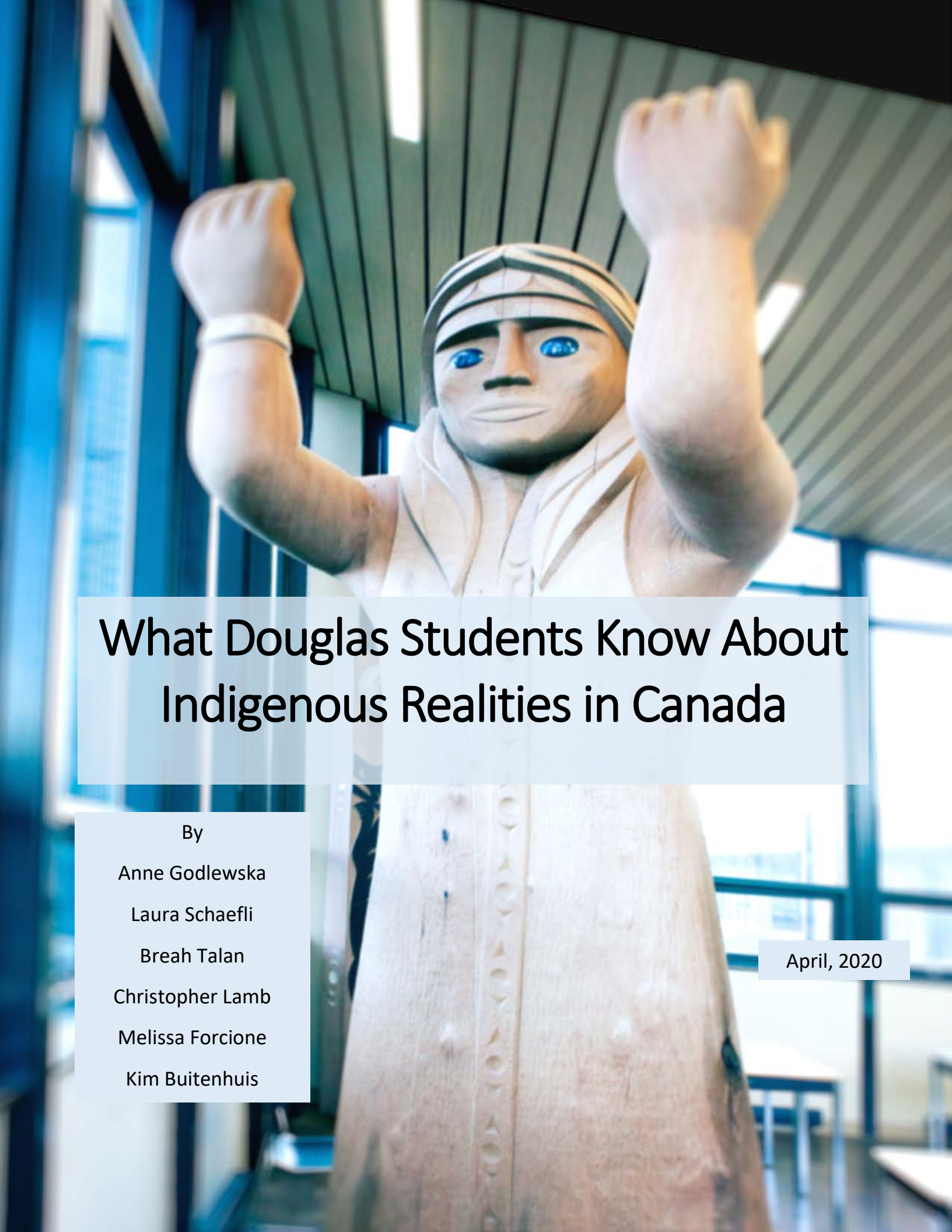

What Douglas Students Know About Indigenous Realities in Canada

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Part 1. Front Matter

Acknowledgements

This research was possible thanks to the generous support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the generous contributions of time and effort of the questionnaire co-designers, the support of administrators at Douglas College and in the surveyed Faculties, faculty and staff at Douglas College, Douglas College Aboriginal Advisory Committee, and the participating students who gave generously of their thought and time.

Title page adapted from a photograph of the Welcoming Pole by Musqueam artist Susan Point. Photograph provided by Douglas College. Photographer: Black Opal Images.

Content Warning: Please note that student responses are included in this report. Some of their responses may be upsetting to some readers.

Terminology

Aboriginal is a legal term, most often used by the government of Canada as an umbrella term for the Indigenous peoples of Canada. This includes First Nations and Métis people (status and non-status) and Inuit. Many Indigenous people prefer that we use the most precise term for a people: so, QayQayt or Kwikwetlem First Nations, for example.

Assimilation involves absorption into the dominant society. It can be either voluntary or forced. In voluntary assimilation, individuals or groups of differing heritage willingly become socially similar to other members of the society. In forced assimilation, the dominant society forces individuals and groups to conform to particular roles. Assimilative strategies include religious conversion, removal of children from their families, land appropriation, the disruption of gender relations, and the prohibition of some cultural practices.

Colonialism is the policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another territory or people and exploiting both the land and the people economically. It usually involves domination, oppression and marginalization of Indigenous peoples and rejection of Indigenous sovereignty. **Settler colonialism** refers to the colonial strategies of dispossessing Indigenous peoples from their land, replacing them with settlers, and eliminating Indigenous peoples or assimilating them into settler society.

The term **First Nations** refers to the Indigenous people(s) of Canada who are not Inuit or Métis. The term indicates the richness, complexity, and independence of Indigenous societies as well as presence in Canada prior to Europeans. The traditional territories of First Nations encompass all land from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans.

"**Indian**" is a legal term used by the government of Canada to define some Aboriginal rights. We use it only in that context.

The term **Indigenous** refers to the diverse peoples whose ancestral territories and traditional systems of law and governance predate colonial nations. In Canada, Indigenous encompasses First Nations, Métis people and Inuit peoples, territories, communities, and forms of identification and governance that exist beyond those defined under the Indian Act.

Inuit are many culturally distinct Indigenous peoples whose traditional territories span the Arctic.

The descendants of non-Indigenous fur traders and Indigenous women are amongst those called the **Métis**.

Executive Summary

In fall 2018 the Awareness Project, using a questionnaire co-designed with Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators, surveyed 4,158 first-term students at Douglas College (New Westminster and Coquitlam campuses). The aim was to understand what students know about Indigenous topics as they enter post-secondary institutions in British Columbia. 479 students completed the questionnaire, giving us a response rate of 19.5% and a completion rate of 11.5%. The picture presented by the data is clear and compelling. These are our principal findings:

1) Nine in 10 students considered the questionnaire a good assessment of their knowledge and less than one in 10 considered it a poor assessment of their knowledge. This suggests significant relevance of the results for Douglas College.

2) On average, students "passed" the knowledge portion of the survey with an average score of 51.3%. They did fairly well on a few questions (Indigenous conceptions of health and well-being (76.3%), what it means when a territory is unceded (76.1%), and the forced relocation of Inuit by the Canadian government in the 1950s and 60s (75%). These first year students did much better on the test than students in Newfoundland and Labrador and Ontario.

3) Students know least about the political and legal systems governing Indigenous lives and nearly two thirds of respondents have difficulty understanding the breadth and depth of systemic racism.

4) While many students have learned about Residential Schools, their depth of understanding is very much in question, especially when it comes to recognizing the schools as part of a larger colonial system.

5) Students have a problematic and unexamined relationship with the concept of culture, especially in relation to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people.

6) The most common trend amongst these students is to place Indigenous people and colonialism in a past for which they cannot be held responsible. This suggests the importance of teaching about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people and topics across the curriculum rather than limiting it to history or anthropology.

7) Student understanding of reconciliation and multiculturalism is uncritical and substantially unexamined.

8) Most students do not understand Indigenous collective identities or sovereignty and the ways in which First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people are distinct from other diversity.

9) The vast majority of students in this survey report that they had not been taught well in Kindergarten to Grade 12, suggesting that many teachers do not engage with curricular material construed as optional. This finding reinforces the need for better teacher and administrative training on the importance of Indigenous topics for all people in Canada, especially given the largely voluntarist approach of BC's new (2016-2019) curriculum.

10) 57% (271/479) of students say they have not taken any courses at any level with significant Indigenous content. These students performed significantly less well on the knowledge test, suggesting that when students do take courses, they do significantly better.

11) The vast majority of students consider that the principal barrier to their knowledge is inadequate coverage in school, college, and university, reinforcing the need for better education

12) Given their poor performance on the test, special attention to the knowledge and understanding of International students is warranted.

13) Students' concern about social inequity for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit appears to be linked to exposure to Indigenous perspectives and topics, again suggesting the social value of education.

14) Negative social attitudes to Indigenous topics can be a major obstacle to learning but the greatest obstacle is no exposure at all at home, school, or in post-secondary education.

15) Many students want to see more courses and programs devoted to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people and topics and also welcome more Indigenous artwork in prominent places and more extracurricular programming.

Introduction

It is our pleasure to present this report to Sarah Dench, Associate Vice President, Academic and Student Affairs at Douglas College and to the Douglas College community. It is our fond hope that it will be of use to the College and the Indigenous communities associated with Douglas as they grapple with the problems of deep social ignorance about Indigenous topics and the colonial nature of Canadian society. There are seven parts to this report. The Front Matter acknowledges the many hands and minds involved in producing the report and provides terminology and a brief Executive Summary. Part 2 describes our methodology. Parts 3 and 4 are qualitative analyses of two key questions: whether the students felt the questionnaire assessed their knowledge fairly and why; and how they responded to the question “name three things you know about First Nations, Métis and Inuit people” prior to exposure to the test portion of the questionnaire. Part 5 is our quantitative analysis of the relationship between student performance on the test and where they learned what they know, what they think of what they learned, their responses to social attitude questions, and their responses to a variety of identity questions. Part 6 is a qualitative analysis of six open-ended questions following the test portion of the questionnaire. Part 7 references some of the scholarship we have used in our analysis. The analysis in this document is focused on student responses to 87 questions with associated sub-questions.

We have shared the raw data, stripped of identifiers, with Douglas College. All data about students is provided by students themselves. In a footnote after each student quotation, we list the respondent’s unique identification number (ID) in our dataset, whether and at what level they have taken courses with significant Indigenous content, age, gender, how they identify, focus of study, and what they see as their future career. This information does not allow identification of any individual. Ultimately, we will make the anonymous data available for analysis by others through the Queen's University Scholar's Portal Dataverse.

Douglas College's 'Indigenization Strategy'

In the winter of 2019 Douglas College struck a steering committee to develop an overarching and long-term Indigenization strategy. This effort was in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's release of its final report (2015) on the history and legacy of the residential school system in Canada and its calls to action for post-secondary institutions, as well as the BC Government's adoption in November 2019 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

Douglas consulted with members of local Indigenous communities, employees, students, and Board members and came up with eight objectives to guide the College as it continues to respond to the TRC's *Calls to Action* and the provisions of UNDRIP. The objectives outlined in the Strategy emphasize Douglas College's commitment to: "Indigenization and reconciliation in ways that are tangible and visible;" "Deepen relationships with local First Nations communities in ways that serve the communities' interests and needs, and the needs and interests of Indigenous students at Douglas College;" and "Address professional development needs of all employee groups in support of Douglas College's meaningful efforts towards Indigenization and reconciliation" (Douglas College, 2019).

In writing the *What Douglas Students Know* report, the Awareness team acknowledges the work being done across the college, and the long-term vision of the steering committee. For many years Indigenous Student Services and the Aboriginal Advisory Committee at Douglas College have supported Indigenous students and worked to enhance awareness of Indigenous peoples' cultures, ways of knowing, and histories at the college and build and maintain relationships with local Indigenous communities. The report is designed to be an independent assessment of the state of students' knowledge of colonialism and Indigenous topics across the disciplines at Douglas. We hope that this report helps inform the committee as it introduces powerful educational experiences that reflect the TRC's and UNDRIP's calls for deep social change.

Part 2. Methodology

Co-Designing the Questionnaire

The Awareness team developed the Awareness questionnaire over a period of ten years through 100+ meetings with over 300 First Nations, Métis and Inuit educators, community members, faculty, staff, and students, affiliated with 15 universities and colleges across Newfoundland & Labrador, Ontario, Manitoba, and British Columbia.[1] The aim of the co-design process in each province has been to develop a questionnaire that allows fine-grained analysis of the relationship between knowledge considered by Indigenous educators to be vital to responsible citizenship, and post-secondary students' formal education, attitudes, and experience. We deliver the co-designed questionnaire to entering and exiting students at partner universities and colleges (Godlewska et al., 2013, 2017a, 2017b; Schaefli et al., 2018b; Schaefli & Godlewska, 2020). We also share raw data, results, and a final report with all partner institutions for use in internal programming.

Co-designing the questionnaire is a living and iterative process. To each co-design meeting, we brought a draft of the questionnaire and reviewed it, word for word, for importance, accuracy, and resonance with co-designers' experiences, understanding, and visions for transforming education. As a result, the questionnaire differs between educational jurisdictions (usually provinces) and each questionnaire is tailored to fit the educational institution. As a research tool that is fundamentally about decolonizing knowledge - transforming educational systems from a conscious or unconscious tool of colonialism to one that is self-aware, critical and moving in the direction of valuing and advancing Indigenous peoples and ways of being - it is vital that the questionnaire reflects many minds and many experiences.

The Douglas College Questionnaire

The questionnaire developed for entering students at Douglas College includes 7 sections designed to determine:

1. Where students learned what they know (10 items);
2. What they think of what they know (6 items);
3. How they express what they know prior to the test (1 item);
4. The knowledge they have (32 items);
5. Social attitude (17 items);
6. Demographics (e.g., age, gender, major) (13 items); and
7. Reactions to the questionnaire (1 item).

The first-year knowledge test is composed largely of multiple-choice questions but there are also numerous open-ended questions where students can express themselves more fully. We have analyzed

[1] These universities and colleges are: Memorial University (NFLD & LB); University of Windsor, University of Guelph, Wilfrid Laurier University, McMaster University, University of Toronto, Trent University, Queen's University, University of Ottawa, Laurentian University, Lakehead University, St. Lawrence College (ON), University of Manitoba (MB), Douglas College and Vancouver Island University (BC).

those responses in Part 6 below. The Douglas College survey questions are designed to appraise awareness of:

1. Indigenous presence in what is Canada today (geography) (6 questions);
2. What is happening for First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples in Canada today (current events) (6 questions);
3. Laws or circumstances structuring First Nations, Métis and Inuit lives (governance) (7 questions);
4. Residential Schools (2 questions);
5. Past realities that have shaped today's circumstances (history) (6 questions); and
6. First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultural continuity (culture) (7 questions).

Delivery and Participants

All 4,158 first-term students at Douglas College (New Westminster and Coquitlam campuses) were invited via email in October 2018 to participate in the study. Eight hundred ten students did so and 479 completed the questionnaire, giving us a response rate of 19.5% and a completion rate of 11.5%. These rates are typical of our online surveys. The responses of the 479 students who completed the questionnaire are the focus of this report. The following table summarizes students' demographics and educational background.

Douglas Respondent Demographics

Country of Graduation				**Languages spoken at home**	
Canada	399	Syria	2	English	239
India	12	Taiwan	2	English and other	131
Vietnam	8	Bangladesh	1	Other	57
Brazil	8	China	1	French and English	21
Iran	6	Colombia	1	French and English and Other	9
Indonesia	5	Germany	1	English and FNMI	7
USA	4	Hong Kong	1	French	7
Ukraine	4	Israel	1	Decline to answer	5
Australia	3	Kazakstan	1	French and Other	2
South Korea	3	Kyrgystan	1	French and FNMI	1
Japan	2	Netherlands	1	**Province of Graduation**	
Mexico	2	Poland	1	British Columbia	377
Philippines	2	Saudi Arabia	1	Alberta	9
Switzerland	2	Tunisia	1	Ontario	7
		Uganda	1	Saskatchewan	2
Aim at Douglas College		**Generalized Focus of Study**		Manitoba	2
A degree	132	Health or social services	129	Undeclared	2
A diploma	123	Arts	91	New Brunswick	1
Planning to transfer	116	Business	73	Prince Edward Island	1
A certificate	42	Teaching	50	**Campus**	
Uncertain	29	Justice system	49	New Westminster	275
Taking some courses	21	Other Science	30	Coquitlam	199
No response	1	Computing and info science	21	Did not specify	5

Table 1 Respondent demographics

The Awareness questionnaire and its delivery were designed to be both diagnostic and educational. Students were shown the correct answers to multiple-choice questions as they completed the questions and, upon completing the survey, were directed to a webpage with resources by Indigenous and decolonial scholars, authors, and activists to learn more.

Part 3. Did the students consider the questionnaire a fair assessment of their knowledge?

At the end of the survey, we asked students whether the questionnaire was a fair assessment of their knowledge. This question was designed to give students a chance to speak back to the questionnaire. We also use students' responses to improve the questionnaire and its delivery in subsequent versions. The majority of students, 426/479 (89%), considered the questionnaire a good assessment of their knowledge. Twenty-seven (6%) students declined to answer the question, and 26 (5%) students did not consider the questionnaire a good assessment of their knowledge (Table 2). That nearly 90% of students considered the test a fair assessment of their knowledge suggests the relevance of our findings for education at Douglas College.

Did this questionnaire assess what you know about First Nations, Métis and Inuit people fairly?		
Y/N/Decline	**Elaboration**	
Yes		**426**
	Good variety of questions	142
	It taught me or I learned	**113**
	Good quality of questions and/or questionnaire	**88**
	It showed my (or general) ignorance	**82**
	Comment on curriculum	51
	It revealed what I know	48
	It was a refresher	39
	Important topics	30
	It made me think	21
	It motivated me to learn more	19
	No reason given	11
	It was not biased	11
	It was too long (4) or too easy (2)	6
Decline to answer		**27**
No		**26**
	No reason given	**4**
	Because I have no knowledge	**4**
	The answers are obvious	**3**
	Questionnaire is biased	**3**
	It did not focus on individual or cultural knowledge	**2**
	I don't like multiple choice questions	**2**
	Racist comments	**2**
	Questionnaire was too long	2
	Questions were too specific	**1**
	You did not explain why this is important	**1**
	The information was irrelevant	**1**
	The survey is racist and colonizing	**1**

Table 2. Did the questionnaire assess your knowledge fairly?

The vast majority of students chose to explain why they did or did not consider the questionnaire a fair assessment of their knowledge and in so doing provided a considerable variety of responses. We formed categories of response which we developed from frequently repeated explanations by the students. Many students made comments that fell into more than one category.

The most common reason students found the questionnaire a fair assessment of their knowledge was the rich variety of questions on the test portion of the questionnaire: "Because it covered everything and more."[2] We are glad to see this as the development of the test demanded much time and effort of Indigenous knowledge holders, instructors, students, and administrators at Douglas College and other educational institutions across Canada. Co-designers' commitment and generosity, together with the highly informative debates that took place in co-design meetings, are what made the survey instrument robust and incisive. This student noticed that the questions did not shy away from major issues: "Because it covered a lot of important topics regarding land, the treatment of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people over time, and the current, lasting issues resulting from them. These questions revolved around events and facts that are still relevant today."[3] Others noticed that while some questions were easier, others demanded much deeper knowledge: "It was a good mix of questions - some were harder than others... I liked it wasn't all the easy ones."[4] For some students, the variety of questions offered an important educational opportunity: "I really appreciated all of the information this questionnaire provided. So you could see what you know and learn what you didn't."[5] Perhaps most persuasively for us:

> This was a good questionnaire to assess what I know about First Nation's, Metis and Inuit people because it took into consideration many different areas and addressed many different and important aspects of First Nations history in Canada. I like that such a questionnaire has been put forward and would like to see more of this, because they are very informative and necessary to learn such a crucial and drastic part of our history. Being a Status First Nation Indian myself, I truly appreciate any and all efforts to bring awareness to issues faced by my people. Thank you kindly.[6]

In general, Indigenous and non-Indigenous students seem to have appreciated the variety of questions as this made the questionnaire educational.

The second most common reason students deemed the questionnaire a fair assessment of their knowledge, expressed by 113/479 (24%) students, was that it taught them something. These students

[2] #67; high school course or courses; 18 years; male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Career and Employment Preparation; CEO

[3] #257; high school courses, social studies classes, in college, history; 18 years; female; Métis; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Future Teachers; elementary school French immersion teacher

[4] #245; course in college, Aboriginal Studies; 37 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Social Work; social worker

[5] #326; no courses; 21 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Stagecraft and Event Technology; stage management

[6] #397; no courses; 30 years; male; First Nations, I have my Status, and identify as a First Nation of Bella Bella BC; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Citizen of my First Nations, Métis or Inuit community, As part of a racially marginalized group; I am in the Dispensing Optician Diploma program; I will become an Optician. I would love to own my own Optical store and that is what I intend to work towards.

comment, for example, that "It was very eye opening and explained well. I learned quite a bit,"[7] that "i learned a lot in a short amount of time,"[8] and that "It was a great assessment. It made me discover new information."[9] The educational impact of the survey was also evident on the comments of First Nations and International students: "It taught me things I didn't know and confirmed what I did know already. Being First Nations I learned more about Métis and Inuit."[10] "With this questionnaire, I know that I have to be interested in First Nation if I want to live in Canada. Moreover, this questionnaire tells us what First Nation is and their information. That's why this questionnaire is excellent."[11] For some it was a treasured opportunity to learn: "It was very thorough and there is so much information that is never really discussed, I am now more knowledgeable and fortunate to be a part of this assessment."[12] Students expressed in many ways that they had learned from the questionnaire.

For many students, 88/479 (18%), what made the questionnaire powerful was the careful design of the questions and the structure of the questionnaire. This student explains that "It asked high level thinking questions while informing me the answers."[13] Many students liked that while testing their knowledge, the questionnaire also asked about their education and their views.[14] For many of these students, the questions were "comprehensive but not excessive."[15] This student and others note that providing the answers and some explanation after each question gave them the opportunity to learn and forced honest self-reflection while being respectful and encouraging.[16] This student echoes this take on the questionnaire: "It asked fair and relevant questions. If it was a trickier question, it also gave an

[7] #137; high school courses, Social studies and social justice; 18 years; female; Non-status Indigenous person; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Legal Studies; contract lawyer

[8] #184; no courses; 18 years; female; Child of Immigrant(s) to Canada; Criminology (Diploma); corrections officer

[9] #256; no courses; 19 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Associate of Arts; psychologist

[10] #388; no courses; 23 years; female; First Nations; Citizen of my First Nations, Métis or Inuit community; Early Childhood Education (Diploma); Education assistant

[11] #319; high school, social studies 11; 23 years; male; International student; Computing Studies and Information Systems (Diploma); software Engineer

[12] #208; high school courses, Social Studies 11; 18 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Nursing (Bachelor of Science); In the medical field

[13] #187; high school courses, Social studies; 18 years; female; First Nations, Canadian with Aboriginal ancestry; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Citizen of my First Nations, Métis or Inuit community; nurse

[14] #206; no courses; 22 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Child and Youth Care (Bachelor of Arts); youth worker

[15] #327; in high school: I am certain I received some additional minor knowledge, but the only Indigenous content I specifically remember being taught in high school related to Louis Riel and the Red River Rebellion, in university: I took courses on pre-confederation and post-confederation Canadian history at Simon Fraser University, which essentially acted as broad overviews of Indigenous history across Canada, and Indigenous relations with other Indigenous groups, with European nations, and eventually, with the Canadian government, in my community: I have gone out of my way to try and access information on First Nations groups both locally and across the rest of Canada and America, utilizing books, podcasts, and other sources to try and educate myself as much as possible; 27 years; male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Computer and Information Systems (Post-Baccalaureate Diploma); in some tech-related field, uncertain exactly where.

[16] #361; courses in college; 37 years; female; First Nations, Tsarlip; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Citizen of my First Nations, Métis or Inuit community, As part of a racially marginalized group; Child and Youth Care (Bachelor of Arts); politics; #135; university courses, a Canadian Literature class where we only read Indigenous authors, another literature class in which we read the TRC; 25 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Child of Immigrant(s) to Canada, As part of a racially marginalized group; Psychiatric Nursing (Bachelor of Science); psychiatric nurse

explanation of the answer so I understood what was being asked."[17] Many thought the questions were clear and well crafted: "Asked very good questions"[18] and "very smartly organised."[19] Some valued that there was always an *I don't know* option as that spared them from guessing at answers. Some liked that the questions sometimes deviated from traditional multiple-choice formats. A few liked that the questions did not focus exclusively on the negative but asked about "some good things as well."[20] We were encouraged that many students were aware of the careful thought involved in creating such a questionnaire.

Another frequently occurring answer was that the test revealed their own ignorance or general social ignorance on the topic: "I think this was an eye opening assessment on how little I actually know about First Nations people."[21] Perhaps more importantly, it taught some students that although they thought they knew a lot, they did not: "I learned I don't know as much as I think I know!"[22] Some students, understanding the rationale for the survey and the research, indicated its value to institutional decision makers at Douglas: "The questionnaire will be able to recognize those who think they know and those who actually know the content. It will be a good assessment of where changes need to be made."[23] The need to unlearn and learn anew was acknowledged by some: "I had vague knowledge, but this questionnaire helped teach me more about the subject matter, and taught me about certain subjects I thought I knew that were actually incorrect."[24] One student seemed to learn on multiple levels from the questionnaire; that knowing someone and being there does not necessarily translate into deep understanding, that Indigenous people in Canada are no more in the past than settlers, and that Indigenous-settler relations must be part of an ongoing conversation.

> Because I have friends living in First Nations reserves, I assumed I knew enough at times. This questionnaire helped me assess my current knowledge as well as taught me to further understand about First Nations, Métis and Inuit people. That this is more than something of the past and should be an ongoing conversation!"[25]

A small number of students described feeling discomfort or unhappiness about their level of knowledge.

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[17] #92; no courses; 18 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Health Care Support Worker; pharmacist

[18] #323; high school course, First Nation studies; 19 years; female; First Nations; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Citizen of my First Nations, Métis or Inuit community; Commerce and Business Administration (Diploma)

[19] #374; no courses; 23 years; male; International Indigenous person; International student; General Business (Diploma); Banking, Business

[20] #396; no courses; 26 years; male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Psychology (Associate of Arts - Pre-Bachelor's); counsellor at first, then a psychologist

[21] #56; no courses; 28 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Accounting (Diploma); accountant

[22] #254; no courses; 27 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Administrative Assistant (Certificate); receptionist

[23] #335; college courses, Douglas College's Aboriginal Stream, community courses, Medicine Wheel teachings, indigenous knowledge trainings and workshops; 24 years; female; First Nations, Métis, or Non-status Indigenous person; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Citizen of my First Nations, Métis or Inuit community, As part of a racially marginalized group; Child and Youth Care (Bachelor of Arts); Indigenous Youth Worker

[24] #126; high school courses; Social Studies 10 and 11, mandatory courses; 18 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Criminology (Diploma); lawyer or police officer

[25] #287; in high school, Social Studies 10, in my community, Church Missions Trip; 20 years; female; Immigrant to Canada (not born in Canada); Nursing (Bachelor of Science); nursing in a remote area or working as a travel nurse

The next category, *revealed what I know*, is closely related to the *showed my ignorance* category. These students liked the test because it showed them what they knew. They either spoke in more equivocal terms about their knowledge (not referring to ignorance, for example) or said that the test had confirmed that they were knowledgeable:

> The questions cover the basic subjects that one should know about First Nations, Metis and Inuit people. They touched not only the past, but also the most recent and the near future events. The questions show how much I already know about the Indigenous community (makes me feel proud of myself a little bit ^_^), and at the same time make me want to do some more research, because I should have known all the answers to those questions.[26]

Respondents who claimed that the questionnaire proved they were knowledgeable were relatively few, approximately 9/48 (19%) of the students in this response sub-category.

Fifty-one (12%) students commented on the state of the curriculum while asserting that the test was a fair measure of their knowledge. Eleven (22%) of these students considered that they had learned much of the material in school. One student asserted "It asked me a variety of questions from BC First Nations Studies 12,"[27] but this student's experience is not particularly representative of the average as, for example, the enrolment from 2009-2016 in the elective BC First Nations Studies 12 was only 1.9% of British Columbia students (Lamb & Godlewska, In review 2020). Where teachers took the topic seriously, some students report that they had significant impact on their learning: "First Nations, Métis and Inuit history was taken very seriously at my high school and it was my teachers number one priority to teach us and make us aware of what happened in BC during the residential school times, he was unaware while he went to a 'all white school'."[28] Thirty-four (67%) considered their education inadequate. For some students, the test "was more informative than actual school."[29] For a student who self-identified as Indigenous, what schools did not teach was personally shocking: "I just am overwhelmed by how much of my languages and cultures have been suppressed. How much I am ignorant of and how little the school educates on Indigenous issues."[30] This comment points to the barriers and challenges that many Indigenous students face in the public education system (Battiste, 2013; Kanu, 2011; Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015). The remaining 6/51 (12%) made more neutral statements that could be read in multiple ways. "Some of the information is very specific and would have required some sort

[26] #295; high school courses, Social 10 and Social Inquiry 11; 19 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Commerce and Business Administration (Diploma); Administrative assistant in the film or music industry
[27] #265; high school courses, BC First Nations Studies 12, Social Studies 10, ESL Canadian studies 10; 18 years; male; Immigrant to Canada (not born in Canada); Nursing; doctor
[28] #440; no courses; 18 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Nursing (Bachelor of Science); pediatrician
[29] #320; high school class, social studies; 21 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Psychology, Applied (Bachelor of Arts, Honours); forensic psychologist
[30] #472; courses in college: Aboriginal Stream of Child and Youth Care Work. Focuses on Family Systems and Community Care from an Aboriginal perspective and from Elders teachings, Pacific Association of First Nations Women; 34 years; decline to answer gender; First Nations, Métis, Non-status Indigenous person, Canadian with Aboriginal ancestry, Want a different word for Cree, as it is racial slang for 'big mouth'; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, As part of a racially marginalized group, Other, mixed blood; Child and Youth Care; A helping, healing, restorative, and educational career!!!

of prior learning"[31] suggests that little is taught in schools. But "It revealed to me that the education regarding Aboriginal, Metis, and Inuit people was relevant and informative. However, it also showed the information I was lacking"[32] suggests that they gained something from their education but could also not answer some questions.

Thirty-nine respondents considered the test a good refresher of their knowledge, wherever acquired: "I knew a lot of the information from an Indigenous Cultural Safety course that I completed earlier this year. I liked how it wasn't a "test" of knowledge, but rather an informative 'quiz'"[33] and "It was a good review of the knowledge I learned years ago along with information I mostly learned from working with First Nations people. It also taught me things I had no idea about."[34] For these students, the test was valuable because it affirmed what they had learned and refreshed and sometimes extended their knowledge.

For some students, the questionnaire was valuable because the topics covered by the questions were important: "Many of the questions were incredibly important history and current-history of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people. Knowing if people know such important facts about the original people of this land who still reside here today is incredibly important."[35] Some of these students identified what they considered the most important questions and why:

> I feel that the questions didn't impose on me. I'm glad that the missing indigenous women were mentioned because that is an appalling piece of Canada's reality. There were a variety of questions about the various things in the Indigenous history including assimilation, residential schools, intergenerational trauma, land rights, treaties, etc.[36]

Some students believe in the importance of education to serve as a foundation for social justice:

> This questionnaire helped remind me of some key issues happening today and in the past. These types of things are important for the foundation of educating young people. In order for change, a lot needs to be done going forward and it starts with

[31] #272; high school course, First Nations studies; 21 years; male; International Indigenous person; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, biracial; decline to answer program; unclear

[32] #154; high school courses, Social Studies 10, Social Studies 11, Law 12; 18 years; male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Immigrant to Canada (not born in Canada), Filipino; Economics (Associate of Arts); Don't know

[33] #313; high school courses, in my workplace; 23 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Therapeutic Recreation (Bachelor); physician

[34] #77; no courses; 38 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Accounting (Bachelor of Business Administration); I'm not sure

[35] #239; no courses; 21 years; male; First Nations, Non-status Indigenous person, Canadian with Aboriginal ancestry; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Associate of Arts; ESL Teacher, teaching English as a second language

[36] #289; high school courses, B.C First Nations and English First Peoples; 19 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Communications and English; editor, copywriter, author, tutor, teacher

> younger generations needing the educations and to set values beliefs into place. Thank you! Keep this up please. I almost forgot my history![37]

Given the challenging nature of many of the topics, "It asked questions that covered every topic that is of high debate,"[38] it is remarkable that 89% of the students thought the questionnaire assessed their knowledge fairly.

The next two categories, *It made me think* and *It motivated me to learn more* are responses dear to the heart of any educator and together they constitute a category of 40 responses. "Made me really think if I was aware of the issues"[39] suggests that the questionnaire challenged some engrained thinking, as did "Got me thinking about my views."[40] The questionnaire seems to have also stimulated thought about where and how students have learned what they know:

> It covered all and more of what I know of first nations people. It also helped me learn more or correct what I believed and knew. It looked at my background of education and where my knowledge came from in regards to learning about Indigenous people.[41]

Some students know they bring prejudice to their understanding of First Nations and their rights but, in recognizing their ignorance, are open to learning more:

> I didn't really know any of the questions that were asked because I have never been taught it before. What I know is mostly from friends and family. I believe every race has both good and bad people but there is some stuff that I see happening in the first nations that bothers me, like how they can still fish without a limit when numbers the fish population is hurting. I overheard someone on the river one time when they had their huge nets out bragging to another boat that they caught and killed a sturgeon which is an endangered species which was really upsetting for me. Seeing and hearing things like this does not paint a good image for me or really make me want to get involved concerning their rights. I know context is everything and I know I am uneducated in this matter and I am open to learning and changing my view and opinions.[42]

Several students are prepared to educate themselves to a far higher level:

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[37] #243; high school course: Native law, College course: Native studies, courses in my community: Cree classes, beading; 29 years; male; First Nations, Métis, Canadian with Aboriginal ancestry; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Citizen of my First Nations, Métis or Inuit community; Health Care Support Worker; holistic medicine

[38] #85; high school courses, Socials 10; 17 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Health Care Support Worker; not too sure yet

[39] #238; no courses; 18 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, As part of a racially marginalized group; Psychology, Applied (Bachelor of Arts, Honours); speech therapist

[40] #221; high school courses, Social Studies; 25 years; Decline to answer gender; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Early Childhood Education (Diploma); Teacher

[41] #282; no courses; 17 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Environmental Studies; environmental engineer

[42] #134; no courses; 29 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Therapeutic Recreation (Bachelor); TRS

> I know some things but there is still so much to learn and be aware of. It's important for me to have an open mind and accept that there is so much i don't understand yet, but if i can expand my understanding then i can be more active in making change. this survey showed me that i have just scratched the surface, and sparked a curiosity in me to learn more.[43]

Engagement at this level, such as preparedness to shoulder responsibility for effecting social change, is important and begs for curricular and institutional support.

Eleven students considered that the questionnaire was a fair assessment of their knowledge because they felt it was not biased. For some this was related to having the space to express themselves and to learn: "Gave space for my personal input to deliver additional understanding. Answers were not opinion but rather fact based."[44] For others the questionnaire, by virtue of the neutrality of its questions, established a safe zone of trust from which they could discover the importance of understanding the topics:

> It provided neutral statements that required you to think on 1. If you were taught this, 2. If you heard about it, or 3. How it makes you feel. Some of it made me uncomfortable due to the lack of knowledge, in all honesty it didn't seem like a big deal till some of the questions came up proving otherwise.[45]

Some recognized the questionnaire as political, as in trying to achieve a particular end, yet, "It was alright, but felt as though it was pushing a political agenda rather than simply being a survey. Either way the questions were fair."[46] We are pleased that these students found the questionnaire "Educational and fair."[47]

Some students, although finding the questionnaire a fair assessment, either considered it too long or too easy. With respect to length, we understand the sentiment as we spent long hours trying to cut the questionnaire down. "My only critique is its length -- the questionnaire itself, as well as the individual questions. It would have been more effective if the questions and responses were more concise."[48] The sensitive and frequently complex nature of the topic militated against brevity. Another student suggested that we should have left the answers until the end of the survey.[49] We have tried that

[43] #430; no courses; 18 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Child of Immigrant(s) to Canada; Neuroscience; psychiatrist

[44] #129; high school courses, Social studies grade 10, indigenous unit, 21 years; male; Métis, Canadian with Aboriginal ancestry; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Citizen of my First Nations, Métis or Inuit community; Digital Marketing Communications Management (Concentration); Digital Marketing

[45] #393; no courses; 21 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Legal Studies; paralegal, maybe lawyer if I can acquire the funding and the grades

[46] #294; high school courses, taught us about First Nations in Socials, English and sometimes art; 17 years; female; First Nations, Lillooet; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Psychology, Applied (Bachelor of Arts, Honours); anything in psychology

[47] #251; college course, political science; 27 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Psychology, Applied (Bachelor of Arts); counselor

[48] #164; no courses; 32 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; I am taking a course for BC teaching requirements; currently a teacher, hoping to be principal one day

[49] #215; no courses; 23 years; male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Child of Immigrant(s) to Canada, As part of a racially marginalized group; Accounting (Diploma); Prime Minister

approach in other surveys, but found it makes the questionnaire far less educational, as students tended to skip the section. Those who said it was easy to guess some answers still said that they learned from the questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to challenge but not dismay students both with very little and with deep understanding.

Remarkably few respondents, 26 (5%), said the questionnaire was not a fair assessment of their knowledge. As is clear from the table, there is relatively little agreement between the 22 who explained their response. For one his heritage absolved him of responsibility for awareness: "I have no knowledge on First Nations I was raised around the Russian history and culture."[50] Another may not have had the English language skill to understand the questionnaire.[51] In that vein, another confided that his inability to learn was not the fault of the questionnaire.[52] One who considered the questions too easy, "Since truth is stranger than fiction, the true answers seemed to stick out over the untrue options" also said "I have no input on how it could have been done better."[53] For one student, "it was too boring and long to focus."[54] Another, who does not like multiple-choice questions, worried that "People who are receiving the survey will be probably guessing for some of the questions."[55] We hope we have minimized this by providing the *I don't know* category. One student considered that the questions we ask do not include "individual" or "cultural" information.[56] We have heard this criticism before from respondents. It may be that these students believe they have important knowledge and understanding that we are not testing. There is no doubt that students will know things we are not testing, sometimes falsely and sometimes because that understanding is not essential to responsible citizenship in Canada or critical to understanding Indigenous-Settler relations. Only two complaints of that nature out of 479 students is encouraging.

All in all, it is highly encouraging that so many students felt the survey was a fair assessment of their knowledge. As the reader will see, we wish their understanding, on average, were more profound. However, we are delighted at how receptive the majority of these students seem to be to this assessment of their understanding and to learning.

[50] #36; no courses; 18 years; male; International Indigenous person; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Computer and Information Systems (Post-Baccalaureate Diploma); working at home
[51] #45; no courses; 19 years; female; International student; Hospitality Management (Diploma); be a manager
[52] #44; no courses; 18 years; male; International student; Hospitality Management (Diploma); a public speaker or a hotel manager
[53] #49; no courses; 22 years; male; Canadian with Aboriginal ancestry; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Music; IT admin, music production, who knows
[54] #53; high school courses, in high school, they emphasize a lot on aboriginal matters; 19 years; female; International student; Associate of Arts; not sure
[55] #47; high school course or courses; 29 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Immigrant to Canada (not born in Canada); Accounting (Post-Baccalaureate Diploma); Accountant
[56] #50; courses in high school about residential schools; 18 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Academic Foundations for Potential Nursing Applicants; nursing

Part 4. Student thinking prior to the test

The last question before students take the test portion of the questionnaire is open ended, designed to investigate what students at Douglas think when they think about Indigenous peoples. How students answer the question is suggestive of the nature of their knowledge and social attitudes uninfluenced by the test questions. We asked students to name three things they know about First Nations and Métis peoples and Inuit. The question is problematic, as reducing knowledge of peoples to three things is reductionist, with all the associated risks. It is, then, significant that not a single respondent called us out on this. In every other college or university where we have asked this question, some students have challenged it. This silence is consistent with the lack of critical understanding reflected in many of the responses below. Using NVivo and in vivo coding and inductive analysis, we used student words and expressions to build themes. This kind of inductive analysis allows data-driven themes to emerge "from the frequent, dominant, or significant themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies" (Schiellerup, 2008; Thomas, 2006, p. 2). We believe that the thematic trends in the students' responses suggest important aspects of their knowledge as they come into Douglas College and point the way forward for decolonizing education at Douglas College.

Residential Schools

A large number of students, 150/479 (31%), mentioned Residential Schools among the three things they know, suggesting previous education on the topic. However, there is little sign of awareness that the Residential Schools were part of a national colonial system (Paquette, 2020; Wolfe, 2006). One hundred one (67%) students mentioned the schools as the first thing they know. In that regard, perhaps the 2015 call of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for better education of students about Residential Schools has been heard (Treleaven, 2018; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). However, the majority of these students (92/150 or 61%) did no more than mention the words "Residential Schools," suggesting limited engagement with the topic. The remaining students focused on mistreatment in the schools (18), intergenerational trauma (14), assimilation (12), harm to family and community (9), the date the schools closed (4), that Canadians do not talk about the schools (2), and that children died (1). Although the focus on intergenerational trauma suggests student awareness of colonialism's ongoing impacts, it can also work to frame colonialism as a "temporally situated experience which occurred at some relatively fixed period in history" (Coulthard, 2014, p. 125). Two students' responses did just this, explicitly describing the schools as in the past. However, one student challenged this relegation of the schools to history, responding to having heard such assertions with "The last residential school closed down in the 90's- it was a long time ago- is an invalid argument."[57] Overall, although students at Douglas seem more familiar with Residential Schools than any other aspect of colonialism in Canada, their depth of understanding is very much in question, especially when it comes to recognizing the Schools as colonial.

Culture

Students use the word culture (or cultural) frequently and uncritically but most often in ways that support the othering and social subordination of Indigenous peoples. We collected all uses of the word culture or cultural and analyzed their use. Most common is the use of culture in the singular, with the

[57] #112; courses in high school, Social Studies; 19 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Immigrant to Canada (not born in Canada); Marketing (Diploma); Marketing/Financial analysis or something in fashion industry

apparent assumption that all Indigenous people share a culture, as in "They have a very rich culture"[58] or "It is important to remember that First Nations, Inuit and Métis each have their own culture."[59] This expression of the singularity of Indigenous culture occurs in 57 of the 132 mentions of Indigenous cultures, or 43% of the mentions. This assumption of singularity and homogeneity of culture is used by four of these students in reference to non-Indigenous cultures with the use of terms like "North American Culture," "European culture" and "our culture." These students apply an us/them construction to Indigenous cultures along with an insensitivity to diversity within any culture.

A particularly striking variant of 'culture' is the description of Indigenous people as "Very Cultural."[60] What are these 19 students trying to convey? There is in the formulation a multicultural sense that culture is something that other people have, or have in a different way, perhaps with more past-ness. Some students wrote that Indigenous peoples "Lived culturally,"[61] that "Their traditions, art and culture are more exposed in today's world,"[62] that they "Practiced fur trading and are/were very cultural,"[63] that "They impart culture to the next generations through storytelling"[64] or that they have "Applicable traditions that go on today."[65] In all these, there is an obliviousness to the cultural mechanisms in their own society that function in essentially the same ways. So, they are "Very cultural"[66] is a form of exoticization with hints of primitivism clear in the binary language some students reserve for what they take to be their own 'society' and the 'culture' of Indigenous people: "Current North American society could learn a lot from Indigenous Peoples' subsistence-based culture of the past"[67] or again sympathetically but with the same binary, "Residential schools basically aggressively attempted to assimilate aboriginal children into European-style society, completely discriminatory to their culture,

[58] #138; no courses; 17 years; female; Canadian with Aboriginal ancestry; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Child of Immigrant(s) to Canada; Environmental Studies; I don't know yet.
[59] #375; high school course, ESL Class; 22 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Criminology (Diploma); Filmmaker
[60] #317; high school course; Social Studies, mostly curriculum in Grades 9-11 as far as I can remember. It was brief and mostly about the colonization of Canada; 19 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Child of Immigrant(s) to Canada; Dispensing Optician; brand ambassador or highly established manager and licensed optician
[61] #348; no courses; 38 years; female; First Nations; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Behaviour Intervention; Supervisor of a Aboriginal Headstart Program
[62] #285; high school courses, Social studies 10 and 11; 18 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; PE teacher
[63] #94; no courses; 19 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Nursing (Bachelor of Science); something to do with medicine
[64] #384; high school course; social studies 10; 18 years; female; Canadian with Aboriginal ancestry; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Nursing; possibly nursing
[65] #393; no courses; 21 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Legal Studies; paralegal, maybe lawyer if I can acquire the funding and the grades
[66] #313; high school courses, in my workplace; 23 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Therapeutic Recreation (Bachelor); physician
[67] #63; no courses; 40 years; male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Academic Foundations for Potential Nursing Applicants

and screwed an entire generation."[68] In these students' rhetorical constructions, "We" have society; "They" have culture.

Many students distance themselves from the pain and suffering caused by settler colonialism through their conceptualizations of culture. These students' formulation of culture as separable from people emerges largely from a focus on the prolonged assault on Indigenous cultures through Residential Schools and the Indian Act. These students argue that "Their culture was ripped away from them."[69] This thinking suggests that it was not people who were colonized but their cultures[70] and that people were not silenced, rather "Their cultures were silenced and exiled."[71] So it is culture that "needs to stay alive."[72] Although not wrong, as culture has long been a focus of colonial attack, in these nine students' formulation culture is objectified and simplified and separated from the people that give it meaning.

The de-politicization of culture follows Charles Taylor's, and many others', construction of multiculturalism without reference to the settler colonial state in which the state is seen as the unproblematic arbiter of rights, while cultures must be subordinate to the state (Taylor, 1994; Kymlicka, 1995). Multicultural nationalism silences Indigenous content and perspectives, is deeply embedded in educational curricula across Canada (Godlewska et al., 2013; Lamb, 2015; Schaefli et al., 2018a; St. Denis, 2011) and has influenced deeply how these students understand multiculturalism and culture. It is because this understanding of multiculturalism and culture is so common that for all of the 132 mentions of "culture" or its variants, there are only 2 mentions of nations in the context of First Nations people, as in, "Each nation has its own culture"[73] and one of these two students identifies as First Nations.

Although not always using the word culture, some students objectify and de-politicize culture by remaining in the 'safe zone' of cultural curios, decorative cultural expressions that can be consumed for pleasure (e.g. food, clothing, music, art, and dance). Although not always using the word culture, some students objectify culture "in the "safe zone" of expressive culture (e.g., music, art, and dance) (Doerr, 2008; Fleras & Elliot, 1992; Raibmon, 2005; St. Denis, 2011). These 5 students consider that they know a "Small amount of culture."[74] Or they talk about "Colourful traditional wear,"[75] "their traditional

[68] #470; high school courses; Social Studies 11, History 12; 21 years; male; Canadian with Aboriginal ancestry; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Computing Studies and Information Systems (Diploma); Software Engineer

[69] #438; high school course; social studies; 18 years; Female, Male, Non-binary, Transgender, Intersex, Other; International Indigenous person; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Decline to answer; unsure

[70] #129; high school courses, Social studies grade 10, indigenous unit, 21 years; male; Métis, Canadian with Aboriginal ancestry; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Citizen of my First Nations, Métis or Inuit community; Digital Marketing Communications Management (Concentration); Digital Marketing

[71] #111; no courses; 18 years; male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Child of Immigrant(s) to Canada; Computing Studies and Information Systems (Diploma); Programmer

[72] #230; no courses; 21 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Veterinary Technology; Veterinary Technologist

[73] #455; no courses; 23 years; female; First Nations; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Health Care Support Worker; RN

[74] #235; no courses; 18 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Academic Foundations for Potential Nursing Applicants; Nursing

[75] #393; no courses; 21 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Legal Studies; paralegal, maybe lawyer if I can acquire the funding and the grades

clothing/art/music"[76] or more specifically "cultural aspects of coastal first nations."[77] These are "cultural expressions"[78] that the students can point to vaguely but do not name, explain, or engage with meaningfully.

Other students document and lament the attacks on Indigenous cultures and celebrate Indigenous resurgence. These 24 students usually refer to Indigenous cultures in the plural. These students observe that "Residential schools and the 60's scoop decimated Aboriginal people's cultures and sense of community and self."[79] They may mention cultural appropriation or that "Canadians have committed cultural and actual genocide upon them."[80] Or speaking of a particular community, "Language is key to rebirth of our culture."[81] These students recognize the massive attack on Indigenous cultures without objectifying them. But others may use cultural to minimize the severity of the harm inflicted on Indigenous peoples, as in cultural genocide,[82] expressed most clearly as "We almost 'not really' committed genocide"[83] (for a discussion of the cultural contexts of cultural genocide as opposed to genocide, see Akhavav, 2016).

Some students (12), implicitly recognizing the problematic way many of their colleagues conceive of Indigenous cultures, engage in myth busting around "culture". They insist "There are many different cultures,"[84] that "Various nations across Canada hold their own cultural practices and beliefs,"[85] or even, but unfortunately not used in the plural, "That a lot of their culture is in our everyday lives and we don't acknowledge it."[86] This student explains with a clear sense of Indigenous plurality, "Our culture does not respect the history, culture, language and practices of all these groups."[87]

[76] #423; high school course, social studies 11; 18 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Social Work; being a social worker for youth criminal justice institutes
[77] #293; no courses; 46 years; male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident
[78] #135; university courses, a Canadian Literature class where we only read Indigenous authors, another literature class in which we read the TRC; 25 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Child of Immigrant(s) to Canada, As part of a racially marginalized group; Psychiatric Nursing (Bachelor of Science); psychiatric nurse
[79] #252; no courses; 32 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Child of Immigrant(s) to Canada; Academic Foundations for Potential Psychiatric Nursing Applicants; Psychiatric Nursing/Higher Education/Psychology
[80] #275; no courses; 25 years; Non-binary, Transgender; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Creative Writing and Language Arts, Writer Poet and Editor
[81] #450; no courses; 22 years; female; First Nations: Tsimshian, Nisga'a, Tlingit, coast Salish; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Citizen of my First Nations, Métis or Inuit community, As part of a racially marginalized group; Child and Youth Care (Diploma); Aboriginal support worker
[82] 151; no courses; 25 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Therapeutic Recreation (Diploma); activity aide/care aide; #181; courses in high school, Social studies and Law courses; 18 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; theater actor
[83] #174; no courses; 17 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Child of Immigrant(s) to Canada, As part of a racially marginalized group; Psychology (Associate of Arts - Pre-Bachelor's); not sure
[84] #384; high school course; social studies 10; 18 years; female; Canadian with Aboriginal ancestry; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Nursing; possibly nursing
[85] #436; high school courses, Social Studies 9, 10, 11; 18 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Psychology (Minor); Speech Language Pathologist
[86] #468; no courses; 18 years; female; Immigrant to Canada (not born in Canada); Therapeutic Recreation (Bachelor); Physiotherapist
[87] #201; no courses; 42 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Health Information Management (Post-Baccalaureate Diploma); Working in a hospital with health records and information

Past or Away

The most common trend amongst these students is to think of Indigenous people in terms of the distant past (111 responses), to place colonialism in a past for which they are not responsible (108 responses), to construct First Nations and Métis peoples and Inuit as vanishing over time (12 responses), to assume Indigenous people still inhabit the past (9 responses), to see them as forever damaged by the past (8 responses), to assume First Nations and Métis peoples and Inuit were, and continue to be, primitive (5 responses), and to imagine Indigenous peoples as not here but far away (24 responses). Altogether 168/479 (35%) respondents engaged in past-ing or distancing in one or several of these ways, generating 291 such responses. The past-ing of Indigenous people is a tendency observed by Susan Dion and illustrated in Thomas King's "You're Not the Indian I Had in Mind" (Dion, 2009; King, 2003). This tendency is so strong because it is one of the most fundamental ways settlers and governments have denied "the geopolitical implications of persistent Indigenous becoming," and the ways that Indigenous existence in the here and now "challenges settler claims to possession now and for the future" (Rifkin 2017 p. 5). For the young this perspective is subtly but powerfully reinforced by the curricular relegation to history of teaching about Indigenous peoples. (Godlewska et al 2016; Lamb, 2015; Schaefli et al 2018a),

Some of the students are concerned to give Indigenous peoples historical priority. However, the way they do that is sometimes deeply problematic and reflects deep narratives of national identity (Anderson & O'Gorman, 2006, pp. 204-206). Many argue that Indigenous people were here in Canada first, giving Canada an eternal status of ever having been: "arrived in Canada thousands of years before Europeans";[88] they "Established canada";[89] were "Canada's founders";[90] "the first to reside in Canada,"[91] and perhaps most happily for settlers, "They found our land."[92] Some rely on colonial anthropological definitions that reduce complex interrelationships with land to simple (i.e. primitive) practices: "They are hunters. They are gatherers."[93] Others focus on a moment or event in the past: "Aboriginal war veterans";[94] "The metis people played an extremely large role in Western fur trades";[95]

[88] #7; high school courses, Social Studies 10; 21 years; male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Other; Psychology (Associate of Arts - Pre-Bachelor's); Something that I'm passionate about and can reliably make a living off of

[89] #241; no courses; 19 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Early Childhood Education (Diploma); Child and youth care worker

[90] #264; no courses; 22 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Nursing (Bachelor of Science); nursing

[91] #301; high school courses, All throughout social studies and history class, in college in my women studies and sociology class; 24 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Child of Immigrant(s) to Canada; Nursing – Psychiatric

[92] #386; no courses; 19 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Academic Foundations for Potential Psychiatric Nursing Applicants; nursing

[93] #74; no courses; 17 years; male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Psychology (Associate of Arts - Pre-Bachelor's); Pro talker

[94] #118; no courses; 24 years; female; International student; International Business Management (Post-Degree Diploma); graphic design

[95] #308; no courses; 18 years, female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Psychology (Associate of Arts - Pre-Bachelor's); Something in psychology

or “Played important roles in defending Canada in the War of 1812.”[96] Six respondents simply write “History.”

Overwhelmingly, in the tenses they use and in their sentence construction, these students place colonialism in the past: “They were discriminated against for hundreds of years”[97] “Unfair treatment historically,”[98] “Mistreated in the past,”[99] “Dealt with adversity,”[100] “Were not given full rights in the past.”[101] Or simply that Indigenous peoples now deal with “post colonialism trauma”[102] which assumes that there is no ongoing colonial trauma. Certainly, these students demonstrate no hint of understanding the lasting impacts of colonialism (Quijano, 2007).

Some students performed a double form of distancing though past-ing and identity. By laying responsibility on others, some students distance themselves from a shared responsibility for ongoing colonialism: “Others took over their land,”[103] “Europeans took over their land,”[104] “White people stole their land.”[105] Even the word settler can be distancing with, for example, this student’s combination of use of the past tense, passive voice and quotation marks, “They were lied to and taken advantage of by "settlers."”[106]

The sense of Indigenous peoples vanishing is not as strong at Douglas College as it is in universities and colleges in Ontario or especially in Newfoundland and Labrador where the myth of vanishing has been a foundation of the curriculum for some time (Godlewska et al., 2017a; Hallett, 2017; Owen, 2017), but it is present in this student population. For some students, assimilation, which some students feel Indigenous people have been striving for, has worked: “Many different communities/groups existed but most have gone/going extinct because of assimilation.”[107] Here assimilation is not framed as the result

[96] #331; high school course, Social Studies; 18 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Nursing (Bachelor of Science); nurse

[97] #240; courses in college: Justice institute of British Columbia; 28 years; male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Immigrant to Canada (not born in Canada), As part of a racially marginalized group; Computing Studies and Information Systems (Diploma); Programmer

[98] #21; no courses; 24 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Nursing - Psychiatric; community psychiatric care

[99] #41; courses in high school, Canadian grade 10 Social studies; 20 years; decline to answer gender; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Academic Foundations for Potential Nursing Applicants; nursing

[100] #57; college courses, CYCC 3520 and a history class; 23 years; female; I am not an Indigenous person in Canada, Native American (U.S.); Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Child and Youth Care (Bachelor of Arts); teacher

[101] #158; no courses; 18 years; male; International Indigenous person; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Chemistry; polymer chemistry

[102] #413; High school courses, social studies, in university, sociology, philosophy; 21 years; female; First Nations; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Citizen of my First Nations, Métis or Inuit community; Management (Diploma); working with indigenous and non indigenous communities

[103] #262; no courses; 22 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Immigrant to Canada (not born in Canada); Criminology, Applied (Bachelor of Arts); lawyer

[104] #15; no courses; 17 years; male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Computing Studies and Information Systems (Diploma); computer science

[105] #97; no courses; 25 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Vet technology; vet technician

[106] #342; in college, our lifespan course has gone over residential schooling quite a bit; 24 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Child and Youth Care (Bachelor of Arts); Working in a youth home or as a child counselor

[107] #430; no courses; 18 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Child of Immigrant(s) to Canada; Neuroscience; psychiatrist

of a series of aggressive policies but an inevitable, even 'natural' process. "They have a rich and vast culture that has been lost with time due to colonialism"[108] with the result that they are "dying cultures,"[109] or "Rare"[110] but again, happily for some, "There culture was suppressed but is very interesting to learn about."[111]

Direct assertions that Indigenous peoples still inhabit the past, are forever damaged by the past, were and continue to be primitive, or are geographically distant appear in a relatively small number of student comments but are nonetheless important. The Canadian camping experience, where campers participate in activities that are presented as typically "Indian," may be responsible for one student's association: "They tell stories around the fire to the little kids"[112] (Shore, 2015; Wall, 2005). The wording of "The effects of the way the government treated them are still engrained in them,"[113] suggests an indelible and hopeless stain. Framing Indigenous peoples as uncivilized "For better or for worse, they were uncivilized. They had no writing system, so by definition they were uncivilized" serves for this student as justification for the violence they faced: "The fact is that if history were a bucket of blood, the genocide of the First Nations would be just a drop in the bucket."[114] Related to the past-ing performed in these responses, some students also perform a form of geographical distancing, placing Indigenous peoples somewhere far away (Dwyer & Jones, 2000; Laliberté et al., 2017; Lipsitz, 2011; Medina, 2013; Whitt, 2016). For some of these students, what is most remarkable about First Nations and Métis peoples and Inuit is their absence, "They mostly live on reservations"[115] or "they are hard to see,"[116] or, referring to Inuit, "They live in harsh arctic landscapes."[117]

Land/Nature

A large number of students (110/479) mention - and take an equally uncritical and often problematic approach to - land or nature in association with Indigenous peoples. In general, students talk about land and nature in five principal ways: they focus on the theft of Indigenous land (44 responses), they assert

[108] #177; no courses; 18 years; female; Child of Immigrant(s) to Canada; Future Teacher; I see myself as a history teacher teaching in a french school because my culture is European (France).
[109] #365; no courses; 22 years; male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Environmental Studies; don't know yet
[110] #367; no courses; 17 years; female; International student; Financial Services (Bachelor of Business Administration); finance
[111] #306; course in high school, socials 10; 18 years; male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Criminology (Diploma); lawyer, Cop
[112] #153; high school course, Social Studies; 19 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Forensic anthropology; a forensic anthropologist
[113] #206; no courses; 22 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Child and Youth Care (Bachelor of Arts); youth worker
[114] #7; high school course, social studies 10; 21 years; male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Very Canadian; born in Canada and will die in Canada. My ancestors came here in the 1600s; Psychology (Associate of Arts - Pre-Bachelor's); Something that I'm passionate about and can reliably make a living off of
[115] #395; high school and college courses; 37 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, As part of a racially marginalized group; Psychology, Applied (Bachelor of Arts); Helping people deal with trauma, stress accidents through some sort of therapy
[116] #53; high school courses emphasize a lot on aboriginal matters; 19 years; female; International student; Associate of Arts; not sure
[117] #286; high school course, Social Studies 11; 18 years; male, First Nations, Métis, Non-status Indigenous person, Canadian with Aboriginal ancestry, Blackfoot Cree; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Commerce and Business Administration (Diploma); Accounting or Finance related

that Indigenous people have a special relationship with land and nature (40 responses), they talk about land rights (33 responses), or they mention Indigenous priority on the land (9 responses). The comments directed at land theft go from the very simple and direct "we took the land from them"[118] to observations that include understanding of the relationship between land theft and reserves, "Government took the land they founded and claimed it for themselves or left them the more dangerous/unusable areas,"[119] between land theft and settlement, "They lost a lot of their people and land to systematic colonization" and between land theft and treaties, "Land treaties were made, but the Canadian government does not honour them and cheated the Indigenous peoples."[120] The comments directed at Indigenous peoples' connection with the land go from the simple assertion "land"[121] to the relatively subtle, "Great knowledge of the land they live on and respect for their environment"[122] or "First Nations believe that everything is connected with each other…"[123] to comments that stereotype, "they are very natural people, they do not like to disturb nature"[124] or "still live with nature, not well developed."[125] The comments focused on land rights either document Indigenous struggles: "Indigenous peoples are still fighting for equality, land rights, and the right to self-govern,"[126] or are statements of responsibility. But three either see settler responsibility as mitigated or overstate political gains made by First Nations: "Even though this is their land, they make up a very small fraction of the overall population of Canada,"[127] "they have sold large chunks of their farming land to large developments"[128] and "… much of Canada's land and fishing areas for salmon are reserved only for the First Nations people."[129] For the most part, those who focus on land rights are better informed than other respondents. Land and nature are frequently used by the students with very different understandings and interpretations, many of them fundamentally unexamined.

[118] #140; high school course, Social Studies; 18 years; female; Dual Citizen of Canada and the US; Musical Theatre; a performer
[119] #79; high school courses, Social studies 11 and 12; 18 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Child of Immigrant(s) to Canada; Academic Foundations for Potential Nursing Applicants; pediatric nurse
[120] #211; high school courses, Social Studies; 22 years; male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Immigrant to Canada (not born in Canada); General Business (Diploma); Mayor of Surrey, BC
[121] #249; no courses; 23 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Psychosocial Rehabilitation (Graduate Diploma); counselling psychologist
[122] #178; no courses; 43 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Behaviour Intervention; autism support worker for young children and their families
[123] #308; no courses; 18 years, female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Psychology (Associate of Arts - Pre-Bachelor's); Something in psychology
[124] #120; no courses; 18 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Immigrant to Canada (not born in Canada), Child of Immigrant(s) to Canada; Youth Justice; I want to be a immigration lawyer for youth, or a custody lawyer for youth involved in the youth justice system
[125] #387; college courses, Yukon College; 65 years; female; International Indigenous person; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Immigrant to Canada (not born in Canada), International student, As part of a racially marginalized group; Business Law (Concentration); fair treat in society and fair law should apply for every body
[126] #161; no courses; 20 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Political Science; lobbyist
[127] #457, high school courses, books on their own personal stories as well as the basic history and a little more in depth; 18 years; male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Criminology (Diploma); CBSA
[128] #140; high school course, Social Studies; 18 years; female; Dual Citizen of Canada and the US; Musical Theatre; a performer
[129] #208; high school courses, Social Studies 11; 18 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Nursing (Bachelor of Science); In the medical field

Stereotypes

In our analysis of the comments, we encountered a number of what we considered to be stereotypes. These were of three kinds, positive (20 responses), neutral (13 responses) and negative (4 responses). Positive stereotypes are blanket statements about peoples that might be true for some but, in relying on generalities, students demonstrate insufficient knowledge to say anything based on deeper education or experience. The tone and nature of these comments is captured by these examples: "Very nice people"[130] "how all of them are a community,"[131] "very spiritual."[132] Many of the references to culture (particularly in the singular), land and nature fall within this category of stereotype, but we have removed them from the count as we discussed them elsewhere. Neutral stereotypes might be offensive, but we suspect are not meant to be so. Typical of these are: "Metis is mixed from first nations and inuit people"[133] or "Metis are french candian"[134] or simply "Different language."[135] Negative stereotypes are few; once we subtract those with overlap with other categories, such as the Gift category, which is itself negative, and focus on the supposed poverty of all Indigenous people (discussed further below).[136]

Reserves

Students who commented on reserves either merely mentioned reserves or reservations (9 responses), commented on poor conditions on reserves (15 responses), or chastised the government for not providing better conditions (4 responses). One student considers that reserves have failed but how they understand reserves and what they mean by failure is unclear.[137] Others see the reserve system as essentially apartheid.[138] As we saw in the Past and Away section, not a few students believe that First

[130] #241; no courses; 19 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Early Childhood Education (Diploma); child and youth care worker

[131] #330; no courses; 23 years; female; Canadian with Aboriginal ancestry; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Child and Youth Care (Bachelor of Arts); youth care worker

[132] #407; college courses: anthropology, sociology, university courses: social justice, governance, public policy, ethics, social programs; 46 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Immigrant to Canada (not born in Canada); Public policy, teaching, social justice, immigration policy; intercultural facilitator/ post secondary instructor

[133] #359; no courses; 18 years; male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Immigrant to Canada (not born in Canada); Nothing

[134] #72; no courses; 17 years; male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Accounting (Bachelor of Business Administration); accountant

[135] #312; no courses; 22 years, female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Commerce and Business Administration (Diploma); Technology and Business Management

[136] #35; high school course, Social Studies 10; 18 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Legal Studies; lawyer.

[137] #401; university courses, I am working towards my BSW and there are several courses that focus on Indigenous content; 44 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Social Work; my hope is to work as a Social Worker within the health care field; #426; high school courses, social studies 11/history 12, college course, Aboriginal crime and justice; 21 years; Other gender; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Criminology, Applied (Bachelor of Arts); police

[138] #470; high school courses; Social Studies 11, History 12; 21 years; male; Canadian with Aboriginal ancestry; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Computing Studies and Information Systems (Diploma); Software Engineer

Nations and Métis peoples and Inuit all live on reserves. Some students seem to regard reserves as a special gift from the government.[139]

Gifts

It is striking that with only three opportunities to name three things they know about First Nations and Métis peoples and Inuit, 24 students focus on the benefits they feel Indigenous people receive. The most frequent reference is to "Free education"[140] or "They get free university."[141] The second most frequent reference is to government funding. The third most frequent is to tax benefits, best summed up as "They don't pay tax."[142] One student lists only benefits and another uses two of three spaces to list perceived benefits. In general, these students do not distinguish between First Nations and Métis peoples or Inuit in making these assertions, and most do not recognize any difference between status and non-status people. Only one student expressed hateful propaganda: "they feel entitled to get free money, and don't work to try and change their circumstances. Forever victims."[143] It is truly disturbing that this student is in psychiatric nursing. This focus on Indigenous people as unfairly favoured, or just favoured, is not as common among the students we surveyed at Douglas as it was among those we surveyed at Memorial in 2013 (Godlewska et al., 2017a, 2017b).

Language

A small number of students (19) focused on language, language recovery or language retention as important issues. Indeed, language retention and recovery are vital to community health and well-being and there is hope for the future with Indigenous language recovery in Canada (Dunlop, Gessner, Herbert, & Parker, 2018; McIvor & Ball, 2019; Statistics Canada, 2017a). Most of these answers are quite terse. But some Indigenous students use their comments to argue that "language is vital"[144] and "Language is key to rebirth of our culture."[145] Many of the rest of these students notice the diversity of languages, note the loss of language, or just cryptically state "language," in the singular.

Government Responsibility

Seventeen students hold the government responsible for what is going wrong in Indigenous-settler relations. The focus of these comments is on responsibility for Residential Schools, land theft, failure to honour treaties, and persistent inadequate support for communities. One student, perhaps deeply unaware of Canada's colonial past and present, expresses puzzlement: "Gov't gives money and tax

[139] #85; high school courses, Socials 10; 17 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Health Care Support Worker; not too sure yet

[140] #423; high school course, social studies 11; 18 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Social Work; being a social worker for youth criminal justice institutes

[141] #373; no courses; 24 years; male, Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Computing Studies and Information Systems (Diploma); software engineer

[142] #237; college courses; 28 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Child and Youth Care (Diploma)

[143] #23; no courses; 34 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Psychiatric Nursing (Bachelor of Science); psychologist private practice

[144] #16; courses in high school: Northern Studies; 23 years; male; First Nations; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Citizen of my First Nations, Métis or Inuit community; Associate of Arts; lawyer

[145] #450; no courses; 22 years; female; First Nations: Tsimshian, Nisga'a, Tlingit, coast Salish; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Citizen of my First Nations, Métis or Inuit community, As part of a racially marginalized group; Child and Youth Care (Diploma); Aboriginal support worker

breaks but why is it not helping their people."[146] Here there is no recognition of what the government and settlers have taken, nor the harms they have inflicted upon Indigenous peoples. In general, while some people blame the government for what has happened or is happening to Indigenous people, there is little recognition of systematic government attempts at Indigenous erasure.

Reconciliation

Similar problems arise when students refer to reconciliation. Sixteen students mention reconciliation. Eight (50%) of these just mention the word, or some variant of it. In general, there is little evidence that students know what they mean by reconciliation. Thinking critically about reconciliation is a must for settlers (Garneau, 2016; Jung, 2018). Do students understand it as something that must transform the violence and domination of coloniality and allow for Indigenous futurity (Paquette, 2020)? There is little sign of this. Some consider that reconciliation is something that Indigenous people are doing alone or must do themselves: "Reconciliation is something they value and are working towards."[147] For one student, reconciliation requires Indigenous people to wake up to Canadians' current good will.

> As they were the first people who were here in Canada, much of their land and culture had been taken away by newcomers and they were forced to move else where. I believe now there is a movement to make change and have their culture be seen and appreciated. It is a movement so the scars of the First Nations, Inuit, and Metis people can heal and understand that the citizens of Canada do care about them and their community.[148]

Povinelli describes as fundamental to colonial multiculturalism this idea that "indigenous persons at once orient their sensual, emotional, and corporeal identities towards the nation's ideal image of itself as worthy of love and reconciliation" (Povinelli, 1998, p. 580). The student's appeal for the first people of Canada to understand Canada's love, is closely linked to the view of Indigenous people as of/in the past, and also of Indigenous people as recipients of undeserved privileges (Whyte, 2018), both themes discussed in this analysis. But one student gets at the heart of the issue, recognizing in Canada's actions the absence of relational thinking and behaviour:

> The First Nations people have been mishandled by the government for many years, even in attempts to reconcile. Because our government is not relational, more harm has been done, even in the attempts to mend the previous damage.[149]

This student's use of the word "mishandled" is disturbing as it implies that First Nations people are objects to be handled by the government and implies a troubling delegation of responsibility for

[146] #324; no courses; 31 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Supply Chain Management (Post-Degree Diploma); Fashion Planner or in Operations preferably in Fashion
[147] #194; no courses; 21 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Computing Studies and Information Systems (Diploma); Web development
[148] #208; high school courses, Social Studies 11; 18 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Nursing (Bachelor of Science); In the medical field
[149] #144; high school courses, Social Studies; 24 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Psychiatric Nursing (Bachelor of Science); Continuing to work as a Psychiatric Nurse, potentially transitioning to working as a Child Life Specialist in the next 10 years

reconciliation to the government. But there is in her words an important recognition of something fundamental; the need to focus on building relationships.

Educational Imperative

In surveys in other educational institutions and jurisdictions, students have emphasized the importance of education to the quality of life of First Nations and Métis peoples or Inuit and to transforming settler Indigenous relations. The importance of transforming, decolonizing, or Indigenizing education has been the focus of significant academic research (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018; Kuokkanen, 2007; Styres, 2017; Tuck & Yang, 2012), advocacy by important organizations like the First Nations Education Steering Committee (see http://www.fnesc.ca/publication/), and activity on the part of the Ministries of Education, school boards and educators (Dion, 2007; Higgins, Madden, & Korteweg, 2015; Korteweg & Fiddler, 2019; St. Denis, 2007; Tupper, 2011; Watson & Currie-Paterson, 2019). In responding to this question, only a small number of students at Douglas College (10) mentioned the importance of education and most of these only as their third comment. Eight worried about how ill-informed most people are and the "lack of proper and accurate representation in the Canadian Public Schools"[150] and that "People in Canada should at least know the history of this land."[151] But one student complained: "We learn about them in literally every class in high school."[152] A First Nations student seems to excuse the poor coverage in schools with the observation that "Most of their history is verbal therefore is hard to teach in traditional school."[153] This comment may be a critique, though not very pointed, of schooling in British Columbia, where classroom settings and timetable constraints limit the possibilities for land- and place-based pedagogies for transmitting oral history.

Multicultural

Multiculturalist thinking antipathetic to Indigenous sovereignty pervades many students' comments, as we have already seen. Aggressive expression of colonialist multicultural thinking, that minimizes the distinctiveness of Indigenous peoples or asserts the commonality of all Canadians (or peoples), is less common in this student body than in Ontario (Schaefli et al., 2018a, 2018b). But it is present. Six students express this very clearly. Again, it is best summed up by a student who uses all three things he knew to say, "They are people," "They have human rights," "They are no different than anyone else."[154] Headed for the police services, this student is not likely to understand the complexities of Indigenous identity and diversity, the ways in which law has, and continues to, disadvantage Indigenous people, the lamentable legacy of treaties in Canada, the implications of the Indian Act, the social geographies of

[150] #472; courses in college: Aboriginal Stream of Child and Youth Care Work. Focuses on Family Systems and Community Care from an Aboriginal perspective and from Elders teachings, Pacific Association of First Nations Women; 34 years; decline to answer gender; First Nations, Métis, Non-status Indigenous person, Canadian with Aboriginal ancestry, Want a different word for Cree, as it is racial slang for 'big mouth'; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, As part of a racially marginalized group, Other, mixed blood; Child and Youth Care; A helping, healing, restorative, and educational career!!!

[151] #87; no courses; 46 years; male; international student; International Business Management (Post-Degree Diploma); I aim to have a job in Canada related to my field

[152] #340; no courses; 18 years; decline to answer gender; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Criminology (Associate of Arts); not sure

[153] #476; course in high school: First Nations Studies 12; 22 years; female; First Nations, Canadian with Aboriginal ancestry; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Academic Foundations; teacher or counselor possibly

[154] #155; no courses; 17 years; male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Child of Immigrant(s) to Canada; Criminology (Diploma); police

violence that have been so evident in British Columbia, or Indigenous resistance and civil disobedience amongst many other consequences of colonialism in Canada.

Some Deeply Informed Responses

A small number of students (34/479) provided comments that reveal deeper reflection around the three things they know. Some of these comments were myth busting or politically progressive statements, some focus on Indigenous peoples' resilience, some focus more on the harms of colonialism, and some do a bit of both. Some emphasized the positive and some the negative, though positive and negative observations were a little more balanced with this group of students compared to those with less thoughtful responses. The myth busting comments were designed to attack some of the stereotypes or myths prevalent in Canadian society. These students emphasized that Indigenous peoples are: "resilient,' "educated", "active in making change for the better."[155] The focus on resilience is important and political, particularly when it is understood as "embedded in Indigenous body and land sovereignty" and where women and girls are conceived as "citizens of sovereign Indigenous nations" "intimately linked to their tribal and kinship networks, lands, and ancestors" (de Finney, 2017, p. 11). Some myth busting is more pointed, countering prevailing myths about First Nations tax exemption: "First Nations peoples pay taxes like everyone else."[156] Some political statements call for important social change as in,

> Canada has a history of abusing and exploiting Aboriginal people and residential schools were not too long ago, yet we talk about it as if it were. Canada talks about reconciliation but I'm not sure how much action is being taken.[157]

Some suggest responsibility: "We teach on their land" "We learn on their land" "we live on their land."[158] But none of these responses says *this is what I want to do about social injustice*. The pro-Indigenous positive observations reveal deeper understanding of, for example, legal rulings affecting non-status and Métis rights, the right to self-government, and the unlearning that settlers must do:

> many of our understandings of history and society are from an explicitly colonial, white supremacist narrative, and settlers (particularly white settlers) have to do the work to unlearn and challenge that in order to show solidarity for Indigenous people[159]

[155] #361; courses in college; 37 years; female; First Nations, Tsarlip; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Citizen of my First Nations, Métis or Inuit community, As part of a racially marginalized group; Child and Youth Care (Bachelor of Arts); politics

[156] #382; no courses; 30 years; male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Decline to answer re. Faculty; Counselor, not 100% on it yet

[157] #33; no courses; decline to answer age; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Child of Immigrant(s) to Canada, As part of a racially marginalized group; Decline to answer re. Faculty; Something to do with social justice, admin work, community programs, mental health programs, and/or music

[158] #88; courses in high school: BC First Nations 12; 18 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Administrative Assistant (Certificate); Paralegal

[159] #429; courses in college: psych and related courses and anti-racism workshops as a youth as well as personal research in order to improve my understanding; 20 years, female, non-binary, Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Child and Youth Care (Bachelor of Arts); youth work

Other students demonstrate a deep understanding of the impacts and harms of colonialism, together with awareness of important governance structures, like the Indian Act or the nature and impacts of racism:

> Most non-Aboriginal people do not understand the way colonialism and forced assimilation has affected Aboriginal people nor do they understand how racism actually works in human psychology. This contributes to the shocking apathy towards the horrible struggles that Aboriginal communities face.[160]

Many of these students have taken courses on Indigenous topics, or are older and have more life experience, or are Indigenous themselves.

Some Understanding

We classed together the responses that fell into no other category but reflected some understanding of the topic, 193/479 answers (40%). We subdivided them into negative characterizations, neutral comments and positive observations. Negative responses, 144/479 (30%) were of two different kinds: recognition of the damage caused by colonialism; and association of Indigenous peoples with social problems without any suggestion of awareness of the colonial source of the problems. Three quarters of the students making negative associations focused on the damaging effects of colonialism: e.g. "as a population they have issues that stem from colonization"[161] or" First Nations are discriminated against in our country."[162] One quarter of students simply named social problems: for example, "higher rates of crime within indigenous community",[163] "Families torn apart by substance abuse stemming from abuse within families."[164] While the students in this latter group may be able to locate the social issues faced by Indigenous peoples in colonialism, not stating that relationship is problematic in an environment of racism. Forty (8%) responses fell into the neutral category. Some were reasonably informed, if generalizing and at the same time particular: "Traditional medicine using indigenous plants is very important to Aboriginal people."[165] Some were tentative: "They lived here first .... not to Familiar with details but its somthing I've been told."[166] Positive responses were fewer, 30 (6%), and focused on

[160] #252; no courses; 32 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Child of Immigrant(s) to Canada; Academic Foundations for Potential Psychiatric Nursing Applicants; Psychiatric Nursing/Higher Education/Psychology

[161] #322; no courses; 26 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; therapeutic recreation specialist

[162] #201; no courses; 42 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Health Information Management (Post-Baccalaureate Diploma); Working in a hospital with health records and information

[163] #69; no courses; 20 years; male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Legal Studies; lawyer, judge, law enforcement.

[164] #131; high school course, Social Studies; 25 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Academic Foundations for Potential Psychiatric Nursing Applicants; psychiatric nurse

[165] #252; no courses; 32 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Child of Immigrant(s) to Canada; Academic Foundations for Potential Psychiatric Nursing Applicants; Psychiatric Nursing/Higher Education/Psychology

[166] #433; no courses; 19 years; male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Administrative Assistant (Certificate); business and management

"Resilience,"[167] duration on Turtle Island such as "Thousands of years of experience,"[168] healing, artistic expression, community, and holistic living. Some of these answers were problematic in important ways: "Indigenous peoples have helped shape this land into the country…"[169] in which Indigenous peoples are seen only for their value to settler society. The findings in this section suggest that when students have minimal knowledge of Indigenous peoples, they tend to focus on the negative.

Don't Know

A generally low level of knowledge is suggested by the significant number of students who could not name two or three things they knew 32/479 (7%) and the even larger number who could not name a single thing they knew 84/479 (18%). A relatively low level of knowledge is also suggested in the 32 strictly definitional responses (20 students), e.g. "Inuit are aboriginals that inhabit the Arctic region."[170] The 87 responses that were too terse to interpret, "Population,"[171] "stories,"[172] "beliefs,"[173] again suggest a very low level of understanding. So, all told, 196 students out of the 479 (41%) who completed the questionnaire struggled to say three meaningful things about Indigenous peoples.

Conclusion

Coming into this test and in response to our intentionally problematic request that they tell us three things they know about First Nations and Métis people and Inuit, students display an array of frequently worrisome perspectives and prejudices. The themes and words we focused on for our analysis are reflected in the headings in this section of the report. While a small number of students displayed deeper understanding of Indigeneity in Canada, the majority reveal a lack of depth of understanding. Students have a tendency to place Indigenous people and colonialism in the past and generally employ a variety of strategies to distance themselves from the suffering of Indigenous peoples. Stereotypical thinking is common and although the stereotypes are not always negative, they reflect ignorance of Indigenous peoples and of society more generally. The number of students who could not think of three or indeed of anything they knew about First Nations and Métis people and Inuit alone speaks to the limited education these students have received and the need to address that at the college level.

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[167] #335; college courses, Douglas College's Aboriginal Stream, community courses, Medicine Wheel teachings, indigenous knowledge trainings and workshops; 24 years; female; First Nations, Métis, or Non-status Indigenous person; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Citizen of my First Nations, Métis or Inuit community, As part of a racially marginalized group; Child and Youth Care (Bachelor of Arts); Indigenous Youth Worker

[168] #315; high school course, Grade 10 socials; 18 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Classroom and Community Support (Diploma); teaching or maybe something involving city planning or law? not sure

[169] #199; courses in high school, social studies 11; 18 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Immigrant to Canada (not born in Canada); Psychology (Minor); something in psych or criminology

[170] #12; no courses; 63 years; male; International student; Computer and Information Systems (Post-Baccalaureate Diploma); entrepreneur

[171] #351; no courses; 25 years; female; Immigrant to Canada (not born in Canada); Management (Diploma); managing a business

[172] #6; college courses, Aboriginal studies; 30 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Administrative Assistant (Certificate); government employee

[173] #358; no courses; 26 years; female; First Nations, Non-status Indigenous person, Canadian with Aboriginal ancestry; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Academic Foundations for Potential Nursing Applicants; Registered Nurse specializing in OR, radiology, or hematology

Part 5. Quantitative Results

We conducted a quantitative analysis of student responses to determine trends in student knowledge and attitudes. We examined statistical differences in participants' performance on the knowledge portion of the questionnaire through independent samples t-tests or analysis of variance (ANOVA). The null hypothesis for these analyses was that demographic groupings would not influence awareness. For demographic variables with two groupings, we employed an independent samples t-test. For demographic variables with three or more groupings, we used ANOVA. We used Welch's ANOVA (α=0.05), specifically, with a Games-Howell post-hoc test to account for unequal variance. Where there were significant differences, Cohen's *d* or partial η2 were calculated as a measure of effect size (Cohen, 1988). Statistical differences in participants' responses within check-all-that-apply items were examined using contingency tables (cross tables) and Pearson's chi-square tests of independence (chi-square test). We employed a chi-square test using z-test of column proportions with Bonferonni adjustments to significance level (α= 0.05) to identify significant differences. For 2 by 2 cross tables with smaller sample sizes, specifically expected counts less than 5, we substituted Pearson's chi-square test for Fisher's Exact Test. The null hypothesis for these analyses was that demographic groupings would not influence awareness. All data analysis was completed using Statistical Program for the Social Sciences version 25 (SPSS v. 25).

Performance on Multiple-Choice Questions

The knowledge test comprised 32 multiple-choice questions. Twenty of these questions had 1 correct answer. The remaining 12 had multiple correct answers and were constructed as check-all-that-apply. We calculated student performance by assigning a point to each correct answer. A question with one correct answer would have a maximum score of 1, whereas a check-all-that-apply question with, for example, 4 correct answers would have a maximum score of 4. Students could score a maximum of 83 points on the multiple-choice questions. Based on this metric, students' overall test performance was 51.3% (*SD* = 23.4%, range = 0 to 100%). Students who self-identified as Indigenous (*n* = 58) performed 6.4 percentage points better on the test on average than students who did not identify as Indigenous. Students who self-identified as International students (*n* = 34) performed, on average, 17.8 percentage points less well than students who did not identify as such. While students who considered that they take most of their courses on the Coquitlam campus (52.8%, *n* = 199) performed slightly better on the test than students who mostly take classes at the New Westminster campus (50.5%, *n* = 275), this difference was not statistically significant. While a large number of mature[174] students took part in the study (n = 150, 35.4%), age did not predict performance on the test. However, students who had taken courses on Indigenous topics in college or university before beginning their current program at Douglas did score higher on the test, on average by 12 percentage points (t_{436} = -2.447, p = 0.015, Cohen's d = 0.60). Students who had not taken any courses on Indigenous topics performed less well, on average by -7.3 percentage points ($t_{424.293}$ = 3.341, p = 0.001, Cohen's d = 0.32).

While students' average performance on the test amounted to a passing score, there was considerable variation in test performance across question themes (Figure 1).

[174] Defined as students over the age of 22.

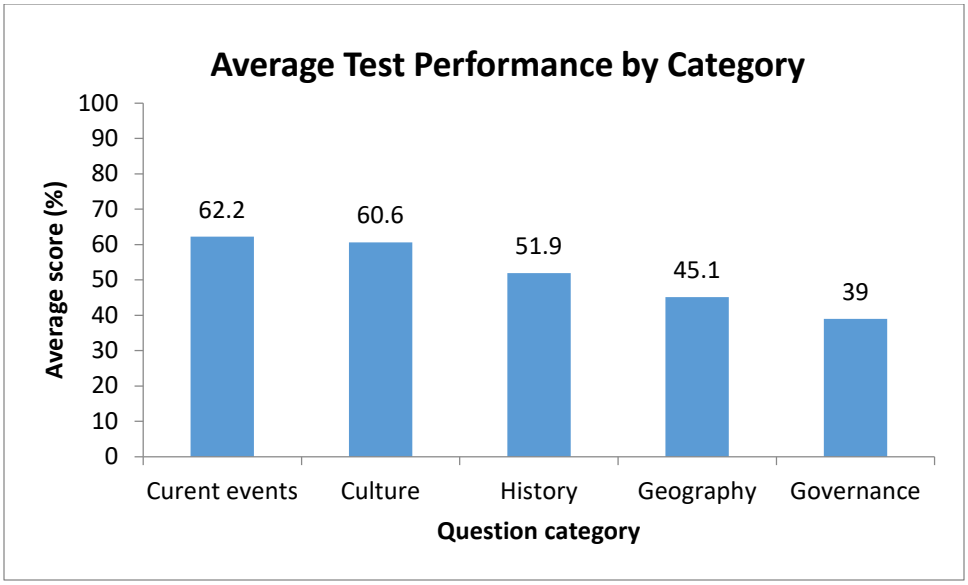


Figure 1. Average test performance by question category (weighted).

Students did best on current events (*M* = 62.2, *SD* = 30.4) and culture questions (*M*= 60.6, *SD* = 26.5). Students did much less well on questions related to the continuity of Indigenous presence (geography) (*M* = 45.1, *SD* = 24.6) and particularly poorly on questions on Canadian governance (*M* = 39.0, *SD* = 22.6). These are the questions that reflect a deeper understanding of Settler-Indigenous relations in Canada, past and present.

Student performance also differed by question topic. Table 3 summarizes the percent correct score achieved on each question, organized by theme.

Performance by Topic and Theme		
Theme	**Question topic**	**% Correct**
Current Events	Indian Act gender discrimination	67.1
	Consequences of residential schools**	50.2
	Post-secondary funding	44.3
	Systemic racism**	37.7
	Upholding treaties	33.2
	Reserves vs. municipalities**	20.1
Culture	Indigenous conceptions of health & well-being	76.3
	Oral history	71.8
	Indigenous languages	68.5
	Inuit way of life	49.8
	Positive changes	44.1
	Potlatch ban**	40.7
	All my relations**	18
History	Inuit relocation	75
	Louis Riel	63.6
	Nation-to-nation relations	57.3
	Land claims ban	52.2
	Aim of residential schools**	26.7
	Enfranchisement**	11
Geography	Unceded territory	76.1
	Reserves vs. traditional territories	57.8
	Traditional territory	51.5
	Government approach to land claims	41.1
	Off reserve	41.1
	FN, M, I population	21
Governance	1876 Indian Act	58.5
	1982 Constitution	41.1
	Resource rights**	18.3
	Changes in legal definitions of status**	17.3
	First Nations Health & Child Welfare Authorities**	14.8
	Modern BC treaty process**	14.3
	Barriers to informed consent**	1.8

**are check-all-that-apply questions. For these questions, % Correct refers to students who selected all the correct answers and none of the incorrect answers.

Table 3. Test question performance by question topic and theme.

Students did best on questions on Indigenous conceptions of health and well-being (76.3%), what it means when a territory is unceded (76.1%), and the forced relocation of Inuit by the Canadian government in the 1950s and 60s (75%). Students did least well on questions related to Canadian governance past and present, performing particularly poorly on questions on barriers to informed

consent on resource projects (1.8%), the many government strategies to reduce the number of status "Indians" in Canada (11%), the dynamics of the modern BC treaty process (14.3%), and why First Nations Health and Child Welfare authorities are needed (14.8%). Important too is that although at least 55% of First Nations people in Canadian provinces live off reserve (Statistics Canada, 2017b), the majority of students believe that most First Nations people live on reserve (45.4% incorrect vs. 41.1% correct). Misconception is also widespread on whether the population of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people is increasing, decreasing, or staying the same. Nearly three times more students considered that "The population is decreasing" than answered correctly that the population is increasing (66% vs. 21%). This belief is politically important, as it feeds discourses of ongoing Indigenous decline, a mentality that works to naturalize settler presence (Dunbar-Ortiz & Gilio-Whitaker, 2016; Wolfe, 2006). Student misconception is also evident in a check-all-that-apply question on informed consent in resource extraction projects. The question asked:

According to the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, when governments or businesses wish to develop projects on or across Indigenous lands, they must secure the informed consent of the Indigenous communities involved. How do businesses and the Government of Canada behave in Canada? (Check all that apply)

Nearly a fifth of respondents considered that "No development takes place without the permission of all Indigenous communities affected" and that "[Governments and businesses] acknowledge the Indigenous right to say no (veto)," suggesting that many students are unaware of the power imbalances at play in negotiations over resource extraction projects (Blackburn, 2005; McCreary & Milligan, 2014; Cooey-Hurtado, Tan & Kobayashi, 2019). It is likewise significant that nearly two thirds of respondents have difficulty understanding the breadth and depth of systemic racism.

Students are good judges of what they know. Immediately after the test portion of the questionnaire, we asked students how informed they feel about Indigenous peoples and topics (Figure 2).

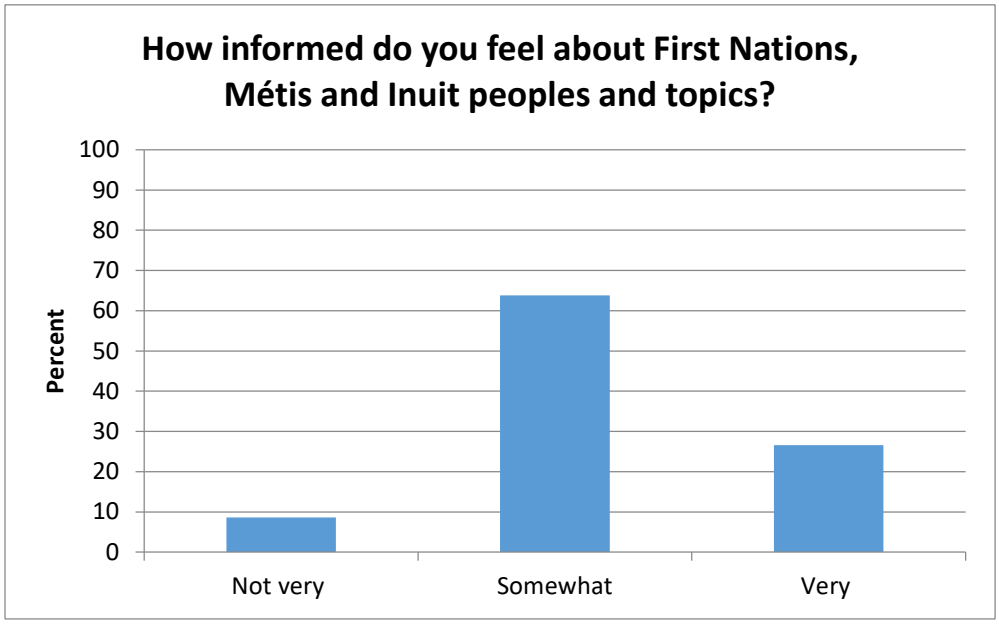
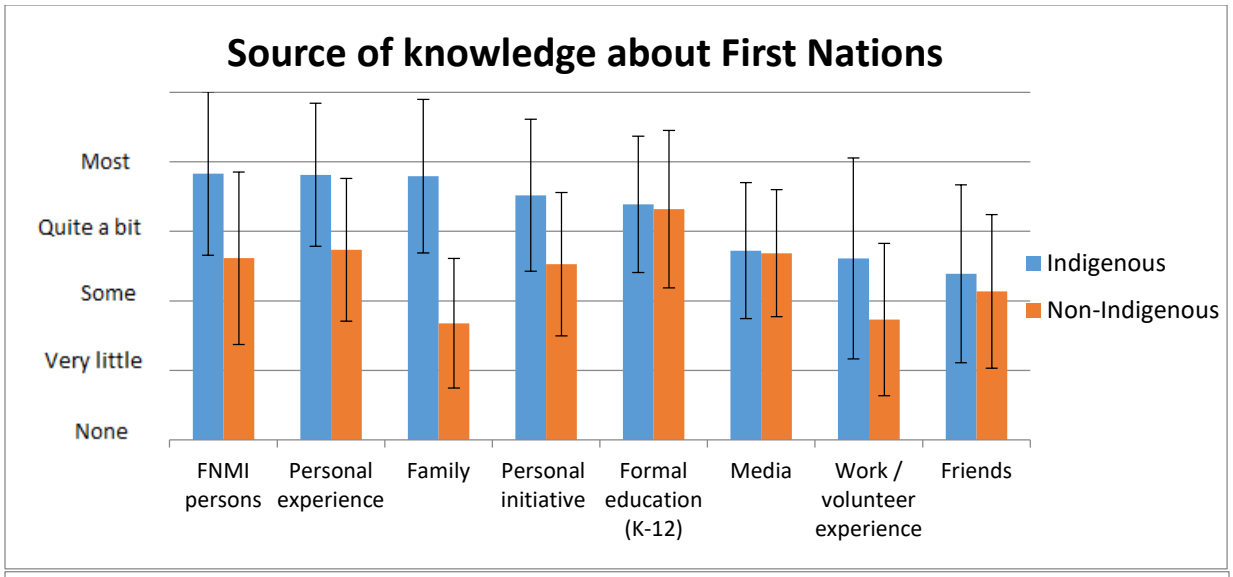


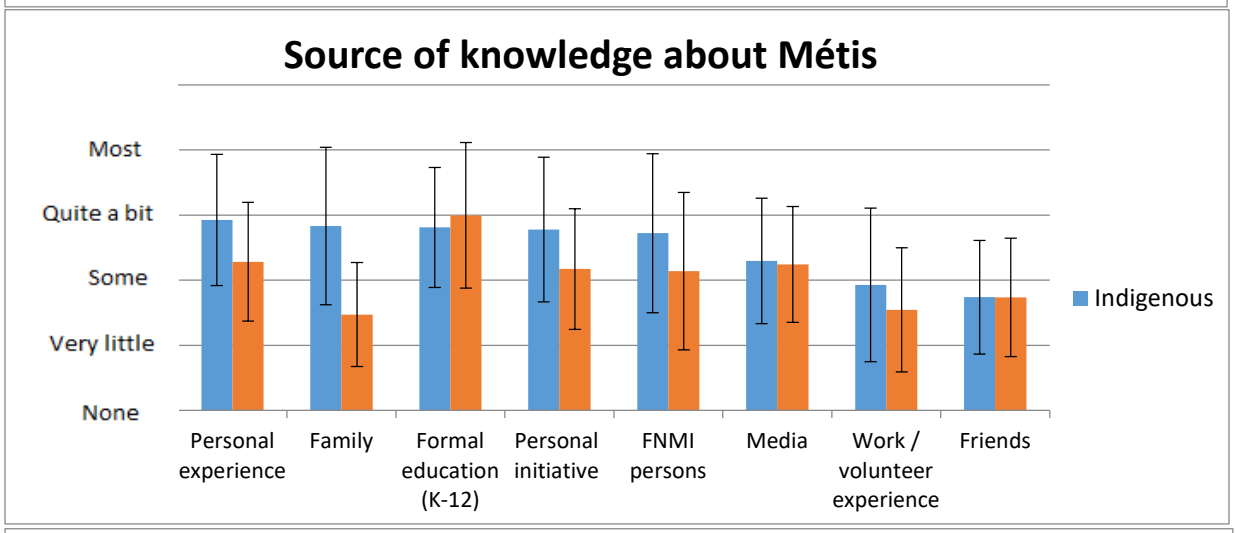
Figure 2. How informed students feel about First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples and topics.

Analysis of variance found that there was a significant difference in test performance based on how informed respondents felt about First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples and topics ($F(2,422) = 11.108$, $p < 0.001$, $n^2 = 0.05$). Overall performance on the multiple-choice test was significantly lower for students who reported that they felt not very informed (39.2 $\pm$ 25.0%) compared to those who reported that they felt somewhat informed (54.3 $\pm$ 21.7%, $p < 0.001$, Cohen's d = 0.65) and those who felt very informed (58.0 $\pm$ 21.9%, $p < 0.001$, Cohen's d = 0.80).

Sources of Knowledge

Where students learn what they know differs significantly between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Students also learn differently about First Nations than about Métis and about Inuit. We asked students how much they learned about First Nations, Métis and Inuit from their personal experience, their own initiative, their formal education, media, friends, family, Indigenous persons, and work, volunteer or internship experience (Figure 3).





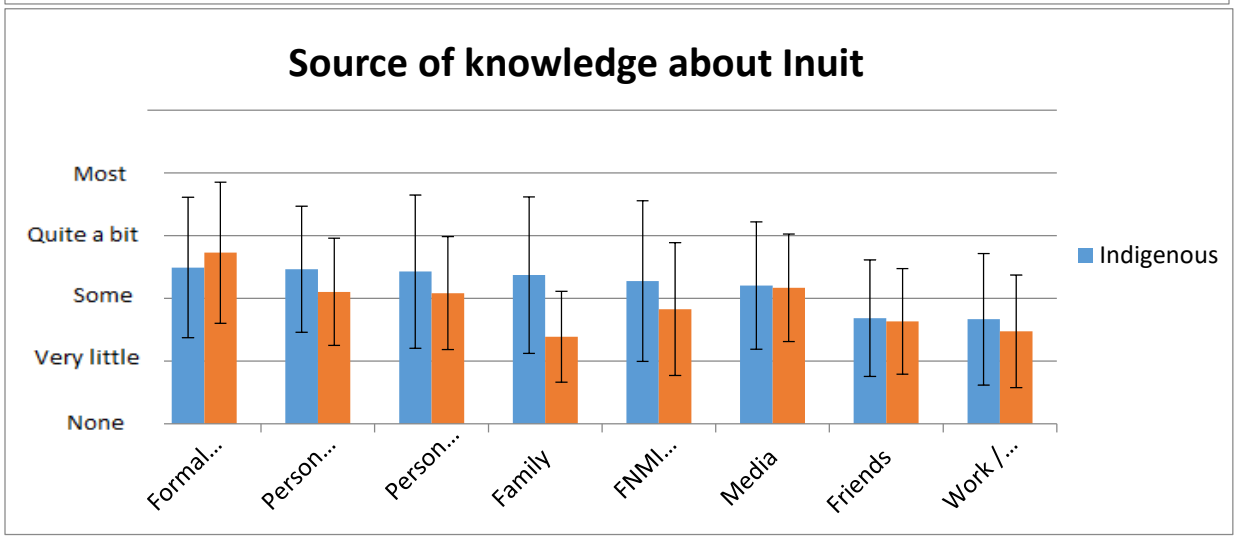
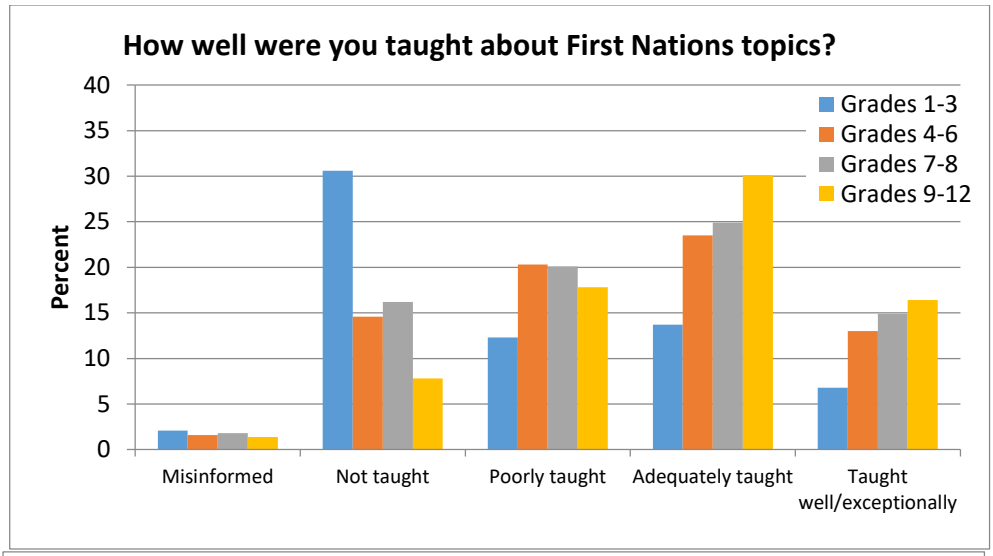


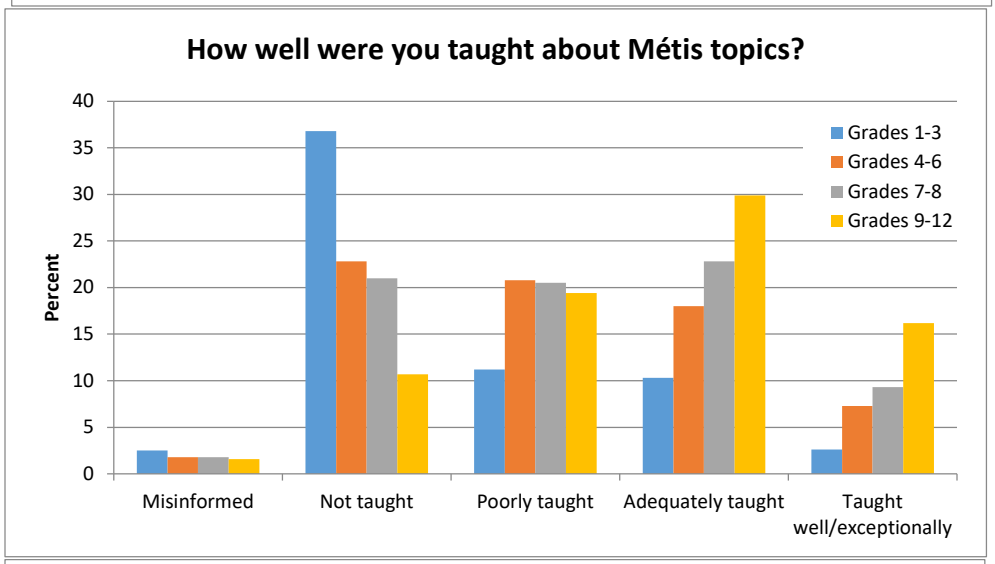
Figure 3. Indigenous and non-Indigenous students' sources of learning about First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples and topics.

All students consider that they learned most about First Nations, much less about Métis and least about Inuit. While formal education was the most important source of learning for non-Indigenous students, Indigenous students are more likely to consider that they learned about First Nations and Métis from family and through personal experience and initiative. We conducted a multiple regression to investigate the effect of these sources of learning on the knowledge test and the results were significant ($F(8,344) = 2.590$, $p = 0.009$, $R2 = .035$). Personal initiative ($p = 0.043$) positively predicted test performance: the more students indicated that they learned from their personal initiative, the higher they scored on the test. No other sources of knowledge were found to predict performance on the test.

Quality of formal education

Student reporting on the quality of their education suggests that they know when they have been taught well or poorly. We asked students how well they consider they were taught in four grade categories: Grades 1-3, Grades 4-6, Grades 7-8, and Grades 9-12. Students could respond "Misinformed", "Not taught", "Poorly taught", "Adequately taught", "Taught well or exceptionally" (Figure 4).





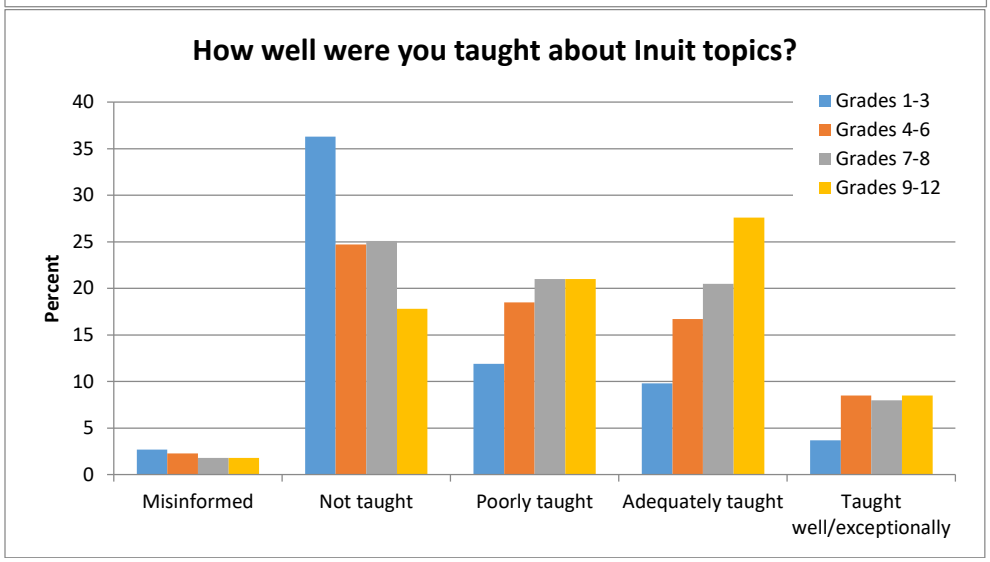


Figure 4. How well students feel they were taught

Overall, students consider that they were taught best about First Nations and least well about Inuit. Worryingly, in each grade category between 10% and 35% of students consider that they were not taught or poorly taught about First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples and topics. This pattern reflects the 1995-2015 curriculum, where over 95% of Indigenous content was framed as optional (Lamb, 2015). Mandatory Indigenous content was clustered in only two of five core subject areas: elementary social studies and science,[175] and in early grade levels, with significant decline in mandatory coverage in later grades. That Indigenous content was not considered germane to more advanced education is a prejudice against Indigenous studies that has existed in the province for decades (Mason, 2008). While the curriculum emphasized to teachers the importance of local Indigenous community participation in the development and delivery of Indigenous content, responsibility for establishing connections with local elders and Indigenous educators was downloaded to the teachers themselves. This approach presumed not only teachers' capacity and willingness to undertake work for which they often were not trained, but also the capacity and willingness of Indigenous community members to donate their time and effort. That so many students report being poorly taught or not taught at all about Indigenous topics suggests the ineffectiveness of this voluntarist approach. Indeed, as many educators have pointed out, there are significant structural challenges to effective integration of Indigenous content: incompatibility between school timetables and Indigenous teaching methods; racism in schools among school staff and students; lack of knowledge about Indigenous peoples, perspectives, and knowledge; lack of appropriate teaching resources; and insufficient support from administrators (Deer, 2013; Higgins, Madden, & Korteweg, 2013; Kanu, 2005; Lambert, 2017; Orlowski, 2008). It is little surprise that so few students considered they were taught well about Indigenous people in elementary and middle school, given the 1995-2015 curriculum's voluntarist approaches to integration of Indigenous content and collaboration with Indigenous communities and educators.

Interestingly, between 5% and 16% of students in this sample reported being taught well or exceptionally about First Nations in grades 9-12. Nearly 70% name high school Social Studies courses as significant sources of knowledge. An additional 15% report taking BC First Nations Studies 12. However, while these students perform slightly better on the test than students who report being poorly taught or not taught in high school, the difference is not statistically significant. It may be that the co-designed knowledge test does not reflect the content of high school courses. It is also possible that students have a low bar for what constitutes good teaching about Indigenous topics. Although we investigated where these students graduated high school, students who say they were taught well do not appear to be clustering in particular school boards.

In 2015, the province introduced a new curriculum with a different approach to curriculum delivery. The new curriculum prescribes even less mandatory Indigenous content and, importantly, cedes control of curricular content and delivery to schools and teachers (Lamb & Godlewska, 2020). That so many students in this survey reported that they had not been taught well suggests that many teachers do not engage with curricular material construed as optional. This finding reinforces the need for better teacher and administrative training on the importance of Indigenous topics for all people in Canada, especially considering the new BC curriculum's voluntarist approach (Redwing-Saunders & Hill, 2007; Nardozi & Mashford-Pringle, 2014; Strachan & Kidder, 2016; Pratt & Danyluk, 2017).

[175] There was very little mandatory Indigenous content in language arts, art & applied skills, and math courses across all grade levels (Lamb, 2015).

Social attitude and test performance

While knowledge is critical to social change, so is social attitude. We asked students a series of questions about their views, attitudes, and values. As we are interested in the relationship between knowledge and social attitude, we asked students what might be the cause of any limitation to their knowledge about Indigenous peoples and topics in Canada. Students could choose one or more of nine set phrases developed by co-designers to represent common student responses (Figure 5).

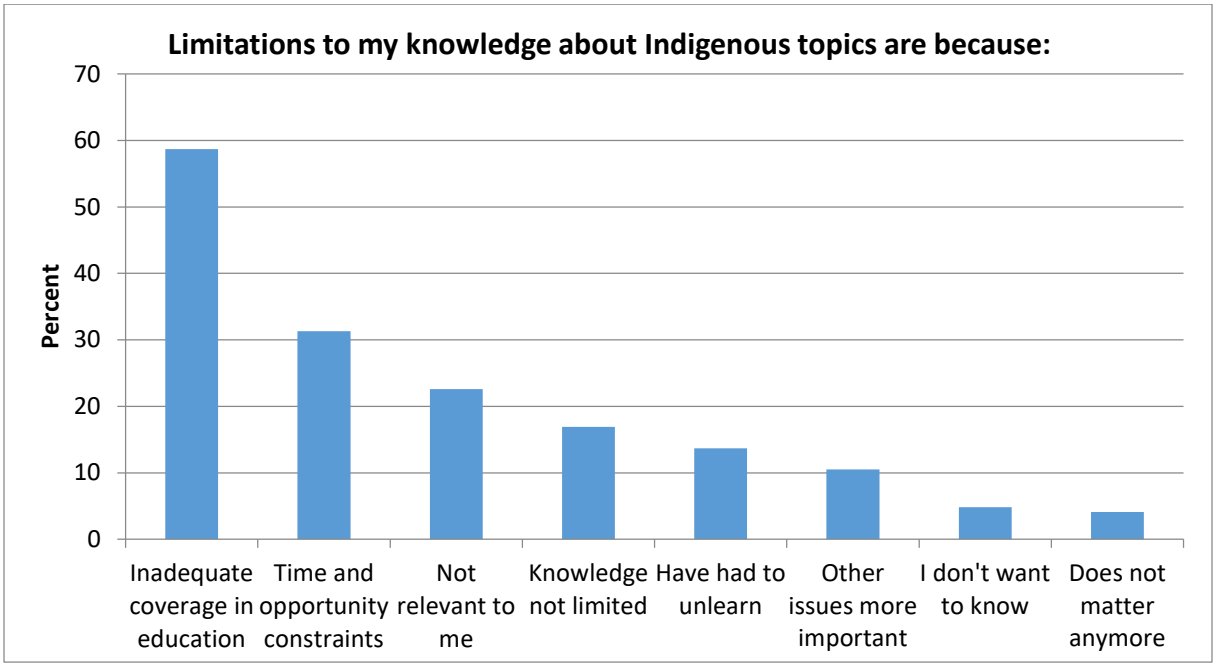


Figure 5. Student reporting on reason for the limitations to their knowledge about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and topics.

The vast majority of students consider that the principal barrier to their knowledge is inadequate coverage in school, college and university, reinforcing the need for better education. About a third of respondents consider that there were time and opportunity constraints to learning. Troublingly, over a fifth of students consider that the topics are not relevant to them and over a tenth consider that other issues are more important in Canada today. Nearly 17% of respondents do not consider their knowledge to be limited. About 15% consider that they have learned things that they have had to unlearn. A smaller number of students (~20) consider that they do not want to know.

We found that there were statistically significant relationships between how students answered this question, their performance on the test, and whether they had previous education on Indigenous topics. Students who recognize gaps in their education ("There was inadequate coverage in school, college, and university") and those who consider that they already know a lot ("My knowledge is not limited") perform better on the test compared to students who do not select these answers: respectively, by 14.9 percentage points ($t244.745 = -6.784$, $p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = 0.67$) and 11.6 percentage points ($t436 = -3.631$, $p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = 0.49$). These students were also significantly more likely to have taken courses on Indigenous topics in college or university (X^2 (1, $N = 438$) = 4.514, $p = 0.034$); X^2 (1, $N = 438$) = 3.892, $p = 0.049$). However, those students who indicate that "I do not want to know" or "It is all in the past and does not matter anymore" perform significantly less well on the test: by -26.8 percentage

points (t436 = 5.331, p = 0.001, Cohen's d = 1.29) and -16.9 percentage points (t436 = 3.060, p = 0.002, Cohen's d = 0.66), respectively.

Students' attitudes towards social inequity also appear to be linked to exposure to Indigenous perspectives and topics. We asked students how they feel if First Nations, Métis and Inuit people have fewer advantages and opportunities than they do. Students could choose one or more of nine set phrases (Figure 6). These phrases were chosen to represent a wide array of attitudes that co-designers considered common in the student population across Canada.

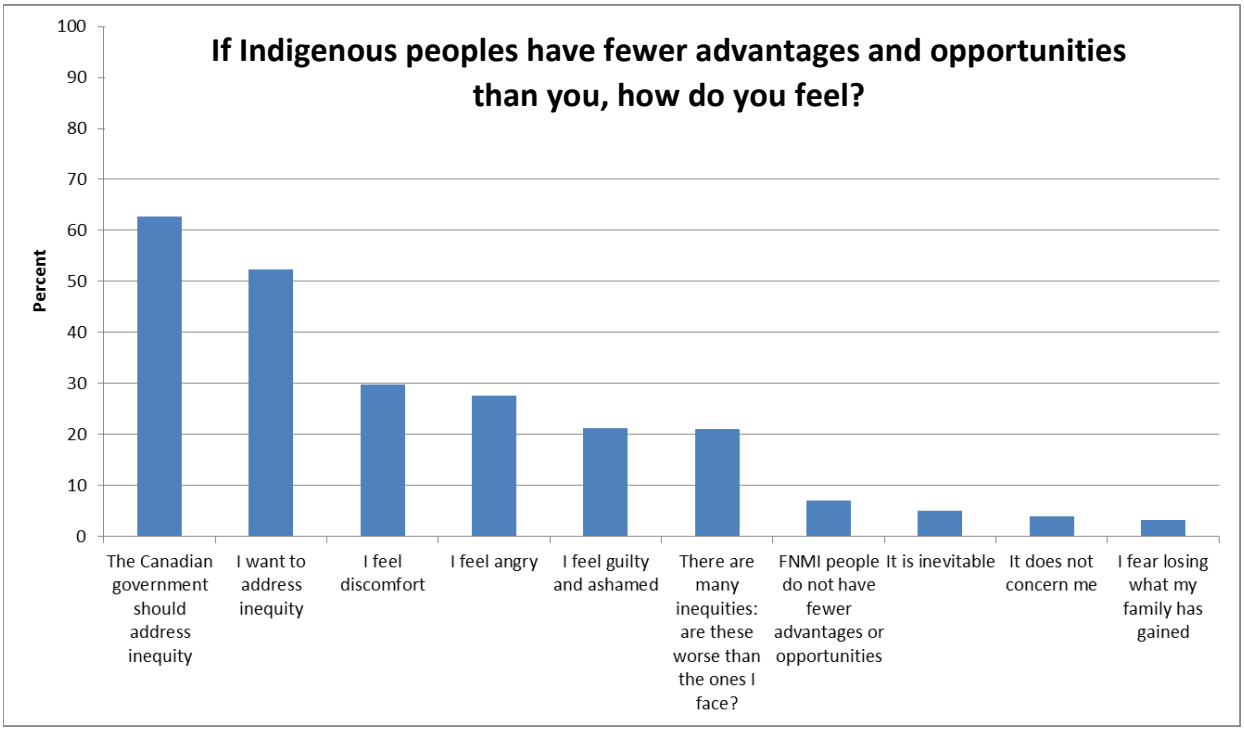


Figure 6. Student reporting on how they feel when First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people have fewer advantages and opportunities than they do.

The responses fall into five categories: delegation of responsibility; taking personal responsibility; ambivalence; feelings of fear, anger and shame; and apathy. Over 60% of students delegate responsibility for inequity to the Canadian government. Fewer consider that they want to address inequity, though, at over 50%, this is the second-most popular answer amongst these students. Nearly a third of students report feeling uncomfortable or angry about the disadvantages faced by Indigenous people(s). A little over a fifth feel guilty and ashamed. That over a fifth of students wonder if the inequities faced by Indigenous people are worse than the ones they face suggests that many of the students in this sample experience social marginalization of one sort or another or perhaps it expresses ambivalence. Approximately 10% consider that Indigenous people do not have fewer advantages or opportunities. Another ~10% are apathetic about inequity (It is inevitable, must move on, does not concern me). The prevalence of fear and apathy is particularly indicative of the barriers at play in challenging systemic racism (Schick & St. Denis, 2003; Tupper, 2013).

In this question, too, students' attitudes are linked to test performance and to their exposure to Indigenous perspectives. Students who consider that the Canadian government should address

disadvantage perform, on average, 24.2 percentage points better on the test that those who do not select this response ($t_{296.424}$ = -11.684, $p < 0.001$, Cohen's d = 1.18). Students who selected "It makes me want to address disadvantage" also perform better on the test, though by a smaller margin: 20.2 percentage points (t425.749 = -10.549, p < 0.001, Cohen's d = 1.00). These students were significantly more likely to report learning what they know from Indigenous persons (X^2 (2, N = 355) = 6.261, p = 0.044). They were also significantly more likely to be critical of the formal education they have received, reporting that they had been poorly taught about First Nations, Métis and Inuit in K-12 and particularly in grades 4-6.

Caring about First Nations, Métis and Inuit well-being is also linked to better test performance. We asked students two questions: how much they care about the well-being of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people and how much they care about social justice issues faced by Indigenous people(s) (e.g., disproportionate poverty, murder of women, inequity in housing, education, incarceration, and health) (Figure 7).

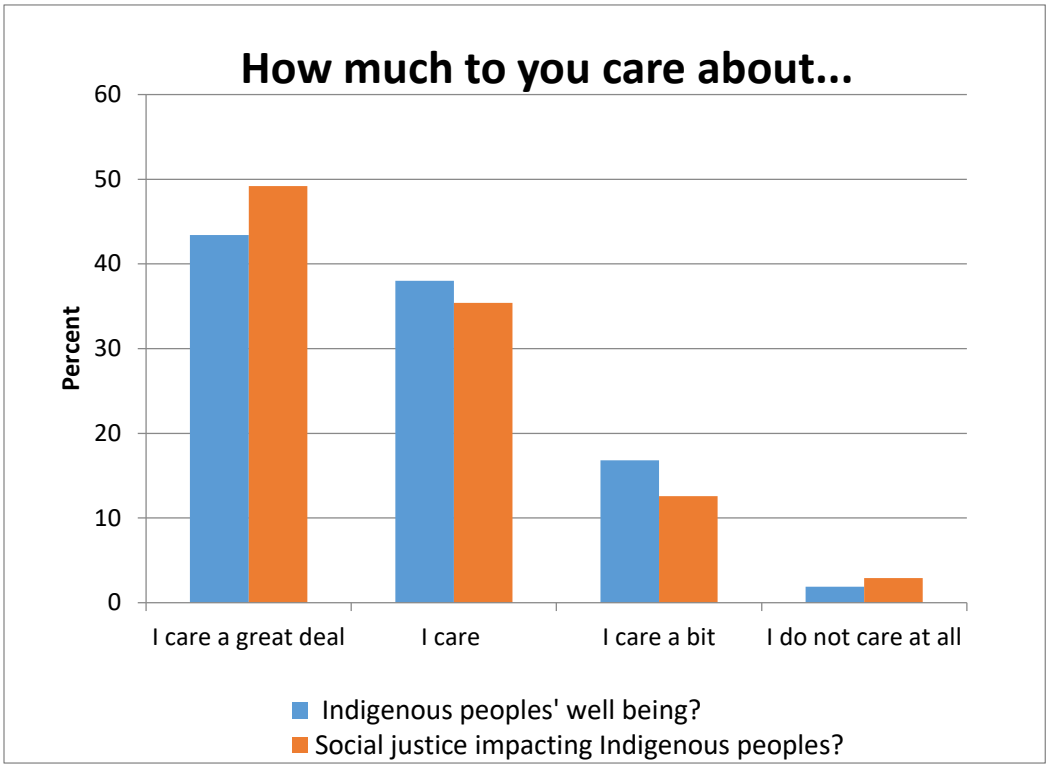


Figure 7. Student reporting on how much they care about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit well-being and about social justice issues affecting Indigenous people(s).

Nearly 80% of respondents report caring about Indigenous people and about social justice. About 15% of these students care a bit about Indigenous well-being and issues in Canada. Fewer than 5% do not care at all. These findings are probably not representative of the entire Douglas student population, as the students who took the time to complete the survey on their own time likely care more than most. We conducted two two-way ANOVAs investigating the relationship between how much participants care about Indigenous well-being and social justice issues, and their test performance. The more students reported caring, the better they performed on the test (well-being: F(3,420) = 13.104, p < 0.001, n^2 = 0.086; social justice: (F(3,417) = 15.923, p < 0.001, n^2 = 0.103). Respondents who reported caring a great

deal about Indigenous well-being performed, on average, 33.8 percentage points better on the test than those who did not care at all. Likewise, students who reported caring a great deal about social justice issues faced by Indigenous people(s) averaged 29.8 percentage points better on the test than those who did not care at all.

Impact of family

While what is taught in school and by society has considerable influence on students' knowledge and social attitudes, so does family. As we were interested in the relationship between family and students' social attitudes, we asked students to describe the views of their immediate family members of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. Students could choose one or more of seven set phrases (Figure 8).

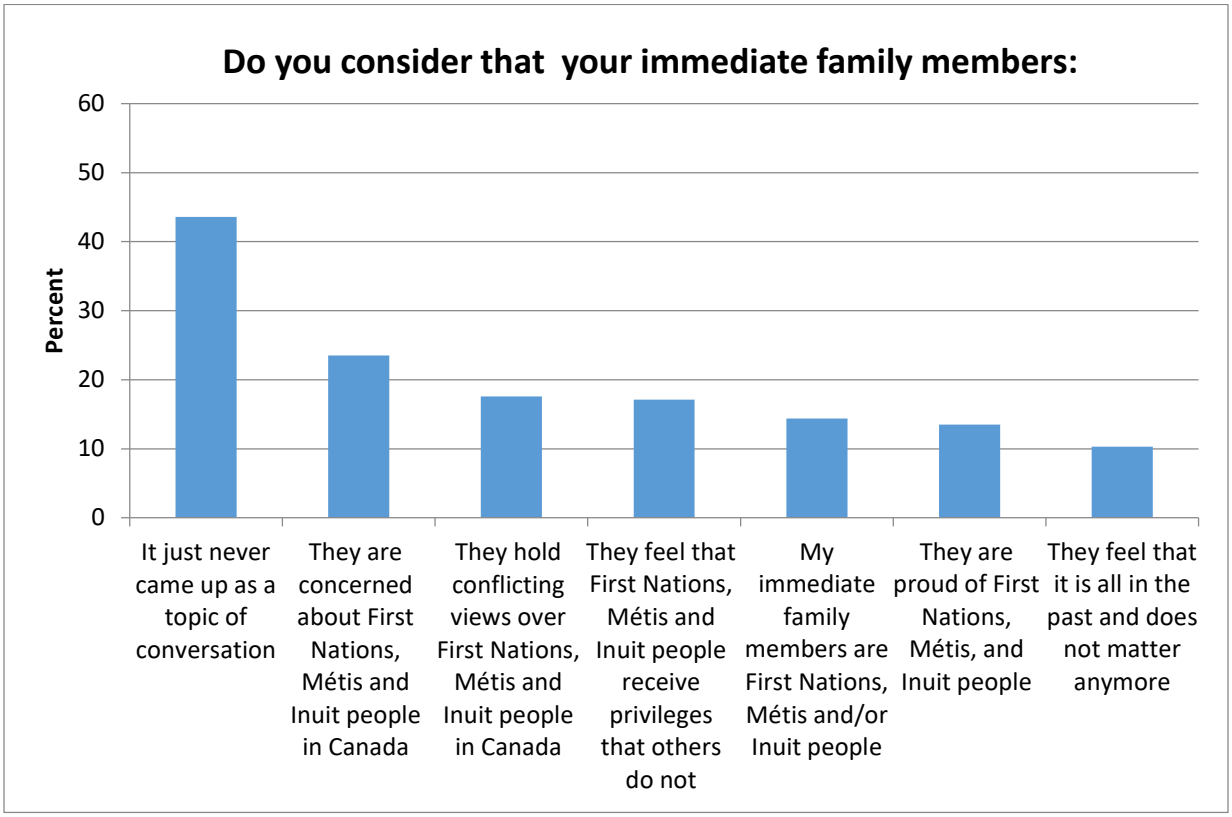


Figure 8. Student reporting on family attitudes.

The majority of students encounter silence in the home. Over a fifth consider that their immediate family members are concerned about Indigenous people(s) in Canada today. Nearly a fifth consider that their immediate family members hold conflicting views. Troublingly, about a fifth of students report that their immediate family members feel that Indigenous people receive privileges that others do not and 10% consider that family members feel that Indigenous topics do not matter anymore. A little over 10% consider that their family members are proud of Indigenous people. Nearly 15% of students have Indigenous family members.

We found a statistically significant relationship between how students answered this question, their performance on the test, and their social attitudes. Students who consider that their families are concerned about Indigenous people perform, on average, 14.1percentage points better than students who do not select this answer ($t230.090 = -6.767$, $p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = 0.7$). Students who say that

their families are proud of Indigenous people likewise do better, by 13.6 percentage points (t106.019 = -5.783, p < 0.001, Cohen's d = 0.68). Interestingly, students who consider that their families hold prejudicial or conflicting views are also more likely to score higher on the test (t436 = -2.920, p = 0.004); t136.328 = -5.421, p < 0.004). However, negative family attitudes towards Indigenous peoples were linked to students' attitudes. Some students recognize the impact of their family on their learning: students who reported that their family members "feel it is all in the past and does not matter anymore" were also significantly more likely to consider that "I have learned things I have had to unlearn" (X^2 (1, *N* = 438) = 16.355, *p* < 0.001). The same is true of students who consider that their family members feel that First Nations, Métis and Inuit people receive privileges that others do not (X^2 (1, N = 438) = 18.712, p < 0.001). However, other students who report that their family members "feel it is all in the past and does not matter anymore" were significantly more likely to consider that "Other issues are more important in Canada today" (*p* = 0.004) and to report that "I don't want to know about these issues" (*p* < 0.001). Silence at home is likewise problematic: students who report that Indigenous topics never came up in conversation are significantly more likely to consider Indigenous topics not relevant to them (X^2 (1, N = 438) = 15.030, p < 0.001).

The effect of family is also apparent in students' views on social inequity. Students who report that their families "feel it is all in the past and does not matter anymore" are significantly more likely to indicate that they do not care at all about social justice issues affecting Indigenous people(s) (X^2 (2, N = 421) = 11.913, p = 0.003). They are also significantly more likely to consider that social inequity "does not concern me" (p = 0.022). Likewise, students who report that their families "feel that First Nations, Métis and Inuit people receive privileges that others do not" are more likely to consider that any disadvantages faced by Indigenous people(s) "were created in the past" and that "it is important to move on." Silence in the home is problematic as well: students who report that Indigenous topics never came up in conversation are more likely to consider inequity inevitable— and thus beyond personal responsibility to engage.

We investigated the relationship between student responses to social attitude questions and self-reported gender, age, the kind of school(s) they attended in K-12, and whether they grew up in rural, suburban, or urban areas. While in this sample, age and where students grew up were not linked to social attitudes, gender and the kind of school students attended in K-12 were. We found that students who self-identify as female (*n* = 300) or male (*n* = 118) answer social attitude questions differently. When asked how they feel when Indigenous people(s) have fewer advantages or opportunities than they do, students who considered that they want to address disadvantage were significantly more likely to self-identify as female (X^2 (1, *N* = 418) = 19.244, *p* < 0.001). The same is true of respondents who considered that the Canadian government should address disadvantage (X^2 (1, *N* = 418) = 13.354, *p* < 0.001). However, students who considered that inequity is inevitable in any society were more likely to identify as male (X^2 (1, *N* = 418) = 5.432, *p* = 0.02), as were students who considered that inequity does not concern them (*p* = 0.015). Students who reported attending mostly private schools for K-12 were also significantly more likely to consider that "as disadvantages were created in the past, it is important to move on" (X^2 (1, *N* = 408) = 4.111, *p* = 0.043).

Part 6. Qualitative Analysis of Open-ended Questions

In addition to the multiple-choice test, we asked the students a series of open-ended questions. The next section of the report summarizes our analysis of what the students had to say.

What have you learned from taking the test?

Overall, we were encouraged by the students' self-reflection in their response to our "What have you learned from taking the test?" question, which immediately follows the multiple-choice questions. Only 14/479 (3%) said they had learned nothing. The remaining 97% indicated that they had learned. Thirty-two (7%) claimed they learned a little without much further elaboration, and 39/479 (8%) claimed they learned a lot or something profound, but provided similarly scant elaboration. Thirty-five responses argue for better education and 31 pointed to government responsibility for harm. Twenty-six responses emphasized learning about the legal structure governing Indigenous people's lives and 24 spoke about the abiding nature of colonialism, though students rarely use that word. Finally, 18 responses addressed the poor treatment Indigenous people have received or continue to receive. Beyond these categories of response, three other kinds of answers are worthy of a bit more attention. One hundred and ten students used the question to reflect on their own knowledge. Seventy-seven responses were focused on key facts learned while taking the test. Although the questions are not primarily historical, fifty-six considered them so.

When speaking of the facts they learned, students mentioned a large variety of things, however, they were truly surprised by four kinds of information. 1) Students seemed shocked that the population of First Nations and Métis people and Inuit is on the rise and not declining, pointing to the deep and well documented settler belief in the myth of the "vanishing Indian" whose disappearance is assumed to be inevitable (Bird, 1996; Dunbar-Ortiz & Gilio-Whitaker, 2016; Fee, 2015; Hutchings & Miller, 2016; Jennings, 1963; Riley, 1988 (2003)). Thirty-two (42%) of these respondents, speaking of the factual knowledge they gained, commented specifically on unlearning this prejudice: "That the number of indigenous people are growing. Thought that Canada was inadvertently reducing their presence in the country."[176] The suggestion by this student that the elimination of Indigenous peoples is inadvertent is not in keeping with the critiques of the assimilative and genocidal policies of the government in many other students' responses to this question. 2) Seven students were surprised to learn that more than 50% of First Nations live off reserve. 3) Another 7 were surprised that "indigenous people do not get a full ride to university. Seems it's a myth."[177] 4) Finally, and vitally, 21 students said they learned about cultural revitalization while taking the test. Discourses of colonial harm often position Indigenous peoples in the public's imaginary as in inevitable decline—a belief that enables settler interests to persist unperturbed (Million, 2012; Tuck, 2009). It is crucial that educational institutions encourage students to reflect on Indigenous vitality in the face of colonial violence and boost awareness of First Nations, Métis and Inuit strength and resurgence.

[176] #117; no courses; 21 years; male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, US citizen/Dual; Psychology (Associate of Arts - Pre-Bachelor's); a doctor hopefully.

[177] #110; High school courses, Social Studies in high school touched on the topic of colonization and indigenous people quite frequently, in university I took an American history course at KPU which also touched on indigenous people and American colonialism such as manifest destiny; 20 years; Female, Non-binary; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Academic Foundations for Potential Psychiatric Nursing Applicants; psychiatric nursing

The students who used the question to reflect on their knowledge provided one (or sometimes two) of 6 types of comments. The vast majority 46/110 (42%) admitted that 1) they knew little: "That I know almost nothing about indigenous peoples and have not been taught adequately."[178] Nineteen (17%) said that 2) the test showed them they did not know as much as they thought they did. This student noted, "that I don't know as much as I thought and that schools in BC should inform grade school students and college student on this topic and make it mandatory."[179] Sixteen (15%) said that they now realize 3) there is more to learn and 15 (14%) said 4) I should know or do more to learn. On this point, a student expressed, "I learned that I have a large interest in this subject and I have very little knowledge. I'd like to take some classes."[180] Ten (9%) said that the test showed them that 5) they have knowledge and 6) six (5%) said that the test showed them they have more knowledge than they thought they did. This student considered "that I know more than I thought I did. But still am continually surprised by the amount the government is pushing against indigenous identities."[181]

Although we were disappointed to see 56 students still relegate Indigenous-Settler relations to history after taking the knowledge test, we were encouraged that that is a far smaller number than the 168/479 (35%) who, at the beginning of the survey, used one or more of the three things they know to place Indigenous peoples in the past. This suggests some learning on the part of students taking the test. The test is primarily an assessment tool but, in providing the correct answer to each question immediately after the students respond, and in directing them to a website with further readings, we have tried to encourage and enhance their learning. Nevertheless, one student is quite right in pointing out that, although he may have learned "Quite a lot but idk how much I'll remember."[182] No test can teach the depth of knowledge and understanding required to meaningfully enhance critical social thinking. We argue that everyone in Canada shares a responsibility for deeper knowledge, understanding, and critical social thinking, but the knowledge and understanding of students is in great part the particular responsibility of curriculum, texts, teachers, programs, and educational institutions at all levels.

[178] #398; courses in college, Hist 1113 Canada before Confederation contains significant content on the white settlers and their treatment of the indigenous natives; 18 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Future Teachers; grade 2 teacher

[179] #125; no courses; 18 years; female; First Nations; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Citizen of my First Nations, Métis or Inuit community; Psychology, Applied (Bachelor of Arts, Honours); chief of my band or a counsellor

[180] #471; course in high school, took an aboriginal class in grade 12, I really enjoyed it however I don't really remember anything; 20 years; female; Métis; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Nursing (Bachelor of Science); I'm hoping to become a midwife with an interest in specializing in helping aboriginal women birth the way they want to

[181] #270; courses in college, History of Canada post confederation; geography of BC; English fiction with a focus on oppression; 30 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Kinesiology, psychology, and education; Elementary school teacher

[182] #4; course in high school, Social Studies; 18, male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Physio; sports physio

Do you feel you know more than what is reflected in this questionnaire?

We asked students this question because we acknowledge that there are other kinds of knowledge that might be particularly important to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students taking the test. Three hundred twenty-seven students said they did not have knowledge beyond what we tested. One hundred fifty-one said they did but only a small number of those explained what knowledge they had. More than 50% of those who did explain said they had cultural or experiential knowledge. Many Indigenous Elders, educators, and scholars emphasize that Indigenous ways of knowing are place-based, experiential, generational, and relational, and point to the difficulties often encountered in trying to communicate these in classroom settings and through textbooks (Battiste, 1998, 2013; Deer, 2013; Ledoux, 2006; Mason, 2008; Simpson, 2011; Tuck, 2011; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999/2002). In the co-design of the questionnaire we formed the questions not from textbooks but from the experience and recommendations of Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge holders. But that said, an objective test is a tool limited to measurement of acquired knowledge, perspectives, and attitudes. Cultural and experiential knowledge is certainly important but is not quantifiably measurable in a multiple-choice test format. Through a qualitative and open-ended format used for surveys of students exiting programs in other institutions and jurisdictions, we have been able to better capture their depth of experiential and cultural knowledge. This is in part due to greater upper-year student capacity to address complex questions and communicate their views in writing. The remaining students who said they had knowledge beyond the questionnaire had more information on Residential Schools, government abuse, or history. Gratifyingly, one student commented, “I feel like I know more about history, which wasn't super prevalent in this questionnaire.”[183] Our test was designed to assess the general understanding of Indigenous peoples and topics that Indigenous educational leaders and knowledge holders feel is essential to being a responsible citizen in Canada today.

[183] #275; no courses; 25 years; Non-binary, Transgender; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Creative Writing and Language Arts; writer poet and editor

What evidence do you see that Douglas College is a welcoming environment for First Nations, Métis or Inuit people?

We asked this question on the advice of administrators interested in hearing students' perspectives. Many students answered this question with multiple kinds of evidence that Douglas is a welcoming place. Table 4 provides a count of each mention.

What evidence do you see that Douglas College is a welcoming environment for First Nations, Métis or Inuit people?	
Categories	**Numbers**
I see no evidence or don't know	108
Courses and programs	66
Douglas is welcoming to all	66
Territorial acknowledgement	59
Aboriginal Gathering Place	53
This survey	43
Indigenous Student Services Centre	38
Art and signs and posters on campus	34
Clubs or union	27
Various events or activities	24
Non-sensical responses	14
Funding for Indigenous students	11
Presence of Indigenous students	11
Topic being talked about	10
Indigenous staff and Elders	7
Douglas website	5
Did not answer	4
Identification request on application	2
Aboriginal Council	1

Table 4. Evidence that Douglas is a welcoming place for First Nations, Métis and Inuit people

The observation that Douglas is welcoming to all needs some unpacking. Some students felt that as they were International students and they felt welcome, everyone was welcome. Some felt that as there was evidence of considerable diversity at Douglas, Indigenous people would feel welcome. Many argued that Douglas was inclusive of everybody and did not discriminate in any way. That 11 students focused on *Funding for Indigenous students* as evidence of a welcoming environment has a whiff of "they get benefits."

Overall, the student response to this question suggests that Douglas could do more. Students seem to be most responsive to courses and programs. The Aboriginal gathering place and territorial acknowledgments have attracted attention. Perhaps introducing more artwork in prominent places elsewhere on campus would suggest that all places on campus are also Indigenous places. The assertion that Douglas, as a diverse place, must therefore also be welcoming to Indigenous people suggests the

need for more education on Canada's colonial past and present and the special place of First Nations and Métis peoples and Inuit on this territory.

What could Douglas College do to enhance the Indigenous content of its education?

We asked this question on advice from administrators from partner universities and colleges. In response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (2015) calls for post-secondary institutions to advance reconciliation and in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (2015), and the BC Government's adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Bill 41, 2019) a steering committee at Douglas created an Indigenization Strategy that outlines a number of objectives that would, among other things, promote deeper learning about Indigenous realities by reflecting Indigenous perspectives, histories, and ways of knowing within and beyond classrooms (Douglas College Indigenization Strategy, 2019). The analysis presented here offers administrators, faculty, and staff an opportunity to see what students want to see done at Douglas (Table 5).

What could Douglas College do to enhance the Indigenous content of its education (in courses, extra-curricular activities, the social environment)?	
Categories	**Numbers**
More or modified courses	160
Enhanced extra curricular activities	155
No answer or I don't know	112
Vague or incomprehensible answer	37
No need	14
Increase Indigenous presence	5

Table 5. What Douglas could do to enhance Indigenous content.

An almost equal number of students focus on courses and extra-curricular activity. The majority of students who call for courses simply suggest more courses addressing Indigenous topics. But a significant number (32) argue that it is vitally important to spread Indigenous content across the disciplines: "I think Douglas college should incorporate indigenous content through your the entire institution, not relegate it to one area;"[184] "Have the professors drop in bits and pieces of interesting indigenous information related to the topic they are teaching;"[185] and "weave it in to everything."[186]

[184] #248; Courses in high school, Haida language, in college, Anthropology Native cultures of BC; 37 years; female; First Nations, Haida; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Citizen of my First Nations, Métis or Inuit community; Nursing

[185] #204; no courses; 19 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Child of Immigrant(s) to Canada; Decline to answer; unknown

[186] #361; courses in college; 37 years; female; First Nations, Tsarlip; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Citizen of my First Nations, Métis or Inuit community, As part of a racially marginalized group; Child and Youth Care (Bachelor of Arts); politics

Some of these students identify particular programs and courses where they would like to see more Indigenous content:

> make indigenous content a larger part of more classes such as geography where it is currently a very small portion that is almost skipped over.[187]

> Indigenous content should be a part of every classroom. Especially in courses where it is directly applicable. For example, in PSYCH 1100 there is a small mention of unethical scientific testing performed on Aboriginal children. We did not discuss this in class nor where any exam questions based on this information. I think it should have at least been mentioned in class.[188]

> Education is the best way to get students to understand and learn. The best way would be to incorporate more First Nations history in many classes that are taken (ex: English, history, arts, even medical). Western culture influences [are] what is being taught to students, but it should be catered to as many cultures.[189]

These students are concerned that Indigenous content is still being marginalized and the possibilities for its integration into a wide variety of disciplines and topics are not fully realized.

Many students would like to see more extra-curricular activities. Forty-six call for extra-curricular activities exclusively. Others seem to prefer events and activities that could take place in or outside classes, including public events of a considerable variety, greater promotion of events by Douglas College, talks, posters and ads, more art, more clubs, and special days.

This question asks students to think like administrators and instructors about the institution and its offerings. So, it is no surprise that 112 students chose to not answer this question and a further 37 could not answer intelligibly – though they did try.

It is encouraging that only 14 respondents (3%) resisted the premise of the question and denied the need to promote meaningful educational efforts at Indigenization and reconciliation. Of those 14, most explained that in their view, "The college already does a lot."[190] For some the matter is personal: "This is something I am not interested in."[191] But there are some very problematic and unexamined social attitudes. For one student,

[187] #476; course in high school: First Nations Studies 12; 22 years; female; First Nations, Canadian with Aboriginal ancestry; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Academic Foundations; teacher or counselor. In fairness, another student promoted a physical geography professor as exceptional in his integration of Indigenous topics into his course.

[188] #252; no courses; 32 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Child of Immigrant(s) to Canada; Academic Foundations for Potential Psychiatric Nursing Applicants; Psychiatric Nursing/Higher Education/Psychology

[189] #131; high school course, Social Studies; 25 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Academic Foundations for Potential Psychiatric Nursing Applicants; psychiatric nurse

[190] #418; high school course, Humanities; 19 years; male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Geology; hopefully as a mineral engineer. Or something left field like a musician

[191] #29; no courses; 30 years; male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Psychology (Associate of Arts - Pre-Bachelor's); school psychologist

> My opinion is that it does not need to be enhanced. Out of the 16 anthropology courses offered at Douglas, at least three are focused on the First Nations etc. That's quite a bit considering the lack of records (i.e. history, not prehistory, to tell) and small impact they had on the present day compared to other cultures (The fact that most First Nations people don't even speak their own language is evidence of that.)[192]

Dismaying and provocative as it is, it is important to remember that this is the expression of a minority opinion.

Finally, a small number of students think about the resource implications of enhancing content and argue either for bringing more Indigenous students to Douglas or for hiring more faculty.

As Douglas is moving forward with its Indigenization Strategy to respond to the TRC's *Calls to Action* and the provisions of UNDRIP, we hope these responses give the school a sense of what students would like to see done for their own education on Indigenous topics.

Do you consider that First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples are distinct from all other diversity in Canada?

We asked this question to gain a sense of whether and how students in BC are thinking about Indigenous peoples as sovereign and distinct from all other diversity in Canada. Throughout our work with universities and colleges across the country, we have encountered students' expressions of liberal multiculturalism and cultural recognition – framing First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples as "another minority" to be managed within the liberal state - and a sense that sovereignty begins and ends with the Canadian government (Povinelli, 2011; Coulthard, 2014). We have found that there is very little awareness or engagement with Indigenous peoples as sovereign nations with their own unique senses of place, ways of knowing, and ways of being (Godlewska et al. 2013, 2017a, 2017b; Schaefli et al. 2018b; Simpson 2017). The vast majority of BC is situated on Indigenous territories unceded through treaty, war, or surrender. Indigenous peoples continue to assert and defend their title, rights, and responsibilities to these lands in the courts, treaty negotiations, and land-based acts of resistance and resurgence. Students graduating from institutions like Douglas College will be responsible for forming mutual and respectful relationships with and in these lands. The analysis presented here helps to contextualize students' responses to the test questions about identity and land acknowledgements by exploring their deeper beliefs, perspectives, and attitudes (Table 6).

[192] #7; high school course, social studies 10; 21 years; male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Very Canadian; born in Canada and will die in Canada. My ancestors came here in the 1600s; Psychology (Associate of Arts - Pre-Bachelor's); Something that I'm passionate about and can reliably make a living off of

Do you consider that First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples are distinct from all other diversity in Canada?	
Yes	**217**
Here first or longest	52
Distinct due to colonialism	38
Distinct because they are culturally different	24
They are not immigrants	16
Distinct for their relationship to the land	8
Distinct - they are different	7
Distinct by virtue of their history	5
They are legally distinct	3
Distinct by virtue of priviledges	3
Prejudicial comments	3
Decline to answer	**144**
No	**118**
We are all the same	80

Table 6. How students responded to Do you think First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples are distinct from all other diversity in Canada?

At first glance, the responses look more positive than they really are. Looking at the summary numbers, more students think that First Nations and Métis peoples and Inuit are distinct. Though many students (30%) declined to answer this question, forty-four (9%) answered no, without explanation and sixty-two (13%) answered yes, without explanation. So more than 50% do not really engage with the question. The table focuses on those who answered with some sort of explanation.

There is a significant variety of responses in the yes category among students who consider Indigenous peoples distinct from other diversity in Canada but very little engagement with the heart of the question; the unique and multiple sovereignties and ways of being of Indigenous peoples. Of the students who answered yes, the majority pointed to Indigenous priority or longevity in Canada. Most of these students simply observed that First Nations and, strangely, Métis peoples and Inuit were here first without much sense of the possible political implications of that observation. Only 6 of these students linked this answer to land rights: "Because it is their traditional unceded land."[193] However, even these comments do not amount to recognition of Indigenous sovereignty or nationhood. Instead, the tone is, they "deserve recompense and reconciliation"[194] and "… immigrants … may be more expected to assimilate to the dominant culture."[195] The students who answered that they are distinct due to

[193] #246; high school courses, English 12 first peoples; 17 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Environmental Studies; environmental/Aboriginal lawyer or social justice advocate

[194] #275; no courses; 25 years; Non-binary, Transgender; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Creative Writing and Language Arts; writer poet and editor

[195] #132; college courses, finished certificate in Human service Work which included a lot of learning about indigenous people in Canada; 23 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Immigrant to Canada (not born in Canada), Child of Immigrant(s) to Canada; Youth Justice; social work

colonialism, considered that "The significance of their mistreatment makes them distinct."[196] These students claim that, "As Indigenous Peoples, they have experienced a distinct type of discrimination and face issues that explicitly apply to their culture,"[197] while asserting that discrimination defines them: "Because they have always been isolated, humiliated and discriminated for their skin colour, religion, values and lifestyle the most."[198] Such an emphasis on the mistreatment of Indigenous peoples embeds colonialism in their culture and casts Indigenous distinctiveness as a by-product of settlement by tying it to the history of settler colonialism (Macoun & Strakosch, 2013; Wolfe, 2013). Those who focus on culture essentially conflate *different* with *distinct*, emptying the word *distinct* of its political power: "culture is too different to be lumped together with other cultures…"[199] Such elimination of the political also happens in the responses of students who express some variation of *Distinct – they are different* category. Most of the comments that assert *They are not immigrants* observe simply that. However, two of these students provide elaboration and observe that Indigenous peoples' historical claim to the land makes them distinct: "These people have historical claim to Canada and are therefore different than immigrant groups, for example."[200] Another notes their greater historical/cultural vulnerability as a result of not being immigrants: "Other cultural groups in Canada are primarily immigrants or have come here at some other point in history so their culture is less tied to this space and if they were no longer in Canada their cultures would still exist in their native lands…"[201] Students who see land as at the foundation of distinct Indigenous identities are much more likely to understand *distinct* in a political sense: "They owned this land before any other, and as such have a unique claim and ownership over it."[202] The students who refer to history rather than culture, tend to have more sophisticated answers, but they still do not grapple with the political consequences of a distinct identity. In the *Legally distinct* category, respondents identify the different laws governing First Nations and Métis peoples and Inuit as what makes them distinct, which in a sense is also the thinking that governs those who say what makes them distinct is "They don't need to pay taxes."[203] So, while the size of the yes response suggests recognition of First Nations and Métis peoples and Inuit as distinct from all other diversity in Canada, very few of these students link such a status to political sovereignty, nationhood or even self-governance. Indeed, it would be fair to say that most of the students do not understand the question

[196] #126; high school courses; Social Studies 10 and 11, mandatory courses; 18 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Criminology (Diploma); lawyer or police officer

[197] #161; no courses; 20 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Political Science; lobbyist

[198] #364; no courses; 18 years; female; Decline to answer; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Criminology (Diploma); Helping out disadvantaged people in their communities, seeking justice for the deprived and forgotten minor populations

[199] #258; university course, one course on self-determination; 25 years; female; First Nations; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Citizen of my First Nations, Métis or Inuit community, Child of Immigrant(s) to Canada, As part of a racially marginalized group; Legal Administrative Assistant (Certificate); policy analyst

[200] #412; community course; Online Aboriginal Awareness course; 40 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Psychosocial Rehabilitation (Graduate Diploma); human services worker

[201] #459; no courses; no age given; male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Sign Language Interpretation; sign language interpreter

[202] #400; college course in Sociology; 20 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Child of Immigrant(s) to Canada, As part of a racially marginalized group; Therapeutic Recreation (Bachelor); recreation therapist

[203] #402; no courses; 22 years; male; International Indigenous person; Immigrant to Canada (not born in Canada), International student; International Supply Chain Management (Post-Baccalaureate Diploma); own business-international trade

and its implications. This respondent's answer demonstrates this lack of understanding: "Every culture is distinct in their personal beliefs and culture. This was a weird question because the answer is basically in the question lol."[204]

By contrast, those who explain their no response are very clear and consistent and can be summed up as "Every culture is equally important."[205] Though, of course, there is variety in the details. Some statements are clearly multicultural: "Canada is vastly multicultural"[206] or "They are part of the mosaics of Canadian nation."[207] Some see multiculturalism as inclusive and even generous: "I treat them the same as any ethnicity"[208] or "We're all brothers and sisters and these divisions between us are artificial."[209] Some of these responses involve some significant social denial: "we are all born equals in this society,"[210] or another form of denial, "No one started in Canada, everyone came here at some point."[211] And perhaps most disturbingly, from a First Nations respondent, no: "Nobody cares for us."[212]

Students at Douglas College, then, are deeply engaged in the multicultural rationale for the denial of First Nations, Métis and Inuit sovereignty and political identity. The liberal-multicultural responses of many of these students highlight the sway of the politics of recognition that casts Indigenous peoples as another minority to be managed and the settler state as the arbiter and giver of rights (Blackburn, 2005, 2007; Coulthard, 2014). Arguably, the vast majority of those who responded 'yes' hold the same view but suspected that to say yes was in some way more correct. For almost all of them, their answers demonstrate that they do not understand the implications of their yes answer.

[204] 129; high school course, Social Studies grade 10, Indigenous unit; 21 years; male; Métis, Canadian with Aboriginal ancestry; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Citizen of my First Nations, Métis or Inuit community; Digital Marketing Communications Management (Concentration); digital marketing

[205] #399; high school course, Social Studies, college courses, history, geography; 18 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Early Childhood Education (Diploma); elementary school French teacher

[206] #436; high school courses, Social Studies 9, 10, 11; 18 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Psychology (Minor); Speech Language Pathologist

[207] #390; no courses; 26 years; male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Immigrant to Canada (not born in Canada); Accounting (Certificate); CPA

[208] #69; no courses; 20 years; male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Legal Studies; lawyer, judge, law enforcement.

[209] #100; no courses; 44 years; male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Immigrant to Canada (not born in Canada), Italian and Polish; General Business (Certificate); already have a career, management in an office environment

[210] #333; college course; My SOCI 2250 mentions the effects of residential schools, the sixties scoop, and European colonization; 20 years; male; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Immigrant to Canada (not born in Canada), Child of Immigrant(s) to Canada, As part of a racially marginalized group; Psychology, Applied (Bachelor of Arts); social worker, psychologist

[211] #282; no courses; 17 years; female; Canadian citizen or permanent resident; Environmental Studies; environmental engineer

[212] #450; no courses; 22 years; female; First Nations: Tsimshian, Nisga'a, Tlingit, coast Salish; Canadian citizen or permanent resident, Citizen of my First Nations, Métis or Inuit community, As part of a racially marginalized group; Child and Youth Care (Diploma); Aboriginal support worker

Conclusion

It is very clear that students coming to Douglas College, whether from abroad or from Canada need better education about First Nations, Métis and Inuit people and topics and that many Douglas students recognize this themselves. It is also clear from the Douglas steering committee's Indigenization Strategy, created in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call for better, more responsible education, that there is a commitment to promote deeper learning within and beyond classrooms about Indigenous realities, including Indigenous perspectives, histories, and ways of knowing. We salute this commitment and hope that this report provides key information and inspiration to continue with these efforts.

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