material with students in a learning environment where we had developed a level of care for one another. I knew the children as their teacher from the prior year and I came to know the new students prior to the study through our time and experiences in the school together. Having gained their trust, I had an emic, or insider's, perspective of the class culture and how the students related with one another. As such, I did not impose new ways of being and had confidence that the participants in my study would relate with one another outside of the school as they did within it (Morris et al., 1999). My role also included studying and interpreting the data I gathered through reflections on my own experiences as a child, applying reflective modes of hermeneutic phenomenology to the data analysis as such.

Intentionality, in phenomenology, is a concept that suggests that when we are conscious of the world, we directly and meaningfully relate to that which we are aware (Van Manen, 1990). Merleau-Ponty explained intentionality as "the invisible thread that connects humans to their surroundings meaningfully whether they are conscious of that connection or not" (Vagle, 2018, p. 27). As learning is an emotional act, how we feel about what we learn also has an intentionality. In studying the phenomenon of how children learned in place through a Kinship/Indigenous worldview, I was interested in understanding how they meaningfully connected with the elements of place that they learned from, including from each other. Thus, I used my position in the study to help them to attend to what they believed place looked like, sounded like, and felt like for them in those moments of learning about place through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview.

Potential Problems

Given that I worked closely with students over a period of time, there were strategic, personal, and ethical issues to consider (Locke et al., 2013). An area that could have been problematic was that I conducted my research at my current place of practice, which meant I had to take extra steps to ensure that my relationships with the students remained independent of my interpretations of the material they provided. Further, in "backyard" research (Glesne, 2016) such as I conducted, I needed to communicate how the information would not be compromised, as well as how the research process would not place participants at risk.

Creswell and Creswell (2017) consider power differentials to be a potential problem. Although I considered power dynamics in the study, I was not overly concerned about their corrupting role within the research proper, as our school community was committed consciously by all to a power-with dynamic. This meant that the students participated within a non-coercive, conflict-resolution committed, and agency-oriented community where most felt comfortable advocating for themselves. The students, then, used their agency to voice when they did not want to disclose something during an interview, or if they did not consent to being interviewed at all, such as one participant did. Finally, I validated data for accuracy by employing specific procedures for soundness including member checking, suggested by Creswell and Creswell (2018), in addition to rich note taking of lesson observations. As we spent prolonged time in the field, I clarified any biases about the experiences through consistent reflections in my personal research journal before attempting to interpret any of the interview data transcripts or participant dispositions that occurred during the interviews.

Lived-Experience Material Gathering Plan and Procedures

Phenomenology helps us to understand the meaning of people's lived experiences. For this reason, Van Manen (2016) refers to a gathering or collecting of "lived experience" material so as not to objectify the experience as a "thing" gained because the experience is not quantifiable. Methods that were used to gather descriptions of children's experiences thus included pre- and post-community/place learning surveys, experiential descriptions the students made in their Natureculture journals, my own observational notes of the students' lived experiences, unstructured interviews, and Photovoice.

Using a variety of methods to collect data allowed for students to articulate their experiences in multiple formats/modalities which allowed for each individual in the study to communicate from their areas of strength, thereby allowing for greater authenticity, depth, and richness in the answers. For example, a less active student with strength in writing could articulate their experience through writing rather than through observations of their physical learning outdoors. Similarly, a student whose writing skills might not have allowed for a full articulation of their experiences could use speech-to-text software in order to generate reflections in their Natureculture journals or they could elaborate more fully and orally when reflecting on the experience during a following interview.

Pre and Post-Community/Place Walk Surveys

To understand what students already knew about their school's immediate place, students participated in a Pre-Walk Survey before the community/place walks (see Appendix B). This information served as a prior knowledge reference to gauge if and how children were transformed to imagine their place in a new way, or not, at the end of the project, which was determined in conjunction with a Post-Walk Survey.

Developing an Understanding of Kinship/Indigenous Worldview Precepts

Prior to the place walking experiences, extensive time was devoted to developing students' familiarity and understanding of the following Kinship/Indigenous worldview precepts: Nonhierarchical Society, Nonanthropocentrism, All Earth Entities Are Sentient, and Learning is Place-Based, Holistic, Experiential, and Collaborative. Developing the precepts coincided with establishing our classroom norms which began on the first days of school, and which were revisited when each precept was introduced. Vocabulary and concept development through dialogue, reflection, illustrations, and team building occurred during the learning process. For example, the learning activities related to the precept, Holistic Interconnectedness of All in The Universe included the above, with class conversation about and illustrations of the movement of the Sun's energy through ecosystems, the students then represented themselves in the ecosystem pictorially, creating images of the dust of the cosmos moving through them, while demonstrating the commonalities between the elements in their bodies and the most common elements found on Earth. Finally, a reflection on The Gabrielino-Tongva creation story of The Seven Sisters (SannaZan TONALLI Studio, 2021) added to the students' understanding of their interconnection to all in the universe.

Each of six community/place walks was front-loaded with a mini lesson about the week's concept/question to learn about students' prior knowledge and to ensure that the students understood the day's precept/concept/question. Flexibility was necessary here because some students needed to live the experience to facilitate their understanding before class conversation could be meaningful for them. Our Gabrielino Tongva Tribal Elder Michael Whitehorse Aviles helped to develop and reinforce many of the precepts by offering his experience as an Indigenous person who is also a cultural knowledge carrier and a military veteran.

Researcher's Observation Notes

To add information about the students' experiences and my observations from a researcher/participant perspective, I utilized Saldana's (2021) Protocol Writing to create a table where my initial observations were recorded. Observations and impressions along with my preliminary interpretations were written and completed within several hours after each walk (see Appendix B). Additionally, I frequently recorded personal reflections on the research experience overall in a reflection journal. Although it was my intention to record students' sounds, voices, laughter, and screams as the experiences unfolded through the lens of each day's guiding question, I chose to focus on hand recording observational notes about what appeared to matter to the participants and so to remain as close to the experiences with the students as possible. I felt more engaged and intentional to the students as they experienced their place with intentionality. After the walks, I reflected on the experiences in my research journal, focusing through my experience with a once-a-child/learner lens.

Natureculture Journals

Before the beginning of the community/place walks, students created Natureculture (Haraway, 2003) journals and produced field shoulder bags. One time per week for 6 weeks, students, a non-intrusive chaperone, and I engaged in a series of 1 to 1 1/2-hour community/place walks. Questions in the Natureculture journals were structured to elicit participants prior knowledge about place/community. Then, each of the following walk's focus question were structured as: What do we know about the air, water, rock, and soil (for example) in our place/community? Then, what do you wonder about the air water, and rock in our place community? Finally, what is the relationship between the air, water, rock, and soil and humans through space and time? Students then reflected on and illustrated aspects of their experiences,

including sketching chosen natural elements from the walks such as leaves, small scenes, trees, plants, manufactured objects, and any other element of their environment that they found mattered for that experience. We took time to stop during the walks, engaged in reflection, and made quick sketches about our observations and asked or recorded questions about the experience. The short research and discussions about each day's topic as it pertained to our place was met with great enthusiasm as students were researching what mattered to them from the walks and they found themselves as researchers in the project to know more about the place than they knew before.

Photovoice

To document their experiences, each student group carried an iPad during the walks. Student groups collaborated on which photos to take during the place experience, knowing they would choose one to discuss at the end of the project through Photovoice. As the study's aim was for children to communicate their feelings and reflective understandings of lived experiences of learning about a place, Photovoice was chosen as an apt method to present their knowledge summatively during Exhibition.

Based on Freire's critical pedagogy and feminist theory, Photovoice increased student empowerment and participation (Warne et al., 2013) in the learning experiences. Each group was provided with iPads (one per group) and they used these to capture photos of subjects they deemed interesting during their community walks. The photos were then labeled and printed, and participants selected a few images to stimulate group dialogue about why the photos were chosen, why they were meaningful, as well as any thoughts they had about other participants' photos. Viewed through the Kinship/Indigenous worldview precept of Learning as Experiential and Collaborative, Photovoice supported data gathering about students' collaborative activity to

deliberately choose experiential photos of place that they deemed important. Photovoice thus helped to make their thinking and feeling about meaningful elements of place more transparent, providing students greater voice in the work, while positioning them as knowledge makers. This work also added to the students' knowledge of the natural world in their place, allowing them to become more receptive, connected to, and caring for nature. In this way Photovoice moved them towards the precept of Courage and Fearless Trust in the Universe (Wahinkpe Topa & Narvaez, 2022). The Photovoice conversations were recorded and transcribed prior to analysis.

Unstructured Interviews

The most common interviews used in phenomenological studies are in-depth, unstructured, and sometimes semi-structured (Ellis, 2018) in format. In-depth unstructured interviews allow the interviewer to tailor their questions as the interview proceeds for a robust exploration of an issue (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Additionally, unstructured interviews can allow for probing interviewee responses for more understanding, providing answers that are richer and fuller and give greater insight into how the respondent views the world in relationship to the questions at hand. For these reasons, I committed to this form of interview process. Further, in seeking alignment with critical pedagogy, and its desire for authentic and naturalized learning encounters, I kept the interviews as true to the typical form of teacher-student dialogue in which we would engage otherwise and not to add professional informality to our relationship (Hickey, 2020). The unstructured interviews were held within one week of the completion of the place/community walks to elicit from participants their freshest reflections about recollected experiences. Interviews were held during the school day at a time that was negotiated with students and families.

After all the weekly community/place walks were completed, unstructured interviews were held with the participants to gather their thoughts about what they learned, how they felt about that knowledge, and to gather any new questions they now had. Interview sessions were recorded on an iPhone App and transcribed for analysis and theming. I chose to transcribe the participant interviews as a person embedded in the research to add to any nuances of student disposition during the interview, and to clarify any words that may have been interpreted differently by the recording app, performing edits of any unclear/incorrect app interpreted words as necessary. The interviews added insight into the experience from the student's perspective of learning in place and learning from Michael Whitehorse Aviles through the six classroom visits.

The outcomes of the interviews were an opportunity to learn together what students felt about place-based educational experiences facilitated through the Kinship/Indigenous worldview precepts and if and how their perspectives on place and learning had been transformed. Student Natureculture journals were scanned for meaning making of what mattered to the students in those moments in place/community and were used to add voice to their experience.

For ease of access and organization, except for the interview recordings, which were kept on the app, interview transcriptions and data were stored in Google drive documents in my dissertation file. Student Natureculture journals remain in hard-copy and continue to be used. An example of a completed participant field record, Natureculture journal entry, and Photovoice reflection are included in Appendix E: Data and Materials Gathering.

Data Analysis

As researchers, teachers stand back and look at the big picture of what has occurred during the learning process. To this end, they can elicit emerging themes that capture and unify

the nature of the various learning experiences students may have in the process into a meaningful whole (Freire, 2020). The thematization of experience is a crucial part of the phenomenological method as it allows for the study of lived and pre-reflective experience through the reduced collection of the elements that appeared as central and meaningful to that experience. Here, data analysis involved the use of Saldana's (2021) emotional coding to pull themes or main ideas behind the students' responses during the interviews. The themes were then supported by identified isolated thematic statements (Van Manen, 2016) from participants and used to illuminate the details associated with the knowledge about their experiences that they shared.

Isolating Thematic Statements

I applied Van Manen's (2016) selective approach to isolating thematic statements in the analysis of the data from the observations of community/place walks, the Natureculture journal reflections, unstructured interviews, and from that which emerged from the Photovoice exercise. I first read the interview transcriptions several times to get the big picture meaning of the data and how it related to the research questions. Then I selectively highlighted student phrases from the data that showed me, through my reflective interpretation, the participants' lived experience of our place-based lessons together. Recurring phrases became the themes I found that best voiced the essence of the students' learning experiences, including what it was like to learn about place through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview. In all instances, my observation of the student's demeanor was also a part of the analysis of the data.

I chose to conduct phenomenological research because many of the children in my environment have had childhoods similar to mine, characterized by a sense of freedom. Hermeneutic phenomenology involves uncovering and interpreting the meanings of the learning experiences I observed in light of my life history and personal childhood experiences. In these

moments, I looked at children through my memories. Considering children's lives are different today, I could relate to their experiences and acknowledge their feelings in these moments (Danaher & Briod, 2005).

Summary

Chapter III explained how hermeneutic phenomenology was applied to answer this study's questions about how teaching through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview can foster children's connection and love for place. The chapter also discussed the interconnection between phenomenology, the research paradigms informing its use, and the blend of critical theory, place-based pedagogy, and a Kinship/Indigenous worldview that were the foundations of the teaching and learning experiences documented by this research. My role as the researcher and potential problems of my being both researcher and teacher in the research process were discussed, and the nature of the participants involved, the research procedures utilized, and the approach to data-gathering was described. Lastly, the process of theming the data and the use of emotional coding in data analysis were explained.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to observe the lived experience of children learning about place/community through a Kinship/Indigenous worldview and how learning through connection to place might lead to love and care for that place. The study unfolds from a theoretical framework working at the nexus of critical theory, place-based education, and work documenting universal elements constituting a Kinship/Indigenous worldview. Chapter IV reveals the process of how research data and materials were gathered and organized, the voices of participants' experiences as they were lived, and the themes that emerged through data analysis.

Data and Materials Gathering

Does learning about place/community through a Kinship/Indigenous worldview lead to connection and love for place? I set out first to learn about how participants cared for their place of learning prior to the commencement of the place/community walks. To gauge participants' feelings of care for place/community at the beginning of the study, they completed a pre-walk survey. Table 4.1 shows the participants' statements about how much care they felt that they had about their school place. The result of the initial survey guided the intention of the place/community walk experiences, along with the scaffolding of participant understanding that might need to occur with each walk's pre-lesson.

A post-walk survey was completed at the end of the research study. Table 4.2 shows the post-walk survey results and reveals changes in the participants' level of care for their school place/community. A description of the change in the level of care for place /community by students is discussed below in the Themes section.

Table 4.1

Pre-Walk Survey - How Much Do I Care About My School Place?

Participant	Response
1	"I care about the community houses and people, but I am not entirely attached."
2	"I care a lot about this community partly because this is where I go to school and also this is where I live."
3	"I don't really care about this community, but I kind of do because some of my classmates live in it. I don't really care about it because, besides my classmates, I don't really know what there is to care about."
4	"98% because I know everything/everyone needs care, and this neighborhood is unique."
5	"None of my friends and family live here so I don't really care."
6	"Yes, because a lot of people live here so I care. Also, my school is here. I want the community around it safe. Also, I don't really care, it's just another place where people live."

Table 4.2

Post-Walk Survey - How Much Do I Care About My School Place?

Participant	Response
1	"I care about place/community more now than I did at the start of the semester because I actually know about it now and have a reason to care about it. I care about the people we saw like little Cameron. I know who came before us. In Conor's words, "Turtle Islander's" (the Tongva People)."
2	"I still care the same but the way I see the community is different thanks to these experiences. I am more curious about the animals and plants here."
3	"I care about it as much as I care about my friends (which is a lot) because there are lots of nice people here and I like my school. I've changed in the way I see the beauty in small things more and don't just walk past leaving them unnoticed."
4	"9 ½ out of 10 because this place is where people get knowledge and meet friends. I used to think plants were just other living things. Now I see them as different forms of life and I want to know more about them and the Tongva People who live here. I imagine California without grass and buildings, and it sounds satisfying to live here."
5	"I care about my school community a lot because the people are nice, and I am grateful for that. Also, when I see a tree, I think of what that tree does for us … the experience has made me care for my community. Now I want to research more about it. I also can see my neighborhood in the past by listening to Michael's

Participant	Response
	stories about who was/are here before the [built] neighborhood. I want to know more about our old community and worried about our future community."
6	"I care about it because I spend my time here and there are nice people here. I feel different and see the community different how and recognize what is around me and how they connect"

In addition to pre-walk and post-walk surveys, data gathering included participant field records and Natureculture journals, Photovoice, and unstructured interviews. To facilitate all the students' access to the focus questions for the day's place/community walk, participants completed field records recording their prior knowledge of the element, observations and sketches, and reflections about how it felt to learn "this way."

Upon returning to the classroom after the walks, students added any additional thoughts and reflections or embellished any sketches they had made. The field records were part of the Natureculture journals. Natureculture journals were places for additional research about the day's focus questions and more intentional and detailed illustrations and drawings. These reflections were drawn upon to support and elaborate on the participating students' lived experiences observed during the place/community walks.

Photovoice images increased student empowerment and participation (Warne et al., 2013) as each group was provided with an iPad to take photos representing their perspectives and reflections about each walk's focus. The photos were printed and participants collaborated to

select a few images to stimulate group discussion about why they chose the particular photos and what meaning about place/community the particular image held for them.

Data and Materials Analysis

To best organize the research data to reveal patterns in the words, voices, and reflections toward eliciting the themes within the data that related to the research questions, I began by reading through the information several times to gain a big picture of the experience from the perspective of the students. Proceeding chronologically in my review of the data from that which was first produced to that which came at the study's end, I focused on my observations of the lived experience as it was lived in place/community and referred to my field observation notes to recollect any details of participants' experiences. Reading through the material again, I made notations about themes that emerged in the notes as the research progressed. When the interviews were completed, I garnered selectively highlighted student phrases from the participant field records and Natureculture journals, unstructured interview question responses, and Photovoice examples. Finally, I brought all selected phrases together to form themes that helped me to make sense of the participating children's lived experiences of learning about place through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview and their relevance to the research questions. The themes that emerged from the data not only revealed the meaning of the lived experience, but also highlighted the collaborative nature of the research experience in light of my memories of what it was like to be a child (Danaher & Briod, 2005) with similar experiences.

Recurring themes related to learning about place through a Kinship/Indigenous worldview that were coalesced from the materials included: engaging curiosity; place as interesting, connecting and interconnected; deeper learning through Indigenizing pedagogy; learning to care; and power and safety of place/community. Theme summaries are included

below along with selectively highlighted phrases from observations and interviews supporting the theme.

Themes

Engaging Curiosity

Student excitement was apparent in the enthusiasm they shared while preparing their materials for the walks. Although we were all excited to leave campus for each place/community walk, I had my responsibilities to tend to before we left and rather than stifle their joy, I tucked myself into a quiet corner and took role and made sure that I had all the necessary materials in my backpack. Additionally, when leaving the classroom, the participants' joyful laughs and utterances caused students from other spaces to approach us and ask, "Where are you going?" with some students responding enthusiastically, "on a neighborhood walk!"

During an interview, one participant expressed, "I didn't think that we were gonna actually like walk outside of the school . . . I thought it was just a possibility. It was a pleasant surprise." Although students had an intentional element (e.g., soil) to observe for each walk that engaged their curiosity, they were free to be themselves to notice, wonder, collaborate, and respond to what place/community was presenting to them in those times off campus. One participant connected their experience with flying a glider to a local corporate symbol and exclaimed with joy as they pointed it out, "I want my photo to be of that!"

Students were alive with utterances of excitement about their multiple observations and reacted to intense connections they made with the insects, plants, fungi, birds, trees, and the non-human and human animals. "I found a fun-guy" student comments as he points to his classmate. Yet another participant shouts, "Birds! birds! birds!" "There are so many birds

around here!" "I found it; there it is on the tree!" "I see two crows and a pigeon," and "I hear them … where are they?"

Another participant shared during an interview,

> when we're trying to comprehensively think about (place) for six days … you realize how much there is in the community of a particular subject … I learned a lot from these experiences… it's like in Procreate … you do every layer and you spend a lot of time on it … it's a lot more detailed.

Procreate is a digital art app that allows users to create sketches, paintings, illustrations, and animations. The layering technique enables users to create separate levels within their artwork. Here the participant is referring to what it was like to intentionally observe an element or two or a layer of our place/community each walk. Having several experiences over time, and reflecting on those experiences, helped them to see parts of the whole place/community ecology and how they interconnected. Thinking about the school campus, although we have several bird species as regular inhabitants, the students either do not notice them or if they notice them, they are not expressing their observations.

Place as Interesting, Connecting, and Interconnected

Participants were open to exploring place/community through the Indigenous worldview precepts because they found them relevant and meaningful. During our discussions, they connected the information they read from researched texts, place/community walks, and their questioning of those texts. The re-emerged knowledge they realized they had of their place, the Indigenous perspectives they learned from our discussions about the Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precepts, and their connection with our visiting Tongva culture teacher, Elder Michael Whitehorse Aviles, was transformative.

One participant shared,

> [Learning] about power systems we were thinking through an anti-indigenous worldview [and] we were thinking about what's more powerful than others and businesses who have a lot of money and can do whatever they want … I thought it was interesting because you get to see both perspectives.

I find the use of the words "anti-Indigenous" interesting because those terms are not used in our class.

Another participant expressed "at first, [the walks felt] all pretty normal. But then, I started to feel a little more comfortable after I went on and it felt more interesting as I learned more." On our walks a participant made the observation of two similar trees, one alive and one that, "looked like it was dying" with a concerned look on their face as they viewed the trees.

Another student chose to take a photo of an unfamiliar stubby tree because they were seeing it for the first time, and it was interesting to them. In their interview, they expressed their place-based experiential learning was "really cool because our seeing … through the past and you get to learn about our ancestors and especially with Michael being here … hopefully other schools get to experience what we got to experience!"

When asked about the relationship between the natural environment and what is made by humans, several participants journaled that "man-made things are below, on top of and next to the natural environment . . . [including] houses, cars, lawnmowers, and Christmas decorations." One participant did note that "many trees and the grass are partly co-existing, but everything is on the land."

Lastly, students took an interest in the lack of fences, noticing, "there are no fences" while making the assumption that "people feel safe here." Moreover, they juxtaposed the lack of

fences with the great number of security cameras they witnessed, while waving into the security cameras. At this, I wondered if the waving students were having a quiet conversation with who they imagined was on the other side

During another place/community walk focusing on animals, a participant was drawn to ants. “Awe, it’s huge … I wonder where they are going,” a participant uttered as they knelt down to views ants through their hand lens while another curious student wanted to see what the other student saw and joined them, kneeling down and looking at the ants through their own lens.

Ahead of them, students stopped to connect and listen to the song of the Northern Mockingbird with intentionality. There was no need to ask them to listen, as they were drawn to the songbird’s music. They decided to take a photograph. Another participant spotted a cat across the street in a window and called out, “A cat!” The student’s group decided the cat would be their focus for Photovoice and took a photo accordingly. At the time I could not see the cat. However, the cat was revealed in the photo by a circle and arrow. During a follow-up discussion a few participants viewed the photo and expressed, “we thought the cats deserved to be recognized and … there was a plant next to the cat.” The cat mattered to them and would be acknowledged. Another student, bending down to examine dandelions, noticed a bee flying around a flower. “There’s a bee … I think it’s pollinating,” and they noticed the dew on the leaves as well. “I love the water on the plants … the way it sparkles!” A participant expressed during the interview later how it felt to connect to the soil, rocks, plants, trees, and insects, stating, “I enjoyed it because we did most of the learning outdoors instead of in the classroom. Being outdoors is connecting to nature!”

One of the biggest connections participants made was with a child and their guardians from the neighborhood. “There is a kid on the sidewalk!” Students noticed a child and a dog on

the sidewalk up ahead of them. Because of the magnitude of the encounter this experience is placed here. The child noticed the students and ran onto their lawn and spoke to someone. As we approached, we noticed that the dog was gone. Students observed the child stomping on a rocket system. The child, eyes wide with excitement, was excited to see so many kids. The students acknowledged the child with, “that’s cool!” and “I want to try!” One student ran to pick up the rocket where it landed.

I corresponded with the guardian and one student asked the child, “What are you doing?” The child asked their guardian if he could speak to the students. With permission, the student set up another rocket and sent it high into the air. The students responded with “aah!” and the child, jumping up and down flapping his hands, was delighted with their interest. The child then told the students that they could each have a turn. Those that wanted to took a turn with the child facilitating each turn. Following this, I asked the guardian if we could ask the child his name. She consented and he then told us that his name was Cameron and that he was 4 years old. At this point, I wanted to step back and give the moment space to unfold. Some of us then learned that the guardians were Cameron’s grandparents, and his grandma was a kindergarten teacher for many years. Some of the students spoke to the grandpa about the dog who emerged with him. They were curious about the dog, who we found was named Bobbie. There were multiple connections here: I observed and appreciated the students responding with wondrous awe to the rocket and to Cameron’s joyful excitement about the other kids being there and his being able share his toy and knowledge about how it worked with them. I saw connection amongst all the beings present. I could relate to the students as I remembered excitedly experiencing phenomena like scientific activities and my fascination with physics. Seeing the students relate to Cameron it

was clear that they knew the feeling of science as fun and interesting. We were all feeling the essence of the moment as we had all had the experience of its clear emotional character—joy!

The antithesis to the feelings of joy we had manifested as our resistance to leaving, and by the assumed feelings of related sadness in turn, when it was time to say goodbye. In that moment students were watching Cameron, empathetic to his perceived sadness and, after a pause, the students did their best to maintain connection and let him know that they might see him at the park after school. In fact, Cameron did show up at the field in front of the school the next day and the students acknowledged him and he them. Standing back, ebbing and flowing in and out of the experience, there was clear confirmation of children as meaning makers and as knowers who develop relationally in self-organizing ways when given the opportunity.

Deeper Learning Through Indigenizing Pedagogy

In addition to learning through the Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precepts, Indigenous Elder Michael Whitehorse Aviles, a Gabrielino Tongva Knowledge carrier, military veteran, and artist was invited to share their cultural knowledge with students. Learning in this way transcended typical learning through the direct engagement available to historical content knowledge about the Tongva People, their ongoing successes, as well as their continued challenges today. The students also viewed and valued Michael's art gifts and accomplishments. He asked me if it would be alright if he shared his art skills with the children. I gratefully accepted and agreed for him to share his talent through drawing lessons. Michael began by showing them art that he created when he was their age and then shared the stories of how he received the work he had done previously from his father before he passed. Michael did not realize that the paintings from his childhood had been saved. The lessons about lines, perspective, and shading were inspiring and, for some, their favorite learning experience of the

study. Responding to the interview question, “Do you have a favorite experience in Place and/or learning from Michael?” One participant shared, “The art lesson, [was my favorite] cuz that was fun.”

Another participant stated,

> I thought it was really interesting the way he described shadows and like different lines because when we take art you learn kinds of lines in a different way. You do lines. Diagonal lines may be x’s, squiggly zig zags, all sorts of things. But he was describing what the light “felt” like, like a straight line: bored, downward line: sad, zigzag lines: angry. So, I think if you’re watching someone draw sometimes you can tell how they’re feeling inside based on the way they are drawing.

Another participant expressed, “I liked it when he did the shading lesson.” I then asked the question, “So, learning about his artistic gifts was meaningful?” The participant responded, “Yes!”

I could see Michael’s influence on the way the students observed place/community. One participant made a connection to prior learning, stating, “I definitely learned a lot more about the Tongva People and how they view nature—how everything is interconnected. We learned about the Chumash People and their connection to the land last year.” Here the participant is recalling the previous semester’s project where students learned about the Chumash and their collaborative grassroots effort to establish a Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary (Knipp, 2023). Wanting to support the Chumash People in their efforts, students researched more into the matter and who was involved, who would benefit, and who might suffer. After hearing all perspectives, students proposed writing letters expressing their arguments for or against the sanctuary.

Another student appreciated participating in the learning during ceremony and was grateful for M's willingness to share his cultural ceremony with us. The participant stated, "Probably my favorite place was [the celebration at] the park because there were lots of plants and species of plants and creatures there." A response from a descendant of Paiute Shoshone was, "I appreciated the Smudging ceremony, the smoke smelled really good."

Several participants found the hidden knowledge of Native American history to be their favorite and in their interviews expressed deep empathy for Michael's experience. One remarked,

> My favorite part was where he shared his history with the class and elaborated how he was as a child [in the Sherman Indian School], and I really liked that even though it might be an embarrassing moment or something, he still shared it, and he wasn't afraid.

Reflecting on this, the student offered, "I think he did feel safe because the way he just elaborated and the way he talked felt very comfortable [for me] and it felt like he was comfortable too." Another student expressed, "Yeah, learning about M's childhood was probably my favorite part," then adding,

> Yeah, like he had to go to this special school and he was only three years old and he was taken away from his mother which is really sad and like people used to bully him because of his looks and tell him to go back to where he came from but this is his home so he can't really go back.

Here the participant elaborated on the experience with a serious face and open-hand gesture, "It's just that I like to learn about like problems, and . . . hearing about M's childhood . . . it's really sad to hear and I wish . . . I like wanna like 'fix it' like in the future!"

Learning to Care

In addition to learning to care about Indigenous People's experiences, during the place/community walks and the lessons and discussions with Michael, students learned about the interconnection of all beings in a community. I noticed they began to show signs of observing closely and caring enough to intervene. Noticing a slug on the sidewalk, a participant gestured to those behind them to stop and stated in a high-pitched voice, "there's a slug—we should move it!" They then bent down and searched the grass for a leaf to move the slug, and other students wanted to help and squatted down too. Making connections between organisms and how they came to see them differently, another student stated during an interview, "When I see a tree I don't think that's just a tree. Now I think of how much that tree is doing for us, what insects live inside the tree, and how long that tree has been here." Continuing with his thought, "Trees photosynthesize and create oxygen and give us fruit and they also give us vegetables."

During the interviews, in response to the question, "What do you feel is the most important learning you took away from those place/community experiences?" a participant responded, "I think the insect walk because it taught me to *not* squish insects I see." Reflective in their response, "That they're actually beings that have a life … just like us, just in a different form." The participant became pensive and there was a pause. Their shift in valuing "different forms" of life beyond four-legged animals sprang from encounters and connection with other types of animals in place as the students learned to think of these other beings as worthy of care because caring for them meant caring for us.

Through the experience of learning about place through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview, participants took the time to look and to see place in a new way, recognizing beings they had not noticed before or as worthy of their care. Additionally, participants realized that

school learning could happen in a manner in which place/community is the classroom and not just a place where the classroom is located to house them within. When asked if they would recommend to other teachers to create these types of learning experiences, one participant expressed, “Yes, because it can be a very interesting experience going out and seeing the world but you’re not just walking outdoors again. Sometimes you’re really studying the plants and animals. This time we’re noticing things you’ve never known before.” I noted this participant took their time to notice and observe, creating careful sketches so as to not miss any element. Their quiet contemplation would not be rushed as they were drawn to the learning element of the day, and they took time to acknowledge and document who they encountered in this way, giving them voice in their journal through sketches and words.

One participant focused on people in their homes and how they might have felt while we were walking in their place/community. Upon examining the interview responses and my notes several times, I interpreted the response in two ways: on the one hand, as the participants’ deeper awareness of the potential impact the walks could have on the people themselves living in the community and, on the other, as to a dawning recognition as to the presence of societal power in the participants’ social lives and for the concomitant need for children to exhibit acceptable behavior in public.

Power and Safety in Place/Community

Over the course of the walks, I noticed participants turning their heads and looking up and down the street, saying, “There are no fences” while assuming in turn that, “People feel safe here.” Additionally, even more so than when considering the number of fences, the students excitedly declared that, “There are so many security cameras!” Yet again this recognition was tied to their sense that the surveillance ensured security, and they said resultingly that, “They

probably don't feel safe." Even so, knowing the purpose of security cameras as a form of neighborhood surveillance, students waved "Hello" to the security cameras during each walk. I noted one participant staring for a longer moment during one such time. Could they be wondering who is on the other side? During the final place/community walk which went into the more industrial section of the one-square block, a student expressed, "I already see a bunch of security cameras." Another participant stated in a matter-of--fact way and with confidence, waving her palm in the air. "Those are good security cameras!" she declared. To confirm their assumptions about the safety of place/community for its inhabitants, they noted a previously encountered child's home, "There is Cameron's house, and his toys are on the porch … the family feels safe that no one will steal the toys!"

Curious about the security cameras installed on homes and corporate buildings altogether, participants wondered about the cameras and people's feelings of safety. Later, during a conversation they posited that cameras and gates are a sign of power and safety in that they are warnings that keep people out of homes and yards or the community altogether. Yet, the community members and their feelings of insecurity about possible intruders would warrant their need for the cameras in the first place and perhaps a sense of powerlessness.

As the walks progressed over the weeks, students were more intentional about the topic of power in the community and what they noticed. Stimulated by their observations of parking and stop signs, car logos, and big industry as symbols of overlapping power in the community one participant asked, "Are power lines power?" With a participant responding, "Power lines are literally, power." Are solar panels free? . . . are they expensive?" Several participants noted specific car symbols as reflective of money and power, asking, "Is a Lamborghini as sign of

power?" One participant responded, "That doesn't mean you're rich!" What about houses, are they expensive?"

One participant acknowledged in their interview how they see power in place/community differently, "The businesses have a lot of money and can do whatever they want, we were seeing who is more powerful and seeing both perspectives." Here the participant is referring to the perspectives of the Tongva People and other groups who have occupied our place/community through layers of time and the systems of power that displace and erase people and culture over time.

Although one participant found the place/community walks highly meaningful, they expressed concern about how we may have been disrespectful during the place/community. When the participant was asked if there was anything they would like me or other teachers to know, they expressed, "I feel bad that we were marching around people's doors at 9:00 a.m. Like do we have permission? We just like we're going down the sidewalk right outside people's doors, so we were really loud."

This revealed to me that their perception of classmates' behavior was very different from mine, and I revisited the statement with the participant to clarify what they meant. They confirmed how they felt. Reflecting on their experience was a reminder of power and how ways of being in public can be embodied by children when society's expectations of how children should be seen and heard live through parental guidelines of what is acceptable public behavior.

When the participant asked me, "Do you think it was OK that we were walking around people's houses out there?" I shared my perspective as a nine- or 10-year-old kid that played on the sidewalks and out in my community every day that I was not in school and after school. Reflecting more on the question, I expressed my wondering if the children in this community

actually know each other and connect with each other in their community outside rather than being inside all of the time. Finally, I shared that, “Honestly, I do feel it was OK and children, as people, have the right to be in community learning.” Their response was,

> I mean I really don’t have that connection with a lot of people in my community just because there’s a lot of really young kids and older people, so it’s also hard to have friends from outside my community because there’s a gate and you need to find your way to get in, yada, yada.

This conversation elucidated for me the deeper meaning behind the child’s experience in their home place and how the need to be quiet carried into our place/community walks.

Connecting Themes to Research Questions

Sub-Questions 1 and 2

What is critical place-based pedagogy? How can children engage in the re-articulation of knowledge and power through the participatory activity of critical place-based pedagogy?

My observations of the students during their place/community walks were supported by interview responses and the findings therein represent how the students engaged in a rearticulation of power and knowledge during their experiential learning. Students were excited to leave campus for every place walk. This was apparent in the enthusiasm they shared while preparing their materials. Additionally, when leaving the classroom, their joyful laughs and utterances caused students to ask, “Where are you going?” with some students responding enthusiastically, “on a neighborhood walk!” Although they were excited to learn off campus, the students initially held together in clusters; however, over time the students felt more comfortable, and they became more freely spread out between me and the chaperones to engage with place/community.

Knowing there were specific elements to observe during each walk, participants used their autonomy and agentic engagement (Reeve, 2013) to make the learning experience as enjoyable and meaningful to them as possible. Students engaged with multiple forms of the element of focus. For example, one group encountered damp soil covered with moss, and another encountered dry soil that appeared void of life. Students were trusted to be self-directed observers in the off campus learning space. What mattered to the students in those moments mattered to me. Keeping with the power-with dynamic of our school I maintained reduced tension and students used their power to learn just as they do in the classroom. Participants engaged in place-based learning through a Kinship/Indigenous worldview which built upon their prior knowledge about how Indigenous peoples view community and the interconnectedness of all beings inhabiting place/community. They learned about what a Kinship/Indigenous worldview was from me, the teacher, and how the Indigenous worldview precepts can relate to their lives and our ways of being at school. Additionally, to gain multiple perspectives across generations, I requested the support of a Gabrielino-Tongva Elder and culture educator Michael Whitehorse Aviles. Learning from him transformed the students' understanding of me, i.e., the classroom teacher, as the principal keeper of knowledge and also added to their understanding about whose knowledge and perspectives are valued by their teacher and school. Learning directly from an Indigenous Elder helped the students to see that we in the school value Indigenous peoples and are grateful for their sharing of their cultural knowledge and how their knowledge can shape how we all view our place and the need to care for all beings there.

Learning about place through the Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precepts and Michael Whitehorse Avila's experiences shifted children's perspectives about place/community. Rather than engage in community walks to simply observe the soil, plants, insects, four-legged

and human animals, trees, birds, and air through the lens of what they know them to be, students developed their understanding of each of the elements over the course of the walks. Through the original Kinship/Indigenous precept lens of interconnectedness, sentience, learning as place-based, collaborative, experiential, and holistic, students transferred what they were learning from Michael Whitehorse Aviles to transform how they saw all the beings together and interconnected in their place/community. Their new knowledge became the fundamental view of seeing themselves as connected to all other beings and changed the way they saw them as worthy of care.

Learning to see the elements of our place/community and ourselves as interconnected, we moved to the broader unseen systems of power that act on us in place/community. Prior to the walk to observe corporate symbols in the community, participants engaged in conversations about their ideas about the nature of power and hierarchy, what they are and how they influence us. Engaged in learning about multiple meanings of power, the discussions turned to dialogue about the power of their school place and what it meant there for them. Building on the non-violence tradition's idea of power-with (Rosenberg, 2002), a tenant of our school, students realized that although someone does have authority, that does not mean power is therefore necessarily authoritarian and that students should be treated as less than adults in the community. During an interview, one participant expressed, "I had enough freedom and power to observe the elements of our place because here [the school] we all have power. I feel very free." Another participant stated, "I especially liked learning about power because it makes me feel like I have power." To further develop their understanding of power and knowledge, the students investigated the connection between infrastructural systems of power such as the institutions providing water, gas, electricity, as well as how such systems manifest through the automobiles

and people in a community. They learned that one can lose electrical power if one fails to pay the related utility bills, and the students thought about the ongoing privilege and power corporations are enabled to exercise over people's lives.

The act of taking students off campus to learn about place out in the community showed the students that learning happens beyond the four walls of an enclosed school learning environment and that place/community are themselves nonformal classrooms with all manner of learning experiences ever waiting to happen. Further, the students were trusted observers, question posers, and educational collaborators as we made meaning of our experiences together. As they knew that they were considered co-constructors of meaning in the study, I shared a summary document of my impressions and interpretations of their field experiences to solicit their thoughts as to the document's accuracy and to provide feedback about it. Several students asked me during the interviews, "Rita, how did the experience *feel* for you?" and "Did you ever have an experience like this when you were a kid?" These questions demonstrated the norms of the interview process and participants' feelings of safety to pose their questions to show their care for and concern about me as part of their ecosystem.

Children learned about the history of local Indigenous Tribes and how they lived in reciprocity with the land and all beings of their place/community. From this, the students chose to represent their understanding through the creation of dioramas that told stories of what they believed represented the daily lives of Tribal members. However, the learning students obtained transcended knowledge of an Indigenous culture at one place in time. Instead, students learned about how settler colonialism acted on the Tongva People. The systems of settler colonialism replaced them, taking their land, resulting in significant effects on Indigenous peoples, including genocide, loss of land and cultural identity, and unequal treatment. By seeing place/community

in this way, their knowledge is being transformed to understand how the powerful systems that act through society to displace local Indigenous peoples are in place globally. This form of learning empowered the students by giving them access to a critical and alternative epistemology and the corresponding cognitive tools for seeing social issues beyond their face-value.

To learn from Michael Whitehorse Aviles and to conduct their research of the elements of place/community was a transformative pedagogical experience that took the students some time. As they learned about the elements of place, students used their notes, research information, and sketches to construct a wall collage representing each of the elements together. However, as the curricular walks progressed over the days, I could see in the students' curiosity and hear in their expressions how looking at their community/place through a Kinship/Indigenous worldview illuminated the meanings place held for them as beyond their past assessments of it.

To express their love for school/place/community they wrote letters of appreciation that they read during their closing ceremony at the park with Michael Whitehorse Aviles. Ultimately, the students' historical knowledge of place/community transcended what they would have learned from any textbook or mission project about the Tongva People. Instead, they learned directly from the perspective of the people themselves, of Tongva experiences and successes across space and time, and about the Tongva People's enduring love for earth and all her beings. In this way, students were not limited by my power to impart the curriculum. Instead, they benefited from the depth and breadth of place-based learning that historicized their experiences by revealing who had been there, what had happened to them, and where those people are now. Further, participants carried their enthusiasm into the semester project and came to celebrate the Tongva People and their history through the lens of our teacher, Michael Whitehorse Aviles.

They then shared their understanding with the larger community through their Exhibition of Learning, thereby reinhabiting place with a more in-depth history than might have been known otherwise, while possibly transforming exhibition visitors' thinking about history and place/community.

Sub Question 3

What is the child's lived experience when learning about Place through an original Kinship /Indigenous worldview?

Sub Question 3 is specific to the lived experience of participants when learning about place through specific Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precepts. The Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precepts that were introduced and developed prior to the walks are: nonhierarchical society (in our case, relationships), nonanthropocentrism, learning as experiential, collaborative, holistic and place-based, and all earth entities as sentient. The information about the child's lived experience of learning about place/community through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview and how it looked, sounded, and felt was garnered from my observational notes which were further enriched with participant statements assembled from interview materials that vividly illustrated their lived experience. The precepts taught or developed in the classroom and the expressions from observations and interviews that exemplify each precept are detailed below.

Nonhierarchical Communities

The sense of freedom the participants had to relate to place/community through the question of the day was apparent in their aliveness, collaboration, and confidence with inquiry. Their attunement to each other's excitement about their findings was unfettered and authentic.

When asked the question, “What does it mean to learn about place/community through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview?” referring to the context of place/community, a participant responded:

> Well, you’re kind of accepting that like everything is equal to you, you’re not higher or not lower than anything else … when we were learning about power systems, we were thinking through an anti-indigenous worldview we were thinking about who is more powerful … I thought it was interesting because you get to see both perspectives, [power] in the context of our school and then in learning in place/community.

Here the student is referring to the concept of power and how it shows up in society. Reflecting on how systems of power and hierarchy show up in our school over several days of discussion, the students realized that although students and community members in general hold to a system of Nonviolence in general, there is a need for someone to oversee the general operation of a school’s administration and teaching staff.

Nonanthropocentrism

Nonanthopocentrism (Wahinkpe Topa & Narvaez, 2022) encompasses several descriptors that draw on several of the Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precepts. Nonanthropocentrism is land based and contextual to where humans come from the land which emerged from a creative force utilized by nonhuman helpers to synthesize an interconnected world where all are kin, inclusive of rock, soil, seen and unseen animals, interconnected by a sacred energy flowing through us. Our interconnection with all kin, then, gives us a great responsibility to care for one another.

What did it mean for the participants to learn about place/community through the nonanthropocentrism precept? To develop an understanding of nonanthropocentrism, Michael

shared the Indigenous worldview through Tongva People's beliefs about interconnectedness of all entities. The students and I engaged in dialogue about place and what makes place, place. We agreed that each place/community has meaning for us because of who is or is not there, and our experiences with them. The idea of *what* as objectifying what Indigenous People believe are kin, took some time. It was helpful to relate how they feel about their pets and how they view them as friends or part of their family to the concept of what rather than a who, a subject. Spending time in a place or anticipating being there develops our interconnectedness with place. The dialogue turned to a conversation about our school place and how we love it enough to take care of it so it is there for the next families. The sense of aliveness and connection with the soil, rocks, plants, animals, trees, birds, people, and institutions was evident in their expressions throughout the walks. Participants understand kin are all interconnected, and we need to understand that when we do not care for them, we are not caring for ourselves.

Several participants' expressions during the interviews and place/community observations revealed their experience with their awareness of, or how their preconceived knowledge about Nonanthropocentrism changed: "I definitely learned a lot more about the Tongva and how they view nature … how everything is interconnected." Another participant stated, "Well, I always thought that the Indigenous worldview is like everything is connected. If you kill or hunt one thing you damage your connection and then maybe you get hurt. That's how I think of it."

In his teachings, Michael Whitehorse Aviles spoke about the sacredness of all living entities, and because we are interconnected with the whole environment and all beings, there is the need for reciprocity and respect when taking a life because every being has a history that

must be honored. When asked about they felt was their most important learning, a participant responded:

> Place is alive and connected to us and I know I learned from Michael that we should really try and appreciate these (beings) and they are very important … they support all living creatures on this planet to stay alive … they give us food and give us shelter and they can help us with … knowing how they function and use [the information] in modern ways to help solve problems like solar panels . . . like biomimicry.

One participant viewed the sun as an energizer, expressing that in learning in place/community,

> getting to learn about nature really freshens you up and just being able to move your legs and learning and looking at the world around you as a whole new experience. So, it was really cool being able to walk … the sun shining down on you just freshens you up!

When asked if there was anything they would like me or teachers to know, one participant said:

> I would like them to know that [learning about place/community] is calming and soothing if you do it in the right way and also, it's very educational and important that we learn about these things because our world is starting to fall apart basically because of climate change, and we need more people to know these things so that we can help restore our planet. If they knew what was at stake and what's really happening here, then we wouldn't just let our planet go to waste. It's our home here and we wanna take care of our home so if people really knew what's going on they would want to help.

Another participant expressed, “Yes, it’s a very free way of learning and we can also learn from other people’s knowledge and get more knowledge and experience.” Here, the participant expresses the value in learning from Indigenous knowledge and perspectives.

The following statements illustrate participants’ perspectives of the interconnection between trees and insects.

> Now I think of how much that tree is doing for us, what insects live inside the tree, and how long that tree has been here . . . Trees photosynthesize and create oxygen and give us fruit, and they also give us vegetables.

> Yeah, I see more like when I look at an ant, I don’t think of it as an ant, I think of it as a colony that it is in and what it does [for] the relationship between them. And when I see a plant and another plant, their roots could be connected and sharing energy, and I think that’s really cool.

> Plants give us fruit, and that’s a connection.

> It helps me have more knowledge about the neighborhood and everything in nature, and it makes me know I should care for it . . . and take care of it.

This understanding of the interconnectedness of beings of place/community encourages a sense of responsibility to care. When seeing place/community through M’s perspective,

> It means to see their [Indigenous Peoples] importance, what they’ve done, what they can do, and it means to see their history and to be able to go a little deeper into it and to see the really simple things and how we should be grateful for them.

The participants' knowledge about place/community and the interconnectedness of all entities has changed. Their understanding that all entities are interconnected has moved them to express a sense of urgency with the realization that for people to take action and change, they must understand what is at stake.

All Earth Entities as Sentient

One participant's response to what it was like to learn about place/community through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview, was:

> It feels very free that I can learn in a way that I want, especially the birds. I loved that part since I have 11 birds and I'm hoping that every time I see a bird or squirrel, I would name them. But I would let them choose their name. I would say go to the right for this name, go to the left for this name or say so for this name. They would go and they would actually listen to be honest.

The precept of All Entities as Sentient was explicated by the participant's expression of her nonanthropocentric view of her birds and how they communicate. While her act of naming them could be perceived as a display of power in how she sees them and how they are portrayed and understood (Borkfelt, 2011), I believe that given the exceptional level of respect she has for her birds, how she feels a connection to them and values their well-being that her intentions are sincere and pure.

Another participant shared, "I think the insect walk [was my favorite] because it taught me to not squish insects I see." When asked, "What has changed about how you see insects?" her response was, "That they're actually beings that have a life . . . just like us, just in a different form."

Reflecting on the statements, one participant holds to their view of their bird as kin and worthy of respect. At the same time, another student's reflection is an example of a change in their knowledge and ways of seeing and being with animals as an example of the place/community walks and learning from Michael Whitehorse Aviles.

Learning as Experiential, Collaborative, Holistic, and Place-Based

The felt experience of learning about place/community through the Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precepts of Learning as experiential, collaborative, holistic, and place-based was observed in participants' expressions during the place/community walk experiences and interviews. Overall, students were observed as energetic, excited, curious, hot, tired, relaxed, remembering, alert, and showing intentionality. Participants expressed learning as interesting, joyful, experienced, good, fun, and free. One participant expressed that learning this way can be calming and soothing. Lastly, one participant expressed feeling bad, loud, disrespectful, and worried.

"I enjoyed learning outdoors instead of the classroom because it was connecting [us] to nature." Another participant expressed,

> It was fun to be out of the classroom, a lot . . .We got to experience everything around us. . . Rather than going for a walk, we got the full experience when we were trying to think about it for 6 (walks). . . you realize how much there is in the community.

Lastly, a participant expressed, "It feels free to learn this way." When asked if it was helpful to have multiple experiences outside of school rather than just one or two, participants responded, "Yes, because it helped me see it multiple times, and then I was able to grasp it."

Another stated,

> At first, [the walks] felt all pretty normal, but then, I started to feel a little more comfortable after I went on, and it felt more interesting as I learned more . . . it was really cool learning about all those different rocks and the water, and all of the trees and we got to look at it through an Indigenous worldview as you said, and I like learning about that too!

Another participant expressed learning through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview as "interesting because we learned about power systems and [were] thinking [about] it through an anti-Indigenous worldview." Here, the participant is beginning to have a good sense of the perspective of settler mindset after learning about how and why our place/community changes through time.

Participants found learning this way to be enjoyable, especially when they had the opportunity to learn art from Michael Whitehorse Aviles. This experience added a new dimension of fun and excitement to their learning journey. However, learning experientially in place was not a wholly positive experience for one participant as they expressed feeling bad because they felt students were loud on the place/community walks and that those behaviors were disrespectful. The participant seemed preoccupied with her assumed feelings that residents had of our class in place/community.

Sub Question 4

How does place-based pedagogy through a Kinship/Indigenous worldview influence a deeper learning of place?

A deeper learning of place manifested through seeing place through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview alongside learning that was collaborative, experiential, holistic,

place-based, and underpinned by the knowledge that is relevant to their lives. Additionally, there were opportunities to see new perspectives, pose questions, and encounter place beyond face value, seeing into the history of place and the beings who there through space and time are, and learning to know and care about their experiences.

The multiple place/community walks over time transformed the way participants view place/community and their role in caring for place/community. One participant expressed:

> Rather than just going for a walk through anywhere … we're trying to comprehensively think about it like we did for six days … you think about what individual thing you are focusing on and realize how much there is in the community of the particular subject … if you take time to look more into a subject you find out how much more there is to know about it.

Additionally, the participant expressed learning about place/community through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview was deeper comparing it to the program Procreate in that

> in Procreate you can (design) in layers … if you do every layer and you spend a lot of time on it and look at it all together it's a lot more detailed than it would be if you just look at the whole thing.

Students' learning transcended the diorama model of Tongva People's life and deepened their understanding of connection to the land not only as Earth mother who provides what is needed to survive but also made visible the Tongva belief that they are relatives to all beings of place and caring for them is living in reciprocity. Additionally, learning through the lens of a Tongva Elder Indian who experienced Residential schools illuminated the Indigenous history left out of history books and most narratives written for elementary and middle school students.

> I definitely learned a lot more about the Tongva and their view of nature … I feel like I know more now . . . that they're alive and connected to us, and I know I learned from him [Michael] that we should really try and appreciate them … to see their importance, what they've done, what they can do, and it means to see their history and to be able to go a little deeper into it and to see the really simple things and how we should be grateful for them … They are important because they support us, they support other living creatures, they support pretty much everything and everyone on this planet to stay alive.

Understanding how Indigenous people view place/community reinforced the idea of power and non-hierarchical society and the need to give to receive. As one participant stated about learning through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview, "You're accepting that everything is equal, you're not higher or not lower than any [being]." Still, for one participant, deeper learning meant feeling the life of the birds and the plants and how "it made me feel free to learn and see how the animals really function and how plants function along with the soil," showing their value for beings of place/community as teachers. Another participant's deeper learning involved the transformation from not caring about insects to caring enough not to harm them because "they are actually beings that have a life just like us but in a different form."

Conclusion

Does learning about place through a Kinship/Indigenous worldview lead to connection and love for place? Based on the analysis of the materials gathered from the participants, learning this way leads to a shift in caring for place. Additionally, participant responses to the pre- and post-walk surveys shown in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 support this statement. However, specific criteria support learning this way. For example, Indigenizing learning was realized through the teaching of, experiencing, and seeing place/community through several of the

Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precepts. Without which, place-based learning might not deepen the connection to, care for, and learn from place/community that students experienced in this study. When teachers creatively engage in opportunities for children to make meaning and construct their knowledge about place/community, they support learners' abilities to "peel back the asphalt" and to recognize that there is always someone in place before us, as well as aspects of our place to which we are likely not attending to consciously. Making such worthy of our attention now, while coming to see and know the everyday avoided curriculum of our place is deeper learning.

Summary

Chapter IV revealed the elements of the research study, including how research data and materials were gathered and organized, the voices of participants' experiences as they were lived, and the themes that emerged through analysis of the data gathered from experiential observations in place, Natureculture journals kept by the students about these experiences, unstructured interviews with them after the fact, and a Photovoice project that we completed as a capstone to our learning.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

This hermeneutic phenomenological research aimed to answer the primary question, does teaching through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview lead to connection and love for place? The teacher/researcher embedded herself alongside the students to actively construct their knowledge about the ecology of a one-square block of place/community surrounding the school. Tongva culture teacher and Elder Michael Whitehorse Aviles supported students in learning about how the Tongva People inhabited the area culturally over time. Students demonstrated their understanding through interviews, reflections in Natureculture journals (Haraway, 2003), and a Photovoice project.

The problem addressed in this study is that opportunities for children to learn the Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview are rare, resulting in the continuation of a dominant worldview that does not recognize the interconnection of the ecology of the planet and the impact of human activity on it. Instead, dominant power influences knowledge (Foucault, 1980) of the curriculum by seeking disciplinary controls over whose knowledge is learned and how it is mastered in the maintenance of a consumer capitalist structure (McLaren, 2023) in this research learning through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview students learned to recognize. This work is pioneering in that critical place-based pedagogy emphasizing Foucault's power and knowledge set a foundation for learning through the Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precepts (Wahinkpe Topa & Narvaez, 2022). Underpinned by critical place-based pedagogy, it challenges what knowledge is learned and how and where learning takes place. Finally, learning this way disrupted traditional teacher-student power dynamics for the hermeneutic phenomenology methodology to be enacted through a critical place-based pedagogy and learning through the Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precepts.

Chapter V discusses my interpretation of the research findings and themes and how they relate to the research questions. Also discussed are the limitations, affirmed assumptions, practical implications of the findings to teaching and learning, along with recommendations for further action and research. I then close with my personal reflection on the research journey.

Interpretation of the Findings

While place-based educators advocate for education that prepares individuals to sustain their places' culture and ecological integrity (Orr, 1994), this critical place-based pedagogy research engaged students in learning through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview concomitant with an Indigenous Elder. Approaching the research in this way helped children understand the hegemonic system of power in place/community to gain an understanding and engage with and read place/community as a text full of history and culture worth knowing. Drawing from Gruenewald's critical pedagogy of place (2003), the Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precepts (Wahinkpe Topa & Narvaez, 2022), Foucault's (1980) power and knowledge, and critical theory, this research delved into the historicity of place with participants, asked "Who is here through space and time?" "Where are they now?" and "Why is that?" Research themes generated from the data support how the participants made significant meaning from their experiences in and out of the classroom (Bowers, 2005; Gruenewald, 2008; Smith, 2002) and developed an awareness of their place/community's interconnected ecology through which they learned to care for place/community and all beings there (Chawla, 2006).

The research revealed how participants grew to see their place/community deeper than face value, helping them understand the power systems of place and how power acts on all beings, transforming place/community and displacing people and their kin who once inhabited their place/community for millennia. This research underscores the urgent need for deeper

learning of place, mainly in the historical context of the people who occupy a place, their ways of living, and how a return to a reciprocal relationship with our environment can help us realize how the change of place/community locally represents global change connected to a worldview that supports consumerist culture resulting in the climate crisis.

Theoretical Implications for Research Questions

Central Question

How can teaching through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview grow children towards connection and love for place?

Does learning about place/community through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview lead to connection and love for place? The themes that emerged from the material analysis: engaging curiosity; place as interesting, connecting, and interconnected; deeper learning through Indigenized pedagogy; and power and safety in the community, all compliment the role of emotion (Bartos, 2013; Chawla, 2006; Grimshaw & Mates, 2022; Lloyd & Gray, 2014; Tooth & Renshaw, 2009, 2020) in place-based education. This engagement is crucial as learning is an emotional act (Hargreaves, 1998), and all the themes emerged from data that was the expression of experiences of participants. Furthermore, it supports and extends the conversation about the role of emotion in place/community and how it is augmented by learning through the Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precepts.

Given that "place" has complex meanings and interpretations depending on how it is used in education (Dentzau, 2014; Gruenewald, 2008), the themes add to the argument that feelings and emotions that emerge from learning about place/community through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview do lead to connection and learning to care for place/community.

Through the focus question and precept of each place/community walk, the participants' intentionality towards the rock, soil, plants, insects, trees, birds and four-legged animals, and humans was apparent in their engagement and interactions with them, and utterances and bodily expressions in reaction to what beings of place offered. As the place/community walks progressed, there were several instances of students growing towards connection and love for place. Initially, students were excited just to be outside of school, walking and talking together in place/community. However, with each walk illuminating a new focus, the students' excitement about their multiple observations and reactions to their connections with insects, plants, fungi, animals, trees, and humans were more relaxed. It was as if by seeing the interconnectedness of and being through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview, place/community took on a deeper meaning and drew them to be in place/community more fully and richly. Although one participant had a less-than-optimal experience based on their assumed emotions of the place/community residents, their flexibility allowed them to remain open to experience and engage with full intention.

Seeing the habitation of place/community by the Tongva People through time millennia from Michael Whitehorse Aviles's perspective gave participants a new way of being with place/community because of the meaning place has for the Tongva People. Feelings of empathy, connection, and care were exemplified through the understanding of the ways power acts through places to limit or destroy othered places and the possibilities for humans and non-human others (Gruenewald, 2003; Hufnagel et al., 2018; Klein, 2016) to survive and thrive. For one participant, these new understandings transferred to their re-connection and deeper appreciation and gratitude for their Paiute Shoshone ancestors and their place/community in Lone Pine, California. As I write this discussion, the returning participants from the prior school year

continue to exclaim their memories of the trees, cats, and people they learned from and about and their encounters during their place/ community walks.

Sub-Questions 1 and 2

What is critical place-based pedagogy? How can children engage in the re-articulation of knowledge/power through the participatory activity of critical place-based pedagogy?

This research was underpinned by three assumptions most critical theorists share about school and society (Giroux, 1988; Kessler & Swadener, 1992) and are important to restate:

- Particular forms of knowledge are valued over others (and accepted as truth)
- School knowledge belongs to the "privileged" group "Who get to say what counts as true" (Foucault, as cited in Lorenzini, 2015)
- People in certain positions exercise power to maintain a dominant societal role (Freire, 1998)

The context for this research is an "Island of Sanity" (Wheatly, 2023), where for 14 years, teachers and staff intentionally developed and have maintained a space for meaningful learning experiences aligned with our education values that include no grades, punishments, or rewards (Kohn, 1993; Ryan & Deci 2000), and non-coercive healthy competition (Wahinkpe Topa & Narvaez, 2022). The context provided an opportunity to integrate place/community as the text participants read through several Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precepts. Their place/community walk experiences were enriched with the stories and experiences of Tongva culture teacher and Elder Michael Whitehorse Aviles. In this way, we transcended the current program, moved towards decolonization through an Indigenizing education (Sammel et al., 2020) and reaffirmation, and opened people's minds to a kinship model because our model

provides a critical framework for real possibilities to denounce and announce an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview model into learning about place/community.

The design of this research was deliberate and intentional in my engagement with Indigenous studies (Sabzalian, 2019) and created opportunities for students to construct their knowledge about Indigenous people's history and the impact of settler culture (Greenwood, 2019) in place/community. In conjunction with the classroom project, they deepened their knowledge of the Tongva People, their history, and their resurgence by learning from Michael Whitehorse Aviles about his life experiences over six weekly visits. Connecting with the Tongva People to know them and learn from them and their ways of being, knowing our interconnection, knowing and caring for them, and caring for ourselves counters systems of oppression inherent in settler colonialism. Using their place/community as the text, participants used autonomy and agentic engagement (Reeve, 2013) to make the learning experience enjoyable and meaningful by engaging with elements that mattered to them rather than one predetermined by the teacher.

Through their multiple experiences, they "re-read" the place/community text (Freire, 1983) through the Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precepts and teachings from Michael Whitehorse Aviles, Indigenizing their learning (Battiste, as cited in Starr, 2014). They began forming the story of their place/community through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview to rewrite the text and tell the history of the *other*, asking, "What is happening here?" "What happened here?" (Gruenewald, 2003), "Why is that?" "What do you notice?" "Who is here?" "Who is not here?" and "Where are they now?"

With each walk, students were transformed as they developed a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of the elements to see place/community beyond face value. This new knowledge is pivotal to seeing themselves as connected to all other beings and worthy of care,

countering the accepted othering of place learned in dominant-based systems of power which do not value a more inclusive understanding of place/community-encompassing ecology in all their interconnectedness. By learning about dominant power systems and how they act on place/community, participants made sense of the local industry and the power it has to change place/community through time. Participants re-discovered familiar phenomena of their place/community through an informed lens of an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview. They saw, related to, and cared for them through their new perspective and reflected deeply on each experience (Tooth & Renshaw, 2009) in their Natureculture journals. Participants created memories of their multisensory and collaborative experiences, which reinforced their understanding of their interconnection with all beings of place/community and place/community (Tooth & Renshaw, 2020).

Participants learned that place/community is a text we can re-read through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview and, in our growing awareness, learn from them and transform how we view (Freire, 1983) and act to reinhabit place. Reinhabitation occurred through the deepening of their knowledge about Tongva's history and ways of being in reciprocity with all beings, their gratitude towards all which earth provides, and their enduring struggles and success to continue a way of living in the land to thrive and sustain their culture. Together, we "peeled back the asphalt" to illuminate the diverse, multilayered ecology of place. Students engaged in experiential and collaborative learning in place/community and were teachers as they shared the deeper story of place/community with the larger community at Exhibition, taking action towards changing any racial perception of the Tongva People and other beings within the ecology of place (Scully, 2012, p. 1), furthering their actions toward reinhabitation.

The Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview model countered power dynamics in learning spaces by teaching and applying the precept of nonhierarchical communities so participants' authentic ways of being could show themselves. Learning from Indigenous Elder Michael Whitehorse Aviles also challenged the accepted norm of who can be a teacher, where and how learning happens, whose knowledge is learned (Giroux, 1997), and the depth of knowledge children can know when learning about place/community through the precept of learning as experiential, collaborative, place-based, and holistic. Additionally, learning through the Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precepts demonstrates that we value Indigenous people's cultural knowledge, teachings, and insights, and recognize the possibilities for learning this way in shaping how we view our place and care for all beings there.

Throughout the place/community walks, students connected with the rock, soil, fungi, plants, trees, and human and non-human animals. Then they researched and discussed them, critically analyzing their understanding of the connections to the larger ecology of place/community. Through the process, participants learned about Indigenous people's view of the interconnectedness of all beings inhabiting place/community, which underscored the importance of our understanding of and our responsibility to care for them.

Students engaged in transformative conversations about the precept of nonhierarchical society to illuminate and develop their understanding of the concept of power. Building on the Nonviolence (Rosenberg, 2002) tenet of power, participants understood their responsibility to relationships, engage in conflict resolution, and, if necessary, engage in restorative justice circles to repair harm and reintroduce members into the community (Clifford, 2015; Wahinkpe Topa & Narvaez, 2022). After several discussions about their agency in power dynamics, students' understanding transcended their ideas about the connection between power, how it manifests in

society, and the impacts of coercive practices on learning and knowledge in schools. The discussion led to dialogue about how power manifests in their school, where authority is multifaceted in a distributed leadership model. They emerged with a clearer understanding of *authority* vs. *authoritarian* (Darder, 1991, pp. 107–108), where, in the case of authoritarian leadership, children would not have the same opportunities to practice their agency as adults in the community. Student understanding of power dynamics and agency on and off campus was crucial for authentic research outcomes. Campus power dynamics did not change off campus, resulting in authentic experiences and expressions supporting the child's lived experience observations and interview responses.

Outcomes of learning about place/community through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview were reflection and action (Freire, 1970) and changing minds from what we thought we knew about place/community to how we understand the multiple aspects of power and our resistance to them (Foucault, 1982).

In conclusion, this study emphasized the transformative potential of place/community walks through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview and developed students' rearticulation of power and knowledge and the need to foster learning environments that illuminate the interconnectedness of all beings and the importance of caring for them.

Sub-Question 3

What is the child's lived experience when learning about place/community through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview?

The information about participants' lived experience while learning about place/community through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview and how it looked, sounded, and felt was garnered from my observation notes which were further enriched with

participant statements assembled from interview materials that vividly illustrated their lived experience. The precepts taught or developed in the classroom and my interpretation of participants expressions from observations and interviews that exemplify their experience of each precept are detailed below.

Learning Through the Precept of Nonhierarchical Society

The Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precept of nonhierarchical society is about interconnectedness and traits such as autonomy, independence, uniqueness, and self-sufficiency. Although these traits are seen as individualistic through the lens of colonized perspectives, within the context of the Indigenous worldview, they ensure the group's well-being (Wahinkpe Topa & Narvaez, 2022). The precept of nonhierarchical relationships is congruent with our ways of being and norms, which, in the classroom, are co-established and refined in the first months of school and practiced throughout the year leading to an educational setting that is Life Enriching (Rosenberg & Eisler, 2003). Providing students with the opportunity to use their voice and develop skills in how they want their classroom to look, sound, and feel now, sets their expectations for future classrooms and to create the kinds of organizations they would like in their future. The result is they care for each other because they see how teachers care for all students with respect, dignity, and equality, fostering a sense of belonging and community. No one person deserves more respect than another and students see adults on campus as allies who have authority, not as authoritarian figures who use their power "to oppress and control" and "continue a colonial regime denying them the opportunity to grow towards their fullest potential" (Winona Victor Hall [Sto:lo], as cited in Wahinkpe Topa & Narvaez, 2022, p. 19).

During their interview, one participant responded to the question, What does it mean to learn about place/community through an Indigenous worldview?

> Well, you're kind of accepting that like everything is equal to you, you're not higher or not lower than anything else. When we were learning about power systems, we were thinking [about it] through an anti-indigenous worldview. We were thinking about who is more powerful. I thought it was interesting because you get to see both perspectives (power) in the context of our school and then in learning in place/community.

Here, the participants expressed their understanding of the concept of power and hierarchy and how it manifests in place/community and in our school. The students came to understand the concept of Nonhierarchy at our school means that although students and community members in general hold to a power-with philosophy, there is a need for someone to oversee the general operation of a school administration and teaching staff, and that with having autonomy, independence, uniqueness, and self-sufficiency comes great responsibility, which is beneficial to all as they can experience a learning community that is not authoritarian.

In this phenomenological study with children, intentional place/community walk experiences were designed to align with our school's tenets and critical pedagogy's values and practices that are transformative (Kincheloe, 2004) and the embodiment of how we teach, what is taught, and how children learn (Giroux, 1997). The co-created classroom norms transferred to the place/community walks. Students were trusted to move freely in the space of place/community to learn rather than remain in a line and conform to the norms of most traditional schools and classrooms (Langeveld, 1983). Reciprocal trust is necessary for the development of the learners to see themselves and be viewed by the teacher as meaning makers as they build on their prior knowledge. This trust and freedom in learning environments lead to authentic learning experiences and self-directed growth, which are invaluable in shaping a students' worldview.

The sense of freedom the participants had to relate to place/community through the question of the day was apparent in their aliveness, collaboration, and confidence with inquiry. Their attunement to each other's excitement about their findings was unfettered and authentic. What mattered to them about the day's focus question is what mattered to me. More learning occurred when varied experiences, which had value to learners, were shared during collaboration in place/community and in the classroom. Trust in the child, as discussed in *The Pedagogical Atmosphere* (Bollnow, 1989), is mentioned here as teaching and learning are relational and emotional acts (Hargreaves, 1998; Osika et al., 2022) "where teachers are sensitive to and interpret inner thoughts, understandings, feelings and desires of children from indirect clues such as gestures, demeanor, expression, and body language" (Van Manen, 1991, p. 16) from which rich data was gathered.

Prioritizing trust invited them to be their authentic selves and "feel free" and "powerful because they had power," as one participant said in their interview. To see the strengths and areas of growth in the children and to help them see themselves do things they never thought possible constituted using my power productively (Foucault, 1982) to support the children in being self-directing in their collaborative group.

Learning Through the Precept of Nonanthropocentrism

Nonanthopocentrism (Wahinkpe Topa & Narvaez, 2022) encompasses several descriptors drawing on several of the Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precepts. Nonanthropocentrism is land-based and contextual to where humans come from the land, which emerged from a creative force utilized by nonhuman helpers to synthesize an interconnected world where all are kin, inclusive of rock, soil, seen and unseen animals, interconnected by a

sacred energy following through us. Our interconnection with all kin gives us a great responsibility to care for one another.

Participants in this phenomenological study reflected on their profound sensory experiences of "direct physical and perceptual experience of the earth" (Cajete, 2004, p. 45) over many weeks, which helped them understand their interconnectedness to place/community (Tooth & Renshaw, 2009). Learning experientially, the participants understood the sociohistorical causes of damage on and in the ecology of their place/community (Gruenewald, 2003, 2008). As a result of their learning from Michael Whitehorse Aviles about his experiences, the Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) of the Tongva People, the history of place/community, and the connection of all beings of place, inclusive of the soil, plants, animals, trees, and other humans of place/community that were once there, were made explicit. Their awareness and intentionality with place/community were apparent in their increased emotional connection and care for nature (Chawla, 2006) and all beings there.

While their knowledge of beings and the history of the Tongva People of their place/community reinhabited their sense of primacy and intimate relationship with place (Cajete, 2004), participants applied their knowledge learned from Michale Whitehorse Aviles about local endemic plants by reintroducing Black sage, California Coastal Sunflower, Coastal Buckwheat, Laurel Sumac, California Sagebrush, and California Wild Grape to their school garden. Learning about place/community through the Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precept of nonanthropomorphism (Wahinkpe Topa & Narvaez, 2022) changed participants' perspectives of place/community as they understood the threats to life and their impact on place (Seawright, 2014). They looked beyond their anthropocentric worldview (Henig & Knight, 2023) to find value in all beings in their place community.

Over the course of the place/community walks, participants began to make connections between the past and present (Grimshaw & Mates 2022). As they thought critically, they developed new ways of seeing the history and culture of the place/community. Thinking forward, they passionately stressed the need for us to learn from Indigenous peoples. They believe Indigenous peoples can teach us how to live better in this crisis, inspiring us to rethink our relationship with place/community and learn from them how to live better in community with all beings of place/community wherever we are.

Learning Through the Precept of All Earth Entities Are Sentient

Given that through the Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precept of All Earth Entities Are Sentient, we are conscious of the feeling and perceiving of all beings, this precept reflects the Indigenous perspective of Honorable Harvest, where we acknowledge the exchange of life for life (Kimmerer, as cited in Wahinkpe Topa & Narvaez, 2022). We can learn from the precept to consider how much we take from the land and reshape how we relate to the natural world by learning to view our place/community through the Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precept. We all have much to learn and can reflect on how much we consume and our impact on place/community.

Students underwent a profound transformation in their relationship with nature as the study progressed. They began to perceive and connect with the soil, rocks, plants, trees, insects, birds, and people during their place/community walks. Under the teachings of Michael Whitehorse Aviles, students grasped the significance of taking just what we need from place/community and leaving enough for others, expressing gratitude for the entity, and appreciating the entire being without waste.

After weeks of place/community walks and teachings, participants' perspectives evolved from a superficial understanding of place/community to a profound realization of the interconnectedness of all beings, as one participant aptly described, "looking at the layers to see the whole picture." Students developed a way of seeing place/community differently, which is the first step to a consciousness of whom we did not notice before and to fully understand how all rocks, soil, "plants, (insects, trees, and non-human animals), are community members, partners, persons with lessons from which we can learn" (Narvaez, as cited in Wahinkpe Topa & Narvaez, 2022).

An aspect of the Indigenous worldview where I observed change in participants was their relationship to place (Cajete, 1994), which relates to and adds to All Earth Entities are Sentient in that the way we talk about a place or another entity reflects how we feel, see, understand, and, most importantly, think about it (Cajete, 1994). When asked what it was like to learn about place/community through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview, a participant exclaimed:

> It feels very free that I can learn in a way that I want, especially [about] the birds. I loved that part since I have 11 birds. I'm hoping that every time I see a bird or squirrel, I would name them. But I would let them choose their name [saying], go to the right for this name, go to the left for this name, or say so for this name. They would go, and they would actually listen, to be honest.

The participant's embodiment of the precept that all entities are sentient was explicated through her nonanthropocentric view of her birds and how they communicate. While her act of naming them could be perceived as a display of power in how she sees them and how they are portrayed and understood (Borkfelt, 2011), her ascription of sentience, intention, and motivation (Merewether, 2023) to birds and how she speaks to them with "good heart and good thought"

(Cajete, 1994, p. 45) shows the exceptional level of respect she has for their relationship. I interpreted her intentions as sincere and pure, as she feels connected to them and values their well-being.

Another participant shared, “I think the insect walk [was my favorite] because it taught me to not squish insects I see.” When asked, “What has changed about how you see insects?” She responded, “They’re actually beings that have a life . . . just like us, just in a different form.”

This realization underscores the profound change in her understanding and respect for all beings, regardless of their form. Reflecting on the participants’ statements, one participant held to their view of their bird as kin and worthy of respect. At the same time, another participant’s reflection is an example of a change in their view of and being with animals due to the place/community walks and learning from Michael Whitehorse Aviles.

Learning as Experiential, Collaborative, Holistic, and Place-Based

The Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precept of Becoming Fully Human reflects learning as experiential, collaborative, holistic, and place-based. As Indigenous people view learning as a lifelong journey towards holistic growth, the place/community walks required many aspects that underpin our school philosophy of teaching and learning. To begin, participants had many collaborative learning experiences in place/community, which called upon them to see place/community through the Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precept they learned before each walk. To do this, they had to be open to seeing the world through another’s perspective, calling on them to be flexible in their thinking (Costa et al., 2009) when considering how myself or Michael Whitehorse Aviles view Earth entities. To be their authentic selves, they had to exercise their autonomy and use their agency to collaborate and think for themselves when their thinking countered their peers.

The impact on participants to see and understand the interconnectedness of all beings of the place/community was elucidated through their expressions about how learning about the soil, rock, plants, insects, trees, and birds through multiple experiences over time helped them see their interconnectedness. When asked if it was helpful to have multiple experiences outside of school rather than just one or two, participants responded, “Yes, because it helped me see it multiple times, and then I was able to grasp it.” Another stated,

> At first, [it felt] all pretty normal, but then, I started to feel a little more comfortable after I went on, and it felt more interesting as I learned more . . . and we got to look at it through an Indigenous worldview as you said, and I like learning about that too!

As teaching and learning are emotional acts (Hargreaves, 1998; Osika et al., 2022), the importance of engaging students through content that incites their curiosity and is relevant to their lives as future adults at school and home, how they learn and where learning takes place (Giroux, 1997) cannot be understated. During the place/community walks, I interpreted students’ interactions and expressions as feelings of freedom, interest, joy, experience, and fun, adding value to learning that is experiential, collaborative, holistic, and place-based.

These experiences are about learning and seeing one’s place in a new light, with a sense of wonderment. The students, as active agents of their learning, could influence how people viewed their home place/community when they shared their understandings with the community at Exhibition night. Their more profound understanding of the place's/community’s history and culture, evident in their presentations about the lives and experiences of the Tongva People throughout history, is a testament to their active participation and the impact of their experiences.

Sub-Question 4

How does place-based pedagogy through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview influence a deeper learning of place?

In this research, deeper learning manifested through an Indigenized (Battiste, 2014; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015) methodology (Arrows, 2019) when students learned about and experienced their place/community through several Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precepts. The learning was not just collaborative, experiential, holistic, place-based, and relevant to their lives, but it led the participants to new perspectives of place and culture. Learning more than facts, they posed questions and encountered place/community beyond face value as they uncovered the unseen rich Indigenous history of their place/community.

Throughout the research project, I noticed an increase in the participants' level of concentration. In contrast, they noticed and connected with beings in place and in learning activities with Indigenous Elder Michael Whitehorse Aviles, a local Indigenous Elder from the Gabrielino/Tongva tribal community, such that they were in a state of flow in those moments as they were motivated by their curiosity about the focus of the day and were self-directed to attend to learning that was valuable to them (Wergin, 2019). As they learned more about the place/community and the Tongva People, their curiosity increased, and they were motivated to continue learning. Over time, the multiple place/community walks transformed how participants viewed place/community and their role in caring for place/community. In their unstructured interview one participant expressed:

> Rather than just going for a walk anywhere … we're trying to comprehensively think about it (place/community) like we did for six days … you think about what individual thing you are focusing on and realize how much there is in the community of the

> particular subject … if you take time to look more into a subject you find out how much more there is to know about it.

Here, the participant expressed that learning about place/community through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview was deeper, comparing it to the program Procreate in that

> in Procreate you can (design) in layers … if you do every layer and you spend a lot of time on it and look at it all together it's a lot more detailed than it would be if you just look at the whole thing.

Additionally, students learned about Tongva People's Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) from Michael Whitehorse Aviles, who shared and spoke about cultural artifacts, including plants and how they can be used for food, weaving clothing and baskets, various seeds and nuts, rattles, ceremonial abalone shells, and rare feathers. Michael Whitehorse Aviles shared how artifacts represent the sacredness rooted in their interconnection with them, and artifacts are a way to remember the being when they pass. Seeing and holding the artifacts and connecting them to Michael's teachings helped students make meaning of their uses in ceremony and practicality to everyday life. During their interview, one student expressed what many participants felt during their experiences:

> I feel like I know more now that they are alive and connected to us. I know I learned from him [Michael] that we should really try and appreciate them to see their importance, what they've done, what they can do, and it means to see their history and to be able to go a little deeper into it and to see the really simple things and how we should be grateful for them. They are important because they support us, support other living creatures, and support pretty much everything and everyone on this planet to stay alive.

This student's words echo the profound sense of connection and empathy that the students developed toward the Tongva People's culture, fostering a deeper understanding and respect.

Understanding how Indigenous peoples have viewed place/community reinforced the idea of power and non-hierarchical society and the need to give to receive, "accepting that everything is equal, you're not higher or not lower than any (being)." Still, for one participant, the deeper learning meant feeling the life of the birds and the plants and how "it made me feel free to learn and see how the animals really function and how plants function along with the soil," which shows they value beings of place/community as teachers. Another participant's deeper learning involved the transformation from not caring about insects to caring enough not to hurt them because "they are actually beings that have a life just like us but in a different form."

Applying a critical pedagogical framework to the study of place opened up a necessary and underutilized portal to deeper learning that illuminated the ever-presence of the Tongva Peoples' culture through a deeper reading of the community's historical text of place. In doing so, rather than limit students' understanding of the Tongva People's history, I intentionally used my power productively (Foucault, 1980). I did my best to Indigenize their learning experience to decolonize their knowledge, as emotionally unsettling as that might be, by providing them with opportunities to "examine, reflect upon, and intentionally disrupt common knowledge" (Wergin, 2019, p. 160) and stories about Indigenous Peoples often learned in traditional schools.

Although the students wanted dearly to create a diorama model of a chosen aspect of Tongva's daily life, their learning transcended a typical model, including what was learned from Michael Whitehorse Aviles. For example, the models did not stand alone, but the students figured out a way to interconnect them to demonstrate the interconnectedness of daily life. They deepened their understanding of connection to the land, not only as Earth mother who provides

what is needed to survive, but also made visible the Tongva People's (and Indigenous Peoples globally) belief that they are relatives to all beings of place and that caring for them is living in reciprocity. Additionally, learning through the lens of a Tongva Elder who experienced Residential schools illuminated the Indigenous history left out of history books and most narratives written for elementary and middle school students. Michael shared in an age-appropriate way that elucidated his experience without going into great detail. Although most teachers might find it inappropriate to teach 4th and 5th-grade students about this aspect of Indigenous Peoples' experiences of settler colonialism, it is my personal belief that atrocities continue to occur through time to othered people because a prevailing settler colonial narrative across society paints a picture of colonization as improving the situation of Indigenous peoples along with the pre-colonial world that they inhabited.

Rather than reify history through the lens of White settler colonialists as saviors of people whose cultures they do not understand or value, I believe that there must be transparency about the root causes and systems of oppression within children's school contexts. Otherwise, children will continue to learn that taking people's culture through a lens of improvement is the right and destiny of those involved in the colonization of a place, which will continue the legacy and harm of systems of imperialism, colonialism, and settler colonialism. The kind of place-based learning we engaged in aimed to hear different perspectives on the nature of our place/community so that we could learn to reflect on varied evidence to make sense of history. Learning this way made critical thinkers want to know more to deepen their understanding of place.

These experiences were not just about learning, but also about the students seeing their place/community, and any place/community in a new light, with a sense of wonderment that incites their curiosity, moving them to ask, What happened here over time? Who is here now?

Who was here? Where are they now? Why is that? As active agents of their learning, the students brought forth knowledge for people to think about and possibly change how people viewed their home place/community when they shared their understanding with the community at Exhibition night. The participants' deeper understanding of the place's/community's history and culture, evident in their presentations about the lives and experiences of the Tongva People throughout history, is a testament to their active participation and the impact of their experiences.

Practical and Theoretical Implications

Findings from this study represent the interpretations of the experiences of teachers and students while learning about place/community through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview. The practical implications of this research are that it provides a transformative model for teaching and learning about the ecology and history of school places/communities through different perspectives. By applying unstructured interviews, Natureculture journaling, and photovoice as alternative forms of assessment, teachers can learn more about what children know and how they know it. Given that California has adopted Environmental Literacy standards (Collins et al., 2024), there is an opportunity to include the local Indigenous voices and perspectives by learning through the Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precepts, which could further impact educational policy.

By extending and developing critical place-based pedagogy, this research advocates for a way to Indigenize elementary education by learning and then teaching the Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precepts, which lead to a connection, love, and deeper learning of place/community. This research provides further evidence for Foucault's theory of power and knowledge and how non-coercive environments are transformative spaces for children's emancipatory learning. Additionally, the research provides a model that illuminates and shifts the

role of power in teaching and learning and expands on the knowledge learned by adding the perspective of learning through the Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precepts.

Limitations

Time was a constraint in our school context which extended the project over the latter and beginning halves of two semesters. Teachers in a five-day program would have the time to implement this learning in a few months given the project is visited three to five days per week. Generalizability limitations are that the findings might not be applicable to the wider population given that the context of our school and school norms and values differ from most traditional schools.

Confirming and Revising My Conceptual Assumptions

My first assumption was that the student-teacher power dynamics in school, which carried into the research while on the place/community walks, would influence children's willingness to engage authentically because they felt the same sense of agency as they have in school. This assumption was validated as participants engaged willingly and fully with each place/community walk's focus and during the interview process, journaling, and Photovoice activity. One participant, however, did feel and respond to the power of society's acceptable public norms for children's behavior and responded with their critical perspective of our class learning in place/community, which may have bothered community members. However, they made the best of the experiences and were fully engaged.

Another assumption was that children would accept anything they are taught without question because they feel they cannot ask questions or do not know how. This assumption was validated and revised. As previously stated, one participant did question the impact of our class learning in place/community. If we considered the community members, which revised my

assumption about children not questioning in their interviews, children expressed that learning through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview and from an Indigenous Elder was knowledge expanding in that they did not know about the local Indigenous history. They came to think about the "importance of knowing who Indigenous Peoples are, what they've done, and what they can do," demonstrating there was an influence on their worldview through learning this way. Their new perspective about place/community was influenced by the empathy they felt when learning through the Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precepts and the empathy they felt when learning about Michael Whitehorse Aviles' experience and stories carried into place/community, leading them to care.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research aimed to know if teaching through connection and love for place leads to caring for place/community, unfolding within a school context of a hybrid school model where students attend two days per week engaging in project-based learning in a non-coercive environment. Future studies within a five-day school program can carry forward the research while adding more data about the lived experience of learning through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview in partnership with local Indigenous Elders and or tribes. More time would allow for expanding the lessons and activities for each element observed on the place/community walks to have a full-bodied curriculum. Partnering with teachers in various place/communities and knowledge carriers of the local Indigenous Tribes in California can unfold these research project elements.

Exploring teachers' knowledge and understanding of Foucault's Theory of Power and Knowledge and its potential impact on them, their pedagogy, and children's outcomes could

have implications for shifting teacher education programs and practical but transformative applications to their teaching practice.

Suggested Questions and Applications

1. How can teachers learn alongside their students through the Original Kinship Indigenous worldview precepts in partnership with local Indigenous People, to transcend settler colonial viewpoints and to value their stories and perspectives of place/community through time?
2. What is the lived experience of learning about place through the Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precepts? How can teachers use unstructured interviews to elicit what children learned about place/community?
3. How does the awareness of embodied power shift education towards praxis for liberation? Further, how would this awareness impact early childhood self-concept in marginalized communities?
2. How would pre-service teacher's understanding of Foucault's theory of knowledge and power counter accepted and unquestioned assumptions about school-age people and their behaviors, along with the accepted norms for teacher-student power dynamics? Reading Foucault in teacher preparation programs and reflections on power and knowledge could elicit teacher perspective about Foucault's theory of power and knowledge in learning, allows one to reflect on one's situation, how it came to be, what sustains it, and how one might imagine a different situation for oneself and those around them.

Closing Reflections

Taking children to learn in the community has always been a part of my practice in elementary education. I learned early on that the space and place outside of the school was an opportunity to think about what learning can be and where it can happen. Certainly, gates are thin boundary spaces between what should be known and who awaits on the other side. These experiences were lively and exciting for us but always left me wondering how they could be enriched.

I recall a trip to Canterbury, England, where I found myself in an archeology museum excavated so one could see the past in layers. One could view the sight from the modern streets into the Medieval period, continuing to the Romans into the Celtic Druids. The layers that enveloped the history of all beings of a time gave more meaning to all the history I thought I had learned in school. At this moment, I understood that through time, events in places are covered over, making them unseen and alive only in oral storytelling and books. However, those who write books get to tell the story of those we no longer see and how they want them to be known.

Years later, in graduate school, I was given the gift of transformative Natureculture journaling in an Introduction to Ecoliteracy course with Dr. Kahn at Antioch. The course-long home assignment brought my thinking full circle to thinking about place one element at a time. This approach set into motion a new way of seeing, connecting to, and teaching about place and community, a view I had not experienced since my trip to Canterbury. With this new view, the concrete the students and I were walking across became a portal to a more profound way of seeing places and communities through time. The work of a Natureculture journal coalesced my thinking about the Indigenous people here on Turtle Island through space and time just as the

Druids were once in their place through space and time, moving us to ask, what is happening here? Who was here? Where they are now, and why is that?

My journey led me to the work of Four Arrows and the Original/Kinship Indigenous worldview precepts, which inspired the research and reminded me of the tenets of my place of practice. I wanted the children I am privileged to teach to have that depth of understanding that they might transfer their questioning to any place/community they find themselves. Everyone comes from a place, and every place has layers of history waiting to be known.

As people change places through relationships that are not always aligned with sustaining the whole ecology of place, the unintended consequences of nonreciprocal systems have led us into a crisis of uncertain outcomes.

However dire, the urgency of the climate crisis is the last opportunity to shift towards a worldview that supports a realizable reversal that begins with education. As educators, we play a crucial role in shaping the future. Knowing the root causes of the crisis and that we are shaping the future, educators must make this a reality for all ecology's sake. Educators have an opportunity to acknowledge the crisis and teach toward decoloniality. This approach supports a shift towards a more sustainable cultural paradigm. By joining the movement for radical localization along a more sustainable line, we can inspire and sustain a paradigm shift towards a better future.

Teaching about place through the Original Kinship/Indigenous worldview holds the transformative potential for this inspiring shift. Although such education is necessary to imagine new reciprocity with all beings of place, it will not likely create sufficient conditions for such a movement. The conditions for this movement must make transparent the hidden curriculum of settler colonialism in geographic culture and all of the oppressive systems underpinning school

structures; teaching must be transformed so that students can investigate and reappropriate a more just relationship to its history within which they are enmeshed.

To do this, we cannot continue teaching as usual; instead, we need to recognize and acknowledge education's role through the dominant worldview that has brought us to our current climate crisis, move from an anthropocentric worldview, and include the whole ecology of place as they have been and continue to be objects of our exploitation. A critical pedagogy of place in tandem with an Original Kinship/Indigenous worldview will support this shift. Through this education and awakening of our Nature-Culture connection and seeing place beyond face value with a new worldview (Wildcat, 2009), children will reconnect with and find a new appreciation for the place. They will develop the agency to imagine, create, and enact new possibilities for change.

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APPENDIX A: PARENT INFORMATION LETTER AND STATEMENT OF CONSENT FOR RESEARCH PROJECT

Dear Parents,

I am writing to inform you about my research project entitled: *Critical Place-Based Pedagogy: Teaching Towards Connection AND Love For Place Through An Kinship/Indigenous worldview*. This project is being taken up as part of my dissertation research program at Antioch University in Los Angeles. My Chair is Dr. Richard Kahn from the School of Education at Antioch University Los Angeles, and my second and third committee members are Dr. Don Trent Jacobs of Fielding University and Dr. Paul Bocko from Antioch New England.

The purpose of the study is to investigate the essence of children's experience when learning about Place through a Kinship /Kinship/Indigenous worldview. Second, the research asks how multiple experiences in place provide children the opportunity to know their place deeply, transcending the typical face-value knowledge of place by experiencing the whole ecology of place through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview. Lastly, I want to document the transformative aspect of children not knowing a place well, to knowing a place deeply enough to care for a place in its totality. The study supports the rising popularity of Place-based education in elementary schools and the need for more research about children as learners in the community.

The study involves me, students, and one parent volunteer taking a series of neighborhood 1-hour walks one time per week for three to seven weeks. The walks will be limited to the block that includes our school. Data gathering includes nature culture journals, photovoice, and interviews. This research demonstrates alternative ways of understanding what and who children know and experience in outdoor learning within a non-coercive public-school

context. The study adds weight to an increasing argument for a more humanizing way of learning by making transparent learners' perspectives about how it feels to learn and discover their place through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview.

As their teacher, your children have spent time setting norms for how we want to be in our classroom and those norms will hold to our walks. Children are viewed as observers, question posers, and documenters of their experience. They will use the experience to engage in discussions about the thwart they observe and how it feels to learn in the community.

The observations, (student taken) photographs, voice recordings, documentation of learning, interviews will be made anonymous and used for education (including Exhibition) and this research purpose only. The identities of all students and the school will remain anonymous in all written published work. All information will be stored in a locked cabinet.

I have completed similar work several times with students at our school in the past. However, never has the work been formalized in published research. Our school tenets of Compassionate Communication will apply to the field trip experiences. Norms for how children want their class to look, sound, and feel are established during the first few months of school and seek to maintain an environment where children can exercise their power and feel safe to take risks, express their beliefs and ideas, and pose questions. They are supported to use their capacities to think critically and develop as learners while constructing their knowledge.

-There are no risks beyond the normal day-to-day experience participation in the regular classroom/school yard.

This research is significant in that an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview teaches about our interconnectedness and a way of living in reciprocity.

Children as future adults will need to navigate their ever-changing world and the problems that continue to arise with a changing climate. *An Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview can support children now to develop ways of being in reciprocity with the earth and later as adults who advocate fiercely for systemic changes at a higher level.*

Thank you for taking the time to consider this proposal. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns. A consent form is attached for you to complete as your child has been selected to participate in a post-field experience interview. The selection is confidential to further ad anonymity to selected artifacts used for reflection.

With deep gratitude,

Rita Bouchard

Ed.D.c

APPENDIX B: PARENTS AND CHILD STATEMENT OF CONSENT

By signing below, you are indicating that you:

- Have read and understand the information document regarding this project
- Have had any questions answered to your satisfaction
- Understand that if you have any additional questions, you can contact the research team
- Understand that you are free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty
- For projects involving minors: have discussed the project with your child and their requirements if participating in the post-fieldwork interviews
- Understand that the project will include observations, photographs, documentation of project work, and hand-written records of conversation that occurs as the natural part of the normal 4th and 5th program.
- Agree to participate in the project

Name_____

Signature_____

Date_____

Statement of Child consent:

Your parent or guardian has given their permission for you to be involved in this research project by participating in a post- field work interview. The interview will take approximately 20 - 30 minutes to complete.

- Yes
- No

By signing on the line below, you are indicating that the project has been discussed with you and you agree to participate in the project. By *not* signing on the line below you are indicating that you do not wish to participate in the post-field work interview.

_____

Please contact me if you have any questions: Rita Bouchard	For further questions or concerns, contact: Hays Moulton, PhD Chair, Undergraduate Studies Antioch University Online and Extended Programs Coordinator, Assessment Resource Team

APPENDIX C: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL AND QUESTIONS

Thank you for participating in this interview. Your responses are significant to this research in that they will add data for teachers to think about when designing Place experiences for children. Over the course of the past month, you have had many experiences in our school Place. I will ask you some questions about those experiences and you may elaborate as much as you need to. I may ask you to clarify questions or to elaborate.

Overarching question - You learned about Kinship/Indigenous worldview from Michael Whitehorse Aviles. Do you see nature differently now? If so, how? What does it mean to learn about Place through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview?

How did the experiences of observing soil, rock, plants, insects, trees, birds, and people etc., in place/community feel for you?

Was there anything that was confusing for you during those Place experiences?

What do you feel is the most important learning you took away from those Place experiences?

Do you have a favorite experience in Place and/or learning from Michael?

How do you see Place and Nature as interconnected after these experiences?

Is there anything about your experience in Place that you want me or other teachers to know?

Would you recommend teachers create these types of learning experiences for their students? Why?

We're almost at the end,

How could the interview process be improved? What questions would you like to ask me?

APPENDIX D: THE ALIGNMENT OF THIRTY KINSHIP/INDIGENOUS WORLDVIEW PRECEPTS WITH PUBLIC SCHOOL WAYS OF BEING

This table includes how the Original Kinship/Indigenous worldview precepts align with the schools' tenets and includes the resources that have helped us develop the organizational, pedagogical, and systems spheres over 13 years. All the resources are aligned with the Standards for the Teaching Profession and grounded in quantitative and qualitative research.

Dominant and Kinship/Indigenous worldview Precepts	How School Tenets Align (What Can Be Developed)	Questions, Resources and Activities for Moving Toward the Indigenous Precept
Recognition of Spiritual Energies in Nature	Children are innately curious and have an affinity for nature. In thinking about the Latin etymology of "spirit" as "breath," I believe experiences with the natural world are refreshing and energizing for children. They need places to connect with all facets of nature and non-human animals to develop and maintain relationships with them. Interactions with nature develop a familiarity with and trust in their place in the ecology and appreciation for their beauty and attractive energy, which draws them to the plants, animals, and insects. Projects develop children's understanding of the social ecology of the school community, including insects and animals as part of the ecosystem. However, transcending the duality of humans and nature, to	How do we help children develop spirituality similar to Indigenous spirituality? Free To Learn: Why Unleashing the Instinct to Play Will Make Children Circle Round: Raising Children in Goddess Tradition

	humans as interconnected with nature, is not usually taught. The Western view of non-human animals alongside human animals as worthy of our deepest care is not typical, and they lack the emotional capacity to care. In our efforts to create opportunities for children to connect with nature, our school garden is an evolving place where children can "be," connect with non-human animals, forest bathe, or enjoy unstructured play. Rather than plan out a garden solely to grow food, we have left half of the garden wild for the children as they appreciate being able to hide in the tall grasses. Although adults are in the area, they are not hovering or interfering with the children's flow. Our trust in children carries into their trust in nature and in themselves to be with nature.	
Non-Hierarchical Society	Since children spend much of their young lives in school, their daily experiences shape their worldview over time. Therefore, treating them well sets their expectations for future classrooms. They care for each other because they see how teachers treat students with care, respect, and dignity. No one person deserves more respect than another. Students see adults on campus as allies, not as authoritarian figures. The school tenets develop and support a non-hierarchical environment by acknowledging that each person is on a continuum of growth and learning. Children are honored and supported to exercise their autonomy by choosing how they learn and demonstrate their understanding of the topic on which the group decides. This voice-giving practice provides opportunities to exercise agency and build confidence. Doing so supports less individualism and a willingness to use their collective agency to make a change. Additionally, children have opportunities to collaborate and work together when a significant school change is needed and participate in the new teacher hiring symposium.	"How do we honor children and pay close attention to how we are treating them?" Faber, A., & Mazlish, E. (2012). *How to talk so kids will listen & listen so kids will talk*. Simon and Schuster.

	The school staff model of mutual respect is an expectation that flows into the classroom ways of being. Teachers communicate and practice a power-with leadership style that is not coercive and allows children to develop self-awareness and self-management. We build conflict resolution skills for children when problems emerge, not through a scripted curriculum. Additionally, children practice leadership when invited to run the Morning Community Reconnection Circle. In these experiences, children choose the talking piece, a question to focus on, and sometimes an activity to lead. In the shared leadership model for our schools, the principal and vice principal take care of the daily administration of the school, and teachers are trusted leaders in their classrooms. Teachers can suggest new initiatives if they feel the students will benefit. Additionally, teachers are part of the hiring process for new staff. Supported as leaders, teachers choose one PD per semester to lead professional development where they share a topic and lead a learning activity that would benefit the staff. Alternatively, they can send a survey and collect data about what teachers want to know more about or need support. Sometimes, we use PD to re-balance ourselves with our core values. Additionally, teachers have the autonomy to be creative with curriculum design rather than purchase curriculum. Although most children do very well with our model, some children who join later in their elementary career can experience challenges shifting to a non-coercive school system. For example, to support their agency, they need to learn to plan projects and understand that it is safe to ask questions. However, if they join early enough, they are successful. We have seen children go through our school, graduate successfully, and move into college, many choosing life-enriching majors centered on improving society or returning to us to learn a different way of teaching while attending college.	Rosenberg, M. B., & Chopra, D. (2015). *Nonviolent communication: A language of life: Life-changing tools for healthy relationships*. Puddle Dancer Press. Brendtro, L., Brokenleg, M., & Van Bockem, S. (2009). *Reclaiming youth at risk: Our hope for the future*. Solution Tree Press.

Courage and Fearless Trust in the Universe	Children are born fearless and learn fear from caregivers. Rather than helping children develop skills solely for self-directed academic learning, we realize the importance of spending time in nature to develop trust and confidence in themselves. For example, children can display aggression toward plants, and insects, and animals. However, rather than discount their ability to love nature, they have opportunities to heal and rediscover their biophilia by working through their fear. They do this by learning from bee caregivers about the beauty and benefits of insects as necessary and trusting. In this way, children grow with a deeper awareness, connection, and trust in the natural world. Trust in the natural world equates to kinship and caring enough to care for it. Although our children will likely not experience a vision quest, we support them to reflect on their situation and think of their resources and possibilities to work through it. We do this by acknowledging their fear and wondering about their situation. For example, a child may become uncomfortable with a stinging insect nearby. The teacher, noticing their discomfort, will acknowledge it by saying, I am noticing your excitement with the bee near you. However, rather than fix it by removing the child, they will ask, I wonder what your need is right now? Or what does the bee need? This practice begins in TK and continues through middle school. Rather than solve the problem for them, we trust their capabilities to be resourceful and creative problem solvers. Signature practices that help children develop trust in situations are A culture of compassion: A spirit of caring and collaboration define our people and culture. We have fun together. We learn together. We grow together. Our students and staff are celebrated for being their authentic self. We serve all students and honor where they are in their life and in education.	How do we support children to develop the skills, knowledge, and habitudes to engage in multiple situations with courage? Rosenberg, M. B., & Chopra, D. (2015). *Nonviolent communication: A language of life: Life-changing tools for healthy relationships*. Puddle Dancer Press.

	Project-based Learning Teachers work backward to plan their curriculum, creating engaging, interdisciplinary projects that center on a big idea and a real-world connection that is rigorous, relevant, and meaningful to students' lives. Students work in teams to create a final product that demonstrates mastery of content standards and a demonstration of key skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and communication. POLs Presentations of Learning ("POLs") are a tradition at the school in which students prepare and deliver a formal presentation to a panel of their teachers and peers. POLs allow students to develop their speaking and presentation skills and to reflect publicly on their understanding and mastery of content in their courses. Students connect how specific work they have completed demonstrates growth toward mastery, 21st-century skills, and Habits of Heart and Mind. Exhibition Nights: Exhibition is a public presentation of student work and an opportunity for our community to gather and celebrate how much our students have learned and grown in the project-based environment. Exhibition Nights are an important component of project-based learning and assessment and provide a comprehensive view of each student's knowledge and mastery of the curriculum. Social-emotional learning is central to The School. We have named our brand of social-emotional learning *Compassionate Communication*, underpinned by the work of Marshall Rosenberg. Teachers learn and apply strategies to support children in developing compassionate communication skills, self-efficacy, flexibility, self-responsibility, empathy, positive conflict resolution, and collaboration. Collectively, these practices support children who are aware of the world and the problems they will face. They also have the courage to think about how best they can make a difference and take action.	

Understanding/ Embracing Death and Dying	Speaking about death and dying with children can be challenging. News of mass shootings or death tolls due to war and natural disasters is more frequent. Teachers will inevitably have conversations about death and dying with children. Based on the view of death and dying of the child and their family, these conversations can be difficult, especially when our community has many faiths with different views of death and dying. COVID-19 presented multiple opportunities for all teachers to support children in these times. In our first semester back in school, we lost a teacher and were shocked that one of our colleagues we had spoken to the day before had passed so suddenly. Our organization made acknowledging his death a priority by gathering Antioch counselors for students and teachers at the school for the week. Students established a memorial in his homeroom, which became a sanctuary for the eight months remaining in the year. Students could go to his room and reflect, write him a note, or just be. It was our way of holding space for him to be honored. What do I do in times of mourning to acknowledge the feelings children experience about	How do we support students in their wondering in moments of death and dying?

	death and the mysteries they have learned that surround it? To ensure we recognize the lives of human and non-human animals, we acknowledge when children's pets move to the spirit world. We show loving kindness and respect for animals that have died at school or a dead bird or lizard they come across in the garden. We discuss the life cycle and our interconnection with Mother Earth and all beings. In this way, rather than discarding the being into a trash receptacle, children learn that all beings are worthy of compassion and ceremony when they pass into a spirit world. They remain part of us because they have been with us - they are always there. After a ceremony, the animal is not forgotten but wondered about; I have begun morning community reconnection with "I wonder where Crow is now." What might they be doing? I like to use the children's book "The Dead Bird" by Margaret Wise Brown to elicit memory and conversation. Children are imaginative with these prompts and appreciate thinking about what might be. Further, this is an opportunity to transfer the conversation to humans and reflect on *How you think*	

	death works. In this way, I am stepping out as having an answer but will contribute my wonderings. One year, we had an elder hen, Henrietta, and some children thought she was dying. After observing her closely throughout the morning, I determined (through my experience with hens) that she was passing. Rather than leave her in the coupe to pass alone, the children wanted to create a soft pillow area in the classroom so they could be with her. Some kids went to the kindergarten dress-up trunk, brought back a velvet smock, and tucked it around her. She did pass, and we celebrated and buried her. The ceremony involved reading *The Dead Bird* by Margaret Wise Brown and singing the song. More recently, our desert tortoise passed to her next life, which was a sad moment for me as well, as I have known her in schools for 22 years. The children, sharing the same feelings, took it upon themselves to create an altar where all children in the school could recognize Shelly. They expressed gratitude for the joy she brought and continued to give to the community through her memory.	

	Over the years, it is interesting to see how children who have had these experiences carry on compassion towards animals and each other as they move into middle school. Sharing our authentic experiences about family members who have passed shows students that they are in a safe environment where they can mourn, be vulnerable, and receive support.	
Living a Socially purposed life	Students have opportunities to direct their learning and collaborate on larger projects centering on relevant, interesting topics they help choose. Teachers use problem or project-based learning to help children understand their role in interconnected systems. Learning in this way honors children's curiosity and supports them in becoming who they want to be rather than becoming someone else's idea of success. Knowing the climate crisis will continue to have adverse impacts on future generations implores us to focus on topics that affect or will directly affect our students as future adults. The work they will do as adults has not been created. The purpose of authentic and relevant learning experiences is to engage students in	How can we provide opportunities for children to discover what has meaning for them? Robinson, K., & Aronica, L. (2009). *The element: How finding your passion changes everything*. Penguin. Robinson, K., & Aronica, L. (2014). *Finding your element: How to discover*

	conversation about what is needed to help Earth and us heal and provide them with opportunities to develop skills and thinking dispositions foundational to more advanced learning experiences. We ask ourselves, What kind of work will they do that will support them as they support healing? In this way, they have the knowledge and power to create a purposeful life. Sometimes, parents tolerate jobs they would rather not be doing. Acknowledging their fatigue and weariness supports them as they continue with work because they are responsible and would do anything for their children. Rather than negate their efforts, we invite parents to share expertise in the classroom and within learning groups created outside the school. In this way, parents can have a renewed sense of purpose as children see the value in their gifts and appreciate learning from teachers and parents in the community.	*your talents and passions and transform your life*. Penguin. Gordon, T. (2003). *Teacher effectiveness training: The program proven to help teachers bring out the best in students of all ages*. Crown. Rogers, C. R. (1995). *On becoming a person: A therapist's view of psychotherapy*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
Emphasis on Community Welfare	A unified community develops through mutual respect for all community members as having a life force. Mutual respect stems from seeing, hearing, and valuing the voices of everyone. Listening is a tenet of our school. We listen to the students with empathy, and they listen to each other and people who might feel marginalized. Developing and practicing self-awareness and empathy skills helps us become better listeners to	How do we create a thriving and inclusive community?

	ourselves and one another. Daily evidence-based mindfulness practice using Inner Explorer has supported our staff, students, and families for 12 years to grow in this area. In addition to outreach during tragic events, several classroom projects have centered around building awareness of providing nutrition for people experiencing homelessness. Regarding the animals on our campus as part of our community, young children have an innate sense of "animism" in their display of affection and "voice-giving" to animals, insects, and toys during play. By voice giving, I do not mean that voice is ours to give. Instead, I mean that many humans with a Western view of the world do not listen to the natural world as knowing or feeling. So, "voice-giving" means "I will say for you what you cannot say yourself in a way that people will listen." How do we sustain "voice giving" as advocating for those who are not heard? Rather than think of caring for nature as something to grow out of, we have a sense of playfulness and honor our inner child by joining them in their concerns and supporting them in any actions they might take, and also helping them understand that the animals are our relatives and worthy of our care. As everything has life energy, land-based knowledge develops an understanding of the interconnectedness of all things on Earth. Our classroom conversations often center around the garden, the animals, and our responsibility in caring for them as valued community members. Our learning community encourages students to communicate learning in and out of the classroom. In addition, families have opportunities to create and attend learning and celebration opportunities on campus, where the larger community is present. Rather than keep parents outside the fence, they are invited in daily. Our doors are always open.	Senge, P. M., Cambron-McCabe, N., Lucas, T., Smith, B., & Dutton, J. (2012). *Schools that learn (updated and revised): A fifth discipline fieldbook for educators, parents, and everyone who cares about education*. Crown Currency. Inner Explorer-Evidence-Based Mindfulness for School Communities Semple, R. J., Droutman, V., & Reid, B. A. (2017). Mindfulness goes to school: Things learned (so far) from research and real-world experiences. *Psychology in the Schools*, *54*(1), 29-52.

High Respect for Women and the Sacred Feminine	How do we see and honor the Sacred Feminine in ourselves and all of our students? In these days of mass shootings in schools, creating an environment that is welcoming and makes children feel safe is more important than ever. Our school staff intentionally creates and sustains a peaceful learning environment that does not reward or punish and breaks with carrying forward the systems of oppression long held as necessary to manage children in schooling. Part of creating a culture of compassion stems from female and trans leadership and a highly respectful and diverse staff representative of the student body. Respect for children by all the adults in the community is an expectation and equal to the respect adults give each other. All of our staff is gentle. Honoring the feminine in everyone is developed by listening to their concerns for each other and the world. Earth is regarded as living, giving, and sacred in my classroom. Earth gives us what we need, and she deserves our care. Rather than uphold practices that accept males as innately destructive rather than gentle and whole, there is high regard and support for sensitivity in boys' relationships with one another and more than human animals. It is not different when we stress the need for boys to care rather than sustain an aggressive way of being accepted at most schools. Although statistics show that boys are called on more than girls and are often chosen as leaders, girls must understand they are just as powerful as boys. To develop a balance of both seeing themselves as equally whole and powerful, there is an absence of hierarchy. For example, all have the opportunity to lead, and boys see their power lies in acknowledging, accepting, and showing their gentle side. Although there may be occasional quarrels, there are never physical fights. To teach about the feminine experience, rather than suppress, hide, or "other" the natural process of menses from the males in the community, we demystify	How do we see and honor the Sacred Feminine in ourselves and our students? Starhawk, Baker, D., & Hill, A. (1998). *Circle round: Raising children in goddess traditions*. New York: Bantam Books. hooks, b. (2000). *Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics*. South End Press.

	menstruation through Puberty workshops in 5th through 8th grades. Very few parents opt their children out of these workshops. Students always gain a more profound sense of awareness and empathy for each other after having gone through these experiences because the mysterious experiences of their mothers are made transparent. However, there is room for developing an awareness of the Sacred Feminine that makes up the whole of each of us. For example, although the role of males in procreation is made transparent, the language and meaning are not eloquent as "male is the breath" in the original Kinship/Indigenous worldview. Although we introduce menstruation to create awareness, we could better stress menses as a sacred and powerful life-giving force of the feminine. Children know about issues from the media but rarely discuss them with their families. I wonder how understanding the fragmented mechanistic view of Earth as an object and a patriarchal society's taking of/from her would change children's perspectives.	
Respect for Gender Role Fluidity	Children and staff feel safe expressing their gender identity, and teachers create spaces where children can be authentic. The environment we strive to develop and maintain allows children's true identities to emerge as they define them. Despite discussions about banning specific curriculum topics and media, we remain committed to representing our highly diverse community through our libraries and resources. Additionally, the administration and the school board	How do we create a community where people can realize, be, and express their authentic selves without fear of repercussions from any community members? Cosmo, From the Stars

	fully support the staff. Our school stands out as an exception during intense activism from some parents against inclusive practices. The ongoing conversation about gender includes discussions of Two-Spirit identities, gender roles, and the impact of parents on their children's self-expression. Being authentic encompasses respecting students' choices in color and type of clothing, names, and the toys and activities they engage in.	*Cosmo_EBook (001).pdf | Powered by Box*. (n.d.).
Nonmaterialistic Barter, Gift, and Kinship Economies	Children learn to value "things" at a very young age. Beginning with losing connection in family relationships and replacing connection with things that will bring temporary comfort. When children enter school, typically, relationships are friendly, but schools can create an undercurrent of competition. Although some competitions can be good, competition in every aspect of the school day can lead to animosity, jealousy, and frustration. Some parents must bribe children to attend school and reward them for doing well to pacify them. Rewards set up an expectation that there will be rewards for everything. Rather than having the intrinsic motivation to learn for oneself, there becomes a constant want for things. Setting this cycle into motion at a young age gives children the idea that life is not about relationships but about competition at every level: how we dress, what we drive, where we live, and keeping up appearances, which fuel the need for more things. In all of this, we have forgotten the relationship and the need for connection that underlies the need for things in the first place. Our school teaches about	How do we nurture children to value people, relationships, and not things? Waters Center for Systems Thinking Local Futures

	relationships and the connections between students, teachers, and the learning environment. We spend the first several weeks at the beginning of each semester building connections and intentionally set daily built-in opportunities for connection and reconnection before (morning community reconnection), during (community math and collaborative projects), and at the end of the school day during Community Reflection. Our attendance is very high and consistent because children want to connect and have the time to do so!	Lesson Plans & Teaching Resources | Institute for Humane Education
All Earth Entities Are Sentient	The most challenging precept to help older children understand is that all animals are sentient. The older we are, the more set in our ways we have become. In my experience, children feel the most important animals worth saving are the ones people don't consume. So, according to children, aside from our pets, wild animals deserve all our attention and should be saved. Although I agree and understand we need to change the systems that endanger wilderness animals in the first place, children need to understand the system of their food. Knowing about animals in the food industry can help children connect to other subjects. So, I begin by focusing on children's feelings about the animals they consume through gratitude. Although I do not eat meat, beginning with gratitude is appropriate to express gratitude for our nourishment, whatever that may be. When we eat lunch together, we pause and thank the plants and animals that nourish us. The reason is that the connection between the animal products children eat in school lunches and an animal that was once alive is sometimes nonexistent. Although some know the link between the plants and animals they consume, they do not care or do not feel it is a problem. Some children do not know because their parents do not want them to know or do not believe "real" protein can come from other sources. Children with this knowledge are potent agents for animals and their right to live. It is helpful to have vegetarian or	How do we help children understand that the plants and animals we take for sustenance are sentient? How do we help children understand honorable harvests, so they reflect on and honor the plants and animals they use for nourishment rather than take them for granted? Lesson Plans & Teaching Resources | Institute for Humane Education

	vegan children who share their thoughts about why they have their eating styles. Some children get downright mad and will explain how animals we eat are thinking and feeling beings. Sometimes, hearing from the hearts of their peers can be an eye-opening and conscious-raising experience. Although older children can learn to understand the sentience of animals, developing the understanding is easier for the youngest children. To provide experiences where children can connect to the animals, community/place walks to The Gentle Barn are planned for families. Children can interact with rescued animals, look into their eyes, and maybe their souls. Also, spending time with the hens in our yard daily and observing them helps them see patterns in behaviors that show them they have fears, joy, and belonging as flock animals. There are several traditional school practices that we consciously choose not to practice at our school. Several teachers and I have chosen not to keep a classroom pet. When asked why, I explain to the children that the industry is not kind to animals but has commodified them for profit. As with all sensitive topics, they can research further with parents if they want to know more. Regarding the dissection of animals, which usually occurs in 5th through 8th grade, digital dissection is much more effective at holding students' engagement. Students can see the interconnection of the different systems in a digital dissection rather than focusing on the formaldehyde smell or moving around compacted organs. They can all participate rather than half the class miss because they feel sick from the euthanized animal experience. If a different experience moves students to engage in conversations about why to utilize one format of dissection over another, it is even better. It means they are thinking about something they might not have	

	before, which has become a norm in classroom lab science. Helping children notice and appreciate life in all aspects of gardening is an opportunity to show them our regard for insects, plants, and animals. We must acknowledge and speak to the plants that might crowd the garden to explain why we remove them rather than just pulling them out. Although a more dedicated group cares for the hens independently and on their own time, everyone has the opportunity through a Responsibility rotation. The younger the child, the gentler and more intentional they are when they help. In a recent conversation about Passion Projects, a student stressed they wanted to research and learn about Red Pandas because they are endangered animals. Another student chimed in about cows being endangered and elaborated on the recent tragedy of 18,000 dairy cows dying in a fire. Rather than ignoring each other, the first students responded by saying they had never thought about cows having feelings. Conversations such as these with children illuminate and broaden their thinking about animals.	
Earth as an unloving "it" vs. **Earth and All Systems as Living and Loving**	When children learn through the Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview precept(s), they know that globally, many people recognize and live in a way that appreciates and contributes to the interconnection of the cycles that maintain a balance for all beings to live. Rather than viewing the cycles as scientific and fragmented, the Indigenous way of knowing how everyone is part of a more extensive, complementary, interconnected system is through place-based learning in	How do we help students understand the interconnection of all aspects of science and human's role and responsibility to support Earth to re-balance?? Object vs. Subject

	the community. Children learn about local Indigenous history and culture alongside a local Indigenous Elder and teacher to transcend textbook understandings that leave out Indigenous voices, unsaid experiences, and successes of living in relation with Earth through time. When children learn of Indigenous People's history from an Indigenous Elder, they relate with deep empathy and curiosity about other people's experiences in history. At a time when students are more sheltered from the current events of the world, they are becoming more detached from the realities they will face as adults. When children learn about their interconnection with all living and non-living subjects and their roles in the Earth's ecosystems, they innately want to care for them and interact with intentionality. Learning to see Earth through an Original Kinship/Indigenous Worldview develops a view of the sciences children learn in school as interconnected. For example, when children understand that you can't have the basics of matter and the cells that makeup living beings without an understanding of physics concepts of gravity, or when there is a change in the weather in one	

	place, there will surely be a shift in the weather system elsewhere, they begin to make connections. When children understand that Earth is a living system regulating and interconnected to other systems, they can better appreciate and respect that all systems have limits that are affected by human activities, are driven by our needs and wants, and grow to be more responsible consumers.	
More head than heart vs. Inseparability of head and heart **An Emphasis on Heart Wisdom**	It is not easy to be a school that supports the whole child. It takes time for teachers who are new to our ways of being to understand that learning is an emotional experience for teachers and students and that there is a connection between compassionate communication, mindfulness practice, the Habits of Heart and Mind, and academic success, Thinking about "Heart Mode," when teachers create a space for learning to unfold, we are reminded of the need for self-awareness and attunement to our hearts. In listening to our hearts, we are giving self-love. Whatever our heart is feeling will guide our actions and create the energy of the space. Being authentic about what is alive	How do we support teachers and home study parents to develop the understanding that learning is an emotional act? -How do we help teachers understand that the energy of the environment will determine how children will engage and ultimately participate and learn? -How do we create spaces where children feel safe to be vulnerable and express their

	in our hearts with children—truth-telling—shows vulnerability and models for children to show their hearts. And they do. When we speak and *act from our heart,* as you say, we free the bound energy of emotion. However, suppose we have not experienced releasing our genuine emotions with family or friends. In that case, we are bound to grow into adults who suppress and don't express, or we express our feelings in ways that are not life-enriching. Modeling "self-calming" for children gives them an invaluable tool for navigating the emotions of life. Being self-aware and able to pause for a moment to think about what is needed to move forward is inviting students to be supportive and empathetic listeners for others. Further, the interconnected energy of the learning space involves everyone's energy. Understanding how children develop and how they may not know how to share their hearts, we are responsible as teachers and caregivers to create connections where all children feel seen, heard, and accepted. Rather than teaching children through a	authentic feelings to move forward in ways that are healing? Faber, A., & Mazlish, E. (2012). *How to talk so kids will listen & listen so kids will talk*. Simon and Schuster. Rosenberg, M. B., & Chopra, D. (2015). *Nonviolent communication: A language of life: Life-changing tools for healthy relationships*. PuddleDancer Press. Gordon, T. (2003). *Teacher effectiveness training: The program proven to help teachers bring out the best*

	dominant worldview, I believe that beginning with an original Kinship/Indigenous worldview of genuine connection that is "from the heart" with children is vital to creating spaces where children want to engage. Children's feelings of connectedness disseminate beyond the classroom to their peers and home. I often hear parents say their children are opening up and using problem-solving skills they have not seen before. They can re-center themselves when out of balance by using their internal "pause button." For years, I have taught children about self-awareness regarding situations that arise daily, using Stephen Covey's Seven Habits. When we are aware of our thoughts and how they impact our body's feeling energy, we can decide what those feelings are telling us and recall what we did the last time we had that feeling and what we will do now with the energy. Then, by pressing the pause button, we can react or respond. Reacting will result in a situation where we continue with old habits and will likely need to repair a relationship. On the other hand, choosing to respond	*in students of all ages*. Crown.

	means we are choosing to remain connected and act in an enriching way for those involved. To maintain a sense of connectedness, even in conflict, we must begin with empathy. Rather than coming from a place of judgment, we can see the situation from the other person's perspective. We can ask ourselves how this situation might feel. We can listen to them, and they can listen to us. We can co-create solutions that might work and choose the one that might work best. We can agree to connect and talk about how the solution is working. Through time, the connection is sustained and intact. Both parties are willing to invest time and energy to improve a relationship.	
Competition to feel superior vs. Competition to develop positive potential **The Sacred Nature of Competition and Games**	I feel the need to speak about the kind of school practices that develop unhealthy competition in children and a socially unhealthy learning environment. Emphasis on school competition can make kids anxious, distract them from learning, and keep them from learning from each other (Kohn, 1994). As assessment can lead to competition, our school is not assessment-based. Where most public schools practice weekly Benchmark assessments to keep each child on a one-size fits all track, we have written in our charter to use less frequent assessment methods that provide home-school parents with the next steps for learning for their individual children.	How do we create environments where children learn the Sacred nature of competition through non-competitive learning and play? Gray, P. (2013). *Free to learn: Why unleashing the instinct to play will make our children happier, more self-reliant, and better*

	We often support student learning through relevant action-based and change-oriented projects where students identify a problem, think about ways to improve a situation and make a change. Students develop communication and other academic skills through the projects. We know what children understand through community-wide- Exhibitions of Learning and Presentations of Learning. These alternative summative assessments provide community members to hear directly from the students about the project details and reflection. As such, not focusing on such frequent testing takes away the "grades-based" mentality where children will compare themselves with their peers leaving some students to feel inadequate because they do not measure up. Another way we develop a Sacred Nature view of competition is through games and non-directed free play. Throughout the day, children can engage in field games and sports in the spirit of play. Children are self-organizing and do not usually require an adult to facilitate their experience. On their own, they will form teams and begin a field game. Because students are self-organized and understand empathy from other aspects of their schooling, they notice when one team is struggling, and stronger players will switch sides to support the other team. This can be! Healthy competition creates a community of children willing to learn together for the benefit of all. Another example is students creating alternative rules for GaGa handball. Rather than play to the elimination of all players, students created Patrick's Rules in which once you are out of the game, you can get back into line and enter the game again once someone is out. So, the game is continuous. There seems to be more harmony with students using this rule. And it came from the students! These interactions spring from our ways of being in all aspects of the school. Children can be themselves and do not view adults as authoritarian but as adults who	*students for life*. Basic Books. Kohn, A. (1992). *No contest: The case against competition*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Rosenberg, M. B. (2002). *Nonviolent communication: A language of compassion*. Encinitas, CA: Puddledancer press.

	are supporting children to develop as empathetic, self-aware, and self-directed. Finally, an impactful practice that marginalizes most students in schools is that we do not have teachers' pets, no student has privilege over another in any sphere of the school, and families who donate do not get special recognition or treatment. Such practices create lexical markings for people to judge themselves against 'others', which is another way to create competition	
Lacking Empathy vs. Being Empathetic	Empathy is one our Habits of Heart and Mind and is a throughline in the way we communicate. Beginning with the question, "How would this email, experience, situation, IEP, feel or be received?" It is part of our continuing practice to develop how we connect with one another in times of joy and times of conflict. Rather than "fixing." Empathy is being aware of one's feelings and noticing what another is experiencing and ● seeing, hearing, and feeling people we encounter so they feel seen, heard, and felt. ● listening deeply first, without getting our response ready ● elicits the deeper meaning of an experience through the lens of the person or group.	Costa, A. L., & Kallick, B. (Eds.). (2008). *Learning and leading with habits of mind: 16 essential characteristics for success*. ASCD. Rosenberg, M. B. (2002). *Nonviolent communication: A language of compassion*. Encinitas, CA: Puddledancer press.

	● brings out the agency and power people might not know they have in a situation. ● is transformational in that it is an opportunity for cathartic release and renewal. Empathy can't stand alone as something we pull out as a tool when needed. When I plan an activity, I consider how the diverse students in my space will respond and whether they feel challenged, overstretched, over-stimulated, marginalized, or bored. In those moments, I give myself empathy and acceptance of the feelings, which can be joy and satisfaction because they are engaged or unhappiness because I wasted the children's time. Rather than trudge along, I can sit with the moment, gather, and hear the children, and ask them what should shift. Using Marshall Rosenberg's Observation, Feelings, Needs, and Requests (OFNR)- I say, "I notice that many of you are not as engaged as usual. What can you tell me about that?" Hearing their Needs and words of truth (because they feel safe), they might say, "Yeah, this just isn't interesting," - Meaning they aren't engaging because	

	their need to learn something interesting, challenging, etc., is not being met. So rather than argue or scold them for lacking interest, I can ask them what would be interesting now. A caveat of using Empathy and OFNR is that a person's worldview significantly impacts how they perceive situations and will or will not be empathetic. Therefore, a teacher's mental model of what learning looks, sounds, and feels like will influence what they perceive and how they respond in the classroom.	
Anthropocentric vs. Animistic and biocentric - **Nonanthropocentrism**	This precept offers teaching challenges as a typical science question for elementary and middle school students is "What makes something "alive"? However, nurturing an everlasting biocentric and animist view of the world in young children before their ideas are tainted later in school is possible. Based on Four-Arrows descriptors: 1. Place-based learning centers on deeply understanding where we are in our space on Earth and the larger cosmology. Beginning in the community, children can learn about the rocks making up soil and life there (seen and unseen), continuing up to the taller plants, animals, the biome of place, and the interconnection of all that creates the "whole personality" of place. Zooming out (Using Google Earth or Satellite images), children can see the connection between many places. Zooming out further,	How do we support children to develop an inclusive animistic and biocentric view of the world vs. an anthropocentric view? How do we help children view Earth through a non-anthropocentric lens (at a young age) before they learn to view it through a Western Lens with the belief that everything is disconnected and ours for the taking? Jacobs, D. T. (2016). Teaching truly: A

	children can see the interconnection of the "skin" of Earth. We are connected. Even over distance, there is a continuous connection. 2. Zooming out helps children conceptualize our connection to Earth. Zooming into areas where mining is ***taking place***, could those areas be considered "sores" in the skin of the Earth? What would children say or ask about them? How do we help children understand that when we "dig into Earth," we harm water and ourselves as we come from Earth and need clean water? Teachers can help children transcend their understanding of water as a molecule necessary for life to an understanding of water as a commodity being monetized for corporate profits. Several videos and documentaries, such as *Water on the Table, Blue Gold,* and Flow: For the Love of Water, are available for teachers to begin the conversation. Additionally, children can learn through multidisciplinary projects centered on Indigenous History and Culture and tying in science and the water cycle, then move into a deeper understanding through the Mni Wiconi Movement. 3. Children see connections between organisms when learning about animals and species. They do this by experiencing connection with others than human life, which is all around us. As innate animists, children can be given opportunities to see the world through the lens of other than human life and tell their stories. Making these connections is key to acknowledging the "mysterious, loving, creative force who, with helpers from the nonhuman world, created the world's interconnectedness" (Jacobs 2022 p. 111). 4. How can an understanding of Creative Force, as the original energy of formation transferred	curriculum to indigenize mainstream education. *Curriculum and Teaching Dialogue: Vol. 18# 1 & 2*, 183. Topa, W., & Narvaez, D. (2022). *Restoring the kinship worldview: Indigenous voices introduce 28 precepts for rebalancing life on planet earth*. North Atlantic Books.

	through the interaction of two beings, passed through ecology, and never destroyed, be conceptualized? Through an animism lens, children can understand Western science's idea of energy transfer through experience with nature. This concept of energy transfer can be seen in something as simple as a rock passing heat to a lizard. Without rock, could the lizard be? Both beings are needed: one transfers their heat to give the other warmth. They rely on each other. Another example is water in a stream providing life force energy to organisms so we can live. We rely on her so much without a thought! 5. "Every element has a spiritual presence" interests me as humans destroy an element's agency to get what they need. I think of this as children having their agency taken from them in coercive environments with the means to maintain the status quo. However, as teachers, we can begin early with children to help strengthen their sense of agency by providing many opportunities for them to use it! When children use their agency regularly in a school context, they are aware of it. When children are aware of their agency, they communicate through their actions when it is being violated. It is interesting to receive children from schools where they had no power. Their habit of raising their hand to do anything in school takes weeks, if not months, to unlearn to relearn that they are free to move about as they do at home. Some children never learn they can move about, use the restroom, meet their needs for nourishment, use supplies, or even speak without an adult's permission. 6. "All elements, including rocks, water, mountains, and thunder, are animated with	

	individual personalities' ' makes me think about Piaget's four levels of animism (Klingensmith, 1953). Until children reach a certain age, they believe the elements are animated and have individual personalities. **What would children say about this?** I understand this precept partially mostly because the way I viewed the world as a child was regularly contradicted once I entered Catholic school. It nearly destroyed me. I wonder about children's innate knowledge about the world and how children are told what is alive and what is not at a certain point in the science curriculum. Any worldview children carry is dismissed by Western science and the criteria for What makes something living or nonliving. 7. After thinking deeply about Darcia's words about Panpsychism and human perception, putting beings' power into everything gives agency to the elements. So, here are my thoughts about explaining that rock is alive: A harmed stone is given voice through the beings connected with the rock. For example, the land and the organisms living within and on rock/soil *show* us when rock is harmed. They do this through their inability to support life or to thrive. In this way, organisms become a voice for the rock. Additionally, people can feel the energy of rocks and crystals and use them for healing. Just	

	as people become sick from drinking sick water, they are the voice for the water, which may appear clear but could be contaminated.	
Words used to deceive self or others vs. **Words are Sacred (Truthfulness)**	Teachers can be truthful by choosing their words well, honoring their words, listening actively with empathy, being truthful with knowledge about the world, believing our children, and taking them and their ideas seriously. First, teachers choose words with intention and reflect on how someone might receive them before speaking to them. This requires an internal pause button and a willingness to rethink what we want to say or admit we don't have all the answers. When we admit that we do not know everything, we can begin to show ourselves as vulnerable and honest. Children develop trust for adults because they know when we are not truthful. Rather than deceive children, it is best to say what you know to be true, feel secure in saying, "I do not know," and open it up for children to see us as learners and ask, "How can we find out?" This simple act will shift our relationship with children. They drop their guard, relax and feel at ease knowing they do not have to have a correct answer or know everything. They can be their true selves. Another way we can honor truthfulness is to listen to children and hear their thoughts and feelings, whatever they might be. When children's thoughts and feelings contradict what we think they should be or reflect, again, we can pause our thoughts, and rather than needing to be right or know the right way to fix a situation, we can accept their truth. Acceptance by others, as Thomas Gordon says, is the path to becoming our best selves. Rather than judging, when we listen to children without interjection, they often find what they are looking for through their speaking without our	How do we teach/model truthfulness? How do we dismantle the triangle of deception (untruths told in the home, schools, and the church)? Gordon, T. (2003). *Teacher effectiveness training: The program proven to help teachers bring out the best*

	interjection. Children learn to trust themselves, not second guess what they think they might be feeling. Just as important, honoring creativity and listening to children's ideas develop great thinkers. As Darcia states, children's ideas must be taken seriously and not seen as juvenile but as the creative force that holds possibilities for a better world. Teachers are often seen as knowledge holders, and many people accept, without contestation, that what we teach children is the truth of how the world works. Teaching science -or any content -cannot be reduced to the acquisition of or mastery of skills or techniques but must be defined within a discourse of human agency (Kincheloe, 1993) which means that science teachers must see their work within the larger contexts of culture and community, and the relationship between power and knowledge. Science teaching must be responsible to students political and ethical implications that is has for the world it has helped to create, and it must be infused with analysis and critique as it is with production, refusing to hide behind the modernist claim to objectivity and universal knowledge (Giroux & Kincheloe, 1993). Colonialism and the age of enlightenment have taught us the need to control nature and people through what they know and how that knowledge has been used. The mechanistic view of the world has brought us to our current climate situation. In this regard, when teachers know that certain knowledge is not accurate or in the best interest of a sustainable future (as is the case with many textbooks) and has brought us to the current world and climate crisis, honoring truthfulness means they have a responsibility to teach, truth (Kincheloe, 1993). In this way, the truthfulness of knowledge can illuminate a new reality.	*in students of all ages*. Crown.
Rigid boundaries and fragmented	The Western Worldview influences all spheres of schooling, creating children with worldviews that	How do we model and support children to see their

systems vs. **Flexible Boundaries and Interconnected Systems**	maintain systems of oppression beginning with each of us. These learned habits trickle into the home, family, and other social structures, including church, sports teams, and entertainment. Being conscious of our interconnectedness with everything else in the universe helps members of our community realize the impact they can have on others. We never act alone. Teaching and practicing the Habits of Heart and Mind, empathy, flexibility, and collaboration help us avoid creating problem-solving barriers and support our desire to do what is best for each person in a particular situation. Doing our best to do what benefits children's learning, our foresight helps us realize how a shift in our teaching and classroom environment impacts another area of a system. For example, not all students have the same learning style or needs, and one may benefit from different resources. Knowing that pivoting one or more spheres of the classroom could significantly improve the learning experience and outcomes for students, our school's ways of being- Compassionate Communication, Habits of Heart and Mind, Project-Based Learning	actions impact all organisms in interconnected systems? Project-Based Learning Universal Design for Learning Guidelines Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Instructional Strategies file:///McIntosh, K., & Goodman, S. (2016). Integrated multi-tiered systems of support/

	(PBL), and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) underpin our Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS). The community accepts this as doing what is best for the person- with or without a formula IEP or 504.	Blending RTI and PBIS. Guilford Publications.
Recognition of Spiritual Energies	The teachers and staff appreciate children's innate spiritual energy and show their spirit in many ways: connecting with other people through play, expressing their emotions, connecting with non-human animals in the gardens, and engaging in learning that emphasizes interconnectedness. We nurture and develop children's well-being, self-awareness, and emotional soundness through our tenets of compassionate communication, developing and practicing the Habits of Heart and Mind, and daily mindfulness practice. These tenets are throughlines in our time together, beginning in TK, where we model them to help children develop and apply them to their lives. Kindness to one another, extending to the animals on campus, means that our choice to have animals on campus and a garden that attracts a wide	How can we recognize and support children's spirit growth? *Spirituality and Emotional Well Being in Children | CCCF*. (n.d.). Canadian Child Care Federation. https://cccf-fcsge.ca/ece-resources/topics/childhood-development/link-between-spirituality-emotional-well-being-in-children

	variety of insects and birds means we have a responsibility to care for them and let them be. Having unregulated and unstructured playtime allows children to learn to lead their lives by having the context to make decisions, negotiate, collaborate, and problem-solve. Developing and expressing their curiosity and creativity through projects involving art or written expression can be shared at our annual poetry jam where community members are encouraged to share poems they have written or like. Most importantly, children's expressions of care for one another and the natural world are never discounted but are opportunities for engagement with them to learn more about their inner selves.	
Disregard for holistic interconnectedness vs. **Emphasis on Holistic Inter-connectedness**	The significance of the original Kinship/Indigenous worldview lies in its recognition of people as inherently relational, a key aspect in the context of holistic education. Our program realizes that children come to school with knowledge from their families' many experiences and	How do our ways of being support the development of the whole child? Quinlan, D. M., & Hone, L. C. (2020). *The educators'*

	cultures. Teaching the whole child is not just about their body, mind, spirit, and emotional well-being with each other at school. It's about developing their understanding of their interconnectedness with all beings they encounter at school. When nurtured, this understanding of their interconnectedness with the natural world can lead to a profound sense of belonging and responsibility, a key aspect of the advocated educational approach. Developing the whole child at our school involves many interwoven aspects that provide a blanket of experience that envelopes the person. Some of these experiences include but are not limited to multiple interconnected experiences underpinned by our school's tenets. Being immersed in the principles throughout the day supports children in being self-aware and responding to their learning and interpersonal needs in different contexts and situations. Children's agency supports them in engaging in problem-solving and conflict resolution, which supports well-being and complements play. As children's physical health is crucial to their well-being, classroom projects have developed children's understanding of the mind-body connection. In an	*guide to whole-school wellbeing: A practical guide to getting started, best-practice process and effective implementation*. Routledge.

	ongoing garden project, students conceptualized and established a garden where they could grow and eat the food of their efforts. Additionally, through this research dissertation, children established a Native Garden with plants endemic to the area to demonstrate their awareness of, relation to, and care for the animals on campus and provide them shelter, food, and water.	
Acceptance of authoritarianism vs. **Resistance to authoritarianism**	Children know adults are responsible for keeping them safe, meaning adults can give space for children to explore and develop agency to be free in the world, but are there to support them when needed. We value that children learn thinking dispositions through the Habits of Heart and Mind, help them to become problem solvers and advocate for their needs through Compassionate Communication, and experience learning that is authentic and relevant to their lives; they learn to use their agency. Rather than uphold the power dynamics of dominant systems, our students see teachers, staff, and administration as having authority, not as authoritarian figures.	How does practicing the Habits of Heart and Mind, Compassionate Communication, and Project-Based Learning support a non-authoritarian school culture? Ayers, R., & Ayers, W. (2014). *Teaching the taboo: Courage and imagination in*

	Instead, students feel trusted to learn alongside others collaboratively. When they make mistakes, they know there is support and, depending on their age, be asked to figure out how to resolve a problem they have with completing work, for example. The students and teachers reciprocate respect. The students are not afraid of adults and teachers. Learning to be in a no punishment/no rewards setting, they can problem-solve during conflict, rather than attending school under an authoritarian adult who keeps everyone in line through fear. When conflict with a group arises, rather than reacting and placing a blanket punishment over the whole group, students are gathered to establish norms for how an activity will unfold. By including the students in conflict resolution and hearing their ideas about how things can be better, they can exercise their agency and push back when adults impose ideas and rules that counter the community's ways of being.	*the classroom*. Teachers College Press. Costa, A. L., & Kallick, B. (Eds.). (2008). *Learning and leading with habits of mind: 16 essential characteristics for success*. ASCD. Rosenberg, M. B., & Eisler, R. (2003). *Life-enriching education: Nonviolent communication helps schools improve performance, reduce conflict, and enhance relationships*. PuddleDancer Press.
Time as linear vs. **Time is cyclical**	Reading this chapter reminds me of the urgency of the education system to push children out of their Zone of	How do we spend our time in school? How do we model

	Proximal Development before they make sense of academic concepts. The linear thinking of over-planning lessons without children's input or "getting through" curriculum negates the value of meaningful experience and the process of learning. As children develop, they always make new sense of concepts as new learning scaffolds them to a deeper understanding that, unless they have experience with it, can be challenging to grasp. For example, mathematical concepts can be too abstract to understand without tangible real-world experience to make a concept concrete. When this process is cut short, children can suffer mathematically for the remainder of their lives and see themselves as not math smart. Learning science and math concepts through art is a way to "spiral" thinking into a more profound tacit knowledge that can transfer to other areas as they connect or when the knowledge is helpful. During their time in school, our students engage in time that focuses on learning experiences where the outcome demonstrates they have learned new information that may or may not feel is relevant to their lives. Play, however, is an opportunity for children to express their	that time is important without allowing a dominant sense of urgency in learning for testing to take precedence over connection, care, and understanding? Restoring the Kinship Worldview Indigenous Voices Introduce 28 Precepts for Rebalancing Life on Planet Earth Tracing the Spiral Curriculum: Montessori, Bruner, and the Bold Idea. (2023, September 11)

	creativity and make meaning of the experiences that they design. They are in charge and lose track of time because of their immersion with one another or alone in a temporal experience that matters to them. Play is also an opportunity to practice real-life skills, including collaboration and problem-solving, because the experience has not been scripted out for them by an adult. Although Project-Based Learning (PBL)has an outcome where projects come to a halt and fragment thought about connected ideas and systems, there are opportunities to connect a project's concept and standards to another project's content. In this way, there is a continuum of thought relating systems to one another. I see a connection between PBL and what Kim Hudson calls the Ways of Knowing Project. Although PBL can support linear thinking with learning that goes directly to answering questions without wiggle room for questions that might steer a project off track, PBL that includes students' diverse questions, is richer and more profound because it pulls in their perspectives and prior	

	knowledge. Ultimately, the deeper learning shows the connections children make to other concepts. Applying PBL to create community in our school is through a project called "Seeing the Unseen." The purpose of the project is for children to connect with parents and reconnect with relatives through interviews. Children work in groups to design questions about their thoughts and their relatives' thoughts; they set up interviews, collect qualitative data, and create a presentation. Through the process, they collect photos and documents to display their findings and share them with the community during Exhibitions of Learning. I learned so much about our students and families and often heard how they discovered their heritage through the information revealed in the interviews. Children learn about one another's heritage, find commonalities, and respect and appreciate differences.	
Dualistic thinking vs. **Complementary Duality**	Typical education experiences shape how children, male-female and lunar-solar, view each other hierarchically through books read and main characters, who get called on, who are a teacher's favorite, and other	How can we teach children that a thriving interconnection of *all* beings is supported by a symbiotic

	schoolwide norms. However, balancing how they can live in true harmony inside and outside the classroom can reestablish egalitarianism. Beginning with very young children, teaching through an Original Kinship Indigenous worldview is a step to decelerating and reversing our movement toward ecological devastation to the point of no return. As children will do with the world what they learn (Weil, 2016) in the classroom and family experiences, acceptance and symbiosis with all beings is only possible in a community that acknowledges all human and non-human members and moves towards being in right relations, living in reciprocity with each of them. We cannot pick or choose. Otherwise, traditional learning communities and their thought patterns support the continued marginalization of "others" who (through their lens) do not fit within the accepted "common" norms of society. I agree with Darcia Narvaez (Wahinkpe Topa and Narvaez, D. 2022) that teachers can help children develop an understanding of the need for a feminine and masculine balance to sustain all life on earth because we	life where we learn to live with reciprocity? How can understanding the symbiosis of life opens us to being symbiotic with those we dislike or feel unacceptable? Topa, W., & Narvaez, D. (2022). *Restoring the kinship worldview: Indigenous voices introduce 28 precepts for rebalancing life on planet earth*. North Atlantic Books. Weil, Z. (2016). *The world becomes what we teach: Educating a generation of solutionaries*. Lantern Books.

	are interconnected, and any harm done to them is harm to ourselves, in the circle of life. Further, the accepted norms or reality are different -generationally. So, a child's reality today is their norm, and they can only know the years of my reality through my stories or visual timelines. What makes this challenging is that children born in a tech reality are of a consumer mindset by choice of the adults to set Technology as the basis for learning and "connection." Repeated exposure to media that reifies hierarchy among humans, non-human organisms, and beings considered "not alive" by the standard view, makes this a most difficult challenge. However, I have seen 4th- and 5th-grade children accept the sentience of animals they would normally consume and appreciate their new understanding or make a conscious decision not to consume them anymore because they see it as morally wrong and are not aware of the treatment of animals in food processing.	

Emphasis on rights vs. **Emphasis on responsibility**	As Nature is benevolent and she provides what we need to live on the Earth, we have a responsibility to protect Earth. We are her voice. Suppose children are to grow in reciprocity with her. In that case, teachers throughout the learning community have a responsibility to nurture children's love and care for Earth so they are on a continuum of knowing how to care rather than destroy. Administrators must prioritize that children spend time learning about their interconnection with Nature as it is a child's right to know how to live with Earth responsibly. Our schools have beings that live in space, birds, possums, raccoons at night, and insects. Doing so means building awareness and "looking" differently for the signs that animals inhabit our spaces. Place-based learning offers the opportunity to study the schools' ecology in layers. To learn about place, deeply, I have taken children on walks on and off campus to observe one layer of the campus at a time. Inspired by the work of Donna Haraway and Richard Kahn, the experience of seeing our place in layers reveals the extent of human and non-human animal life surrounding us. When we	How do teachers create learning environments where children connect and Nature and her gifts, so they grow to appreciate and respect her and want to care for her?

	notice them, we understand that we are never alone in our place. When we connect to the life before us, the caring relationship instills a sense of responsibility to support them to live a good life. That could be planting a tree for shelter, planting flowers for nectar and seed, or providing water in a dry landscape. The alternative is modeling "othering' which discounts the value animals have in our ecosystem and supports raising and teaching children who are disconnected and do not care for the land, which can lead to a sense of power and privilege over the taking of land and their resources. Focusing on what we want from Earth for our well-being negates that all life is worthy of well-being. The modeling of acknowledging life around us and expressing gratitude is essential for children to see in adults. When adults are caring, children are caring. Our classroom culture is a non-authoritarian environment, yet children know someone is there to support them with learning or if there is a conflict where mediation is needed. They have a good amount of autonomy, and as such, they are responsible. They know	

	they are not managed but trusted as people who learn together and care for one another. They also show responsibility with classroom norms we establish together. Because they had a voice in setting them up, they hold each other accountable. This responsibility carries over into learning because they feel seen, heard, and trusted. Students respond, give back, and want to do their best! There is no need for coercion or micro-managing of children in these spaces. Children appreciate hearing stories that center Indigenous people in reciprocity with Earth. They learn that honoring all non-human animals, especially animals we take to nourish ourselves is important and have a new perspective on the lives of these sentient beings.	
Ceremony as rote formality vs. **Ceremony as Life-Sustaining**	Our community has several traditional ceremonies that occur at the beginning and end of the year. The first day of school and the final day of school are huge celebrations for children and teachers. We have autonomy around how we welcome children into our spaces at the year's commencement and move them forward at the end of the year. Graduation is another	How do we honor ceremonial practices in our learning community? How do children create authentic ceremonies?

	ceremony where 7th-grade students and families plan the 8th-grade ceremony. There are a few rituals throughout the ceremony that area signature practices. Students write a poem of gratitude for their home schoolteacher (usually their parents) and present this to them halfway through graduation along with a rose. Teachers appreciate each student reflecting on strengths and areas of growth. Additional ceremonies occur each school day. In the morning, we hold community reconnection where we return and reconnect after 5 days away. In these ceremonies, we are reconnecting to our learning community ecology. Since children attend school for two days, they have a longer period between school days, so sharing can be a big deal to them. At these ceremonial times, meetings are opened with a hum or a shake of a percussion rattle. Children use a talking piece and listen to each other's experiences over the last five days. They also are free to share their deepest thoughts and feelings in a safe space. When this occurs, the community knows something is alive for their friend. I stand in awe when children check on each other to see how they are doing and if they need support.	The Elementary Classroom As a Site for Creative Ritual Developmental Studies Center, Oakland, Ca. (1996). *Ways We Want Our Class to Be: Class Meetings that Build Commitment to Kindness and Learning. Ideas from the Child Development Project*. Developmental Studies Center. Gordon, S. P. (2022). Symbols and Ceremonies. In *Developing Successful Schools: A Holistic Approach* (pp. 161-181).

	Oftentimes, children just want a place to vent or share without receiving a lecture or being judged. Two additional ceremonies we have at the end of the day are celebrations and appreciation. In both instances, children can bang the Djembe, ceremony drum, or shake another percussion instrument to express feelings for themselves and others. These ceremonies occur once or twice a month because they are considered special when they are held. Children usually have much to celebrate. They do so by naming whomever they want and why they are doing so. Sometimes they celebrate rain for sounding so beautiful or soil for giving them food and mud to shape. I like to hear them celebrate themselves for everything from trying something new or helping out around the house. Although celebrations are intentional, Appreciations have specifics. Using compassionate communication and appreciation names, a feeling one experienced when their need was being met by another or something they did. For example, I appreciate Sarah because they noticed when I needed a friend and was willing to listen when I felt upset. Thank you! Another example is, I	Cham: Springer International Publishing. Kriete, R., & Davis, C. (2014). *The morning meeting book*. Center for Responsive Schools, Inc..

	appreciate myself for persevering with my project because it was challenging, and I almost gave up! I feel powerful! Thank you! This takes modeling and practice with Marshall Rosenberg's Non-Violent Communication. Although it takes more than modeling for children to own these ways of communicating, through intentional practice, children develop their way of compassionate communication, and it sounds less scripted. Major whole community events occur throughout the year with the intent to bring families together to celebrate the beginning of the school year, a fall festival, multicultural celebration, STEM fair, Poetry Jam, and Talent showcase. Although a parent oversees the events coordination, each grade level/cohort and teacher sponsor the event. This is our way of inviting families in to share their ideas and use their creativity to make the event actualize.	
Learning as didactic vs. learning as	Children learn, and teachers lead in a non-coercive learning community and have the freedom to learn and explore (seeing they are trusted) and gain confidence to	Faber, A., & Mazlish, E. (2012). *How to talk so kids will listen & listen so kids*

experiential and collaborative	take healthy risks. We trust parents as children's first teachers and offer them opportunities to learn new teaching skills if they wish. Additionally, we invite them to share their gifts with the community. The research for this dissertation is an example of learning as experiential, collaborative, holistic, and place-based. The research was possible because of the tenets of our school which support children to be their authentic selves and engage with one another as they explored their place/community while learning through the Original Kinship/Indigenous worldview precepts.	*will talk*. Simon and Schuster. Rosenberg, M. B., & Eisler, R. (2003). *Life-enriching education: Nonviolent communication helps schools improve performance, reduce conflict, and enhance relationships*. PuddleDancer Press. Gordon, T. (2003). *Teacher effectiveness training: The program proven to help teachers bring out the best in students of all ages*. Crown. Berger, R. (2003). *An Ethic of Excellence: Building a*

		Culture of Craftsmanship with Students. Heinemann, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc., 361 Hanover Street, Portsmouth, NH 03801-3912.
Trance as dangerous or stemming from evil vs. Trance-based learning as natural and essential	Reflecting on the physical, psychic, relational, and spiritual elements of a balanced relationship with ourselves and our community, I consider the importance of Social and Emotional Well-Being and its connection to our physical well-being. Social-emotional learning (SEL) is a hot topic in education. However, based on my experience, SEL as a stand-alone intervention for creating a better learning experience for children negates the significant system changes needed in schools. All spheres, organizational, pedagogical, and systems, meaning the way schools have run traditionally, would benefit many children but need to be updated so the learning is life-enriching and considerate of the mind-body connection.	How do we create learning environments where children understand the relationship between their state of mind and whole-body wellness? Rosenberg, M. B., & Eisler, R. (2003). *Life-enriching education: Nonviolent communication helps schools improve performance, reduce conflict, and enhance*

	Rather than placing a band-aid on a deeper problem, school administrators must consider children's perspectives beyond academics. Many schools are shifting and implementing mindfulness in the classroom and creating gardens for children to experience growing plants and flowers. It's about changing how the school looks, sounds, and feels. Teachers also must reflect on their practice and ask who and what the school is for. When teachers include students in how the classroom and school will be, a shift occurs because they are honored as intelligent feeling beings, not passive learners. Rather than have a stand-alone SEL program, children's social and emotional intelligence development are through lines in the interconnectedness of everything we do. Gloria Lee says, "Healing begins at one's own center; this is the ultimate responsibility for one's well-being." (Wahinkpe T. & Narvaez, 2022. P. 259) As a teacher, I can co-create a learning space where children feel good about themselves and their abilities wherever they may be on the continuum of learning. When they feel good, their bodies feel good and can remain healthy.	*relationships*. PuddleDancer Press. Topa, W., & Narvaez, D. (2022). *Restoring the kinship worldview: Indigenous voices introduce 28 precepts for rebalancing life on planet earth*. North Atlantic Books.

	When they have a voice in how their community will be, they are responsible for the community *and the micro-community within their bodies.* When children practice self-awareness and can reflect on a problem, they have can engage in problem solving, they take responsibility for their situation, which builds confidence and agency. It is essential to make the connection between mind and body transparent to children. Doing so can help them be more aware of their state of mind, and with support, they can move from a state of sadness or anger to a calmer and healing frame of mind when out of balance.	
Humor as entertainment vs. Humor as an essential tool for coping. **Humor as Essential**	Humor is one of the fundamental aspects of creating a learning environment where people can authentically relate to each other. Showing humor invites them into our lives differently. To relate to students and have them relate to us, we need to show them our humorous side and laugh with them- never at them. When we do not take ourselves seriously all of the time, we show them it is acceptable to have humor in learning. Humor is good	How do we authentically use humor to show we do not have to take ourselves so seriously all the time? How do we honor quiet humor?

	for the body and, as learning is an emotional act, can be the ice breaker for students with learning challenges or a quiet disposition. Using humor to poke fun at people is a societal norm, not compassionate. Instead, it supports a dominant worldview of how we have come to relate to one another in and out of school. Using laughter in this way creates disconnection, which can lead to alienation. Laughter through an original Kinship/Indigenous worldview lens, on the other hand, supports bonding among people by showing that you know someone well enough to understand they are trying to help you see their or another perspective. Looking at humor this way can be challenging for young children to grasp if they have not been raised with this kind of humor. For children to be able to use humor in situations where their needs might not be met or when they are trying to make a situation better could show their ability to read situations and people on a deeper level and turn them around. When teachers show humor to children in a life-enriching way and even include themselves, they are modeling humor that bonds people.	

Conflict mitigated via revenge and punishment vs. **Conflict resolution as return to community**	Conflict is inevitable in society. Unfortunately, traditional school models of student management reinforce negative student behaviors with coercion to keep them from experiencing conflict. The result is that students keep problems to themselves in a system of silence that creates a victim who often feels helpless. Sometimes student issues are made visible, and the usual result is suspension or expulsion. Unfortunately, the dominant worldview uses coercion to maintain systems of oppression, and when one strays from the path, hostile forces are used as punishment to shame a person into compliance. As a result, students accustomed to shame recoil and lash out even more because their initial need continues. Marred by shame and public humiliation, it's difficult to feel worthy of the opportunity to return to the community. Our school takes a different approach regarding rules, breaking the rules, and creating an accepting learning community. Using a Power-With lens, rather than adults creating rules, students develop norms for how they want their classroom and school to be. In general, these norms are *ways of being* children want	How do we welcome people back into the community members when one has been harmed? How do we show compassion and acceptance when people harm us? Faber, A., & Mazlish, E. (2012). *How to talk so kids will listen & listen so kids will talk*. Simon and Schuster. Rosenberg, M. B., & Eisler, R. (2003). *Life-enriching education: Nonviolent communication helps schools improve performance, reduce conflict, and enhance relationships*. PuddleDancer Press.

	their school to look, sound, and feel like. They mainly adhere to the norms and expect others to do the same. When a conflict arises, they navigate meeting their needs through a discussion. Sometimes they will ask for a mediator. However, when conflict arises, resulting in profound emotional or physical harm, students are given time to reflect on the act of injury. They are welcome back into the community through restorative justice practice. Through the Restorative Justice ceremony, a dialogue, or several, occurs between the people and the harming person. The facilitator informs participants about using the talking piece for hearing one another through listening. There is no shaming or coercion. It is important to understand that as all precepts are interconnected, practicing Restorative Justice cannot be a stand-alone "go-to" trick. Rather than use restorative justice as a daily disciplinary measure, school leaders can create the opportunity to build a foundation where students learn and live ways of being by using compassionate communication to meet their needs. Non-violent Communication is the foundation for our model of compassionate communication. It is a way of being	

	that is a *through line* in everything a school does for children. Additionally, applying RJ principles only when serious harm has occurred holds this ceremony sacred. Staff and students keep serious conflict to a minimum by being accountable to our learning community's ways of being, which are underpinned by our organizational values, daily community meetings and reflections, and trusting that students can learn and use compassionate communication to get their needs met in the first place.	
Learning as fragmented and theoretical vs. Learning as holistic and Place-based **Connection to the Land**	Children spend a significant amount of their time in school. Their experiences inside and outside the classroom will shape their attitude toward nature. They can view nature as a teacher or learn to view it as an unsafe place. Teachers play a significant role in how children view and feel in natural spaces. Rather than spend hours inside, teachers can create conscious outdoor experiences where they connect and learn about their role in the school's ecology. To understand a place at a more intimate level is to critically question what we perceive in our community, asking what, who, do I notice, and what do I know about them. What, where,	How can teachers create experiences that introduce and nurture an enduring connection and love of place at school and home?

	why, how, and questions about the place from the ground up offers us a different perspective from passive daily glances. To support a connection to place, teachers can take children out into the community on short walking community/place walks, with each field trip focusing on a different aspect. During each field trip, children can stop and record their reflections in their nature-culture journals. Then, at home, children can walk their place. When children do this regularly over a school year, they become familiar with their place on a deeper level. Rather than see it at face value, they know there are aspects of the Environment that are not *seen*. Knowing there are beings that they can't see, they become more conscious of their actions and how they might impact them. For example, on the first walk, a teacher might ask what you understand about the Earth we walk on. Children can discuss, reflect, and write what they do or don't know. Then they can ask questions and record them. Finally, children can take their walk with questions in their minds. They can take photos, draw	

	illustrations, and take them back to school. They can research their local soil to find out more and create a photo library with captions and narratives. Knowing that soil contains microbes that are important to the soil ecology and food they might grow there, they might think twice before contaminating the soil with watercolor paint or digging it up. In this way, there is reciprocity with place rather than destroying them. Teachers can capture children's feelings of being in place through voice recording, video, or note-taking, being mindful that they are noting how it feels to be learning this way with children and the *Environment as the third teacher.*	
Social laws of society are primary vs. Laws of nature are primary. **Laws of Nature as Highest Rules for Living**	Taking observations of nature and spiritual nature and place together, we can nurture children's innate love of nature and respect for natural law and animism by providing opportunities to connect with place and nurture their spirituality as a normal part of the day, not the exception. In my research about place-based learning, contextually, children can learn to see their	How do we teach children about their original Kinship/Indigenous worldview and Natural Law, so they understand what is at stake and know their role in a climate reversal?

	school place at more than face value if they observe long enough over time. Their school is their landscape. Although the precepts in their totality are interconnected and part of the Kinship/Indigenous worldview, this precept, Laws of Nature as Highest Rules for Living, is a top priority for change toward climate reversal. However, learning the "rules" for viewing the world must begin with young children. I am not saying that children should bear the responsibility for climate mitigation, but they are future adults and will need a new lifestyle paradigm to manifest a reversal of the crisis. Given the paradigm of dominant education systems -globally- children can be shaped to have a Kinship/Indigenous worldview, or they can be shaped to continue towards extinction. How do we teach Kinship/Indigenous worldview and Natural Law? -It is crucial to teach children that Indigenous People are still here and living among us worldwide. Children need to learn that Indigenous ways of being in solidarity with Earth and all beings are the ways to live sustainably	

	without doing further harm to the planet through the taking of non-renewable resources for profit. -Children need to learn that the romantic image of the Indian is a construct by Western views through a dominant lens supported by false narratives of Manifest Destiny. - Parents and teachers must support children to continue to value their innate animism in the face of a dominant culture that views children's lens of the world as juvenile, and fantasy based. -To support children's innate animism, they need many opportunities, daily, if possible, to experience and connect with other beings, human and non-human, to enjoy all they have to offer. Inspired by the work of Donna Haraway (2003) and Richard Kahn, (2010) and more recently, Kinship/Indigenous worldview Precepts put forward by Wahinkpe Topa and Narvaez, (2022). I support children to "Peel back the asphalt" to see through the whole of place from the unseen to the seen through an original Kinship/Indigenous worldview lens supported by the precepts. Knowing a place in such depth makes children	

	aware that their place is alive with beings we can and cannot see! Growing children who transfer a Kinship/Indigenous worldview to different 'places' helps them understand what they see in context as every "place" differs depending on your depth of experience there. Curriculums in every State include Social Studies and History standards that center on Native Americans. Additionally, NGSS science standards include systems thinking and systems interconnection as an end goal of science. Making United Nations Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services transparent would also support teachers who want to teach the precepts. Administrators would be more accepting of their work if teachers showed they are following research-supported initiatives for the transformation of ecology towards health through applying the Kinship/Indigenous worldview precepts and not pushing an agenda. However, most important is teachers' genuine care for the natural world and support of Natural Law as a way of being, which emanates into their work and inspires children.	

	Although some people might feel it is too late to reverse the climate crisis towards catastrophe, we can and must teach children to live in harmony with nature and care for her to they feel such an attachment that they want to care for them and find it worth their while to know ways to mitigate their situation.	
Nature as dangerous vs. Nature as benevolent **Nature as Benevolent**	Earth is abundant and provides many people with all they need to live sustainably, taking what they need to maintain a healthy and balanced life in their locale. However, most people need to see the abundance of living a simple lifestyle. Instead, they have become accustomed to a consumerist lifestyle stemming from a place of scarcity that requires more and more things we assume we need. These objects require continuous extraction of Earth's resources at a rate that is not sustainable. Unfortunately, most people have become so detached from Earth they would need to gain the relational skills and knowledge to live with nature in reciprocity. I am not saying people cannot learn, but there is much unlearning to relearn a new way of being in solidarity WITH Earth and appreciating what she	How do we teach children to understand Earth is generous with her resources and to live in reciprocity? Why Kids Need To Spend time In Nature Otto, S., & Pensini, P. (2017). Nature-based environmental education of children: Environmental knowledge and

	continues to offer. Accepting her generosity and letting go of life as we know it and the constant withdrawals is to rekindle our relationship with her. Doing so could begin healing a fragmented education system that brought us to this point of the climate emergency. Further, if teachers can understand how education has brought us to this point, they are responsible for educating towards an appreciation and reciprocity for everything earth provides. So how do teachers create learning opportunities where children will develop an understanding of their interconnectedness with Earth and all beings? How can children learn that their survival depends on the survival of all beings in the web of life? To begin, teachers will be open to exploring the interrelatedness of every being in the universe, which is crucial to undoing the fragmented lens through which most children learn to view the world in traditional education. Creating interdisciplinary projects emphasizing relatedness through science concepts that coincide with a Kinship/Indigenous worldview is a first step to helping see the benevolence of nature. There are many entry	connectedness to nature, together, are related to ecological behaviour. *Global environmental change*, *47*, 88-94. Street, H. (2018). *Contextual wellbeing: Creating positive schools from the inside out*. Wise Solutions Pty Limited.

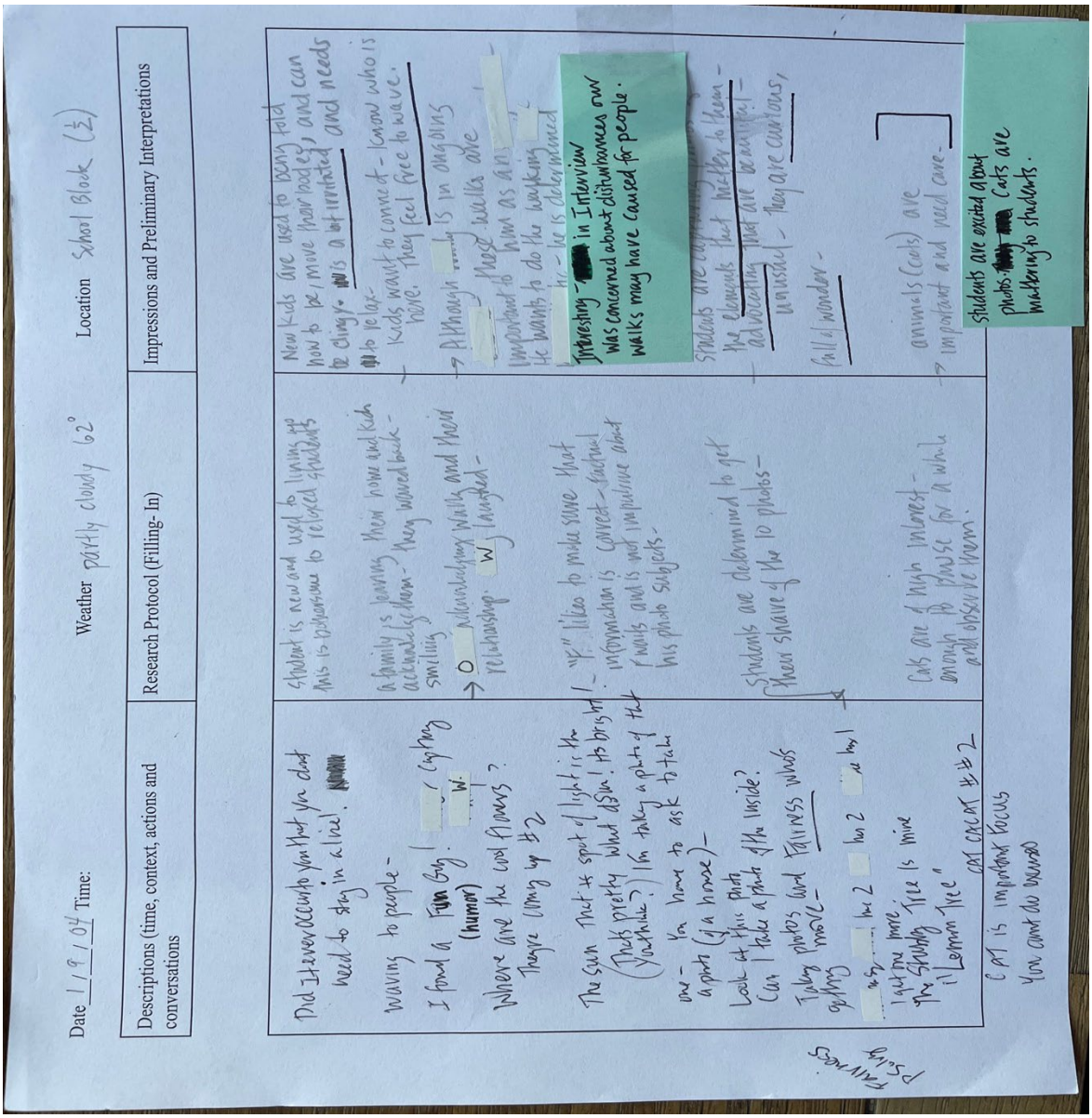
	points for teachers to engage students with different intelligences. All experiences have opportunities for discussion, follow-up reading, writing, and art. For example, when teaching about Energy concepts in school, teachers can begin with their emotional energy, the heat or coolness emotions generate, and e-motion of the electrons. Then, teachers can invite children to reflect on how emotion looks and feels when they are calm vs. when they are angry. Whereas high-energy electrons move quickly and generate heat, low-energy, calm electrons move slowly. Another way to teach about our connection to Earth's energy is by intentionally taking children outside and sitting on Earth. Our classroom regularly holds classroom meetings on the grass or in the garden. Teachers invite children to sit or lie on the ground, and most will without being asked. In these experiences, I like to begin with a simple discussion about how electrical energy is everywhere and how our electrons relate to Earth's energy field. Then, another discussion centers around how reconnection to Earth and one another can help us ground ourselves, release excess	

	energy, and restore our health by giving power back to Earth. It feels good to be generous! Once teachers have made electrons and emotions transparent, they can get into the science children can transfer their understanding through a demonstration of passing a stone in a cup around the circle. The stone represents electron flow. Teachers can ask a child to "roll out" of the circle, opening a gap that represents an open circuit. Then, the child can roll back into the circle representing the closed circuit allowing the stone electron to continue flowing. For me, the space that opens up is a metaphor for our disconnection from Earth. It represents a longing for relatedness to Earth and others; for children, relatedness is essential, especially in schools. To continue engaging children in exploring Earth's energy, which is their energy, demonstrate how static electricity buildup from their body and a balloon can light a diode or light bulb! Earth gives freely and in abundance. The learning continues with the Sun's energy and how it flows through all systems that support life on	Earthing: Health Implications of Reconnecting the Human Body to the Earth's Surface Electrons

	Earth, including the plants that feed the animals, which many people consume to continue the energy transfer, and the Sun's heat that worms us and where our original electrical impulse for our heart originates. Ultimately, the teaching should show how ancient civilizations used the Sun's energy to live without extracting non-renewable resources. Returning to some of these ways is slowly influencing sustainable architecture by using local soil and south-facing buildings that are warm in the winter and cool in the summer. And then into the formal physical science aspects of resistance, ohms, voltage, etc. Through multiple concept experiences, before formal content instruction, children attain a concept through metaphor that they have developed through the experience and what it means for them and their peers. The possibilities are endless with learning, and many times children will want to know about the Northern lights and solar flares—all with the foundation that we are connected to the life force energy of Earth.	

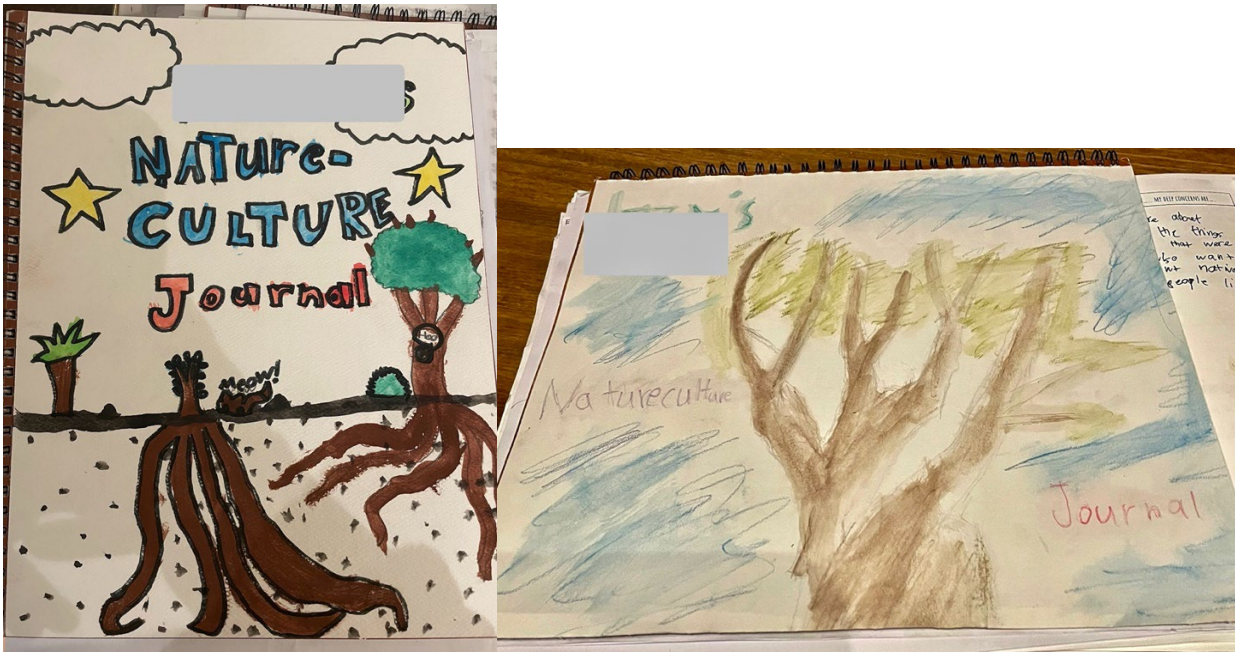
APPENDIX E: DATA AND MATERIALS SAMPLES

Examples of the Field Data Journal for Observation Notes During Place/Community Walks

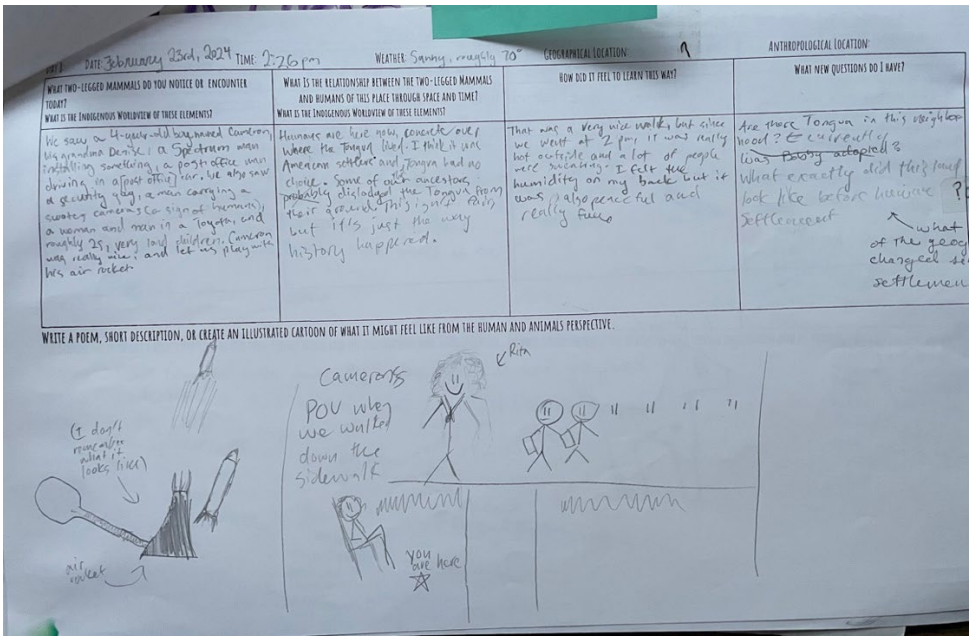


A Field Data Journal was used to document my observation notes during the place/community Walks. These notes were reviewed soon after each walk to “Fill-In remembrances of the experience. Impressions and preliminary interpretations were made at this time to reflect on what the data was showing and support the research focus.

Examples Natureculture Journal and Entry

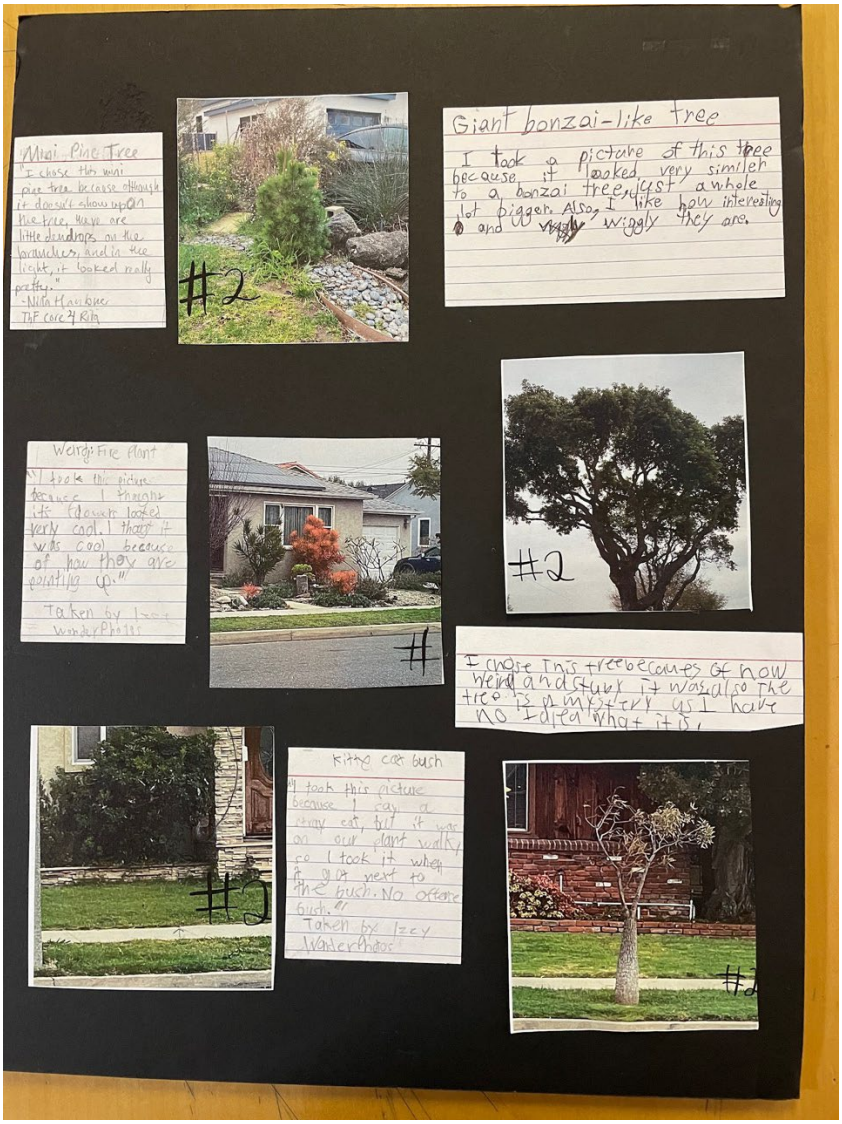


Students created Natureculture journals to document and reflect on their experiences while on the place/community walks. The reflection entries were part of the data gathering and analysis which lead to themes for the discussions.



Students responded to prompts in their Natureculture journal pages using words and illustrations before and after their place/community walks. Additionally, students posed questions to further their inquiry throughout the project.

Example of Photovoice Board



Photovoice increases student empowerment and participation (Warne et al., 2013) as each group used iPads to take photos representing their perspectives, views, and feelings about each day's focus. The photos were printed, and participants collaborated to select a few images to stimulate group discussions. Viewed through the Indigenous Worldview precept of *Learning as Experiential and Collaborative* in and out of the classroom.