Teachers' perceptions of Indigenizing learning at a Canadian offshore school

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Abstract

In 2015, British Columbia (BC) released a redesigned curriculum that mandated the authentic and meaningful Indigenization of all aspects of learning. The mandate applied to schools within the province of BC and to the international schools that make up the BC Offshore School Program. BC offshore teachers are often uncertain on how to meaningfully Indigenize learning within an international educational context. There is little research regarding the implementation of Indigenized curricula within transnational contexts. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore teachers' perceptions of Indigenized learning at a BC offshore school in Egypt. A critical sociocultural framework was used in exploring teachers' perceptions of Indigenizing learning. The focus of this research included determining how teachers perceive Indigenized teaching and learning at a BC offshore school and the perceived factors that influence Indigenization. Semi-structured interview and focus group data of 16 elementary and secondary teachers were collected and analyzed using a constructivist grounded theory approach. A theory emerged that teachers' prior knowledge of Indigenous culture shapes perceptions and practices of Indigenized learning, which are then mediated by unique external factors that emerge in international schools (Adams, 2024). Based on these findings, recommendations were formulated to assist teachers in implementing meaningful Indigenized learning internationally.

Keywords: BC offshore schools; Egypt; Indigenization; transnational curriculum.

1. Introduction

In 2015, British Columbia (BC) released a redesigned curriculum which mandated authentic and meaningful Indigenization across all learning (BC Government, 2021). This mandate applied to the province's public and independent schools and also to the 45 international schools that make up the BC Offshore Schools program (BC Government, 2021). This program is comprised of schools in over 10 countries which utilize the BC

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curriculum and are accredited by the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care (BC Ministry of Education, 2021).

The challenge of meaningfully and authentically Indigenizing instruction has been documented in Canada (Deer, 2013; Kanu, 2005; Milne, 2017; Scott & Gani, 2018; Webb & Mashford-Pringle, 2022). In offshore schools this challenge is often magnified, where teachers must negotiate internationalizing and Indigenizing learning. The problem is that BC offshore teachers may not know how to meaningfully Indigenize learning in international contexts. Canada's onshore teachers have expressed uncertainty in Indigenizing learning, which often is attributed to a lack of knowledge of Indigenous cultures (Kanu, 2005; Milne, 2017; Scott & Gani, 2018), insufficient professional learning, resources, and administrative support (Chorney & Bakos, 2021). This uncertainty is amplified among offshore teachers, who must decide how to effectively integrate local and global cultures within instruction (Beck & Pidgeon, 2020; Ragoonaden & Akehurst, 2013). There is little research exploring the perceptions of offshore teachers Indigenizing learning; however, in a study of Australian offshore teachers in the United Arab Emirates, Maxwell (2020) described how teachers omit references to Aboriginal and Torres Island Strait cultural content in the curriculum because of its perceived irrelevance to the experiences of their Emirati students.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore teachers' perceptions of Indigenizing learning at a BC offshore school in Egypt. The following research questions were addressed in this study:

RQ1. How do teachers perceive the Indigenization of learning at a BC offshore school in Egypt?

RQ2. What factors influence the teachers' perceptions of Indigenizing learning?

This exploration sought to identify the factors that shape teachers' perceptions in Indigenizing learning wherein recommendations could be developed to assist offshore teachers and administrators in effectively Indigenizing learning in their schools.

1.   Literature review

1.1.   Indigenized learning

The literature on global Indigenization efforts can be categorized in terms of its impact on curricula, pedagogies, and learning. Studies often present Indigenization efforts in a particular region such as Africa (Acharibasam & McVittie, 2021; Dlakavu et al., 2022; Dyll, 2019), North America (Attas, 2019; Brunette Debassige et al., 2022), Oceania (Asmar & Page, 2018; Thorpe, 2019; Woods et al., 2022), and South America (da Luz Scherf, 2020). Several studies address Indigenization of higher education and efforts to Indigenize the academy (Attas, 2019; Augustus, 2022; Brunette Debassige et al., 2022; Louie et al., 2017; Mooney, 2021; Vizina, 2022). Decolonization is also presented as an essential component of Indigenization (Bell et al., 2022; McGowan et al., 2020; Mitchell et

al., 2018; Shahjahan et al., 2021). Likewise, land- and place-based pedagogies are cited as a feature shared among Indigenized pedagogies (Allison-Burbank et al., 2023; Gahman & Legault, 2019; MacKinnon, 2021). There are few studies which examine Indigenized learning at the K–12 level or in classrooms composed of a mix of Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners, or exclusively non-Indigenous learners.

1.2.   *BC's redesigned curriculum*

In 2015, BC unveiled its new curriculum emphasizing 21st Century skill development, social-emotional learning, competency-based, and holistic learning (Storey, 2017). With the advice of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the BC provincial First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC), teachers were tasked with expanding "Aboriginal perspectives into the entire learning journey, rather than into specific courses or grade levels" (BC Ministry of Education, 2015; pp. 7–8). Since 2015, the Indigenized learning has evolved into a framework known as the First Peoples Principles of Learning (FPPL), which consists of nine principles characterizing Indigenous learning processes (First Nations Education Steering Committee [FNESC], 2008/2014). The FPPL is rooted in the shared pedagogies and epistemologies of several Indigenous cultures of Canada (FNESC, 2008/2014). There has been uncertainty among teachers in implementing the principles since the FPPL is not a collection of lesson plans, but instead a guide that helps teachers "translate the principles into choices about what is important to learn and how to be responsive within their own contexts" (Hanson, 2019, p. 125).

As of 2023, the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care requires that K–12 students completing requirements for the BC Certificate of Graduation complete 4 credit hours of Indigenous-focused coursework (Ministry of Education and Child Care, 2024). This graduation requirement also applies to the international schools of the BC Offshore Program. A specifically designed course titled Indigenous Studies has been created in the offshore schools and students graduating from 2024 and onward are required to complete the course to receive BC's graduation certificate, the Dogwood Diploma.

1.3.   *International and transnational education*

The internationalization, or the integration of an international or intercultural component into learning, has emerged as a major trend in education (Knight, 2004). Since the 1990s, the concept of internationalization became more generalized with global learning framed in ideological and pragmatic terms (Buckner and Stein, 2020). Ideological definitions of international education emphasize the development of global citizens and the nurturing of peace and cooperation among nations (Elnagar and Young, 2021; Tarc, 2019), while pragmatic definitions are concerned with the economics and politics of global education such as international trade agreements, student migration and mobility, and the transferability of educational credentials across international borders (Buckner & Stein, 2020; Elnagar & Young, 2021). One model of international education, transnational education, is categorized as education occurring with learners located in a country different from the awarding institution (UNESCO/Council of Europe,

2000). The establishment of transnational educational programs has increased steadily and has been attributed to a burgeoning middle class in many developing countries who have the financial resources and desire to have their children educated in private K–12 international schools that utilize foreign curricula (Magpili, 2020; St. John, 2023).

1.4.   BC's offshore schools

Several Canadian provinces including British Columbia, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Ontario first established international schools in the 1990s, with Alberta, Manitoba, and Prince Edward Island also operating offshore schools in recent years (Cosco, 2011). The history of Canadian offshore schools varies as a result of the each province's regulation and governance of offshore education (Alexander, 2024). British Columbia and New Brunswick were the first adopters of the offshore model with schools established in China, with Maple Leaf International School opened in 1995 using the BC curriculum and the Beijing Concord College of Sino Canada opened in 1997 using the New Brunswick curriculum. Over the next several years, additional BC offshore schools were established in China as a result of new regulations supporting private foreign learning options within China's schools (Wang, 2017).

According to the BC Government (2021), the BC Offshore Program partners with host country operators in the management of 45 international schools across eight countries. Each school utilizes the BC curriculum and is certified by the BC Ministry of Education and Childcare (BC Government, 2021). Students graduating from BC offshore schools leave with equivalent credentials as their onshore counterparts (Office of the Auditor General of British Columbia, 2020).

1.5.   Reconciling Indigenization and internationalization

Reconciling the seemingly conflicting trends of Indigenization and internationalization is possible when applying critical and transformative approaches to learning (Barker, 2020). Indigenized learning requires a critical discourse on the inequity present in education and the unjust structures that impede equitable learning. To address these issues, an additive model of multicultural education (Banks, 2019), where selected pieces of Indigenous culture are simply incorporated into learning, is insufficient. Instead, Indigenization should include a critical examination of educational policy, curriculum and pedagogy and their relationship to needs of Indigenous Peoples (Barker, 2020). Indigenous educational structures require a transformative approach where Indigenous and non-Indigenous stakeholders collaborate by critically analyzing and decolonizing existing power structures in creating equitable education for all (Harder et al., 2018; Seniuk-Cicek et al., 2021).

1.6.   Theoretical framework

Critical sociocultural theory (Lewis et al., 2020) served as the framework for this study. Critical sociocultural theory categorizes learning as a social endeavor situated in

complex sociopolitical contexts that is mediated through constructive processes shaped by power and privilege (Trigos-Carrillo, 2019). Sociocultural approaches provide an understanding of learning as an inclusive event that requires social interaction, these interactions occur between individuals at a micro-level and not a macro-level, where social issues such as power and agency play a central role in shaping the learning process. A critical sociocultural approach was used to address these macro-level social interactions to determine the impact of power and agency on the development of teachers' understandings and actions. Often, power and agency are intrinsically tied to issues of race, culture and colonialism, and such constructions demand an investigation to understand their impact on teachers' perceptions of Indigenized learning.

2.   Method

Merriam (1998) described the focus of qualitative inquiry as gaining deeper understanding of human perceptions of complex social phenomenon. In exploring the complex nature of teachers' perceptions of Indigenized learning, a qualitative approach was deemed best suited for collecting and analyzing of data. Grounded theory represents a systematic qualitative methodology that is appropriate when little no information is known about phenomenon (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019) and utilizes inductive processes to generate a theory of observed social phenomena (Strauss & Corbin, 2014). Of the three grounded theory approaches, a constructivist approach (Charmaz, 2000) was utilized in this study.

2.1.   Research setting

The setting for this study was a Canadian international school in Egypt. The school utilizes the BC curriculum and it is certified yearly by the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care. Students at the school graduate with the same credentials, the Dogwood Diploma, as their onshore BC counterparts. The school provides K-12 learning and the majority of the student body are Egyptian nationals. The teaching staff is primarily Canadian and BC certification is required of all teachers of BC credit-bearing courses. The site was selected because this offshore school represents one of a few Canadian international schools operating in the region and includes elementary and secondary programs from which to draw teacher research participants.

2.2.   Population, sampling, and data collection

The population for this study included 67 elementary and secondary teachers at a Canadian offshore school in Egypt. Inclusion criteria for participation in this study included elementary and secondary, BC-certified teachers currently employed at the Canadian international school in Egypt. A sample size of 16 teachers participated in this study. A sample was developed purposively based on inclusion criteria of that he participant be BC-certified and an elementary of secondary teacher at the research site.

Teachers meeting the inclusion requirements were recruited in-person at the school. Data collection instruments for this study included semi-structured interviews and two focus group sessions. All 16 teachers participated in individual interviews, and of the 16, ten participated in

focus group sessions. Interview and focus group questions (see Appendix A) were designed to elicit teachers' perceptions of Indigenization. Questions were reviewed by seven subject matter experts in the field of Indigenized and decolonized learning, and their feedback was incorporated in refining the research instruments for this study.

2.3.   Data analysis

A constructivist grounded theory approach was used in analyzing the data. Transcribed data were analyzed using the Atlas.ti software. Data from semi-structured interviews and focus groups were analyzed using a method of constant comparison, where developing new codes and conceptual categories occurred through an iterative process. Analysis of the interview data produced emergent themes, which were then used to selectively code focus group data served to affirm, disaffirm, or extend the theory generated from analyzing the interview data.

The coding of interview and focus group data adhered to grounded theory protocols, which include open, axial, and selective coding (Charmaz, 2000). This coding scheme was applied to the interview data interview data, where new codes and conceptual categories were created as each participant's interview data were analyzed. Axial coding was used to identify emergent themes and selective coding was employed to organize these themes into a theory grounded in the data. Extensive memos were created throughout the process of code and category development.

Theoretical saturation, or a point in the conceptualization process where no new categories emerge (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022), was achieved after analyzing 15 participants' interview data. Once theoretical saturation was achieved, a deductive coding process was used in the coding of focus group data based on the emergent themes of the interview data. Additional conceptualizing of the data occurred in developing a theory that connected the emergent themes of the research. The generated theory was then used to selectively code the interview and focus group data.

2.4.   Ethical considerations

The confidentiality and privacy of participants was maintained throughout the study and the use of pseudonyms in place of participants' names was applied to data transcripts and reporting. Informed consent was gained by all participants and full disclosure of the nature of the study was provided to all participants before data collection commenced. This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of the American College of Education (approval number: 1910079820).

3.   Results

Themes emerged in the development of a core theory grounded in the data. These themes included that (a) teachers' understanding of Indigenous culture influences how they Indigenize learning, (b) teachers' prior understanding shapes how they make relevant and connect Indigenized learning to their students, and (c) teachers' capacity to Indigenize learning is shaped by internal and external factors. The theory which connects these themes is that teachers' prior knowledge shapes their perceptions of Indigenization and these perceptions are mediated by unique external factors present within international schools.

3.1. Defining Indigenous

Theme 1: Teachers' understanding of Indigenous culture influences how they Indigenize learning

In analyzing their responses, how teachers defined the term Indigenous varied significantly. These definitions were classified as either local or global definitions of Indigenous culture with some participants referring exclusively to Canada's First Nations or locally within an Egyptian context, referring to the Bedouin or Nubian peoples of Egypt. Other teachers referenced Indigenous culture within a global context by referring to Indigenous populations worldwide, particularly across Africa. Participant 15 defined Indigenous culture by referencing a Canadian context, "So when I think of Indigenous culture, I often think of the three people groups in Canada: the Metis, the First Nations, and the Inuit come to mind." Participant 6 provided a global and local, context-specific definition of Indigenous culture describing it as the "the root of where peoples came from. For example, here in Egypt, I think of the Bedouin culture, the Nubian culture."

Some teachers provided a global, non-geographical definition of Indigenous culture by referring to the social and cultural values contained within the First Peoples Principles of Learning (FPPL). Participant 7 demonstrated this approach by defining Indigenous culture as "the principles and values that are held in prominence in Indigenous culture that also have transferable and obvious application across all cultures and across all settings." This definition is often situated within a framework of social-emotional, moral, and civic education. Some participants defined Indigenous culture using a social, economic, or political context. Participant 14 exemplified this approach in defining Indigenous as a "group of people that have been living in a specific area for an extended period of time and due to an external force that came in and somewhat claimed the land or used the land in that specific order which kind of put these groups of people that were originally there in a specific position where they have to be concerned as to how they are perceived and the way that their land is perceived historically."

3.2. Connection and relevance

Theme 2: Teachers' prior understanding shapes how they make relevant and connect Indigenized teaching and learning to their students

Teachers' understanding of Indigenous culture was revealed in their descriptions of in connecting Indigenized learning to students. For example, many teachers who utilized the First Peoples Principles of Learning (FPPL) in defining Indigenous culture, typically conflated social, emotional, and civic learning instructional strategies with Indigenized learning (Adams, 2024). Some teachers equated other learning models, such as inquiry-based and cooperative learning, as Indigenized learning (Adams, 2024). Participant 9 exemplified this connection by describing Indigenized learning as "just incorporating Learning Principles into your lessons every day without making a big to do about it, it's just another activity students are doing in class; rather than, here we go, we're doing Indigenous Knowledge again." Participant 12 reiterated the interwoven Indigenized learning approach by describing Indigenized learning as "just a method or style of teaching that is incorporated without them really even knowing. So I don't see a huge difference between them."

Teachers who defined Indigenous culture in a non-Canadian contexts typically applied learning strategies that specifically refer to Indigenous cultures in Egypt, Africa, or in a context of global indigeneity (Adams, 2024). One participant described making these connections:

> There are times when you might come into a lesson and you are trying to just overtly, explicitly to make those connections and sometimes students can get a little loss with that. They don't accept it as well as they could, in particular if it's about a culture that isn't relatable to them. That's why here in particular, I try to make more connections with Nubian art with Bedouin art and with Indigenous Peoples that are closer to this area. (Participant 6)

These connections were often integrated into an overall multicultural instructional practice that, according to Participant 6, "can be a starting point before expanding and doing a little bit more of a comparison or drawing more connections between the other cultures and how they are interrelated."

Teachers who defined Indigenous culture within a social, economic, or political framework often made relevant Indigenized learning by focusing on social justice issues and economic disparity as a starting point in connecting Indigenized culture to the experiences of Egyptian learners. Participant 14 described this connection:

> You can always talk about the disenfranchised and the underprivileged groups of people because they're everywhere. What you can do is that you could take the ideas that apply to the Indigenous people in Canada for example and kind of find common traits with the more disadvantaged and disenfranchised people anywhere in the world.

Teachers' knowledge of Indigenization likewise influenced their approach to Indigenizing learning. These practices emerged from the teacher's prior understanding and experience with Indigenous culture and their experience in applying critical modes of inquiry and reflection within their instructional practice. Teachers often described Indigenized learning as either occurring explicitly or implicitly. Teachers described explicit Indigenization as an emphasis on the content, history, or culture of a specific Indigenous culture, which for most referred to cultures associated with the Indigenous Peoples in what is now Canada (Adams, 2024). Participant 6 described the difference

between implicit and explicit instruction in describing Indigenization as "not necessarily explicitly tied tying it to Indigenous cultures." Participant 10 reiterated this sentiment, "I think when you're integrating it, you're not explicitly teaching it. It's not a standalone lesson." Often implicit Indigenized learning was described using the FPPL as a framework for holistic learning. Participant 10 characterized this implicit learning as "something that is sort of woven through the fabric of the curriculum and it's carried on and continued through and modeled and shown throughout the term or semester or whatever it might be." Some teachers contested the idea of only implicitly Indigenizing learning. One teacher believed that only relying on the FPPL to Indigenize learning was insufficient:

> I disagree with that to a certain degree because if you come from a situation where people don't have an understanding of racism, it is not taught or they believe it's invisible in their society, then a lot of these things they have no understanding of how did we get here. I think it helps to have background information to understand about each Principle of Learning. (Participant 1)

Several teachers conflated Indigenized learning with several other instructional models such as inquiry-based; cooperative; social, emotional, and civic; and whole-child learning. Participant 6 connected inquiry-based and Indigenized learning, 'it [Indigenized learning] lends itself …to an inquiry approach, which I see an inquiry approach is something that can be more related to Indigenous culture in any case, anyway." Other teachers connected Indigenized learning to social-emotional, civic, and moral education, where a participant remarked:

> I don't think that I explicitly or purposefully teach the Principles of Learning or the Indigenous. I think I just…at the end of the day a lot of it is good teaching practices, period. It's not about it being Indigenous or not. It's just like teaching kids to respect each other, to respect elders, and I mean that's just humanity. So I can't say that I sit down and explicitly think of ways or think that I have to integrate. I think that looking at it, I can say okay I do this when I do this. I do this when I do this and I think it kind of just naturally happens. (Participant 10)

Many of the teachers described place-based learning as an essential component of Indigenization. One participant emphasized the importance of place in Indigenized instruction:

> I think the most common way for me, and probably can still be improved upon, would be using the Principles of Learning and saying like having a sense of place, a sense of home and a sense of identity and really hammering those pieces home. Those are things that every human can relate to so having that as a guiding principle is a way. (Participant 7)

Participant 2 reiterated this point and characterized Indigenized learning as "people connecting with the land." Participant 2 also discussed the importance of community as a feature of Indigenous culture and learning by describing Indigenized learning as having a "strong community focus as well. I think we tend to have maybe a more individual focus and I find in Indigenous cultures much more community based."

A few teachers approached Indigenized instruction critically and cited decolonization and critical discourse as essential components of Indigenization. Participant 1 presented a critical stance in characterizing Indigenization as incorporating a "non-European or non-Western worldview, a non-European approach to learning." Teachers approaching Indigenization with a critical stance often cited the incompatibility of a Western-derived curricula and Indigenized epistemology. Participant 5 expressed this view, "I think the problem is that we're still based on this this kind of Victorian-era education system. We're trying to put in these Principles of Learning to make things better. It's not always working."

A critical examination of the dominant Western educational paradigm was also expressed by a teacher:

> I think for me one of the biggest challenge is the fact that students are so entrenched in the Western mindset that they have very little information and knowledge about racism or systemic racism so a lot of times they in the beginning they think it's done. There's just no connection to the story of what's going on in Egypt. So you have to build those connections that this happened, this is happening, and it is up to us to be aware and to be able to make an ethical judgment to take a stand when these issues are present. (Participant 1)

For teachers engaged in critical modes of Indigenized instruction, reflection and identity emerged as important aspects essential for effective integration. Along with decolonizing approaches, several teachers supported learning from multiple perspectives as necessary component of Indigenized learning. Participant 2 expressed this sentiment by stating that "it's important for them [the students] to hear, especially at a Canadian international school, not just the perspective of the people who are descended from the colonizing group."

The variations in teachers' definitions of Indigenous culture within a local or global contexts and the non-critical or critical instructional strategies employed in Indigenizing learning were organized into a typology (see Figure 1). Type I-IV orientations were assigned based on teachers' Indigenized instructional practice and perceptions in defining Indigenous culture. Most teachers supported a holistic, integrated approach to Indigenized learning; however, there was a distinction in approaching Indigenized instruction critically or non-critically.

Theme 3: Teachers' capacity to Indigenize learning is shaped by internal and external factors.

The teachers in this study described several challenges to Indigenization. This included connecting and making Indigenous learning relevant to students, a lack of professional learning opportunities and resources focused on Indigenization in international schools, uncertainty in implementing Indigenized learning, and the need for greater school-wide prioritization of Indigenization. The difficulty in connecting Indigenized learning to students was expressed by Participant 3, "the challenge for them [the students] is that it [Indigenized learning] is foreign for them." Participant 2 reinforced this perspective by describing Indigenized learning as 'difficult for some of

them [the students], they're hearing about it for the first time and they didn't grow up with that cultural context." The challenge of connecting and making relevant Indigenized learning was also viewed as resulting from the diversity of student learners. A participant described a lack of student diversity as a potential challenge in Indigenizing learning:

> Even within BC schools, depending on where you are in BC, you'll have the same because you can have some very diverse schools, multicultural schools, and then others that are more polarized. I would say that that is one of the biggest challenges because the majority…the high majority of the students are all from Egypt. (Participant 11)
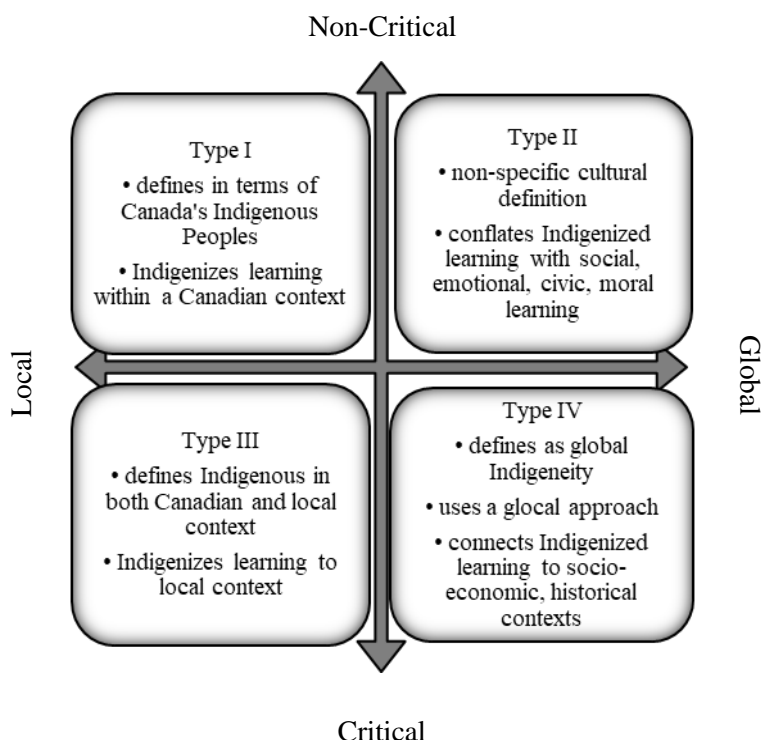

Figure 1. Teachers' perceptions of Indigenous culture and instructional orientation

Lack of professional learning and resources dedicated to Indigenized learning was frequently cited as a major challenge impeding Indigenization. According to Participant 2, "there's so much opportunity for PD [professional development] back home but here not so much." Others pointed to the lack of materials and resources specifically designed for Indigenized learning abroad. Another participant remarked:

> I feel that I don't know the full extent of what that could look like. I really gravitated towards the storytelling, but its different ideas. What's an example of something that would in an international setting? I don't necessarily want to teach about Aboriginal content, how can I still incorporate that in math. (Participant 12)

Participant 3 expressed the uncertainty and apprehension that many teachers feel in attempting to Indigenize learning, "So that's when there are blocks for teachers and I feel teachers still feel a little bit uncomfortable. It's not a comfortable situation to be able to really delve into it." This sense of apprehension is often tied to lack of knowledge on how to Indigenize learning or fears of appropriation and tokenization. These sentiments were expressed by several teachers such as Participant 15 when describing the use of Indigenous resources, "That's the biggest part I struggle with. I don't want to use something out of context or appropriate. I get nervous about that."

Most teachers expressed a need for greater school-wide prioritization of Indigenized learning. Though Indigenization is Ministry requirement, little guidance is given on how to meaningfully and authentically Indigenize learning especially in international schools. According to Participant 6, "From the top level from the ownership level, from the administrative level, it is really made clear to faculty the importance of it [Indigenization] to the school culture." This need for greater input and direction from the top down was reiterated by several teachers and represents a recommendation that could assist Indigenization efforts.

3.3.   Teachers' prior knowledge shapes their perceptions of Indigenized learning which are then mediated by external factors that uniquely emerge within international schools.

A theory was developed by connecting and conceptualizing the emergent themes of teachers' knowledge of Indigenous culture shapes how they Indigenize learning, teachers' prior understanding influences how they connect and make relevant Indigenized learning, and the supports and challenges that affect the Indigenization process (Adams, 2024). I was theorized that teachers' prior knowledge shapes their perceptions of Indigenized learning which are then mediated by external factors that uniquely emerge within international schools. In developing a theory grounded in the data, teachers' perceptions of Indigenization were constructed internally based on prior knowledge and experience; however, external structures dictated how these perceptions manifested as instructional practices and capacity to Indigenized teaching and learning (see Figure 2).

One teacher illustrated the role prior understanding and experience play in shaping their approach to Indigenized learning:

> I heard about racism. I heard about these things. I heard about it in church. I heard about it in my neighborhood. This was part of my world whereas in this society they're not talking about racism. It is not an open dialogue what they're talking about so it's difficult for them [the students] to understand some of these things. (Participant 1)

Developing a critical view appeared consistently among teachers engaged in reflective practice to improve their multicultural, multi-perspective, and Indigenized instructional practice. One teacher described the influence of experience and perception on their instruction:

> I am naturally a storyteller as a teacher. I tell stories and that is part of the Indigenous culture is to tell stories for learning. So I think that's one of my biggest ways. If I have a connection myself to something that I'm teaching and I have experience in it, I'll go back to that. And if there's anything that the students know

about, connect to what they know, to what you know. So that's one of my ways and also the whole thing about place, connecting to place. That's mostly how I do it. (Participant 5)

Teachers' ability to Indigenize learning was supported through practice of continual reflection as expressed by a teacher:

It always resonates with students when they are able to speak what forms their identity and their interests, to engage in their communities. I think the reaction is well but again I think it's more of an implicit connection and as I am speaking this I still feel I don't know if guilt is the right word, I feel like there's supposed to be more. I feel like I should be doing more. (Participant 7)

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This participant's perspective revealed that teachers' perceptions are constructed as a result of prior knowledge and experience but transformation requires critical reflection and praxis. Internally constructed perceptions of Indigenized learning can either be supported or hindered by external factors in the educational environment.
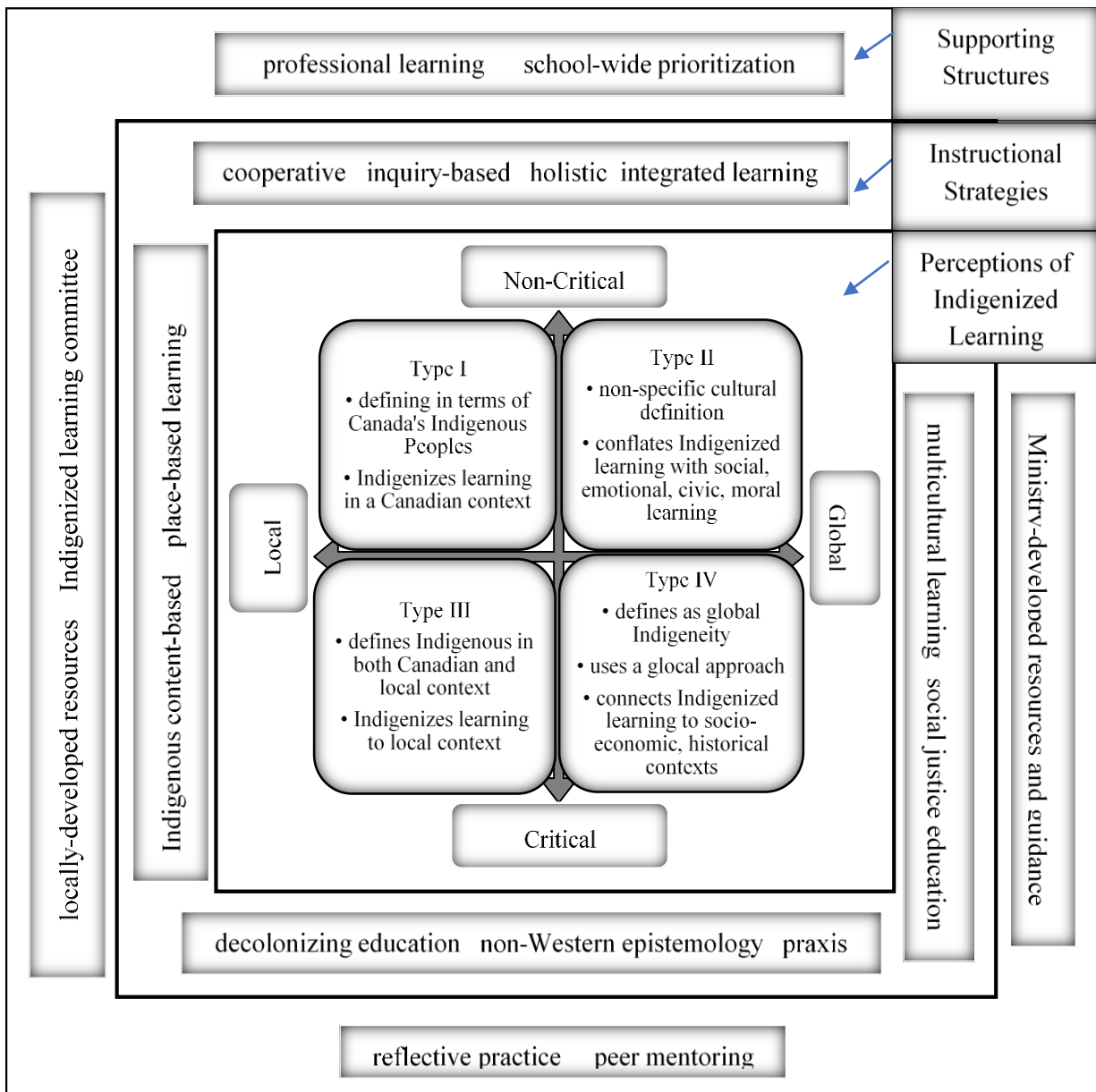
Figure 2. Internal and external factors shaping Indigenization

4.   Discussion

The conclusions drawn from this study confirm and extend the results of similar studies regarding teachers' perceptions of the Indigenization. The themes which emerged confirm much of the peer-reviewed literature regarding teachers' perceptions in Indigenizing learning. This study's findings however extend the understanding of teachers' prior knowledge and conceptualization of Indigenous culture shapes Indigenized instructional practice. This study confirms the need for a transformative

approach to Indigenization to meaningfully and authentically Indigenize learning in the global space.

The peer-reviewed literature regarding teachers' perceptions of Indigenizing learning confirms similar challenges experienced by teachers in other contexts. Canadian teachers expressed uncertainty on how to Indigenize learning which often emerged from a lack knowledge of Indigenous cultures or Indigenized instructional practices (Kanu, 2005; Milne, 2017; Scott & Gani, 2018). In Canada, a lack of administrator or district-level direction and guidance supporting Indigenization has been cited as a significant hindrance to Indigenizing learning (Milne, 2017; Scott & Gani, 2018). Likewise, teachers in this study described the need for greater, targeted professional development on Indigenization that addresses integrating Indigenous culture into learning at international schools. Issues involving insufficient resources and lack of administrative support to meet integration goals has been noted in other contexts (Chorney & Bakos, 2021; Scott & Gani, 2018). The teachers in this study also commented on the need for greater resources and direction in implementing Indigenized learning. The teachers in this study also expressed the struggle in connecting and making relevant Indigenous culture to their students, which coincides with previous literature regarding the negotiation of cultural knowledge within global learning environments (Beck & Pidgeon, 2020; Ragoonaden & Akehurst, 2013).

The peer-reviewed literature regarding transformative learning supports the findings of this study. This study's participants represented four orientations in defining and implementing Indigenized learning. Each orientation represents an important aspect of Indigenized learning; however, in the terms of this study, teachers' who utilized critical and transformative approaches appeared to effectively integrate Indigenized learning within an international educational environment. Barker (2018) presents transformational learning as a bridge to connect global and Indigenized educational trends. Transformational learning can support Indigenization and internationalization by bolstering learners' cultural and social awareness, collaboration, and reflection (Barker, 2020). Transformative approaches were advocated by a few teachers in this study. These teachers recognized the power in relating social, economic, cultural, environmental, and political issues as central to Indigenized learning. This approach in combining a glocal framing of Indigenized learning represents a strategy supporting global and Indigenized education.

Anti-racism and social justice education are two streams that emerged among teachers employing a critical framework to Indigenize learning. Approaching Indigenized learning through the lens of social justice education provides a means to implement authentic and meaningful learning experiences for students and represents a vehicle to effect transformation in learners (Leddy & O'Neil, 2022; Walsh et al., 2020). By expanding Indigenized learning to issues of social and economic justice, learners can potentially identify more easily with important Indigenous issues such as racism, land and language rights, economic disparity, and cultural preservation. Applying a social justice and anti-racism framework for Indigenized learning also allows for a more global approach in decolonizing learning by framing this endeavor in terms of socio-economic, cultural, and epistemological justice (Giles, 2023; Lin et al., 2021).

This study involved a small number of teachers within an offshore school and therefore is limited in the transferability of its findings to other contexts. Consequently, this study's findings may not be representative of the entire community of offshore teachers Indigenizing learning. Further research is needed in gauging offshore teachers' perceptions in Indigenizing learning in developing a more comprehensive view of factors governing Indigenization and its overall effectiveness in the global space.

5. Conclusions

This study explored offshore teachers' perceptions of Indigenized learning and the factors that influence these perceptions. In this study, it was found that teachers' definitions of Indigenous culture influence their approach to Indigenized learning. These definitions also shaped how teachers connect and make relevant Indigenized learning to their students. Teachers also expressed a number of challenges that hinder Indigenization and recommended strategies to support Indigenized learning in international schools. A theory was generated from the data that revealed that internal structures such as teachers' perceptions of Indigenization are shaped by prior knowledge and experience but also later supported or hindered by external factors present in the international educational environment.

Teachers who approached Indigenization using a critical and transformative framework were able to most effectively integrate Indigenized and internationalized learning. By applying pedagogies that focused on social justice and anti-racism education, these teachers were able to implement a transformative learning model that supported a greater connection to Indigenized learning among students. As a result, it is recommended that organizations provide training and resources that equip offshore teachers' with the knowledge and skills needed to Indigenize learning within a critical framework. Likewise, teachers can locally organize committees dedicated to exploring effective Indigenization strategies for international schools. A greater collaboration between teachers, administrators, and district leaders is recommended in supporting meaningful Indigenized learning in offshore schools.

Acknowledgements

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Appendix A.   Interview and focus group questions

A.1.   Interview questions

1. The BC curriculum requires that teachers integrate Indigenous culture (worldviews and perspectives) into learning. How do you define Indigenous culture?

2. The BC curriculum requires that teachers integrate Indigenous culture (worldviews and perspectives) into learning. What does it mean to integrate Indigenous culture into learning (lessons, class activities, projects, and assignments)?

3. In the BC curriculum, the integration of Indigenous culture into learning should be "authentic and meaningful". In your opinion, what does it mean to authentically and meaningfully integrate Indigenous culture into learning?

4. How is integrating Indigenous culture into learning at an international school different from/the same as integrating Indigenous culture into learning at a school in Canada/North America?

5. How do you integrate Indigenous culture into your teaching? Describe your experience in integrating Indigenous culture into your classes.

6. How do students respond to lessons or activities that include Indigenous worldviews and perspectives?

7. Do you believe that integrating Indigenous culture enriches your students' learning? In what way?

8. What are some important ideas, practices, or strategies that can make integrating Indigenous culture into learning at an international school more meaningful and authentic?

9. What challenges exist in integrating Indigenous culture into learning at your school?

10. What recommendations would you suggest to meet these challenges?

A.2.   Focus group questions

1. The BC curriculum advises teachers to "meaningfully integrate" Indigenous culture into learning. What does it mean to "meaningfully integrate" Indigenous culture into learning?

2. How does being in an international school affect how integrating Indigenous culture into learning occurs?

3. Describe a hypothetical lesson in which Indigenous culture is integrated into learning.

4. What do teachers need to make integrating Indigenous culture into learning meaningful?

5. What impact can integrating Indigenous culture into learning have on students at this school?

6. Is there anything else you would like to share?