THE CHANGING TIDES OF EDUCATION IN NUNAVUT

The Changing Tides of Education in Nunavut: A Non-Inuit Perspective of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit

By

Morgan Skye Bentham

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Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

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Abstract

Despite the changing tides of educational policy and reform, the power imbalances that maintain control over the system of education in Nunavut remain largely the same, and relatively unchanged. It is through a push and pull between Inuit and non-Inuit goals that educational policy and practice shift, back and forth, as one new initiative after the other ultimately rises only to inevitably fall, with each new tide of change. Thus, examining recent reform and new initiatives by the Department of Education to promote student academic achievement and success, this qualitative study, through semi-structured interviews, explores how non-Inuit educators in Nunavut might interpret, support, and effectively implement the goals of education within their classrooms. As the majority of teachers in Nunavut are non-Inuit, this research project revealed that without clear directives and lacking key resources to effectively combine Inuit culture and values within mainstream education, non-Inuit educators undoubtedly struggle to understand enough about Inuit qaujimajatuqangit to effectively transform the vision and goals of education in Nunavut into one seamless and well balanced system of schooling.

Key Words: Indigenous education, schooling in Nunavut, Inuit qaujimajatuqangit, culturally relevant pedagogy, qualitative research
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction to the Chapter

United by a common language and culture, Inuit are a circumpolar people, inhabiting not only the Arctic regions of Canada, but also Alaska, Greenland and Russia (Bonesteel, 2008). Isolated from the rest of the world, Inuit at one time believed "they were the only true human beings anywhere" (Petrone, 1992, xi). Inuit camps were small tight knit communities, which included namely, parents, elders and extended family members (Bennett & Rowley, 2004). Each person in the camp had an important role to play, and everyone was involved in teaching the children values, skills, and critical knowledge that they would later need to survive (Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, 2006; Nunavut Department of Education, 2007). In this way, “Inuit considered each child unique… Rather than speaking of their age in years… they spoke of children in terms of physical development and capabilities” (Bennett & Rowley, 2004, p. 11).

Vital information was passed orally from one-generation to the next, and children learned through observation and practice (Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, 2006). Kawagely (1995) noted, “Competency had an unequivocal relationship to survival or extinction. You either had it, or you didn’t, and survival was the ultimate indicator” (p. 88). Berger (2001) later rationalized, this mode of assessment was the most ‘authentic’ as “it valued learning and mastery of vital skills necessary for survival” (p. 33). Indigenous ways of teaching and learning however, have drastically changed after First Contact with Europeans (Dorais, 2010; McGregor, 2012, 2013; Nunavut Department of Education 2007; Qikiqtani Inuit Association, 2013; Rasmussen, 2001, 2011; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996; Simon, 2011; Tester & Irniq, 2008; Van Meenen, 1994). Yet, despite colonization, Inuit beliefs and values, skills, principles and knowledge have survived. In chapter two, a more comprehensive examination of the complex and intricate relationship between Inuit and non-Inuit is explored and expanded on.

Research Problem

Today the formal educational system in Nunavut is based on Euro-Canadian norms and staffed with a majority of non-Inuit teachers (Berger, 2009). According to Berger, the education system in Nunavut, “began, and remains a system based primarily on the knowledge, pedagogy and culture of Euro-Canadians rather than Inuit”; as a result
of Western dominance, schooling in Nunavut is, as Berger put it, “in crisis” (p. 56). Confirmed by Statistics Canada (2013), Nunavut has the lowest graduation rates out of all the provinces and territories for every year on record. In 2010, only 38 percent of Nunavummiut students graduated from high school, furthermore, projected graduation rates conservatively suggest, each year more than half of all Inuit students won’t graduate from high school; and of those few who do, most will not pursue post-secondary education (Berger, 2009; Dorais & Sammons, 2002; Statistics Canada, 2013).

To address the low graduation rate, many non-Inuit educators have struggled to build meaningful educational programs “grounded in Inuit culture, that teach in the Inuit language, and ensure children learned both their ancestral and the modern values, knowledge and skills required to survive as confident and competent individuals in the contemporary world” (Nunavut Department of Education, 2007, p. 18). It has been suggested, to achieve these goals, will require not only culturally responsive curricula and pedagogy, but more importantly, community ownership of schooling (Berger, 2009; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Osborne 1996). John Amagoalik (1977) confirms, “We must teach our children their mother tongue. We must teach them what they are and where they come from. We must teach them the values which have guided our society over the thousands of years” (p. 54). Today, Elders are not advocating a return to the past, but rather a “grounding of education in the strengths of the Inuit so that their children will survive and successfully negotiate the world in which they find themselves today” (Nunavut Department of Education, 2007, p. 22).

The landmark document, *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit Education framework for Nunavut Curriculum* (Department of Education, 2007), outlines Inuit beliefs, laws, principles and values along with traditional knowledge, skills and attitudes that have become the foundation of all government departments in Nunavut, including the Department of Education. Suzanne Evalordjuk, Perter Irniq, Uriash Puqiqnak, and David Serkoak further explain, “Inuit qaujimajatuqangit means knowledge that has been passed on to us by our ancestors, things that we have always known, things crucial to our survival – patience and resourcefulness” (Bennett & Rowley, 2004, xxii). Within the current curriculum, based on Inuit societal values (Department of Education, 2016), new teaching materials and learning resources are being developed and implemented, which
are meant to incorporate both the values and principles of Inuit culture, and “the best in modern education practices” (Nunavut Department of Education, 2013, p. 7). Nevertheless, as Berger (2001 & 2009) points out, regardless of curriculum change, schools remain foreign institutions, structured with buildings and schedules that represent the dominant culture. With that in mind, it must be considered, if a culturally relevant curriculum can ever be truly realized, within the foreign institutions and colonial structures that define schooling and education today.

**Purpose of the Study**

Following the lead of Berger (2001, 2009), the purpose of this study is to examine the recent and ongoing changes within education in Nunavut, specifically addressing how non-Inuit educators interpret and support the goals of education, founded on Inuit qaujimajatuqangit, within their classrooms. This study, which focuses on one community in the Kitikmeot region, takes into consideration the unique challenges teachers in this might face ensuring that their students are prepared to graduate with “a strong sense of Inuit identity and clear knowledge of their unique personal strengths and skills…” (Nunavut Department of Education, 2007, p. 7), the Department of Education (2007) expects educators to not only develop an understanding of Inuit qaujimajatuqangit, but also to understand, how the new basic elements of curriculum influence both teaching and learning. Considering over half of the teachers in Nunavut are non-Inuit educators (qallunaat), and foreign to Inuit qaujimajatuqangit (IQ), it is important to examine if, and how, non-Inuit teachers can effectively combine Inuit knowledge, with “the best of Western educational thought and practice…” as outlined by the Department in the landmark document, Inuit qaujimajatuqangit Education Framework for Nunavut curriculum (p. 7).

**Research Questions**

Through the shared stories of teacher’s lived experiences, non-Inuit perspectives of teaching in Nunavut are explored using qualitative research methods and narrative inquiry, which highlight the participants’ and collaborators’ personal stories, while also exploring the complex relationship between Inuit and non-Inuit worldviews. Smith (1999), a leading theorist on decolonization of Maori in New Zealand, encourages researchers to adopt “a more critical understanding of the underlying assumptions,
motivations, and values that inform research practices” (p. 20). In Maori communities, she described, research was talked about, both in terms of its absolute worthlessness to the indigenous world, and “its absolute usefulness to those who wielded it as an instrument” (p. 3) In discussing research practices, many Indigenous community members asked Smith in frustration, “why do they [researchers] always think by looking at us they will find the answers to our problems, why don't they look at themselves?” (p. 198). In formulating my research questions, and in preparation for this study, I have often come back to this question. Perhaps, as Linda Tuhiwai Smith suggests, the time is now that “we”, non-Indigenous researchers, look at ourselves for a change. It is with that purpose in mind that I now embark down this path of becoming a researcher.

By examining teacher beliefs and attitudes, practice, pedagogy, and policy, my research study asks: How non-Inuit educators might effectively implement Inuit qaujimajatuqangit within their own classrooms? Furthermore, as Inuit qaujimajatuqangit is also directly related to the goal of education in Nunavut, this research asks: How might teachers in Nunavut interpret the goals of education? Lastly, as the Department of Education in Nunavut is now in the process of addressing the recommendations made by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada (2013), whilst also updating the current Education Act (2008), the way education is framed, supported and delivered is transforming through new educational initiatives. As such, I ask: In what ways might the current changes now underway within education in Nunavut, further promote the integration of Inuit qaujimajatuqangit in the classroom?

Situating the Researcher

Research is a representation of a shared intellectual space, shaped by both researcher and participants (England, 1994). England contends, research is more than just a product, “Research is a process…” (p. 82). As such, the positionality and identities, of both researcher, and participants, have the potential to impact the entire research process (1994). Not only might my own bias influence the participants, their responses, as well as my own observations and interpretations, but also the nature and purpose of my research, may too be negated by bias. Kezar (2002) explains, “Within positionality theory, it is acknowledged that people have multiple overlapping identities. Thus, people make meaning from various aspects of their identity…” (p. 96). It is with this sentiment that I
disclose my identity and positionality, through a reflective and reflexive process, to share with the reader who I am, what I believe, and where I come from.

Growing up in small towns and big cities, I was brought up in a relatively low-income single parent family. Weaved into the fabric of my identity, I am also female and a visible minority. Born in Canada with mixed ancestry, I am half of this (Polish) and half of that (Barbadian), yet I have always felt outside of either race, defined by both, but belonging to neither, I have become open to all. I am a Canadian. I am spiritual but not religious, despite my Catholic upbringing. Instead, I find meaning and purpose through connection and interaction with others. Raised both in Canada and abroad (Colombia and China), I have had the distinctive pleasure of living both inside and outside of North American culture and language. These experiences play a role in defining who I am, and where I come from.

I traveled to Nunavut for the first time in 2005 to visit my mother, who at the time was living and working as a teacher on Baffin Island. As I journeyed from Toronto to the capital, Iqaluit, on ever shrinking aircrafts, I eventually found myself nervously climbing the stairs to a small twin turbine airplane to make the final leg of my journey to Kimmirut. By the plane alone, I knew then, it was to be an experience like no other. I can still clearly remember my first impressions looking down through the small round window as the fly-in-community came into view, a meager speck, within the vast sea of snow and ice that stretched beyond every horizon. I was greeted at the airport by several Inuk strangers and welcomed into the community, a kind and customary gesture. I marveled at the sharpness of the fresh cold air in my lungs and the squeak of the pure white snow beneath my feet, I felt alive here.

Near the end of that initial three-week visit, and after spending time in the school, I recall the conversations and preparations for the graduation ceremony. With a small handful of graduating students that year, I became acutely aware of the fundamental difference Chamberlin (2004) had described between Them and Us. I began to ask questions. As I considered the perceived factors that might have contributed to, or resulted in such low graduation rates; I couldn’t understand why. Through these questions, I first came to learn about the residential school legacy, and its lingering effects upon the people, their families, and the community (Simon, 2010; Qikiqtani Truth
Commission, 2010). With that piece of the puzzle in place, the fairytale story I had been told all my life, about my beloved Canada, began to unravel. Until now, the history I thought I knew well, had transformed into a history that I did not know it at all.

September of that year, enchanted by the foreignness of my own country, I went back to Baffin to live and work in Kimmirut - this time for a full school year. It wasn’t long after my arrival that I obtained a position at the local school as a student support assistant (SSA). In this capacity, I was afforded an overview of the K-12 school as I spent time in the staff room and moved between several elementary and junior classrooms throughout the day. The school in Kimmirut was somehow “different” to the other seven schools that I had attended throughout my youth. One thing that stood out for example, were the teachers, who were regularly addressed, by staff and students alike, according to their first name. Over time, I came to learn that this was customary. The school year, although short, gave me a taste of a world so profoundly different than the one I had grown to understand through the years. It quickly became a part of me and the years of experiences that followed, which fueled many questions surrounding the intricate complexities, of contemporary Inuit society. Although I believe that everything is connected, as I share my story, I attempt to limit the discussion to education.

Not fixed to any one place in particular, except broadly speaking Canada, I have always felt a bit nomadic, a traveler on an ever-unfolding journey with an unknown destination. As such, learning the language and customs of each foreign place I visit, has always been an important way to connect with, and to get to know, the community and its people. In Kimmirut, which translates as “heel”, the primary language spoken is Inuktitut and is often written in syllabics. On Indigenous languages, Kirkness (1998) described language, as more than “a lexicon of words”, it is the “culture and the essence of who we are” (p.94). Reflecting back, I recognize my own childish naiveté, ignorant of the complexity between language, culture and power; blind to the significance of the people and their relationship to their language. Instead, I was blissfully unaware and oblivious to it all, although I later came to know the many ways language essential and central to Inuit.

As I continued to learn Inuktitut, the students in the school became my teachers. They taught me my “ᐃᐱᑎᑭ’s”, which are equivalent to ABC’s and pronounced (ee-pee-
As the students sung a song to help me remember, I recognized a distinctly familiar tune from my childhood. It took me a moment to place it, until I realized it was the inherently racist tune, “Ten Little Injuns”, composed by Septimus Winner in 1864 (Nolan, 1996). I was horrified to see “the normalization of racism,” in progress, which critical race theory suggests, often operates unnoticed (Vaught & Castagno, 2008, p. 96). I wanted to ask about the song, but at the same time, I did not feel it was my place to do so.

That first year-and-a-half, I learned many things about Inuit culture, as I came to know the Nunavummiut. On many occasions, I would try and daydream possible ways to “fix” the school system, adapt it even as Berger (2001) discussed, but of course, there was no quick-fix solution, or easy answer, to a complicated and deep-rooted set of circumstances that shaped, and continue to shape, the current educational landscape. I did however, come to recognize one thing for certain, only Inuit could positively guide and change their future. These experiences in Nunavut have changed the course and direction of my life profoundly.

Returning again to the Nunavut in 2011, I travelled to a community in the Kitikmeot region. Due to its location along the Northwest Passage and being a major stop for ships in the area, the community over the years had become well acquainted with non-Inuit visitors. This community was different from Kimmirut in several ways. For one, the language was different as they spoke Inuinnaqtun rather than Inuktitut and I heard more English being spoken more often. There were cultural and artistic differences that I noted as well. With few deposits of soapstone in the region for example, there were fewer carvers and the community arts seemed to be more focused on sewing and clothing design using a combination of fabric, sealskin and furs.

That school year, I ended up wearing several different hats in the community: part-supply teacher (K-12), part student support assistant (SSA), and part adult educator. Each of these roles combined, gave me a broad overview of education, teacher practice, and curriculum in Nunavut. For instance, while supply teaching, I eventually found myself scheduled to co-teach the “IQ class” with another non-Inuit educator. I found it odd, that two non-Inuit teachers were charged with the responsibility of teaching Inuit
culture. Of all the classes, I thought Inuit would surely be better suited to teach this subject, yet here we were.

As I saw it, Inuit qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) was seemingly disconnected and isolated from the other, ‘more important’ subjects such as math and science. Characterized by photocopied workbooks, markers and chart paper discussions, IQ class seemed like a formality, taught only to appease the calls for cultural inclusion from the community. Stan and Peggy Wilson (2002) use an analogy to point out the imbalance of power that the Western school system often perpetuates, albeit with the best of intentions, in the attempt to infuse Indigenous cultural content into the curricula:

On the surface the concept sounds good. But it is like someone claiming that she or he is going to make a buffalo and rabbit stew with one buffalo and one rabbit: it would be difficult to find the rabbit in that pot of stew. (p. 67)

As I attempt to infuse Inuit perspectives throughout this research project to find a better balance, a more equitable buffalo and rabbit stew, I acknowledge that my worldview and experiences might influence how each perspective has been framed. By weaving both Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars work throughout this study, I not only strive to create balance, but also attempt to highlight the importance of Inuit knowledge and societal values within formal research and to teacher practice and pedagogy, which I believe is central to addressing issues of de-colonization within the restructuring of education in Nunavut. In the next section, I provide a brief overview of each chapter.

**Overview of the Research Project**

Through a brief discussion of teaching, learning, and education in Nunavut, Chapter One, introduced readers to my research topic, research problem and research purpose. I introduced my primary and secondary research questions: 1) How might non-Inuit educators effectively implement Inuit qaujimajatuqangit within their own classrooms? 2) How might non-Inuit educators interpret the goals of education in Nunavut? 3) In what ways might the changes to the curriculum further promote the integration of Inuit qaujimajatuqangit in the classroom? I situated myself as the researcher, describing my experiences, and how I came to live and work in Nunavut, before concluding with a brief summary of each chapter that follow.
In Chapter Two, a review of the literature discusses Inuit qaujimajatuqangit in greater detail, followed by an analysis of formal schooling in Nunavut. Eurocentric practices are then defined and expanded on and a discussion of language follows. Inuit qaujimajatuqangit within the curriculum is identified, before reviewing possible roadblocks and requirements to effective teaching practices. Through the literature review, attention was given to exploring the historical relationships of formal education and research as it relates to education today.

In Chapter Three, the theoretical and methodological aspects of this study are elaborated on; I review the general approach and procedures, followed by a description of data collection methods, data analysis, and participant sampling and recruitment procedure. Ethical considerations are then discussed along with the methodological strengths and limitations embedded within this research project. As no Inuit teachers volunteered to participate, and I am non-Inuit, the research lacks the dialogue I had hoped it would achieve.

In Chapter Four, the findings of my research are presented, highlighting each of the six themes that emerged: 1) The impact of cultural and regional difference; 2) Negotiating the goals of education in Nunavut; 3) Challenges, barriers and roadblocks; 4) Supporting Inuit qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) in the classroom; 5) The changing tide of educational reform; and 6) Effective teaching practices, pedagogy and advice for new teachers. I conclude by summarizing each theme, highlighting the key points discussed through the findings.

Lastly, in Chapter Five, I review the key findings and their significance, before discussing both the broad and narrow implications of this research project. I then suggest recommendations for the Department of Education, for teacher practice and pedagogy, teacher education programs, and community/business partners. Area’s for future research are then suggested, before I conclude with my closing thoughts and final remarks. A list of references and appendices follow at the end.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter Overview

This chapter is designed to situate my research project within the context of formal schooling in Nunavut. As Cherubini (2008) and an ever increasing number of Indigenous scholars and researchers (see Battiste & Barman, 1995; Castellano et al., 2000; Hill & George, 1996), have pointed out, “Aboriginal academic achievement is influenced by a complex mix of socioeconomic, sociohistoric, and sociocultural realities that are the residue of the colonizing efforts that continue to underscore the contemporary reality of Aboriginal peoples in Canada” (2008, p. 5). As such, this chapter has been designed to examine the recent and ongoing changes to education within Nunavut, placing emphasis on how non-Inuit educators interpret, and effectively support the goals of education, founded on Inuit qaumajatuqtangit, within their classrooms.

First, I begin with a brief look at Inuit qaumajatuqtangit, or “that which has long been known by Inuit” (Office of the Auditor General of Canada [OAG], 2013, p. 6). Next, I acknowledge the importance of looking back at the history of formal schooling in Nunavut to describe the loss of culture and knowledge that Nunavummiut (people of Nunavut) now struggle to return home to. Home in this context, being Inuit qaumajatuqtangit, or IQ as it is commonly referred to by the non-Inuit. Afterwards, an examination of Eurocentric teaching practices and southern-based models of schooling is explored, subsequently followed by discussion of conflicts and contests over language. Expectations of IQ within the classroom are then identified and discussed.

I then consider some of the roadblocks and requirements to effective teaching practices as identified through the literature, before discussing recent shifts in policy change, and Identifying the gap in the literature. Throughout this chapter, I attempt to balance two conflicting worldviews (Battiste, 2000), by including both Western and Indigenous perspectives, because like in marriage (Kirkness, 1998), for better or worse, our two worlds are now bound together, and researchers point out (McGregor, 2013; Berger & Epp, 2005; Annahatak, 1994), the Inuit perspective is all too often lacking in formal research.
Introduction

I was once told that the Inuit, to orient themselves when traveling on the land, look not only forwards but also backwards to see both where they were going and where they had been simultaneously. Through looking back, you can see where you came from, remember how you got here and, know the way back home. I remember this teaching often, as it reminds me to not only look forward but backwards to find balance between the past (where we have been) and present (where we are going). As we move forward from today into tomorrow, culturally and socially intertwined (Simon, 2011), walking both together and apart (Qikiqtani Inuit Association [QIA], 2013), it is important to consider how non-Inuit, or qallunaat teachers in Nunavut might effectively reflect Inuit qaujimajatuqangit within the classroom despite their own beliefs and educational pedagogies. Qallunaat is an Inuktitut term that is used commonly in the Baffin region to refer to people who are non-Inuit. In the Kivalliq and Kitikmeot region where Inuinnaqtun is spoken, the term qabllunaat is used (Tester & Irniq, 2008). Both terms can be used interchangeably.

Educational achievements and outcomes in Nunavut are currently lower than in other jurisdictions in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2013). In 2010, only 38 percent of Nunavummiut students graduated from high school and an even smaller percentage of graduates went on to post-secondary education (2013). Much of the literature (Berger & Epp, 2005; Berger, 2009; Kirkness, 1998; Stairs, 1995), examines the possible contributing factors to explain the disparaging gaps in the realization of formal education in the North. The Nunavut Minister of Education, the honorable Paul Quassa, identified education as the key to building “a healthy, strong and flourishing Nunavut” (Department of Education, 2014). His mandate states, “Our goal is the development of self-reliance and we are working to provide a vibrant learning environment that encourages academic success, guided by Inuit culture and values” (Department of Education, 2014). Without an education, Nunavummiut lack opportunities to hold key positions in their schools, communities and the government (QIA, 2013). Many of the studies I have examined, identified critical elements of instruction, teacher pedagogy and practice, which have impacted student learning in Nunavut (Berger & Epp, 2005, 2006; Berger, 2009;
Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit

As an outsider to Inuit language and culture, it is essential to understand what Inuit qaujimajatuqangit is, what it means, and where it comes from in order to effectively teach a curriculum developed and guided by its principles. Tester & Irniq (2008) contend, that non-Inuit must have an understanding of Inuit social history and the relations between Inuit and qallunaat, and also emphasize the importance of “creating a “safe and non-scary place” (kappiananngittuq) where matters can be discussed across cultures” (p. 58). Mick Mallon (2005), an Inuktitut teacher and linguist, explains that compared to the English language, “the structure of Inuktitut is much more logical, much more regular, and much more complex.”

The Inuktitut word for ‘Inuit qaujimajatuqangit’ is not a recent phenomenon, however, it now has a new modern history and context within Nunavut (Tester & Irniq, 2008). It has become a guiding principle and foundation for all Government of Nunavut services, programs, and program development including, but not limited to education (McMillan 2013). As it is the foundation of Inuit knowledge, social values, and philosophy, Inuit qaujimajatuqangit is an intricately complex term, which characterizes Inuit culture (McGregor, 2012) and encompass every aspect of Inuit life, ways of living, and ways of knowing (Tester & Irniq, 2008). Mallon (1995) provides an insightful linguistic analysis to explain:

\[ qaujima \text{-} \text{a verb root meaning 'know'.} -jaq\text{-} \text{is a post-base added to verbs, giving the idea of 'that which is ...' } taku +\text{jaq gives takujaq 'something seen' or 'that which is seen.'} kapi + jaq gives kapijaq 'someone stabbed,' or, less brutally, 'someone injected.' qaujimajaq is therefore 'that which is known' -tuqaq \text{-} \text{is an adjectival post-base meaning roughly 'has existed for a while.'} \]

Therefore, qaujimajatuqaq represents one image of 'traditional knowledge' in the sense of a fact, or possibly a person, that has been known for a long time.

The post-base -ngit is a third person plural marker (e.g., umiangit could be 'his boats' or 'their boats'). So there we have Inuit qaujimajatuqangit, 'the things that Inuit have known for a long time.' (p. 240)
Thus, Inuit qaujimajatuqangit is to Inuit, “the knowledge that has been passed on to us by our ancestors, things we have always known, things crucial to our survival – patience and resourcefulness” (Bennett & Rowley, 2004). Tester & Irniq (2008) further explain Inuit qaujimajatuqangit is also a place, “a foundation – a kappianannngittuq ‘safe place’ made so by the historical struggle of elders. It is a place legitimized by ancient wisdom that defines all of us in ways that have profound implications for human survival…” (p. 59). To describe the concept, they use the Inuktitut word avaluqanngittuq, “that which has no circle or border around it” to describe Inuit qaujimajatuqangit (Tester & Irniq, 2008, p. 49).

Tester & Irniq (2008) engage Inuit qaujimajatuqangit from a critical standpoint and examine the historical and socio-cultural context within “a broader socio-political context, characterized by various forms of resistance” (p. 49). As the concept of Inuit qaujimajatuqangit moves from oral transmission into a text based format, “Contests between cultures over language and definitions are critical. The outcomes determine how reality is to be constructed…” (p. 49). Aylward’s (2007) position implores educators in Nunavut to “interrogate and continually question how institutions legitimate and organize knowledge. What knowledge’s count? And whose knowledge’s counts?” (p. 2). Kirkness (1998) reasons that, “culture is language and language is culture” and the destiny of a people are intrinsically bound to the way its children are educated (p. 13). How they are educated shapes language and pathways of thinking and works as a transmission of cultural DNA from one generation to the next (RCAP, 2006, p. 404). Oskineegish, (2015); Berger, (2009); and Lewthwaite & McMillan (2010) suggest non-Inuit teachers must self-reflect to carefully examine their own bias.

How can qallunaat educators in Nunavut work toward creating a classroom environment that not only reflects and teaches ancestral knowledge (Inuit qaujimajatuqangit), but also combines Western knowledge such as mathematics and science? Can both of these forms of knowledge coexist together, and if they can, are they then presented equally? I come back to concepts of Inuit qaujimajatuqangit and how it has been framed within education in Nunavut later in this chapter. Next I look at a brief overview of the history of formal education in Nunavut because as Tester & Irniq (2008) affirm, “non-Inuit must understand Inuit social history and Inuit/qablunaat relations. This
knowledge reveals why it is important, at every opportunity, to create a kappiananngittuq ‘a safe, or non-scary, place’ where matters can be discussed across cultures” (p.58).

**Formal Schooling: A Brief History of Education in Nunavut**

The comparatively short colonial period, fast pace of change, and time period sets Inuit history apart from most Indigenous people in North America (McGregor, 2012). Mary Simon (2011), former president of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, described the Inuit existence in the Arctic as being, “built around the opportunities, risks, and realities of a hunting and gathering way of life” (p. 880). With the arrival of explorers, whalers, traders, missionaries and police however, the Inuit way of life quickly became entangled, in what Simon (2011) describes as, “an ever-evolving intersocietal relationship with the qablunaat” (p.880).

For countless generations, the Inuit people had exercised complete control of education practiced by families and communities where knowledge, values and beliefs were integral to survival (RCAP, 2006). Inuit children learned through play, observation and example (Bennett & Rowley, 2004). Minor (1992) noted, “When a traditional Inuk is asked how she learned to sew skins or how he learned to hunt, and who was the teacher, the most common answer is that no one taught her, that he just learned how” (p.66). Mick Mallon (1976), a language teacher in Nunavut explains, “our school system is alien not only because it has been developed and is being run by non-Inuit: it is alien because it is a system (p. 66).” As Stairs (1995) points out, formal education also “is in direct conflict with indigenous modes of transmitting knowledge across generations” (p. 315).

Formal education in the Eastern Arctic began with the arrival of a small number of mission schools in the late 1800’s (McGregor, 2012), which focused more on western religion than on academic subjects such as math and science (QIA, 2013). However, the missionaries at this time taught basic syllabic literacy to the Inuit although not entirely altruistic, it was used to ensure religious teachings and the moral codes embedded within western storybooks were assimilated into Inuit culture and society (2013). This was the model of formal education that continued for several decades in the Eastern Arctic.

By 1939, the world was at war and issues of sovereignty and the strategic importance of Arctic were at the forefront of discussion. The Canadian Government at this time could not reasonably claim the Inuit were in fact Canadian citizens, as they did
little to assist, educate and police them (QIA, 2013). Tester & Kulchyski (1994) suggest schooling in the eastern Arctic was part of a colonial policy to strengthen Canada’s claim to sovereignty in the area. Regardless of the reason, what followed was one of the most devastating initiatives by the Canadian Government that continues to impact Inuit society today (OAG, 2013).

By 1950, eight residential schools, referred to as day schools, were opened in the Eastern Arctic as part of a federally funded campaign designed to “kill the Indian in the child” (RCAP, 2006). Children were removed from their homes and as Simon (2011) recounts, “A society’s loss of control cannot be illustrated more pointedly, or more painfully, than through the forced rupturing of the bonds between parents and children” (p. 880). Once in the schools, Children were prohibited from speaking their language or practicing their traditions and many Inuit children had limited contact with their families, communities and culture (QIA, 2013). Although many students tried to hold onto their culture, a generational divide between students and their parents as a result of residential and day schools was devastating (2013). “Children who were raised in schools with southern foods and values went home and questioned, challenged, criticized or denigrated their parents’ customs and values. Furthermore, the knowledge of Elders was perceived as outdated, unnecessary, or uncivilized” (p. 35). Berger (2009) believes all formal schooling, especially residential schooling, had a profound impact regarding identity within Inuit culture through the disruption of traditional family life (QIA, 2013; Berger, 2009; RCAP, 2006, McGregor, 2013; Douglas 1994, 1998).

It should be noted however, that some students had more positive experiences with the residential school system. In Churchill, Inuit students from many communities were brought together where they were directly exposed to emerging ideas about civil rights and anti-colonial movements (QIA, 2013). In testimony from the Qikiqtani Truth Commission, John Amagoalik described, “The attitude was different, and we had excellent teachers… They treated us as ordinary people. We had never experienced this sort of attitude before and it was, in a way, liberating to be with new teachers that treated you as their equal” (2013, p. 22).

The fact that not all residential schools were comparable with death camps as Oskineegish (2015) suggests, reveals the power of teaching infused with notions of both
equality and respect. Although this was a horrific period of education in Canada, a valuable lesson can be learned through looking back at the past and analyzing not only its failures but also its successes. By embracing a model of co-learning and co-teaching, perhaps we can apply this lesson to the future of Qallunaat/Inuit relationships both inside and outside the classroom to create a positive and safe learning environment.

Around the same time as residential schools were being built, the government also began to design services that could only be delivered in a small number of centralized places. Tester & Irniq (2008) describe the move from a nomadic lifestyle into settlements as being set in motion by “outside assumptions” based on “the importance of bringing Inuit into a modern and progressive world” (p. 57). The Deliberate and calculated policies, practices and assumptions of the qallunaat were based on a complex mixture of good intentions, political contradictions, and superficial community consultation (Berger, 2009; Aylward, 2006; RCAP, 1996; Van Meenen, 1994).

Not all were in favor of centralization however, Margery Hinds (1958), a teacher at the time wrote, “The Eskimo should remain an Eskimo no matter how much white man’s ways he is able to absorb. Otherwise he is a lost soul” (p. 108). Hinds decided to forego the existing schoolhouse altogether and instead conducted a sort of traveling school in a tent. Armed with her own supplies, Hinds (1958) would travel to areas where Inuit gathered to hand out assignments to be completed at home which students would return later for corrections and new assignments. This form of teaching came to be known as “The Cape Dorset Experiment” (QIA, 2013, p. 17). What can be learned from Hinds method of teaching? Perhaps, a break from the schoolhouse tradition is in order, in favor of what Berger (2009) and Kirkness (1998) encourage, a radically different way of delivering education.

Since the 1950’s the goal of education in the North has been full of contradictions. In a memorandum from J.V. Jacobson, the Superintendent of Education, two main goals of education were perused: “to prepare the pupil to return to his own native way of life” and “to prepare a student for occupations in the white man’s economy” (QIA, 2013, p. 28). The challenge then, and I contend now, remains how to incorporate both of these contradictory goals within a seamless education system (Tester & Irniq, 2008).
The school system, both then and now, imposed southern educational traditions, standards and materials with no regard for the Inuit people, their culture or way of life (Berger, 2009; Douglas 1994). Kirkness (1998) described, “The Indian child is caught between two cultures and is therefore, literally outside of, and between both” (p.16). Both Kirkness (1998) and Berger (2009) call for radical change to reframe and reshape the education system to reflect Indigenous values and beliefs. “Inuit Elders want our youth to know their ancestral knowledge but at the same time to get modern education and training” (Pelly, 2001, x). Yet, Tester & Irniq (2008) ask, “Should Inuit youth not only know, but be able to practice and live with ancestral knowledge at the same time as they get a modern education and training? Is such a thing possible?” (p. 52). Berger & Epp (2006) indicate that not all are in agreement and recognize “some Inuit might prefer the schools to remain southern institutions” (p. 12). Regardless of how schools are structured, one thing is certain, Inuit education must “be defined and controlled by the Inuit” (p.23) for positive change to occur.

By 1999, the Territory of Nunavut was formed and the Inuit gained the right to self-govern with full autonomy and control. Nunavummiut finally had the authority they needed to incorporate and prioritize their language, history and their cultural values to reshape and re-imagine the Eurocentric school system that was previously imposed. The Education Act (2008) which came into effect ten years after the territory was formed, was a commitment to re-conceptualize education to reflect Inuit ways of knowing, being and doing. Some of the major changes to education set out by the Act included bilingual education for all students by 2020 in either Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun and English or French (2008). In addition to the bilingual goals, the incorporation of Inuit culture into all aspects of Education (including elder involvement and community consultation) was implemented (QIA, 2013). Yet today in Nunavut, Inuit teachers make up only 26 percent of all teachers across 41 schools in 27 communities (Aylward, 2007).

To pursue educational change in line with Inuit wishes would be an easier task according to Berger (2009), if Inuit were not so underrepresented as teachers. Why are so few teachers Inuit? In the next section I examine Eurocentrism in relation to the formal model of schooling used in Nunavut.
Eurocentric Teaching Practices Dominated by a Eurocentric School System

The Inuit, similar to most Indigenous peoples, participate in school systems drawn from the dominant culture according to Lewthwaite & McMillan (2010). Berger (2009) contends that the Southern Canadian school system model that exists in Nunavut today continues to be as an “instrument of colonialism” that continually fails Inuit students (p. 65). Berger (2009) calls for Canadians to end the Eurocentrism that allows schooling to remain an institution that assimilates students in what Rasmussen (2011) describes as “the Inuit struggle for Inuit education” (p.139). Berger (2009) defines Eurocentrism according to Smith (1999), as a “belief in the superiority of European ways” (p. 57). Berger (2009) analyzes how Eurocentrism hinders “well-intentioned” non-Inuit teachers and diminishes the success of initiatives for positive change (p. 58).

Berger (2009) and Aylward (2006) both add that many qallunaat teachers are unaware that they are even embedded within an educational system that marginalizes Inuit students and note to date, little effort has been made to help teachers in Nunavut understand their own Eurocentrism. Berger suggests it may take “a high degree of awareness and constant vigilance for Euro-Canadians to avoid acting and reacting Eurocentrically, but there is no alternative if we wish to do things differently” (p. 61). McGregor (2013) forewarns that since most teachers are “successful products of the institution of schooling themselves,” they are resistant to the radical re-conceptualization of education (p. 108). Graveline (2002) echoed by Berger also remind us that when bureaucracy remains predominantly White, or in this case non-Inuit, we should not expect the “Eurocentric hegemony that exists” to be suddenly dismantled without resistance (p. 63).

In the field of Indigenous education, Mi’kmaq scholar Marie Battiste (2000) laid important groundwork by naming “cognitive imperialism” as contributing factors that limit Indigenous student potential (p. 198). She pointed out how little progress had been made to advance language and culture in public schools. In a follow up study, Battiste & Henderson (2009) observed that although Indigenous knowledge in programs was still lacking, dedicated efforts by Elders, community leaders and professionals, as part of the “global Indigenous renaissance in education,” were now rethinking education from a new perspective (p.10).
Berger (2009) contends, without a radical shift the Eurocentric school system will continue to dominate. He suggested the Department of Education needs to prioritize the hiring of Inuit teachers, yet because Elders and other potential bilingual teachers do not hold formal qualifications or degrees, their unique expertise has not been adequately acknowledged (2009). As Kirkness (1998) identified, “Not properly acknowledging the Elders is probably the most serious mistake we make as we attempt to create a quality education for our people” (p. 13). McGregor (2013), on the other hand takes on a more positive position looking at how the assumptions and structures of Eurocentric educational systems in Nunavut are being challenged by the development of Inuit based philosophy, policy, and curriculum through the process of decolonization of schools. Berger (2009) maintains that despite the studies, policy change, and laws, the school system has remained remarkably the same. He does however acknowledge that some new courses have been added that include content relevant to Nunavut, yet maintains “the structure of schooling is still dominantly Euro-Canadian and the majority of the curricula remain southern” (p. 57). Stairs (2005) insists the cultural pedagogy, which defines the classroom structure determine how education is carried out citing, “ways of teaching are as important as the knowledge itself” (p. 287).

In the past, several researchers have discussed the inability of northern schools to meet the learning needs of Inuit students through experiences and pedagogies used in the classroom, which they claim, contribute to students’ lack of educational success (Berger, 2009; Berger & Epp, 2005; Stairs, 2005) Berger & Epp (2006), according to Ryan (1992) however, question the term success itself and conjecture, if how we measure success is based on our own culturally inscribed and preconceived notions of value and achievement within a Eurocentric framework, then “the value of that “success” must be questioned along with all practices that lead to it” (p. 11). In the next section, considerations of language and how we use it is examined in relation to student potential and achievement.

Conflicts and Contests of Language

In the Eastern Arctic, the primary language of instruction has been in English since the federal government took over education from the early missionaries. In 1964, the director of the Northern Administration branch reported that there were, “far too few
teachers with a command of the Eskimo language to make it possible for them to teach.” (p. 32) He also advised that it would take “several years before there is a body of Eskimos who have had time for sufficient education to pursue teaching careers” (p. 32). Between 1964 and the present we must ask, has anything changed? Lewthwaite & McMillan (2010) observed, the majority of teachers, principals, and school operations administrators from their study were non-Inuit. Although they acknowledge the presence of Inuit staff, “especially in elementary schools”, they note, “the dominant Canadian curricula and pedagogical practices have both intentionally and unintentionally denied the inclusion of Inuit culture through this imbalance” (2010, p. 142).

Today, English remains the primary language of instruction in Nunavut despite the fact that eighty-five percent of Nunavummiut reported speaking either Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun as their first language (OAG, 2013). Inuit students from Lewthwaite & McMillan’s (2010) study recognized the influence of language as, “a barrier and frustration in their learning” (p. 160). In Berger & Epp’s (2005) study, one teacher recounts, “I was not prepared for what I found when I came up here, and that was basically that these students are being treated as if they don’t speak Inuktitut as a first language” (p. 8). Not only was there an identified need for ESL teaching strategies in classrooms, but also most resources were prepared in English, using distinctly unsuitable themes students couldn’t possibly connect to. Another teacher from Berger & Epp’s (2005) study recounted:

Here I am reading a story about little squirrels jumping from tree to tree and… a lot of these kids don’t ever see trees… first of all you have to explain what a tree is, then you have to explain what a squirrel is, and by then they’ve kind of lost the flow of the whole story (p. 6).

As can be seen through Berger & Epp’s study, there exists a large gap between curricular content and student experiences. In essence, “the lives of Inuit students and the experiences of those depicted in schoolbooks (as well as the life experience of the teachers) were worlds apart” (QIA, p. 29). Identified as early as the 1950’s, this gap remains prevalent in most, if not all, Nunavut schools.

In a study by linguist Louis Jacques Dorais (2010), it was suggested the Inuktitut language is in serious trouble and specific knowledge about people and places is rapidly
disappearing with the loss of the language (Collignon, 2006). With that in mind, the Education Act (2008) not only prioritizes bilingualism and the protection of Inuit languages, but also sets out to achieve total bilingual instruction for all the grades by 2020. In light of the Auditor General’s findings, however, it was determined the Nunavut Teacher Education Program (NTEP) does not produce enough fully bilingual graduates to meet those goals (OAG, 2013, para. 41) and had no available statistics to suggest when this goal could be met (para. 42). Many of the same issues from the 1960’s, appear to have not changed over the past 50 years and we must ask ourselves, how is possible to see such little change over such a vast time period? In the next section how Inuit qaujimajatuqangit is embedded within the Education Act (2008) and the curriculum is explored.

**Teaching I.Q.**

Inuit qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) has become the foundation for all aspects of education in Nunavut, yet many educators struggle with the complicated pronunciation of the term and have simply dubbed it IQ. Mallon (2005) explains, “Southern bureaucrats can wax quite eloquent on the extent to which their organizations reflect the virtues of "I.Q.,” a term they find very comforting, not only because of its brevity but also because it avoids the challenge of trying to pronounce *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*” (p. 240). Thus, I use this section, Teaching I.Q., to explain the bureaucratic and political usage of the term Inuit qaujimajatuqangit as it applies to education in Nunavut.

Drawing from the prior curriculum development efforts, the landmark document, *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit: Education Framework for Nunavut Curriculum* (2007), hereafter referred to as the IQ foundation document, was the basis of all teaching resources and student assessment tools (McGregor, 2012). With the creation of the Education Act (2008), Nunavut became the only jurisdiction in Canada with legislation calling for all public education to be based on Indigenous knowledge (2012). “Creating a balance between two worldviews is the greatest challenge facing modern educators” (Battiste, 2000, p.202). McGregor (2013) adds, “This balance between walking in two worlds does not come easily and is not predictable.” (p. 102).

While the purpose was, “to strengthen Inuit cultural identity as well as include Western knowledge and values” (Berger & Epp, 2006, p. 197), Tester & Irniq (2008)
contend, “IQ has gone from being something transmitted orally to something encoded in
text” (p. 53). They recognize that although “non-Inuit must understand Inuit social
history and Inuit/qablunaat relations” (p. 59) they question, “just how traditional is
traditional?” (p. 50) Tester & Irniq (2008) are certain “these considerations are relevant to
how IQ will be defined and used” (p. 53). The Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, a national
aboriginal rights organization, founded by some of the first Inuit graduates of the
imported southern school system, described the time consuming and costly process
involved in developing an Inuit-centered curriculum from scratch. They suggest, “It
requires collaboration between Inuit educators and elders to develop new learning
modules, new Inuit terminology, and to mentor the new generation of younger teachers in
appropriate methods” (ITK, 2011, p. 82).

The IQ foundation document credits over fifty-five Inuit Elders, sixty-six
Northern and Inuit educators, 12 community experts and 18 government staff that
participated in answering the questions such as: “What’s worth knowing? How should it
be taught? And what are the values behind what we are teaching (Department of
Education, 2007)? The IQ foundation document (2007) defined eight fundamental
principles of Inuit qaujimajatuqangit as:

- **Inuuqatigiitsiarniq**: Respecting others, relationships and caring for people.
- **Tunnganarniq**: Fostering good spirit by being open, welcoming and
  inclusive.
- **Pijitsirniq**: Serving and providing for family or community or both.
- **Aajiiqatigiinniq**: Decision-making through discussion and consensus.
- **Pilimmaksarniq**: Developing of skills though practice, effort, and action.
- **Piliriqatgiinniq**: Working together for a common cause.
- **Qanugtuurniq**: Being innovative and resourceful.
- **Avatittinnik Kamatsiarniq**: Showing respect and care for the land, animals,
  and the environment. (pp. 45-48)

Each of the guiding Inuit qaujimajatuqangit principles apply equally within four
integrated curriculum strands, conceived to approximate the holistic nature of Inuit
knowledge (Tester & Irniq, 2008, p. 48). They represent “the knowledge, skills, and
attitudes that students are expected to demonstrate at the end of their schooling” (McGregor, 2012 p. 39). The four strands are listed as:

- **Nunavusiutit**: Heritage, culture, history and geography, environmental science, civics, economics, current events, world news.
- **Iqqaqqaukkaringniq**: Math, innovation, problem solving, technology, practical arts.
- **Aulajaaqtut**: Wellness, safety, society, survival, volunteerism.

In the next section I examine some of the roadblocks and requirements of effective teaching practices in Nunavut.

**Roadblocks and Requirements of Effective Teaching Practices**

While it may never be possible, or desirable for qallunaat teachers to act like Inuit as Lipka (1989) contends, proper orientation and teacher in-servicing is essential for teachers from the South to better understand the unique culture of the community, and the people they both live and work with. Oskineegish (2015) recommends that teaching with positivity, flexibility and open-mindedness with a willingness to learn though community engagement and self-reflection not only shape a teacher’s attitude and approach but suggests that when students and teachers have shared experiences outside the classroom it builds positive interactions within the classroom (2015). Nevertheless, many difficulties stem from the lack of training and preparation in culturally appropriate practices (Oskineegish, 2015; Berger, 2009; OAG, 2013; Stairs, 1995).

Berger and Epp’s (2005) research examined some of the obstacles and challenges of teaching in Nunavut. Both qallunaat and Inuit educators reported feeling frustrated because they lacked the tools required to do their job and called for several changes to address these issues (2005). First, they identified a better understanding of Inuit culture through proper orientation was needed. Second, help was needed to develop English language learner strategies. Third, Nunavut-specific, culturally relevant curricula and resources required not only further development, but proper distribution. Lastly, they expressed the need for ongoing cross-cultural teacher training (2005). Referring to colonialism and the Euro-Canadian mindset, Berger & Epp (2005) suggest these “calls
for help” are “symptomatic of problems that run much deeper than inadequate training and resources” (p. 3).

Lewthwaite & McMillan (2010) made several recommendations on effective teaching practice and strategies. First, they suggest teachers must acknowledge how students define their own success. They must be consistent, interested, connected and communicate clearly that they care about their students because they want them to succeed. Effective teachers mustn’t see the deficits, allowing room for students to use their first language using local contexts and resource material to establish reciprocal learning opportunities within their classrooms. They must champion student learning through multiple instructional strategies and individual support. Lastly, effective teachers recognize they are “the central players in fostering change” and must redefine their teaching practice and strategies to transform the formal educational landscape in Nunavut (p.168). In the next section, mandated policy changes by the Department of Education are explored, as education continues to transform, shifting in direction and focus.

Shifts in Policy and Practice

Nearly ten years have passed since the enactment of the Nunavut Education Act in 2008. As such, the Department of Education has begun reevaluating its current policies, practices and strategies to transform education through policy reform. In 2014, the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs (2014) announced an upgrade to the curriculum and evaluation standards in education that began in September 2014. With a push for all English source materials to be translated into the Inuit languages, increased bilingualism goals, and a new standardized assessment system to measure student progress at every level, significant changes were underway in Nunavut. Within education, policy and practice were being reformulated as the promise of significant change and reform had been called for once again.

In 2015, a second major review of the Education Act (2008) was completed by a Special Committee of the Legislative Assembly (Department of Education, 2016). The review, which followed up on the Audit of Education in Nunavut conducted by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada (2013), also made several recommendations to improve attendance, encourage teaching resource development, and develop more inclusive educational practices, encouraging the transition toward bilingualism among others.
changes (Department of Education, 2016). Consequently, the Department of Education (2016) recognized, “clear opportunities for moving forward” and have since begun the process of updating the Education Act (2008), making the necessary changes as they put it, “to establish the best education system possible for students, teaching professionals and communities” (p. 3). Currently in the consultation phase of updating the Act, the Department of Education and Government of Nunavut are in the process of making specific policy changes that will alter the course and direction of education in the territory (Department of Education, 2016).

Questioning what effect these changes in policy have had on teachers, if any, my research explores the potential of changes in policy to impact non-Inuit teacher practices. Additionally, as the changes to education in Nunavut are relatively new and ongoing, little research or data has been collected in this area of study. My research addresses this gap by examining how non-Inuit teachers in Nunavut might support the goals of education, based on Inuit qaujimajatuqiangit, within their school and in classroom.

**Conclusion**

From the moment of first contact, our histories, that of the Inuit and qallunaat people, have been intertwined in a complex and problematic relationship dominated by social, political and language power struggles that remain unresolved today (Simon 2011, McGregor, 2012; Tester & Irnq, 2008; Berger, 2009; Berger & Epp, 2005). As we wait patiently for the “made-in-Nunavut” vision of education to be fully realized (Lewthwaite & McMillan, 2010, p. 141), classrooms will continue to depend on imported teachers and borrowed curricular content that somehow must prepare students for the old and new challenges of walking in two worlds (McGregor, 2013). The reality is, our histories, that of the Inuit and qallunaat people, are now intertwined and forever interconnected, therefore moving forward in education, teachers must find a balance to support both cultures and values with equality, to coexist and grow both together and apart. And now we end where we began, looking both forward and backward, to determine how education today will be shaped for tomorrow’s future. Elaborating on key methodological decisions, the next chapter discusses both the methodological and the theoretical aspects of this study.
Chapter 3: Methodology

Chapter Overview

In this chapter, both the theoretical and the methodological aspects of this study are elaborated on. First, I review the general approach and procedures used in this study, followed by a description of data collection instruments. I then review participant sampling and recruitment procedure in detail, before elaborating on data analysis procedures. Finally, I consider the ethical considerations, methodological strengths and finally limitations, before concluding with a summary of key methodological decisions.

Introduction

The act of ‘conducting research’, tainted by harmful and unethical practices, has led to an environment of mistrust in many communities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people (Healey, 2006, 2008). Within the past twenty years, however, a growing body of literature has focused on putting Indigenous research epistemologies into words, by an ever-increasing number of Indigenous scholars (see: Annahatak, 1994; Goulet & Goulet, 2014; Battiste, 2002; Kirkness, 1998, Graveline, 2000). Through their research, Indigenous scholars are opening up narrative spaces and dialogue between two, often opposing worldviews, as they strive to produce new paradigms of knowledge (Healey & Tagak, 2014). As Bishop, Higgins, Casella, & Contos (2002) contend, “understanding worldviews of both the targeted community and ourselves is imperative if we are going to do more good than harm” (p. 611).

As a minority from the dominant culture, I cannot claim to “know” or be considered “expert” in Indigenous or Inuit epistemology. However, I share my thoughts now, as they combine with those who came before me (Battiste, 2002; Berger, 2009, 2000; Graveline, 2000; Healey, 2006, 2008; Healey & Tagak, 2014; Henderson, 2007; Kirkness, 1998; Kovach, 2009; Pyrch & Castillo, 2001; Smith, 1999; Youdell, 2006), and in doing so, I humbly add my voice to the existing body of academic research and ‘knowledge’.

Pyrch & Castillo (2001) described the importance of Ganma, an ancient indigenous metaphor, which describes how two different forms of knowledge (Western and Indigenous) can exist separately yet come together to produce new knowledge (2001). To understand Ganma is to imagine:
A river of water from the sea (Western knowledge), and a river of water from the land (Indigenous knowledge) mutually engulf each other upon flowing into a common lagoon and becoming one. In coming together, the streams of water mix across the interface of the two currents and foam is created. This foam represents a new kind of knowledge. Essentially, Ganma is a place where knowledge is (re)created. (p. 380)

Ganma illustrates how cross-cultural dialogue can be achieved, between two distinct worldviews, to create new knowledge that is based on mutual caring, respect, listening, hearing, and sharing. Throughout this research project, I strive to balance Western knowledge, with the written words of both Elders and Indigenous scholars, as their knowledge too, combines in dialogue across time, space and cultural lines. Guided by Ganma, perhaps both Inuit and non-Inuit knowledge might flow together, in search of harmony (Saimaniq) and (Isuma) wisdom, to achieve, iqaumaqatigiinniq, where all things come into one.

**Research Approach & Procedures**

Qualitative research is not unified under any one particular theoretical or methodological concept (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Graveline, 2000; Kovach, 2015, 2009; Maclure, 2003; Reason, 1981; Seidman, 2006; Steinhauer, 2002; Turner, 2010). However, “The way in which people… understand and interpret their social reality is one of the central motifs of qualitative research” (Bryman, Bresnen, Beardsworth & Keil, 1988, p. 8). Characterized by various theoretical approaches and methods, Lincoln and Guba (1985), suggest all qualitative research should follow several criteria including: trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. Graveline (2000) however, engages qualitative researchers to resist the “oppressive Eurocentric attitudes and practices that currently shape research norms” (p. 361). Using the poetic narrative of a *Trickster Tale*, Graveline (2000) attempts to subvert dominant research structures, writing:

- Findings vary Depending on values chosen.
  - Empower and enfranchise Some.
  - Disempower and disenfranchise Others.

This is how We became “those people”.
The “Uncivilized”
“Vanishing”
“Disadvantaged”
“Dispossessed”.
Unlearn White “expertism”. (p. 362)

What is White “expertism” and how can I, as a non-Indigenous person from the dominant culture, unlearn my own ‘expertism’ as Graveline (2000, p. 362) suggests? Perhaps, like fighting an addiction, the process of recovery first starts with the admission of a problem. That being said, I first begin this section by reflecting not only on qualitative research methodologies, but also question the act of ‘conducting research’ that is complicit with, and in the tradition of, the Academy. In doing so, I recognize the act of research and inquiry is, as both Graveline (2000) and Smith (1999) suggest, an act of power. Therefore, as I embark down the path to becoming a researcher, I do so with an open heart, open mind and open spirit, to hear the teachings and wisdom embedded within Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing. Although, I will never truly “know” or fully understand Indigenous methodology, I attempt, with the best of intentions, to share what I have come to understand respectfully, and with humility.

Qualitative inquiry, broadly speaking, characterizes the research deign and methods utilized by this study, as they offer a flexible framework for exploring the complex relationship between Indigenous and Western worldviews. Before I continue with my rationale for choosing qualitative inquiry, it should be noted that within educational research, qualitative inquiry has not always been accepted as a valid form of research by many professional organizations or journals (Seidman, 2006). Over the last thirty years however, qualitative research has gained significant ground with a growing number of traditionally quantitative publications, beginning to recognize the increasingly important role of naturalistic research paradigms for the collection of interviews and personal stories in research (Alasuutari, 2010, Greenwood & Levin, 1998; Polkinghorne, 2007). That being said, I have selected qualitative inquiry to explore strategies and
limitations of non-Inuit educators to effectively implement Inuit qaujimajatuqangit into the classroom.

Creswell (2013) identified, “We conduct qualitative research when we want to empower individuals to share their stories, hear their voices, and minimize the power relationships that often exist between researcher and the participants” (p. 48). Therefore, individual, in-depth, semi-structured interviews have been selected to facilitate dialogue into the complexity of teacher experiences in Nunavut. In-depth interviews delve deeply into social and personal matters that can be explored and revisited through participants’ own words and perspectives (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). As Denzin & Lincoln (1994) further explain, qualitative data obtained through this method can also provide rich insight into human behavior. Semi-structured interviews then, do not aim to measure teacher experience statistically, because the richness of human experience cannot be quantified to find meaning or develop understanding.

The inherent quest for understanding and meaning, central to qualitative research, align with, according to Kovach (2009), Indigenous methods of knowing. Cree scholar, Wilson (2001) however, warns, “Western research brings with it a particular set of values and conceptualizations of time, space, subjectivity, gender relations and knowledge. Western research is encoded in imperial and colonial discourses that influence the gaze of the researcher” (Wilson, 2001, p. 215). Clarified further by Wessells & Bretherton (2000), “Ontologically and epistemologically, traditional Aboriginal world views and the white Western world views, remain fundamentally different” (p. 104).

Although “there are as many kinds of qualitative research as there are qualitative researchers” (Hatch, 2002, p. 20), paradigms sub-categorize researchers according to their views. “Paradigms are…competing ways of thinking about how the world is or is not ordered, what counts as knowledge, and how and if knowledge can be gained” (Hatch, 2002, p.20). They are “basic belief systems based on ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions” that together represent a “worldview” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 105). Wilson (2001) suggests, “We now need to move beyond an “Indigenous perspective in research” to “researching from an Indigenous paradigm” (p. 175). According to Wilson, a research paradigm then encompasses:
Ontology or a belief in the nature of reality. Your way of being, what you believe is real in the world...Second is epistemology, which is how you think about that reality. Next, when we talk about research methodology, we are talking about how you are going to use your way of thinking (your epistemology) to gain more knowledge about your reality. Finally, a paradigm includes axiology, which is a set of morals or a set of ethics. (p. 175)

Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing, are based on understandings of the world that go beyond human interactions to include interaction with the land, animal, and spirit worlds (Chilis\textsc{a}, 2012; Deloria, 1995; Wilson, 2008). Battiste (2002) described Indigenous knowledge as, embodying a “web of relationships within a specific ecological context… containing linguistic categories, rules, and relationships unique to each knowledge system” and having “localized content and meaning” (p. 14). Battiste continued, by also describing the importance of having “established customs with respect to acquiring and sharing knowledge” and implied responsibilities for “possessing various types of knowledge” (p. 14). Knowledge is therefore viewed, as the development and accumulation of experiences people have with both each other, and the world around them (Chilisa, 2012; Wilson, 2008; Battiste, 2002). Knowledge then, as Battiste contends, is not secular, “It is inherent in, and connected to all of nature, to its creatures, and to human existence” (Battiste, 2002, p. 14). Therefore, as Thayer-Bacon (2009) equated, “Knowledge = Truth” (p. 1).

Poststructuralism, a branch of postmodernism, seeks to, “deconstruct productions of singular, powerful truths reproduced through oppressive metanarratives” (Gebhard, 2015, p. 14). Essentially, poststructuralism is “anti-foundationalist, anti-essentialist, and committed to a critique of the “common sense” assumptions that regulate and organize institutions” (p. 14). Furthermore, Maclure (2003) adds, “truths are always partial and knowledge is always ‘situated’—that is, produced by and for particular interests, in particular circumstances, at particular times” (p. 175). Thayer-Bacon (2009) suggests by describing ourselves separately from the land and from each other, is to miss the multitude of ways we are connected, we are related, and we are one with the universe. Thus, she proposed, “When we understand we are one with the universe, then we can begin to understand how connected we are, as knowers, not only to each other, but to our
products as well, our knowledge” (p. 17). As a theoretical approach, poststructuralism recognizes the complexity of human experience, and thus, encourages the deconstruction of assumptions formed around, “knowledge” and “truths”. Guided by a poststructuralist framework, my research project calls on both Inuit and non-Inuit teachers to share their individual stories, across cultures.

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) established the educational importance of narrative inquiry as a research methodology as it brings “theoretical ideas about the nature of human life as lived, to bear on educational experience as lived” (p. 3). Although narrative inquiry is a broad term that encompasses numerous qualitative approaches, Connelly and Clandinin (2006) frame it as such:

People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful…. Narrative inquiry, the study of experience as story, then, is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience. Narrative inquiry as a methodology entails a view of the phenomenon. To use narrative inquiry methodology is to adopt a particular narrative view of experience as phenomena under study. (p. 22)

Thus, using narrative inquiry, I openly contextualize my research through my own lived experience and engage the participants to also share their stories and lived experiences to create meaning as our stories combine.

Creswell (2003) suggests, “Meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting” (p. 9). Storytelling is a way to share lived experiences, knowledge, history, values and beliefs and most likely is the earliest form of “research”. The stories told from one generation to the next, are encoded with a richness that cannot be measured using scientific method; our stories, explain who we are, but more than that, stories are who we are. Barthes (1993), who described the importance of narrative to our humanity, said:

Narrative is present in myth, legend, fable, tale, novella, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy, mime, painting, stained-glass windows, cinema, comics, news items, conversation. Moreover, under this almost infinite diversity of forms,
narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society; it begins with the very history of mankind and there nowhere is nor has been a people without narrative. . . Caring nothing for the division between good and bad literature, narrative is international, trans historical, transcultural: it is simply there, like life itself. (Barthes, 1993, p. 251-252)

Consequently, understanding narrative inquiry then, as an approach for sharing knowledge, might further facilitate greater insight into the meaning, and understanding of our shared world (Borland, 2013); a world that we both encompass, and a world that encompass’ us.

Indigenous scholars, Kovach (2009), Wilson (2008), and Healey & Tagak (2014) underscore the importance of the story within research settings. In Inuit society, the power and role of storytelling (unikkaaqatigiinniq), is a central aspect of Inuit ways of life and of knowing (Bennet & Rowley 2004; Nunavut Department of Education, 2007). Explained by Healey & Tagak (2014), storytelling is a millennia-old tradition, which allow Inuit to share their personal experiences, “without breaking cultural rules related to confidentiality, gossip or humility” (p. 6). Therefore, I have selected an approach that might create narrative space, in which both qallunaat and Inuit may come together to both share, and combine their stories to create new knowledge.

**Instruments of Data Collection**

Situated within the context of teaching and learning in Nunavut, my research study has employed semi-structured interviews as part of the data collection procedure. Interviews were selected to “gain rich qualitative data,” told from “the perspective of selected individuals” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2010, p. 95). Ritchie & Lewis (2003) advise, “understanding motivations and decisions, or exploring impacts and outcomes, generally requires the detailed personal focus that in-depth interviews allow” (p. 58). Elliott & Timulak (2005) further explain the benefits of using semi-structured, in-depth interviews and open ended questioning. “Inquiry”, they explain, is “flexible and carefully adapted to the problem at hand and to the individual informant’s particular experiences and abilities to communicate those experiences” (p. 150). As observations are also not restricted to certain pre-existing categories, “participants are encouraged to elaborate on their accounts, making each interview unique” (p. 150).
Open-ended questions tend to evoke responses that are rich and descriptive, meaningful and culturally significant (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, through semi-structured interviews, teachers were invited to share their stories, experiences, memories, motivations, wisdom and knowledge. According to Van den Berg, Wetherell & Houtkoop-Steenstr (2003), interviews can be particularly useful as they explore, “Crucial things about a segment of society’s conversations with itself, about the ways in which the world is typically legitimated, organized, and justified” (p. 13). Guided by Inuit qaujimajatuqangit, I strive to build of positive relationships (Tunnganarniq) that are collaborative in nature (Inuuqatigiitsiarniq). Together, with a shared purpose (Piliriqatigiingniq), I’ve made an effort to create kappiananngittuq, a safe place, “where matters can be discussed across cultures” (Tester & Irniq, 2008, p. 58).

**Participant Information**

A relatively small sample size of two educators were selected to closely consider and explore the personal stories, experiences and narratives of both Inuit and Non-Inuit educators in the Kitikmeot region. Due to the context of this study, I refer to the Kitikmeot region, which encompasses five communities in Nunavut and covers over four-hundred thousand square kilometers of land. I use the region in lieu of a geographic descriptor to ensure participant anonymity. The participants were dully notified though information and consent letters, as well as via email correspondence following the interview. In this section, sampling criteria established for participant recruitment is discussed, followed by a review of sampling procedures, in addition to teacher recruitment strategies. Lastly, under the teacher biography section, background information has been provided on each participant.

**Sampling Criteria**

The sampling criterion for this study was designed to include both Inuit and non-Inuit perspectives. As such, the participants of this study were selected using the following criteria. Firstly, participants had to consider themselves a teacher, elder, or pre-service teacher, with direct experience teaching in Nunavut classrooms. Secondly, as experience gives the research context, I required at least one participant to have teaching experience outside of Nunavut. Lastly, one participant with over twenty years and
another with less than five years of teaching experience in Nunavut were seen as necessary to allow for comparison and contrast of perspective.

**Sampling Procedures**

*Inuuqatigiitsiarniq*, a foundational concept to Inuit ways of being, involves showing respect and a caring attitude for others. Therefore, participants were engaged, rather than recruited to participate using a snowball method. In preparation for this study, I emailed and made phone calls to people I had previously worked with, and whom I had developed both personal and professional relationships. With snowball sampling, a type of purposive sampling, individuals volunteer to participate in the study or might also recommend friends and colleagues they think would be willing to participate (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). This method is often used to find and recruit hidden or hard to reach populations, that are not easily accessible through other sampling strategies (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). To ensure that educators volunteered, rather than feeling pressured or obligation to participate, I provided my contact information, rather than asking individuals to provide me with the names and contact information of people they thought would be suitable.

**Participant Biography**

**Brent.**

Teaching at the primary-junior level, Brent is a dedicated non-Inuit teacher who is passionate about English literacy and teaching the fundamental skills students need to communicate and thrive in the world. At thirty-four, Brent is a relatively new, Caucasian teacher, who has been living and working in Nunavut for about seven years. The majority of his experience has been in one community where he has worked as a teacher for about five years. Brent also has experience teaching several communities in Nunavut and outside the Kitikmeot region. Through his teacher practice, he focuses on building positive relationships with his students and the community to foster both trust and respect.

**Henry.**

Originally from Ontario, Henry has been a teacher for over thirty years at the primary-junior level. Caring and passionate, he believes all children have a gift or talent that is up to the teacher to find and nurture so that all students can find success in school.
Teaching for twenty-two years in one community in Nunavut, Henry has witnessed many changes within the school and community as educational initiatives and programs have risen and fallen with each new political tide and policy change over the years. Caucasian, and of Polish-Ukrainian decent, Henry is a non-Inuit educator, with over twenty-five years of experience teaching in the North. At the age of fifty-three, he advocates for student needs and strives to create hands on learning opportunities that are culturally appropriate and relevant to students lived experiences.

**Data Analysis**

In this section, I articulate how the data/stories were collected, organized, and analyzed. With the assumption that the goal of data analysis is to find meaning, and develop understanding through the transcribed stories of participants (Creswell, 2013), it was prudent to also consider both, Inuit and non-Inuit forms of data, data collection and analysis procedures. Guided by Inuit qaujimajatuqangit, I strived for shared consensus through cooperation and collaborative action (*Aajuqattiginingniq*). Research participants not only collaborated through the sharing of their story, but also through reviewing the transcribed interview for accuracy. In this way, participants had the opportunity to add, or clarify meaning, to ensure consensus. Being resourceful, and seeking solutions innovatively and creatively, (*Qanuqtauurnarniq*), guided the acquisition of knowledge (*Pilimmaksarniq*), as the data/stories were analyzed. Data collected was then organized holistically around six themes that emerged, which were relevant to the research questions and purpose. As part of my analysis, I also acknowledged, “null data,” that is, what participating educators did not speak to, and what that might signify.

**Ethical Review Procedures**

The Masters of Teaching program at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) required that ethical review procedures were followed. First, all participants were asked to sign a consent letter (Appendix B), giving their consent to be interviewed as well as audio-recorded. The consent letter not only provided an overview of the study, but also addresses ethical implications and specified expectations of participation. Second, participants were informed that the data collected from the interview would be used to inform my Masters of Teaching Research Project and subsequently, may also be used in future publications or conference presentations. Third, it was also made clear, that while
there are no foreseeable risks or widespread benefits to the participants directly, the information shared during this study would have the potential to inform my practice and the practice of other teachers in relation to the complex issues within education in Nunavut. Fourth, participants were also told that they could withdraw their consent at any time, and were not required to answer any questions that they felt uncomfortable with. Fifth, the educators interviewed were also assured that the full transcripts and audio recordings obtained from this study would be stored on my password-protected laptop, only to be seen by my supervisor and I. In addition, any audio recordings made would be destroyed after five years. Sixth, before conducting each interview, the participants were assigned a pseudonym to remain anonymous, and made aware that any identifying markers related to their schools or students would be excluded to protect their identities. Lastly, participants had the opportunity to review the transcripts, to clarify or retract any statements, before the data analysis was carried out.

Methodological Strengths and Limitations

This research study celebrates Inuit unikkaaqatigiinniq, the concept related to the power and role of storytelling (Healey & Tagak, 2014). “The Inuit have a very strong oral history and oral culture. The telling of stories is a millennia-old tradition for the sharing of knowledge, values, morals, skills, histories, legends and artistry.” (p. 1) Through this study, educators in Nunavut were given the opportunity to share their story, because as Reason (1981) suggested, “The best stories are those which stir people’s minds, hearts, and souls and by so doing give them new insights into themselves, their problems and their human condition” (p. 50). That being said, the use of stories to effectively communicate information is an important part of Inuit society and considered a methodological strength as interviews also validate both teacher voice and experience.

There are however, several limitations to this study. First, this study was limited in both scope and data collection. Upon contacting the participants there was a limited time frame within which to conduct the interview and as such I had to be very selective about the topics and issues I chose to pursue. As such, this study provides a narrow understanding of Education in Nunavut. Also, although my research study was opened up to Inuit participants, and intended to create space for safe and open dialogue, for reasons outside of my control, I was unable to find willing Inuit participants participate as part of
this research. It is my sincerest hope that in future study, supportive Inuit research partners might be established so that we may work to find balance together, opening up new narrative spaces where relationships can truly be built based on cooperation, trust and understanding.

Second, based on budget and geography, telephone interviews were conducted. In contrast to quantitative research, relatively few qualitative studies employ telephone interviews, and there is little methodological discussion of this mode. As Chapple (1999) noted:

While entire books have been written about the advantages and disadvantages of telephone interview for the purposes of social survey work…much less has been written about telephone interviewing as a means of gathering qualitative data. Chapple (1999)’s comments have led me to conclude that within established qualitative research protocols and norms, telephone interviews are seen as inferior to face-to-face communication. The third and fourth limitations to this study are in regard to the Masters of Education ethics approval, which consequently has restricted the depth and breadth of this research study through its limitations. In addition to being prohibited from inviting current or former students to participate as part of this research project, direct observation was also precluded. Observation, which would have provided direct impressions associated with non-Inuit teaching practice and pedagogy, limits the breadth and depth of discussion.

The sixth limitation of this study is related to my own ethnicity as researcher. As I am non-Inuit, and part of the dominant culture, it must be acknowledged that my interpretations and analysis are inseparable from my own beliefs, values, culture and knowledge. In addition, my limited or superficial ‘knowledge’ of Inuit culture and philosophy, might’ve caused me to misinterpret meaning, and also limited my ability to understand the context. This, in combination with my own limited experience as either a teacher or researcher, acted as a potential limitation of this study.

**Conclusion**

Through poststructuralist paradigms, and guided by Inuit qaujimajatuqangit, I have attempted to create narrative spaces, where both Western and Indigenous knowledge can come together to dialogue. Through this framework, I’ve attempted to resist
oppressive Eurocentric attitudes and practices that typically shape qualitative research design. Through the use of semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions, participants were welcomed to share their stories and knowledge, through narrative inquiry. The narrative spaces have been created to share teacher stories as they intersect, flowing both together and apart to create new meaning and understanding. In the next chapter, the findings of these intersections are discussed at length as themes emerged holistically. Teacher narratives are presented and discussed as data, situated in relation to the literature to broadly explore the findings of this preliminary research project.
Chapter 4: Findings

Chapter Overview

Highlighting prominent themes that have emerged through the analysis of the data collected through teacher interviews, the ways in which non-Inuit educators have implemented Inuit qaujimajatuqangit within their own classrooms is discussed through the findings. This chapter also addresses how the recent changes to education in Nunavut have further supported the integration of Inuit qaujimajatuqangit in the classroom, questioning the ways in which the recent changes also support the goal of education. Through interviews conducted in September 2016 with two teachers in the Kitikmeot region, six themes have been identified: 1) The impact of cultural and regional difference; 2) Negotiating the goals of education in Nunavut; 3) Challenges, barriers and roadblocks; 4) Supporting Inuit qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) in the classroom; 5) The changing tide of educational reform; and 6) Effective teaching practices and advice for new teachers. Utilizing narrative inquiry, each theme is discussed, as I not only contextualize the findings through the lived experiences of teachers who share their stories, but also through the literature and my own teaching experiences in Nunavut.

The Impact of Cultural and Regional Difference

Although Nunavut is a territory of Canada, culture, language and worldview, for example, distinguish Inuit from other Canadians. Through the findings, not only is the division between Nunavummiut and non-Inuit teachers pronounced, but between the three regions in Nunavut (Kitikmeot, Kivaliq, and Qikiqtaaluk/Baffin), each community also tends to vary considerably. Annahatak (1994), through the literature, confirms that these differences often cause tensions in the classroom between “Inuit values versus institutional values, traditional activities versus current activities, Inuit worldview versus mainstream worldview, and modern cultural tools versus traditional knowledge” (p. 13). In essence, the tension Annahatak described, must be negotiated through education, however as one research participant reported, “in terms of the teachers, most of the teachers are predominantly Southern from like southern Canada. Administrators, our principal is [also] from the South.”

Through the findings, non-Inuit teachers and administrators make up the majority of school staff, which identified as the research problem in Chapter One, confirm that
Inuit continue to participate in a school system drawn from the dominant Canadian culture, and are typically educated in schools by non-Indigenous teachers with divergent ontological and epistemological views. (see Lewthwaite & McMillan, 2010; Berger, 2009). Laugrand & Oosten (2009) explain “schools can play an important role in transfer of Inuit knowledge but they should understand that traditional Inuit ideas and values will not always agree with those of the modern educational system” (p. 128). In the next section, I examine the divide between the North and South in relation to education where the tension between two worldviews often collide. I then situate teaching and learning in the Kitikmeot region through a comparison of other regions within Nunavut.

**Dividing the North from the South**

As Inuit are circumpolar people, as discussed through the literature, and are united by a common bond and a shared perspective. Linguistically and culturally, Inuit also share distinct similarities with one another other, regardless of the geo-political lines that in many ways, arbitrarily divide the land and their people (Bonesteel, 2008). Through my own experiences, and further confirmed both through the literature and the data, Nunavummiut often refer to where they live not by territory name, but instead by direction. The North, and I capitalize here because the word in conversation does not simply inform the reader of a direction, but rather a specific place and a people, a culture and their history. Brent clarified, “You have to understand and realize that this [the North] is a different place, and things are done differently.” For example, he explained “things that are done down south, or maybe in your community, or in a city, or wherever you’re coming from, aren’t necessarily done here, or are not done the way you’re used to things being done.”

Confirmed through the literature, Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing are based on understandings of the world that go beyond human interactions to also include interaction with the land, animal, and spirit worlds (Chilisa, 2012; Deloria, 1995). Yet, the formal education system, modeled after southern systems of schooling and following curricula primarily developed in the South, Irniq (2008) has come to accept, “the Inuit way of life is disappearing” and “Inuitness is becoming more Europeanized or 'southernized'…”, which he suggests might stem from the fact that most teachers and administrators in schools are non-Inuit (para 5). One participant added that “some of the
teachers from the South are not ready for the isolation of the North… they just are not ready to deal with the isolation, the darkness, and it does affect their teaching.” Because non-Inuit teachers are often unaware of the local environment, culture and language, Annahatak (1994) emphasized and my research data confirmed, “More often than not Inuit values are left out of school” (p. 17).

With different culture and ways of knowing discussed through the literature, data reveals that the North poses distinct challenges for qallunaat (non-Inuit) teachers, as they attempt to acclimatize to their new surroundings and teach a curriculum based on Inuit qaujimajatuqangit. In addition to the extreme change in environment, the lived experience, culture and values of students significantly differs from those found in the South. At times, the relationship between Inuit and non-Inuit is contentious, as one participant revealed, some teachers from the South have a particular attitude and believe they are there to save the Inuit. However, as Henry pointed out, “Inuit people existed for years before the Southern people, and they are going to be around after Southern people leave. They don't need to be saved by some person from the South!” These types of teachers, he explained, often don't last in the North because, as he put it, “if you think you know it all, if you think you're up here to save the Inuit, you are gonna bomb big time.”

Furthermore, Berger (2009) and Aylward (2007) confirm non-Inuit teachers are often unaware that they themselves might perpetuate the normalized, hierarchical constructions of race and privilege that are embedded within dominant society and consequently, teacher pedagogy, which may in fact lead to the teacher attitude Henry, one of the participants, pointed out. Echoed by Berger (2009), I suggest that without knowing and understanding the North and its people, non-Inuit educators have no choice but to perpetuate a system that marginalizes Inuit, in turn also limiting the integration of Inuit qaujimajatuqangit in the classroom. In the next section, regional differences within Nunavut are discussed as I compare the Kitikmeot region to other regions in Nunavut.

**Regional Differences within in Nunavut**

Through the data, distinctions are not only made longitudinally (north and south), but also laterally (east and west). Findings revealed the Kitikmeot region has distinct socio-cultural and linguistic variations that differentiate it from other regions in Nunavut.
In each community, Brent explained, “schools are [also] very much different”, for example, his community speaks Inuinnaqtun instead of Inuktitut, however, the language is not as strong as in other communities, and overall, is much less cultural. Comparing a community in the Kivalliq region to the one he now teaches in, Brent noted that his students “are not able to speak the language as well as kids in … [the Kivalliq] were able to do it, and even just in terms of traditional skills, the girls there could sew mitts; the adults could all make parkas.” Adding, that the majority of both Inuit and non-Inuit students in the Kivalliq wore traditional style Inuit parkas that were homemade.

Through Brent’s observations, adults and children in his community had significantly less experience with traditional skills such as sewing and Inuinnaqtun. Brent attributed the influence of having elders in the school daily, to be correlated with student language acquisition and practice of traditional skills in the classroom. In that community, he explained, “the elders would sew with the girls, they would speak the language to them, and the girls picked up the language that way.” In other communities such as this one, a stronger language and culture, might be tied to how traditional knowledge is passed from one generation to the next.

From twenty-five years of experience teaching in his community, Henry reasoned, the language and cultural loss in his community might be directly connected to the prevalence of non-Inuit people in the region. When he first started teaching back in the seventies, Henry’s community was the center for the Kitikmeot back when Nunavut was still part of the Northwest Territories. Henny remarked, “I think the Inuit culture was lost as they had more and more southern people come up.” Although Henry suggested that his community was redeveloping and promoting their culture more recently, he noted the “Inuit language is really suffering...”. Brent added that since there are so few Inuinnaqtun speakers in his community, “It’s hard to find people to come into the school to do Inuinnaqtun who can actually speak the language, because… everybody actually speaks English.”

Brent also observed that not only the language is suffering, but the culture as well, for example, he explained “people here can’t sew it’s not a skill that’s taught and passed down.” Henry reasoned, communities that tend to have a stronger culture, tend to also have more Inuit teachers. Brent on the other hand suggested, “the language is stronger
there [in other communities] because they have more quality teachers… teacher’s that can speak the language and who can teach the language” which, he suggested makes a difference in the way Inuit qaujimajatuqangit is integrated within the school.

Brent insisted that although every community has been different, some communities are better than others. “Sometimes this goes in cycles, you know, certain communities will experience various issues, and maybe it’s not as, you know, as positive of a place to be for a teacher, especially a new teacher.” For example, Henry suggested that while some communities have very little support from parents, his community in the Kitikmeot is fortunate because education, for the most part, is important to the families, which makes teaching much easier. Although teaching in the Kitikmeot is not without its challenges, Henry explained that teachers coming from other regions often notice that his community is so much happier, and the kids are so much keener on learning. Teaching in a community where education is supported and encouraged by parents which he suggested makes his job as a teacher much easier. In the community where Brent and Henry both teach, lack of language, elders and cultural support from the community have been significant challenges to delivering a culturally relevant curriculum based on Inuit qaujimajatuqangit. With positive community attitudes towards education and parental support, however, students are more engaged and eager to learn. Through the findings, as teachers are expected to “strengthen Inuit cultural identity as well as include Western knowledge and values” (Berger & Epp, 2006, p. 197), education and teaching in Nunavut might be more effective and culturally relevant when the whole community is involved. In the next section, the formal goals of education in Nunavut are explored in relation to teacher understanding and implementation of those goals.

**Negotiating the Goals of Education in Nunavut**

The goals of education in Nunavut, as also seen through the literature, are somewhat unclear and largely subjective. Data revealed, as non-Inuit teachers first must interpret and then implement educational mandates set by the Government of Nunavut (GN), their understanding of education and the Education Act (2008) in Nunavut must be negotiated. Brent, one of my research participants, asserted that various organizations and community stakeholders in Nunavut have differing perspectives on the purpose of
education which complicates matters as non-Inuit teacher attempt to understand and implement to goals of education:

Honestly, I think it depends on which group you talk to. If you talk to the Department of Education, I think they will tell you that the goal is to provide, or produce, grade 12 students that can go into a college program, or go into a university program, or go into the workforce and be productive. But if you were to talk to, say for example the KIA, so the Kitikmeot Inuit Association, their response might be to produce bilingual graduates, they want students who can speak our local language. If you speak to the NTI, the Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, they might tell you, we want kids that can speak Inuktitut or Inuinnaqtun fluently, we want kids who can go out on the land, and hunt, and fish, and survive on the land, build igloos. So I think it depends on which group of people you ask.

As seen through this participant’s perspective, there are many opposing ideas concerning the goal of education, and all are not in agreement regarding what and how students should be taught. Dating back to the 1950’s the goal of education in Nunavut has been full of contradiction. With the main two goals then being, “to prepare the pupil to return to his own native way of life” and “to prepare a student for occupations in the white man’s economy” (QIA, 2013, p. 28). It might be observed that besides the vocabulary, not much has changed.

Looking at the contradictions between worldview, culture and knowledge, it is difficult to imagine whether or not it is possible to incorporate both of these contradictory goals within one seamless education system (Tester & Irniq, 2008). The KIA, NTI and the Department of Education each compel a different view of the goal that education might fulfill. One participant suggested having so many distinct perspectives has been problematic. He said “I think that’s actually one of the problems with education in Nunavut because you have so many different people who have so many different views on what we’re trying to do.” Data thus reveals, how the goal of education is pursued, determines how education and classrooms operate.

Regardless of the difficulty in seamlessly incorporating a multitude of viewpoints, data revealed, Euro-normative goals often take precedence in education, leaving little
room for Inuit qaujimajatuqangit in the classroom. For example, when asked what his goal was as a teacher, Brent stated that producing students who could read, write and who have basic math and critical thinking skills was the most important thing. Explaining why, he stated that with those basic skills students can think for themselves, they can be independent, and have “enough tools that they can go out and survive in the real world whether that is in Nunavut or Edmonton or wherever the case may be”, adding, that these types of skills not only prepare students for work in an office or classroom, but also living off the land, suggesting further, “If you can read, then you can read about cultural activities and things like that.” Although reading, writing and mathematics are important for students to learn, the literature suggests, practice and experience with skills associated with living on the land, interacting with elders, and developing Inuit language come from experiential hands-on learning opportunities and practice, rather than from books. Though the data, and confirmed through the literature, many non-Inuit teachers who come from the South tend to prioritize Eurocentric skills and values and ways of knowing, such as reading and writing, over Inuit cultural and societal values, which also further illustrates the tension Annahatak, (1994) had stressed.

Listing education as one of its priorities, “the Government of Nunavut [GN] has identified that improving educational results is crucial to the territory’s social and economic development” (Office of the Auditor General of Canada [OAG], 2013, p.1). Through the data, improving student graduation was cited by non-Inuit teachers as a primary objective of education, and as Henry, one of the participants noted, the Department is currently putting a lot of money into the literacy and math programs used in the territory to increase the number of graduates. From his observations, the main goal of education has been “to really improve the reading level and the comprehension level of all the students, so that the students will be able to graduate, and hopefully go on to university or college and hopefully get good jobs.”

Yet as discussed through the literature, the primary goal described by Education Act (2008) has been focused on ensuring “the vision and beliefs about education held by Nunavummiut are embedded in schools and in the education that students receive in Nunavut” (OAG, 2013, p. 1). The Honorable Paul Quassa, the current minister of Education reconfirmed, “Our goal is the development of self-reliance and we are working
to provide a vibrant learning environment that encourages academic success, guided by Inuit culture and values” (Department of Education, 2014). Although though the data there is strong evidence to support that non-Inuit teachers encourage the academic success of their students, it seems that Inuit culture and values consequently take a back seat role in the classroom as was discussed through the literature. In the following section, challenges, barriers and roadblocks are discussed in relation to effective non-Inuit teacher practice, including the integration of Inuit qaujimajatuqangit in the classroom.

**Potential Challenges, Barriers and Roadblocks**

Through the data, several direct and indirect challenges for non-Inuit teachers in the North are discussed, which consequently may act as barriers and/or roadblocks to the effective integration of Inuit qaujimajatuqangit to support the goals of education set out by the Department of Education. In the following sections, challenges that are directly related to teacher practice are explored beginning with the lack of resources, including a need for more culturally relevant materials, followed by access to elders, flaws within the school administration and governing bodies, and student behavior, which were cited as the main barriers to achieving the goals or vision of education set by the Government of Nunavut (GN) and central to effective teacher practice. Factors that also indirectly influence the delivery of education in Nunavut are explored through the data.

**Resources**

Central to effective teacher practice, resources play an essential role in the delivery of quality education, guided by both the “values and principles of Inuit culture”, in addition to, “the best in modern education practices” (Nunavut Department of Education, 2013). In the following subsections, the lack of resources, the need for quality resources, and culturally relevant materials are discussed as challenges to effective teacher practice in Nunavut.

**Lack of Resources.**

One of the central issues related to effective teacher practice described through the data, was a lack of teaching resources. Confirmed as an ongoing issue through the literature, the lack of resources is one of the main challenges educators faced teaching in Nunavut. One participant described, that not only are there significantly more resources
in the South, there is access to more computers, libraries, and field trips are easier. Another participant acknowledged that while technological resources are available at his school, essential paper resources are often unavailable. Consequently, irregular and variable access to resources across the territory has led many teachers to buy and develop their own teaching resources. For example, one participant explained that he has used a lot of his own resources that he purchased himself for a couple of reasons, first, he is more comfortable and familiar with his own resources, they are always available and if teaching in another community, he doesn’t need to reinvent his program of the lack of resources. “So for me,” he stated, “I got my own resources just so I know what I have, and what I’m going to use to teach.”

Because the school or community doesn’t always have the required text books, substitutions need to be made. Another participant used the Math Focus program as an example, which teachers have been expected to use since last year. But as he stated, “the school only had Math Focus for up to grade three so teachers in [grades] four, five and six, had to use Math Makes Sense even though we are supposed to use it only as a secondary resource.” Regardless of policy change and new initiatives by the Department of Education, the data might suggest to be effective, teachers must either purchase or create the resources they need to teach in Nunavut due to a lack of resources.

**Quality of Resources.**

Data revealed that even when the required texts were made available, the mandated programs were not always effective and lacked quality. Somewhat reluctantly, one participant divulged, “The old math program was awful! It was too wordy, not enough examples and the examples jumped all over the place.” As a solution, he added, “myself and a couple of other teachers, we bought Jump Math and it worked wonders - even though we're not supposed to use it.”

Despite curriculum changes and new educational mandates, other subjects beyond mathematics were also found to be lacking in essential resources, or resources were outdated. For example, both participants specifically mention the health curriculum being outdated. Henry, who had been teaching in the Kitikmeot region since the mid-eighties, confirmed the health program they are using hadn’t changed since he started teaching there. In science and social studies, the participants also emphasized that everything
comes from their own resources because there aren’t any textbooks that teachers are
directed to use. Frustrated, one of the participants declared, “they don't really have
anything - they have a guide, the guide doesn't really do much, so it’s up to the teacher to
come up with all our resources for that.” Confirmed through the literature, many teachers
struggle with the quality of print resources in Nunavut, as a barrier to effectively
implementing, and successfully delivering the curriculum (Berger & Epp, 2005).

Through the literature, The Auditor General’s (2013) report, for example,
concluded that although the Department of Education had provided some of the necessary
tools, there were still many areas where tools and resources were required to deliver the
curriculum, including teaching resources, such as handbooks and manuals (p.2). In the
report, they recommended the department should:

Reassess its plans for developing the remainder of the required teaching resources,
in the required languages, and should determine what adjustments are to be made
and by when. It should also consider other options, such as adapting resources
from other jurisdictions for use in the Nunavut education system. (p. 31)

In response, the Department of Education agreed to re-evaluate their current plan for
developing teaching resources, and over the past three year’s new strategies have begun
to surface. In the next section, I examine the ways new strategies are being implemented
by the Department of education to adapt curricula and resources to meet the needs of
Nunavummiut students.

**Adapting Resources.**

Data suggests the Department of Education will continue to depend on curriculum
imported from the provinces discussed through the literature, despite the unique
educational needs of Nunavummiut students. For example, one participant revealed the
Department of Education had essentially given up on the long anticipated made-in-
Nunavut curriculum that Lewthwaite & McMillan (2010) had described through the
literature. According to Brent, one of the participants, instead of the made-in-Nunavut
approach, the Department of Education has shifted their focus to develop more made-in-
Nunavut resources to accommodate and adapt a large percentage of the Northwest
Territories (NWT) curriculum, which he added mostly, comes from Alberta and British
Columbia (B.C.). Data revealed a large part of the changes that have been happening in
education have been in response to the Auditor General’s Report (2013). As one participant put it:

The government was basically told that kids don’t have skills - they can’t read, they can’t write, they can’t go out into the real world and be functional adults in any capacity whether it be on the land or in an office or somewhere else.

However, if the intended changes focus mostly on skills, such as reading and writing, and adaptations to the Northwest Territories curriculum, derived from a combination of B.C. and Alberta’s curricula, are to be the newest strategy intended to improve students’ academic achievement, then to paraphrase Berger (2001), schools in Nunavut will remain foreign institutions, structured with buildings and schedules that represent the dominant culture. If Berger’s assertion is correct, and Euro-Canadian methods of schooling in Nunavut is part of what puts it in crisis, then the Department’s plan to make adaptations to a curriculum that was developed and structured by dominant culture, further risks Inuit marginalization in schools.

One non-Inuit teacher I interviewed was relieved the made-in-Nunavut language program never came to fruition. Revealing a little of his Euro-Canadian bias, he said:

I think that if we had a made in Nunavut language program, it might not have been to the same standard that, you know, Alberta, or BC, or other provincial programs are. So I think we should just use what they have and just adapt it for our classrooms.

Although in line with the Department of Education’s new policy to adapt pre-existing teaching resources from other provincial and territorial jurisdictions (see OAG, 2013), the data revealed non-Inuit were apprehensive to entertain the possibility of an Inuit education made for Inuit, by Inuit, and also questioned the quality of education of such a curriculum. Brent, whose pedagogy is focused on developing students’ skills, for instance, wasn’t too worried about covering curriculum expectations which he described as being relatively similar from province to province. Instead he tends to focus on the functional skills that go along with those outcomes as opposed to the outcomes themselves. As such, to him “developing resources and providing schools with more resources, you know, quality resources” would be more cost effective and helpful to his teacher practice. Yet, Nunavut in comparison to other jurisdictions, as cited through the
Through the literature, it was apparent that although Inuit culture and language are intended to be the foundation for education, the data revealed that there are challenges to achieving the Departments model. For example, although the Education Act (2008) directs the Department of Education to use Inuit qaujimajatuqangit as the foundation for everything they do, teaching resources from other jurisdictions will be adapted for Nunavut’s distinct “cultural and linguistic priorities, based on Inuit qaujimajatuqangit” (OAG, 2013, p.31). One of the main challenges with adapting resources from outside the territory, will be ensuring the Inuit societal values are congruent with those embedded within the resources being adapted, in addition to ensuring the content of the resources can be adapted to be culturally relevant, as discussed through the literature. Another challenge raised though the data, suggested that although the language and culture of the community is important, and does have a place in the curriculum. As one participant commented, there are not enough trained bilingual teachers who can teach cultural knowledge and without enough staff to accommodate, he suggested, teachers should primarily use English in school. To explain his reasoning, he stated:

The reality is the language of business is English, you know, the language of the GN is English, they may translate things, but for the most part people speak English and your need to be able to speak English if you’re going to be successful in the world today, at least in Canada.

Although English is an essential language worldwide, and certainly important for students to learn, their culture and language are at risk if they are not practiced in school. Lacking the necessary resources, the made-in-Nunavut curriculum cancelled, non-Inuit teachers, without specific cultural knowledge, will continue to prioritize Euro-Canadian skills in the classroom over Inuit values until quality teacher resources are created/adapted to equitably merge the two. In the next section culturally relevant resources are examined.

**Culturally Relevant Resources.**

The need for culturally relevant resources was also raised through the data as a factor limiting in teachers’ ability to effectively teach a more Nunavut-based culture
based program. For example, one teacher had discussed difficulty for some students when reading a Sherlock Holmes novel by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle with his class. Noting the elements surrounding the setting and time period were the most prevalent cause of confusion for many of the students who had little experience outside of their community, let alone outside the territory or country. The question this raised, is why such European literature was selected in the first place? Is there a lack of Nunavut themed novels and Inuit literature that might be used in the classroom instead?

Noting a lack of appropriate multimedia for both teachers and students to learn from, one teacher suggested better resources that were culturally relevant to students lived experiences would be necessary to further improve his teaching practice. Advocating for DVD resources that might discuss the history and formation of Nunavut as a Territory which was made by Inuit might be effective. He said: “It would be nice if they could make a recording of one of the people who were responsible for Nunavut coming around… so students can see it, and hear about it, cause its different from me talking about it.” Beyond a few Nunavut themed books, the data implied his school is lacking a lot of Inuit resources. For example, one participant said he only has a few pages in social studies guide, which is actually only meant for the teachers. For students at the elementary level, he says that he hadn’t seen any resources that really teach about Nunavut. Through the literature, Berger and Epp (2005) contend, “The concerns about the lack of curricular relevance are not new” (p. 7), nor is access and availability of resources consistent throughout the territory. Henry, one of the participants criticized the lack of resources related to culture, language and Inuit history. He indicated: “The government in Nunavut is, in my opinion… are falling down on the job. They are not coming up with enough Inuit resources to use in the classroom.” The data suggested, teachers are frustrated and have little choice but to utilize resources and texts that have little to do with Nunavut, Inuit, and their stories, culture, and values.

The data indicated the Department of Education had sent out class sets of about fifteen to twenty books that relate directly to Nunavut and the Canadian North in an effort to produce more culturally relevant resources. Both participants noted an increase in Northern themed books covering issues such as the environment, different land and sea animals, many of which were written by Inuit by the publishing house Inhabit Media.
One participant explained that although many of the books are in both English and syllabics, which is a positive, few had been produced in Inuinnaqtun, which use roman orthography rather than syllabics. Instead, most of the resources available in Inuinnaqtun were community or teacher created, participants indicated there were very few dual language texts available to students. In fact, the availability of Inuinnaqtun resources according to one teacher, has been “a big issue for us, we don’t have the teaching materials ready to go to help teach the students.” For example, a new guided reading series, mandated by the GN to support Inuit language development, has yet to arrive in his community. One participant commented that although the Inuktitut resources are ready to go, the required Inuinnaqtun resources haven’t been created or are not being properly distributed. In many ways, the lack and limited availability of culturally relevant resources, for both teacher and students, might be problematic to achieve a well-balanced education that meets the needs of Nunavummiut. Ensuring cultural resources are used and understood, elders play an important role in the transmission of culture, values and language. In the next section, barriers to elder participation in the classroom are discussed.

Elders

According to the participants, elder involvement in the classroom changed dramatically when the territory of Nunavut was formed. With new policy enacted at that time, Henry pointed out, elders had to be paid any time they came into the school, which dramatically cut down on elder volunteering in the school. The research finding also suggested several other challenges that have prevented elder involvement in the classroom. First, the main challenge has been related to the criminal record check (CRC) and its accompanying paper work. Second, support from the school administration, directly influenced the number of elders brought into the school. Lastly, the Heritage Center might also act in some ways to limit the inclusion of Elders in the classroom.

Reflecting on his twenty-five years of experience working in the North, Henry has noticed many changes over the years. Back before Nunavut was its own territory, for example, he recalled that more elders used to volunteer in the schools. However, ever since the Government of Nunavut was established, enacting new procedure and protocol to ensure elders were paid for their time, some elders stopped volunteering. He wouldn’t
say if it’s good or bad but added that the compensation program, “definitely cut down on
the volunteers… Elders wouldn't volunteer anymore; they wanted to get paid”. Although
it is important elders are paid for their time, with less volunteers, there are missed
opportunities for students to interact with elders, learn their language, and experience
Inuit culture in ways that non-Inuit teachers cannot provide.

Brent suggested that lack of money doesn’t play a huge role in having Elders
come into the classroom as much as the criminal record check (CRC). He explained that,
“Each school is given a fairly large budget to bring elders into the school to do cultural
activities each year, but… the paperwork and CRC’s make it difficult for schools to bring
in certified elders.” Expanding on this, Brent emphasized:

The elders that we would want to bring into the school, you know, they can speak
the language, they can sew, build igloos, other cultural things, like skills, but they
can’t pass a criminal record check. For some of them It’s not even like is a serious
offence. It could be something you know that was minor that happened twenty-
five years ago, but with the RCMP it ‘pops’ so they’re not even allowed in the
school.

According to Oosten and Laugrand (2009), Elders have repeatedly expressed their
disappointment with the modern schooling system, questioning an education which has
taught their children nothing about Inuit life and values, contributing to children being
alienated from their roots. Citing the “dynamic aspects of Inuit qaujimajatuqangit”,
Oosten and Laugrand explained, “Traditional knowledge is not static, not something
abstract and separated from the context in which it is produced, but always related to the
present. In this respect, it contrasts with the modern schooling system, which sets great
value on the absorption of objectified knowledge.” (p. 7) Berger (2009) contends, without
a radical shift the Eurocentric school system will continue to dominate, suggesting the
Department of Education needs to prioritize the hiring of Inuit teachers and Elders. Yet
because Elders and other potential bilingual teachers do not hold formal qualifications or
degrees, their unique expertise has not been adequately acknowledged (2009).

As discussed through the literature, Kirkness (1998) reasoned that “Not properly
acknowledging the Elders is probably the most serious mistake we make as we attempt to
create a quality education for our people” (p. 13). When elders are excluded from schools
and classrooms by rules put in place to protect children from harm, such as criminal record checks, ironically it may cause harm by limiting access to Elders in schools. Although criminal record checks are arguably important, in this instance, they’ve also been acting as a barrier, preventing elders in the classroom, and consequently blocking the transmission of culture and language from one generation to the next.

According to one participant, the Department of Education has acknowledged that criminal records are an issue preventing many qualified elders into the school and have been working recently with the Department of Justice to correct and find a way to work around the issue. Most of the time, Brent explained, elders’ criminal records are just “minor things on their record from, you know, many years ago”, but without the criminal record check, Elders can’t come into the school to teach the kids their culture, history and language. Unfortunately, progress is slow and to paraphrase Brent, “it still hasn’t happened.” The other challenge with having Elders in the classroom, beyond the criminal record check, one participant reasoned, was the accompanying paperwork involved by both the Elder and school to complete the certification process.

Additionally, Henry suggested that his old principal, who was close to retiring, didn’t put in much extra effort and was not very positive, brought a very small number of elders into the school. To explain why the principal is so important, he remarked:

A principal can do so much to determine the success or failure of the school…I have seen the principal really damage the school… If an administrator had no clue how to do anything, the whole school is going to suffer because a good teacher is only going to do so much with a bad administrator.

Although the old administration claimed that elders felt embarrassed and didn’t want to come into the school, data showed with a new principal in the same school, more elders were brought in within a few months then in the past two years combined. Data here suggested the role and attitude of the administration plays a crucial role in not only determining how well the school is able to function, but also played a role in determining the number of elders brought into the classroom.

Within this particular community, beyond the criminal record check, accompanying paperwork, and challenges with school administrators, the Heritage Society also poses a unique challenge to accessing certified elders. Brent explained that
because the Heritage Society pays elders a salary and they are full-time employees, they are often unavailable to spend time in the classroom. Although positive to have Elders working full-time to record their stories and work on cultural community based projects and research, it is somewhat ironic that in “developing culture and heritage programming” (Kitikmeot Heritage Society, 2016, para 1) cultural and linguistic transmission through education is compromised.

Through the findings, it is apparent that including elders in the classroom comes with its own set of distinct challenges beyond those mentioned through the literature. Elders are often excluded from the classroom, for not only lacking the correct set of qualifications, but due to the excessive amounts of paperwork involved and reluctant administrators. Yet without Elder participation in education, as seen through the literature, young Nunavummiut will struggle to know their culture, history, language and values within a system where the majority of teachers who are non-Inuit and as the data confirmed, lack the resources and cultural knowledge to effectively teach Inuit societal values and Inuit qaujimajatuqangit within the classroom.

In the next section, the challenge educating and retaining Inuit teachers is discussed as an alternative way to ensure Inuit societal values are passed from one generation to the next through education.

**Inuit Teachers**

Suggested through the data, are better equip to teach language, culture and societal values. Inuit teachers working in the school also become role models, they have some say in how students are taught, and what they are taught. Overall, finding suggested effective Inuit teachers have a positive impact on students in Nunavut. For example, Brent, one of the teachers from this study, said in one of the communities he’d worked in, the language was much stronger thanks to so many dedicated Inuit teachers. He said the Inuit teachers were really effective, not only because they spoke the language, but because they could also teach the language, which was not necessarily a characteristic of all Inuit language speakers he’d experienced in schools.

According to Henry, who has invited several Inuit Student teachers into his classroom, observed that his students “really like having an Inuit teacher in the classroom, you can tell they get quite excited, and it’s a really good role model for them.”
Not only might having Inuit teachers be a great role model for students, they share a common worldview and understanding, cultural heritage, which might allow for a more effective integration of Inuit qaujimajatuqangit in the classroom. Some of the Inuit teachers Henry has seen, have been better than some of the Southern teachers and highly effective. Speaking about one of their current Inuit teachers, he said that eventually she’ll probably end up taking an offer from the government so she can spend more time with her kids and family, which “would be a big loss for our school.”

Although there is no doubt having Inuit teachers in the school is beneficial, findings from this study revealed, out of the few Inuit teachers that graduate from NTEP, the Nunavut teacher education program, many have been enticed to leave teaching for higher paying jobs with other governmental departments that usually offer better hours. In his community, Henry said that he had noticed that most of the Inuit teachers only teach at the school for one or two years before they notice that they can get a really good government job, a job “where they can go home at 4:30 p.m. and don't have to come in to work in the evenings.” It appears through the data, the already small number of Inuit teacher declines or remains the same over time, as new graduates fill the roles left by their predecessors. One participant explained that, “a lot of the NTEP grads get offers from the government to work for them” Another participant added, once they have their degree, “they have some education… they are people that are in demand. So often those people don’t even end up in a classroom, especially the more effective ones.”

NTEP, the Nunavut teacher education program, is one of the only university equivalent programs in Nunavut. Through this program, students are able to pursue a bachelor’s degree without having to leave the territory, and sometimes even residing in their own community. Thus, since Inuit students are able to earn a university equivalent degree by becoming a teacher, they become qualified for a whole range of other employment opportunities, which might be a significant factor that impacts teacher retention within education in Nunavut. To prevent Inuit teachers from leaving the profession, Henry had suggested, grooming the most effective Inuit teachers to become principals as one strategy to ensure the best teachers are not wooed by other departments of the government. As this might be an effective strategy, Inuit teachers would need to want to take on the responsibility of an administrative role, which is in many ways
different from teaching. Through the data, it is clear teacher retention strategies might be deployed, in addition to increasing interest in higher education, by possibly changing the way education is delivered.

Henry’s suggestion had provoked an interesting question, if teachers could be groomed into becoming principals, could Inuit, fluent in their language, also be groomed to become certified teachers through an apprenticeship model rather than through the current teacher education program? For example, an apprenticeship model might be created by integrating the Nunavut Teacher Education Program directly into schools. In this way, Inuit teacher candidates would learn through a combination of observation, experiential hands on learning, practice, and theory. Teacher candidates would also be learning holistically, acquiring teaching proficiency by constructing their own knowledge and understanding through observation and then practice. Although this model may have its drawbacks, it is more closely related to traditional Inuit methods of teaching and learning as discussed through the literature and worthy of thoughtful consideration that future research might further explore.

As prioritizing Inuit teachers who speak the language, has been one part of the Department of Education’s (2016) strategy, as discussed through the literature, findings revealed that there may be so few Inuit teachers in schools within Nunavut because not enough graduates can be produced. Not having enough Inuit teachers is problematic, and compromises the effectiveness of the Education Act (2008). For example, the Special Committee to Review the Education Act (Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, 2015) recognized due to the limited number of bilingual educators, the regulations established in the Education Act (2008) cannot be fulfilled. Furthermore, with so few bilingual instructors, the committee pointed out that the goal of “delivering three different education models across the territory becomes complex and difficult to manage. This, in turn, compromises the success of the education system as a whole” (p. 14). Thus, for the Department of Education, administrators, teachers, and students, more Inuit teachers in the schools would have several benefits.

In the next section, a range of issues raised by teachers regarding certain challenges they’ve faced in the classroom with students are broadly discussed.
Students

Several challenges regarding students were identified through the findings that relate directly and indirectly to education, to teachers’ ability to fulfill the goals of education set out by the Department (2008). Issues surrounding student academics, behavior and learning disabilities are examined in the next sections. In addition, student attendance and home life are briefly explored, followed by a short discussion of the impact of sexual abuse, which was raised, by both Henry and Brent, as a prominent challenge they’ve encountered teaching in Nunavut.

Academics, Learning Disabilities and Behavioral Issues.

The formal educational system in Nunavut, based on an imported Euro-Canadian school system (Berger, 2001), draws much of its curriculum and teacher resources from the South. Depending on the subject, Data suggested that teaching students in the North Southern curricula, non-Inuit teachers should be prepared to teach a lot of background knowledge, including both vocabulary, content and themes. For example, one participant stated in Nunavut, he has had to do a lot of teaching for background knowledge that he wouldn't usually have to do back down South. Furthermore, resources that have been adapted to use in the North are often thematically or conceptually incompatible and in many ways not relevant to students lived experiences.

In addition to difficulty with specific science vocabulary, European cultural knowledge that is embedded within typical Southern lessons and materials must also be explicitly taught. For example, Henry clarified, “I did a novel study on a short story by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and I had to do a lot of background vocabulary and go into what England was like in the 1870's” Henry reasoned, that although most students were able to understand the context of the Sherlock Holmes story after it was explained, he noted that a small percentage of students took longer to grasp certain concepts. Henry suggested, “A lot has to do with exposure. The kids that have more exposure to the south, to the internet, “tend to relate to the content more easily “then the kids who have never been out of the community or don't have internet at home”. In essence, my findings reflect, the subject matter of lessons when based on the dominant culture, impact student learning and effective teacher practice.
According to Brent however, the lack of language skills is a much more pressing and substantial challenge related to student academics. In his evaluation, “the biggest problem for Nunavut students is that they don’t have a language, whether it’s their own language, or English… they can’t really speak either fluently and express themselves on paper in either language.” Both participant interviews and the literature have suggested that academic achievement is not only lower in Nunavut, but the number of social and behavioral challenges are also a significant factor to effective teacher practice. Brent reasoned, “being in Nunavut, if you don’t have good classroom management skills then, you know, you’re not – I don’t think you’re going to be very successful.” Brent reasoned that because, “there are more, you know, behavioral issues [and] the academics are lower…”

In addition to classroom management, Henry proposed Nunavut needs to support a better special education program to address student need:

some of our kids are severely, or moderately delayed. They have real learning problems… I'm not talking about a student who is just a bit behind, but a student who has major learning problems. We're not doing, and by we, I mean everybody – the school the government, the board offices – we’re not doing a good enough job for those kids, they need more…[but] there’s a lack of resources. The schools need more SSAs to work with these students.

From the data it might be reasoned that without the proper backing for students, there is only so much that can be done to support their development and learning in the classroom. As one participant stated, schools just don’t prepare students with the “life skills” they need.

In the following section, student’s home life and attendance are explored as I discuss how housing issues in the community might impact teacher’s effectiveness in the classroom.

**Attendance & Home Life.**

One of the biggest hindrances to education in Nunavut might be the lack of student attendance, which Henry pointed out. It might be reasoned that the challenges faced by many students relate to socio-economic challenges, which has had an impact on student learning, and impacted the effectiveness of his teacher practice. Henry
acknowledged that improving student attendance is something that all schools in Nunavut need to work on by working with parents and the community to encourage kids to come to school. Henry reasoned, “If the kids don't come, there’s not much the teacher can do” adding that attendance issues are usually related to “lack of parenting” or specific family issues. Clearly, other factors that remain outside the purview of education impact student learning and play a role in the classroom. It appears through the data that attendance, remains a significant hurdle to education that must be questioned.

For example, the shortage of housing in Nunavut, which indirectly has an effect on attendance and student performance in school, is another factor that has an impact on student attendance and punctuality (OAG, 2013). Henry explained:

That’s the other problem with education, lack of affordable family housing. I know it’s not directly related to education, but it is. The kids have to share a house with ten other kids, and three adults… it’s hard for them to learn. I’m sorry, that’s one of my pet peeves, is lack of affordable housing in the North, because it would make education a lot easier.

When asked if he had any ideas on how to improve attendance, Henry responded hopelessly, that he really doesn’t know if there is a solution due to the complexity of the problem.

Published reports on the issue of schooling in Nunavut, confirm that there are other factors beyond attendance and punctuality that complicate the delivery of education in Nunavut (see OAG, 2013). The housing shortage, for example, which often results in overcrowded houses with limited space for students’ study and sleep. Although the Department of Education is aware of the issue, and has agreed to collaborate with the departments of Health and Family Services, “to create guidelines for addressing issues and services for students requiring additional support that the school system cannot provide” (OAG, 2013, p. 34); change in this area has yet to be seen. As a result, some students are not able to complete assignments at home, do homework, or get enough sleep to be well rested for school the following day. Thus, as the data suggested, overcrowded houses indirectly effect how education is delivered and the effectiveness of teacher practice is also impacted.
In the next section, the ways in which other factors such as sexual abuse effect teacher practice are examined.

**Sexual Abuse.**

Nearly absent from the literature, findings in this study revealed that the sexual abuse carried out by educators, school administrators and local community members is breach of trust, and an important factor to consider when discussing the effectiveness of non-Inuit teachers in the classroom. It has been suggested by Kirmayer, Fletcher & Watt (2009), “that the cycle of abuse from victim to perpetrator… [might be seen as] an important factor in the abuse occurring throughout the North” (p. 202). Cases of abuse, often unreported for years, have more recently surfaced in the media. The most infamous case involved Ed Horne, a teacher and principal who worked in several communities in the North between 1971 and 1985 (Bell, 2000). With about one-hundred victims of his abuse now stepping forward, Horne was convicted of indecent assault charges that included “incidents of genital fondling, masturbation, and simulated anal intercourse with boys aged 7 to 15” (Bell, 2000, para 10). Due to a handful of sexual abuse case, much like this one, Henry commented that some communities are a lot harder to teach in, partially because of what Ed Horne and what other abusers in education have done, a lot of people in those communities have negative feelings toward teachers and schools. Without trust, as one participant suggested, effective teaching can’t happen.

Brent, recalled the difficulty he faced teaching in a community where some of his female students had been sexually abused by a male in the community. Being one of the only male teachers in the school, he explained:

Trying to teach a lot of the students was very difficult, especially the female students because I felt like I couldn’t – I really didn’t feel very comfortable getting within three feet of them. So trying to teach them when they are sitting at their desk and trying to stay, you know outside of their you know personal space even more than you normally would [was a challenge]…. I didn’t want them to feel uncomfortable but honestly, myself, I wasn’t really comfortable either.

Reflecting back on his experiences, Brent suggested that although it might have been a special circumstance, he concluded, “in some ways, if you look at all the schools in Nunavut, you’ll find … there are a lot of kids who are abused, you know social issues,
things like that.” Not only does the trauma surrounding sexual abuse complicate the ability for a teacher to connect with their students, as demonstrated in Brent’s example, but it also impacts their effectiveness as teachers. For the students, “emotional trauma suffered as a result of abuse, particularly sexual abuse, is an important cause of mental health problems…” (Kirmayer, Fletcher & Watt, 2009, p. 302) and can impact their learning. Not only might abuse impact student learning as the data revealed, teacher effectiveness might also be affected. Next, the way non-Inuit educators have supported Inuit qaujimajatuqangit in the classroom is explored.

Supporting Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit in the Classroom

The data revealed, there is little consistency in how non-Inuit educators have implemented and incorporated IQ principles into their classroom. Defined by the Nunavut Social Development Council (1999), “Inuit qaujimajatuqangit embraces all aspects of traditional Inuit culture, including values, world-view, language, social organization, knowledge, life skills, perceptions and expectations.” (cited in Department of Education, 2007). The Department of Education (2016) states, “Inuit Societal Values and Inuit qaujimajatuqangit are the base and the building blocks of our education system. They guide the Department of Education, teachers, students and District Education Authorities (DEA) in everything they do” (p. 5). Although policy states Inuit qaujimajatuqangit is central to teaching in Nunavut, data revealed that educators might not have a deep enough understanding to negotiate equitable integration across all subjects.

Both participants equated Inuit qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) as simply “golden rules” to live by. One participant stated, “The concept is pretty, pretty straightforward… even though they don't say it, they all follow the golden rule: do unto others as you would have others do unto you.” Although similar, I question if the complexity of Inuit cultural values might run deeper than can be expressed through this single expression. Aylward (2007) contends, “it is possible that well-intentioned Nunavut educators and policy planners may be analyzing issues of diversity and cultural relevance through a framework of “sameness” that draws upon essentialist notions of culture” (p. 3) Haymes (1995) suggested, common humanity, the Eurocentric notion that all human beings are the same as a result of their autonomy and rationality result, according to Aylward (2007), in
misguided notions of Inuit qaujimajatuqangit.

Rasmussen (2011) warned, many of the methods utilized by Qallunaat, are rooted in Eurocentric notions that further marginalize and assimilate students (2011). When teaching IQ, Henry explained, “some schools do one concept a month, I don't. I try and see what I can tie into every lesson” For example, he stated, “I try to support it by using it in the health program.” Brent on the other hand, explained how he might adapt a lesson to incorporate cultural knowledge. For example, if Brent knows there are certain aspects of a lesson that students might not relate to, he tweaks it so that its more relatable to them and their experiences:

If, you know, you’re talking about a lesson or teaching about certain types of animals, instead of using animals that a student would not be familiar with you could use animals that they are familiar with, you know like polar bear, muskox, and you know, branch out from there so that it’s something that’s relatable to them.

Annahatak (1994), comments on these types of lessons, which she terms “floating lessons”, clarifying that they are not “connected to our [Inuit] cultural purposes” (p. 17). Furthermore, she suggested this type of lesson is “more for surface learning, that is, to learn the physical aspects of culture (food, clothing, tools, customs, etc.) adding, “They rarely touch upon students’ choices, decisions, and identity” (p. 17).

In the newest policy document released by The Department of Education (2016), Policy Intentions for the Proposed Amendments to the 2008 Education Act, the role of Inuit qaujimajatuqangit in the curriculum has been clarified. The Department has further specified that the new proposed central goal to education will be to graduate “self-reliant and well-educated Nunavummiut” (p. 3). They clarify:

The idea of ‘well-educated’ and ‘self-reliant’ includes the requirement that students understand and live the principles and concepts of Inuit qaujimajatuqangit. These ideas are not separate, but closely connected. Inuit qaujimajatuqangit can be and is already a part of academic study. However, understanding and applying Inuit qaujimajatuqangit has unique features, and can be a different process than some academic studies. It involves making a human being, not just developing students. (p. 5).
Although Henry has been a teacher in Nunavut for twenty-five years, he admits that even now, he doesn’t have sufficient knowledge to effectively teach Inuit culture and history through the IQ framework, stating, “I have some but I don’t have enough.” As part of his wish-list for education, Henry appealed for more culturally relevant resources to help convey Inuit voices directly to the students. As he put it:

I think it's important for the development of a really good self-esteem, a healthy self-esteem, if the student learns about their own, about how Nunavut came into effect and the people that helped it. It will help them feel better about themselves because most of the role models you see on TV or read about in books are not Inuit. They are Southern people or aliens.

Additionally, Henry suggested that anything which might develop student pride about their culture would develop positive self-esteem, exposing students to Inuit perspectives that are all too often lacking in schools. Confirmed by Berger (2009), the education system in Nunavut, “began, and remains a system based primarily on the knowledge, pedagogy and culture of Euro-Canadians rather than Inuit” (p. 56).

The Department of Education (2016) has more recently also suggested concrete ways, in which educators might incorporate Inuit Societal Values in schools, such as: “Incorporating traditional Inuit songs, music and storytelling in schools” and “Ensuring that all schools have engaged Elders passing on traditional knowledge to students, making the necessary time and space in the school calendar for the transfer of traditional knowledge” (p. 5). As Henry put it, education is, “In the midst of making a lot of exciting changes.” However, time will tell if enough resources can be produced and distributed, which support non-Inuit teachers’ integration of Inuit qaujimajatuqangit authentically into their classrooms. In the next section, notable patterns and trends related to educational reform, policy and practice are discussed.

The Changing Tide of Educational Reform

The Government of Nunavut, now in the consultation phase of updating the Education Act (2008), appears to be committed to making specific changes to the Act, regardless of community and teacher input, failing in many respects to reach consensus. The community consultation held in the spring with the Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM), participants reported to have left with mixed feelings about the changes. In
regards to the updated Education Act, one participant said he got the impression from the ADM that Education was going to become more centralized. He explained:

The Department of Education is looking to take more control over education and take away the community based aspects of it so that it’s not going to be a community oriented education system, it’s going to be run from, you know, the Department of Education offices and they’re going to direct what is going to be done and by who.

Even through the Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) had asked community members, parents and teachers for suggestions surrounding the Education Act (2008) updates, Brent noted that it did not exactly feel like the Department of Education was open to suggestions. He said, “there were certain things they were going to do regardless of what people said.” Thus, it might be implied educational reform, which includes centralization, is a reversal of the community control and flexibility that were previously the goal of the original Education Act (2008).

To that end, the Department (2016) justified this shift, explaining that students across Nunavut receive such a varied education, so that effectively monitoring progress to deliver high quality educational programming is difficult without increased centralization. They suggested the community based system in place is not only unfair to students, but it is costly and less effective. Thus, “Standardization of the education program will allow the department to improve resources, develop effective assessments and better manage teaching resources” (p. 4). In favor of the changes intended to improve literacy, Henry, one of the participants, was most concerned with the suggestion of standardization. He explained with standardized testing, “a lot of teachers just teach to the test, they don't bother teaching the curriculum.” Thus, as the Department continues to look for ways to close the educational achievement gap, Henry warned, “if you start standardizing things, then you’re going to lose a lot of kids… Especially if you go to gear our students to a test that was made in the South.” He then added, “Kids are going to be good at something and it’s up to you [the teacher] to find what it is they can do.”

According to this participant, teaching is about finding and nurturing students gifts, rather than teaching to a test. Using hands-on, relevant teaching based in experiential learning, his effectiveness as a teacher is threatened by standardization.
Proposed centralization and standardization, if a shift in educational policy might impacts teacher practice both directly and indirectly. Although the department suggests standardization will help track student progress and identify program wide areas of improvement, the data reveals some teacher apprehension regarding some of these proposed changes. The push toward centralization and standardization might pose some challenges as the Department must find a way to meet the diverse needs of each unique community, addressing specific issues that shape individual classrooms, schools, and regions in Nunavut. In the next section, the new flexible grouping strategy is discussed as an example of policy change and reform being pursued by the Department of Education.

**Flex-groupings**

Data revealed flex-groupings to be one strategy the Department of Education is pursuing effect academic change. In response to the gap between final examination marks and classroom marks, the Department of Education has committed to address the issue of low student literacy rates, through a change in policy (OAG, 2013). One participant summarized that although the school is now doing what’s called flexible groupings, in the past this strategy had been frowned upon for not being inclusive, which has been one significant change he’d noticed recently. Presumably part of the Department’s approach to create policy to support inclusion and differentiated instruction in the classroom, as seen through the data, the new flex-groupings are changing the way literacy is being addressed and taught in the classroom.

Supportive of the change, Brent explained students would now be leveled based on their math and reading levels, for example, if a student is in grade three, but working at a grade one level, they’d be placed in a grade one class. Explaining the idea behind the change, Brent reasoned:

> It’s easier for teachers, cause then you are not teaching as many different levels and that way you can support kids at a certain level more than you could if you’re trying to teach multiple levels. So the kids that are working at their level are getting challenged.

He then added, that “the students that have the potential to progress… will benefit the most, because they are being challenged.” At the junior level, data suggests the flex groupings have worked well. The primary on the other hand, had struggled with
scheduling and transitioning young students between classrooms, a more time consuming process with younger students. Although they are not having as much success at the primary level, Brent concluded, “the idea behind it is good.” As flex groupings have only recently been implemented it is too early to comment, however, it will be interesting to observe through future study to determine if it is an effective strategy employed by Nunavut schools. Learning coach, a new position, is also being developed in schools to help level students in conjunction with the new flex groupings. In the following section, this new position is defined and then discussed in relation to teacher practice.

**Learning Coach**

Through the data, a new position of learning coach was discussed by participants, which had been recently added to all schools to support literacy and language development. Henry explained, “We now have a learning coach in every school in Nunavut and the learning coach is supposed to help teachers and a small group of student to improve literacy” adding, “I think that’s a big move, a good move in the right direction.” Brent detailed that, “the learning coach will model literacy lessons, whether its reading, writing or other literacy aspects in your classroom, and acts as a teacher mentor… and that teacher will do running records for all students in the school.” Explaining further, Brent added that the learning coach will make an assessment of every student from kindergarten to grade six, leveling them based on their reading ability.

Because the position only came into schools last year however, Brent clarified, “there is still a lot of debate over what that person can do and can’t do.” Although supportive of the change, Brent suggested, “there is still a lot of work to do like getting a better job description for that person so they know what their expected to do.” Yet despite the challenges, Brent reasoned, “its still, it’s better than nothing.” Future study might be considered to further examine, the effectiveness of the learning coach as a new position to support literacy development in Nunavut. In the next section, specific changes to both the literacy and math program are explored, where teachers have been using new strategies to improve students’ academic achievement.

**Literacy and Math**

With the assessment of education and recommendations by both the Auditor General and the Special Committee to Review the 2008 Education Act (see Legislative
Assembly of Nunavut, 2015), several changes to the math and language arts program have been made to close the academic achievement gap outlined by the Department of Education (OAG, 2013). Through the data, both participants discussed some of the changes that have been implemented in their classrooms to support literacy and math following new policy. Discussing the recent changes, Brent explained that now in Nunavut, “we’re teaching certain aspects, you know, in a systematic type manner.” Two major changes have been the inclusion of the Daily Five into the language arts program and the Reading Place Kits that are now being promoted by the Department.

Using the Daily Five, a literacy program popularized in Canada and the United States, one participant explained, “teachers are expected to do the daily five aspects… read to self, read with a partner, being read to, writing, [and] work on words… each day in language blocks.” Another acknowledged through the data, was the Reading Place Kit, which are a series of leveled readers ‘from A-Z’. Not only were all schools given the Reading Place Kit by the GN, said one participant, but teachers in every school were also in-serviced on how to use it. Brent suggested that even though all schools have the placement kits and should know how to use them, “some schools are using it more than others… it’s there to use, if you want to… but you can use any system you want to do guided reading.” As the changes to the language arts program are relatively new, it is too early to comment on the effectiveness of the strategies to enhance student literacy, however, as Henry suggested, with the focus on language arts and math, other subjects are suffering.

Utilizing flex-groupings, data revealed the new mathematics program directives, much like language arts, are reorganizing students to ensure they are all working at the same level. Although students are now leveled according to their ability in mathematics, one participant suggested the problem with student achievement might be the math program itself. “It’s still a bit wordy” he said, adding, “it’s a lot better than the other one.” As a teacher, he has no choice but to comply with the directives introduced by the Department of Education, regardless of its flaws, instead of using a programs such as Jump Math that he had found more successful in the past. In the following section, effective teaching practices, pedagogy and advice for new teachers have been summarized and are explored.
Teaching Practices, Pedagogy and Advice for New Teachers

As the main thrust of my research has been to identify effective teacher practice in Nunavut, strategies and advice are shared through the perspectives of two teachers, both new and old to the changing tides of education reform in Nunavut. Stairs (2005) insists, beyond policy, the cultural pedagogy which defines the classroom structure also determine how education is carried out; As such, “ways of teaching are as important as the knowledge itself” (p. 287). That being said, each response, from both Henry and Brent, is part of their own personal narrative and individual experiences, and is in no way intended to be read as fact.

Analyzing the data, there were several effective teacher practices that might better prepare new teachers for the unique challenges shared by participants. Brent suggested, new teachers should do their research to know where they are going, contact someone in Nunavut and ask questions about the various communities. It is important to keep an open mind, and be aware that you would be going to Nunavut, not the other way around. Brent suggested in Nunavut if a teacher is going to be successful they need to develop a rapport with students inside and outside the classroom. To gain their trust, it is important to get to know them, and develop rapport so if there is an issue with a particular student it is much easier to handle.

Responding to the most important lessons he had learned, Henry simply suggested “Kids are kids. You treat kids with respect, you know, give them opportunity to learn they are going to surprise you with what they can come up with….” Additionally, he also reinforced that new teachers should be willing to take ideas and help from other teachers and lessons should be hands on. To make learning more culturally relevant, teachers should take their students out on the land, bring plants and rocks into the classroom and invite elders to talk with students as much as possible. Effective teachers might also have students work together because most kids in Nunavut enjoy working in pairs and groups. Having students work this way also allows them to all get a change to be a leader and learn from somebody else, rather than just the teacher. Lastly, non-Inuit teachers shouldn’t be too rigid, instead they should be flexible, be adaptive, have a sense of humor. To quote Henry, “if you don't have a sense of humor you're not going to last” as a teacher.
Conclusion

Negotiating the goals of education in Nunavut, involves a complex and intricate understanding of how two, often contradictory, goals might find balance (Battiste, 2000), within one seamless system (Tester & Irniq, 2008) of education, supported by Inuit and non-Inuit ways of knowing. As Brent, one of the participants, pointed out, “that’s actually one of the problems with education in Nunavut, because you have so many different people who have so many different views on what we’re trying to do.” Education, which by design privileges its maker, produces tension (Annahatak, 1994) between two worldviews (McGregor, 2013) as they collide together, one taking dominance over the other. Without clear directives, and lacking key resources to effectively combine Inuit culture and values within mainstream education, non-Inuit teachers struggle to effectively transform the vision and goals for education, into one seamless and well balanced system of schooling.

Identified as the research problem, Inuit participate in a school system drawn from the dominant Canadian culture, typically educated by non-Indigenous teachers with divergent ontological and epistemological views (Lewthwaite & McMillan, 2010; Berger, 2009). Non-Inuit teacher attitude, belief, pedagogy and practice play a role in normalized, hierarchical constructions of race, privilege, and power that have shaped, and continues to shape, the current educational landscape in Nunavut. Connecting to issues of identity and culture, my findings suggest the North is just as much a state of mind, as it is a physical location. With different culture and ways of knowing, the North also poses distinct challenges for qallunaat (non-Inuit) teachers, as they attempt to acclimatize to a specific community, complete with its own set of challenges.

My findings have revealed several distinct challenges that have been noted through the data and the literature that related, both directly and indirectly, to effective teacher practice in Nunavut. As each community is different, some of the challenges discussed are specific to one community in the Kitikmeot, however, the Auditor General’s (2013) findings confirmed many of the challenges raised are widespread throughout the territory. Directly related to teacher practice, challenges with resources were cited as a major concern, as many are either outdated or not available. A need for culturally relevant materials also acts as a barrier for non-Inuit educators to effectively...
implement, and successfully deliver curricula that supports Inuit qaujimajatuqangit. Access to elders was also raised as a concern and barrier in promoting and effectively implementing Inuit qaujimajatuqangit within the school and in teachers’ classrooms. Issues with student attendance, behavior and learning disabilities were named as challenges, which impact teachers’ ability to fulfill the goals of education set out by the Department.

Without intimate knowledge of the North, as illustrated through the findings, non-Inuit educators attempting to teach Inuit qaujimajatuqangit face challenges when resources, parent and community support are limited. Furthermore, the way in which non-Inuit educators have implemented and incorporated Inuit Societal Values and the IQ principles into their classroom have been inconsistent and vary from community to community and from educator to educator. As Rasmussen (2011) warned, many of the methods utilized by Qallunaat, are rooted in Eurocentric notions they risk further marginalizing and assimilating Inuit students. In line with Berger (2009), my findings also indicate the education system in Nunavut “remains a system based primarily on the knowledge, pedagogy and culture of Euro-Canadians rather than Inuit” (p. 56).

The Department of Education, aware of many of the challenges, has cited “clear opportunities for moving forward” and are currently in the process of “making the necessary changes to establish the best education system possible for students, teaching professionals and communities.” (Department of Education, 2016, p. 3). In the process of updating the Education Act (2008), findings revealed in the Kitikmeot region, changes have already begun to take shape. Seen through the creation of a new position to support literacy, such as the introduction of flex groupings and changes to the language program, these changes are intended to “close the gap between classroom marks and final examination marks” (Department of Education, 2013, p. 22). Future study might examine the implementation of standardization, further exploring both the challenges and benefits associated with the proposed changes now being implemented.

As the main thrust of my research has been to identify effective teacher practice in achieving the goals of education in Nunavut, I asked teachers to share their strategies and advice to better prepare new non-Inuit teachers for complexities, challenges, and rewards of teaching in Nunavut. Sharing their words of experience, they suggested new teachers
should research and understand the unique qualities of the community they intend to visit, because in Brent’s words, “you’re coming to Nunavut, they’re not coming to you.” As a teacher you need to be flexible to change, willing to take help from others, and recognize the importance of relationships. Positive relationships are built through developing a good rapport with people, not just with the students and their families, but within the community as a whole. Treat your students with respect, giving them authentic opportunities to learn, because when you give them hands on learning experiences, incorporating elders and utilizing culturally relevant materials, as Henry suggested, “[students] are going to surprise you with what they can come up with.” Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, have a sense of humor, because without it, Henry implored, “you’re not going to last.”

In the next chapter, the implications of the findings are discussed to identify how my research might address the complexities of education in Nunavut, as non-Inuit teachers struggle to implement, support and balance the goals of education based on Inuit societal values and Inuit qaujimajatuqangit within their classrooms. Lastly, recommendations and areas for future research are explored.
Chapter 5: Implications

Chapter Overview

This research project, which focused on how non-Inuit educators might effectively implement Inuit qaujimajatuqangit within their own classrooms, also considered how the recent changes to education in Nunavut might have 1) clarified the goal of education and, 2) further promoted the integration of Inuit qaujimajatuqangit in the classroom. In this chapter, I begin with an overview of the significant key findings discussed in Chapter Four, before thoroughly explaining the broad implications for the educational community as a whole. I then explore the study’s narrow implications, rooted through the literature and my findings, as I connect to how my own development as a teacher-researcher has been impacted by this project. Next, I suggest concrete and actionable recommendations for the department of education, non-Inuit teachers, teacher educations programs and business/community partnerships in Nunavut. Lastly, I highlight some of the questions raised through this study, identifying avenues for further research, before concluding with my closing thoughts and final remarks.

Overview of Key Findings and Their Significance

After accounting for regional and community variances, a clear division was found to exist between North and South, which more accurately might be understood as a cultural divide between Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldview, rather than simple geography. As non-Inuit (qallunaat) educators are typically imported from the South as cited through the findings, they may run the risk of misinterpreting Inuit societal values or possibly over simplifying Inuit qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) principles at the foundation of education in Nunavut (Government of Nunavut, 2008). To explain his thinking, one participant said, “even though they don't say it, they all follow the golden rule” which might be true, however culture, identity and societal values tend to be more complex and intricate, requiring a higher level of consideration.

Although teachers are expected to successfully negotiate the goals of education to ensure students are exposed to a culturally relevant curriculum integrated with the best of Western educational thought and practice (Nunavut Department of Education, 2007), in classrooms staffed with non-Inuit teachers, my findings suggested there was limited integration of both of these goals equitably, favoring dominant Eurocentric teaching
approaches over Inuit ones. One participant who was strongly in favor of using a
European model, suggested language arts should be taught for most of the day with a
small amount of math and physical activity in between. He justified such a strong focus
on developing students English proficiency because, as he put it, “kids can’t really do
social studies and science if they can’t read and, then they can’t write, [and] they can’t
express themselves.” Furthermore, as the goals of education in Nunavut are somewhat
unclear and largely subjective, the way non-Inuit teachers have understood and then
implemented Inuit qaujimajatuqangit, have been inconsistent and tended to vary widely
from teacher to teacher and between schools and regions in Nunavut. As Brent, one of the
participants, pointed out the fact that there is no agreed upon goal is “actually one of the
problems with education in Nunavut, because you have so many different people who
have so many different views on what we’re trying to do.” Through the findings of my
research study, it became clear that teachers had a slightly different goal than the
Department of Education. Brent had also suggested the NTI and KIA, which both also
influence education initiatives also have a different set of goals they expect students to
achieve through school.

The limited and inequitable integration of IQ principles, across all subject areas
by non-Inuit teachers, further suggests qallunaat teachers might not only be lacking
sufficient knowledge, but also lack the essential motivation to teach Inuit Societal Values
and IQ effectively within their classrooms. For example, although Henry has been a
teacher in Nunavut for about twenty-five years, he admitted that even now, he doesn’t
have sufficient knowledge to effectively teach Inuit culture and history through the IQ
framework, stating, “I have some but I don’t have enough.” The findings suggested that
although non-Inuit educators did on some occasions attempt to create a culturally relevant
curriculum, overall, they tended to rely on Eurocentric models of teaching and prioritized
Southern curricula more often in their classrooms, adapting when necessary to meet the
needs of their students somewhat superficially.

Through the data, I suggest both direct and indirect challenges have impacted
teacher effectiveness, especially when incorporating the IQ principles in the classroom.
Directly related, teachers cited limited access to elders, lack of resources, culturally
relevant materials, and outdated texts, which acted as a barrier when attempting to
integrate Inuit qaujimajatuqangit into the classroom. Several indirect challenges such as students’ socioeconomic status, poor attendance and behavior were also cited as factors that had impacted their teaching. Through the data, it might be suggested that despite years of experience living and working in one Inuit community, non-Inuit teachers may never possess enough knowledge to effectively integrate Inuit qaujimajatuqangit in the classroom. Thus, efforts should be made by the Government of Nunavut to consider a different approach to producing Inuit teachers, who might be better equipped to incorporate their own culture and societal values into the classroom, finding the balancing line where both Inuit and Western knowledge might co-exist equitably.

With hopes of the made-in-Nunavut curriculum quietly aborted, the dream of an Inuit education system might now be receding further away with the current tide of educational reform. Despite new and ever changing cycles of policy, procedure and practice aimed toward positive educational change in the North, formal schooling in Nunavut remains remarkably unchanged and the goal of education remains up for debate within each community. Since the fifties, when J.V. Jacobson, the Superintendent of Education, stated two main goals of education to be perused were: “to prepare the pupil to return to his own native way of life” and “to prepare a student for occupations in the white man’s economy” (QIA, 2013, p. 28), education in Nunavut has been contradictory.

With so few Inuit teachers, schools in Nunavut will continue to depend on borrowed curricular content, developed and delivered primarily in English by non-Inuit educators. Responding, one participant stated, “The government in Nunavut is, in my opinion… falling down on the job” especially when it comes to resource development. Although it is clear that there is no simple solution, the Government of Nunavut has done little to effect significant change despite their awareness, and continued calls for radical reform by researchers and scholars for years (see Berger, 2001, 2009; Rasmussen, 2011; Kirkness, 1998). In the next section, the broad and narrow implications of this research are discussed.

**Implications**

Through an ever evolving and complex mixture of good intentions, political contradictions, and superficial community consultation (Berger, 2009; Aylward, 2006; RCAP, 1996), non-Inuit teacher attitude, belief, pedagogy and practice play a significant
role in the normalized, hierarchical constructions of race, privilege, and power that have shaped and continue to shape, the current educational landscape in Nunavut. As such, what follows is the proliferation of what Rasmussen (2011) described as “the Inuit struggle for Inuit education” (p.139), which consequently in Nunavut has both broad and narrow implications for non-Inuit teachers as they negotiate the mandated goals of education founded on Inuit qaujimajatuqangit. In the next sections, the broad implications are discussed as they relate to education in Nunavut overall, followed by an examination of the narrow implications which relate to my professional development. It should be noted, as each community varies considerably, the implications may only be applicable to one community in the Kitikmeot region.

**Debated Educational Goals and Complex Relationships**

As seen through the finding and presented through the literature, schooling in Nunavut is intertwined in a complex and problematic relationship dominated by social, political and language power struggles that remain unresolved today (see Simon 2011; Tester & Irnq, 2008; Berger, 2009; Berger & Epp, 2005). As such, non-Inuit educators must navigate and negotiate the goals of education in their classroom, developing strategies to support both cultures and values equally to adequately prepare students for the challenges of walking in two worlds (McGregor, 2013). Yet, with so few Inuit teachers, the responsibility to incorporate Inuit knowledge effectively and equitably into the classroom relies heavily on non-Inuit teachers and administrators to have sufficient knowledge and resources, which discussed through the findings, is all too often lacking. Consequently, it might be inferred that non-Inuit teachers tend to promote a curricula based on normative Euro-Canadian educational values rather than on Inuit qaujimajatuqangit due to in part to their lack of familiarity and limited resources.

Much of the debate within education in Nunavut has been related to what and how students learn in the classroom, and as my findings suggest, cultural knowledge and Inuit values are often excluded in the classroom beyond the occasional cultural day or scheduled language/ culture class, which has been documented as major issue since at least the fifties (QIA, 2013). Through the data, it appeared that little effort had been made to help teachers in Nunavut understand their own Eurocentrism. For example, one teacher said:
I think kids should be learning in English first, mainly because I think it’s the more functional language… [in my community] I think we’re just kind of delaying the inevitable, we don’t have enough people speaking Inuinnaqtun to keep the language alive.

Thus, non-Inuit educators were also often unaware of their own biases rooted in Euro-Canadian educational practices, which are often in conflict with Inuit societal values and worldview. If teachers are unaware of their role within a colonial school system that often marginalizes Inuit students, little can or will change in the way schools and teachers approach Inuit culture and knowledge. That being said, without innovative initiatives by the Department of Education to increase Inuit representation, as both teachers and administrators in schools, authentic and meaningful change to address the socio-economic, socio-historic, and socio-cultural realities stemming from colonization, will continue to undermine present and future educational initiatives.

Broadly speaking, as Berger (2009) suggested, the “Southern Canadian” school system utilized in Nunavut acts as an “instrument of colonialism” (p. 65), which through the shortage of Inuit teachers and the unpreparedness of non-Inuit educators to teach cultural knowledge, has not only has had an impact on non-Inuit teacher effectiveness in schools, but might also affect student learning and engagement, which could be inferred as a contributing factor to the low academic achievement of Nunavummiut students.

Although there is no doubt having Inuit teachers in the school is beneficial, findings from this study revealed, out of the few Inuit teachers that graduate the NTEP program, many have been enticed to leave teaching for higher paying jobs with better hours at other governmental departments. According to Brent, once they have their degree, and “they have some education… they are people that are in demand. So often those people don’t even end up in a classroom, especially the more effective ones.” As the NTEP program is one of the only university equivalent programs in Nunavut, students are able to pursue a bachelor’s degree without having to leave the territory. Henry had suggested, grooming the most effective Inuit teachers to become principals as one strategy to ensure the quality teachers are not wooed away from schools by other departments of the government.

Thus, as non-Inuit teachers will most likely remain dominant within schools in
Nunavut, professional development activities might be developed to help teachers better understand what Inuit qaujimajatuqangit is, what it means, and where it comes from providing a deeper understanding of how it specifically defines Inuit culture and societal values. The way in which the IQ principles were understood and cited by non-Inuit teachers might be problematic. The findings, which indicated that individual non-Inuit teacher knowledge may lack of the depth and breadth of understanding required to fully support the IQ framework and effectively teach a curriculum developed and guided by its principles in the classroom. Furthermore, the failure of educational policy to advance professional development activities that model authentic ways in which Inuit cultural and societal values might be integrated effectively to support Inuit qaujimajatuqangit in the classroom, has broad implications. Integration will remain a challenge for non-Inuit teachers in Nunavut, if educational partnerships or relationships between individual teachers and the community are not developed and supported. In the next section, the narrow implications of this study, which have impacted my development and professional practice as a teacher-researcher, are explored.

**Deconstructing the Settler-Colonial Identity**

Through this research project, in combination with my studies at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), I have come to know more about Indigenous culture, history, and their relationship to language and the land. As I learned about different Nations (including Inuit) and their distinctive cultures, beautiful languages, and rich histories, I have also come to know much more about the Canadian identity, our culture, history, and the settler-colonial legacy, which for the majority of my life had been omitted from most of my formal education. I had never once considered that there might be any other truth then the one I knew, I had never stopped to wonder if there even was another story waiting to be told, never thinking about the world I inherited; I was ignorant. Not only had I never questioned the way in which we define and divide what we know into neat little boxes that fit so uniformly together, I hadn’t even given it a second thought, never taking the time to reflect on my knowledge; I was living a life of convenience, blissfully unaware.

Growing up Canadian, we were always taught in school to believe that our ‘peacekeeping’ efforts, multicultural policy, and tolerance were at the center of our
identity. I once believed that we belonged to a nation that was somehow better, elevated above the fray, accepting, tolerant and welcoming, a safe-haven for those escaping oppression. As I researched further, my perspective changed as I learned of the much darker narrative that has shaped our Canada. The Canadian Identity I knew was in fact, a myth, a fairytale history, half-truth and half-lie; the realization was devastating but it is from this point that I began to deconstruct the illusion down a path towards decolonization. Through the literature, I could now more clearly understand the tumultuous relationship between Inuit and qallunaat (non-Inuit), the tension Annahatak (1994) described, the struggle for education suggested by Rasmussen (2011), and the overwhelming need for empowerment and radical change cited by Kirkness (1998) to reconfigure the school system, and finding balance between our two worlds (Battiste, 2000).

It has been my goal through writing this research project to share some of the insights, observations and knowledge I have gained regarding education in Nunavut, the history, and relationships between qallunaat and Inuit, and between Inuit and land, language and culture. By framing myself within the system of education that is dominated by a Euro-Canadian framework, has impacted how I understand education and its purpose, the way I approach teaching, the choice of words I use in the classroom and how I use them, the way I evaluate resources, create unit plans, and in general, how I think about and interact within the world has been significantly altered. In writing this research paper, I have come to see how many of us, both Inuit and non-Inuit, have become normalized to the explicit and implicit hierarchal discord, submitting in countless ways to the constructed truths, that in turn marginalize the marginalized further.

The relationship between Inuit and non-Inuit is complex, intricate and delicate, especially in terms of education, with all roads leading to language, which is at the center of the educational debate. For example, Brent, one of the research participants, was adamant about was the need to teach English at the expense of Inuit language and culture due to the lack of trained Inuit teachers. He said:

The reality is, the language of business is English… and you need to be able to speak English if you’re going to be successful in the world today, at least in Canada… I think we should be promoting English but also then promoting, you
know, Inuinnaqtun or Inuktitut, whatever dialect you’re speaking, and we need to
do that as much of possible as well, but the reality is we don’t have enough teachers
who can teach it.

I have come back to Brent’s thoughts on language a few times, and although I do
not share the same sentiment, his views do raise some interesting questions. For instance,
if there is no increase of qualified Inuit teachers that speak their language fluently, then
must decisions be made to streamline one language over the other? And if not, how might
Inuit languages be effectively integrated and taught within the classroom when there is a
shortage of qualified Inuit language speakers? Furthermore, if teachers do not believe
bilingualism is a reasonably achievable goal, how will that belief effect their classroom
practices? As I see it, there is a choice here that everyone must decide for themselves. Is
it to lay down and accept the current reality, submitting to the feelings of powerlessness
that resign teachers to work within the bounds of what is, rather than what could be? Or
alternatively, is it to stand up against the systemic discrimination and oppression, fighting
against all odds for something better, and not giving up in the face of adversity? call me a
sentimentalist but I’ve always liked the underdog story, and I think non-Inuit teachers
today might benefit from a reminder of the power of positive thinking.

To that end, through my professional practice as a non-Inuit teacher and
researcher, and as an outsider to Inuit language and culture, I have advocated for an
educational system that authentically reflects the views, culture and values of
Nunavummiut, that encourages youth to find their voice (in any language), and radically
rethinks education as Berger (2009) suggested. To achieve this, I believe issues of
language are central and the way they are framed in schools matters greatly. As a
non-Inuit teacher, I believe we must strive to look beyond our own, often Eurocentric,
knowledge, inspiring students to be the change that makes anything possible. It is our job
as teachers to open these doors of possibility, to support critical thinking and nurture
questioning that might guide students to realizations about who they are, what is
important to them, to their family and community, thus guiding them to establish a place
for themselves within society as a whole. Most importantly, I believe change begins with
a single idea that might grow and flourish with time; patience is key, along with
understanding, caring and humility. With these things, I believe anything is possible and
dreams of a better future, a future for tomorrow must start today, building one day at a
time, toward those dreams for tomorrow.

Throughout this research project, I not only considered how non-Inuit teachers
might approach creating more culturally relevant classrooms in Nunavut, but in the next
section I also make recommendations for multiple community and educational
stakeholders, to engineer innovative programs and professional development activities
that might encourage higher graduation rates and also increase the number of Inuit
teachers in schools.

**Recommendations**

As I am non-Inuit teacher and researcher, and both participants in the study were
also non-Inuit, the recommendations I propose are consequently framed from a Euro-
Canadian perspective. That being said, the recommendations may also not adequately
represent Inuit beliefs, culture or societal values. Additionally, instead of the radical
change Kirkness (1998) and Berger (2001 & 2009) proposed, many of my
recommendations are simple adaptations to the current system of schooling as discussed
through the literature (see Berger, 2001). In the following sections I suggest
recommendations for the Department of Education, highlighting possible modifications
to the teacher education model utilized in Nunavut, in addition to resource creation and
professional development workshops. Then I make recommendations regarding teacher
practice and pedagogy, followed by a discussion of how the teacher education program
might be modified. Lastly, I suggest an incentive program funded through local business
and community partnerships to encourage attendance and reduce drop-out rates.

**Department of Education**

As various types of challenges discussed through the findings were connected to
the lack of appropriate, adequate or available resources, the Department of Education will
need to further create (or continue to adapt) resources that strengthen Inuit identity, teach
Inuit values, and explore the history of Nunavut. These resources should be available in
both official Inuit languages, English and French. Additionally, print resources need to be
updated, developed, adapted, and distributed consistently throughout the territory.
Partnerships might also be established with the National Film Board or other Canadian
film agency to produce an educational series which relates to the development of
Nunavut as a territory, highlights Inuit role models and leaders, sharing their story through films celebrating the diversity, history, culture and present day topics that would be relevant to Inuit students in Nunavut. Developing multimedia teaching resources that might be used with a range of grade levels, as one participant suggested, would allow Inuk to share their stories more directly with students, so they can come to know their own people, history and values more directly and accurately conveying Inuit values and exposing students to more of their culture and less Southern driven content.

By producing more Nunavut specific resources, appropriate at both the primary and junior levels, teachers might be better able to effectively teach Inuit qaujimajatuqangit, focusing on Nunavut based resources. In this way, resources that focus on Inuit stories, instead of so many European ones, might also develop students’ connection to their own past, hearing from their own people, which may build self-confidence, shaping how they see their future. If non-Inuit teachers are to succeed in achieving the goals of education to teach a balanced curriculum founded on Inuit qaujimajatuqangit as discussed through the findings, then non-Inuit teachers need to know more about Inuit societal values and Inuit qaujimajatuqangit to ensure they’re being integrated throughout all subjects, infused in health and physical education, art, music, social studies, math, and language arts, in addition to the culture and language class students already attend. Additionally, as many students do not speak standard English as their first language or dialect, certain concepts and academic vocabulary should be explicitly taught as illustrated through the literature and findings (see Cummins & Early, 2015). Therefore, The Department of Education might provide professional development workshops and activities that reinforce ELL strategies to ensure teachers scaffold student learning in developmentally appropriate ways.

As such, I recommend the Department provide hands-on professional development activities, which model lessons and classroom activities that demonstrate a variety of different integration strategies. For example, activities might include how to balance Inuit knowledge with western educational practices, strategies that teach how string games might be used to teach math, how Inuit stories might be used to teach social studies or language, how a living history program might be developed to research and act out how Nunavut was formed as a territory, strategies that model how residential schools
might be addressed without producing historical trauma and what signs to look for when covering potentially sensitive topics might also be covered. Utilizing professional development opportunities, non-Inuit teachers through practicing different strategies to integrate Inuit values, might be able to more effectively integrate Inuit qaumajujuq throughout all subject areas.

As made clear through the literature and research findings, non-Inuit teachers will continue to dominate within the field of education. In lieu of Inuit teachers, the Department of Education should in the meantime, provide opportunities for current non-Inuit teachers to engage in a process of decolonization. Through decolonization focused activities, non-Inuit teachers might learn to identify the normalization of racism (Vaught & Castagno, 2008) and white privilege (McIntosh, 1988) embedded within the school system they belong to. As all teachers are expected to ensure students learn Inuit values in school (see Nunavut Department of Education, 2007) beyond the surface teaching and learning Annahatak (1994) described through the literature, the implications of my research suggest that when teachers understand how their own privilege and perspective influence their teaching practice and pedagogy, the way they approach teaching might change as they engage in new ways to implement theory into practice. In the next section teacher practice and pedagogy are expanded on, with recommendations for non-Inuit educators and how they might approach teaching and learning in Nunavut.

Teacher Practice and Pedagogy

In the classroom, non-Inuit teachers need to be flexible, adaptive and have an open mind in how they approach teaching. Not only is positivity, flexibility and open-mindedness important, but effective teachers must also possess a willingness to learn through community engagement and self-reflection as recommended by Oskineegish (2015) and echoed through my findings. For example, Henry had said:

If you think you know it all, if you think you're up here to save the Inuit, you are gonna bomb big time. The Inuit people existed for years before the southern people and they are going to be around after southern people leave. They don't need to be saved by some person from the south.

Apologizing, Henry said that although this had not been the case with most teachers, over the years he had seen a few non-Inuit teachers who had little respect for Inuit culture or
societal values. Alternatively, the data revealed when students and teachers have shared experiences outside the classroom, positive interactions might also be built within the classroom. To illustrate, Brent said:

I get to know my students and I take an interest in what they’re doing and I get to know them, and I think they appreciate that… So I think just getting involved and developing a rapport with people [is important], not just in the school but the community as a whole.

Thus, the way teachers approach their students, parents and the community, in addition to their attitude toward teaching in Nunavut, might impact their effectiveness in the classroom.

Essential to professional practice and pedagogy, non-Inuit teachers must understand the history of Western schooling in Nunavut and recognize the relationship between trauma and colonization practices as Tester and Irniq contend (2008). Although it was clear from my findings, non-Inuit teacher did attempt to modify lessons to include culturally relevant, land-based learning opportunities, as Annahatak (1994) emphasized, “More often than not Inuit values are left out of school” (p. 17). As Aylward (2007) recommended, educators in Nunavut need to “interrogate and continually question how institutions legitimize and organize knowledge. What knowledges count? Whose knowledges count?” (p. 2). It is through this recommendation, I suggest non-Inuit teachers must go beyond the basic understanding of Inuit culture and values to develop authentic and relevant learning experiences, to engage students in ways that are specific to Nunavut and complementary to the community.

In line with the recommendations proposed by Lewthwaite and McMillan (2010), the Office of the Auditor General of Canada (2013), and the Department of Education (2016), teachers should be aware of how limited housing, socioeconomic status, abuse, and/or family issues might impact the students in their classrooms. Lewthwaite and McMillan (2010), who proposed several recommendations concerning effective teaching practice and strategies for non-Inuit teachers remain, in many respects, still relevant today. First, they suggested effective teachers will acknowledge how students define their own success and avoid seeing the deficits; they allow room for students to use their first language using local contexts and resource material to establish reciprocal learning
opportunities within their classrooms (Lewthwaite & McMillan, 2010). For example, Inuit language might be brought into the classroom regularly using traditional and contemporary Inuit music, storytelling and art to engage students in meaningful and relevant learning experiences (Department of Education, 2016).

Teachers might also consider bringing in elders and Inuit role models into the classroom regularly to promote Inuit culture through experiential learning. Henry, one of the participants, suggested that effective teachers in Nunavut “bring kids out on the land… bring in some plants and some rocks, [and] if you have an elder that knows a lot about it then you can get them in to talk about it.” By utilizing local issues, topics, themes and resources in the classroom, non-Inuit teachers might better ensure the curricula is culturally relevant to their students. Additionally, students should be given hands on learning experiences that provide opportunities to lead, teach others, and work together to construct knowledge and meaning by doing.

Effective teachers champion student learning through multiple instructional strategies and offer individual support to enhance student understanding and achievement. For example, differentiated instruction, a key component of the inclusive education mandate, “provides students with multiple opportunities and pathways to learn new information through the use of a variety of teaching strategies, assignments, materials, and assessment at all stages of learning” (OAG, 2013, p. 17). Although differentiated instruction might be an important strategy in the classroom, the Office of the Auditor General’s (2013) report suggested that due to lack of training, differentiated instruction is underutilized by teachers in the classroom. Contrary to the inclusive education policy, that suggests that regardless of individual challenges or differences, all students have the opportunity “to attend regular classes with children in the same age group” (OAG p. 17), this study revealed that flex groupings are now being used by schools to stream students by ability in mathematics and language arts. As such, the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of this strategy is yet to be seen, although the teachers interviewed as part of this research project seemed to feel favorably toward the recent changes.

As Lewthwaite and McMillan (2010) also had suggested through the literature, effective teachers are also consistent, interested, connected, and communicate clearly that
they care about their students because they want them to succeed. In addition to caring, data from the findings revealed non-Inuit teachers also need to ensure that students are treated with kindness and respect in the classroom to create an environment that is conducive to student learning. As Henry said, “You treat kids with respect, you know, give them opportunity to learn they are going to surprise you with what they can come up with.” Although some of the effective teacher practices were not always evident through the findings, and teachers did not agree on the same strategies or best practices, I argue all of the afore mentioned qualities of effective teachers, are central to the process of decolonization of schools in Nunavut, in addition to being essential components of effective teacher practice.

Lastly, as closing the academic achievement gap and graduating more Inuit students is essential to ensuring more teachers and professionals, perhaps as Lewthwaite and McMillan (2010) suggested through the literature, effective teachers must then recognize they are “the central players in fostering change” and understand that they must redefine their teaching practice and strategies to transform the formal educational landscape in Nunavut (p.168). Although actively fostering change was not a strategy addressed by the participants of this study, it might in fact be an essential component of effective teaching practice. Essentially, for non-Inuit teachers to provide more authentic opportunities to incorporate traditional knowledge into the classroom, they must begin by working collaboratively with the students, their parents, community stakeholders, and with the Inuit language teacher or other Inuit staff members (such as SSA’s or school counselors), to provide meaningful cross-curricular learning opportunities and co-create units and lessons with non-Inuit teachers that are designed to empower youth through leadership, hands on activity and dialogue. Moreover, as discussed through the literature, for positive and authentic change to occur, Inuit must be the ones who define, reframe and reshape education to meet the needs of Nunavummiut students. In the following section, recommendations for actionable modifications and adaptions to the current model of teacher education are presented and then discussed.

**Teacher Education Programs**

The majority of teachers in Nunavut remain non-Inuit, as confirmed through both the literature and data collected from interviews with research participants. As it appears
that there is no foreseeable increase of Inuit teachers projected in Nunavut, I recommend that teacher education programs within Canada, including Ontario, need to better prepare educators for the complexities of teaching within Inuit communities, in addition to First Nation and Metis communities. As Inuit culture, history and values are significantly different from First Nations and Metis people, more relevant and practical teacher training is required to address the unique culture of each group, identifying distinctions rather than clumping them all together.

Through my own experiences in the Master of Teaching (MT) program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) through the University of Toronto, I have noticed a lack of knowledge about Inuit or Nunavut. In taking the two out three Aboriginal land-based courses available through my program, I noticed minimal information that might be specifically applicable or relevant to understanding Inuit perspectives or teaching in Nunavut. As Nunavut does not have its own university, teacher education programs at other universities in Canada must ensure that courses are taught that not only distinguish between First Nations, Metis and Inuit (FNMI), but also teach placing equal emphasis on each. How else might non-Inuit teachers understand and be prepared to teach in Nunavut, if they are not exposed enough to the culture or teachings? In general, most of the professors and instructors I have encountered through my studies had very little if any knowledge about Inuit or Nunavut. Even if non-Inuit teachers never travel North for work, Nunavut as part of Canada, should be part of the curricula beyond just a mention. Exposing pre-service teachers might also reduce culture shock if and when non-Inuit teachers choose to work in the North.

Alternatively, to ensure Inuit qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit societal values are effectively integrated into the classroom, increasing Inuit teachers in Nunavut schools is another avenue worthy of consideration. As providing a bilingual education from kindergarten to Grade twelve by 2020 has been a goal since the creation of the Education Act in 2008, there is still little evidence to suggest the number of Inuit teacher in schools is increasing. As the Department of Education has suggested that they will not meet their goal of bilingual education by 2020, and offer no further projection as to when there may be enough Inuit teachers in schools to support this initiative (Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, 2015), it is unlikely enough Inuit teachers will be established without
intervention. Although it is clear that there is a need for more Inuit represented throughout all departments of the government, including education, increasing the number of qualified Inuit teachers has been recommended through the literature for about the last fifty years and has yet to be achieved (QIA, 2013; Rasmussen, 2011). The Government of Nunavut might then consider more innovative approaches to the teacher education program. I question if a return to an apprenticeship model of teacher education might prove to be more effective at producing and retaining Inuit teachers then the current NTEP model. In the following section, additional ways in which community and business partners might help support students are elaborated on.

**Community and Business Partners**

The main challenge related to increasing the number of Inuit teachers is the shortage of high-school graduates. One strategy worth exploring to increase the graduation rates might be the use of a monetary award or incentive program, funded through community and business partners. Although there is little long term evidence that supports the use of financial motivation to encourage graduation and additional drawbacks might be worth examining, I question if creating an award or financial incentive might be enough to motivate more students in Nunavut to finish school and graduate. As Slavin’s (2009) research suggests financial incentives might not only reduce high school drop-out rates, but also improve attendance in developing countries and marginalized populations of the developed world. Within Nunavut, if the creation of a financial incentive program or graduating award, might encourage students to stay in school and improve attendance, then it is a possible strategy that it is worth careful consideration.

Future educational partnerships might be established with local businesses and industries that might benefit from more high school graduates and who would be willing to donate toward the award fund. Worth approximately five thousand dollars for each community per year, the award would then be split evenly between each of the graduating students, recognizing student achievement, celebrating academic accomplishments and possibly creating more positive associations with school. It must be acknowledged, however, for incentives to be most effective they should be implemented, according to Fryer (2013), in combination with good teachers, engaging curriculum and
parent involvement (p.1756). Without a sustained commitment on all three fronts, it is unclear if student graduation rates would improve with a monetary incentive. Other incentive program models might also be explored to close the educational achievement gap which remains significantly lower than the national average (Statistics Canada, 2013). Areas for further research are discussed in the next section, revealing the many avenues of research that might be pursued regarding education and research in Nunavut.

**Areas for Further Research**

Examining the imbalance of cultural representation in the school system, and how it affects both teaching and learning in Nunavut, might shed light on how and why education in Nunavut has changed so little over the past fifty years, despite numerous and ongoing policy changes and educational initiatives that date back to the introduction of formal education in the territory. Developing and understanding why more progress has not been made to increase the number of Inuit educators might be addressed through future research, with specific focus on the development of innovative and practical solutions to break the cycle of Inuit underrepresentation in the school system.

As this research project is limited scope and preliminary in nature, further research might reexamine the Kitikmeot region and other regions in Nunavut, using larger sampling sizes, including both Inuit and non-Inuit students, parents, teachers and community members, to reveal a more comprehensive and accurate representation of effective teaching and learning practices in Nunavut. How non-Inuit teachers might interpret the goals of education, effectively implement Inuit cultural knowledge and societal values and balance those with Western educational practices in the classroom might be addressed through further research. Also examining the ways in which community members, stakeholders and elders are incorporated into the classroom might also be worth further examination, looking specifically at how the integration of cultural knowledge and values are disseminated in the school curricula.

As the changes to education are ongoing and the current Education Act (2008) is in the process of being updated, new studies might be commissioned to research the potential effectiveness of the changes and how specific updates might encourage student academic success, strengthen cultural inclusion, and promote Inuit societal values and Inuit qaujimajatuqangit as a framework for all subjects. Throughout the findings of this
study, many challenges, roadblocks and barriers raised by the participants regarding effective teacher practice in Nunavut I found to be consistent with the literature. Future research then, might look at some of specific challenges non-Inuit teachers cited, such as the availability and quality of teacher resources. Lastly, future research might explore alternative teacher education models, such as the apprentice model discussed in the recommendations, as an area for future study to determine if there might be a more effective way to produce qualified Inuit teachers better equipped to integrate Inuit societal values and Inuit qaujimajatuqangit into all subjects of the curriculum.

**Concluding Comments**

Despite policy change and new initiative after initiative, education in Nunavut remains remarkably the same. As such, negotiating education in Nunavut involves a complex and intricate understanding of how two, often contradictory, goals might find balance (Battiste, 2000), within one seamless system (Tester & Irniq, 2008) of education, supported by both Inuit and non-Inuit ways of knowing. However, as cited through the findings, without clear directives, and lacking key resources to effectively combine Inuit culture and values within mainstream education, many non-Inuit teachers, including myself, will struggle to transform and balance the mandated goals and vision for education put forth by the Department of Education (2016). It is clear through the research that ensuring more Inuit teachers and administrators in schools as educators might go a long way to support the inclusion of Inuit societal values and Inuit qaujimajatuqangit in the classroom, yet with the current lack of qualified Inuit educators coupled with low graduation rates, imported non-Inuit teachers will continue to be required until the requisite number of Inuit teachers has been reached. Therefore, considering the findings of this small-scale study, it is clear that for meaningful and positive change to occur in Nunavut, non-Inuit teachers must find more innovative ways to support Inuit qaujimajatuqangit and Inuit societal values effectively within the classroom.
References


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Appendix A

Notes on Terminology

The legalized imposition of names by colonial forces maintains power, dominance and control over how a society is shaped (Cannon & Sunseri, 2011; Tester & Inrniq, 2008). Cora Weber-Pillwax (2001) explains, both language and how it is used conveys knowledge, ways of being, and relating to the world. In this section, I define my use of key terms.

Eskimo  Eskimo, which was a colonially imposed term to describe the Indigenous people of the Arctic, is now largely regarded as offensive in Canada, as such, it has been replaced by the term Inuit. The term Eskimo has however, been used within the literature review only within direct quotations from historical texts and documents.

Inuit  The term Inuit is often translated as “people” or “human beings” (Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada, 2006, p. 2). Rachel A. Qitsualik however, offers a more precise translation as “The living ones who are here” (Raheja, 2007, p. 1181) Inuit is a term that has been officially in use since the 1970’s, and replaced Eskimo to describe the Indigenous people of the Eastern Arctic.

Inuit qaujimajatuqangit  Inuit qaujimajatuqangit (IQ) is the term for ancestral Inuit knowledge and ways of knowing, passed down through oral history, customs, and traditions. It encompasses all aspects of Inuit culture including values, worldviews, language, social organization, knowledge, life skills, perceptions and expectations (Nunavut Department of Education, 2007).

Nunavummiut  Nunavummiut is a term that includes all residents of Nunavut, including the 15% who are not Inuit. The suffix –miut, meaning “people of” describe geographic markers rather than ethnic markers (Stern, 2013, p 2).
Qallunaat/ Qabllunaat  
qallunaat is an Inuktitut term that is used commonly in the Baffin region to refer to people who are non-Inuit. In the Kivalliq and Kitikmeot region where Inuinnaqtun is spoken, the term Qabllunaat is used (Tester & Irniq, 2008). The origin of the term can be traced back to the Sedna/Nuliajuk story (Aupilaarjuk et al., 2000). Where, qallunaat are said to be “descendants of the puppies that Nuliajuk had with her dog-husband, who were set afloat in a kamik” (p. 189).
Appendix B

Date: ____________________

Dear _______________________________,

I am a student in the Master of Teaching program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). A component of this program involves conducting a small-scale qualitative research study. The aim of my study is to articulate and discuss the possible opportunities and limitations, non-Inuit Educators might encounter when implementing Inuit qaujimajatuqangit effectively in the classroom. This study welcomes all educators, elders or in-service teachers, who have experience working in Nunavut classrooms, to share their stories, experiences, memories, perspectives, and knowledge. Narrative spaces are formed to discuss Inuit qaujimajatuqangit, and how it might influence teaching and learning.

Your participation in this research will involve one 45-60-minute interview, which will be transcribed and audio-recorded. I would be grateful if you would allow me to interview you, at your convenience, outside of school hours. The contents of this interview will be used for my research project, which will include a final paper, as well as informal presentations to my classmates. I may also present my research findings via conference presentations and/or through publication. You will be asked to choose a pseudonym to maintain your anonymity and I will not use your name or any other content that might identify you in my written work, oral presentations, or publications. This information will remain confidential at all times. Any information that identifies your school, or students will also be excluded. The interview data will be stored on my password-protected computer and the only other person who will have access to the research data will be my Research Coordinator Angela Macdonald.

You are free to change your mind about your participation at any time, and may withdraw even after you have consented to participate. You may also choose to decline to answer any specific question during the interview that I might ask. I will destroy the audio recording after the paper has been presented and/or published, which may take up to a maximum of five years after the data has been collected. There are no known risks to participation, and I will share a copy of the transcript with you shortly after the interview so you can verify and ensure accuracy.

Please sign this consent form, if you agree to be interviewed. The second copy is for your records. Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Morgan Bentham
morgan.bentham@mail.utoronto.ca
Research Coordinator: Angela Macdonald
Contact Information: angela.macdonald@utoronto.ca

Consent Form
I acknowledge that the topic of this interview has been explained to me and that any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw from this research study at any time without penalty.

I have read the letter provided to me by Morgan Bentham and agree to participate in an interview for the purposes described. I agree to have the interview audio-recorded.

Signature: ____________________________________________________
Name: (printed) _______________________________________________
Date: _________________________________________________________
Appendix C

Introductory Script:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study, and for making time to be interviewed today. The aim of this study is to articulate and discuss the possible opportunities and limitations, non-Inuit Educators might encounter, implementing Inuit qaujimajatuqangit effectively in the classroom. This study welcomes educators to share their stories, experiences, memories, perspectives, and knowledge as it creates narrative space, to discuss the potential of Inuit qaujimajatuqangit to influence, both teaching and learning.

I would like to remind you that this interview is confidential, and will last approximately 45-60 minutes. I will start the interview by asking you a series of questions divided as follows: First basic facts and background information about you and your experiences will be discussed, followed by your perspectives and beliefs about teaching, learning, and education in Nunavut. Next, Inuit qaujimajatuqangit will be commented on, followed by a brief discussion of the Auditor General of Canada’s Report in 2013. Lastly, I will ask you about teaching resources available to you that support Inuit qaujimajatuqangit (across any and all subjects), before concluding the interview with words of advice, wisdom or knowledge that you might like to share with other educators and pre-service teachers.

As a reminder before we begin, you do have the right to withdraw your participation from the study at any time. If you are uncomfortable answering any question, please feel free to pass at any time. Also, as I explained in the consent letter, this interview will also be audio-recorded. Have you received and signed the letter of consent? Before we begin, do you have any questions for me?

Background Information
- How long have you been teaching in Nunavut?
- How long have you been at your current school?
- What grade do you currently teach?
- How would you describe the demographics of school staff (teachers, principals, SSA’s, admin, etc.) where you work?
- Approximately how many Inuit work in your school, and can you describe their roles?

Teacher Perspectives, Beliefs & Strategies
- When you first started teaching in Nunavut, was there anything that you were or were not prepared for?
- How might you compare teaching in Nunavut to teaching elsewhere? (If applicable)
- Can you describe any challenges teaching in Nunavut that you may have experienced? Were you able to overcome these challenges? If so, how?
How would you describe your knowledge of Nunavut and Inuit culture before you arrived? Has your knowledge changed since then? (If applicable)

What do you feel the main goal of education is in Nunavut/ your community?

How might you contribute to achieving that goal?

How has education changed in Nunavut since you started teaching?

**Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit**

- Can you describe Inuit qaujimajatuqangit (IQ)?
- What do you feel the relationship is between ancestral knowledge (IQ) and Western knowledge?
- Do you feel that you have sufficient knowledge to effectively teach IQ? How so?
- What supports are available to you, if any?
- How is IQ taught to your students?
- Do you think this method is effective, why or why not?

**Auditor General of Canada’s Report (2013)**

- I recently read the Government of Nunavut made changes to education policy and assessment practices since the Audit by the Governor General in 2013; are you familiar with this report? Do you care to comment on it?

- Can you comment on any changes you’ve noticed since then the report came out?

**Teaching Resources**

- Can you describe and comment on the teaching or teacher resources that are available to you?
- What resources, if any, incorporate Nunavut specific themes? What are the strengths and limitations of those resources?
- How do students relate to teaching materials developed outside Nunavut?
- What kind of access do your students have to resources in Inuktitut/Inuinnaqtun?
- Have you ever used co-teaching as a strategy within your classroom?
- What are the main benefits, or challenges incorporating elder’s/Inuit community members in your classroom?

**Teaching Each Other**

- What is the most important lesson you’ve learned teaching in Nunavut?
- What advice would you give to a new teacher about teaching, learning, and education in Nunavut?
- If you could change anything about teaching or education in Nunavut what would you change, if anything?
- Is there anything that I haven’t asked you about, that you would like to share?

Thank you so much for your participation in this research study, it has been a distinct pleasure speaking with you today. As soon as I have transcribed the interview, I will send you digital copy for your records. I will then ask you to check the transcription carefully to ensure accuracy.