Chapter 5
Teaching Reconciliation and Treaty Education Through a Leveled Reading Series in Primary Schools in Canada

Calvin Racette and Alison Sammel

Abstract This chapter discusses how Indigenous ideologies and perspectives are being embedded in schools in Saskatchewan, Canada, through Reconciliation and Treaty Education projects. Through dialogue, Alison explores practical ways Calvin Racette, a Métis Elder from Saskatchewan, has worked on projects to Indigenizing education. This chapter outlines how Calvin worked with teachers and his wider community to do an art project and student conference entitled *Treaty4 Project* which won the 2018 Canadian Governor General's History Award for Excellence in Teaching. His second project, called *Under One Sun* addresses Treaty education through a series of 54 books, and Elder videos, for Kindergarten to grade eight students, published by Nelson Education. In this book series, Calvin and his cowriters introduce key concepts to re-educate and re-shape the history of the Indigenous peoples in Canada while also awakening new ways of negotiating reconciliation. They present information in a way that focuses on healing, reconciliation, and a collaborative way forward. These classroom materials included a teacher's guide to assist with understanding and embedding the teaching outcomes of Treaty education agendas. Each book is designed to be used as a leveled reading strategy to improve literacy while embedding Indigenous histories and cultural competencies and perspectives. Throughout this chapter, Calvin provides a glimpse of what it was like to grow up as a Métis child and how the support of his family encouraged him to become a teacher, a community leader, and ultimately be recognized as a community Elder.

C. Racette
Regina Public Schools, Regina, Canada

A. Sammel (✉)
Griffith University, Gold Coast, Australia
e-mail: a.sammel@griffith.edu.au

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Dialogue can be the midwife of inspiration, reflection, and understanding. Yet, in our very busy teaching practices, little time is available for deliberate academic dialogue with our peers. Much of our conversations tend to focus on administration or logistic functions and rarely do we focus on thoughts and emerging ideas from our chosen disciplines. This is an academic tragedy, as many pedagogic insights emerge from the rich, dynamic interplay started over a cup of coffee. Gadamer's (1989) concept of the fusing of horizons speaks to the importance of these kinds of dialogues. When Gadamer (1989) writes of horizons, he is referring to conscious and subconscious perceptions, beliefs, and biases that are brought into any discussion. These horizons are twofold: a historical horizon (defined by the past and the traditions that have resulted from it) and a present horizon (that encompasses all that is believed and understood by a person at this moment in their current situation). They are interconnected as the historical horizon influences the present horizon and as such and must be acknowledged and examined so that the present horizon can be better understood. The explorations of these horizons result in what Gadamer (1989) refers to as their fusing. In this fusion, the historical horizon remains fixed, while the present horizon "is continually in the process of being formed because we are continually having to test all our prejudices" (Gadamer, 1989, p. 306). It is through dialogue between the two horizons that understanding can grow. Gadamer (1989) proposes that developing a rich understanding is not something that can be achieved individually, but through dialogue when people lay open their experiences and horizons, and entertain the possibility of change and growth. In this chapter, Calvin and I seek to enter into this type of Gadamerian dialogue where historic and present horizons "fuse" in an attempt to capture understandings of what it means to Indigenize education.

Alison: By way of an introduction, can you tell us about your life and your link to teaching and learning?

Calvin: I grew up in a prosperous rural community in Saskatchewan on the proverbial wrong side of the tracks. There were about 10–12 Métis[1] families living in the community. We were all marginalized by the larger society. Up until the 1940s, the Métis were not seen as citizens. They were excluded from the education system; were not allowed to live in towns because they did not pay taxes. Growing up in the 1950s and 60s, the exclusion was very much part of life.

Although we were disenfranchised by the wider community, I would say I grew up in a conditional environment: conditional on the fact that I played by the rules and conformed to the majority society's value system. This was especially the case when I was in school, as I was a different person than I was at home. At school, I learned and followed the norms of the school community. This allowed me to fit into some degree with the other students. It was also in school that I discovered the teachers who were interested in me as a person and they encouraged me to be a successful learner. They understood that the odds of a successful graduation were against me, but they were willing to help me all they could. The statistics from previous graduations

[1]Métis are people of mixed European and Indigenous ancestry, and one of the three recognized Aboriginal peoples in Canada. For more information please see: http://firstpeoplesofcanada.com/fp_metis/fp_metis1.html

and dropout rates showed very few Métis students completed high school. The lack of curriculum relevance and basic teacher support was not there. I believed some teachers would help me as long as I gave them my best effort. I was able to see a type of role model that I liked, but I also was able to see many teachers that I did not want to emulate.

Back then, it was normal for the Métis boys to leave school at Grade 8 or age 16 and make their way into the workforce. However, I chose to stay in school and graduate. After I finished school, I joined the other Métis men in the workforce. My high school education proved to be very useful during the years I spent in the construction industry. I was able to read manuals, fill out the forms, and take a lead role on the work crew. Several years later and the father of three children, I entered into university with the help of a government bursary. I was determined to become a teacher as I was fascinated with how my children learned. Upon graduation, I was told by one of my university instructors and also the Area Education Committee from the Métis Community that I was a change agent. This meant that I had a responsibility to make life better for myself and Métis children. I started teaching and quickly recognized the disparity that existed and set out to make education better for Métis and First Nations children.

I worked in the area of Indigenous education for 34 years. I continually challenged the status quo and was determined to level the playing field for these marginalized students.

Alison: Growing up, what were your family's understandings about education?

Calvin: Growing up, education was considered a much-desired thing. My mother was a firm believer in education and was determined that her children would go to school and have a better life than she did. My mother worked as a house cleaner and did sewing and laundry for people. She believed that her children deserved better and that they were equal with the other children from the town. She recognized the path that the students who did not graduate from school were only able to travel. She believed we were capable of more and could be leaders as opposed to simply workers.

My mother died of cancer when I had just turned 13. I elevated her to a pedestal and was determined to get my Grade 12 as a means of honoring her. My siblings and I adopted her philosophy on education and continually told ourselves that it was a case of *when* we graduate, rather than *if* we graduate from high school. My father, however, was a farmer and time spent in school meant less time that we spent working on the farm. We would miss blocks of time during the planting and harvest season. This was not an uncommon practice for all the farm students. I preferred to go to school and would only miss school when I had to work on the farm. Upon reflection, I believe it was my unwritten agreement to my teachers who believed in me and also to the promise I made to myself to graduate to honor my mother. I would work hard to catch up on the work I missed and learn the new content. I especially enjoyed how Math connected things. I was good in Math and actually enjoyed the challenge.

Alison: Did you see your Métis heritage in the curriculum you taught—and what did you think about that?

Calvin: Métis content was never taught in school. I think in Grade 5 we studied Canadian history and spent a lesson on the Northwest Resistance.[2] At school, we were told this resistance was a rebellion, and Louis Riel was a traitor against Canada and was hanged for opposing the government. It was in university that I learned about Métis history and its place in Canadian history. It was here I learned that Louis Riel was central to the struggle for Métis identity in Canada. He became a very polarizing figure and challenged the Western status quo. He was educated, and he used his knowledge and skills to oppose the Canadian legal and political system in an effort to give Métis people equal access to Canadian life, education, and the workforce. If this perspective of Riel and Métis history were taught in schools, I believe more Métis students would have stayed in school. I believe that if students were educated about Métis history and their struggle against unfair government infrastructure and policies, then students would have understood and fought to maintain the rights that Riel gave his life for. It is our nature, as Métis people, to not go easy into anything without a fight.

It was also at university that I learned about the role of the church, the subjugation of the First Nations and Métis people, and their struggle to survive. I learned that First Nations children were forcibly sent to residential schools and Métis children were marginalized and not allowed to go to school until 1940. Learning this made me angry to see what happened, but it gave me a sense of pride. The Indigenous people were pursued in a genocidal manner and they survived. I championed their resilience and became a champion of the underdog.

Alison: What assumptions do you think your parents and the community had about Western knowledge? And do you think they would have liked to see Métis content knowledge or processes taught at your school?

Calvin: I think my parents believed that Western knowledge was superior and that in order for us to be successful, we had to conform and learn those things. Also, education was something relatively new to the Métis community and they were just grateful that we were learning to read and write and being given a chance at success. I think the Métis parents of my early school days looked at the community in terms of who treated them decently and who accepted their children. In my adult working career, I learned that the education system is also seen as a commodity in terms of cost and length of attendance. That success in education could be viewed as a product that could be translated into a wage. You went to school to get an education, so you could get a job. The more education you got, the better job you could get. It was never viewed as a process of learning where life skills, citizenship, or parenting skills were developed.

In Canada today, children are not held back so attendance is not considered a factor. Children are not held back in schooling. They are promoted and remain with their age cohort. Mastery of the appropriate grade level skills is considered secondary and the hope is that the next teacher will catch you up as your willingness to attend

[2] In 1885 there was a brief but unsuccessful uprising against the government of Canada by the Métis people led by Louis Riel in Saskatchewan. Riel was charged with treason, was tried by a biased jury and executed. See https://library.usask.ca/northwest/background/riel.htm.

or work harder improved. Therefore, we have many children entering high school without appropriate reading, writing, comprehension, and math skills. Their work habits are poor from an inconsistent attendance and they simply lack the skills to succeed. As a result, the exodus of students at high schools is overrepresented by Indigenous students who have received limited educational support.

When I was growing up, failing a grade was common and was seen as a detriment to your progress as a person and to your position in society. It was perceived that you had something wrong with you and the result was to stream you into a special classroom. This led to society assuming you were not a capable learner and therefore, you would be a substandard employee. The Métis community also felt it was their lot to have limited access and to be grateful to be allowed laboring positions. In retrospect, I know that the Métis people I knew and worked with had amazing survival skills. The men were all master carpenters and had no training. The women were amazing seamstresses and cooks. I think they believed that learning the Western ways would allow them to have a better life. As I learned during my entire life, that fitting in wasn't an option. I had to work at least at 110% to be considered acceptable in every position I ever held. I was scrutinized because of my ancestry (being Métis) and doubts were always raised as to my ability to succeed. I knew that having both Western and Métis knowledge helped me to become the change agent that was outlined for me because I graduated from university. Although, I believed I had to know everything to be considered equal to the non-Métis community.

Alison: Where did you learn about Métis knowledge and how did you learn it? In hindsight, how did you make sense of both these knowledge bases?

Calvin: I learned a tremendous amount from my uncles. They were my mentors in the workforce. I also remained connected to my Métis community. I learned about relationships, survival, and I also learned many traditional skills, such as cooking, hunting and fishing, and carpentry skills. I learned about Métis history from the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research library when I was in university. It was there I learned about the theory of Canada's colonial history and the oppression and subjugation of the Indigenous people. It was also where I learned how to understand the power relations that created Indigenous and Métis oppression, and how to navigate my way through this space to help myself and Métis children. It was there, I also found many allies, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. By learning Métis history, I realized that in order to change the dominant historical storyline, Indigenous people needed to become the authors of their own stories.

Alison: What does colonization mean to you?

Calvin: Colonizing is the onslaught of European values that were imposed on the Indigenous peoples of the world. European countries that had navies sought out foreign lands where they subjugated the Indigenous peoples and seized their wealth and took it back to Europe. They imposed their language, their value system, their government, and their religious views onto the Indigenous people. Over a long period of time, they eroded the identity of the Indigenous people and placed them in a role of being subservient.

Alison: I feel such profound pain when I read this. As someone who is not Indigenous, I cannot fathom the reality of this. What was the reality of this like as a child, and

as an adolescent? And what was the experience like when you first started to come across the "theoretical understandings" of colonization?
Calvin: Being one of the first cohort of Métis children to be given access to formal schooling in town, I felt happy to be given the chance to go to school. Even at my young age, I was happy to be offered the opportunity to do more with my life than what the older members of my community had been given. I believed in the power formal education offered Métis students to integrate into the wider community. I had older siblings who also believed in education and shared our mother's dream. They always knew that things could be better and encouraged me.

When I was studying at university, I realized the long-term impacts of colonization and who benefited while others suffered. When I learned this, I felt a certain amount of anger. But, from that anger, grew determination to be that change agent and level the playing field. I encouraged others to graduate from school and go to university. One of my mantra statements was "they can't take it away from you". I also learned about the power of relationships and the importance of allies and friendships. These bonds go beyond the community and I realize that the struggle to make changes is not mine alone. There are many who share that struggle and most of it comes from wanting to be a good person. I realize there are many teachers who want to share another side of Canadian history. Like me, they believe that presenting a balanced view can build a shared history that benefits all.

What I have learned is that Métis history and voice needs to be included in the history of Canada. And all people need to understand what happened in order to heal and move forward. I learned that in order to challenge the colonial views on history, I needed to create a strategy or a business plan that would allow me to work on behalf of my Métis community. I believed we needed to reshape how the wider community understood our identity. In order to do this, I knew that I needed allies and support. I found this support in the Métis community as well as my university community.
Alison: Who are the Indigenous peoples of Canada and what does Indigenizing education mean to you personally?
Calvin: There are many different peoples in Canada who are referred to as Indigenous peoples—these are the Inuit, the Métis, and the First Nations peoples. There is a wide range of worldviews that exist within the Indigenous community, so there is not one straightforward answer. What is common to these Indigenous worldviews is that the Creator, the heavenly bodies, the elements, the plants and animals all have a sacred place and exist in relationship with each other. Humans also are connected in this relationship but are considered the lowest because we need the rest of Creation to exist. They, however, do not need us.

Therefore, I think the term "Indigenizing education" has different meanings to different people. From an education perspective, Indigenizing education is often seen as taking Indigenous content and teaching it through a Western lens to be evaluated in a Western reporting system. This is a common approach to the school systems, and I believe that it is a wrong approach. For Indigenous people, every concept that exists in the education system for Western society has a parallel teaching in the Indigenous world. Mathematics, Science, History, Health, Language, Literature are subjects that are common in school. The Indigenous peoples of the world have all these within

their teachings. Indigenizing means to learn these concepts from the Indigenous people's viewpoint. Without these Indigenous perspectives being included in formal education, it sends a message that Indigenous content and history have less value.
Alison: What do you believe an educator could do if they wanted to Indigenize their teaching practice?
Calvin: I can see there are a few different ways teachers could Indigenize their educational practice, meaning how they could learn about Indigenous perspectives relating to what they are teaching in their classrooms. There are many other ways of Indigenizing education, but I offer these three approaches as examples. The first would be to ***develop relationships within their local Indigenous communities***. One way of doing this would be to spend time with an Elder and learn about Indigenous perspectives and teaching approaches. Not all teachers have access to an Elder but for those that do they can collaborate with an Elder about concepts that are mandated to be taught in a classroom; you can gain an understanding of these disciplinary concepts through an Indigenous lens and drill down into them and learn them. Once you begin to learn them, you begin to understand the processes of how to see the world from an Indigenous perspective. This perspective is underpinned by teaching interconnections and relationships (rather than isolated facts or information) which is very important not only to sustaining a culture, but also to sustaining the planet. By understanding the concepts, we teach in Western schools from an Indigenous perspective, a teacher can then incorporate and interpret these perspectives into their classrooms so they make sense to the learners.

However, Indigenizing education is not just about adding Indigenous perspectives but also understanding Indigenous pedagogy. By working with an Elder, a teacher can learn how Indigenous people look at the teaching and learning process. In the Métis community and, arguably, other Indigenous communities, central to a pedagogic process are strategies which communicate how things relate to each other. This concept is so important that it was a key theme in the *Under One Sun* project I will talk about later. Unfortunately, in Western schools, too often, the content is delivered in a manner that requires memorization of isolated information: connections are not identified or focused on and historical relationships are not made. This method of delivery is seen as foreign to the Métis.

By understanding school concepts through a dual lens, teachers can then help their students understand interrelated relationships within their community (this is another theme in the *Under One Sun* project). I have found that when students are exposed to this method of teaching, they realize they only have been learning half of the story, and even though the story is presented as fact, it reflects a biased point of view. When students understand that there are multiple perspectives, they often start to think differently and begin to ask different questions. They ask their teachers different questions. When teachers seek to understand the world from an Indigenous perspective, and engage with Indigenous pedagogies, they will find lots of support from like-minded thinkers. Locally and globally, there is a growing body of literature and resources to assist in their understanding of Indigenous perspective.

The second approach to Indigenizing education is by ***accessing and utilizing current, high-quality resources***. Teachers need to access high-quality resources that

offer Indigenous perspectives around the concepts they are teaching. If the resources are supported by their school system, and teachers have access to professional development on how to use these resources, then teachers are more likely to feel comfortable embedding this knowledge into their lessons. The project that I have been working on for the past few years aimed to support teachers in feeling comfortable and confident embedding Indigenous perspectives in their classrooms. The resource that my colleagues and I developed is called *Under One Sun*[3] and it offered an Indigenous perspective of Canada's history through the exploration of Treaties. We did this by writing levelled reading materials in the form of children's story books. Our aim was for teachers to be given the resources, professional development, and time needed to work towards learning or incorporating Indigenous perspectives into their literacy educational practices. I will explain more about this later in the chapter.

The third way of how teachers could Indigenize their educational practice is to ***build a school community that is culturally safe for students***. If a teacher creates a space where Indigenous perspectives are taught, valued, and respected alongside Western knowledge bases, then I believe Indigenous students will engage more with what they are learning. Teachers can formally incorporate their Indigenous student voices, perspectives, and knowledge bases into lesson plans. When students feel safe, they are more likely to share the information they are learning in their homes and communities about the concepts being studied. Building healthy relationships with the students and their families is vital to this work and may encourage family members of the Indigenous students to share their knowledge with the class. Rather than being a one-off thing, if this is included for each concept, it will signal to the community that Indigenous people and their knowledge are valued.

Alison: Can you provide us with an example of these practices?

Calvin: There are two projects I have worked on that illustrate how a teacher can Indigenize their practice that I will talk about in this chapter. The first one is called *Under One Sun* and it is published by Nelson Education. This project is K-8 with six titles available for each grade level. It is a levelled literacy project and the content is about Treaty education. The other project is called the *Treaty4 Project,* which I will explain in a moment. It was a student conference that involved an art project at the high school level. This project received the Canadian Governor General's History Award for Excellence in Teaching.

A good example of how Indigenous people and their voice can be valued in schools is through our Treaty 4 Student Conference Project. This project developed because two teachers in an affluent high school wanted their students to know more about Treaty 4, how their students have benefited from Treaty 4, and how they could be good treaty citizens. The project used an art theme of the 4 Directions or the Medicine Wheel (Fig. 5.1).

The students built a mural from 264 small pieces of artwork that they did after participating in the student conference. The student conference hosted workshops about issues affecting the Indigenous community and the impact of these issues. Issues such as murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls, land claims, treaty

[3]For more information about *Under One Sun* see https://school.nelson.com/under-one-sun/.

Fig. 5.1 Four directions of the medicine wheel. Permission from Leia Laing and Naomi Fréçon

rights, Métis people who live outside of a treaty. To more fully understand what they had learned, the students did follow-up work in their school and community (such as interviews with community members, research assignments, blogs, and a writing project). The mural formed part of their expression about what they had learned.

As background, we live in the southern part of Saskatchewan, Canada. In 1874, Treaty 4 was negotiated between the British Crown and the First Nations of Southern Saskatchewan. It had clauses that provided a way forward in which European settlers and the First Nations could share a common future. This treaty was seen as a "forever existing" agreement that would be good for all and allow for a prosperous life for all. However, over the decades, the clauses of Treaty 4 and the other Numbered Treaties have been disregarded by the governments and their partners in industry as they implement developmental policies that focus on economic development.

Recently, there has been a huge emphasis in Saskatchewan on the treaties and fair and equitable interpretation of the treaties. One of the huge focuses has been

on the environment and sustainable energy practices. This focus was also key in the Treaty 4 Student Conference Project. This project provided an opportunity for Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators (who worked very hard to put together a safe learning experience for high school students) to explore their roles as responsible citizens in the Treaty 4 area of Saskatchewan. This project was recognized by Historica Canada (Historica Canada is the largest independent organization devoted to enhancing awareness of Canadian history and citizenship) and received a Canadian Governor General's History Award for Excellence in Teaching.

This Treaty 4 art activity was also incorporated into the Grade 7 book within our other project (*Under One Sun*) as a way for students to learn about treaties in Canada. This second project, called *Under One Sun,* is a K-8 levelled literacy project. There are six titles around key Indigenous themes for each grade. This project is a resource that comes with the children's books, cards, or magazines for each grade level, a teacher's guide, Elder videos, and various online and paper-based supports. *Under One Sun* is connected to the Treaty Outcomes for K-8 from Saskatchewan. The Saskatchewan Curriculum uses outcomes that they wish the students to learn for the subject areas. Treaty Outcomes were created for the teaching of treaty education. This resource provides Canadian teachers with an accessible way to explore Indigenous perspectives and Treaty education in the primary and middle years.[4]

Alison: Can you tell me about the relationship between Indigenizing education and communicating an accurate understanding of the history of Canada in schools?

Calvin: This a very broad question. Perhaps, the best way to explain this is to use the *Under One Sun* project. Canadian history has been taught from a very European perspective. This biased story is what I call "Celebratory Canadian history". A perfect example is Canada became a country in 1867; last year Canada celebrated their 150th birthday and for the most part ignored the previous 15,000 years of history. Other examples are the lack of acknowledgement of traditional Indigenous land claims, borders and boundaries of territory, languages, and lifestyle choices. The lack of respect for Indigenous history tells me that this viewpoint speaks of treaties as things that happened in the past, with little relevance for today.

In the most recent past, when the history of the residential schools was exposed and truth and reconciliation became topics of conversation, the concept of treaties emerged; they were seen as historical documents that did have relevance for present-day Canada. Even though the treaties were set up in good faith, the main benefactors of the treaties over the centuries have been the settler society that came to Canada. Therefore, Indigenizing the topic of treaties is to struggle against that long-established, Western-biased narrative. The project that we undertook has been a negotiated story, one that moves the narrative to the left. By this I mean that I understand a story or a history as a continuum. There are right-wing and left-wing perspectives. The current state of teaching treaty education in Canada has come from government's perspective. This viewpoint is based on majority society and their voting status. Hence, the treaties have always been interpreted to benefit the newcomers from Europe. Moving

[4]To explore the Saskatchewan curriculum please see https://www.curriculum.gov.sk.ca/webapps/moe-curriculum-BBLEARN/index.jsp#.

it to the left will allow it be less biased and presented in a much fairer perspective to show that Indigenous people did not benefit as they were supposed to when the treaties were negotiated. I believe there is much more to do and successive generations will have the task and responsibility to further change this biased narrative. I suppose it is like learning to walk: we must begin with slow tentative steps that grow stronger as we go along.

Alison: What are the benefits associated with Indigenizing education?

Calvin: The benefits are many. The most important benefit is that the Métis children will begin to see themselves in the curriculum. Until they do that, formal school learning will not be of value to them. Once they realize they have a place and a role at school, only then will they truly become engaged. I believe the children will become more eager to engage in the school community because they see value in themselves, they see that they belong, and that the best version of themselves is what is needed. It is also important to engage the parents. When they support their children in their learning, they promote participation and encourage their children to attend school. I have witnessed how this leads to higher success rates at school. Belonging and being nurtured is fundamental to success. When Indigenous children feel part of the larger society, they will respond by becoming more engaged and involved in their future, and their society. I have seen how this ultimately promotes a better standard of living when they leave school.

Let me expand upon this—education has been deemed one of the main indicators of success in life. I can use my own self as an example. My parents were not high school graduates. My mother did not get professional employment and my father was a farmer who inherited the land from his father. I have graduated from high school and then university. I was able to help and support my four children to graduate from high school and go to university. They have all graduated and have been able to get professional employment and earn a decent wage. As a result, my nine grandchildren have a better life where they live in stable housing, eat decent meals that are a balanced diet, and are involved in a lifestyle that promotes a healthy life. I explain this process as "doing well". Education has allowed me to do well, and as a result, my children have been allowed to do well, and as a result my grandchildren are doing well. My success has broken a cycle and created a better standard of living for me and my family. There are many Indigenous families that have yet to enter this process or are at the early stages of this process. I am not saying that Métis values and lifestyles have not promoted or allowed for Métis to "do well", but what I am saying is that since colonization, traditional lifestyles, values, and customs have been disrupted, and new infrastructures have been put in place that have not supported the Métis or allowed the continuation of our traditions. Doing well was achievable in our traditional ways, but in this new infrastructure, doing well is not so easy. Since colonization, doing well is now linked to education success. If Métis students do not see themselves in what is taught at school, they will not engage as deeply, and they may not be as successful as they could be, and so this is one way in which the cycle continues.

Another huge benefit is that Indigenous cultures have a huge richness to their history and stories. Teachers who collaborate with the Elders learn about this richness and form valuable relationships. While learning about our Métis history, our

Elders help teachers become better educators. Spending time working with an Elder encourages the teacher to become a learner again and they are able to see the power of engagement that an Elder brings to Indigenous youth. As teachers learn to master the skills the Elder communicates, they enhance their teaching repertoire, not just of Indigenous knowledge and perspectives, but also their pedagogical knowledge and their ability to strengthen relationships with the Indigenous community.

Alison: Do you believe that a non-Indigenous teacher can understand the Métis content? What role do you believe they can they play?

Calvin: Non-Indigenous teachers become allies to the Indigenous community and are able to become the bridges to the Indigenous community. They build relationships with the children and to their families. It is these relationships that create optimal learning environments. Mastering the content takes dedication and a lot of hard work. What is important is that you are open to the content and interact with it. I have found that when Métis students and their culture are valued in a classroom, they become open to sharing their Métis knowledge and traditions. Therefore, if you work to create this safe space, much of the learning will come from the students. The trick is recognizing this fact and building a relationship with the child, their knowledge, and the wider Métis community.

Alison: What are the challenges associated with Indigenizing education?

Calvin: The challenges are many. It takes time and energy on the part of the teacher to develop relationships not only with the students but also with parents and the community. The past has shown that Indigenous parents often did not have successful or pleasant educational experiences, particularly their experiences with teachers. This may mean that building effective relationships can be even more difficult. It needs to be understood that historically, formal Western education was used as a colonization tool in residential schools and Indigenous children were punished for being Indigenous. They were subjected to an onslaught of European values and teachings, but more than that, they were denied their own history, language, and culture. They were taught these things were wrong, often morally wrong. To teach this, the Canadian government partnered with the churches to assimilate the Indigenous children into mainstream society and to deny their own history and heritage. For Indigenous people, education had been the tool of assimilation and led to the disenfranchisement of their own value systems. For children outside of residential schools, the purpose of education was to give you a chance for a better life and a career. For Métis children who for the most part went to mainstream schools, their knowledge and value systems were ignored. They were taught a Western-based value system that devalued who they were and what they thought and denied their family values and traditions. This led to many Métis children feeling ashamed of who they were and when they became adults, they denied their heritage.

These negative aspects of parents or grandparents' own education will influence how they view their own children's education. Therefore, the Métis community are often unwilling to approach the teacher or confront the school. This can be perceived as Métis parents not being interested in their children's education. This is not the case. Based on their history in mainstream education and the ones that attended residential

schools, many Métis parents fear that teachers may expect less, or even punish their children because they are Indigenous.

Often times there are many other dynamics that involve stable housing and food security that take on a more active role. With the dissolving of traditional support structures and resources due to colonization, transience is a huge problem in the Métis community. Métis parents often live in rental housing. They move frequently to access better or more stable housing or employment or access to food security. Often times, there is not a grocery store in their neighborhood, or access to a community agency that provides a food program for the students. This fragments and disrupts their children's education and stable links to a school community. Despite all this, there are still many successful Métis families who engage with the school and teachers and are very involved in the revitalization of their language and culture.

Further, teachers who have good rapport with Indigenous children are often placed in the most difficult classrooms with extra students and fewer resources. Another problem is that the schools in lower socioeconomic areas where there is a higher percentage of Indigenous students are often not the schools experienced teachers want to work in. The system often places new teachers into these environments. The history of public education where I live is that Indigenous parents do not complain about teachers who do not know how to engage their students as often as non-Indigenous parents complain.

From a theoretical or curriculum perspective, the system might support teachers Indigenizing their curriculum, it might even be viewed as an important goal, but practically teachers might not be given the resources, professional development, and time they need to work towards learning or incorporating Indigenous perspectives. It is because of this that the *Treaty4 Project* was developed to support teachers.

Alison: If you were to explain treaty education to someone who has not heard of that term, how would you describe it?

Calvin: Treaty education is a contemporary term. I would explain it by using the historical treaties. Treaties were part of the history of Canada and were signed between the British Crown and the First Nations leaders at certain times in history. All of these treaties had clauses that covered land, rights, education, health, and behavior. Treaties were legal documents that require the descendants of both historical signatories to honor them. In Saskatchewan, the province of Canada in which I live, we all reside on land that was historically negotiated on, as part of a treaty, or is currently being negotiated. Learning about these treaties, the role we play in honoring the clauses of these treaties and interpreting the clauses in a fair and respectful way is a very good way for children to see the effects treaties have on the lives of all people who live on treaty land. It also enables all children to understand that the disenfranchised circumstances many Indigenous people currently live and have grown up in, have been the fault of the wrongs from the past. Teachers have a responsibility to teach about Canada's colonial history as this understanding and acknowledgement is foundational to a fair and equitable society. It is easy to examine what was proposed and agreed to in the treaties and look at the inequities that occurred and realize that the treaties were not, or have not, been implemented in a fair manner as they were intended. It is important to recognize that First Nations were recognized as being

sovereign nations under the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and that was the main reason for treaties to be required to be negotiated.

Alison: Were the early treaties (starting in 1871 CE) seen as the framework for peaceful co-existence—and if so, would you say they currently still reflect this intention?

Calvin: The first thing I would say is that the treaties were signed by both parties, so we are all treaty people and everyone deserves to know the truth and history of our province and country. There are several categories or clauses which flesh out the terms of the treaties. There are commitments and obligations from each side to each other. The first clause of the treaty negotiations is peace and goodwill. This clause continues to have value. It has always had degrees of strain on it but there have been very few incidents in history where the First Nations and Western society have not been able to negotiate in meaningful ways. What continues to be exposed through research and court challenges, is that the treaty obligations have not been fairly interpreted in relation to Indigenous populations. What is interesting is the more treaty relationships are explored and negotiated, the majority of criticism towards treaties is coming from non-Indigenous society as they are being required to share some of the benefits they have enjoyed. Modern Canadian society conveniently forgets or were never told of the huge benefits that they have enjoyed because of the treaties. The standard of living enjoyed by most Canadians rates very highly in world standards. Indigenous Canadians live at third world standards. When non-Indigenous peoples are asked to honor the intended clauses of the treaties, they are often offended and certainly one of the first reactions is that they are unwilling to share or "give back" some of that privilege. They perceive that Indigenous people are trying to "take away what is theirs", what they or their parents and grandparents have worked hard for. They forget (or were not told) that what they gained was originally taken (mostly through violent or murderous means) from Indigenous people whose parents and grandparents, going back thousands of years, all worked hard for it as well. It is important for all Canadians to understand this history and what is currently being explored to honor the legal agreements that were made in good faith by both parties involved in the treaty development process.

Alison: Why do you believe Treaty education is important?

Calvin: Treaty education is important because it creates a place to start the process of reconciliation and healing. Treaties are fact-based documents that come from a historical place. They are historical Canadian documents that are now being seen as foundational documents on which Canada was built. Treaties outline the big-picture items that can then be researched and studied. Teachers and students can examine, discuss, and interpret what they meant at that time and how they would translate 150 years later. They are agreed-upon clauses and it is very easy to look at the clauses and their interpretations to see if they have evolved in a fair and equitable manner. Teachers need to understand that Treaty education is part of Indigenous education in Canada. Treaties talk about a relationship between European newcomers and a wide array of Indigenous cultures. Understanding Indigenous worldview is critical to understanding Indigenous education and Treaty education as part of the bigger picture. Learning the impacts of how the treaties were implemented reveals very

much about the society in which we live. Canadian celebratory history takes a great deal of pride in presenting Canada as a *just* society and they pride themselves on their role in the world as being fair and equitable. A certain amount of discomfort occurs as the topic of treaties and how they evolved is explored. When one group of people benefits more than another group of people, it tells you that the treaties have been unfairly interpreted and it suggests that as a society we must work to together to find solutions. Students see these inequities and when they take what they have learned in school home to their parents, there is often an uneasiness created at the parental level.

I believe the children in our school systems have a remarkable sense of social justice and they quickly see the wrongs of the past. They do not look at things just in terms of economics and career options; they see things as fair and in terms of how it benefits all. Children are the leaders of tomorrow and it is through the learning of these disparities; they often strive to right them as they become adults.

Alison: Can you tell me about your *Under One Sun* project?

Calvin: The *Under One Sun* project began as a Community of Practice. I have worked closely on Treaty education and how to teach treaty outcomes to teachers and students for many years. One of my co-workers proposed we do a Community of Practice and invite K-8 teachers to come and work with us on how Treaty education can be incorporated into teaching, in all subject areas, and what activities and resources can be used to make this possible. It started as a session to unwrap the Treaty education outcomes. We felt it was key to unwrap the outcomes, so the teachers could better understand what they were supposed to be teaching. There are many things that have caused the treaties to be misinterpreted or misunderstood. There is also a huge disjoint in the worldview of the different parties. It is a very challenging area.

Alison: Tell me more about a Community of Practice.

Calvin: In theory it is where a group of like-minded individuals come together to discuss topics that they have a shared interest in. It is through this process, they can learn from each other and become much more informed learners from the process. We had hoped that teachers would come with many ideas on how they taught Treaty education to their students. The ideas they brought were few and my colleague supplied most of them. Jackie had taught from K-8 over her career and had a wide range of incorporating Indigenous content into the existing curriculum. As previously stated, it started to unwrap the Treaty education outcomes; the second part was connecting learning opportunities/activities to the outcomes.

Alison: How did the Community of Practice event go?

Calvin: We billed it as a Community of Practice but in order to make if work we had to prepare background information that had not been pulled together before. After many hours of preparation and discussion, my co-worker and I hosted a Community of Practice for all grade levels from K-8. Teachers were invited from our entire system which has 44 elementary schools. The school division is located in Regina, Saskatchewan and has approximately 1000 elementary or K-8 teachers. The meetings were held at the central district board office and were held after school hours. The meetings were hit and miss in respect to attendance: some grade levels were fairly well-attended, and some were not as well attended as we hoped for. Regardless, the

attendance level was lower than I believe it should have been. What was successful were the presentations themselves. I consider my colleague a master teacher and she has amazing teaching ideas. She also has many years' experience at the K-8 level. She identifies as Métis and has spent over 25 years teaching in an inner-city environment with the majority of her students being Indigenous. Myself, I am more of an historian and I have a very good grasp of Canadian history, the treaties, and how Canadian confederation has impacted Indigenous people. I felt we had put together a very good starting point in which to engage the classroom teachers and we saw the potential to support teachers as they explored what this topic meant for teaching and learning. During the process of delivering a session of the Community of Practice, we were visited by two members of a publishing company. They quickly saw the potential of how this project could turn into a classroom teaching resource and approached us on what they thought was possible.

Alison: How did this project come about?

Calvin: The project came about by luck or fate. The individuals happened to be at the board office meeting with our resource purchase people. For Indigenous materials, I was included into the process. We were delivering a Community of Practice session that day and I invited them to attend. They came and enjoyed the session. They asked if they could return and came back the following week to participate again. From our sessions and in discussion with them, the possibility of a project emerged and then evolved. For my colleague and I, it came about because of frustration with the lack of classroom resources that were age appropriate for students. There was a lack of teacher-friendly materials. Our idea was to create a resource for Saskatchewan teachers that helped teachers teach the Treaty Outcomes. Teachers want literature and resources that connect to the lessons to help them teach. We believed this was an important thing to support.

Alison: What were the publishers looking for in this resource? Were there any differences in your beliefs and the publishers?

Calvin: The differences in belief systems between the teachers, publishers and us, as writers, were many. I don't speak for the non-Indigenous educators but can only assume their beliefs. However, teacher beliefs seemed to emerge as a fundamental theme in this project. Teachers very much want a well-planned resource with lessons and teaching activities that would help them teach Indigenous content or show an Indigenous perspective from a secure place with no potential for backlash from parents or society in general.

One of the main themes that I observed was the idea that Western organizations or power structures believe they have been given the authority to speak for everyone within their jurisdiction. For example, an elected official or Chairperson of the Board of Directors will speak on behalf of people, with the assumption that they all think the same way. Indigenous people believe that you can only speak for yourself and that you do not, and should not, speak for anybody else.

In relation to what the publishers were looking for, as they were a large Canadian publisher, they first and foremost were looking for an Indigenous product that was a levelled literacy resource that was unlike any other resource that existed in Canada. They said that there was nothing out there that included a balanced approach with

all the literacy components; including read aloud, shared reading, guided reading, Elder videos, all focusing on reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing, and representing strategies. They also wanted the resource to include Treaty education and Indigenous ways of knowing and to be a balanced literacy approach. Further discussion led to my colleague suggesting we highlighted the content that spoke to the Truth and Reconciliation Report that had just been released and they could be a marketing tool. They had their own processes, staff in place across the country and had some very definite plans and goals for this resource.

I believe that the publishing company felt there was a great need to provide revised curriculum resources that reflected a more modern Canada: a Canada that had just gone through a major reawakening of its social political history. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples[5] was undertaken in 1991. It was a huge report that was published in 1996 and had over 400 recommendations. I believe it was a huge study on the history of Canada and the role of churches in relation to the persecution and dismantling of Canadian Indigenous peoples through residential schools. It revealed a past that the majority of Canadian society had not heard. It revealed a 120-year period where Indigenous children were placed in residential schools and often abused. They were denied the right to speak their language and practice their culture and for the most part lost aspects of their identity. This sparked controversy and a need for a political reawakening with a determination to make things right by the Canadian people from all backgrounds. This process requires an examination of the past in order to understand how to move forward.

In relation to the differences, there was a huge disconnect in the beliefs of the publisher and the Indigenous community. They looked at things in terms of products while the community thoughts were about a process of being heard and understood. Also, the reviewers were all Western trained and looked at the content from an academic, journalistic perspective. A difference in the worldview existed and this was evident in all aspects. One example was how terminology was used and understood. Understandings of "colonizer", "visitor", or "newcomer" varied greatly between these communities, which led to discussions about how they were applied and understood.

Alison: How does this project link to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Canada?

Calvin: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission emerged from the Federal Apology on Residential Schools and became a blueprint on how Canada could resolve its past practice and history on residential school and the treatment of Indigenous peoples. The Government presented a report that outlined what happened and made 94 recommendations of how Canada could move forward in the areas of education, health, justice, child welfare, language, and culture.[6] Many of the recommendations

[5]For more information on The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples please see https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/royal-commission-aboriginal-peoples/Pages/final-report.aspx.

[6]For more information on The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action, please see https://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf.

were then acted on based on how it could or should be done in the Canadian and international context. It called on agencies and systems to assist in the process. It also then called on the churches to apologize for their role in the residential schools and to create educational materials to teach about that history and to provide opportunities for Indigenous people to participate in that process. It encouraged the creation of programs for youth. Museums and archives were requested to upgrade information to better represent Indigenous people and to more fairly reflect history. It called on a recognition of Indigenous people who attended residential schools and those who perished and were buried. It called on the media, business, and the sports world to become more involved in recognizing Indigenous history and improving relationships.

The 400-plus recommendations led to investments in Indigenous education. It led to apologies by the churches and the Canadian Government. It created a process that allowed for Aboriginal healing at the community level and many community hearings occurred that allowed for Indigenous peoples to tell their story of their experiences. This led to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This most recent report came out with 94 recommendations of how Canadian society, their government, and Indigenous peoples could work together to create a better society that was fair and just for all Canadians. This report was released in the summer of 2015.

Large amounts of investment were required to ensure the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations were enacted, and the Federal Government signaled and committed huge investment in Indigenous education and research. The publisher saw a market for a resource that we were talking about at our Community of Practice. Our resource was developed by and for teachers and took the Treaty education outcomes that had been updated and released in the province of Saskatchewan and made them accessible and usable in classrooms. The publishers asked if we could write classroom materials in book format that could be marketed as a resource that met the teaching outcomes in Treaty education. The teaching outcomes are set by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education for all grade levels K-12 and all subject areas. Specifically, they requested a focus on Indigenous perspectives and Indigenous ways of knowing through children's story books that offered a leveled reading strategy to improve English literacy. They also requested a teachers' guide, so we shared the Community of Practice materials for inclusion into the guide. The project then expanded to having Elder videos and direct connections to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Alison: Can you provide us with a few examples of the *Under One Sun* books and what you wanted to achieve?

Calvin: The early years K-3 format was of little, leveled books that introduced different themes around relationships: relationships with self, with family, with Elders, with community, with animals, and with nature or the environment. However, the stories were not neatly divided into these categories. For example, in the Grade 1 book, *What Do You Share?*, a young child asks the garden, the rabbit, the fish, a berry-bush, the beaver, the bee, and his grandmother what they all share with him, and each communicates what they share (Figs. 5.2 and 5.3).

Fig. 5.2 What do you share Grandmother? Permission from Nelson Publishers Canada

This illustrates how all relationships are interconnected and how everyone depends on each other (including nature). The book *What Does Mother Earth Share?* extends this theme. We used photos of a worm, a goose, and a beaver and showed their daily contributions to the ecosystem. This reflects the Indigenous way of seeing how everything is interconnected. In the books we very much focused on Indigenous worldview and how this worldview centers on connections to the Earth and the value systems of Indigenous people. This philosophy can be seen in every book.

Next, I see a rabbit in the field.

"Rabbit, what do you share?" I ask.

"I share my meat," replies the rabbit.

Fig. 5.3 What do you share Rabbit? Permission from Nelson Publishers Canada

The book *What Is A Family?* was written for Kindergarten children and shows how all families are different but yet the same. We represented different kinds of families—a family with: a mother and a father; two fathers; one mother; one grandmother; one moose and her calf; and a mare and her foal (Fig. 5.4).

We wanted to teach that families can look different and for students to understand that animals have a family too. We also want students to see that we all share common ways of living, we all belong, and we all are necessary to make the world function as the Creator intended; we are all connected (Fig. 5.5).

The middle grades (Grades 4, 5, and 6) had a card-style format with four-fold-out cards (8.5 by 11 inches). In these cards we focused on explaining treaty clauses, what they mean, how they were interpreted, and how they varied in Canada over the years.

Fig. 5.4 What is a family—Humans? Permission from Nelson Publishers Canada

In the cards (Grade 5) *What Treaties mean to you?* we used a student blog format and had students from different places respond to a student's blog. Our aim was to show that treaties across Canada mean different things to different people and that they impact people differently. We used a student perspective to show that treaties have a place within today's society (Figs. 5.6 and 5.7).

In Grades 7 and 8 we used an 8–12-page magazine format. We encouraged students to examine their own value system and perhaps become better citizens by exploring diversity through art, music, blogs, interviews, and personal research. In Grade 7 the *Mother Earth Edition* looks at Indigenous worldview and looks at the clash between an environmental perspective and sustaining Mother Earth or an economic perspective. The image is the Cree worldview and shows how we are all part of the Creator's plan (Fig. 5.8).

Alison: How much autonomy did you have over the project?

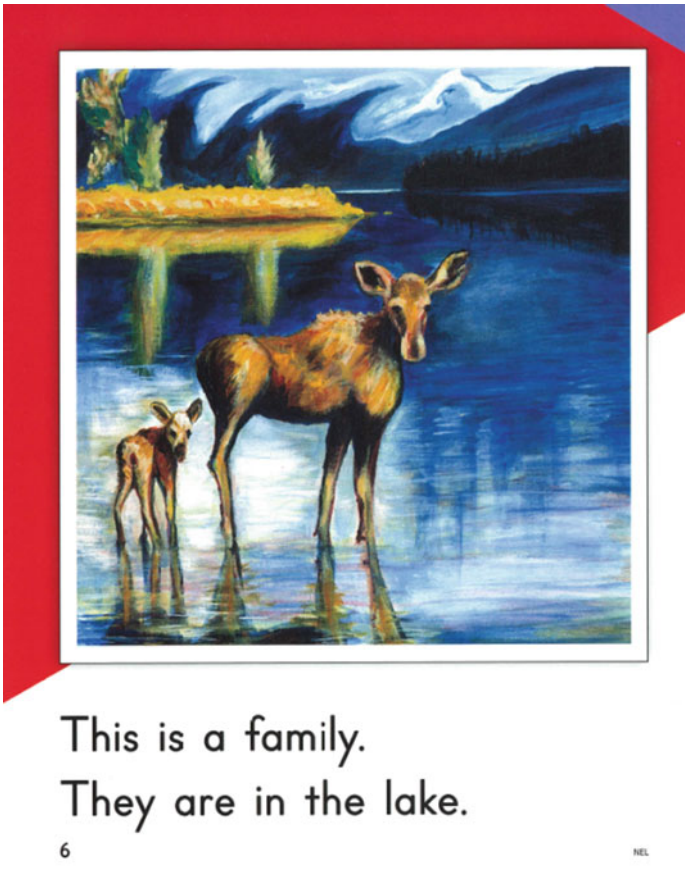
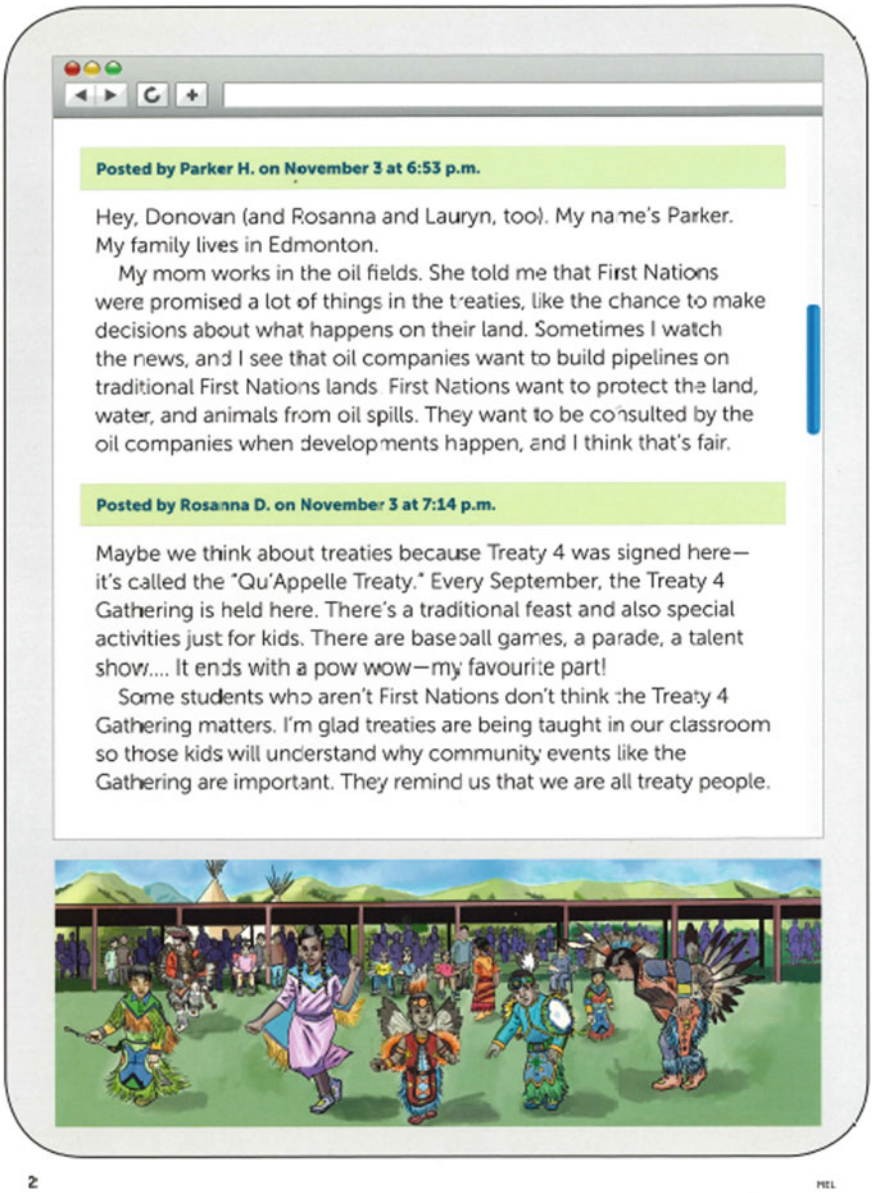


Fig. 5.5 What is a family—Moose? Permission from Nelson Publishers Canada

Calvin: The publisher had a strong sense of what they wanted, and they believe the market was there for what they had in mind. They needed it to be written by Indigenous writers and illustrated by Indigenous artists. They wanted a newer version of Canadian celebratory history that spoke of the wonderful composition of Canada that presented treaties in a positive light and that all was well in Canada. They did recognize that a newer story needed to be told, one that could be told to children that spoke of the evils of the past but could be presented in a way that provided a way forward. They also felt that the Canadian education system was ready for this and a huge appetite existed that they could market a resource of this nature.

As writers, we wanted to present stories that spoke of the evils of Canadian history and told how treaties were not being implemented fairly: stories that showed how First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people had not benefited from treaties and that all the benefits went to settler Canadians. The disparities were obvious to us and a reality that we had all lived. We desperately wanted to tell our side of the story.



Posted by Parker H. on November 3 at 6:53 p.m.

Hey, Donovan (and Rosanna and Lauryn, too). My name's Parker. My family lives in Edmonton.

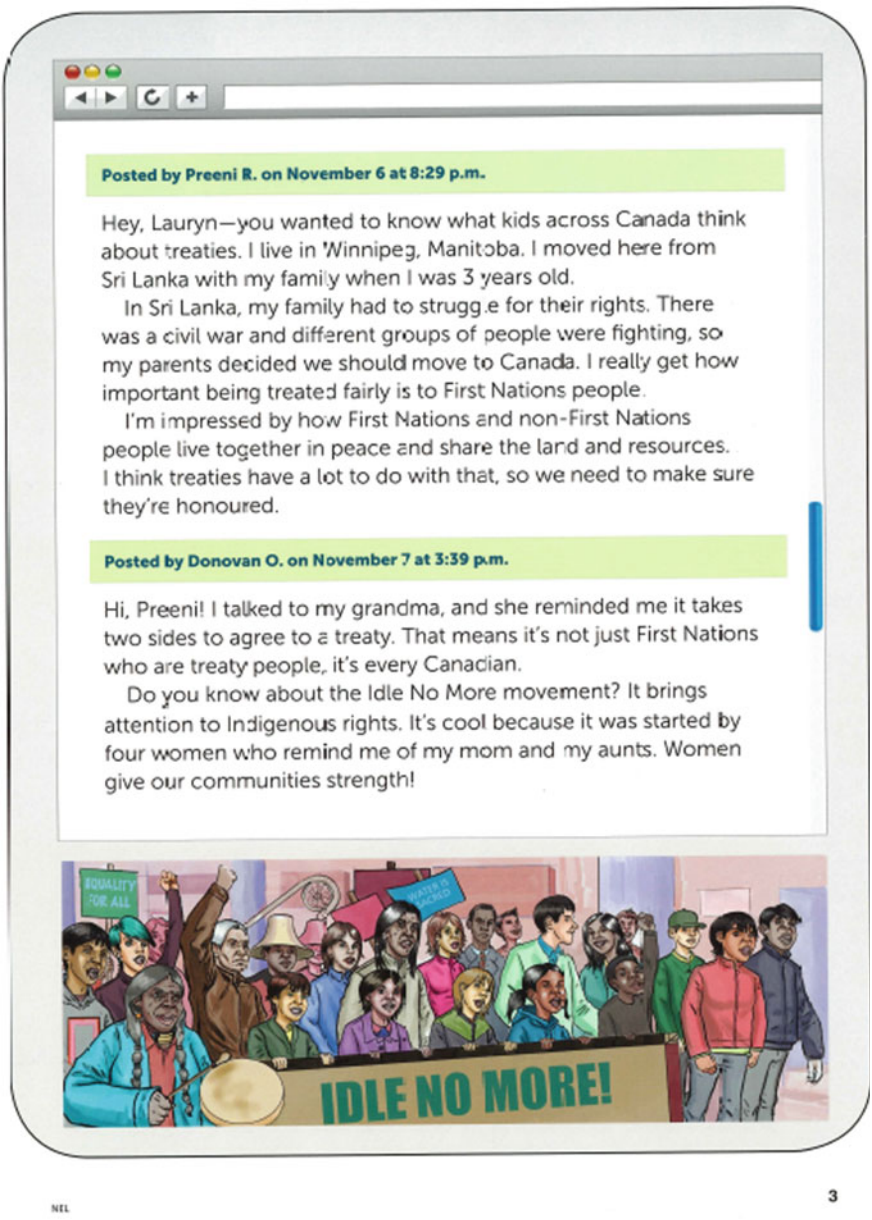
My mom works in the oil fields. She told me that First Nations were promised a lot of things in the treaties, like the chance to make decisions about what happens on their land. Sometimes I watch the news, and I see that oil companies want to build pipelines on traditional First Nations lands. First Nations want to protect the land, water, and animals from oil spills. They want to be consulted by the oil companies when developments happen, and I think that's fair.

Posted by Rosanna D. on November 3 at 7:14 p.m.

Maybe we think about treaties because Treaty 4 was signed here—it's called the "Qu'Appelle Treaty." Every September, the Treaty 4 Gathering is held here. There's a traditional feast and also special activities just for kids. There are baseball games, a parade, a talent show.... It ends with a pow wow—my favourite part!

Some students who aren't First Nations don't think the Treaty 4 Gathering matters. I'm glad treaties are being taught in our classroom so those kids will understand why community events like the Gathering are important. They remind us that we are all treaty people.

Fig. 5.6 What treaties mean to you? Permission from Nelson Publishers Canada



Posted by Preeni R. on November 6 at 8:29 p.m.

Hey, Lauryn—you wanted to know what kids across Canada think about treaties. I live in Winnipeg, Manitoba. I moved here from Sri Lanka with my family when I was 3 years old.

In Sri Lanka, my family had to strugg.e for their rights. There was a civil war and different groups of people were fighting, so my parents decided we should move to Canada. I really get how important being treated fairly is to First Nations people.

I'm impressed by how First Nations and non-First Nations people live together in peace and share the land and resources. I think treaties have a lot to do with that, so we need to make sure they're honoured.

Posted by Donovan O. on November 7 at 3:39 p.m.

Hi, Preeni! I talked to my grandma, and she reminded me it takes two sides to agree to a treaty. That means it's not just First Nations who are treaty people, it's every Canadian.

Do you know about the Idle No More movement? It brings attention to Indigenous rights. It's cool because it was started by four women who remind me of my mom and my aunts. Women give our communities strength!

Fig. 5.7 What treaties mean to you? Permission from Nelson Publishers Canada

Fig. 5.8 Eagle is a very important bird and is considered a protector of the world. Permission from Leah Marie Dorion, artist. http://www.leahdorion.ca/

We soon learned that because the publishing house owned the project, they made the rules. However, they were willing to work with us to find compromises. We wrote stories that allowed for an understanding of a new reality, one that told some truths and ultimately exposed the Canadian education system to a new perspective.

Alison: Can you talk through an example?

Calvin: One of the examples that we were constantly at odds with the publishing company over, was that of treaty negotiations. The publisher and the editors were quite happy with saying that the treaties were signed by the settlers and the First Nations. They felt that this was an easy way for children to understand the process of two different peoples making a deal or a treaty. We, on the other hand, had gone through many years of university classes on Indigenous history and the struggle for Indigenous rights, land claims, identity, and even being recognized as human beings according to European law. We insisted that it be recognized that treaties were made by First Nations leaders and the British Crown on behalf of the settlers. This recognized a nation-to-nation negotiation and that First Nations were sovereign and had the ability to negotiate treaties. Settlers were not sovereign and required a government to negotiate on their behalf. We repeatedly would have our stories and wording edited to change the intent in the text and also in the teachers' guide. We repeatedly would insist that this be reversed. It was more problematic at the lower levels due to the complexity of participants and process. It became easier as the grade levels increased. They did not feel it was a big issue. We had many years of personal history that mattered to us and we felt it very important. However, we would rewrite passages to compromise or change content in order to avoid the conflict. There were other examples but that is one that was easy to explain.

Alison: What other obstacles did you come across?

Calvin: The obstacles were not what we expected. The biggest obstacle was that we really never had a blueprint to follow. We were not trained as writers or authors. We had to write to leveled text requirements; we had to use certain sight words; we were

limited to the number of words we could use and word choice. We were asked to write to a formula that we didn't know and that we had to learn it on the go. We were introduced to a world that existed but predominantly had no place for Indigenous viewpoints and worldview. We were asked to create this.

We entered into a process that was founded on Western models. We had editors and reviewers from the Indigenous academia. This was an interesting area. All feedback came in a critical format and came from the historical academic viewpoint that they learned from journal articles or Western-based history. The feedback was not community based and as a result, did not prove very helpful. We were trying to tell a story that did not simply rehash the same tired version of Canadian history that we had all learned.

Alison: Is there an example that you could share from the historical legal or political area that caused you difficulty while working on the project?

Calvin: The Canadian political system has the Indian Act which is a good example.

The Indian Act was passed in 1878 by the Canadian Government. It was passed by the elected legislators (all non-Indigenous) and there was no consultation or involvement of the Indigenous peoples. This piece of legislation had three main purposes. Firstly, it identified the criteria that the government would use to recognize the individuals that they deemed as "Indians". Secondly, it was created to civilize and Christianize the "Indians", and finally to control the lands that were "reserved for Indians". It placed First Nations people in a position where they could not make decisions that affected their lives and basic actions required permission from the Federal Government (First Nations people were seen as wards of the government and did not have any citizen rights such as voting rights or land ownership rights and therefore could not make decisions without government approval.) **The Indian Act has had many revisions, but it still exists!!!! And it still has many negative barriers for First Nations people. This piece of legislation is deemed racist and it still totally governs the lives of First Nations people**. Our political system, education system, health system, justice system, kinship system, and economic system are all heavily influenced by the Indian Act. The results of what we can and cannot do can be seen in the statistics between different Canadian societies. Canada is deemed to be in the top five for living conditions for mainstream Canadians. However, First Nations peoples are deemed at a level of 67th in the world, or similar to many third world countries, and this is a direct result of the Indian Act.[7]

There certainly was no shortage of issues to write about, the problem almost became which ones *to* write about. Canada is a large country, and there are many areas that have never been included in the treaty process but any First Nations people who lived in those regions were still affected by the Indian Act. To offer a resource that explored these issues with an audience wider than Saskatchewan, the content of the *Under One Sun* books had a national focus and reflected the realities and the role of treaties in different parts of Canada. We were acutely aware of how the

[7]For more information about the Indian Act please see https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/the_indian_act/.

misapplication of treaties, as well as the Indian Act, negatively affected First Nations people all over Canada.

To develop the books, we continued to use the Saskatchewan teaching outcomes for Treaty education as our guidelines. The outcomes are mandatory for the teachers to cover in Saskatchewan. Treaty education is also considered mandatory, but the outcomes are separate from the subject area outcomes and the teachers are expected to weave them into the course of their teachings. The teachers may or may not include the Treaty Outcomes because they are not required to be on the report cards. The Saskatchewan curriculum uses outcomes instead of objectives. The outcomes are applied to each grade and there are specific themes or outcomes that the teachers must cover. The teacher is allowed to use whatever means they wish to teach the outcome, but it is expected that the students will know them by the end of the grade level. These outcomes are reported for the student assessment which we refer to as report cards. These outcomes are predominantly Western based and treaty education is mostly ignored.

The Métis and the Inuit have different realities in relation to the treaty agreements, as governments did not include them in the treaties. These groups were not seen as "viable" citizens and so were not to be included into mainstream society. The Inuit were later given similar rights as First Nations in 1939. The Métis recently won a court case that may lead to similar rights.[8] These communities, the community of my peoples and the Inuit, were marginalized and their needs and issues were never considered significant or important in the decisions of the larger society. However, it was hard to directly say this in the books as we had to negotiate the political correctness that we could write, the reading levels of our audience, and the ability of creating a marketable product.

We also realized that the Indian Act and the Federal government still control and make the decisions for First Nations people. We found many examples that we could not write about. The stories of failed projects, unfair treatment, suicide, and social malfeasance were many. Actually, it was much harder to find positive examples.

Alison: How has *Under One Sun* been received in Canada?

Calvin: *Under One Sun* is being marketed by Nelson Education. It has been on the market since 2017. It came out two grade levels at a time, starting with the younger years. The Grade 7 and 8 resources have only been out since 2018. The Nelson team have done a very good job on promoting, supporting, and marketing it across Canada. They recognize that this is the "first out of the chute" and that other publishers are frantically creating resources. It is being well received by teachers. Teachers have long recognized the need for resources of this nature. They always talk about having to adapt or use non-specific resources that are outdated. Teachers have also complained that they may access needed teaching content but do so without proper supporting materials. The teachers are happy to receive this resource but also quickly remind us that this is the first of the many resources that seek to Indigenize education that are needed to close the gaps. One of the strengths is this is a levelled literacy resource

[8]For more information about Canada versus Daniels 1999 please see https://ablawg.ca/2014/11/21/supreme-court-of-canada-grants-leave-to-appeal-in-daniels/.

and is being incorporated in new provincial curriculum outcomes as a dual resource to teach literacy as well as Indigenous education. The project is being well advertised and seems to be well received across Canada. As a writer, I receive a royalty payment and other writers have told me that I am doing okay in the area of royalty fees. One of the Nelson representatives said that *Under One Sun* was their top-selling product for that time period.

Alison: The resource seeks to support teachers to include Indigenous perspectives into their practice. How does this relate to decolonizing pedagogies, and what does this term mean to you?

Calvin: A pedagogy is how we teach our children our value system. We need to look at what we are teaching and why we are teaching what we do. We need to decolonize our teaching. What I mean by that is that our history has been written from a Western-based worldview and it offers the narrative that all good things come from Europe. To decolonize we need to share the values and the contributions of the Indigenous people in the curriculum. The teachers need to show the richness of the history of Indigenous people and to use a balanced approach. Indigenous children must be able to honor their ancestors and their worldview.

Teachers need to look at the low success rates for Indigenous students that colonized teaching methods have brought about. The statistical data show the huge gaps that exist. It is so easy to see the need for resources that speak to Indigenous students. Children need to see themselves in the things they are learning. If they see no place for them, they disengage. I worked as an educator for 34 years and every day of my professional life was dedicated to levelling the playing field, in that I offered Indigenous students a way into the curriculum. I firmly believe that most teachers are like doctors. They take a Hippocratic Oath to perform their jobs to the best of their ability to every student that walks through their door. In order to meet the diversity of cultures and to address the gaps that exist, they need all types of teaching resources: resources that allow students to see themselves in what they are learning.

Decolonizing materials is a nice term. We have to remember that we all live colonized lives. It doesn't matter if you are the colonizer or the colonized, we have a colonial view. In order to move beyond, we need to see the bigger picture, other perspectives, and learn the full extent or range of the experience. We have to understand that we all put our pants on one leg at a time and that economic advantage does not give you the right to dismiss another person.

Alison: What advice would you give to educators new to Indigenizing their practice?

Calvin: Indigenizing education is not easy. There are many challenges brought on by Canada's colonial history. It takes a great deal of effort on the part of the teacher. It is a place where you will find all sorts of challenges. But once you achieve a level of success, you can never go back. Teachers enter the profession to be the best they can be, they want to make a difference. In this area, the struggle is real, and it has many turbulent times. However, teachers are finding that the addition of Indigenous content into the curriculum enhances their content, makes it more interesting, and provides a link from the historic to the contemporary.

The rewards are not hard to come by if you work at it. You get rewards when you see Indigenous and non-Indigenous children very engaged in the content and interested

in what you are teaching. It is wonderful when you experience the lightbulb moment when they start to make connections. You get a great deal of internal gratification because you know that you are making a difference and when the parents engage, it is even better. The greatest rewards I have found have occurred since my retirement. I am often contacted by a former student through Facebook, or I run into them at my grandchildren's sporting events. They tell me that I was the reason they came to school or that I was their favorite teacher and that I have an honored place in their world. There is nothing more special than being introduced to their children as their favorite teacher when they were in school. They tell me that they and their children are doing well, and they believe that I had an important role to play in it. Indigenous education has many peaks and valleys but the relationships you form along the way last a lifetime.

Indigenizing education is an education that highlights the beliefs and perspectives of some of the oldest cultures in the world and gives you a wonderful opportunity to be the best teacher you can be—one that acknowledges you as a caring human being.

My final thought is that you need to know that Indigenous education is not an easy area. The university system did not teach us very much in the way of Indigenous content. Many of the Indigenous teachers may not necessarily have been brought up with an Indigenous value system. It requires work and you will make many mistakes along the way. But you can't worry about making mistakes because they are an important part of the learning process.

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Calvin Racette is a Canadian Métis man who has recently retired after 34 years of working in many different levels of Indigenous education. He feels very fortunate to have received his Master's degree with a total emphasis on Indigenous education and Indigenous values. He has written several publications and served as a resource for many video productions. His goal to level the playing field is ongoing. His four children all have successful careers and his nine grandchildren are immersed in learning their traditional values.

Dr. Alison Sammel works at the School of Education and Professional Studies at Griffith University on the Gold Coast, Australia, in the fields of Science and Sustainability education. Her research areas include the teaching, learning, and communication of science; authentically Indigenizing science education; and advancing posthumanism and ecological sustainability in science education. She is a non-Indigenous Australian/Canadian who was raised on, and now lives and

works on, Yugumbeh/Kombumerri traditional lands in Australia. She spent 15 years in the Southwest region of the Anishinabek Nation in Canada (Ontario) and five years on Treaty Four lands in Canada (Saskatchewan). In 2008, she was a Smithsonian fellow in Washington, D.C., where she collaboratively investigated Indigenizing science education. Prior to her tenure at Griffith University, she was the chair of science education at the University of Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. Here she investigated the impact of Whiteness and White privilege in formal education and how it disenfranchised First Nations students. This led to collaborative work with local First Nations communities to co-develop curricular materials that respectfully incorporated local Indigenous ideologies and perspectives in the teaching and learning of science. Her publications include three books, and many peer-reviewed papers and chapters in the field of education, plus two government reports on First Nations science education. Over the past two decades, she has presented more than 50 international conferences and received awards for her teaching. She has been the principal researcher on many successfully completed competitive grants and has supervised many graduate students.