Integrating Indigenous Issues in Secondary Music Education

By

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore how Ontario secondary specialist music teachers are currently working to include Indigenous Issues (II) in their curricula. This research intends to inform the practice of secondary music teachers in Ontario by sharing the best practices, resources, and other findings emerging from two semi-structured interviews. Participants reported integration of II in most areas of music, but a lack of available, authentic repertoire and resources. They also reported a lack of self-confidence in teaching the topic, engagement with II related activities outside the classroom, as well as a perceived lack of II integration into music by other teachers. These findings provide a wealth of implications for the educational community at all levels, as well as for the author’s own professional identity and practice as a non-White, Canadian settler educator. This study makes recommendations for music educators, music educator associations, administrators, parents, and federal and provincial governments. Due to the emerging prominence of II in topics of education, and its inversely proportional presence in music education as observed by this study, several areas for further research are outlined.

Key Words: indigenous issues, FNMI, music education, decolonizing education, Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)
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Chapter One: The Introduction

1.0 Introduction: Research Context and Problem

Sherene Razack (2015), a preeminent Canadian race and colonialism scholar, claims “the settler is not legitimate. The land is occupied and continues to be stolen. Colonialism continues apace” (p. 7). Canada, a nation built on stolen Indigenous land, has a problematic past with its Indigenous population (Godlewska, Moore, & Bednasek, 2010). The Federal government has had a very shaky relationship with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) peoples, which has only recently begun to seem more promising (Harding, 2006). Nevertheless, many argue that the current education system in Ontario is not FNMI-inclusive, and quite Eurocentric; in other words, colonial (Godlewska et al., 2010). Even the number of Indigenous teachers in public schools “remain[s] far too low, relative to current and projected needs” (Kanu, 2011, p. 8).

Furthermore, it has been argued that the way in which students acquire knowledge, organize information, and formulate ideas is related to their culture (Kanu, 2005). Contemporary education focuses on engaging students in a way that allows them to discover their own identity, perhaps as Canadians, and contemporary scholars suggest Indigenous perspectives be integrated with “existing curricular imperatives” (Deer, 2013, p. 177). For Canadian students, it is theorized that a better understanding of Indigenous Issues (II) and perspectives will result in a more complete sense of culture and the peoples and histories they represent (Deer, 2013).

II are often overlooked in practice, even in geography courses, where it would be expected to merge easily (Godlewska et al., 2010). Canadian studies on any kind of II integration that might provide educators with theoretical and practical tools are sparse (Kanu, 2011). Therefore it is likely that many music teachers are failing to incorporate it into their lessons as well, despite the fact that music, both contemporary and traditional, was used in response to
cultural and political issues for FNMI peoples (Lehr, Tabvahtah, & Bartlett, 2004). Many of the
distinguished common themes surrounding II have been the central subject matter of many
Indigenous songs (Manzo & Potts, 2013). It is every Canadian’s responsibility to understand
their relationship to this land and the growing FNMI population within it (Godlewska et al.,
2010). Teachers of every subject area should be aware of II and how they might incorporate
them into their classroom (Kanu, 2011).

Some pitfalls teachers may face include their own lack of knowledge on the subject
matter. This is due to the Canadian public’s major misconceptions about Indigenous culture and
FNMI people (Harding, 2006). In addition, Ontario’s antidiscriminatory and multicultural
secondary music curriculum somehow fails to prioritize Canadian II above other Indigenous or
For example, the most current secondary music curriculum documents in Ontario mention
Indigenous music and culture in examples as recommendations; however, they do not explicitly
name FNMI music. In fact, they name a number of cultures of international origin instead.
Otherwise, the language used throughout the curriculum documents is very inclusive and aware
of racial, cultural, sexual, and other forms of diversity (The Ministry of Education, 2010a; The
Ministry of Education, 2010b). The most current secondary music curriculum document in
Manitoba, which has a large FNMI population, fails to mention any Indigenous culture (The
Minister of Education and Advanced Learning, 2015). However, the government of Manitoba
released a document in 2003 titled “Integrating Aboriginal Perspectives into Curricula” as an aid
to educators. Similarly, the government of Ontario released two resources in 2014 and 2009
titled “First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Connections, Grades 9-12: Scope and Sequence of
Expectations”, and “Aboriginal Perspectives: A Guide to the Teacher’s Toolkit” respectively.
While it can be inferred that all music teachers are required to incorporate, briefly if at all, II into their teaching, there is no mention of FNMI ways of knowing in the curriculum documents mentioned above. Interviewing teachers is one way to learn more about available resources and how to effectively integrate II into a music curriculum. In addition, it is one way to help with the problem of a lack of II covered in music classrooms and literature.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore how Ontario secondary specialist music teachers are currently working to include II in secondary school music curricula. To explore this topic, I interviewed a small sample of these teachers about their experiences of inclusion, reported practices and perceived outcomes of their practices (including the creation of a safer space), barriers and supports, as well as their understandings of this inclusion and its importance.

It is my intention that the findings of this research inform the practice of secondary music teachers in Ontario by sharing the best practices, resources, and other findings emerging from my interviews. Enabling current and future educators to think more on this topic will help promote a fresh, healthy, relationship with FNMI peoples in Ontario and Canada.

1.2 Research Questions

The central question driving my research was: how are Ontario secondary specialist music teachers currently working to include II in secondary school music curricula? Sub-questions to further guide this inquiry were derived from the research objectives. They are:

▸ How do teachers understand II in the educational and historical context?

▸ What kind of classroom environment do these teachers reportedly work to cultivate when teaching about II?
What resources support them in this work and what barriers do they face?

1.3 Background of the Researcher

I am a first generation Canadian from a Persian family. I was born in Esfahan, Iran, and moved to the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) with my parents at the age of 6. It was five years before I learned Canada had an Indigenous population, and another ten years before I acknowledged that my family had settled onto Haudenosaunee and Ojibway land. I currently reside in downtown Toronto on land belonging to the Ojibway community, specifically the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. In the past five years here I have earned a Bachelor of Music degree in Western classical French Horn and music education at the University of Toronto (UofT). In the future, I hope to teach instrumental music and mathematics at the Intermediate/Senior (I/S), also known as secondary, level. However, I will make sure the music and mathematics that I teach incorporates II.

This is a goal I have set for myself because I strongly sympathize with the FNMI peoples. I feel that they have been greatly mistreated since first contact, especially in the last century. It is important to me that the future Canadian public will be able to experience and critique II through a decolonized lens and come to an understanding of their personal relationship to this land and its Indigenous peoples. More importantly, this experience should be made possible in every classroom, including music classrooms. My current understanding of Ontario’s music curriculum and FNMI musical culture makes me believe that this is an attainable goal in every classroom. My only concern is that educators, including myself, might perpetuate stereotypes or inadvertently appropriate Indigenous cultures in our attempts at incorporating it in the secondary music curriculum. Ultimately, I hope that heightened awareness and understanding will allow this country to work towards peace with its problematic past and present.
Initially, I believed my ethnicity would place me in the position of a third party researching this topic. I have come to realize however, that my settler identity involves me directly, even if I am not white. In addition, since part of my nationality is Canadian, and I feel a sense of national pride, I am even more closely tied to the controversy surrounding Indigenous issues. These similarities I share with white settlers contribute to my sense of responsibility on social justice topics such as this. However my position as a first generation Canadian does offer me a different experience than a settler born on this land. Although we would both be considered settlers, I would be relatively fresh, with more Persian cultural life experiences guiding me.

Therefore, I do not carry with me a “white guilt” as a result of the actions of my ancestors from many generations ago, because none of them and no one like them was directly involved in the cultural genocide of FNMI peoples in Canada. Nor do I harbour any conflicting feelings towards the Anglican Church, or any other religion for that matter, because I was never raised on one. Neither of my parents are or were religious, and they never implemented any supports for me to explore religion. As a result, we are all either agnostic or atheist. This does not necessarily make me better-suited to conduct this research, but it also does not make me any less well-suited to this task. Rather, what I bring – both obstacles and insights – are, quite simply, different.

1.4 Overview

To respond to the research questions, I have conducted a qualitative study using purposeful sampling to interview two Ontario secondary specialist music teachers, both with prior experience of including II into the curriculum, about their instructional strategies for doing so. In Chapter Two I review the literature in the areas of II in Canadian secondary schools. Next, in Chapter Three I elaborate on the research design. In Chapter Four I report my research findings and discuss their significance in light of the existing research literature, and in Chapter
Five I identify the implications of the research findings for my own teacher identity and practice, and for the educational research community more broadly. I also articulate a series of questions raised by the research findings, and point to areas for future research.
Chapter Two: The Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter I review the literature in the areas of colonialism, and Indigenous Issues (II) in education and in the public curriculum. I start by reviewing the literature in the area of colonialism in education, and I consider the role of cultural assimilation in residential schools, the current Euro-centric education system, and current music practice. Finally, I use the literature to review how II integration into the public curriculum has been recommended in the past to reverse the effects of the aforementioned themes.

This chapter will not be reviewing literature specific to integrating II in the secondary music curricula, because my review did not yield any sources with this narrow focus. It seems “the vast majority of research on Indigenous education continues to focus on university contexts and often reflects perspectives of teacher candidates, and teacher educators” (Madden, 2014, p. 58). Other relevant texts found include government reports, the bulk of them published by government organizations in Canadian provinces other than Ontario. The Manitoba government, for example, has acknowledged its First Nations, Inuit, and Métis (FNMI) student population and invested time for researching and critically evaluating their education system. Alas, these documents are not part of the literature, nor do they cite empirical literature with a focus on secondary music education.

2.1 Colonialism and Education

This section will explicitly show the problematic relationship between colonialism and education by studying European-Indigenous relations since first contact. The residential school system in particular is a very prominent and recurring theme in literature pertaining to II. As a result, the first subsection will review literature discussing this theme. The following subsection
will review literature pertaining to the present education system and its relationship with colonialism. Finally, I will focus specifically on studies of music education relating to colonialism.

2.1.1 Residential schools and cultural assimilation

There seem to be conflicting ideas on the nature of the FNMI peoples’ relationship with the European immigrant population during the 16th and 17th centuries, that is, the early years of contact. Some reports, using an Indigenous paradigm and historiography as an organizing element, claim initially respectful cross-cultural relations as a result of immigrant dependency on Indigenous knowledge (Aquash, 2013), whereas others, based on large-scale interviews, claim hostile colonial intent since first contact (Silver, Mallett, Greene, & Simard, 2002). Although it is true that Christian groups tried to convert FNMI peoples as early as 1620, it makes sense that, for the benefit of survival and the fur trade industry in North America, immigrants adopted a process of acculturation (Aquash, 2013). Both sources above acknowledge that shortly after the War of 1812, as a result of political changes, colonial Canadian perspectives shifted from that of acculturation to assimilation; over the course of 200 years, FNMI people were robbed of their lands and forced onto reserves and residential schools (Aquash, 2013; Silver et al., 2002). To this fact, there is no argument. Many journal articles and government documents alike agree that a cultural hierarchy, where European values were superior to those of FNMI peoples, and systemic racism led to the conception of the residential school system in the late 1870s in Canada (Aquash, 2013; Manitoba Education and Youth, 2003; Silver et al., 2002; Toulous, 2013; Troniak, 2011).

It is evident throughout the reviewed literature that the residential school system was used as an “instrument of colonization”, its primary function being “to kill the Indian in the
child” (Milloy qtd. in Silver et al., 2002, pp. 32-33). Testimonials from residential school teachers, students, and their families can be found across many mediums, such as books, articles, and parliamentary reports, recording flawed policy development, loss of identity, and high mortality rates as a result of abuse, malnutrition, poor sanitation, and exposure to contagious diseases (Aquash, 2013; Silver et al., 2002; Troniak, 2011). Moreover, qualitative researchers represented by the Manitoba Minister of Education and Youth, with the intention to assist Manitoba curriculum developers and educators in integrating Indigenous perspectives, have found that these testimonials attest to the negative effects of the residential school system being “felt to this day as Aboriginal peoples struggle to regain their stolen history, language, culture, and relationships” (Manitoba Education and Youth, 2003, p. 5). Most recent investigations have also concluded that the current, unfortunate, socio-economic reality of many FNMI peoples and nations comes as a result of the seven generations that were subjected to this colonization process and oppression (Aquash, 2013; Silver et al., 2002; Toulous, 2013; Troniak, 2011). In response, almost all the literature suggests a reworking – rather a decolonizing – of education in order to “honour Indigenous students and build bridges between all students” (Toulous, 2013, p. 5). The Truth and Reconciliation Commition of Canada (2015) explicitly calls educators to “make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples’ historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students” (p. 7).

2.1.2 The present public education system (as a Euro-centric colonizing tool)

The present public education system in Canada is criticized by Winnipeg scholars, Silver et al. (2002), for continuing to be heavily Euro-centric and assuming cultural superiority. Ontario scholars, Mashford-Pringle and Nardozi (2013) agree, finding these are the ways in which the
public education system has, and continues, to be a colonizing tool, especially in assimilating FNMI peoples into the “mainstream economy” (p. 4).

Some research delving into teacher education, the Ontario curriculum, and government policies, suggests that teacher education programs, as well as the student education systems they feed into, are perpetuating Canada’s ignorance of II (Godlewska et al., 2010; Mashford-Pringle & Nardozi, 2013). Canadian students and teachers, Indigenous or not, are not being taught the problematic history of this country with its FNMI population. This may largely be a result of teacher candidates not receiving the training and education necessary to their teaching. Teacher candidates at the University of Toronto have self-reported their frustration at the lack of coverage on the topic of Indigenous issues, as well as at their own lack of pre-existing knowledge (Mashford-Pringle & Nardozi, 2013).

2.1.3 The present music practice (as a colonizing tool)

High school music education is largely practiced as orchestra, band, or choir, and any alternative music-making, such as guitar, steel pan, African drumming, Indigenous drumming, gamelan, composition, or improvisation, is mostly neglected (O’Toole, 2000). This is reflected in secondary music curriculum documents that prioritizes Western notation above all else. Western classical, concert, and jazz music are the main areas of focus. Although there is mention of exploring music from cultures around the world, it is very brief. Moreover, FNMI music and culture are never explicitly mentioned (The Ministry of Education, 2010a; The Ministry of Education, 2010b). In addition, the curriculum represents music from international cultures as an “other”. Some authors have expressed othering as an effective colonizing technique (Kincheloe, 2006). In Research to Practice: A Biennial Series, Torontonian music education scholar, Lee Bartel (2004), reflected on the restrictive qualities of traditional instruction and instead proposed
a socially and culturally relevant pedagogy to fulfill music education’s obligation in reaching all students. Some researchers more explicitly connect the stagnation and restriction of traditional education to “projects of conquest and colonization through cultural imperialism” (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013, p. 221). It was also found in a Canadian teacher inquiry group study that teachers perceived students’ understanding of historical marginalization and structural inequalities, such as in II, to be potentially enhanced through the use of the arts (Wiltse, Johnston, & Yang, 2014).

Reviewing literature pertaining to the impacts of the residential school system and the resulting effects on the present education system has ultimately led to the topic of colonization. This section has explicitly shown the problematic relationship between colonialism and education, including music education, by studying European-Indigenous relations since first contact.

2.2 Integrating Indigenous Issues into the Curriculum

The literature has highlighted a great number of disparities within the FNMI community as a result of past and present efforts at assimilation. Much of the literature has also recommended decolonizing the community and eradicating widespread ignorance of FNMI history and culture by first decolonizing education (Burleigh & Burn, 2013; Godlewska et al., 2010; Madden, 2014; Mashford-Pringle & Nardozi, 2013; Silver et al., 2002). Therefore, this section will review literature on educators’ integration of II into their curricula. The first subsection features literature that highlights what could be taught, whereas the second subsection features literature that suggests how this might be done. Finally, the literature review will end with a close look at developments in other subject areas attempting to integrate II into their curriculum.
2.2.1 What to teach

The literature shows that there is more to decolonizing education than expected. A resource published by the Canadian Teachers’ Federation (CTF) presents current research in equitable education and highlights the necessity for “immediate action aimed at fostering understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples” (Toulous, 2013, p. 9). They summarize research that finds honouring Indigenous contributions, such as hockey, basketball, lacrosse, kayak, dogsleds, axes, pulleys, saws, asphalt, and compasses, is “paramount to the success and engagement of Indigenous students, parents/guardians and the communities” (p. 9). Taking this step would help fulfill the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s (TRC) Calls to Action (2015) for educators, and could help build trust and meaningful connections with FNMI communities.

With such a large variety of contributions, a minimal level of II integration should be possible in each class. One narrative study (Madden, 2014) from the University of British Columbia exploring the decolonizing processes of improving schooling for Indigenous students concludes that Indigenous ways of teaching, such as the Anishinaabe medicine wheel, can be very different from the current norm, but also very helpful in re-organizing school-based education. However, while certain aspects of FNMI culture, such as the arts, sports, observances, some ceremonial activities, and literacy, have been found to be accessible to pre-service teachers, others have not (Deer, 2013). Following an action research investigation with experienced non-Indigenous teachers, Deer (2013) perceived inaccessibility to largely characterize such topics as spirituality, language, and community-specific practices due to “how sacred such topics might be” (p. 188). Therefore it is possible that teacher education programs in Canada struggle to provide complete background and understanding of II. To make matters more difficult, the
literature highlights an element of difficulty reported in acquiring II classroom resources, as well as an unmet expectation for teacher education programs to inform pre-service teachers of such available resources (Deer, 2013).

2.2.2 How to teach

The question remains: how can teachers integrate II in their curricula? Although it is the objective of my research to find out how teachers are doing this, it is important to consider the work already done in this field; instantly, it appears to be a difficult task to sensitively and appropriately incorporate II (Burnard, Dillon, Rusinek, & Sæther, 2008; Deer, 2013). There happens to be a body of literature already published on culturally relevant pedagogy in general; however, with II specifically, the literature frequently draws parallels between Indigenous education in Canada and other regions of the world, such as New Zealand, Australia, Alaska, Hawaii, and the Pacific nations (Fee & Russell, 2007; Kanu, 2011; Rico, 2013). These scholarly sources might not be the most teacher-friendly; some teachers will most likely come across government articles that are more easily accessible to them first, such as Aboriginal Perspectives: A Guide to the Teacher’s Toolkit (The Ministry of Education, 2009).

Some authors insist teachers do as much research as possible for alternate discourses, and ways of thinking and being, in order to be “critical teachers” (Kincheloe, 2006, p. 194). As a result, teachers who focus on critical ontology may have a context in which:

[They] explore literature, history, popular culture, and ways of forging community in subjugated/indigenous knowledges. In this context teachers develop their own and their students’ social and aesthetic imaginations. Here we imagine what we might become by recovering and reinterpreting what we once were. The excitement of curriculum as ontological quest is powerful. (p. 194)
This process of critical ontology may be one way for teachers to incorporate II into the curriculum. The pertinent findings of a qualitative study of four teachers from around the world (Burnard et al., 2008), who were able to foster inclusive relationships with students, design learning experiences that recognize learner agency, and focus on meaningful music-making, show how engaging with students in critical ontology could complement the efforts of cultural responsive and inclusive pedagogy. It may be in engaging in conflicts such as this that students become more attuned to the social structures and ideologies that result in their unique, individual relationship to FNMI peoples and this land (Kincheloe, 2006). In addition, both an aforementioned CTF document (Toulous, 2013) and qualitative study by Burnard et al. (2008), recommends partnering with FNMI communities in education in order to impact the effectiveness of II integration; in the case of educating FNMI students, this may also significantly impact student success. In this partnership, some authors endorse involvement in local Indigenous activities, celebrations, and social media networks (Deer, 2013). Teachers are also encouraged to embody worldview by learning basic sayings and terms in their respective regions, familiarize themselves with social protocols, and acknowledge the unique stories and skills of Elders that could not be replicated by the majority of teachers (Toulous, 2013).

2.2.3 Existing developments from other regions and subject areas

Due to the lack of literature specific to the topic of this paper, I have explored other, closely related sources. This section will review literature on pedagogy from other Canadian provinces, as well as other regions of the world with similar Indigenous-Settler relationships. Aside from music, subjects such as English, social studies, and the sciences will also be reviewed.
There is evidence of research in integrating II in music education in Australia and New Zealand. Two educators from the University of Waikato, New Zealand, (Locke & Prentice, 2016) have produced a narrative article based on an analysis of 61 documents, many of them peer-reviewed studies and narratives of practice, on responsive pedagogy in music education. Locke and Prentice question how educators shaped by Western musicking discourses might engage with Maori culture. They found the need for “a greater emphasis on more culturally nuanced music teacher education in relation to indigenous musics” (p. 139). Their analysis calls for a decolonizing of curriculum through co-construction, however some of the research they reviewed views integration as exploring Indigenous music through other areas, such as social studies, language, and history. Their analysis of the literature also raises awareness of the challenges of song ownership and suggests Indigenous pop or rap music to be more accessible than traditional Indigenous songs, both culturally and aesthetically.

The same literature also finds “educators must avoid the tendency to extract musical concepts from their cultural context and use western European methods of analysis to frame and teach the concepts,” because it “removes the holistic approach that indigenous musicians adopt” (Locke & Prentice, 2016, p. 146). This finding coincides with that of two research papers from Canada; a research and development project by Glen Aikenhead (2001) from the University of Saskatchewan and an exploratory case study by Tracy L. Blood (2010) from the University of Alberta. Both authors drew on teachers incorporating II into the sciences and strongly insist that teachers attempting the same should not conform FNMI knowledge to Western ways of knowing (Aikenhead, 2001; Blood, 2010). Instead they suggest II content be linked to the local community, learners, or learner experiences (Aikenhead, 2001; Blood, 2010). In addition, students should not be expected to believe in or adopt the perspectives they will learn, but still be
able to state the culture they are speaking in, as it is “an asset in society today” (Aikenhead, 2001, p. 350). Blood (2010) refers to students approaching subjects from various perspectives a “transformative approach”, whereas the ideal would be a “social action approach” (p. 92), where students make decisions related to real world issues with the option to act on them.

Many authors (e.g., Aikenhead, 2001; Blood, 2010; LaFramboise-Helgeson, 2014; Locke & Prentice, 2016; Orlowski & Menzies, 2004) touch on two considerations for integrating II into any curriculum: consulting local Elders, and a lack of teacher resources. A research and development paper (Orlowksi & Menzies, 2004) on a high school social studies unit with II integration made a point of consulting extensively with local tribal council members and educators, resulting in a highly motivational student experience. Aikenhead (2001) recommends this action as well; however, Blood (2010) expressed concerns after semi-structured teacher interviews revealed teacher-perceived inaccessibility to reach Elders for advice or classroom visits. Furthermore, these authors, including others, present teacher reports from 1997 through 2016 that cite a lack of resources and supports. One teacher from a University of Alberta study acknowledged her school board offered professional development for teachers who use FNMI literature in English classrooms, but claimed “you have to ask for help” (LaFramboise-Helgeson, 2014, p. 74). Another teacher from this same study explained how FNMI literature was often not found in libraries, which may allude to the availability of FNMI scores in music libraries. Locke and Prentice (2016) also question what some teachers’ perceptions of resources are – this seems to remain unclear as it would change depending on the subject area in question.

Peaking at what could be taught, how it could be done, and how it is being done in subject areas other than music can be a useful tool. Music educators can try to learn and take inspiration from these recent developments to better inform the creation of their own curricula.
The literature reviewed in this section, on educators’ integration of II into their curricula, also has the potential to be useful to parents, administration, and federal and provincial governments.

2.3 Conclusion

In this literature review I looked at research on colonialism pertaining to education, II, and how they may be integrated into the public curriculum. This review elucidates the extent at which attention has been paid to the representation of II in the current education system, and reveals the apparent lack of coverage in the field of secondary music education. It also raises questions about whether integration would be helpful, and points to the need for further research in the areas of music pedagogy with an Indigenous perspective, as well as teachers’ perceptions of resources. In light of this, the next chapter will describe the research methodology used to collect data on how educators experience the integration of II in the secondary school music curricula, so as to fulfill the purpose of this paper.
Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter I explain the research methodology. I begin by discussing the research approach, procedures, and instruments of data collection, before identifying the participants of the study. I will list the sampling criteria, describe the sampling procedures, and provide some information on the participants. I then explain data analysis procedures and discuss some ethical risks associated with my study. I proceed to speak to the methodical limitations of the study, while also acknowledging the strengths. Lastly, I conclude the chapter with a brief summary of key methodological decisions, and my rationale for these decisions, given the research purpose and questions.

3.1 Research Approach & Procedures

This study was conducted using a qualitative research approach, involving a literature review and semi-structured interviews with two teachers. Broadly speaking, qualitative research can be defined as “a situated activity that locates the observer in the world” (Denzin, 2008, p. 311). However qualitative research boasts a history in eight eras, the latest (2005 – now) labeled “the future” (p. 317). As a result, the definition of this method is dependent on the moment it is being used. In this moment – the future – a qualitative researcher observes the present world to “study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (p. 312), in order to connect this to the needs of their society.

Until about thirty years ago, qualitative research was uncommon, and it was not until about 15 years ago that it was established as a credible approach to research in a range of disciplines (Barbour, 2008). To Barbour, it is unsurprising that the field of education would pick
it up as well, since it relies so heavily on human interaction. Burns (1994) suggests within every human interaction or social context there exist multiple realities and socially constructed meanings that qualitative research has made educators realize are not to be overlooked (Freebody, 2003). As a result, the outcomes of qualitative research in education are used to improve teacher practice, as well as inform ongoing debates within related subject areas (Race, 2008).

Freebody (2003) claims that a considerable amount of educational research concerning social justice makes use of qualitative methods. This is likely because qualitative methods allow researchers to study how people understand concepts, which is not as possible with positivist methods such as quantitative research (Barbour, 2008). Therefore, given my research purpose and the questions that I have, a qualitative method was an appropriate approach for me, as my study concerns social justice in the realm of Indigenous Issues (II) and how teachers understand it. It also provided me with a platform to dissect the multiple realities, and socially constructed meanings on this topic, held by a small sample of secondary music teachers.

3.2 Instruments of Data Collection

Questionnaires, interviews, and participant observation are three common sources of data for qualitative research in education (Race, 2008). Interviews are perhaps the most common of the three, although they may be used in combination with questionnaires or participant observation if the researcher is not restrained by time (Race, 2008). These interviews, which are specifically in-depth research interviews, are designed to only collect data and are generally not seeking to “help” or “empower” or “change” the participant (Wengraf, 2001). As I was not interested in affecting my participants or making them biased, in-depth research interviews suited my study well.
In-depth interviews can range in format, from heavily ritualized to more exploratory and uncertain (Wengraf, 2001). Somewhere in the middle of this spectrum lies the semi-structured interview, designed to have prepared in advance a number of questions that will allow the interviewer to carefully improvise subsequent questions (Wengraf, 2001). Although semi-structured interviewing is often concerned with the subjective world of the interviewee and their way of knowing, Wengraf stresses that the collected data should not be treated uncritically or accepted at face value. Thus, the quality of information received from this flexible protocol leads it to be the instrument of data collection used in my study.

In order to take advantage of everything a semi-structured interview has to offer, I organized a protocol (located in Appendix B) as well as prepared myself for constant, on-the-spot decision making. This protocol is divided into five sections, beginning with the participant’s background information, followed by details of their efforts to include II in the secondary music curriculum, their beliefs and values on the topic of decolonization and antidiscrimination, possible influencing factors, and ending with next steps for teachers. Questions include: Can you walk me through a time you included II into a unit or lesson in the past? In your view, how does your identity as a (insert participant identity) influence how you approach teaching II? And, what challenges and barriers do you face in your practice?

3.3 Participants

The following is a review of the sampling criteria and procedures I established for participant recruitment. I have also included a section wherein I introduce each of the two participants.

3.3.1 Sampling criteria

The following criteria were applied to teacher participants:
1. Teachers have incorporated II into their own curriculum

2. Teachers are currently working fulltime

3. Teachers have experience teaching within grades 7-12, preferably 9-12

4. Teachers hold a bachelor’s degree in music or equivalent (e.g., 10 or more years of experience as a professional musician)

In order to satisfy the main research question, the participants I interviewed are self-identifying teachers who incorporate II into their curricula. Likewise, because my research is a study of current practices with the aid of an entire curriculum, participants are fulltime, employed teachers. With participants with more than five years’ experience, I was sure to inquire about any perceived changes in focus on II. Once again, since this study concerns secondary music teachers, I sought to interview Intermediate/Senior teachers with special preference for those in secondary schools (which are characterized as grade 9-12 schools).

To ensure musical literacy, both technically and academically, participants hold a bachelor’s degree or equivalent in music, be it classical, jazz, Western, or not. A variety of backgrounds resulted in diverse findings, which I consider ideal. Here, an “equivalent” will be loosely defined as any post-secondary certificate or diploma, as well as 10 or more years’ experience as a professional in any musical field.

3.3.2 Sampling procedures

Barbour (2008) insists that qualitative sampling is often misunderstood, which leads to “irrelevant criticism of [its] methods as failing to provide representative findings” (p. 36). Sampling in qualitative research simply follows a different logic compared to quantitative research, where samples are randomly derived from larger populations and strive for statistical generalizations to the whole populations (Flick, 2007). According to Morgan (2008), qualitative
research mostly makes use of nonprobability sampling methods like purposive sampling. Within each sampling method, researchers have developed a number of specific techniques, such as theoretical, where data is collected, coded, and analysed to generate a theory; maximum variation, which intentionally includes a wide range of extremes; and stratified sampling for purposive, or convenience, quota, and snowball sampling for nonprobability (Morgan, 2008).

For this study, I have used purposive sampling, as well as convenience sampling, and snowball sampling. The sampling procedure was purposeful in that the three participants were drawn from a highly particular population as outlined in section 3.3.1. Due to the small sample size of potentially rich data sources, however, it was appropriate to use primarily nonprobability samples as an approach to data collection since they rely on careful interpretation and analysis (Morgan, 2008). Therefore, as a teacher candidate who has been taught in school boards throughout the GTA since grade 1, I relied on convenience sampling to obtain participants through existing connections with other teacher candidates and working teachers within the region. In addition, I used snowball sampling by asking participants to recommend other individuals who may be appropriate or relevant for the study (Flick, 2007).

3.3.3 Participant bios

My first participant, Gina, is a non-Indigenous, self-identifying Canadian of Chinese ethnicity, who has been living in Canada her whole life. She has been working as an Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) certified teacher for about twenty years, the past ten years being a part-time strings teacher at a Toronto District School Board (TDSB) high school. Gina has previously taught strings from grades four and up, as well as private lessons in another Canadian province prior to moving to Ontario. Her musical background involves playing music in public school, continuing through a Bachelor of Music in Education and performing in (what they refer
to as) amateur Irish ensembles. Gina is also very familiar with Chinese music. Gina has known about II for approximately a decade. Integrating it to her classrooms had been on her mind for quite a while until she finally executed an II related unit in the 2015-2016 school year.

My second participant, Megan, is a non-Indigenous, self-identifying Canadian of Chinese ethnicity, who has been living in Canada since immigrating at the age of nine. She has been working as an OCT certified teacher in the TDSB for about five years. Megan has experience teaching grades nine through twelve, in vocal music, instrumental music, guitar and music computers, social sciences, English, as well as English as a Second Language (ESL) and literacy courses. Her musical background consists of piano lessons at the age of six, voice lessons in high school, and a Bachelor of Music in Education, majoring in voice. She has also performed with choirs. Megan was first introduced to FNMI cultures through her mother when they first immigrated to Canada. She has since been reading about II and experiencing FNMI culture through public community events and powwows, and began teaching an II related unit in the 2015-2016 school year.

3.4 Data Analysis

Before getting to the actual analysis, data must be secure and well-organized. Wengraf (2001) strongly suggests developing a clear index system (possibly aided by software programs devoted to qualitative data analysis), making multiple copies of the interview recording, as well as taking notes on the recording as soon as possible after the interview is complete. Once the interview data is prepared, a qualitative researcher will likely code and categorize it for analysis (Flick, 2007).

During my analysis I transcribed interviews and coded data, as it related to my research purpose and questions. I then identified and categorized frequent themes or discrepancies in the
findings, while also recognizing null data in the research, and discussing the significance of it.

3.5 Ethical Review Procedures

Qualitative research in particular has a history of misuse that has only come to considerable awareness in the last decade (Barbour, 2008; Flick, 2007). Consequently, the numbers of institutional ethics review boards and committees have increased in recent years (Barbour, 2008). As a result, qualitative researchers have had difficulty making ethics committees understand the principles of purposive sampling and related misconceptions. Educational researchers in Canada and the US specifically report committee members’ “lack of knowledge of the classroom, collegial relationships and job remits as barriers to realistic appraisals of ethical applications from [educational] researchers” (Barbour, 2008, p. 71). Qualitative researches generally agree, however, that the review of ethics is crucial whether one is planning, recruiting, or in the field (Barbour, 2008; Flick, 2008).

The general topics of concern include, identifying and approaching potential participants, consent, reciprocity and remuneration, confidentiality, as well as impact on participants and researchers (Barbour, 2008). I will proceed to expand on the risks commonly associated with these topics of ethical concern, and discuss how they may be ameliorated and mitigated.

In identifying participants, researchers should reflect on whether their use of vulnerable people, such as children, patients, or those living under difficult circumstances, is justifiable (Flick, 2007). They should also consider the outcomes that come as a result of their sampling method; recruiting participants from clinics or educational institutions will limit the research in a different way from recruiting participants by way of community events or local media (Barbour, 2008). Furthermore, in approaching selected participants, interviewers should be trained in their instrument of data collection by being informed on the research topic and possible problems that
may arise during an interview (Flick, 2007). Role-plays and rehearsals may be helpful if they are followed by a supervisor or research team’s critical feedback (Flick, 2007).

Informed consent is based on the idea that consent is “knowledgeable, exercised in a non-coercive situation, and made by competent individuals” (Milne, 2005 cited in Babour, 2008, para 26). To ensure informed and ongoing consent, researchers should prepare a mutual contract which explains the research purpose, participant expectations, data storage, and whether results will be shared with participants (Flick, 2007). For participants who are not able to sign a contract, researchers must clearly outline how informed and ongoing consent can be guaranteed, whether it is personally informing the participant or finding someone else who is qualified to sign in their stead (Flick, 2007).

Some researchers may choose to incentivise participation in their research through offering money, vouchers, or participant packs (Barbour, 2008). Although this can be perceived as coercive and unethical by many ethics committees and funding bodies, Barbour (2008) argues that it is unlikely to pose a major problem for most qualitative studies.

It is generally agreed that confidentiality and anonymity is an “enshrined principle” in qualitative research (Barbour, 2008, p. 81). This is due to several cases in the past where the well-being and safety of another person was breached as a result of not observing the confidentiality of one individual (Barbour, 2008). In order to avoid this breach of security and anonymity, researchers should avoid mentioning identifying characteristics specific to participants (such as their name or associated institution), and request participant consent in including interview excerpts in publications (Barbour, 2008).

Participants can easily be impacted by the questions asked of them during an interview, as many may feel pained or conflicted as a result of being confronted (Flick, 2007). Similarly, it
is important to consider that, although an interview is inherently probing, researchers should respect participant privacy and not be pushy (Flick, 2007). Should a participant reflect about an issue “beyond what we expected”, interviewers should take them seriously and inquire about such issues (Flick, 2007, p. 74). In addition, not truthfully sharing the research topic, or sharing too much detail about the research question, may produce specific expectations of irritations in participants (Flick, 2007). Furthermore, interviewing participants from a group of people who know each other can irritate those who are not chosen for interview (Flick, 2007). Thus, interviewers should take precautions to avoid harm to participants unless absolutely necessary and justifiable (Flick, 2007).

Researchers will be impacted at several points in the study, including the recruitment and interview stage (Barbour, 2008). Their safety may be compromised in contacting participants as a result of being removed from their regular settings, therefore they should consider taking preventative measures (Barbour, 2008).

Out of Barbour’s (2008) list of general topics of concern, all but remuneration and approaching an ethics committee (this was done on my behalf by OISE) were addressed for this study. Through extensive research of currently existing literature in my Chapter Two, I established that my research topic is in fact under-researched and will thus not pose an ethical threat. In sampling methods, I carefully contemplated the consequences of purposive, convenience, and snowball sampling and acknowledged them in my findings. Furthermore, in addition to the interview training I received from Dr. Lee Airton, I made sure to practice at least two role play-interviews with my colleagues before engaging with any participant. To ensure informed and continuous consent, I created a Letter of Consent (located in Appendix A) outlining the purpose of the study, the associated ethical implications, and the expectations of
participants. In addition, participant confidentiality and anonymity has been respected by the use of aliases, omission of any identifying indicators, and password protected data on an external hard-drive which will be cleared after five years. Moreover, to minimize impact on participants, the Letter of Consent alerts to any potentially triggering questions, interview questions were not overly probing, I acted professionally as an interviewer, details of the research question were avoided, and participants were asked to refrain from sharing their interview experiences with any participants they may know. Finally, my safety was ensured by avoiding interviews in private settings, such as participant homes.

3.6 Methodological Limitations and Strengths

To begin with, the largest limitation to this study is that, although the findings can inform the topic, they will not be generalizable to the population (Flick, 2007). This is due to the small sample size characteristic to most qualitative research (Morgan, 2008). Conversely, the strength of this methodology is that it will validate the teachers’ voices by allowing for a much richer, in-depth understanding of how secondary school music teachers include II in their teaching (Barbour, 2008).

Secondly, my own biases or relationship with the participants could distort how I chose to interpret the findings (Merriam, 2002). Equally, this limitation can strengthen my study if I am able to acknowledge the ways in which my biases influence the data collection and interpretation (Merriam, 2002). Lastly, the scope of the research is limited to interviewed teachers, which excludes students, school administration, and teacher candidates like me. Similar to the aforementioned issue of biases, this limitation can strengthen my study if I acknowledge its existence and remain aware of the existing tension when presenting my findings.

3.7 Conclusion: Overview and Preview
In this chapter I described the research methodology. I began with a discussion of the research approach and procedure, exploring the significance of qualitative research as it relates to the research purpose and questions. I then described the instruments of data collection, specifying semi-structured in-depth interviews as the primary source of data. I subsequently identified the participants I sought for the study, listing the sampling criteria and procedures that I used to find them, including purposive sampling and nonprobability sampling. Next, I broadly defined data analysis in qualitative research and how I used coding and categorization for this study. Ethical issues, including confidentiality, consent, right to withdraw, risks of participation, member-check, and data storage were considered, and possible ways of addressing them were recognized. Finally, I discussed the methodological limitations and strengths of the study. Next, in Chapter Four, I report the research findings.
Chapter Four: Research Findings

4.0 Introduction

This chapter will present and discuss the findings that emerged through the data analysis of two semi-structured research interviews with fulltime high school music teachers who have incorporated Indigenous Issues (II) into their own curriculum. Throughout the analysis, I was constantly mindful of my research question: how are Ontario secondary specialist music teachers currently working to include II in secondary school music curricula? In the sections below, connections will be drawn between participants’ experiences and perceptions, and the Chapter Two review of literature in the area of colonialism in education and how II has been integrated into the public curriculum. Findings are organized into two main themes with respective sub-themes that further illustrate how they play out in a classroom:

1. How these participants are integrating II in the secondary music classroom
   - Integration of II has been used by participants to fulfill performance, culture, and history requirements in the music curricula, but not composition
   - Teachers reportedly lack available, authentic repertoire and resources

2. Factors influencing participants’ integration of II in secondary music curricula
   - Despite over a decade of II awareness, these teachers are not confident in their abilities to teach about II
   - Teachers engage in some sort of activity regarding II outside the classroom, in their private life
   - Perceived lack of II integration into music by other teachers
For each theme, I will first describe it, then report on the data, and finally present my interpretation on the significance of each theme within the context of the existing literature. Finally, I will summarize my findings and make recommendations for next steps.

4.1 How These Participants are Integrating II in the Secondary Music Classroom

The purpose of this first theme is to help answer my central research question: how are Ontario secondary specialist music teachers currently working to include II in their curricula? My interpretation of the data presents the following two sub-themes as contributions to answering to this question. Each sub-theme will begin by highlighting the data collected from participants, Gina and Megan, showing my interpretation of it, and finally drawing connections to the literature reviewed in Chapter Two.

4.1.1 Integration of II has been used by participants to fulfill performance, culture, and history requirements in the music curricula, but not composition

Both participants integrated II into performance, culture, and history aspects of the music curricula; however, neither participant reported using composition or allowing students to use the creative process within rehearsals of repertoire.

Gina developed a culturally informative unit with a group in her Honours Specialist Advanced Qualification (AQ) course. Gina says their unit “was not about repertoire, it was about Aboriginal instruments, how they use music, what they use music for, how they practiced music”, however they did perform music by “a composer friend from university! Who actually lives up near Georgian Bay. He has composed pieces with First Nation type of melody”. Gina also claimed that their “goal in music class is to teach [students] about the cultural meaning behind things”. As a result, they used II to fulfill performance, culture, and history requirements in the music curricula, but not composition, explicitly.
Megan developed her unit around the “Miqmaw Honour Song”, by Lydia Adams, and only executes it with vocal music classes. This is the only unit she has developed that includes FNMI culture, and, because her only exposure to them has been through a rocky AQ course (there was some negative student response to the Indigenous artist), she has yet to bring in any guest artists. Students are assessed on “the elements of music, including intonation, rhythm, tempo, expression, tone production” In addition to the performance, which involves strategic staging and recreating sounds found in nature, she also teaches what the song honours. After the performance, Megan asked students to find any piece of music they felt represented the “Native symbol of a feather”, and then present the elements of music within that piece. Megan is sure that “if people want to incorporate [II], it works in every unit in music”.

The literature has already revealed that alternative music-making, including composing and arranging, is often neglected in secondary music education, and my participant data only reinforces this (O’Toole, 2000). Compared to recommendations published by Manitoba Education and Youth (2003) and educators Locke and Prentice (2016), Gina especially seems to have a better grasp on decolonizing education with her focus on teaching culture. It would take further questioning of their specific pedagogy to gauge whether their lessons align with the ideal “social action approach” (Blood, 2010, p. 92).

Conversely, Megan’s method of extracting Western musical concepts from the “Miqmaw Honour Song” could be seen to conflict with much of the literature presented in Chapter Two (Aikenhead, 2001; Blood, 2010; Locke & Prentice, 2016; see also Brisson, 2015 for a critical discussion of that song in particular). A safer approach for teachers more generally could be highlighting Indigenous contributions listed by the Canadian Teachers’ Federation (Toulouse, 2013).
4.1.2 Teachers reportedly lack available, authentic repertoire and resources

Both participants perceive a lack of lesson plans for music, as well as resources in understanding II. Gina draws on books and the internet with great difficulty, because they seek material written by Indigenous authors and composers. They agree that “there could be resources out there that I just haven’t found”. It is their hope “that someday, somebody with Aboriginal background gets through composition at university. And starts writing more music for us to play. That would be great. I don’t think there are a lot of Aboriginal people in music”. This is why they were very pleased to find an indigenous composer whose music she found “sounded authentic”. Even then, Gina found this composer through a personal network, not a library of online resources.

Megan feels that despite the push for Aboriginal education “NOW - and it’s 2016 - there’s a severe lack of resources out there and understanding out there. Like true understanding of everything [FNMI peoples] have experienced with the reconciliation process”. They perceive a lack of resources in schools, boards, as well as the Ontario Music Educators Association (OMEA) resource bank online, and have done the bulk of their own research at public libraries and the internet. They believe “continuing Ed courses and AQs would be really helpful”, both in educating and providing a wealth of reliable resources to draw from.

Both of my participants’ perceptions of resource availability are backed by several research papers reviewed in Chapter Two (Aikenhead, 2001; Blood, 2010; LaFramboise-Helgeson, 2014; Locke & Prentice, 2016; Orlowski & Menzies, 2004), most notably an action research investigation with experienced non-Aboriginal teachers (Deer, 2013). Megan’s sentiment towards greater continuing Ed and AQ courses is similarly echoed in related literature. One thing I should have confirmed was my participants’ concepts of resources; it could be that
our individual, immediate definitions of resources are not aligned, which would lead to a
misrepresentation of the data. To recapitulate, Lock and Prentice (2016) questioned the possibly
differing definitions of resources in their own narrative article, and so their question remains
unanswered in this study.

4.2 Factors Influencing Participants’ Integration of II in Secondary Music Curricula

The purpose of this second theme is to further answer my research question by examining
the nuanced factors that influence the participants’ integration of II in secondary music curricula.

My interpretation of the data presents the following three sub-themes as contributions to this
examination. Each sub-theme will begin by highlighting the data collected from participants,
Gina and Megan, showing my interpretation of it, and finally drawing connections to the
literature reviewed in Chapter Two.

4.2.1 Despite over a decade of II awareness, these teachers are not confident in their
abilities to teach the issue

Both participants began their journey into II integration over a decade ago, and neither is
certain in their abilities to teach it.

Gina’s first exposure to II was approximately 10 years ago with David Suzuki’s books
and learning about “the owner of Body Shop – she’s also very heavily involved in Indigenous
peoples’ issues”. Passionate figures and activists allowed her to bridge into this social justice
issue. Gina ranked her level of confidence on a scale of 1-10, 1 being not at all confident, 10
being very confident, as “almost a five, but not quite”. Despite keeping up with the issues, Gina
believes that she is only getting a sense of II, and that “it’s very hard to understand [if you’re not
part of the culture] and I know I’ve made a lot of mistakes in trying to... convey what they are
about, because I’m still learning. I recognize that”. Gina went on to explain how teachers should
reach a certain level of confidence for any subject they are going to teach. Despite this belief, and her rather low self-ranking, Gina has taught II in her music classes. This could point to her idea of a necessary level of confidence to be lower than five (on a scale of 1-10), a nuanced piece of data I missed, or a contradiction between her words and actions.

Megan’s first exposure to II was approximately 18 years ago, when she first immigrated to Canada. Her mother, who was very interested in Inukshuks and FNMI cultures, “bought me this dream catcher and Inukshuks, and so she would just explain to me how they’re very connected to life... yeah it all started with her, basically”. Megan has since been keeping up regularly with Indigenous news regarding North America on social media. Similar to Gina, when asked to rank her level of confidence along a scale, Megan expressed “I wouldn’t give myself a pass. I’d give myself like a four”. Her reasoning was that, since she is self-educated on the topic, she has no way of knowing if she is also teaching it correctly. She seeks for an outside perspective to “assess” her in how to teach II, before she can have more confidence herself. As a result, she incorporates “only a small amount that I’m comfortable with... but it’s nothing really extensive – as extensive as I would like it to be. It’s a start”. Perhaps this is the nuanced piece of data that I was missing from my interview with Gina.

Although there exists literature gauging teachers’ content knowledge (it is largely reported as lacking), I have not been able to review anything concerning teachers’ self-confidence in teaching II. This seems to be a gap in the literature, since content knowledge may not necessarily correlate to confidence in that knowledge.

**4.2.2 Teachers engage in some sort of activity regarding II outside the classroom, in their private life**
Both participants provided evidence of interest and engagement in II related activities outside the classroom.

Gina runs the “seven minutes of music to get to class” at her school, and took the initiative to include Aboriginal music during Aboriginal Education month. They also network successfully to connect and find resources, such as the composer friend that ended up supplying them with repertoire for their students. Megan has attended powwows in the past, and is actively engaged in social media around II.

My participants display a level of commitment to continued awareness and learning of II in both musical and sociopolitical facets. The literature reveals that educators’ commitments outside the classroom can allow them to become better-attuned to social structures and ideologies that result in their unique, individual relationships to FNMI peoples and this land (e.g. Kincheloe, 2016). Ideally they would replicate these experiences for their students in some way. Nonetheless, both participants’ actions align with encouragements from the Canadian Teachers’ Federation to embody worldview by familiarizing themselves with social protocols and unique stories from FNMI peoples.

4.2.3 Perceived lack of II integration into music by other teachers

Both participants denied, without hesitation, that Canadian II is sufficiently covered in secondary education in Ontario. Megan mentioned “seven-ish” schools, some with explicit examples, that have II integrated into Arts programs but none of them were music. She highlighted that she didn’t “know any. Any music teachers that incorporate II into their music curriculum.” Gina acknowledged the generalization being made on their part, and that they “don’t know for sure, but that’s what [they] imagine.” So not only have both participants denied
that II is sufficiently covered in their fields, but that there appears to be a complete absence in their immediate network of educators integrating II in secondary music curricula.

These participants’ perceptions align with the literature, or rather the lack of literature. I noted earlier in the introduction to Chapter Two that my review did not yield any sources with a narrow focus on II integration into music by secondary teachers. As such, it can be assumed that my participants’ perceived lack of integration in this topic is somewhat valid and accurate. Further research will be required to confirm this assumption.

4.3 Conclusion

Overall, my findings show how a small sample of Ontario secondary music teachers is integrating II into their curricula, the obstacles they perceive, and the variety of factors that affect their efforts. They draw on experiences outside of the classroom, use most areas of the music curriculum, and - despite a perceived lack of action on their colleagues and administrator’s behalf, as well as their own lack of confidence - continue to engage with II in their classrooms. My findings point to ways in which Ontario secondary music teachers perceive II, accessibility to its relevant resources, and its uses in the classroom, none of which have been studied before at this local level. In the next and final chapter, I offer implications and recommendations for educators, schools, specialist school staff, administrators, education associations, parents, and communities on further supporting and improving practices of II integration within music.
Chapter Five: Conclusion

5.0 Introduction

This chapter will draw an end to this paper. Following an overview of the research study and my key findings from the previous chapter, I will outline the broad and narrow implications pertaining to the educational community and myself, respectively. In the latter half of this chapter, I will make recommendations and highlight what I believe should be areas for further research. This chapter, and ultimately this paper, will be concluded in the final section.

5.1 Overview of Key Findings and their Significance

The findings of Chapter Four, which are categorized into two main themes, each with their sub-themes, present how the participants of this study have reportedly integrated Indigenous Issues (II) into their music classrooms, as well as some influencing factors. Within the former theme, both participants found II integration possible in performance, culture, and history requirements of the music curricula, but not so much in composition. Unfortunately, within that same theme, they also each expressed that there was a lack of available, authentic repertoire and resources at their disposal. Within the latter theme, it was found that both participants lacked confidence in their abilities to teach II, despite the fact that they each had over a decade’s experience with the topic. Outside of the classroom, they are both reportedly active in some sort of II engagement. Finally, both participants perceived a lack of II integration on behalf of other music teachers.

My participants’ contributions to this research are ultimately a contribution to the existing education research landscape surrounding II. The findings I drew from our interviews are significant in many ways. They add voice to strengthen the findings of others who have published the reported lack of repertoire, resources, and alternative music-making in the form of
composing and arranging. Furthermore, my findings on teacher engagement with II related activity in personal life are also echoed by the literature, and thus help other educators with similar interested to incorporate II in their classrooms. Finally, my findings are also valuable additions to some gaps I observed in the literature regarding how many music teachers are incorporating II into their curricula, and how their self-confidence in the topic factors into their teaching of it. It is my hope that Gina and Megan’s voices here will encourage other researchers to advance our understanding of how music education is and can be benefited through an integration of II.

5.2 Implications

The implications of the above findings are organized into two sub-sections; broad and narrow implications. In this paper, broad implications are shared for the educational community at all levels, including school staff, parents, students, ministries, and boards. Narrow implications, on the other hand, are for my own professional identity and practice as an educator.

5.2.1 Broad: The educational community

The following broad implications have been drawn from the aforementioned findings. I will address them in the order they appear within Chapter Four. To start, with regards to how II has been practiced in curricular areas, my participants implied that administration may have been supportive in some way. Unfortunately it is possible that teachers are either not approaching composition at all, or when they do, it is largely traditional. As a result, Indigenous and Western musical stereotypes may be perpetuated, and students may only come to understand composition in a limited way; notated, Western, and classical.

My participants’ lack of confidence in teaching through an II lens draws forth the possibility that there may be a lack of easily accessible resources in Ontario. However, teachers
may also not be invested enough to make use of resources already available to them. Furthermore, whether it was a result of lacking parental or community pressure, teacher education programs up until now may not have valued greater teacher and student II awareness.

It is also possible, however, that teachers who do a very good job of integrating II might be overly self-critical, to the point where they don’t believe they fulfill the necessary requirements for doing this work. Since my sampling criteria only accounted for whether teachers have incorporated II into their own curriculum, and there was no additional criteria of how well they thought they did that, I may have ended up interviewing music teachers who are not the best at integrating II, but are very enthusiastic to help in its progress.

My participants’ engagement with II related activities outside the classroom implies that teachers currently attempting to integrate II may be doing so as a result of personal investments. It is therefore possible that other school staff, parents, and students are also engaged in some sort of similar activity - something that could potentially be capitalized on. This begs the question: is the most authentic way to learn about II through social involvement rather than academic involvement? Another question comes from finding a perceived lack of II integration by other music teachers; is there in fact such a deficiency and why? It may be the case that music teachers do not have a working knowledge or understanding of II or its connections to music. Administrations and boards may also not be adequately supporting music teachers who pursue it. Finally, I would suggest that music teachers may not have valuable or effective conferences and collaborations around this research topic.

5.2.2 Narrow: Your professional identity and practice

This study and its findings have led me to make an array of decisions regarding what I will do for my current and future students, their respective parents, colleagues, and communities.
I want to incorporate II as much as possible without being fearful of appropriating, stereotyping, or delivering problematic teachings. I will do this by bringing in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) artists to my classes, keeping an eye out for emerging artists, continuing to engage with politics and news, collaborating with other teachers to learn more and brainstorm, establishing a safe space, and attending as many conferences and events hosted by the FNMI community (such as powwows) as possible to maintain networks and professional development. In an effort to pursue a more social than academic learning of II, I may even start my own organization. One that acknowledges II, and works with the FNMI community, to promote related musical programming for musical ensembles in schools, and is committed to bringing awareness to all intersecting issues of equity.

It is my wish to do all these things because, in conjunction with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s (TRC) *Calls to Action* (2015) for educators, I believe it is part of my responsibility as a teacher and settler in reconciliation. Generally, I believe all teachers are responsible for contributing to students’ involvement in politics, news, social issues, and citizenship - II being an example of all of these. Schools are similarly responsible for education, not only of settler students, but of the broader settler communities of this country, on the true, unabridged history of Canada and its relationship with its Indigenous peoples. Equitable education such as this requires, in my opinion, safe spaces for white privilege, Indigenous genocide, racism, sexism, and other intersectionalities to be discussed. I believe conferences and professional associations are capable of, and should be, providing valuable connections for educators seeking to improve their practice. Hopefully educators will use these meaningful connections to create constructive, individual experiences – different from reading a book or
academic article – for themselves and their students to better understand, address, and reconcile with II.

5.3 Recommendations

Similar to broad implications, the following recommendations have been drawn from the Chapter Four findings and are addressed in their respective order here. First, with regards to fulfilling all areas but composition in the music curricula, it is recommended that teachers first ensure they are teaching composition or arrangement in a variety of ways, such as DJing, remixing, graphic notation, and traditional staff notation. In support, administrators should be supportive in helping these teachers acquire composition resources, as well as guest conductors and music makers.

To ensure the continued teaching of II, safe spaces should always be facilitated by either a teacher, administrator, parent, specialist school staff, persons with training, or someone related with an FNMI community. This should also take place during PD days, with administrators highlighting the importance and urgency of an II understanding, as well as making sure to address insecurities around appropriation. Furthermore, school communities should propagate II at school concerts and events where parents are present, in order to create a sense of urgency that may help address the perceived lack of accessible resources for teachers.

Teacher confidence should be boosted through support at all levels. For example, teacher education programs must push II as a topic of great importance. In order to inspire public action, the federal and provincial governments should further educate the public on II and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. There should also be an Indigenous archive added to the Ontario Educational Resource Bank (OERB) with a variety of I/S music lesson plans and an accessible
interface; at the moment, an advanced search for II related music lesson plans for any grade yields only twelve results.

To follow the example set by my participants, both of whom are engaged with II related activities outside of the classroom, I recommend that schools, boards, or the Ontario Ministry of Education should offer school staff, students, and the community, opportunities to attend or host Indigenous activities during or outside school hours. Teachers should also share their experiences and encourage their community members to do the same through presentations at PD days, conferences, and social media. This may bring more music teachers who incorporate II into their curricula out of the woodwork. Ultimately, if too many of them are missing, administrators and boards should make a concerted effort to support music teachers in pursuing II integration, which includes funding for guest Elders and artists. Conferences hosted by music educator associations, like the Ontario Music Educators Association (OMEA), should also feature more valuable speakers and resources (such as related lesson plans, instruments, manipulatives, and guests or groups that could be invited to classrooms) for their members.

5.4 Areas for Further Research

The findings of this study have left me with so many unanswered questions about the methods of II integration, as well as the realities of it, because I do acknowledge that my participants have only provided me with their personal perceptions of world. Educational research scholars should direct their attention to all areas of further research outlined here, due to the emerging prominence of II in topics of education, and it’s inversely proportional presence in music education as observed by this study.

Some lingering questions regarding the methods and challenges of II integration for music teachers include: how could my personal fears be combatted? How could II be supported
or covered through students composing and arranging music? How have teacher education programs delivered II awareness in the past and how does that compare to their current delivery? It is important to make this comparison to reflect on where progress has been made, and how that has affected current teachers in their practice. Perhaps teacher education programs could be improved based on this research.

Similarly, there are areas that lack research with regards to the current state of II education in music. Although this study may have added to these unexplored areas, it still has not been able to answer questions, such as: to what extent are schools and board administrators really supporting music educators in integrating II? How many music teachers are successfully ensuring safe spaces at all in their classrooms? How many music teachers integrate II into their curriculum? How, if at all, are boards and administrators making II resources available to teachers, especially those with little to no background on the topic? Are parents, especially those who homeschool their kids in Ontario, aware of II? Is there a relationship between teacher self-confidence vs. how well they execute II in music? Are II resources in Ontario easily accessible to practicing teachers? Which leads to better II integration by a teacher: social or academic involvement? How much of Ontario school staff, parents, and students (organized by region), report engaging in II related activities outside the classroom? How frequently are music educator associations, like the OMEA, featuring II related speakers and resources for their members? These areas likely require large scale surveys of the education community.

5.5 Concluding Comments

This study has allowed me to extensively explore a topic that has been troubling my colleagues, professors, and I forever. How do we, as secondary music teachers, incorporate II in our classrooms? It turns out it will continue to trouble me, only to a lesser extent. In conducting
my research, I have been put in contact with several guiding figures and insightful sources that have led me through careful reflection of my positioning as a non-White settler seeking to raise awareness of II, decolonize education, and help students come to an understanding of their personal relationship to this land and its Indigenous peoples. This journey has also led me to see that my passions are shared by a larger community, and that I would do well to reach out of my comfort zone and make more connections. I only hope that my connections will also be able to benefit from the findings I have shared here.

While the findings of this study point to a very long list of questions and areas for further research, it is worth remembering that research in the area of II integration in Ontario high school music classrooms is still in its infancy. It is not my intention to dissuade anyone from exploring this topic, but to encourage them to continue tackling it. Researchers, educators, students, school staff, administrators, communities, and governments are all stakeholders in the public education system, as well as reconciliation with FNMI peoples. I hope that this study has contributed to a greater awareness of II in music education, and that it inspires educators to fulfill their responsibilities by striving to integrate II into their curriculum.
References


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Appendices

Appendix A: Consent Letter

Date: ___________________

Dear ___________________,

I am a graduate student at OISE, University of Toronto, and am currently enrolled as a Master of Teaching candidate. As an I/S music teacher candidate who sympathizes with the FNMI peoples, it is important to me that the future Canadian public will be able to experience II through a decolonized lens. Therefore, I am interested in learning how a sample of I/S music teachers are integrating II into their curricula. Findings obtained from this study may be informative for not only current and preservice music teachers, but equity policy-makers, and leaders in the promotion of decolonization within the educational community. I think that your knowledge and experience will provide insights into this topic.

I am writing a report on this study as a requirement of the Master of Teaching Program. The purpose of this requirement is to allow us to become familiar with a variety of ways to do research. My data collection consists of a 60 minute interview that will be audio recorded. I would be grateful if you would allow me to interview you at a place and time convenient to you.

The contents of this interview will be used for my assignment, which will include a final paper, as well as informal presentations to my classmates and/or potentially at a conference or publication. I will not use your name or anything else that might identify you in my written work, oral presentations, or publications. This information remains confidential. The only people who will have access to my data will be my research supervisor and my course instructor. You are free to change your mind at any time, and to withdraw even after you have consented to participate. You may decline to answer any specific questions. I will destroy the audio recording after the paper has been presented and/or published which may take up to five years after the data has been collected. There are no known risks to you for assisting in the project.

Please sign the attached form, if you agree to be interviewed. The second copy is for your records. Thank you very much for your help.

Sincerely,

Sarah Kamalzadeh
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 at any time without penalty.

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

Signature: ______________________________________

Name (printed): __________________________________

Date: ______________________
Appendix B: Interview Protocol

I will begin by introducing myself; my name is Sarah Kamalzadeh and I’m an MT teacher candidate at OISE. My music background includes a Bachelor of Music in education degree at UofT’s Faculty of Music on the French horn. I would like to thank you for participating in my research study. The aim of this qualitative research is to learn how secondary music teachers include Canadian II in their curriculum. This interview should take approximately 60 minutes, and is comprised of approximately 23 questions. The interview protocol has been divided into five sections, beginning with your background information, followed by details of your efforts to include II in the secondary music curriculum, your beliefs and values on the topic of colonization, possible influencing factors, and ending with next steps for teachers. I want to remind you that you can choose not to answer any question, and can remove yourself from participation at any time. Do you have any questions before we begin?

To begin, can you please state your name for the recording?

Section A – Background Information

1. How long have you been living in Canada?
   a. (If born here) Can you describe your relationship to indigeneity (i.e. Canadian, Indigenous, FNMI, Settler, etc.)?
   b. (If not born here) Which country did you immigrate from? How do you identify your nationality (i.e. Canadian, Settler)?

2. How many years have you been working as an OCT qualified teacher in Canada?
a. Was that all in Toronto?

b. Were you a full-time music teacher for all of that?

3. What grades and subjects have you previously taught?
   a. Which do you currently teach?

4. How long have you taught in this school?

5. Can you describe the community in which your school is situated (i.e. specific diversity, socioeconomic status)?
   a. How many Indigenous students attend your school?

6. How would you describe your music background?
   a. Do you have any performance or professional music experience?
   b. Which post-secondary music schools did you attend, if any?
   c. Which program did you complete within it?

7. How did you learn about II in Canada? (i.e. teachers’ college PD personal research, personal life)

8. On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being not at all confident and 10 being very confident how would you rate your confidence in teaching about II?
   a. Can you tell me about why you chose that number?
   b. How does you think your confidence influences your ability to teach about it?

**Section B – Including II in the Secondary Music Curriculum**

9. Could you walk me through how you planned and delivered a recent unit in a secondary music course?
   a. PROMPTS (guest artists or conductors, etc.)
   b. Would you say this was a typical unit for you?
10. What equity-related factors do you usually take into account when designing a unit?
   a. PROMPTS (safe space, etc.)

11. Can you walk me through a time you included II into a unit or lesson in the past?
   a. PROMPTS (what pieces/material included, where located it, assessments or resources used, elder, community guest speakers, etc.)
   b. How did students respond?
      i. (if negatively at all) How did you handle these responses?
   c. What would you do differently next time, if anything?

12. How often do you try to incorporate II into your units?
   a. Which units receive this attention?
   b. Do you find it is impossible to do this with certain units?

13. How else have you seen II incorporated into other teachers’ music units or lessons?

Section C – Values and Beliefs

14. In your opinion, are Canadian II sufficiently covered in secondary music education in Ontario?
   a. What percentage of secondary music teachers would you say are including these issues into their curriculum?
   b. What are you basing this estimate on? (e.g., own experience, media, etc.)

15. During your years of teaching (pre-service or in-service), has there been a change in awareness within the teaching community?
   a. Do you think there needs to be (more) of a change? In what way?

16. Why do you incorporate II into your secondary music teaching?

Section D – Possible Influencing Factors
17. In your view, how does your identity as a (insert participant identity) influence how you approach teaching II?

18. How do you think your music background influences how you approach teaching II?

[PROMPT from prior responses in Section A]

19. What resources are available to you in learning and teaching about II?
   a. What resources would you like to see?

Section E – Next Steps

20. What challenges and barriers do you face in your practice? (i.e. disinterest, administration, community, racism, stereotypes)
   a. What do you think needs to be done to minimize and eliminate these challenges and barriers?

21. As a pre-service teacher who wants to learn how to incorporate II in their music curriculum, what advice do you have for me?

Thank you, sincerely, for your time and considered responses. Do you have any questions for me?

Finally, I would like to remind you that my contact info, as well as that of the UofT Research Ethics Board, is on your copy of the Letter of Consent. Thanks again for your participation!